

EXPERIENCE & DIGITALISATION

REDEFINING STORYTELLING, COMMERCE AND MUSIC

with new immersive ways to watch, shop, read and listen

EXPERIENCE



astro
REWARDS
Exclusively for ASTRO customers



We continue to reward customers through exclusive privileges and offers via Astro Rewards

The emergence of faster connectivity and demand for deeper personalisation of content provides opportunities to engage, interact and better understand customers. Throughout FY19, we continued to enhance and simplify customer experience across every touchpoint with the goal of designing a delightful customer journey.

Digitalising customer care

In FY19, we placed a strong focus on improving our existing self-serve channels to provide customers with the flexibility to manage their subscriptions at their fingertips.

Having previously integrated the payment gateway into our Channel 200, the on-screen self-service platform for Pay-TV and NJOI customers, we continue to upgrade payment functionalities

across other parts of our value chain. This year, we added payment capabilities to our MyAstro mobile app, offering our customers the convenience of managing their subscription and bills in a hassle-free manner. With the revamp of MyAstro, customers can now purchase à la carte channels and packages, and settle their bills using the app, thus streamlining the payment process. Meanwhile, our chatbot is now able to facilitate transactions including bill payment and NJOI prepaid credit top-up, going beyond providing general support and service.

In line with our focus on sustainability, we continue to actively promote paperless billing through our Greenleaf Project. Customers can opt for e-bills via email and SMS free-of-charge, or physical bills at a RM3 fee. As a result, 50% of our Pay-TV customers are now on e-billing, a six-percentage point increase year-on-year.

The 2018 FIFA World Cup presented Astro with an opportunity to showcase our omnichannel capabilities in serving customers. Through an array of contact touchpoints, ranging from our on-screen self-service Channel 200 to our customer call centres, customers were able to simplify and fast-track their subscription journey for event passes. Additionally, to cater to tech-savvy football fans, the Stadium Astro VR app was unveiled, allowing our customers to watch all matches live with a 180° VR view. Whether with a VR headset or a standalone smartphone, our Sports Pack and World Cup pass subscribers were able to customise their own camera angles of the match, giving viewers the chance to experience an adrenaline rush watching the game in super slow motion and from an aerial view. Encouragingly, our VR app recorded 145,000 engagement sessions, demonstrating customers' interest in this interactive and immersive sports viewing experience. This was our best World Cup ever, with over 11.6 million unique viewers watching on TV, up 40% from 2014, and 1.7 million streaming digitally through our apps. In total, 87% of Malaysians watched the 2018 World Cup on Astro TV channels.

Rewarding customer loyalty

Astro's market position as Malaysia's preferred content provider would not be possible without our customers' loyal support. As a way of thanking our customers, we continued to enhance Astro Circle, our loyalty programme.

In FY19, over 1.2 million participants took part in Astro Circle's engagement sessions, ranging from points redemption and contests to bespoke events and lifestyle privileges, a 20% increase year-on-year. Our attractive offerings include the redemption of bill rebates, alongside Astro First and Astro Best titles, and festive-exclusive merchandise for Chinese New Year and Hari Raya. Tickets to major events, including sold-out concerts by Jacky Cheung, Mariah Carey and K-Pop groups like Wanna One and WINNER were major draws, along with discounts on entry tickets to Legoland and Hello Kitty & Thomas Town theme parks in Johor.

Throughout the year, we also introduced new exclusive events for different target segments leveraging thematic content such as the World Cup, where we held viewing parties and sponsored lucky participants to Russia, as well as experiences designed to cater to differing personal interests, such as Specialty Coffee Barista and Parent-Child Baking workshops.

FY20 will see the introduction of Astro Rewards, a new programme that will enable our Pay-TV customers to enjoy a variety of exclusive rewards and privileges at participating merchants and stores. In conjunction with the 2019 Chinese New Year celebrations, Astro Rewards campaigns were launched featuring financial and retail offers. We have since included offers on smartphones, as well as concert tickets for Jason Mraz, K-Pop band Super Junior, Leon Lai and Hins Cheung. We will continue to foster strategic partnerships with key merchants to deliver more exciting rewards to our customers.



Our VR app offered an immersive World Cup viewing experience for football fans

DIGITALISATION



Astro has progressed well in our digital transformation journey, having concluded the second year of our three-year partnership with AWS. With the foundations for becoming a cloud and mobile-first company now firmly established, Team Astro is working in an innovative and iterative manner to delight customers by leveraging contemporary and emerging technologies.

