

Better service in the pipeline: James Hardie FRC pipes and NEC Q-Master^{EX}

JAMES HARDIE

James Hardie FRC Pipes, the world leader in manufacturing fibre reinforced concrete pipes and fittings, have a vision of offering top customer service through their national contact centre, a function that fulfils order placement, requests for quotes, and responds to technical queries.

Keith Harrison, the Customer Logistics Manager, was facing challenges that needed to be addressed quickly, without disrupting the existing service.

"Our national Contact Centre is integral to the success of our business," said Keith. "Yet we were facing a situation where, by using an open-loop system, we were losing calls. Also, we had no queuing capabilities, so customers would end up on hold sometimes for longer times than we – or they – were happy with. With a call abandonment rate of around 8%, we were very keen to reduce it."

The contact centre agents at James Hardie FRC Pipes receive incoming calls from end users such as contractors, builders and consultants. Outbound calls are also made to a variety of customers involved in James Hardie projects.

"Our agents felt very strongly about improving our level of service," explained Keith. "They take pride in their work and our business, and we wanted a technology solution that would allow them to deliver the high level of service they desire to."

"We felt Q-Master^{EX} provides true and sophisticated computer telephony integration, and that this was the solution to make our contact centre more responsive, efficient and cost effective", said Keith Harrison, Customer Logistics Manager, James Hardie.

After reviewing several systems, James Hardie selected an NEC Q-Master^{EX} contact centre solution. "We liked the fact that it's a modular suite of software for setting up, running and managing a contact centre," said Keith. "We felt Q-Master^{EX} provides true and sophisticated computer telephony integration, and that this was the solution to make our contact centre more responsive, efficient and cost effective."

The next step was to implement Q-Master^{EX} without disrupting the James Hardie contact centre.

"There's always a concern when you shut down your phone network", said Keith. "But with Q-Master^{EX}, we shut the network down one evening, and by the next morning the entire system was up and running successfully".

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Q-Master_{EX} now provides James Hardie with the ability to see and monitor the status of every call, in every queue.

"This queue visibility allows our contact centre supervisor to monitor queues, and to identify callers who have been in a queue for an unacceptable period of time," said Keith.

"It allows us to have agents logged into multiple queues, and lets them handle peaks from other queues when their queues are quiet. "As a result, we've found that call abandonment has reduced from 8% to 2%. We're delighted with this outcome, and it demonstrates that Q-Master_{EX} is enabling us to deliver the high levels of customer service that we strive for," said Keith.

Another of the key benefits Q-Master_{EX} delivers to James Hardie is increased visibility of agents. This is delivered through one of the Q-Master_{EX} modules, Q-Agent.

"Previously our contact centre supervisor would have to physically check whether an agent was available to take calls", said Keith. "Now, since the implementation of Q-Agent, each agent's name and status is displayed on the desktop. This saves time, and means our supervisor is constantly aware of agent and queue activities, which avoids the possibility of abandoned calls if agents are absent," he said.

The availability of real time information on agents and queues allows for better management of the contact centre.

"Previously we received monthly reports, which made it difficult to determine why problems had occurred," explained Keith. "With Q-Master_{EX}, we are tracking calls on a daily, or even hourly basis, and we can react to problems immediately."

James Hardie FRC Pipes has further plans to extend and develop the role of their Contact Centre, to keep pace with the quickly changing needs of customers.

"Email and fax management, web enablement and voicemail are just a few of the additional modules that we'll be looking at," said Keith. "All of these are available to us as integrated modules into Q-Master_{EX}, which means we can continue to extend our complete contact centre solution."

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