

Barclaycard Business

- Realized a 9% reduction in total annual operating costs
- Achieved full ROI in 11 months
- Improved service level by 20%
- Reduced overtime costs by over 40%

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Gary Sharples
Barclays

As part of Barclays, one of the world's leading financial institutions, Barclaycard Business provides complete solutions for all business' card payment and processing needs, both nationwide and internationally. Barclaycard Business is also the United Kingdom's leading issuer of corporate cards, with more than 142,000 business customers and over 500,000 individual cardholders worldwide.

Their business operates three call centers in the UK handling over 6.2 million contacts per year and employing 2,000 staff with 450 agents. Barclaycard Business looks after the processing and payment for over one-third of Britain's retailers and has been expanding these services to international customers.

Business issues

Barclaycard Business decided to take bold steps to bring its resource planning in-line with the organization's need for more effective and efficient customer-focused service. “Operational efficiency is primary for our business and service is paramount for our customers,” says Gary Sharples, head of customer operational planning at Barclaycard Business. “Nothing affects these things more than getting resource planning right. We quickly realized that the changes needed to achieve best practices meant that this had to be a journey for our whole business, requiring buy-in from staff as well as alterations to the way we do things and new technology to support this.”

Previously, only one of Barclaycard's three contact centers used a formal workforce management solution. The other two operated on large spreadsheet models. Typically these centers were characterized by service levels below target with wide variation between sites and a system-wide forecast variance greater than 6 percent. This resulted in more than £200,000 in overtime costs for the first half of the year. In addition, the processes needed to support resource planning required a full-time planner to handle holiday requests and schedule changes. It also left management with little insight into exception handling.

The existing mixed processes also meant that adherence and efficiency had to be evaluated manually -- with limited data about agent activity. “The closest we got to any form of adherence was to compare the ACD log with the anticipated time a member of staff was due to be on the phones,” says Sharples.

Meeting internal performance targets and closing crucial gaps in operational visibility required a new coordinated approach. In response, Barclaycard Business began a thorough investigation of the market to find providers and systems that would help them to achieve their goals. “When it came to selecting technology to help us change our resource planning we wanted an advanced system but also advice on which features would work with the processes we needed to meet our business goals,” says Colin Wheelan, planning and intraday manager. “We saw it more as a partnership working with someone who was willing and able to share advice for mutual benefit.”

Barclaycard Business chose the IEX® TotalView® Workforce Management system, purchased through QPC, to support the company's new resource planning approach. "IEX TotalView has a proven track record and the features we wanted immediately, as well as the functionality necessary to support future business developments," Sharples commented.

Easy installation

Although Barclaycard Business operates from three geographical locations, the TotalView system's multisite capability made it easy to manage these together as one virtual center. The three different ACDs at these locations also posed no problem for IEX TotalView because of the number of readily available integrations. "One of our sites had Genesys workforce management and routing. We wondered how easy it would be to separate the two and for another system to work with the routing platform," said Sharples. "The CTIA bridge that QPC provided made the IEX TotalView integration with Genesys easy. Now we have a better system at that site as well as one that works across our entire contact center operation."

Streamlined processes

Barclaycard Business uses the IEX TotalView Schedule Bidding feature along with TotalView WebStation™ Plus to empower advisors, cut scheduling paperwork, reduce response times and improve communication between the planning team and agents. Talking further about the impact of IEX TotalView on advisors and how it is perceived, Colin Wheelan says, "Schedule Bidding and WebStation allow agents to work the times they want to and manage their own holidays, which really helped get them on-board with the changes we have made. What's more is that all this can be done while reducing the amount of time required by the planning team to work on this."

Better schedule adherence

Central to the changes at Barclaycard Business was a structured approach to workforce management that emphasized the importance of advisors adhering to their work schedules. Since its first agent adherence measurements, Barclaycard Business has realized an 8 percent improvement on its initial measure and is now enjoying over 95 percent adherence. While agent performance used to be driven by calls per day targets, using IEX TotalView these have now been replaced with an adherence target which underpins the business's focus on contact quality with productivity rather than quantity alone.

Improved customer service

The incidence of recorded customer complaints has improved by 66 percent since the changes to their resource

planning processes due to increased agent availability and a more smoothly operated contact organization. Customer satisfaction is also up more than 5 percent across all customer segments. "The acquiring area took a little longer to develop its schedule adherence, and did not initially experience the same benefits, but as adherence ensured that people are in the right place at the right time, customer satisfaction has now improved greatly," says Sharples. "We anticipate similar growth moving forward since our adherence targets are consistently being achieved."

In Barclaycard Business's first full year of their new workforce management program they have consistently met and even exceeded the 80 percent goal. There is now very little variance between each center and typically each site has achieved a 20 percent improvement. Abandon rates have similarly improved by 4 to 5 percent. This has been achieved even while overtime costs have been cut nearly in half. "All of our key performance indicators have been delivered consistently each month because of accurate forecasts, visible productivity and adherence that IEX TotalView provides," says Wheelan.

Employee opinion counts

Barclaycard Business uses employee opinion surveys to help understand how they can make their organization better for business, customers and staff. The operational planning team at Barclays was conscious that the changes they were making should impact staff positively as well as provide benefits for the business and customers. Sharples comments, "We are delighted that staff have responded so well to the work we have been doing. We have seen an improvement in survey opinion results in areas such as using technology efficiently, reduction in paperwork and reduction in duplication of effort."

Rapid return on investment

Barclaycard Business has enjoyed substantial benefits in a short period of time through enhanced resource planning processes and technology, bringing its three centers under closer control and improving performance while giving better relations with both agents and customers. "Overall we have managed to achieve a 9 percent reduction in operating costs for Barclaycard Business' contact center organization, which is a fantastic result," Sharples concluded.

Company: Barclaycard Business

Sector: Financial Services

Contact Types: Voice, fax, e-mail, mail

Locations: Northampton, Liverpool and Stockton On Tees

Contact Volume: 6.2 million

Agents: 450

Type of ACD: Genesys, Aspect and Symposium

Website: <http://www.barclaycard.co.uk>



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