



Large U.S. Bank Increases Agent Productivity

Case Study, a Major Financial Institution

Profile

Using the Avaya™ 5000 Predictive Dialing System (PDS) and Intelligent Call Blending®, the credit card division of this large U.S. bank increased agent productivity to collect funds effectively while maintaining positive customer service.

Converged Voice and Data Networks
Customer Relationship Management
Unified Communication

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Collections and customer service?

It is possible; and with today's technology, it's more cost-effective and efficient than ever!

The challenge

To efficiently and effectively collect on past-due accounts without alienating customers is a major challenge faced by collection centers everywhere. Prompt collection of money owed is the business-critical function of any collection department. It cannot be placed on hold, cannot wait until a "better" time. It is a continuous life function of an enterprise... and one of the quickest ways of alienating and losing long-term customers.

Progressive companies are tackling this conundrum with a precise recipe of service and technology. These organizations realize that agent effectiveness, the ability to contact and collect on past-due accounts in a timely manner, and maintaining effective customer relations are all vital; but none alone provides the needed combination of people, process, and technology required for success.

Customer service

The credit card division of a large bank, headquartered on the East Coast of the United States, faced the challenge of achieving the perfect blend of effectively collecting funds owed and maintaining positive customer relations. Collecting at the expense of eliminating current customers and potential future revenue and income was counterproductive. Moreover, besides taking their business elsewhere, frustrated customers have a knack for sharing their poor experiences with friends and family.

"We are very aware of and concerned about our collection efforts' potential impact on our customers," states the bank's vice president of collections. "Though some people are habitual or repeat collection challenges, many individuals drop 30 days past due only one time during their relationship with our bank. We have established many policies and procedures to ensure that our collection efforts are effective, efficient, and customer-friendly."





Timing is everything

The bank makes collection calls during the weekdays, operates a half day on Saturday, and makes no collection calls on Sundays. This helps reduce calls to customers at inconvenient times. The bank targets calling campaigns to reach the highest percentage of customers and “follows the sun,” first calling East Coast accounts and then working across the United States (and time zones) as the day progresses. With its collection center located on the East Coast, the bank is able to place calls 73 hours a week.

Agent effectiveness and efficiency are as important as when the calls are placed, because bottom line results are achieved through these combined efforts. Highly skilled and well-trained agents, working in concert with state-of-the-art contact center technology, are producing enviable results. Here’s a closer look at this bank’s “recipe.”

“We use a state-of-the-art Avaya Predictive Dialing System with Intelligent Call Blending. This has broadened our collection and customer service capabilities tremendously.”

*Vice President of Collections,
a Major Financial Institution*

Our Avaya™ Predictive Dialing System blending function makes it possible for us to automatically feed inbound calls to agents on outbound duty... This greatly reduces the possibility of someone being in a hold queue for extended periods and is a huge customer service advantage.

Vice President of Collections, a Major Financial Institution

The right person for the job

Recognizing that diverse collection efforts require specific skills, the bank put into place a method of routing delinquent accounts to agents best able to produce desired results.

“When customers call our 800 number, Interactive Voice Response (IVR) is used to acquire the caller’s account number. The call is then routed based on information in the caller’s account file. For instance, when a caller enters their account number via IVR, and it is determined that the caller’s account is past due, the call is routed directly to our collection center. This is true for all delinquent accounts. If someone is calling for other reasons, say, for a credit line adjustment or change of address, and their account is flagged as past due, the call is routed to collections before any other action is taken. This enables us to speak with many customers early in a delinquent cycle, let them know we are on top of things, and still provide quality, attentive service.”

The bank further defines which agent the caller will speak with by dividing agents into specified areas of expertise. “This enables our staff to consistently focus on same type of accounts and delinquents, and helps us avoid the possibility that a caller who is 30 days late, perhaps for the first time in their customer history, will be routed to a collector who has just talked with four or five habitual past due customers in succession. Though all collections are a serious matter, human nature shows that an agent who is used to handling severe accounts may intimidate a first-time delinquent and cause more potential long-term harm than good. Different scripts, tonality, and voice pitch are required in the various levels of collection. We match the callers to the agents. We collect money owed, while making every effort to maintain superior customer relations and service.”

Technology provides the answer

"We use a state-of-the-art Avaya™ Predictive Dialing System with Intelligent Call Blending. This has broadened our collection and customer service capabilities tremendously," explained the bank's vice president of collections.

To enhance its customer service levels, the bank's agents are used as "blend" or "universal" agents, performing both inbound and outbound call duties as required to facilitate satisfactory service levels based on inbound and outbound call volume. "Our Avaya Predictive Dialing System's blending function makes it possible for us to automatically feed inbound calls to agents on outbound duty. As agents complete outbound calls, incoming calls that otherwise would be placed on hold are routed directly to them. This greatly reduces the possibility of someone being in a hold queue for extended periods, and is a huge customer service advantage."

Viewing the blend environment from a strict in-house efficiency note, the bank's VP of collections adds, "With a 100% 'blend agent' environment, we have no problem tracking agent-to-agent performance for purposes of evaluation, bonuses, and the like. All agents work in the same calling environment, and it's easy to compare individual performance."

Job linking

Though the customer service advantage of the bank's investment in its Avaya PDS is paying handsome customer service dividends, the decision and subsequent purchase of the solution were, in large part, based on investment payback and reduction in operating costs.

Prior to installing its new system, the bank was losing a large amount of agent productivity when transitioning from one calling campaign to another

(job linking). During these job changes, the bank could lose up to 47 agents for 5 to 7 minutes at a time. With job links occurring every 3 hours or so, averaging 15 jobs each day, productivity loss was a great concern.

With Avaya PDS and the job-linking feature, agent downtime is negligible when transitioning from one job to another. The increase in agent productivity and debt collected, coupled with the savings in agent time, is tremendous. By virtually eliminating agents' idle time during job linking, the bank is able to capture 60 to 82 agent hours each working day (47 collectors/15 jobs per day/5 to 7 minutes per agent/per job link). This is the equivalent of 7 to 10 additional full-time employees each day. At \$10/hour per agent, the savings quickly add up: \$560 – \$800 per day, or \$150,000 – \$225,000 annually.

"The productivity gains achieved with our new system through on-the-fly job linking was definitely a primary motivator when we made the decision to purchase [the Avaya PDS]. Coupled with the call blending function, we are more efficient, effective, and customer-friendly than ever before."

The bottom line

Investing in new technology has greatly improved this bank's collection results, decreased its costs, and enhanced agent productivity. The paradox of achieving positive customer relationships in a collection environment has been solved through smart management policy and technology-enhanced collection efforts. It combines the optimum blend of people, process, and technology to provide a great recipe for success.

To learn more about how the Avaya Predictive Dialing System can enhance your customer service contact your Avaya Client Executive. Or, visit avaya.com/solutions.

Using the Avaya 5000 Predictive Dialing System, this U.S. bank is saving as much as \$225,000 annually.