

Studia Generalia

# iobox Development

iobox - A TerraMobile company

25.10.2000 Kari Penttilä



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## iobox in Nutshell

- ▶ Pioneering Wireless pan-European portal (now 2 M reg. users)
- ▶ Two fold strategy BtoD and BtoC segment
- ▶ One-stop for shopping for hosting
- ▶ Over 130 employees
- ▶ Launched early 1999, by Jari Ovaskainen and Henry Nilert
- ▶ Operations in Finland, Germany, Sweden, and UK
- ▶ Belief: Future of Internet is wireless
- ▶ Acquired by TerraMobile in July 2000 for EUR 230 million



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## iobox Services

### **BtoC**

- ▶ Messaging
- ▶ Personal Information Management
- ▶ Mobile Fun
- ▶ Content Aggregation
- ▶ mCommerce

### **BtoB**

- ▶ Mobile Internet Platform for Private Label i-Hosting



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## Purpose of this presentation

- ▶ Understanding of operations of Wireless Portal Company
- ▶ What it takes to run Development in Start-up
- ▶ What kind of Employer iobox is
- ▶ Understand the Technology behind



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## Topics

- Manage the Growth
- Manage the People and Organisation, and Motivation
- Manage the Innovation
- Manage the Development
- Manage the Production
- Manage the Goals / Strategy
- Manage the Costs
- Manage the Tools / Methods / Technology



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## Manage the Growth – start-up

- Think big and small – keep the vision of each step of organisation.
- Can not grow bigger without going through all the phases (pain)
- Let all employees to know the status (open communication)
- Formal training very difficult – must trust A class people
- Configuration and Release control to be thought first
- Version control & backups – secure the investment
- Don't save in equipment
- Define responsibilities regularly – situation changes rapidly
- Enforce processes by testing



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## Manage the Growth – steps in iobox

- ▶ Less than 20 people  
-Single project mode – one man show
- ▶ More than 40 people  
-First signs to step into matrix org. Assigned responsibilities
- ▶ More than 60 people  
-First signs to introduce project management  
-Formal work order processes  
-Multiple development sites  
-Formal Release Process
- ▶ More than 80 people  
-Full functional matrix organisation  
-Formal Integration Process



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## Manage the People and Organisation

- ▶ Face the fact expert is not a good project manager.
- ▶ Let the experts make the decisions – not managers.
- ▶ People say organisation does not matter, but it will.
- ▶ Communicate the organisation – even changing montly.
- ▶ Management is to make changes at the speed people can take it.
- ▶ Provide job rotation, maintains the motivation.
- ▶ Identify the hot spots in the organisation and double them
- ▶ Remeber the office culture and example of the management.
- ▶ Organse regular get-togethers.



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## Manage the People and Organisation

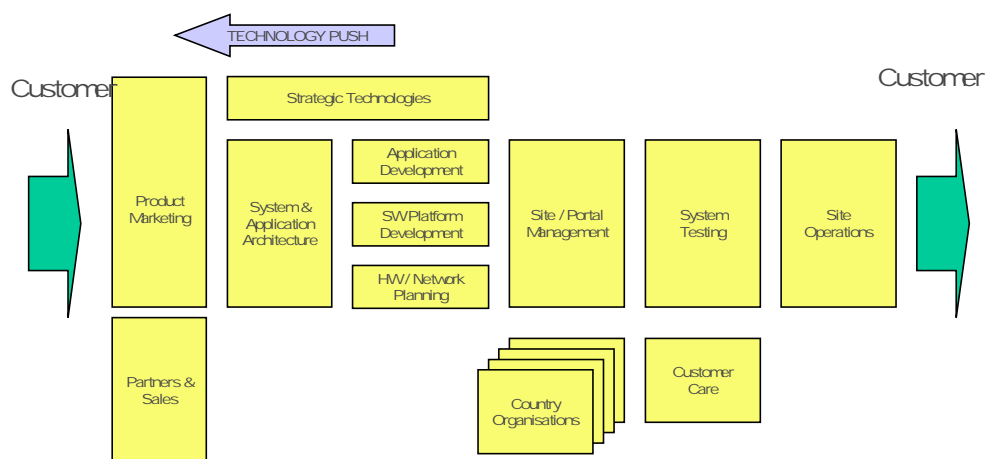
- ▶ People has different backgrounds:  
Example Telco / Internet - get the best of the people  
Telco: Execute in Waterfall - plan for scalability  
Internet: Quick and dirty - worry scalability later functionality first
- ▶ Never put a person to a management position without "testing" his/her capabilities. Allow people to take their place.



