

Key results

- A very flexible, self-administered system that fully utilised Voicentre's inbound resources
- Full integration with 'in-house' customer management system and Microsoft Outlook
- A significant increase in managed call volumes
- A "future proofed" solution that could meet the aggressive growth plans of the business
- Installation cost was 30% less than the price of comparable system, but with more features
- Potential to offer remote or Home agent working in the future

What the customer says

"The critical success factor for our business is to offer a highly professional service at a price that is competitive with an off-shore operation. Quite simply, Swyx allows us to do this; we can optimise the utilisation of our agents so that they can work on multiple accounts and campaigns across both of our call centre locations. In addition the scripting system allows us to add either a new account or a new project for an existing account on the fly and have it up and running on the same day if necessary".

*Andrew Barclay,
Managing Director, Voicentre*

Background

Established in 1999 Voicentre is a part of the 1st Locate group of companies and provides outsourced call centre capacity to the utility sector. Voicentre handles over 400,000 calls per month on behalf of a number of prestigious clients including, Powergen, Scottish Power and Yorkshire Water. The company employs over 130 people from its locations in Leeds and Scarborough.

Challenge – poor agent utilisation, no flexibility, limited integration

The call centre services that Voicentre provides compete directly with those supplied by off-shore call centres in India and other locations such as South Africa. Voicentre recognised however, that most UK based utilities would prefer not to place its customer service operations off shore, if the service could be provided at a comparable cost in this country. In order to achieve such a competitive cost Voicentre knew that it needed to maximise its resources as efficiently as it possible. Andrew Barclay, Managing Director at Voicentre explains, "In order to

compete with off shore competitors we needed a system that would enable all our agents to answer any incoming call from any client customer, rather than have a group of agents being restricted to a single account. Without such a system we could have one group of agents so busy that they missed calls and another group sat redundant waiting for calls to come in."

He continues, "The process is complicated further by the fact that we are not a message taking bureau, our agents are very highly skilled in dealing and resolving our clients customers' billing and account problems. Therefore with each incoming call the agent also needs immediate, automated access to the caller's accounts details."

In order to solve this problem Voicentre initially installed a traditional, but sophisticated PBX from Alcatel, but unfortunately the system failed to live up to expectations, Barclay explains, "The Alcatel system had some very good features, but like most traditional systems it was far too rigid for our operation; it did not allow us the flexibility we needed to constantly modify and add new campaigns. Also there was some other deficiencies, such as



restrictions on hunt groups; it could not do skills based routing or even transfer some calls from podium to podium, in fact the shared agent efficiencies that we could achieve with the system were virtually non-existent. In addition some of the critical features that we required, such as advanced call routing and voice recording were only available at a significantly higher cost."

Voicentre took the brave step to write off this investment and find an alternative solution that could meet its business requirements.

Solution – A "pure" software based IP solution

Benefiting from Andrew Barclay's background in software, he felt that the most advantageous solution for the company would be one that was "open" so that it could be integrated into the company's existing customer management system. He explains, "We realised that a converged solution based on IP was the only way that we could meet our operational requirements. After taking a long look at what was available on the market, Swyx were the only company that offered a "pure" software based solution that did not rely on black box hardware and a telecommunications engineer to support it. The beauty of Swyx is that it runs on a server the same as any other IP application; this means we can support and control the system ourselves without being held to ransom by a third party".

He continues, "Another major benefit of Swyx is that all the critical components are included with the basic package. Voice recording, advanced call routing and scripting, all vital to our wish list, were included at no extra cost. We estimated that when you include these features the Swyx system is more than two thirds cheaper than comparable systems we came across."

Results – More flexibility, more functionality, more choice

Barclay comments on the impact the Swyx solution has made, "The critical success factor for our business is to offer a highly professional service at a price that is competitive with an off-shore operation. Quite simply, Swyx allows us to do this. We can optimise the utilisation of our agents so that they can work on multiple accounts across both of our call centre locations. In addition the scripting system allows us to add either a new account or a new project for an existing account on the fly and have it up and running on the same day if necessary. The level of flexibility Swyx provides means that we can focus our efforts purely on core business issues – the technology enhances rather than limits our development plans".

Future – More opportunities, more growth

Voicentre expect to double the size of it operation over the next two years and possibly look at other options to increase its capacity using the Swyx system, Barclay concludes, "Swyx has really cracked the challenge of remote telephone access, and this gives us the opportunity to look at home workers as a future development. There are other issues, such as government legislation that the company may have to overcome, but from a technology perspective we already have it".