MOVING BUSY CALL CENTRES TO THE CLOUD

How we helped one major transport company achieve a step change in customer service

THE CLIENT

Our client is a long-established ferry company that provide a passenger service. It now operates a variety of routes and carries over 1 million passengers, 200,000 passenger vehicles and over 100,000 freight vehicles each year. Today its fleet includes a fast car ferry, a freight-only vessel, a conventional car, passenger and freight ship and a high-speed trimaran.

BACKGROUND AND CHALLENGES

The company has two call centres. One caters for enquiries relating to UK services. For some years, the operator had been struggling with its outdated call centre telephony systems.

The shortcomings of the call centres were particularly pronounced during periods of travel disruption, when bad weather or other events affect crossings. There is usually a major spike in telephone enquiries at these times, but the system relied on the right number of staff physically being in the call centres – it wasn't possible for them to handle calls from home. If extreme conditions prevented staff from making it to the call centres, then the company's problems quickly escalated.

Just as bad for customer service, the telephone system could only cope with a certain number of calls. If demand was high, many people couldn't even get through to be placed in a call-waiting queue.
In addition to these problems, the telephone system wasn't well integrated with the company's wider IT systems. This meant the operator didn't have all of its callers' data in one place, resulting in a poor customer experience and lost marketing and sales opportunities. The system wasn't integrated with email or webchat either, adding further obstacles to good customer service.

Taken together, all of these issues resulted in call centres that were inefficient, lost business unnecessarily and were expensive to run.

FINDING THE RIGHT SOLUTION

The client turned to Intergence to help solve its call centre issues. We were asked to implement a solution, that had no limit on the number of calls it could handle, was integrated with other company IT systems and could cope with periods of high demand. The work would also need to be part of a wider digital transformation strategy, which Intergence was driving on behalf of the client.

To solve these problems and many more, we recommended that the client move to a cloud-based system, called Five9. Five9 is one of the world's leading call-centre software packages and quick to install. We usually get a service like this up and running for our clients in less than 10 days, so operators can quickly start taking calls.

It's feature-rich and integrates voice, web-chat and email on the same platform. Large numbers of users can use the system via their web browser from any location, making it easy for staff to work from home – and thus be on hand during periods of peak demand or during crises such as COVID-19.

The software also offers call recording, which is helpful to the company for training purposes and for monitoring evidence of potentially fraudulent activity. It is also fully integrated with the traditional telephone systems used by non-call-centre staff across the rest of the organisation – so transferring calls to appropriate colleagues isn't a problem.

The biggest source of potential, however, comes from the single view of the customer. It is fully integrated with the company's CRM, Microsoft Dynamics, allowing call centre agents to better understand customer enquiries, solve their issues faster and make targeted recommendations.

The move to the contact centre as a service solution has resulted in other major benefits for the ferry operator. It now has an integrated system that doesn't suffer from complex licensing requirements. Because Intergence manages the system, the company can focus its resources on using it to maximum effect.

This has resulted in a step change in the quality of customer service and allowed them to continue serving throughout COVID-19. The company also has no more missed calls and real-time statistics allow it to see when others abandon, which they can now do something about. Managers can also see exactly what call operators are doing during a day, making it easier to spot problems and remedy them.

NEXT STEPS

The move to contact service as a service has resulted in immediate benefits for our client and enabled them to work remotely and continue serving throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The system also has the potential to open more opportunities in the future. Our client has the ability to introduce robotics and machine learning to streamline the service still further. Because the system offers webchat and email integration, there's huge potential for encouraging customers to shift channels – resulting in savings and fewer voice calls. Best of all, having a single view of each customer will allow our client to better meet their needs and target services and offers according to their interests and travel history.

OMNI CHANNEL

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