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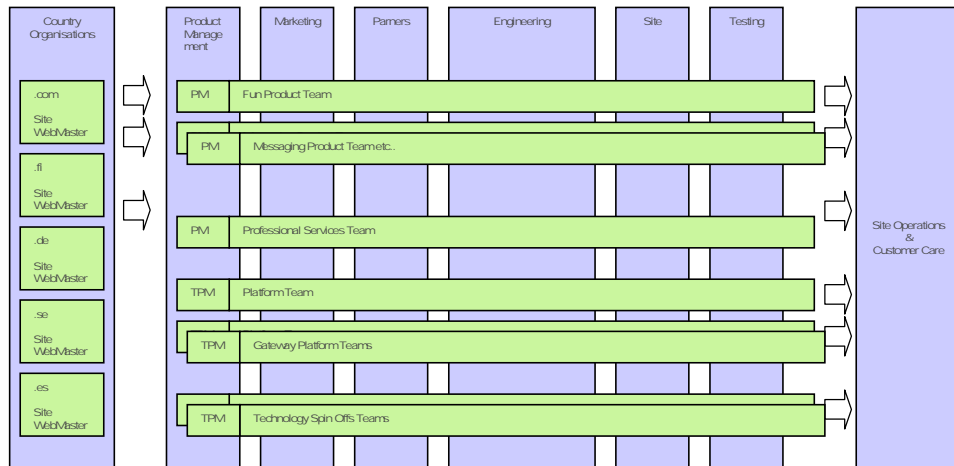
## Functional Elements - dilemma?



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## Cross Functional Team Organisation



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## Bonus Schemes

- Option Programmes  
According to the will and guts of the person
- Competitive Sallary  
Not tied to the line hierarchy
- Other incentives and benefits, BUT most important anyhow is the atmosphere created by company culture.
- No incentive plan can create motivation itself - it is the WORK

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## Manage the Innovation

- ▶ In leading edge:  
Technology Push is essential – market does not know what to want
- ▶ Avoid being leading follower – me too.
- ▶ Support technology spin-offs. Buy in people with ideas.
- ▶ Do not implement commodity, do only “b” leading edge.
- ▶ Organise implementors and innovators, and define handover
- ▶ Understand the value of “designware”
- ▶ Organise groups with independent missions – for results



