

Tuition Management Systems

Replacing its ACD with the IP-based Intervoice Contact Center gives TMS the edge to compete.

BUSINESS OBJECTIVES:

- *Delivering a consistent level of service and access across phone, email, and web without dramatically increasing fixed costs*

SOLUTION:

- *Support enhanced service initiatives by migrating from an ACD to the IP-based Intervoice Contact Center to provide a better customer experience through consistent delivery of education payment solutions across multiple channels, with phone, email, and chat contacts in a single queue with a single agent interface*

RESULTS:

- *Fewer agents handle more customers*
- *Seasonal labor requirements reduced by 10 percent*
- *Improved customer experience across multiple channels*
- *Call durations reduced by 45 seconds*
- *New services enabled, including consolidated reporting, web collaboration, deferred response, and IVR*
- *New labor options, such as at-home agents*

“Built-in CTI has reduced each phone call by about 45 seconds. When you’re talking about 400,000 calls, that will make a big difference in our telecommunication costs.”

Keith Roberts
Director of IT
Total Management Systems

More and more graduating college students have looming debt burdens, driven by the escalating cost of higher education and the increasing availability of student loans and grants. Managing tuition payment plans is a challenge for university administrative staffs.

Increasingly, they turn for support to Tuition Management Systems (TMS), who can serve both their interests and the interests of their students. For its part, TMS has chosen to partner with Intervoice to help it remain competitive. Intervoice has helped TMS put a new face on its customer-facing operations and offer new value to the markets it serves.

Emerging Market Needs Create Opportunity for the TMS Business Model

TMS has been in business since 1985. This year it expects to help more than 250,000 families make tuition payment decisions and manage nearly \$1.5 billion for 700 schools, colleges, and universities in 50 states.

To enable a better customer experience without dramatic increases in operating costs, an IP-based contact center system began looking very attractive.

Delivering seamless education payment services requires investments in people, processes, and technology. Gone are the days when schools simply chose between outsourcing education payment services or managing them internally. Now, the best processes emerge from a blend of both on-and off-campus resources and expertise.

Working with its member schools, TMS counsels students on a “proven path” to getting the bill paid. They leverage best-in-class partners for the delivery of multiple options and integrated solutions. They work both sides of the tuition equation: they counsel students about how to minimize their debt burdens, sometimes even helping them find lenders; and they help schools with billing and payment processing.

Schools, by outsourcing these services, have better collection rates, more even cash flows, and—ultimately—higher student recruitment and retention rates. The result of this “proven path” is improved service delivered to the student, reduced costs and workload for the school administrator, improved cash flow for the school, and better recruitment and retention. “We asked

ourselves, how do we deliver a consistent level of service across multiple communication channels, such as phone, email, and web, to students and their families without dramatically increasing our fixed costs?” said Keith Roberts, TMS director of IT. “We were running our contact center with a generic Nortel ACD setup, processing 300 emails daily through an alias on Lotus Notes, and holding web chat sessions on an altogether different platform.”

To enable a better customer experience without dramatic increases in operating costs, an IP-based contact center system began looking very attractive. It would allow TMS to provide a consistent delivery of education payment solutions across multiple channels. As Roberts explains, “Not only would an IP-based system allow us to provide a better customer experience but, at the same time, we would gain better agent productivity, better insight from management, and better integration with our customer relationship management systems.”

Intervoice Sets the Standard for Vendor Selection

And that's where Intervoice came in. After a thorough competitive review of technology to support its new initiatives, TMS selected the IP-based Intervoice Contact Center™.

"We were floored by how smoothly everything worked together, what you could do, and what you could configure—including screen pops," Roberts said. "It fed our questions to other vendors: 'Can you do this, this, and this?' The answer to most of them was 'yes,' with a professional services engagement. Everything outside basic install and setup was professional services. Then you're paying for a hybrid product that is not mature by any means. And they hadn't figured out how to provide a single interface for all these applications."

Intervoice Contact Center Streamlines the Family Sales Channel

Families make inquiries, enroll for TMS services, and check their account status via the phone, email, and the web. The Intervoice Desktop provides a single, consistent interface that delivers a unified view of voice, email, and web contacts to TMS agents with a set of universal tools for handling them,

including a softphone on the desktop.

Roberts explained, "Agents like the system because it makes their job easier, and the system tells them what kind of contact is coming up next.

Managers like the flexibility and control the system gives them to monitor calls, barge in, record calls, and exchange messages with agents through the system—without putting customers on hold." Integration of the Intervoice Contact Center with an IVR further streamlines operations, today by automating payment processes and, soon, by allowing callers to change demographic information and adjust budget contracts through the system.

Intervoice Contact Center Facilitates New Service Offerings

Customer research conducted last fall was loud and clear: customers like to talk to the same agents. TMS will use the database lookup capabilities of the Intervoice Contact Center to launch a new service called My EPC (my education payment counselor) that matches account numbers with specific agents and agent groups to promote relationship building. On the school side, TMS now offers outbound calling services to help them with marketing campaigns.

World Headquarters**Intervoice, Inc.**

17811 Waterview Parkway
Dallas, TX 75252

(US) 800.700.0122

(Int) 1 972.454.8000

International Headquarters**Intervoice Limited**

50 Park Road
Gatley, Cheshire UK
SK8 4HZ

+44 (0) 161 495 1000

Offices worldwide, including California, Florida, Sao Paolo, Dubai, South Africa, Singapore, Ireland, Germany, The Netherlands and Switzerland.

About Intervoice

Intervoice is a world leader in unified communications, powering millions of customer interactions every day. Since 1983, our standards-based IVR/voice portal and IP Contact Center solutions have ignited customer loyalty for the world's leading banks, communications companies, healthcare institutions, utilities and government entities. Our proven IMS-ready multimedia messaging, call completion and payment solutions fuel revenue growth for the world's leading service providers.

With more than 5,000 customers in 75 countries and an extensive channel partner ecosystem, we have a proven track record of helping organizations meet or exceed their business and customer service goals. How can Intervoice help you? Visit www.intervoice.com for information.