Digital transformation goes beyond digitalising organisational processes and adopting cutting-edge technologies, it also encompasses cultivating a change in mindset and culture to drive workplace transformation.



PEOPLE

Cross-team structures and industry-leading training empower our people to better collaborate in shaping the future of Astro by constantly aligning customers' needs with agile practices.



CULTURE

By changing our mindset and dispelling preconceived notions that perfect ideas require large one-off investments, to one rooted in business agility where ideas can be democratised via small iterative processes for fast go-to-market improvements, we are able to quickly adapt to customers' changing expectations.



TECHNOLOGY

With technology as an enabler, we are enhancing asset efficiency and automating processes by embracing cloud, analytics, and machine learning ("ML").

PEOPLE

Cross-functional teams and scaling digital talents

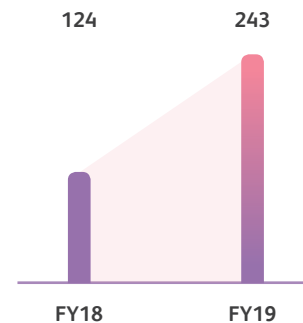
Working closely with AWS, Astro piloted the restructuring of selected teams into customer-centric cross-functional teams to remove silos and cultivate an agile and innovative culture driven by iterative improvements and rapid experimentation through prototyping.

The Cloud COE is one of our first cross-functional teams that was established to manage and oversee cloud products and services, ensuring cloud best practices are adopted across the organisation. Since its setup in May 2018, we have recorded a reduction in time-to-market of new products and features, improvements in applications' stability, enhancements in security compliance and a reduction in overall cost-to-serve. In FY20, we will continue to scale this initiative to teams across Astro.

In parallel, Astro is building a pool of digital talents with the necessary capabilities to design, build, operate and optimise cloud and emerging technologies for faster time-to-market. We are equipping digital talents with the necessary technical skills to drive our digital transformation. In FY19, more than 200 professionals and specialists across different technology areas such as cloud, data analytics, DevOps and cyber security were trained under the CTP

programme. Through this initiative, we have developed a strong pool of AWS certified architects, developers, system engineers and scrum masters to help lay a strong foundation for Astro to operate in the cloud, with documented standards, quality assurance and automation. As one of the largest users of public cloud services in Malaysia, these initiatives are essential to ensure we continue to operate in an optimised and efficient manner.

No. of CTP skill sets trained



Astro is building a pool of innovators via our CTP and CIP programmes



CULTURE

Innovation to compound customer value

In FY19, Astro continued to establish support mechanisms to nurture and manage ideas to propel the organisation innovatively using design thinking and lean methods. The CIP training has been transitioned from being conducted by AWS to being internally led by Astro's innovation champions, with more than 300 talents completing CIP Levels One and Two in FY19 under the guidance of seven Astro trainers. CIP Level One focuses on innovation frameworks and tools whereas Level Two emphasises incubation of qualified ideas with executive sponsorship. This enables us to experiment and validate potentially viable ideas and make prompt decisions to shelve unsuccessful projects at an early stage, thus avoiding unnecessary costs.

A robust external ecosystem was established to contribute a pipeline of ideas and expose Team Astro to new frontiers. Our talents excelled at AWS hackathon events by developing prototypes of automated football highlights and subtitling. Having won first place at AWS Hackdays Malaysia, we emerged second runner-up in the grand finale of AWS Hackdays 2018, the biggest offline hackathon in Southeast Asia which was held in Jakarta in September 2018. We also teamed up with one of our partners to organise a hackathon event, leveraging their extensive global employee network and expertise to generate ideas to deliver better products and services to Astro's customers. Driven by a culture of innovation, management teams across Astro business units assembled to reimagine our business and services in the ANT Workshop series.

Championing sustainability through digitalisation

We are streamlining processes to improve productivity through the adoption of digital tools in areas including human capital management, IT service solutions, content management, and customer relationship management. To encourage customers to switch to e-billing, we introduced a RM3 fee for each paper statement issued since June 2018, in line with our commitment to go digital and deliver a fast and convenient billing experience to our customers while reducing paper waste.

In championing equal access to quality education, we collaborated with local media and telco partners to launch JomStudi – a digital learning platform aggregating quality educational material for students. Astro's educational content is made available on the JomStudi platform and is accessible to students including those in remote areas, hence reducing the need for printed materials.



