

TD Waterhouse invests in improved customer service with IBM and KANA

Overview

■ Challenge

TD Waterhouse recognised that first class customer service was vital to its market leading position. With fluctuating demand for contact centre agents, knowledge provision needed to be transformed to enhance agent performance.

■ Why become an On Demand Business?

TD Waterhouse needed to integrate information provision with its business processes, enabling agents to respond flexibly to varying demands.

■ Solution

TD Waterhouse teamed with IBM Business Consulting Services to develop a knowledge management strategy for its contact centre using a KANA solution to integrate knowledge across the business.

■ Key Benefits

- *Customer Satisfaction Index up 10 per cent across all brands*
- *Agent productivity up 5.5 per cent, agent errors down 29 per cent.*

» On Demand Business defined

An enterprise whose business processes – integrated end-to-end across the company and with key partners, suppliers and customers – can respond with speed to any customer demand, market opportunity or external threat.



Providing telephone and online access to a range of brokerage, managed fund and other consumer financial products, TD Waterhouse is one of the world's largest discount brokers. Currently number two in the UK market in terms of trading revenue and number of trades, the company is competitive on price and offers a full range of products – but so do its rivals, to varying degrees. Retaining a leading position means cost effectively offering customers the best possible experience, encouraging them to come back again and again. “Customer service is the most important aspect of our business and everyone’s bonus is linked to our Customer Satisfaction Index,” says Darren Hepworth, Vice President, Customer Services at TD Waterhouse.

The demand for investor services is difficult to predict, so companies need extremely flexible resourcing to capture revenue opportunities when they appear and scale down to cut costs when they disappear. TD Waterhouse addresses this issue by supplementing a core permanent workforce with temporary staff. However, temporary staff may be inexperienced and come from differing backgrounds yet must handle a large variety of telephone enquiries including potentially complex share transactions after just a few weeks training.

On Demand Business Benefits

- Enhanced customer service through better call handling
- Improved productivity and performance from unified access to information
- Increased business flexibility due to reduced agent training requirements
- Improved employee satisfaction – interdepartmental cooperation up 50 per cent.
- Employee induction time halved
- Financial payback for project within 15 months

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Darren Hepworth, Vice President, Customer Services, TD Waterhouse

A joint venture agreement between TD Waterhouse, National Westminster Bank and the Royal Bank of Scotland means contact centre agents must also handle calls for three differently branded product sets. It is a challenge to keep frontline staff informed.

Looking to transform information provision

TD Waterhouse was aware that customer service could only be improved by radically transforming the way knowledge was provided to its contact centre agents. Agents needed easy access to relevant information as they were interacting with customers, enabling them to respond appropriately to different situations. “We thought that a Service Resolution Management (SRM) solution might help address our business challenges and decided to investigate,” says Hepworth.

A four-week pilot of a KANA SRM solution proved the potential benefits through carefully chosen metrics. It measured changes in call handling times, number of calls handed on to a third party, customer complaints, compensation payments for errors made and much more. Convinced of its worth, TD Waterhouse decided to implement the solution known internally as Resolve.

Learning from experts

KANA recognised, however, that with no previous in-house expertise, TD Waterhouse would struggle to implement Resolve in the most effective way. Optimising the solution requires development of a knowledge management strategy that efficiently integrates information provision with business processes. KANA recommended IBM as the best company to help. “IBM’s expertise, project management and coaching skills were integral to the speed and ease of our implementation,” says Hepworth. “It’s not just about plugging in a new solution, the knowledge management strategy needs careful planning and that’s one area where IBM really helped.”

The TD Waterhouse team was supported by a multi-skilled IBM project lead. He helped them develop the knowledge management strategy, plan the communications strategy and prioritise activities right from the start. “It was tempting to try and do everything at once,” says Hepworth. “IBM suggested we take three days at the start of the project to construct a model of the procedures we were going to build. That enabled us to prioritise our biggest pain points and address those first.”

With IBM’s help the launch of the new solution went very smoothly. “IBM worked with us in developing a training programme and maintained an obvious presence onsite around the time of the launch. It was reassuring to know the team was available to anyone with concerns or questions,” explains Hepworth.

Overcoming operational challenges

Based on an open, scalable, fully integrated IBM infrastructure, Resolve adapts easily to the rapid change inherent in TD Waterhouse's business. The company has measured results in three key areas where improved knowledge provision has provided benefit: cost reduction, customer service and employee satisfaction.

Cost savings are particularly evident in relation to employee productivity. Agent productivity is up 5.5 per cent and call handling times have reduced by 5 per cent. Referrals to team leaders are down 17 per cent. Hepworth says: "This has had a stunning effect not only on the costs associated with tying up two people on a single call, but also on our performance, freeing team leaders to do what they should be doing – leading the team, coaching staff and maintaining the quality of customer service." Referrals to operational staff are also down 15 per cent. Agent errors have been reduced by 29 per cent further lowering costs and improving customer service. Overall, the project has seen a financial payback within 15 months.

It used to take four weeks to train a new or temporary member of staff to a basic level of competence. Agents are now productive in just two weeks. Instead of having to learn about every product or situation they might be questioned about, they simply learn how to use the knowledge management solution and gain real-time access to the information required for accurate, efficient enquiry resolution.

The Customer Satisfaction Index, on which staff bonuses are based, has improved by 10 per cent across all brands since the launch of the solution. A key measure within the Customer Satisfaction Index is the length of time a customer is kept on hold while a query is dealt with. Hold times are down overall by 18 per cent.

A regular internal staff survey measures co-operation between departments within TD Waterhouse. This has improved significantly since IBM began introducing the new solution. "Staff feel good because they are more self-sufficient when resolving problems and customers benefit," says Hepworth. "IBM Business Consulting Service's relentless support was a key factor in the project's success. I was conscious we were inexperienced in both project management and knowledge management strategy, but nothing was too much trouble for the IBM team. Their expertise was invaluable and certainly helped us get the best from our implementation."

Key Components

Software

- KANA IQ

Servers

- IBM @server xSeries

Services

- IBM Business Consulting Services
– Design and Implementation Services
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Award winning knowledge sharing

The solution is already being rolled out to the operational areas of TD Waterhouse. Eventually, regardless of where you are in the organisation, you will have access to the same version of information.

Everyone involved in the project was delighted to see its success publicly recognised when TD Waterhouse received a CRM Excellence Award from Technology Marketing Corporation's (TMC's) Customer Interaction Solutions magazine – the premier publication in the CRM, call centre and teleservices industries.

TD Waterhouse expects to see benefits from the solution continue to grow. "We are currently exploring with IBM the possibility of providing customers with self-service access to our knowledge database over the web. By giving access to more information on line we would improve customer service and take cost out of our business by helping our customers to help themselves," concludes Hepworth.

For more information

Please contact your IBM sales representative or IBM Business Partner.

Visit us at: ibm.com/ondemand

About KANA

KANA is a leading provider of Service Resolution Management (SRM) solutions that improve customer satisfaction, reduce service costs, and increase revenues. KANA's award-winning suite of customer service solutions for assisted, self, and proactive service enables companies to resolve customer requests quickly and accurately across multiple channels. Built on the industry's most advanced Web architecture, KANA's solutions are in use at approximately half of the world's largest 100 companies. For more information visit www.kana.com.

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