



## Customer Profile

Accor Reservation Services

## Industry

Hotel and hospitality services

## Witness Systems Solutions

- eQuality Balance
- eQuality Evaluation
- Services: Performance Optimisation Workshop

## Region

Worldwide

## Locations

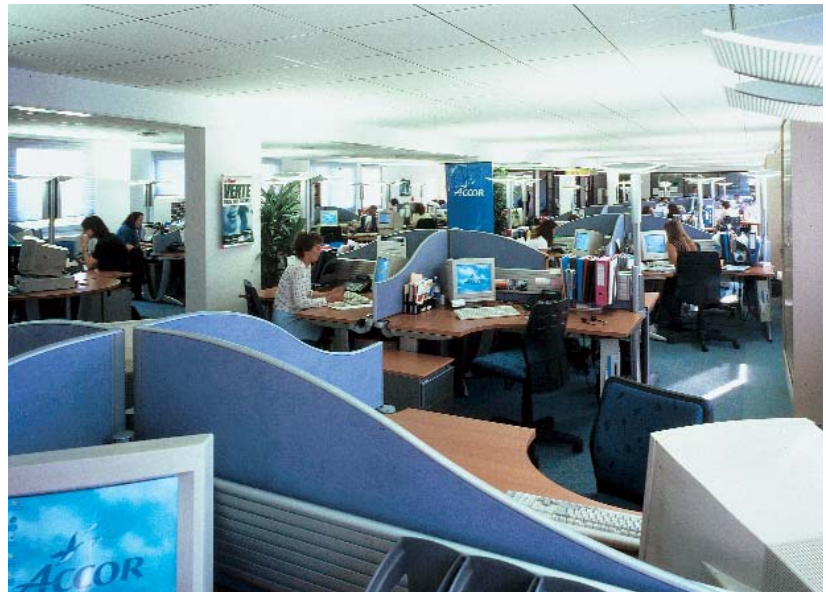
Sydney, Bangkok, London, Paris, Madrid, Columbus and Sao Paolo

## Number of agents

350 agents, 7 call centres

## Results

- Increased enquiry-to-booking conversion rate to 45% in 2004 from 40% in 2003
- 20 Million Euros additional revenue generated
- Return on investment achieved in less than a year
- Improved service quality and consistency
- Improved agent performance
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Booking errors significantly reduced



Accor, Europe's leading global hotel and service industry group, based in France, operates a central booking structure, Accor Reservation Services, to take call reservations for its hotel brands Sofitel, Novotel, Mercure, Suite Hotels and Ibis. In total the group has 3,500 hotels worldwide. Seven call centres worldwide in Sydney, Bangkok, London, Paris, Madrid, Columbus and Sao Paolo receive about 3 million calls a year and cater for 31 markets in 14 different languages, with 350 employees.

## The objective

In order to track service quality and to improve the business efficiency of the centres whilst increasing the enquiry-to-booking conversion rate, the Accor team developed a quality management initiative and implemented a call centre performance optimisation and interactions tracking solution, Witness Systems' eQuality suite.

eQuality allows Accor to focus on key processes to improve customer service. They identify most frequent errors and best practices in their seven contact centres worldwide, and then use the intelligence to optimise training programmes, as well as streamline the IT systems the agents use. eQuality also allowed Accor to achieve a greater consistency in the way agent's performance is evaluated. This means that a homogeneous and consistently high level of service can now be delivered and maintained globally, regardless of the location.

## Deployment of eQuality

Following the technical implementation of eQuality Balance and eQuality Evaluation, Accor engaged Witness Systems to carry out a Performance Optimisation Workshop. In this business consulting workshop, Witness Systems facilitated a discussion between frontline customer service agents, team leaders and Accor management worldwide, to agree on the criteria by which customer interactions would be evaluated.



*“We no longer feel that the system is driving us, as we are now driving the technology to suit our needs. This is a giant leap forward for us in terms of improving our operations”*

**Christelle Zuccotti, Director of Operations for Accor Reservation Services in Asia Pacific**

*“We immediately felt, from the relevance of the questions asked and the suggestions made by the Witness Systems team, that they were absolute experts in all contact centre issues as well as being experts in call centre technology,” says Benoît Bourla, Director for Accor Reservation Services. He adds: “We quickly realised that the project was much broader than we originally thought. It turned out to be a company-wide initiative where we reviewed and aligned all our processes, from recruitment to training, and reviewed the definition of exactly what a quality call was.”*

Christelle Zuccotti, Director of Operations for Accor Reservation Services in Asia Pacific comments: *“The independent facilitation by Witness Systems meant that call centre agents felt they had been engaged in the process and that the new system was a collaborative effort to improve the performance of our operations, rather than just a management initiative.”*



## **50 criteria and key behaviour elements identified**

Over four months, call centre managers worked on the definition of a calibrated call. For each call related to a booking, 50 criteria and key behaviours were defined following the workshop. *“I thought that we worked the same way*



*across the world, but that was not the reality. Hence we had to work on building the consistency of our processes,” adds Benoît Bourla.*

In April 2003, Sydney was chosen as the worldwide pilot site for the eQuality implementation. At the time the contact centre was experiencing operational issues relating to customer service quality, which was caused by a rapid period of growth. The remedy for this was to deploy eQuality Balance, an automated customer interaction recording solution, as well as eQuality Evaluation, an on-line performance scoring and reporting tool.

