



Channelling customer satisfaction

Automated messaging from VoiceSage enables home-shopping giant QVC to keep UK customers updated on deliveries with a solution that has paid for itself in savings on stationery and postage alone

QVC is a leading multichannel retailer, best known for its TV home shopping channels. QVC UK is carried on satellite, cable and digital platforms throughout England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, reaching 24 million homes. Repeatedly named Best Shopping Channel and this year awarded Best Niche TV Channel in the annual Freesat Awards, it broadcasts 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Its customer operations centre is the largest private sector employer in Knowsley, Liverpool.

Until 2010 the customer operations centre relied on traditional outbound contact methods – a combination of calls, emails and letters by post - to notify customers of any delays in the shipment of goods. This activity accounts for 70,000 outbound messages each month. Creating the content was time-consuming and incurred delays. Generating outbound customer communications in response to a new event, such as extreme weather, could take 2-3 days. As well as being inefficient, the process meant customers did not always receive timely information.

New alerts in hours, not days

To improve productivity, reduce costs and speed up customer contact, QVC surveyed the market for an automated outbound messaging solution. It chose a combined Interactive Voice Messaging (IVM) and text (SMS) messaging solution from VoiceSage. This is hosted externally, yet can be controlled by the customer services team. Using the solution, QVC can broadcast personalised voice messages to customers' home phones or mobiles, or text messages to their mobiles, alerting them in plenty of time if there is any delay or issue with their order. Together, VoiceSage and QVC have developed standardised templates, allowing customer services personnel to generate and distribute new outbound messages in just 3-4 hours, a fraction of the time taken before.

QVC forecast that just removing the cost of stationery and postage used for mail-outs would more than pay for the VoiceSage solution, which it calculates is saving the company £64,000 a year. Just as importantly, it has improved customer satisfaction. The company has not had a single complaint since implementing the responsive new system.

"If we need something urgently, they have the flexibility to turn around a solution promptly. As well as being more efficient and making significant savings, VoiceSage has enabled us to provide a more engaging and responsive service to customers, leading to greater trust in our brand."

James Keegan, QVC's Director of Customer Services in the UK





Reassuring customers about returns

Having seen what the technology can do, QVC has begun to envisage other applications for it. Most recently it has begun using the VoiceSage IVM and SMS solution to confirm receipt of returned goods. Previously the process involved issuing letters through the post. Because this would take three days, customers would often call the customer services department to check their items had been received, generating 20,000 calls a year. By eliminating these calls, QVC has saved £20,000, in addition to eliminating customer uncertainty.

Finding new opportunities together

In the future it is likely that QVC will deploy VoiceSage in additional ways, for example in marketing, and collections. Management information generated by the systems offer QVC the chance to monitor its operations more closely, identifying call trends, which could be useful to the business.

Commenting on QVC's reasons for selecting VoiceSage, James Keegan, the company's Director of Customer Services in the UK, says, "With VoiceSage we have created a strong partnership that works extremely well. With their expertise, they were able to guide us to the appropriate solution for what we wanted to achieve. They are very agile as an organisation too: if we need something urgently, they have the flexibility to turn around a solution promptly. As well as being more efficient and making significant savings, VoiceSage has enabled us to provide a more engaging and responsive service to customers, leading to greater trust in our brand."

AT A GLANCE

Application

- Interactive Voice Messaging
- SMS Messaging

Business Challenges

- Routine customer notifications were labour-intensive and slow
- Customers lacked certainty about deliveries and returns
- Desire to eliminate stationery and postal costs & consolidate outbound communications
- Need to get messages out the same day

Benefits

- Routine outbound communications automated
- Stationery and postal costs eliminated
- Substantial reduction in inbound calls
- Increased responsiveness – new messages issued within hours
- Increased customer satisfaction