

O2 Celebrity Greetings

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Liz Lyon
Voice Marketing Manager
O2

Network operators are continually looking for ways to differentiate themselves, enhance the customer experience and increase average revenue per user. In a maturing market, creating offerings that satisfy all three aims requires innovative thinking and fast, flexible implementation. Successful projects must be sufficiently different from those already on offer and they also need to be delivered over an existing network, with minimal investment cost.

Lost Revenues

With the parameters established, O2 (formerly known as BT Cellnet) and Intervoice worked together to extend O2’s Voicemail 901 service (O2’s most popular voicemail service, also supplied by Intervoice). Many millions of O2 subscribers are signed up to the Voicemail 901 service but many (particularly prepay customers) choose not to use the voicemail facility and they do not create a personal voicemail greeting.

Operators lose revenues from callers who do not leave voicemail messages; from the call time it takes to leave a message, from the subscriber retrieving the message, and from the subsequent returned call. Research has shown that 85% of voicemail non-deposits are a result of poor or non-existent personal greetings.*

Users can personalise their mailbox by replacing a network standard or existing greeting with a prerecorded greeting from the service.

To turn this costly trend around, O2 and Intervoice developed a new Celebrity Greetings service, based on the Intervoice Messaging solution, that allows customers to use professionally recorded messaging from a range of impressionists and specially created characters.

The service, launched on 18th March 2002, is kept fresh and entertaining by regular updates (there are over 500 greetings currently in the O2 Celebrity Greeting gallery) to ensure the user experience is varied, and therefore increases the number of visits to the system.

By selecting a specific greeting from the Celebrity Greeting service, users can personalise their mailbox by replacing a network standard or existing greeting with a prerecorded greeting from the service.

Target Market

The Celebrity Greeting service is being targeted at the mainstream prepaid market. These customers are adventurous and want new and fun applications to personalise their phones.

Liz Lyon, O2's voice marketing manager and product owner for both Voicemail 901 and Celebrity Greetings, highlighted three benefits of the service: "Users will compete with each other on who has the best greeting and will therefore wish to refresh their greeting with the latest recording, much like ringtones."

"Also, customers are more likely to leave messages if there is a compelling reason to do so. Our research has shown that a caller is more likely to remain on the phone listening to a Bart Simpson recording than a standard clipped greeting of someone's mobile phone number. Slamdowns are something we want to avoid and Celebrity Greetings will help in reducing these."

Using the System Broadcast feature of the Voicemail 901 service, O2 was able to accurately target the most likely prospects among its millions of voicemail customers. This marketing strategy proved extremely effective, generating around 100,000 interested responses within just two weeks.

The service is available to any Voicemail 901 user by dialling a four-digit shortcode (4901). The use of a network shortcode to access Celebrity Greetings means that customers who would normally be restricted from the use of premium rate numbers, such as prepaid users, can now access the service. The 4901 call is charged at 60p per minute and the average call is less than 2.5 minutes. Any O2 customer can open a Voicemail 901 account by dialling 1750 from their mobile and following the instructions.

Conception to commercial delivery took less than 14 weeks, including integration with the Voicemail 901 platforms. The Celebrity Greeting service passes a file to the Voicemail 901 platform with the customer's details and the requested greeting. This information is used to dynamically update the customer's mailbox with the new chosen personal greeting.

This seamless, end-to-end service ensures the highest quality digital recordings are presented to anyone calling a mailbox with an O2 Celebrity Greeting.

Rapid ROI

Peter Rampling, vice president of value added services for O2 stated, "The Celebrity Greeting service is a good example of a value-added voice service that our customers understand, want and are willing to pay for. It is simple to market, makes use of existing network infrastructure and its success is easily demonstrable as real revenue. Independent market research carried out jointly with Intervoice clearly showed that there was a requirement from our customers for this type of product and we decided to act on it."

"Intervoice was chosen as our Celebrity Greetings partner because of their cost-effective Intervoice platform and their experience with managed service solutions. This allowed O2 to concentrate on delivering the correct content and user experience."

"We're very pleased with the success of the Voicemail 901 Celebrity Greetings service. It's proving to be a must-have offering among the target

market and, thanks to Intervoice's rapid implementation, ROI has been measured in weeks rather than months."

Intervoice, who is delivering the 12-month contract to supply O2 with the Celebrity Greeting as a managed service, believes that this is just one way that operators can generate additional revenue from existing GSM networks.

Future Services

Intervoice's Intervoice Messaging platform can enhance the attractiveness of a basic messaging service with features such as Celebrity Greetings, Call Return and speech control of voicemail accounts. Beyond voice messaging, Intervoice Messaging can be further extended to provide advanced messaging options such as mixed media and MMS. Only the Intervoice suite of services can provide a network operator with a single platform to provide all value added services, whether using current or next-generation technologies.

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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.

