

Case Study

University of Canberra gets smart with NEC

Seasonal student demands for information were playing havoc with The University of Canberra's customer service especially during peak enrolment periods. Now, a unique NEC online hosted contact centre solution called Agent 99 is proving any organisation can take control and get smart with their customer contact.



The Challenge

Located in the national capital, the University of Canberra has enrolments of approximately 10,000 students across 30 professional disciplines. At specific times during the year (particularly prior to new year enrolments), student enquiries peak as students attempt to gain information on courses for the coming year/semester. With a staff of only four to manage this seasonal influx, the University was struggling to meet demand and provide customer service. The result was missed calls, a backlog of voicemails and an increase in customer complaints.

"Under our previous caller enquiry system, we had no idea of the extent of our caller backlog or the number of calls we were missing," says the Manager of the University of Canberra Student Centre, Nick Rendina. The university also found that once the students were on the line and talking to a customer service agent, there was no easy access to the student's information or record of previous enquiries. The result proved frustrating for both the student and university staff.

More significantly, says Rendina, the university had no management reporting information systems in place to measure and report on any caller statistics.

"We really needed to streamline what we were doing and how we were doing it," he says.

Consequently, the university's IT group set about finding a technology solution to the problem. They soon realised many vendors were simply not interested in providing a contact centre solution for only four seats. What they didn't expect was to discover Agent 99, NEC's online hosted contact centre solution for the SME market.

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The Solution

As the user of one of NEC's largest PBXs, The University of Canberra had an established relationship with NEC. As part of an Australian-first trial, NEC offered the university a three-month trial of an innovative new contact centre solution, Agent 99, complete with full NEC support.

"The university sector are traditionally early technology adopters however many are constrained by limited budgets," says Andre Szep from NEC Business Solutions.

"Agent 99 offers the perfect answer. It's a hosted, on-demand customer contact solution that combines phone, email, live web chat and customer records together in an easy-to-use browser interface. It's also delivered via the Internet meaning there's no outlay on costly hardware or software, just a pay-for-use fee. All the customer service agent requires is a web browser and a phone line."

All Agent 99 infrastructure is hosted at NEC's data centre (Mulgrave, Victoria), providing total security and safety against intrusion, power loss or any other threat. With a proven uptime of 99.9 percent, customer responsiveness is always guaranteed. NEC also handles all maintenance, upgrades, functionality and support for no extra cost negating the need for customers to focus any technical resources on the solution.

Every contact that comes into the university (via phone, email or web) is presented in one clear view to the customer service agents.

"With clever management features available real-time from the desktop, Agent 99 enables university staff to easily track activities and details for all inbound and outbound customer contacts," says Szep.

"Agent 99's sophisticated reporting tools provide both real time and historic intelligence, enabling the university's customer service operators to quickly and easily view and change incoming channels, queues, agent groups and profiles to match changing demands." The solution is also on demand and highly scalable, with the speed to market a clear advantage.

"Where the installation of a customer contact solution once took six to eight weeks, Agent 99 can be up and running in around three days, and for as few as two customer service agents," says Szep.

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Andre Szep, NEC Business Solutions

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The Benefits

For The University of Canberra, the benefits are clear.

Thanks to Agent 99's management reporting systems, the university now knows it receives around 1400 calls and 430 emails every week in peak times. Previously, there was no formal method for capturing this critical information other than manually, which was not always accurate.

"Agent 99 has been brilliant," says Rendina.

"For the first time, it's given us accountability for our customer contact and the ability to manage incoming enquiries."

"Agent 99 is also great for the university budget as there's no capital expenditure, just a pay-for-use monthly fee," says Rendina. "Plus we've got the greater flexibility of being able to up or downscale depending on our call volume requirements."

"In the short term, it definitely suits our needs. It's certainly working, the frustration levels we're used to are simply not there anymore, and our people are happy."

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About NEC Business Solutions

NEC Business Solutions Ltd provides voice, data and video solutions for business and government. The company uses its expertise in Internet-based telephony, contact centres and managed services, and strong partnerships with other leading companies to creatively and affordably solve business problems.

NEC Business Solutions employs 750 staff nationally, and is a wholly owned subsidiary of NEC Australia.

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