

Bright House Networks

Award Winning Bright House Networks Increases Customer Satisfaction with Aspect® Customer Self Service™

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Bob Artz

*Director, Call Center Operations
for Bright House Networks,
Central Florida Division*

The Company

Bright House Networks (BHN) is the eighth largest cable company in the United States and the largest cable company in the state of Florida, providing cable television, Internet and telephone services to more than 2.1 million customers. Recognized for its exceptional service, the Central Florida division consists of four inbound contact centers and 600 agents supporting the company's 24x7, full service operation responsible for sales, billing, customer service, and repairs. Each contact center is virtual and linked by Bright House Networks' fiber infrastructure.

The Business Challenge

- Position Bright House Networks as a technology leader.
- Increase customer satisfaction.
- Increase self-service calls.
- Reduce internal call transfer rates.

The Solution

Aspect Customer Self Service voice portal solution. From the Signature product line, Aspect Customer Self Service is a full-featured interactive voice response platform that automates transactions traditionally performed by agents and extends business hours, while at the same time delivers the latest advancements in speech technology, including speech recognition, text-to-speech, voiceprint identification, and more.

The Results

- Increased customer satisfaction.
- Increased self-service calls by 100 percent.
- Decreased calls to live agents.
- Reduced transfers to agents by 50 percent.



Building the Competitive Difference

In the highly competitive cable industry world, it is extremely important for companies to differentiate themselves. Taking advantage of technology and streamlining business processes can make a significant difference.

Bright House Networks, the eighth largest cable company in the United States, has taken this to heart. Providing cable, internet and telephone services, the Central Florida division of the company has four in-bound virtual contact centers, connected with the Bright House fiber network, with more than 600 agents managing customer service inquiries. The company segments its agents into two groups: 1) Universal agents who handle sales, billing and repair inquiries and 2) Specialized agents who provide level 2 support for internet and phone services. All of the calls originate in one location and then are distributed across the four contact centers based on agent availability.

In order to differentiate the organization and continue growing the business, Bright House recognized that it had several business challenges it wanted to overcome. These included:

- Positioning the company as a technology leader.
- Increasing overall customer satisfaction.
- Increasing self-service calls.
- Reducing internal call transfer rates.

By addressing all of these issues, the company anticipated experiencing improved business processes and reduced costs.

The company felt that its agents spent a significant amount of time handling routine billing inquiries, such as account balance, how to make payments, questions about cable outages, or confirmation and cancellation of service appointments. It also recognized that time was also wasted with customer service agents having to transfer calls to the agents that handle the sales and billing inquiries and vice versa. Streamlining this process could make deep inroads into maximizing agent resources and improving overall customer satisfaction by reducing queue times and routing the customer to the right agent the first time.

Bright House identified that an interactive voice response system could accommodate all of these requirements and began the process of exploring vendor solutions. Early on in the vendor exploratory process for potential solution providers, Bright House received a ROI assessment and determined that just by reducing the number of transfers alone would provide enough cost savings to justify a complete system. A complete request for proposal (RFP) was sent to a number of leading vendors, including Aspect Software, Avaya and IBM Global Services. Following a review of the RFP responses, Bright House put Aspect and Avaya on the short list for further exploration of the capabilities of each of the solutions.

Aspect was ultimately selected by the company for both its competitive price and tight product set integration with other existing Aspect Software solutions including Aspect® DataMart™ and Aspect® Enterprise Contact Server™, which Bright House is using to provide agents with customer information via screen pops and Aspect® eWorkforce Management™, which they are using to schedule agents to handle appropriate call volumes. Each contact center product provides information to Aspect DataMart to give Bright House historical and real-time reporting capabilities.

Putting A Plan Into Place

Ultimately, Bright House Networks chose to go with Aspect Software by implementing its Aspect® Customer Self Service™ voice portal product. From the Signature product line, Aspect Customer Self Service provides all the benefits of voice self-service, such as automating transactions normally performed by costly live agents, extending business hours, and giving customers convenience and privacy. The platform also supports speech technology to greatly enhance the power of self-service applications.

