

Equifax Boosts Call Centre Growth and Morale



As a growing company, Equifax Card Solutions, specialists in card processing for retail banking and loans processing companies, expected to exceed the capacity of its customer call centre, unless a more efficient way of working could be implemented. Handling more than 1.5 million calls a year, Equifax's customer services department was dealing with calls ranging from simple, general transactions to the more complex customer issues. The growth of Equifax meant that, in the near future, it would either have to grow staffing levels and move to a new building, or maintain the existing levels, but manage calls more efficiently. To ensure Equifax's level of service was maintained whilst allowing the highly trained call centre staff to best use their skills set, a sophisticated automated solution was required. The solution chosen was provided by Edify, a global leader in multi-channel customer interaction solutions. Edify and its partner, AGS, implemented Edify's voice self-service application.

Equifax Card Solutions processes high volumes of calls to its customer services department. With more than 150 operators in its Customer Service centre and more than 200 staff working over two floors, Equifax was outgrowing its building. The number of calls received was also growing and capacity had been reached both physically and in terms of capability. At the same time, the customer service representatives were feeling frustrated. They are skilled people, well trained to add value to Equifax' service, but a lot of their time was taken up with dealing with recurring queries and transactions that had become monotonous and mundane. It was evident that efficiency and customer service would be jeopardized if a more efficient business solution was not found.

An important factor in the choice of solution was not only to increase Equifax's operational effectiveness, but to offer an enhanced service for clients and users. The solution needed to be flexible enough to meet changing technological demands whilst complementing existing systems and practices within the organization. Future growth was anticipated so the system needed to be scalable to enable it to incorporate multiple communication channels of the present and future such as speech recognition, speaker verification, email, Internet, text to speech, and WAP technology.

It was also important that implementation of the system did not impinge on the performance of the mainframe systems, thereby reducing efficiency. It needed to be integrated seamlessly with existing platforms as well as third-party systems such as telephony, mainframe, server, and other financial applications.

AGS worked closely with Equifax's IT team to conduct a full evaluation of Equifax's requirements, resulting in the development of a solution which unified, in a single platform, all the elements required to effectively handle a range of customer enquires and to improve contact.

Analysis was carried out to identify priorities in terms of calls that could be automated and that would not necessarily benefit from operator assistance. Typically, these included debit payments, balance enquires, requests for copies of statements, and direct debit mandates. By involving employees at all levels of the organization, other applications were identified such as streamlining instant credit processing when applying for a retail store card and the fax ordering of stationery items needed by stores.

As each area was identified, workshops were set up to develop the process of the system, working out the flow of the call. This was tested throughout and AGS was on site to identify any problem areas and rectify them. It took only eight weeks from outline design of the system to the first phase going live and, since then, around 35% of cardholder calls have been handled by the new telephone system. Currently the system handles debit card payments, balance enquires, changes to personal details, request for statements, the initial information for processing an application, and orders for stationery.

Edify has a comprehensive reporting capability so that Equifax is also able to analyze calls, the volume processed, the way in which customers navigate around the system, and why they may have been transferred to an operator. The statistics also give a valuable picture of trends in customer behavior, enabling planning for the future to be carried out with greater confidence.

In terms of achieving Equifax's initial aims, the system has improved efficiency — the volume of calls has increased, but the call times have been reduced by an average of 31 seconds. There has also been a significant reduction in headcount — 10% fewer people have been recruited than anticipated six months ago and staff turnover has been reduced to represent an equivalent saving of 10 to 12 full-time employees. Agents are also making better use of their training and by providing added value to customers, there is far greater job satisfaction.

Highlights

Company:

Equifax Card Solutions, UK

Market Segment:

Consumer and Commercial credit information and card processing services

Edify Solution:

Edify Voice Self-Service

- Efficient management of telephone calls
- Seamless integration to existing systems
- Automation of calls using voice self-service to handle debit card payments, balance enquires, personal details updates, statement requests, application processing, and stationery ordering

Business Benefits:

- Improved efficiency
- 31 second average reduction in call lengths
- 10% reduction in headcount
- Reduction in turnover representing a saving of 10-12 full-time employees
- Great job satisfaction for agents

Edify Corporation

Corporate Headquarters

2840 San Tomas Expressway
Santa Clara, CA 95051 USA

Phone: 1-800-944-0056 (US & Canada)
1-408-982-2000

Fax: 1-408-982-0777

Edify EMEA Ltd

Phone: +44 (0) 1628 850222

Edify Asia

Phone: +852 2806-5700

www.edify.com

