

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Vodafone Ireland

INDUSTRY

Telecommunications

WITNESS SYSTEMS SOLUTIONS

- Impact 360™ Quality Monitoring*

REGION

EMEA

LOCATION

Dublin and Dundalk, Republic of Ireland

NUMBER OF AGENTS

570 call centre agents, supported by 70 back-office, support, commercial, training, CRM and MIS staff

RESULTS

- Achieved four-fold return on investment
- Reduced repeat calls by 23 percent
- Enabled the successful redeployment of 80 percent of total quality control (TQC) resources by automating the quality monitoring process
- Reduced second level escalations by over 4 percent

OPPORTUNITY

With 1.93 million customers, Vodafone Ireland is Ireland's most popular network. The company is part of the Vodafone Group – the world leader in the mobile communications arena. Vodafone's strategy of delivering innovative services, value and high quality has proved particularly successful in Ireland, where its customers consume more services per head than their European counterparts.

"At Vodafone Ireland, one of our core objectives is to constantly improve our customer relations and expertise by refining our sales and service delivery processes and enhancing the quality of our overall customer service and business operations. Our customer-centric CRM strategy is based on a deep knowledge of how our customers communicate with us. What they're saying day to day is vital information for us, so Witness Systems' contact centre workforce optimisation solution is an essential component of our broader CRM approach. Witness Systems is a key part of our performance evaluation process as well. In the 18 months since implementation, we've seen a striking 23 percent reduction in repeat calls and a cut in low-level calls. Our investment in Witness Systems' technology has more than paid for itself."

– JUSTIN CONRY

CRM SYSTEMS MANAGER, VODAFONE IRELAND

Improving Quality in the Contact Centre

Justin Conry is the CRM Systems Manager for Vodafone Ireland, and is responsible for all the development issues relating to the provision of sales, service and analytics-based solutions for the company's call centre, CRM and IVR channels. Collectively, these account for over 70 percent of all contacts with Vodafone Ireland's customer base. In Ireland, Vodafone is a market leader with 1.93 million customers and 1,700 staff. The company invests €3.5-4 million per week in its network.

CRM activities play a key role in supporting Vodafone's business development – a third of the company's employees are directly involved in serving the customer, and Vodafone has invested significantly to support major business initiatives such as the roll-out of 3G. One of Vodafone's objectives is to always delight the customer, providing them with compelling reasons to keep coming back. To drive efficiencies, the company also focuses on reducing operating expenses and improving revenue – from both new and existing channels.

Contact centres play a key role in the Vodafone CRM mix, with over 500 agents working in centres in Dundalk and Dublin. The Dublin contact centre runs an 8-to-8 service delivering corporate care, business care and premier care, and also runs outbound lifecycle campaigns, second line and data support, and core functions such as credit management and customer satisfaction programmes. The other centres handle core care activities for 90 percent of the customer base, as well as non-telephony contacts.

Managing 400,000 Interactions a Week

"We're dealing with a significant volume of customer contacts at our centres, ranging from 4.5 million verbal contacts each year to 20 million Web-based and written interactions, and 60 million IVR sessions," explains Justin Conry. "Currently running at almost 400,000 interactions a week, we've designed our CRM strategy to reflect this volume, and also to acknowledge that during our customer lifecycle there's a wide range of different engagement points before we even get to sales and service delivery."

*At the time of implementation, the software was called eQuality® Balance. Witness Systems has since rebranded its solutions as Impact 360.

“We’re committed to deploying a range of technology-enabled relationship management solutions that will deliver on our commitment to connect with customers at any time from any place to allow us to deliver a high quality customer relationship.” Justin Conry adds, “Customer knowledge is an essential component of that mix, and we aim to manage individual customers as a ‘market segment of one,’ where all previous contacts and activity are known and acted upon – irrespective of the delivery channel.”

Analysing the CRM Lifecycle

Having built a comprehensive CRM infrastructure, Justin Conry and his team were determined to optimise its performance. “It became clear that to continue towards best-in-class performance, we had to invest in the quality of our customer service delivery.” Part of the move towards quality monitoring was due to an increasing realisation that existing procedures weren’t allowing Vodafone to capitalise on the wealth of live customer data stored in each interaction. According to Justin Conry, “We felt we weren’t offering customers a continuity of message, and this often meant that our agent recommendations were different. We’d tried running buddy monitoring programmes to address the continuity issue, but found that without a formal process it was easy for this to slip.”

SOLUTION

To address these concerns, Vodafone identified the requirement for both a voice and data capture solution that would help maximise the value received from previous IT investments in areas such as CRM, IVR, the Web and self-service. Operational objectives included providing a greater ability to understand agent quality, offering voice and data capture, campaign feedback support, process improvements, the ability to analyse training gaps and broader quality monitoring support. Vodafone also identified the need to share best practices amongst its agents, as well as the ability to index and store interactions in a way that they could best act on all the customer insights currently locked in the calls. After evaluating the solutions on the market, Vodafone Ireland selected Witness Systems’ workforce optimisation – and specifically its Impact 360 Quality Monitoring solution – to address its quality monitoring requirements. The solution could scale to meet Vodafone’s volume requirements and could be implemented quicker than rival solutions. This was important as Vodafone was looking for a 60-day deployment timeline. According to Justin Conry, “We built a clear business case for our investment in a quality monitoring solution based on a number of process improvement goals, including decreasing second level escalations by six percent, cutting the number of repeat calls by 15 percent and optimising the use of our quality resources.”

BENEFITS

Removing Subjectivity from the Scoring Process

“When team leaders used to sit alongside agents and score their performance, we were never going to get a fair, consistent measure. To help ensure an even scoring approach, we moved towards a centralised scoring team, and we’ve seen far greater objectivity,” explains Justin Conry.

“From our analysis, we broke down calls into six areas – the opening, communications, systems, resolution, close and wrap-up – and identified 33 contributory measures to the success of a call – from effectiveness measures such as correct validation, sufficient interaction with our Clarify system and up-selling, to more empathetic issues such as listening skills, questioning skills and willingness to help,” he adds.

“Once assessed, the automated evaluation forms are broken down into weighted scores for each area, with some automated fail criteria and a pass score set at 85 percent. Simply collecting and scoring data is only one part of the project, what’s actually done with the information is more important to Vodafone Ireland. Justin Conry comments. “We use the Witness Systems data in four ways: to produce a summary call centre report, then a quality measures report that drills a further level down to report on each metric and highlight the top 10 lowest scores, so we can provide further support.”

“We look at a macro level to produce a qualitative report that identifies the contact centre processes that are working well, or not working well. Once identified, we put process teams in place to go in and fix the issue. At a general level, we look for other more detailed events – such as actual call types that are causing problems, or training gaps,” he concludes.

Delivering Real Bottom-Line Benefits

Now, 18 months into the project, Vodafone Ireland has integrated its quality assurance capability into its performance evaluation process, and also sees it as a critical training tool in terms of the company’s continuous process review approach. When assessing the success of the project, Vodafone and Witness Systems have achieved impressive results. Repeat calls are down 23 percent, second level escalations are down by over four percent, and the company has successfully redeployed its internal quality resource to refocus on revenue-generating activities. According to Justin Conry: “Working with Witness Systems, we’ve achieved the specific goals we set out at the start of the project. Indeed, we’ve more than proved the business case by surpassing all our original targets!”



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