

Aero Energy



Customer

Aero Energy

Industry

Energy & Utilities

Challenges

- Distributed office locations
- Multiple contact-center queues
- High call-abandonment rates
- Long customer hold times
- Seasonal call volume
- Limited visibility into contact-center operations

Solution

- NEC UNIVERGE® Spherical® Contact Center NEC Associate: Atris, Incorporated (Oaks, PA)

Results

- Better department/queue management
- Optimized contact-center staffing
- Visibility into service-level metrics
- Improved customer satisfaction

Contact centers play a crucial role within the enterprise. By embracing new contact-center technology, companies can get the necessary systems and data to better meet the needs of its customers and make a major contribution to the bottom line.

Aero Energy, an oil company in New Oxford, Pennsylvania, provides heating fuel to residential and commercial customers in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and Delaware. The company is one of the first to provide fuel that is 100% drilled, refined and sold exclusively in North America. Aero Energy implemented NEC's UNIVERGE® Spherical® Contact Center to improve service levels within its contact center and better manage queues across multiple departments and remote office locations.

Challenges

Aero Energy (Aero) has nine office locations in Pennsylvania and Maryland. The company's contact center is spread across all locations and is comprised of nine queues to handle a number of different customer inquiries. "We have queues to address a full range of customer requests that include new account, equipment delivery and service, steel tanks purchases and basic billing and credit issues," says Brian Salsgiver, IT director for Aero Energy. "We handle around 1,400 on our busiest days, so the contact center is a very critical part of our business."

Aero was having difficulty managing customer hold times within its contact center. "Agents and supervisors had no graphical interface or software to tell them how many people were on hold," says Salsgiver. "Only an administrator could tell how many people were on hold based on the number of lines coming in; and, we were getting complaints from customers about having to hold for so long or no one answering the phone."

Challenges (cont.)

Aero sought a solution that would provide better visibility into its seasonal call volume. “We are very busy in the winter but slow in the summer,” continues Salsgiver. “With such a drastic change in call flow, we needed qualitative data to help us determine when and how to adjust staffing and operations.” The solution would also need to provide advanced routing and queuing.

Aero used Sphericall, NEC’s pure software-based enterprise communications solution, for IP telephony and unified communications. “We wanted to stay with Sphericall because it functioned well,” says Salsgiver. “We needed a solution that provided a higher degree of contact-center functionality but could be easily integrated with our existing Sphericall system.”

Solution

Salsgiver consulted Atris Incorporated, an NEC dealer in Oaks, PA, which recommended UNIVERGE Sphericall Contact Center.

“Sphericall Contact Center offers sophisticated functionality that addresses Aero’s unique requirements,” says Jud Berkowitz, president of Atris Inc. “Because Sphericall is a software-based, open-architecture solution, the contact-center application could be easily integrated so that both applications run in a single environment.”

Sphericall Contact Center has a callback feature which provides callers the option to wait on the line or hang up but keep their position in the queue. “Customers are happy to leave a message if they know you will call them back,” says Salsgiver. “Once customers pick their appropriate department, the callback feature allows them to leave a name, number and message to be called back once they have reached the front of the queue.”

“Our ultimate goal is to provide better service to our callers,” says Salsgiver. “The fact that we are getting fewer complaints lets us know that the solution has helped improve customer service.”

Sphericall Contact Center allows Salsgiver to customize announcements on a per-queue basis. Callers can now be continually updated with changing information relating to their position in the queue. “Telling callers why they are on hold and keeping them updated as time progresses improve customer satisfaction,” says Salsgiver. “It also ensures callers won’t hang up just as they reach the front of the queue, which improves call-abandonment rates.”

The custom-announcement feature makes it easier for Salsgiver to create and manage recorded messages. “Before, I would have to take the hold music file and mix in the other recordings in the middle as one file,” contends the IT director. “Now, I can have Sphericall play hold music, and then the contact-center application interrupts with progress announcements, which greatly simplifies the process and saves a lot of time.”

Sphericall Contact Center’s advanced routing and queuing capabilities allow contact-center supervisors to better manage incoming inquiries. “Managers can actively view queue information in real-time directly from the desktop while doing other things,” says Salsgiver. Managers get a pop-up alert on their screens when call volume and wait times reach a certain threshold. “Upon receiving a popup alert, managers can jump on the phones to help take calls,” continues Salsgiver. “They can also solicit help from experts outside the contact center who are not normally signed into a queue.”

Sphericall Contact Center also empowers agents to help queues throughout other offices that are experiencing increased call volumes. “The company’s headquarters in New Oxford has the largest call volume, so we can have people from other offices and queues log into our system to help with high call volume,” says Salsgiver. Agents in the New Oxford office can also take calls from other offices that may have limited staff. “Sphericall Contact Center allows agents to proactively help without supervisor intervention, so they also contribute to better managing various queues as well as various departments,” adds Salsgiver.

Sphericall Contact Center provides Aero with the in-depth reporting needed for better visibility into operations. “We now know pertinent information about call volume for various times of each day, including hold and talk times,” says Salsgiver. “Now we have the information necessary to staff our facilities and know what was going on with our phone calls.”

Results

Sphericall Contact Center has improved service levels within Aero Energy's contact center. "We see a lot of callers using the call-back feature," says Salsgiver. "Because we offer the option to call them back rather than stay on hold, we now have fewer abandoned calls." The solution's desktop queuing and routing also improves the contact center's average-speed-of-answer rates.

With Sphericall Contact Center's in-depth reporting feature, Aero can better manage and staff its contact center. "Our ultimate goal is to provide better service to our callers," says Salsgiver. "The fact that we are getting fewer complaints lets us know that the solution has helped improve customer service."

Atris Incorporated contributed significantly to Aero's successfully integrating the contact-center solution with the company's existing Sphericall system. "Judd introduced us to Sphericall Contact Center product as well as helped us design our queues for the implementation," says Salsgiver. "We told Atris what we needed and they helped us to figure it out."

Empowered by Innovation



Corporate Headquarters (Japan)
NEC Corporation
www.nec.com

Oceania (Australia)
NEC Australia Pty Ltd
www.nec.com.au

North America (USA & Canada)
NEC Corporation of America
www.necam.com

Asia
NEC Corporation
www.nec.com

Europe (EMEA)
NEC Unified Solutions
www.nec-unified.com

About NEC Corporation of America Headquartered in Irving, Texas, NEC Corporation of America is a leading provider of innovative IT, network and communications products and solutions for service carriers, Fortune 1000 and SMB businesses across multiple vertical industries, including Healthcare, Government, Education and Hospitality. NEC Corporation of America delivers one of the industry's broadest portfolios of technology solutions and professional services, including unified communications, wireless, voice and data, managed services, server and storage infrastructure, optical network systems, microwave radio communications and biometric security. NEC Corporation of America is a wholly-owned subsidiary of NEC Corporation, a global technology leader with operations in 30 countries and more than \$42 billion in revenues. For more information, please visit www.necam.com.

CS10014 | v.08.31.10

© 2010 NEC Corporation. All rights reserved. NEC, NEC logo, and UNIVERGE are trademarks or registered trademarks of NEC Corporation that may be registered in Japan and other jurisdictions. All trademarks identified with ® or ™ are registered trademarks or trademarks respectively. Models may vary for each country. Please refer to your local NEC representatives for further details.