Aspect Customer Self Service offers support for speech recognition for a more user-friendly interface. By taking advantage of the flexibility that speech recognition technology adds, Bright House is able to automate processes, such as address collection, that cannot be automated with a simple touchtone system.

In addition, as a seamless part of the contact center, Aspect® Customer Self Service™ enables Bright House to automate a portion of a call and then transfer the call to an agent for completion, ensuring that the agent's time is spent where it is most valuable. Of key importance to Bright House was the fact that Aspect Customer Self Service could send all of the call data information to Aspect® DataMart™, which could then turn around and provide the contact center managers with extensive information about call handling.

Aspect Customer Self Service offers a highly-scalable, mission-critical architecture, ensuring that the automated system is available to Bright House customers when they call. And, because Aspect Customer Self Service supports VoiceXML, an industry-standard application development language, Bright House can future-proof its applications and use them across multiple platforms.

One key piece to the company's successful implementation of the Aspect Customer Self Service solution was that during the testing phase, all Bright House front line employees were required to call through the system to give ideas for enhancements. Each of the 600 comments was reviewed and some items were chosen for refinement before full implementation and roll-out to the customer base.

The Proof is in the Pudding

Following implementation in April 2005, the company saw a number of immediate results. They were able to increase self service calls by 100 percent, enabling them to reduce the more basic calls to agents, freeing up their resources to handle more complex inquiries. In addition, they were able to reduce transfers by more than 50 percent

Customers are now able to quickly and easily check their account balance, make payments, confirm or cancel service appointments, reset their equipment, as well as find information on payment locations, online bill pay, and service outages. Before the implementation of Aspect Customer Self Service, customers had to either connect with an agent to obtain the information or navigate through a touch tone system. Now they are able to use voice prompts to make transactions and have access to service 24x7x365.

Most importantly, Bright House has seen a measured increase in customer satisfaction. In fact, the company has been acknowledged for its customer service by winning a number of awards, including the 2007 Implementation Award from *Speech Technology Magazine* for improving customer satisfaction scores through speech applications.

Leveraging research conducted before and after the implementation, as well as focus groups, has confirmed that Bright House's customers are very satisfied with the services they are receiving following the implementation of the Aspect Software voice portal solution. Many of the individuals in the focus groups commented that the new system was "better than most" or the "best they've seen". In addition, the latest survey, conducted nine months after implementation asked: Does Bright House Networks offer good self-service features? The company's ratings increased from 35 percent pre-installation to 45 percent.

As an added bonus, Bright House was able to experience a Return on Investment (ROI) from Aspect Customer Self Service less than six months after implementation.

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Next Steps

In their ongoing efforts to continue differentiating the company from the competition, the Bright House contact center will review reports and metrics to help identify areas for improvement.

In an effort to maximize their technology, as well as to gather data on how well the company and agents are performing, Bright House is discussing the implementation of a customer survey application that will use the speech recognition capabilities of Aspect Customer Self Service. They also plan to continue hosting focus groups to determine areas where they can increase customer satisfaction and overall usability of the services they provide.

Lastly, as always, Bright House Networks will continue to invest in technology, as needed, to enhance their services as the business changes.

About Aspect Software

Aspect Software, Inc. founded the contact center industry and is now the world's largest company solely focused on Internet Protocol (IP) and traditional voice-based products and services for customer service, collections, and sales and telemarketing business processes. Each day, Aspect Software powers more than 125 million customer-company interactions at thousands of in-house and outsourced contact centers around the globe. Its pioneering Unified IP™ Contact Center product line reduces complexity by uniting automated call distribution (ACD), predictive dialing, voice portal, email management, web chat and collaboration, and recording and quality management to provide consolidated administration, routing, reporting and workflow. PerformanceEdge™, the industry's first fully synchronized contact center optimization suite, combines workforce management, recording and quality management, performance management, campaign management, and coaching and eLearning applications. And, the company's trusted Signature product line delivers reliable best of breed ACD, predictive dialing, CTI and Voice Portal capabilities. Headquartered in Chelmsford, Mass., Aspect Software has operations across the Americas, Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia Pacific. For more information, visit www.aspect.com.

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