



Challenge

- Create a single call center platform for inbound service requests from multiple internal/external sources
- Integrate call center with company's RightNow Technologies Customer Relationship Management (CRM) service
- Improve all major call center performance metrics

Solution

- Echopass Call Center On-Demand, integrated with RightNow Technologies

Benefits

- Improved customer service, including adding new customer "self-service" options
- Fewer service personnel needed, while increasing overall customer service quality
- Better agent experience since all customer touch points now unified via common PC/softphone interface
- Direct integration with RightNow CRM enabling instant, personalized service info

Results

- Abandoned call counts down from 25% to 7%
- Customer wait times reduced from (average) 3-1/2 minutes to 45 seconds
- 95% of all customer issues resolved within 24 hours
- 36% fewer inbound calls due to customer self-service
- Echopass reporting features enable better staff scheduling
- Call center employee headcount reduced by 33%

Technology Partners

- RightNow Technologies
- Genesys

Ulta Salon, Cosmetics & Fragrance, Inc. Experiences Beautiful Results From Echopass Call Center On-Demand 'Makeover'

Background

The complexion of health & beauty retailing is changing-and Ulta Salon, Cosmetics & Fragrance is providing the new look. With 160 stores in 21 states and growing fast, Ulta is the ultimate one-stop upscale beauty store for women. Ulta provides cosmetics, fragrances, skin and hair care products, plus a full range of salon services including hair styling, pedicures, manicures, massages and other spa treatments, all under one roof.



Ulta, the brainchild of Terry Hanson and Dick George in 1990 and currently run by CEO Lyn Kirby, is headquartered in the Chicago suburb of Romeoville IL. All of Ulta's corporate and distribution operations are handled from Romeoville, including its call center functions.

Because of Ulta's meteoric growth, inbound contact from customers and in-store personnel had become increasingly difficult to manage. A major concern was the company's fragmented call center infrastructure. Calls from store employees were routed to one department, while customer questions went to another. Many times, when customers were referred to their local Ulta store for assistance, the calls never reached the store.

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—BRUCE DRESSER
Chief Marketing Officer of Echopass

On the e-commerce side, incoming email messages from Ulta's cyber store, Ulta.com, were handled by an outsourced web response company. Ron Brown, Director of Service and Communications for Ulta, realized that consolidating and improving the retailer's call center operations was an essential priority while the company continued its impressive expansion.

"Our primary goal was to route all service requests to a single source," Brown noted. "However, we also had a number of other objectives. First, we wanted to establish a self-service capability for customers who needed routine questions answered, such as store hours or directions. Second, we needed a robust call center reporting capability. And finally, we wanted to improve our overall call center performance, particularly call wait times."

Complete Integration

Brown had shared his company's call processing concerns with representatives from RightNow Technologies, provider of Ulta's CRM (Customer Relationship Management) software services. In response, RightNow told him about Echopass and its Call Center On-Demand service.

"I liked what RightNow had to say about Echopass, especially how it could integrate seamlessly with RightNow Service™, the on demand customer service and support application we use. By deploying



On Demand

Always On

Guaranteed

End to End

Echopass Call Center On-Demand alongside RightNow, we could significantly increase our quality of service across all touch points.”

Echopass is the call and contact center industry’s only provider of on-demand, always on, guaranteed, and end-to-end solutions offered as a complete, web-based service through the Echopass EchoSystem Service Integration Platform. Echopass Call Center On-Demand, the company’s flagship voice offering, incorporates and integrates CRM

applications from providers including RightNow; other components such as Workforce Management and Interactive Voice Response; and best-of-breed IP and routing technologies from Genesys Telecommunications, ensuring the most advanced call center infrastructure at an affordable price.

“Echopass Call Center On-Demand is especially suited to growing companies like Ulta because it provides state-of-the-art call center capabilities instantly, without a major upfront capital

investment,” said Bruce Dresser, chief marketing officer of Echopass. “Customers get all of their most important customer service capabilities like intelligent queuing, customizable routing, screen pops and Interactive Voice Response plus the flexibility to add features and capacity as needed through our on-demand model.”

Brown noted that Echopass Call Center On-Demand’s VoIP capability would allow the system to sidestep the company switchboard. “Up to this time all calls were routed by our operator. With VoIP we could install soft phones at each workstation that could receive calls directly.”

Improved Service Levels

Based on RightNow Technologies’ recommendation and the presentation from Echopass, Ulta chose Echopass Call Center On-Demand for its new call center backbone. Soon after the contract signing, the new EchoSystem was in operation.

Ulta was impressed with how easily the new Echopass capability came on line. “I was pleasantly surprised at the process,” Brown stated. “Echopass worked closely with our IT group and answered our questions whenever we needed help, which was pretty infrequent because the implementation went smoothly. Both RightNow and Echopass assisted with agent training, providing materials and live instruction.”

By linking its CRM capability with its call center, Ulta found it could provide faster, more complete and personalized customer service. FAQs are listed on each agent’s computer screen, giving staffers quick and consistent answers to customer requests. Ulta’s rewards program, the number one reason customers call, is also integrated through Echopass, so agents can now easily access personal point totals to keep callers updated on their balances.

Ulta’s new call center infrastructure allows agents to field both phone and email through a central interface. If the company should choose to add other forms of contact in the future—web chat or fax, for example—Echopass can quickly provide the necessary enhancements.

Exceptional ROI

After several months of service, Brown and his staff more than achieved the performance improvements they were hoping for. Call wait queues have dropped dramatically, from 3.5 minutes on average before Echopass to 45 seconds after its debut. The rate of abandoned calls (customers who hang up before being served) has also dropped significantly, from 25% to 7%.

Overall agent contact volume has dropped 36%, due in large part to the new self-service features of Echopass Call Center On-Demand. A much higher percentage of requests for product information are successfully forwarded to in-store personnel for resolution. In fact, 95% of all customer issues are now resolved within 24 hours.

The reporting tools of the new system are making it easier for Brown to assess and manage service levels. “Our continual tracking of requests is making it easier for us to determine how to train our agents,” he said. “We cross-train all our call center personnel, but eventually we want to develop specialists. This information will help make that possible.” He noted that while Ulta’s in-store systems department still exists, the new infrastructure has freed up technicians so they can concentrate on escalated issues.

Perhaps the most positive bottom-line benefit is reduced staffing and outsourcing costs. With the Echopass system in place, Ulta was able to eliminate their third-party web response. As a result of Echopass, the retailer is able to offer longer call center hours and better service, with one-third less headcount than before.

“Almost every aspect of our customer and store service has improved,” Brown said. “We’re able to quantify information easier and have streamlined our service structure. In a few short months we’ve become a more professional company.”

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