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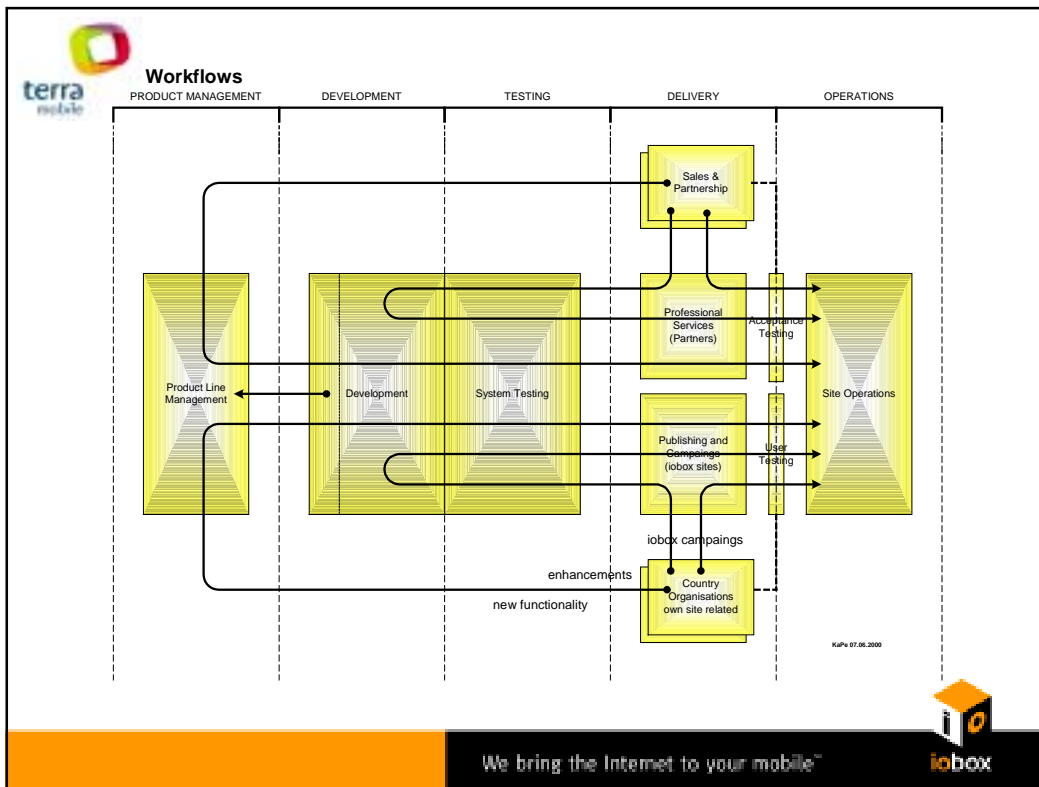
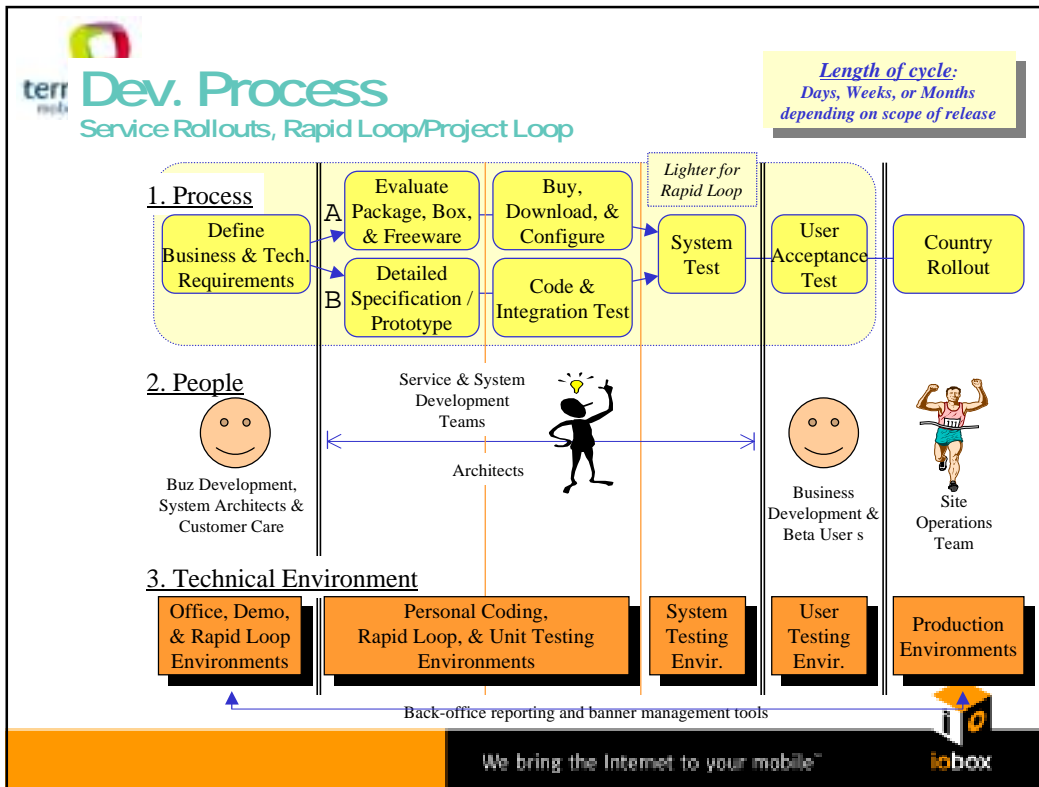
## Manage the Development

- ▶ Remember the the formal process to get commitment from development – ability to be trustworthy to your partners
- ▶ Establish own organisation for deployment of services for internal and external customers (Professional Services / Portal Development)
- ▶ Guarantees development of next set of services / applications / releases.
- ▶ Formalise system testing and handover to production
- ▶ In early stage concentrate to deliver rather the quality – this exercises the internal development processes.
- ▶ BUT Implement in backwards compatible way always

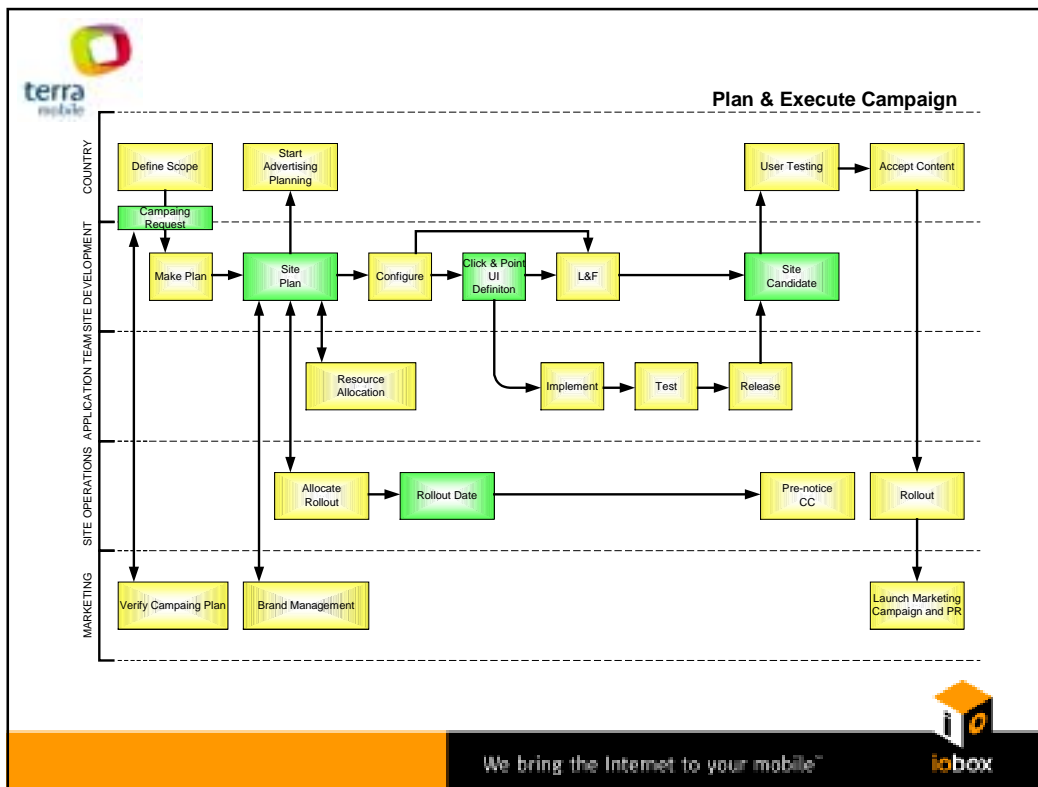


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**Manage the Development - Technology**

- Don't invent the wheel - use proven industry standards
- Whatever you have invented someone might have implemented a proto already - download and test.
- Keep focus on **implementing services to million of users**
- Understand the purpose of platform in (speed of development)
  - Transaction handling
  - User accounts
  - Security
  - Scalability
  - Datawarehousing
- Seek partners to implement services in the framework
- HONOUR ARCHITECTURE - KEEP IT CONSISTENT**

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## Manage the Production 24/7