*“The roll-out of the Witness Systems eQuality suite implementation worldwide took just eight months. We put in place two tools: the first was the score card incorporating 57 metrics of call performance measurement, and associated with that a detailed definition document explaining item by item what is expected of the agent. For the Paris call centre, we trained the trainers, the team managers, as well as the operational managers, representing the entire first-level management. We then trained the agents to use this scorecard and progressively started to evaluate calls. We also worked on common calls to ensure that everyone monitored the call in the same and consistent manner”* adds Anne Sophie Gaudron, Call Centre Manager for Accor Reservation Services, Paris.



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Call Centre Manager for  
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Additionally, because of the ability for agents to access the system and actively participate in their own evaluations and training, team leaders can programme the automatic recording of both sides of the interactions (the audio and the screen), in advance. *"I no longer need to be physically present in the call centre when monitoring agents, which gives me much greater control and flexibility over the system. Agents are empowered to decide which skills they need to improve and then instantly access the appropriate training module. We no longer feel that the system is driving us, as we are now driving the technology to suit our needs. This is a giant leap forward for us in terms of improving our operations,"* says Christelle Zuccotti.

After three months, agents were able to record and evaluate their own calls. *"One of the reasons why we wanted this project to be lived as a global company initiative was because we did not want agents to perceive it as a control tool. It is above all a training tool whith the objective of reinforcing our evolution and training philosophy for our agents. This tool is self-service, completely at the agents' disposal"* comments Benoît Bourla. *"Evaluations are personalised, but they are not linked to any sanctions or remuneration. We are very careful on this particular point, otherwise we risk damaging the spirit of the project"* he adds.

### **Satisfied users**

*"As a team manager, I feel eQuality really gives me a user-friendly tool. It is simple to use and allows clearer evaluations of my team members, which provides me with a more focussed basis for improvement. It's a real pleasure working with this product because the features allow us to save an enormous amount of time"* says Fanny Kopf, Team Manager for Accor Reservation Services. *"There's no denying the benefit for the agents. The system allows us not only to record the audio call, but also what actually happens on the agent's screen, i.e. data capture too. The agent has a clear frame in which to operate. He knows exactly what criteria are being measured, and we have trained them on the handling of the call and what they need to say. The system allows us to evaluate the technical skills of the agents and to provide them with any additional training they need,"* adds Anne Sophie Gaudron. She continues: *"This Witness suite is completely integrated in our company quality processes: the supervisors and team managers evaluate from 3 to 5 calls per agent per month and then implement specific actions, such as tailored training programmes, accordingly."*

Benoît Bourla adds: *"We had major frustrations in the past, because we could not see the whole customer transaction. As an example, imagine you've captured a conversation but you have 30 seconds silence. What is happening during these 30 seconds? Is the agent waiting for the system to respond? In which case our role is to help the agent fill the silence, with communication techniques. Or is the agent in a total panic during these 30 seconds because he opened three different windows on the reservation system and is now totally lost and hence has no time to speak to the customer? In which case we need to work with him on the right way of using his system. That's why we needed to capture the whole interaction, to empower our agents to improve themselves."*





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### Establishing a library of best practices

*"In order to continuously improve themselves at the highest level top athletes, for example, use video recording to review their performance; well, eQuality is exactly the same concept: it's about helping agents improve their own performance, day after day, by reviewing how they deal with customers"* illustrates Benoît Bourla.

*"The installation of the first eQuality milestone was a huge success. As a second step we now envisage archiving all the recordings in a database library representing a pool of best calls. These calls will then be accessed as and when the agents need them. We eventually want to progress toward an e-learning programme with tools tailored to agents' individual training needs. In order to achieve this we plan to further invest in Witness Systems e-learning tools eQuality Now and eQuality Producer."*



### The results to date

*"As well as more homogenous internal processes and the streamlining of our approach to training, we have seen an increase of our enquiry-to-booking rate to 45% at the end of 2004, from 40% in mid-2003.*

*Better than that, this rate progressed 5 points in less than a year. And 5 points correspond to 20 million Euro additional revenue" comments M. Bourla. He adds: "This allowed us to achieve a return on investment in less than a year. Of course, this is linked to a number of initiatives put in place as part of a complete programme, including the Witness solution. For example, we reviewed our recruiting processes, our training processes, and our motivation programmes. This is all part of our 'Spirit of Smile' quality initiative," concludes Benoît Bourla.*



It's your goal. It's our philosophy.

WITNESS SYSTEMS

Improve everything.™

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