Belgacom
Lifting customer satisfaction and sharpening outsourcer activity

Multichannel solution drives contact center operations to new levels

Matching business agility to excellent customer care

The biggest Belgian telecoms service provider, Belgacom, offers consumers and business customers quadruple-play fixed and mobile telephony with internet and digital TV. Set on strengthening their market position by raising network speeds and accelerating investment, a key factor in their success has been the scrupulous attention to customer satisfaction. To ensure customers can communicate easily and quickly with their agents, regardless of their chosen channels, Genesys has played a critical part in the evolution of the contact center strategy at Belgacom.

The process started in the last decade, when the Genesys Customer Experience platform with self-service IVR capabilities was customized into a solution known as the intelligent Customer Front Door™. Enabling Belgacom to transform a script-based environment, this enhanced agility and saved significant costs. It also meant the firm could react instantly to rapid shifts in the pace of sales or marketing activity.

The overriding aim was to reduce the number of live agent calls by 1 million per year. This objective was attained by promoting self-service for simpler inquiries, offering more contact channels, focusing on higher value agent interactions, and improving the efficiency and quality of call handling. Within two years, the Genesys solution had outperformed targeted reduction figures an impressive 10%.

“The great thing about Genesys solutions is that the self-service features enable contact centers to integrate voice, speech, touchtone, video, SMS and other multimodal self-service applications with agent-assisted transactions.” said Gerry Cools, Sales Strategy and Development Manager at Belgacom.
Probability-based menus and the use of historic customer data ensure the IVR response is appropriate. If a customer has an open order or has just received a bill, it’s likely that the inquiry will be related, and intelligent IVR adjusts menu options automatically. It also supports complaint handling in the event of a surge in calls precipitated by a network outage. For customers who need to speak with an agent, skills-based routing ensures that 90% of those calls arrive at the right place the first time.

Raising responsiveness to web speeds

To refine their sales processes and to support more effective customer retention in their core businesses—voice, mobile, broadband and TV—Belgacom has taken further steps to integrate their inbound communication channels for specific functionalities. And here again, they found solutions from Genesys essential to meet these needs.

First, Belgacom installed Genesys Digital Channels to enable callback functions while people browse their website. The firm uses a screen-pop to capture customers online and give them the opportunity to speak with a live agent. If someone clicks to choose the service, connection is seamless. If all Belgacom agents are tied up, the pop-up message doesn’t appear.

Belgacom is using the same technology to pioneer a new service in support of online purchasing. When customers on their website add products to an online shopping cart, but do not reach the checkout after a reasonable interval, an agent makes a live follow-up call. “Although this application was not piloted in response to explicit demand, our Genesys-based integration of web and phone to support online product sales has been very well received by customers, so we’re pressing ahead,” said Cools.

In the case of email, Belgacom is still exploring possibilities. “At first, we offered email only to customers with a complaint, as we’re obliged in such cases to respond by email,” said Cools. “When customers email us, we prefer to call them back to suggest a solution; if after three attempts we still haven’t reached them, we then reply by email.”

The company has implemented another effective way to reduce the time spent by agents on complaints by offering one-off credit notes. It’s a cheaper solution, on average, than to having an agent investigate. And the credit note is adjustable according to circumstances but normally around €50. This empowers the agents and satisfies the customers.

The combined effect of such measures has seen top customer satisfaction improve from 75% to 80%.

Visibility and control over outsourced call handling

Belgacom has a total of around 600 inbound call center agents. Some 60% are employed in-house, while the rest work for five Belgian outsourced call center operators. Belgacom works with internal agents but also with outsourced partners. This affords maximum flexibility, enabling Belgacom to respond to fluctuations in customer demand on a minute-by-minute basis—and, just as importantly, to minimize their costs.

“Across our outsourced estate, and including virtualization and contract reviews, the measures enabled by our adoption of Genesys have saved us €3 million per annum.”

Gerry Cools,
Sales Strategy and Development Manager
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“We want to make sure that our in-house agents are fully occupied, and only then route calls to our outsourcers,” explained Cools. “They have other customers too, so they can manage a fluctuating workload in whatever way works best for them.” The consequent improvement in in-house agent productivity has seen an 8% rise in the number of calls handled per hour per agent from 48 to 52.

The switchover of outsourced call centers to the new infrastructure has been gradual. Each operator had to adopt the upgraded Belgacom system; each may face different ICT or operational issues. However, the service provider has integrated a virtualized desktop infrastructure (VDI) across the wide area network to smooth progress; thereby ensuring outsourced call center agents are using the same desktop tools and interfaces as in-house Belgacom agents.

A key benefit from this carefully managed process has been that Belgacom now has full traceability of any calls that leave their internal environment. Previously, the firm did not have this capability, and reporting from outsourcers was not available in the same detail and format as Belgacom uses internally.

“We would lose all information on any call that went to an outsourcer; now we can track it right through to resolution,” says Cools. “A key benefit of the new reporting framework is the reduction in the number of repeat calls to Belgacom from our customers—they’ve dropped from 14% to 9%. For us, that means lower costs as well as improved customer satisfaction.”

What’s more, it has enabled Belgacom to circulate relative performance statistics among their five outsourcers, which fosters competition between them as each strives to outdo their rivals. By the end of the year, Belgacom intends to launch an annual prize for the best performer of the year, which should, in turn, improve performance across the board.

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To learn more about the systems featured in this case study, visit www.genesys.com.

RESULTS

1 million fewer inbound calls due to customer self-service

5% reduction close control of outsourced resources has cut repeat inbound calls cut by five percent

Improved outbound success rates

Smaller font: of up to 12% for acquisition and 80% for retention

€3 million savings per annum across outsourced estates

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