

# EXXONMOBIL: MERGING TECHNOLOGY AND CROSS-FUNCTIONAL SKILLS TO CREATE MORE VALUE

- In addition to upstream oil and gas production operations carried out by ExxonMobil Exploration and Production Malaysia Inc., ExxonMobil's presence in Malaysia also includes the extensive global IT and engineering support activities of the Kuala Lumpur Business Support Centre Malaysia Sdn Bhd (KLBSC), and marketing of chemical products within Malaysia under ExxonMobil Chemical Malaysia Sdn Bhd.
- KLBSC is a major IT support organisation, providing services globally to ExxonMobil, ranging from operational functions to engineering, architecture, business intelligence and analytics.
- KLBSC's latest offering, the ExxonMobil IT Operations Centre (EOC), emphasises cross-functional IT support skills, where the team has knowledge of both Application and Infrastructure areas.
- ExxonMobil is also working to implement predictive analytics in the EOC, where their dashboards will interpret the data and churn out predictions on incident occurrences long before they can happen.
- To date, the EOC has handled almost 300 major IT incidents and contributed to an average of 120 proactive reliability observations per month.

**E**xxonMobil is a multinational oil and gas company that has been in Malaysia since 1893. From its early beginnings marketing petroleum products, ExxonMobil's business presence has grown over more than a century to include upstream exploration and production of oil and gas; IT services and engineering and technical support for ExxonMobil's upstream, downstream and chemical facilities worldwide; and marketing of specialty chemical products.

Functioning as the main IT support service for ExxonMobil affiliates worldwide, the IT Infrastructure in KLBSC plays a pivotal role in ExxonMobil's global operations. KLBSC, which was



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first set up in March 2004 and attained Multimedia Super Corridor status five months later, is one of eight business support centres established by ExxonMobil around the world. Since its inception, it has set its focus on knowledge-intensive sectors such as engineering, architecture, business intelligence and analytics. KLBSC is a bustling IT hub serving and tending to the technology-related needs of more than 100,000 users in ExxonMobil's global business operations.

KLBSC's success as ExxonMobil's major IT Infrastructure support organisation can be attributed to a number of factors – a pool of outstanding home-grown talent that is able to deliver, an Agile working culture which empowers teams to quickly assess and adapt their responses during issue resolution or project management, and a cost-effective location with reliable infrastructure.

## Maintaining Business Continuity

In 2017, KLBSC set its sights on a new service offering called ExxonMobil IT Operations Centre (EOC), a centre focused on service reliability and incident management. Of the eight service hubs within ExxonMobil's global operations, KLBSC was one of only three hubs selected to perform this function, a demonstration of ExxonMobil's trust in its Malaysian affiliate. The main value proposition for EOC is to protect business productivity and value by minimising business impact – including safety and productivity – due to unplanned IT downtime events.

With business continuity being a key focus, major activities include monitoring to prevent or eliminate incident occurrences, and providing rapid resolution to ensure they do not escalate and become major incidents. Making continuous improvements to optimise delivery and learning from past incidents also play a large part in the function of EOC, as having the foresight to catch a problem before it unravels can save precious time and resources for the business.

To date, EOC has handled almost 300 major IT incidents and contributed to an average of 120 proactive reliability observations per month. One of the key reliability metrics for the EOC is Mean Time To Restore (MTTR) and the IT organisation has started to appreciate the downward trend observed starting from 2017 to date, with a 45 percent annual reduction in MTTR.

As the EOC grows, it also continues to evolve its technology. Right now, EOC is pursuing data analytics to slice through the myriad of global data in its collection, and to identify the most pressing incidents. In addition to data analytics, EOC is implementing predictive analytics in their monitoring strategy, so in the future, their dashboards will be able to interpret the data and help predict whether an incident is going to happen long before it occurs.

## Impacting the Business

At ExxonMobil, they believe technology is the X factor that can radically change the game and create value. As the company's major IT hub in the Asia Pacific region,



ExxonMobil IT Operations Center's main role is to protect business productivity and value by minimising business impact, including safety and productivity, due to unplanned IT downtime events.

Being cross-functional may seem like an obvious path to growth, but due to the complexity that Application and Infrastructure pose as singular entities, adopting cross-functional skillsets takes time. The plethora of skills required to perform as a hybrid of two different operations may be challenging, especially to newer talent. EOC is looking to nurture individuals to allow them to understand both the business and IT components by placing them into roles that will help them grow.

### Developing Hybrid Skills

KLBCS sees leveraging individuals with cross-functional skills as the competitive advantage for EOC, versus the more historical approach of using talents with a singular skillset. The cross-functional skills allow staff greater flexibility to find solutions to the myriad of challenges the EOC team face every day. Starting with the base talents from Application and Infrastructure areas, EOC plans to further develop more staff with hybrid skills, so the EOC can manage its cross functional portfolio and grow its technical leadership, which are key to championing continuous service improvements.

The high quality of ExxonMobil's Malaysian talent has a large part to play in the rapid growth of KLBCS, and its contribution to ExxonMobil's growing business worldwide is apparent. The vast majority of ExxonMobil's workforce across all its businesses in Malaysia are local, charting at 98 percent, while EOC is staffed almost entirely by local talent. Over the past few years, KLBCS has ramped up its hiring of local talent to meet the company's increasing demand for more specialised, differentiating technical skill sets. ExxonMobil is confident that KLBCS will continue to deliver world-class IT solutions to help our global business for many years to come.

KLBCS plays a significant role in providing a secure and reliable platform for ExxonMobil's global business operations, which are heavily technology-dependent.

Within ExxonMobil, KLBCS is the only business support centre co-located with an upstream business affiliate, and it has used this to its advantage to develop its resource base. Employees have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and understanding of business needs through business assignments, enabling them to better deliver value-added solutions and to enhance business productivity.

### The Mindset Difference

The rapid growth and evolution of ExxonMobil's KLBCS since its establishment in 2004 has to be credited to its people, particularly the strong infrastructure talent pool and their Agile working culture. Within ExxonMobil's IT organisation, its global approach to problem-solving empowers teams to come up with creative solutions to address tasks, allowing for flexibility in execution, while still maintaining proper

accountability by team members.

This Agile working culture has been crucial to KLBCS's ability to upgrade its service offerings and to develop the IT infrastructure skills and in-country applications support teams necessary to be selected to host the EOC for the Asia Pacific region.

Though the team's broad mindset and the company's Agile working culture played a significant role in the quick ramp-up, it is also the team's cross-functional skills that have helped EOC to grow rapidly since it was set up in 2017.

### Importance of Cross-Functional Skills

In the past, heavy importance was placed on just providing infrastructure to the organisation - with focus being on server, storage, network and customer service - there is now more value in being 'cross-functional'. Being cross-functional means being able to understand both the Application and the Infrastructure services of the organisation.



The brilliant minds at ExxonMobil IT Operations Center.