- ▶ Do only the value added part, externalise de-facto part.
- ▶ In very early stage focus of delivery, then quality.
- ▶ Train operations to drive the deployment.
- ▶ Do not forget capacity planning, user base growth is exponential in succeeding companies.
- ▶ Remember the operations and customer care in development – implement management interfaces and back-office tools with every service.
- ▶ Remember the regulators and legislation for security and logging.
- ▶ Monitor the systems for fraud and attacks



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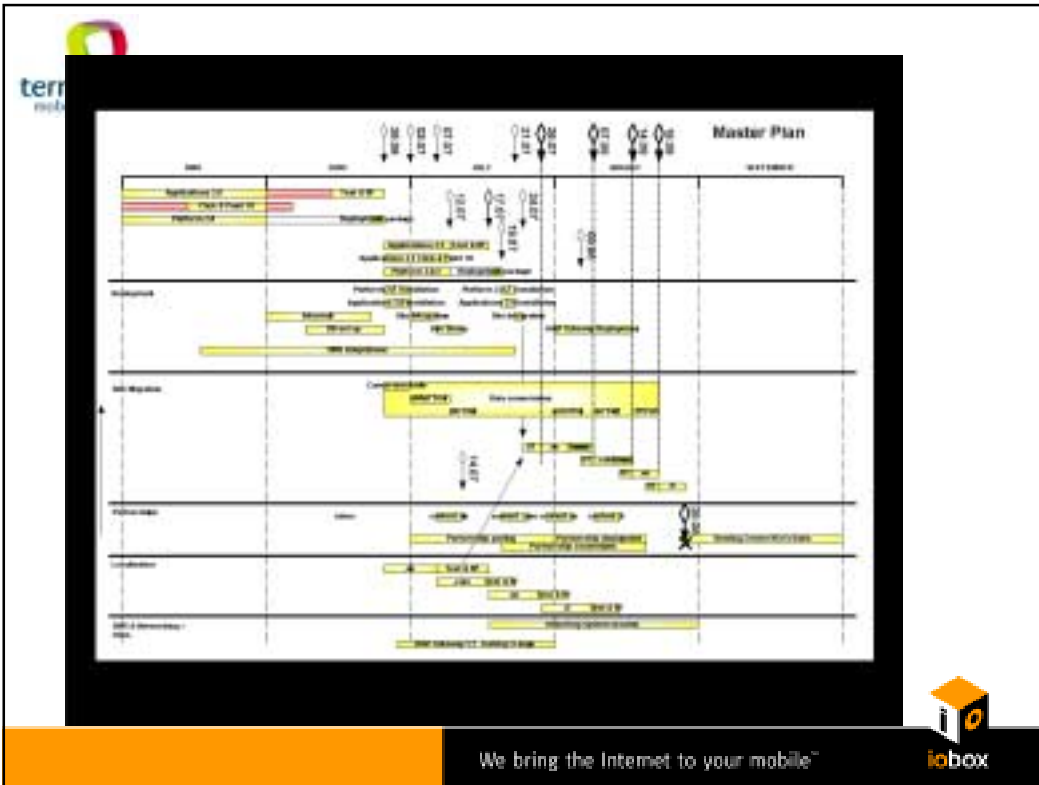
## Manage the Goals / Strategy in dev.

- ▶ Create real value: Possess the technology used
  - Encapsulate that in platform
- ▶ Visibility: Communicate the goals and strategy to every one
  - Make to goal of company to goal of every individual
- ▶ Concretise the Goals: Have a masterplan on all levels of operations
  - Campagins / Partnerships
  - Releases
  - Deployments / Site building
  - Expansions
  - Researchs
- ▶ Followup: Number of matters may drop into grey area – keep regular development / project meetings.



