

Budget Insurance Services

FINANCIAL SERVICES CASE STUDY

SMART PEOPLE
BUDGET

The Budget Group has been in business for more than 10 years and has grown significantly during this time, both by acquisition and organically. The company has developed a reputation based on price and quickly achieved an enviable record in client retention. However, to fulfil its ambition to be the UK's leading insurance intermediary, Budget recognised that its price differentiator was no longer enough. Service was going to be key and it was this that became the driving force behind the company's instigation of a three year plan for improving customer service, a plan that meant a major overhaul of the company's call recording system.

Budget - The Company

The Budget Group is based in Peterborough and is one of the UK's leading personal lines insurance intermediaries, employing 1,900 people. The company has more than

750,000 customers, 86 high street retail outlets, and major contact centre operations in Peterborough, Coventry and Sunderland.

The contact centres are staffed by more than 700 agents and handle around 700,000 calls a month. But this is set to grow, as the most recently established Sunderland centre becomes fully operational during the course of 2003.

The contact centres provide a range of insurance products to consumers, including motor, bike, home, van and travel insurance. And, to most effectively manage the business, the contact centres are split into three main departments - Sales, Customer Service and Renewals.

Budget - The Recording Challenges

Budget was no stranger to call recording, using it for training, compliance and, ultimately, to improve the quality of customer service. But the old system was an analogue, tape-based platform that quickly became redundant in the light of Budget's new demands.

For instance, with service improvements the primary motivator behind the review of the old system, the existing storage issues were also posing major challenges. Tapes had to be physically stored in areas of valuable office space

around the building. The retrieval process of any given conversation often took days. This was unacceptable, leaving an unsatisfactorily long lapse before being able to resolve a customer query.

In addition, Budget needed a call recording solution to enable it to improve quality measurement and monitoring of agents. This was going to form the underlying part of a new training and motivation initiative entitled the 'Customer Services Career Ladder'. It is this initiative that lies at the heart of Budget's overall plans for improving customer service. It was introduced in 2002 in the Customer Service department to give each agent a three to five year career plan and came about in response to agent demands for more promotion and career opportunities in a company where management turnover is very low.

The Customer Services Career Ladder Programme allows Budget to proactively train, coach, reward and remunerate contact centre agents and is intended to improve what is already an exceptionally low agent attrition rate. Inherent to this is the widely held belief that better trained and motivated agents will ultimately manage customers better and improve the overall experience that customers receive when calling Budget.

ULTRA
INTELLIGENT
RECORDING

"ULTRA has quickly become an integral part of our customer service and quality strategy."

Nick Edwards,
Senior Manager Renewals,
Budget Insurance Services

VERINT
POWERING ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE™

VERINT - ULTRA the recording solution and the results

In February 2002, after a rigorous selection process, Budget opted for the Verint ULTRA platform – a digitally based intelligent recording system that would easily meet Budget's wish list. It records every single call and stores them digitally on the system to ensure both rapid retrieval as well as removing the need to store physical tapes. And retrieval is straightforward, triggered by any of a number of criteria, from policy number to date or time of call.

In fact, the business has already seen some fantastic returns from the investment. Nick Edwards, Senior Manager, Renewals, takes up the story. "Since ULTRA went live in February 2002, the results have been virtually immediate, and impressive," he says. "In fact, ULTRA has quickly become an integral part of our customer service and quality strategy."

For instance, ULTRA is able to retrieve recordings within just minutes now, making dispute resolution far quicker than before. According to Nick, ULTRA has saved at least 10 hours a week in recording retrieval in the Renewals team alone.

And, as part of the agents' system for self-scoring against certain quality criteria, the Customer Services and Renewals teams have seen their quality scores improve by up to 12.5%. Agents are also better placed now, because of the improvements in coaching, to better articulate the key differentiators and value of the Budget proposition with customers at the time of renewal, so automatically improving an already very impressive customer retention rate. In fact, there has already been a 0.25% increase in the numbers of customers renewing.

And, in the same period, there has been a 0.1% reduction in the number of customers who cancel policies mid term.

Nick continues, "Our quality and conversion rates have increased against previous levels and we've been able to implement wider coaching and quality initiatives. For instance, team leaders and supervisors can now initiate any corrective action that may be required straight away and tailor the coaching or address any issues immediately. In fact, ULTRA is directly attributable to the improvements we have made."

Since its launch, the 'Customer Services Career Ladder' programme has gone from strength to strength and Nick puts much of this down to the vital role that ULTRA plays. He explains, "ULTRA has become an invaluable and intrinsic part of this initiative, where recordings of customer transactions enable us to assess our customers' experiences and use this intelligence to shape the direction of our staff training and development."

He continues, "This is vital for ensuring we continue to provide the best customer service while maintaining our below average staff turnover. And, as the Customer Services Career Ladder programme rolls out company wide, ULTRA will work even harder for us."

As Budget has grown, not just by the number of customers and agents but also sites, the quality team would have needed to double in size if the business had continued with the existing analogue recording platform. However, using ULTRA the team has stayed the same size, and yet can evaluate double the number of calls.

When focusing on each call, it previously took in excess of three minutes to actually set a call up for evaluation which included finding the tape and then identifying the required call on the tape. Since using ULTRA, Budget has now been able to cut this time to approximately one minute for each call.

What next?

Budget has rolled out the implementation of the ULTRA platform through its three contact centres in Peterborough, Coventry and Sunderland, allowing for centralised quality monitoring of these teams.

As the business continues to evolve, and Budget's affiliate channels grow, then additional capacity will be required for recording and also quality management.

Why Verint?

Budget chose ULTRA for the ability to grow with their business. ULTRA provides a unique approach to handling centralised storage and quality monitoring but localised recording enables Budget to be confident of delivering against their business plans.

"We chose Verint Systems because we felt that they were in a different league in terms of the overall capability of their system and the value their solutions provide," said Harry Wright, director of technical services and property at Budget.

"We were also impressed by the Verint team, which was very professional and went the extra mile to meet all our requirements. The new system will not only help us achieve our customer service goals, but will bring efficiency gains and a good return on our investment."

About Verint Systems

Verint Systems (NASDAQ: VRNT) is a leading global provider of analytic software-based solutions for communications interception, networked video, and business intelligence. Verint solutions transform voice, video, and text into actionable intelligence - timely, mission-critical insights for achieving strategic goals.

Verint. Actionable Intelligence for a Smarter Enterprise™.

Call us at: **+44 (0) 1932 839 500**

Email: marketing.emea@verint.com

Or on the web at: www.verint.com

Verint Systems, 241 Brooklands Road, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0RH.

© 2004 Verint Systems Inc.

VERINT
POWERING ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE™