

Win in the Flat World

Think Flat

Telco saves \$12 million a month by 'getting personal'

Personified voice portal improves customer experience and reduces wait times

Abstract

Put customer needs first and profitability will follow. A telecommunications company realized this was more than a marketing mantra when it strategically tailored its voice portal in response to its customers' needs. The voice portal now completely services about 23% of calls, reflecting the user-friendliness of the simplified and personalized customer experience. Further, each call completely resolved by the voice portal saves the company between \$4 and \$8, resulting in gross monthly savings of about \$12 million on contact center operations.



Customer loyalty through faster innovation

Industry:
Communication Services Provider

About the client:
The company ("telco") is a communications service provider, whose customer segments include local and long-distance telecom services for the retail and small business segments.

Put customer needs first and profitability will follow. A telecommunications company realized this was more than a marketing mantra when it strategically tailored its voice portal in response to its customers' needs. The result: customers were saved the inconvenience and frustration of long waits; the company saved \$12 million a month.

The telco's global operations cater to about 150 million 'line-access equivalents' for local and long-distance telecom services for the retail and small business segments. It wanted to improve customer service for these segments.

Customer queries and complaints were handled by a service center, which received about 400,000 calls per day. This forced customers to wait over an hour to speak to a service agent. The company attempted to rectify this by offering personalized customer experience. It supplemented the service center with a customer self-service voice portal – a voice recognition system that allowed customers to access information and conduct transactions using voice commands over the phone, instead of a touch-tone keypad.

However, the transition was far from smooth. The voice portal had limited capabilities and capacity. Customers felt it was an unattractive and less user-friendly alternative to the service center.

When customer dissatisfaction threatened to hurt its business, the telco brought in Infosys to re-engineer the voice portal.

The system had to be personalized and made simple enough for callers to navigate through and satisfactorily complete calls.

Infosys, which has designed and implemented a number of customer service programs, understood that the most critical factor was getting the design elements right.

First, the voice portal had to become an attractive alternative to the service center. For this, the long waits had to end. Next, the system had to be personalized and made simple enough for callers to navigate through and satisfactorily complete calls. Third, the average cost of call handling had to be reduced.

To execute these changes, Infosys recommended a two-phased approach. First, expand the footprint of the voice portal to cover customers across the whole country. Second, personalize and simplify the navigation based on callers' transaction history and personal preferences.

Once the voice portal was re-engineered, the telco began to realize the benefits. Waiting times fell dramatically from an average of 60 minutes per caller to about five seconds. The portal was also able to handle larger volumes – from an initial 420,000 calls per day to 956,000 calls as of January 2006.

The voice portal now completely services about 23% of calls, reflecting the user-friendliness of the simplified and personalized customer experience. Further, each call completely resolved by the voice portal saves the company between \$4 and \$8, resulting in gross monthly savings of about \$12 million on contact center operations.

“I want to thank the Infosys team for their great partnership, flexibility and sense of commitment on this critical initiative for improving customer experience and reducing wait times,” said the company’s director of call management.

A major portion of the re-engineering work was performed at Infosys’ development centers in India. Infosys’ Global Delivery Model, which distributes work to geo-locations where it makes the most economic sense, helped the telco save about 34% on professional service costs.

Are the customers more **fickle** in the **Flattening World**?
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