Swisscom Mobile ID:
Enabling an Ecosystem for Secure Mobile Authentication

Executive Summary
Using a PKI-based, mobile signature secure encryption technology on the SIM card, Mobile ID combines smartcard level security with a sophisticated ease of use for customers wanting to transact across a wide range of industries, including online and mobile banking, insurance, pensions and HR processes, secure enterprise access, as well as government services (tax, social security, housing, healthcare and other government services).

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Within just a few months, Mobile ID has now reached a user-base of 25,000, with steadily increasing adoption rates of approximately 10% each month. Much of this success may be attributed to simplified processes for customers in obtaining and using the authentication solution. However, a large degree of the success is due to by Swisscom’s determination to develop the broader ecosystem of partners and relying parties to ensure a strong market for the uptake of Mobile ID.

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In early 2013, Switzerland’s leading operator, Swisscom, introduced a new product called Mobile ID, a fully managed strong authentication solution and a complete service package for enterprise and business, as well as individual users. Swisscom’s unique approach to the positioning of Mobile ID within Switzerland’s high security-conscious business community provides important lessons for the telecoms industry as it adopts and explores new trusted roles within the evolving digital economy.
“Developing the ecosystem” has been a core part of Swisscom’s Mobile ID strategy from the outset, recognising the long-term strategic benefits that come from being prepared to invest both time and resource to establishing partnerships across different sectors in the marketplace. By establishing a mutual partnership with well-known security software firm, AdNovum, Swisscom was able to immediately offer Mobile ID to a range of high profile enterprises, including some of Switzerland’s leading banks, HR system providers and management consulting firms.

Swisscom’s success in gaining rapid traction among users and business customers reveals key insights into the effective operationalisation and deployment of a managed secure authentication service as part of its core product offering.

In the early stages of product development, the Swisscom Mobile ID team set clear priorities for the development of Mobile ID as a tool for multiple industry sectors. Taking learnings from earlier mobile signature products in other markets, the team endeavoured to remove the complexity involved in the user registration and certificate management process, opting to produce a pure authentication service as a starting point for additional add-on services down the road.

In this way, Swisscom focused on the core capacities of the mobile telecoms industry in providing network based authentication through unique identifiers (MSISDN, mobile number), secure time stamping with PKI generated certificates, and provision of highly professionalised customer support – Swisscom’s area of expertise as a trusted consumer and enterprise brand.

As enterprise IT and security departments worldwide continue to grapple with “bring-your-own-device” challenges, Swisscom has successfully positioned itself as an integral part of the mobile security value chain and a trusted provider of personal data services.

This case study follows the story of Mobile ID and explores the key “success factors” that allowed Swisscom to further solidify its position as a trusted brand among customers and partners. Beginning with the operator’s pioneering strategy and rationale for a new identity product, the study explores the deliberate decisions taken by the Swisscom product team to ensure smooth integration, deployment and delivery of a product that has maintained a persistent level of uptake and satisfaction among users to date.

Mobile ID is the winner of numerous security and consumer awards, including the Mobile Security category of the European Identity Award in April 2013.