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**terra mobile**

## Manage the Goals / Strategy in dev.

- 
 iobox had two parallel competing lines of strategy for dev to execute
  - BtoC executed to proof iobox for BtoD
  - BtoD executed for revenue
- 
 To guarantee the value of company in future:
  - Add value by implementing a wireless internet platform
  - Do not position the company in commodity (example selling toys in the internet)

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## Manage the Cost

- ▶ Remember the mortality – money is a fuel
- ▶ Follow up the realisation of business plan weekly, monthly
- ▶ Follow up the realisation of costs weekly
- ▶ Avoid ad-hoc investments – careful reasoning
- ▶ Reserve budget for firefighting – for immediate execution
- ▶ In operations do not trust on “SLA” from HW/vendors – invest on backup reserve.
- ▶ Understand the major costs, do not save pennies



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## Manage the Tools/Methods/Technology

- ▶ Do not overtrust tools, understand what you are doing
- ▶ Automate routines as soon as possible: (examples)
  - bugtracking
  - regression testing
  - load testing
  - rollout-environment
  - version and configuration control
- ▶ Invest in modelling tools



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## Manage the Tools/Methods/Technology

- ▶ Apply patterns already invented – senior people in group leadership
- ▶ Methods used must match the Tehnology used
- ▶ Often very difficult to apply in leading edge development
- ▶ Methodology is usually applicable only at the second round
  - learn somewhere else
  - apply here



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## Manage the Tools/Methods/Technology

- ▶ Use Technology that has been proven in the industry
- ▶ Don't invent proprietary extensions – technology trap
- ▶ Possess every area of tehcnology you are integrating
  - to avoid being mercy of third parties
- ▶ Evaluate and test run every tehcnology you are about to use
  - recruit qualified people already familiar with it
  - integrate and run and ASSESS
- ▶ Apply the tehcnology according to the architecture
- ▶ Technology is an enabler!



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## Technology iobox uses

- ▶ Basic Programming Technologies:  
Java, J2EE, Java Beans, 3-tier architecture
- ▶ Supported Network Technologies  
Web, SMS, WAP, GPRS
- ▶ Publishing Tehnologies  
XML/XSL, WML, HTML, LHTML
- ▶ Technology Partners
  - Oracle - database,
  - BEA - middleware,
  - HP - networking,
  - Sun - solaris,
  - Sun - Servers/Clusters



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## Summary of Key Elements

- ▶ Small groups - defined handovers - simple processes
- ▶ In depended missions - fully responsible
- ▶ Implement only Leading Edge, others subcontracting, buy
- ▶ Keep people motivated - provide job rotation, challenges
- ▶ Implement on well defined APIs and industry standards
- ▶ Continuous evaluation of new technologies
- ▶ Rapid prototyping

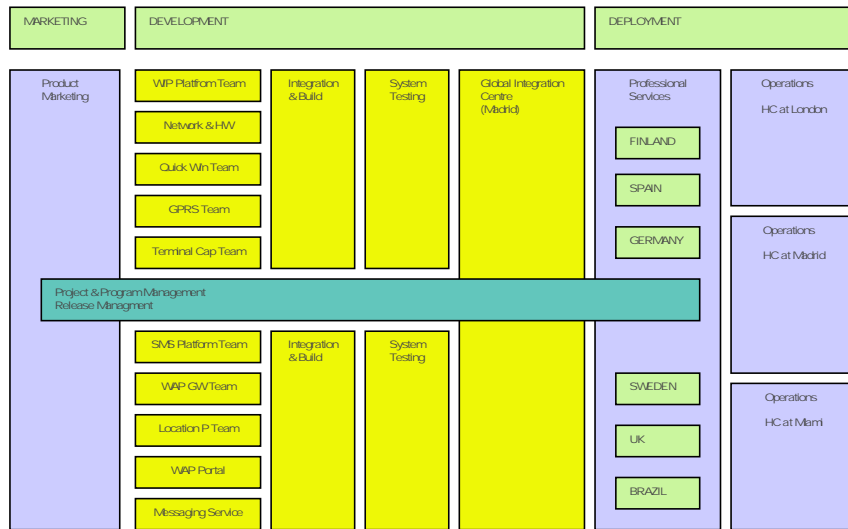


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## Operative Organisation - now



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## Thank You!

Nowidbox continues its story as part of TerraMobile

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