

SF311 Enables Remote Work and Enhances Self-Service to Address the Demands of COVID-19

Background

San Francisco 311 (SF311) is the primary customer service center for the City and County of San Francisco, which is home to nearly 900,000 residents. As part of normal business, the organization does considerable planning for various disruptions such as earthquakes, power outages, and other extraordinary events.

When COVID-19 struck, SF311 was presented with a truly unique scenario. The pandemic required the organization to rapidly transition employees to remote work, while also ensuring the public had easy access to timely, consistent, and accurate information.

Quickly and Effectively Enabling Remote Work

Prior to implementing a work-from-home solution, SF311's disaster recovery plan called for work to continue in a less than optimal space at City Hall. Furthermore, a few years before, the organization undertook a telecom upgrade to voice-over-IP. This provided functionality needed to support remote work, but it was never fully implemented. In response to the pandemic, SF311 worked tirelessly to accelerate the enablement of remote working to address the demands created by COVID-19.

Verint® Engagement Management Professional™ was critical in enabling SF311 to quickly shift to remote work, and effectively support its workforce and residents after the move. By making the Verint solution available through a proxy server, customer service representatives (CSRs) and city staff can easily access it remotely without a VPN. In addition, as employees transitioned to home offices, SF311 procured the equipment necessary to give them as close to an in-office experience as possible. A testament to its efforts and success, only six people remained in the office by choice after a few short weeks.

Quickly and Accurately Informing the Public

When California issued a shelter-in-place order, the announcement generated a surge in calls from people seeking information about the changing circumstances. As a result, it became paramount that SF311 was able to provide vital public health-related information. This created several challenges SF311 had to contend with.

First, SF311 had to ensure consistent messaging. The organization needed a way to centralize rapidly changing public-facing information instead of it being scattered and updated separately. Doing so would help to maintain consistency and limit the amount of conflicting or inaccurate information. Second, SF311 needed an effective way to present the information that CSRs provided to the public.

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Customer Success Story



Solutions

Verint® Engagement Management Professional™



Industry

Local government



Region

United States

Results

- Transitioned employees to remote work quickly and effectively.
- Strengthened information dissemination.
- Improved self-service, in turn making a safer environment for both residents and staff.

Finally, the organization needed an effective way to measure the public's consumption of the information. Understanding receptiveness and the extent of any information gaps was critical. This was even more important given that some legacy systems had data sampling limitations, which inhibited SF311's efforts to gain a full picture of its metrics.

As with enabling remote work, Verint Engagement Management Professional was critical in helping SF311 overcome these challenges.

To start, the organization leveraged the "temp events" functionality within the Verint software. "Temp events" provides a way of highlighting the specific knowledge articles most relevant to the calls that CSRs are likely to be receiving. As an influx of COVID-related calls was expected, "temp events" enabled SF311 to instantly provide CSRs with quick-and-easy answers from the start. SF311 also broke down some larger knowledge articles into smaller segments for quicker access.

SF311 then quickly established a process to consume new information added to the sf.gov website, so it could reliably distribute all COVID-related information to the public, CSRs, and other staff. Simultaneously, the Verint search engine functionality helped address the growing number of "temp events," enabling users to search specifically for COVID-tagged articles. Because of the way that the display of knowledge articles is prioritized, "temp events" articles automatically appear at the top of the search results if they are related to the query.

To accurately measure the performance of COVID-19 articles, SF311 created a new reporting process. Instead of only tracking the number of views on articles, the organization implemented additional context recording. This enabled the creation of daily reports with breakdowns of article access, article usage, and distribution channel. With this insight, SF311 can clearly identify what information the public is seeking and what they find most valuable.

Optimizing Information Flow

Employees of SF311 facilitate the flow of information to city and county residents and are deemed essential workers. In the wake of COVID-19, the organization needed to optimize the flow of information both internally and to the public. With each announcement, whether about business closures, mask requirements, or other protocol changes, SF311 needed an easy way to collect information in forms while adhering to privacy and compliance laws.

In the past, a new form took a minimum of six weeks to develop and deploy. However, following an in-depth analysis of popular form options, the SF311 team was able to clearly identify Verint as the optimal solution. This was particularly true in core areas such as tracking a case, customer information, integration with mapping, and reporting. With Verint Engagement Management Professional, SF311 was able to quickly develop the online forms needed to address its COVID-19 requirements.

With the move to online forms, SF311 built a master template to help speed form development. It also leveraged example forms from the Verint Community and the Verint support team for added efficiency. Consequently, the organization was able to successfully reduce the amount of time it takes to deploy a form to one week.

As a result, SF311 enhanced self-service, making information flow more efficient and effective, providing a better option to minimize the sprawl of form types. Overall, the forms enable the organization to meet the City's goal to push core city services online, helping to make a safer environment for all.



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