

CASE STUDY:

TRUenergy



CUSTOMER PROFILE: Provider of retail energy

INDUSTRY: Energy

LOCATION: Australia

BUSINESS NEED: Ensure regulatory compliance
Improve quality management processes
Leverage VoIP to drive cost efficiencies

SOLUTION: NICE's VoIP-based Customer Interactions
Solutions for Contact Centers

RESULTS: High rate of meeting regulatory requirements
Improved agent skills
Decreased overhead costs

On NICE:



I used NICE when I was at Vodaphone here in Australia, and I think it's an excellent tool. We are very committed to it.



Gene Alessi, Customer Service Manager

ABOUT TRUenergy

TRUenergy is a national energy organization in Australia, providing retail energy to the mass market and to industrial and commercial customers. TRUenergy supply gas and electricity to 1.1 million customer accounts throughout the country. Energy is produced mainly through two power stations, coal-fired in Victoria and gas-fired in South Australia. The company also has a fairly significant underground gas storage facility and trade energy on the national grid.

The weather in Australia is quite seasonal. In some areas it can get as cold as 3° or 4° Celsius (37°-39° Fahrenheit) in the winter. And in the summer peak temperatures can exceed 35° Celsius (95° Fahrenheit). Most households heat their homes with gas during winter and cool their homes during summer with electricity. This means that TRUenergy has high call volumes during winter as a result of much larger winter gas bills and the same for electricity during the summer period. This translates into about three million transactions annually, i.e. calls into the call center, most of which come in during peak times.

THE CHALLENGE

“Our agents need to be trained not only on good customer service, attentiveness, courtesy, and other “soft skills”, but they also need to understand complicated technical information.”

TRUenergy's contact center agents, or “service consultants”, need to understand a broad spectrum of technical information to provide good customer service, such as the rate of consumption of a particular white goods or household equipment. For example, what sort of power usage would the average air conditioner expend, and the implications these have on usage, volume, and cost.

They are so often asked “why has my gas bill doubled in cost this month?” Service consultants need to be well versed in how to handle these calls. They need to know the series of qualifying questions that will bring the customer to an understanding. For example, “have you been heating your home?”, “how often do you use it?”

CASE STUDY:



And if the answer to this last one is “I heat the house all day and all night”, then the service consultant needs to be trained in bringing the customer to reach the conclusion that the consumption of gas has quadrupled and therefore the bill has quadrupled, thus avoiding a confrontation and potentially dissatisfied customer.

THE SOLUTION

“Firstly, we are using NICE to achieve our regulatory requirements. That is, we need to have recorded evidence of customers accepting every contract they sign up for, and agreeing to the relevant exit fees and penalties. The second, and most major need, is quality control to pick up any training and skills deficiencies and engage in continuous improvement.”

TRUenergy’s service consultants have the great responsibility of ensuring that TRUenergy meets the obligation of their retail license, i.e. ensuring that all terms and conditions are communicated to the customer, when signing them up for the service.

Furthermore, this is a process which involves the customer disclosing a lot of technical detail. NICE helps TRUenergy to make sure that on the one hand, regulatory requirements are met, and on the other hand that the service consultants are successfully coached to handle technical information professionally and accurately.

“Our industry is closely monitored and audited to ensure that all our regulatory requirements are met. NICE gives us the opportunity to demonstrate that compliance and to work with our consultants on any areas of their performance that need more work.”

IMPLEMENTING VoIP

TRUenergy operates in competitive marketplace. Unlike most energy players around the globe that are highly regulated or government owned, TRUenergy is deregulated and privately owned, facing tough competition.

“There was a list of things that we needed to do with our customer service function that we simply could not do with the old platform. And we saw VoIP as a leap-frog technology; we wanted to really push the limits.”

NEXT: INTERACTION ANALYTICS FROM NICE

“We are looking to have some of your fantastic interaction analytics in our VoIP environment. We’re very excited about key word spotting and emotion detection, which we would love to get a hold of to use for customer retention activities – that is, to thaw out customers who might mention our competitors’ names, or use phrases such as ‘leaving your business’.”

Australia’s energy market is currently churning at about 25%. And while TRUenergy is well below the market, they are looking at a variety of creative ways to speed up retention activities, leading these is NICE’s advanced interaction analytics from NICE Perform®.

“This technology from NICE can help us in that regard. We can see really exciting opportunities.”

About NICE Systems

NICE Systems (NASDAQ: NICE) is the leading provider of Insight from Interactions™ solutions and value-added services, powered by advanced analytics of unstructured multimedia content – from telephony, web, radio and video communications. NICE’s solutions address the needs of the enterprise and security markets, enabling organizations to operate in an insightful and proactive manner, and take immediate action to improve business and operational performance and ensure safety and security. NICE has over 24,000 customers in 100 countries, including over 85 of the Fortune 100 companies. More information is available at <http://www.nice.com>.