Astro's educational content is easily accessible to students via the JomStudi platform

The ANT Workshop series: Cross-organisational workshops to reimagine our business

We conducted a series of ANT Workshops in FY19 to ensure Astro's priority areas are aligned to the needs of customers. Team Astro was asked to reimagine business models, rethink the way we serve customers, and change fundamental business rules to augment customer value.

"We picked the humble ant for its qualities of being great team players, efficient and hardworking. Despite its size, the ant is able to conquer bigger predators through collaborative efforts and perseverance. Team Astro must be like ants in the new borderless world, small yet immensely powerful when we work as one," emphasised Astro's then CEO Designate, Henry Tan.

Intentionally introducing talents from different parts of the organisation to look at priority areas and opportunities, the workshops were orchestrated using Amazon's working-backward methodology and structured with leading standard of innovation activities to spur debates, ideation, and feedback from various lenses, especially the customers'. Every team had an assigned customer role – an individual whose task was to probe and challenge thinking.

Insights garnered from the workshop were taken forward by business teams to test and incorporate as strategies. Ideas to shift business enablement have since been put into practice, including a revised group annual planning process that promotes cross-organisational visibility and support in achieving common goals. We are confident that the resulting customer-first initiatives will deliver positive experiences across Astro's ecosystem, allowing us to capture adjacent opportunities within the households we serve.



A series of ANT Workshops were held in FY19 to align priority areas to customer needs



TECHNOLOGY

Magnifying customer insights and business efficiencies through ML

Acceleration into cloud-based services has helped us overcome capacity limitations inherent in on-premise IT infrastructure while reducing our IT infrastructure footprint and maintenance costs. The flexibility of cloud solutions allows us to shift from a capital-intensive model to one which is asset light and pay-as-you-go, enabling us to harness emerging technologies available on cloud to continue strengthening our core business.

In FY19, we enhanced business efficiencies and insights through the use of data analytics to further automate processes and support key business goals such as personalisation, upselling, retention and cross-selling.

We started tapping into new opportunities, leveraging on emerging technologies such as ML, computer vision and Natural Language Processing (“NLP”) to enhance content search and recommendations for customers. We further digitalised through Robotic Process Automation (“RPA”) to automate manual tasks and boost work efficiencies.



Astro won third place in the grand finale of AWS Hackdays 2018, the biggest offline hackathon in Southeast Asia

Highlights of our FY19 digitalisation accomplishments

Content acquisition, processing & recommendation

To unlock the value of our extensive in-house content library, we initiated the migration of our core content archives comprising over 500,000 hours of content into the cloud. By integrating automation capabilities into our core operations, we shaved content turnaround time from our archives by half, thus increasing content delivery efficiency. We also started exploring content acquisition with immediate simultaneous review capability, even at remote production locations, to help us deliver the right content faster based on a customer's profile. Combining analytics with ML, we updated the content recommendations from tag-based to AI-based for some of our digital brands, which has contributed to a significant increase in the click-through rate as well as average page views.

Efforts to localise our content include deployment of a cloud-based subtitle automation platform utilising deep neural machine translation which can double our subtitle production efficiency by halving the time required to generate local language subtitles compared to purely manual endeavours.

With unified metadata publishing capabilities in the cloud, connections were established between our assets which enabled quick recommendations of more personalised content to our viewers. Our cloud-based AI and RPA also enhanced our content processing abilities by automating content scheduling and ensuring relevant content information is displayed to viewers in a timely manner.

Sales conversion

We integrated our sales platforms and optimised our end-to-end process to allow for better conversions from the point when leads are received to order creation, hence reducing redundancies and the need for multiple data entry.

Additionally, our call centre system has been enhanced to effectively flag out potential sales leads from the respective omnichannel sales team in a shorter amount of time to further nurture leads, resulting in higher conversions. We also applied predictive analytics to drive take-up rates of sales campaigns across the board.

Customer care

Through progressive digitalisation of our call centres, we enhanced our capabilities with technologies that include digital interactive voice response while further driving customer engagement and experience through chatbot, social media and self-serve portals.

Technical operations

To improve the operational resilience and stability of core customer relationship management and billing systems, next-generation monitoring capabilities were introduced utilising trend analysis and analytics to predict and pre-empt possible service disruptions, resulting in a dramatic reduction in system outages since its introduction.

The use of AI and NLP technology has also allowed for automation of service requests received by the technical operations service desk, reducing resolution time of high-frequency technical requests from an average of 48 hours to under an hour, and leading to an improvement in overall customer experience.