



QueueBuster is an essential customer satisfaction tool for Britannia

Britannia Building Society first introduced Netcall's hosted QueueBuster service to its customer service operation in April 2005 to help reduce customer queues during busy periods. Today it is viewed by the mutual building society as an essential customer satisfaction tool, supporting its aims of being known for the excellence of its customer experience and to build systems and processes that are among the most cost-efficient in UK financial services.

With around three million members and 254 branches across the country, Britannia is the UK's second biggest mutual building society. Its contact centre in Leek, Staffordshire is home to 85 customer service advisors and a similar number of sales advisors. It handles around 17,000 calls per week and is supported by a new contact centre based in Bristol.

Managing seasonal peaks in call volumes

Like many financial organisations, Britannia experiences seasonal peaks in call volumes. In January Britannia sends out its annual mortgage statements; in February the building society issues its annual Membership Reward, which has shared more than £471 million profits with members in the past 11 years; and this peak is followed by activity generated by its savings products in March and April, the traditional end of the financial year.

While Britannia is committed to getting staffing levels right to maintain its service levels throughout the year, the training required for its multi-skilled contact centre makes it impractical to recruit extra staff for its busiest peaks during the first five months of the year. In March 2005, Britannia decided it needed a solution to help manage the queues at these peak periods. Gerard Hearson, Senior Analyst at the Leek Contact Centre, was tasked with finding that solution. He explains:

"Finding the right balance between staffing levels and call volumes is a challenge for any contact centre and queues can build up quickly if there is a sudden surge in call volumes. A Senior Manager asked me to find a way to take the pressure off our staff at these times and to minimise the time our customers spend waiting in the queue. Fortunately the answer was at hand, in the form of Netcall's hosted QueueBuster application."

QueueBuster "on demand"

Netcall's QueueBuster solution allows customers to avoid waiting in the queue by offering them the option to choose a fully automated callback before hanging up. The system then queues on behalf of the customer and calls them back as soon as an advisor becomes available. In 2005 Netcall introduced an "on demand" QueueBuster service, hosted remotely on Netcall's fully-managed Intelligent Communications Platform™. Gerard Hearson continues:

"While we had looked at QueueBuster in the past, the system required a significant upfront investment in hardware. However, the hosted business model provided a much more attractive option, allowing us to use the service on a 'pay as you go' basis. We decided to trial the solution for an initial six month period while we entered into a tender process to explore alternative solutions in the market-place. The QueueBuster trial itself was up and running within three weeks."



Britannia's technical team found QueueBuster lived up to its claim of being a non-intrusive application and was easy to integrate with their Genesys ACD. The building society uses skills-based routing to deliver customer enquiries to appropriately trained advisors. Since call length varies slightly between different types of call, Britannia's technical analysts have defined queue thresholds so that QueueBuster automatically 'switches on' when it is needed.

Best fit for Britannia's needs

The initial trial was successful, helping to reduce abandoned calls and improve service levels. It also received an overwhelmingly positive response from Britannia's customers. The trial was extended for a further ten months while the building society completed its tender process.

In July 2006 Britannia decided that the hosted model offered by Netcall was an ideal match for its needs. QueueBuster was rolled out to support a further 85 advisors in Britannia's Sales and Customer Retention teams, also based in the Leek call centre. In July 2007 it was introduced to Britannia's Bristol contact centre. Gerard Hearson explains:

"Although we looked at other vendors, we could find only one other solution that matched QueueBuster's functionality but this required a significant investment in hardware. We were impressed with QueueBuster and decided that the hosted solution was the best fit for our needs."

Results

QueueBuster was introduced during a period of unprecedented growth for Britannia. In September 2005 the society completed its £150m purchase of the former Bristol & West savings business and branch network, marking a step change in the scale of Britannia's core Member Business, which grew by a third in terms of members, savings balances and branches.

In 2006, Britannia's customer satisfaction scores were at best ever levels with 86% of customers saying they would recommend Britannia. Despite 700,000 new customers joining from Bristol & West, customer complaints were down for the second successive year, having fallen by more than 40% since 2004. Gerard Hearson believes that QueueBuster has contributed to these impressive statistics:

"For Britannia, the real value of QueueBuster has been the improved customer satisfaction that it has helped to deliver. When asked for feedback, our customers have given QueueBuster glowing reviews. While QueueBuster has helped us to reduce abandoned calls and to maintain our service levels during busy periods, it has also produced some notable 'softer' benefits. For example, we have noticed that when we call our customers back, the conversations usually begin on a warmer note. This in turn leads to greater staff satisfaction."

Longer and better relationships

In 2006, Britannia increased sales of mortgages, personal loans, investment and insurance in an immensely competitive market. QueueBuster provided valuable support for the building society's marketing campaigns, taking the heat off call centre queues during call spikes created by advertising and other promotional activity. Gerard Hearson concludes:

"There is no doubt that QueueBuster has given our sales team the opportunity to talk to customers who might have gone elsewhere, helping us to build market share, particularly for our mortgage products. QueueBuster has also made a helpful contribution to our key objective of building longer and better relationships with our customers."

About Netcall

Netcall is the leading specialist in callback, auto-messaging and contact solutions, helping organisations increase profits and productivity while improving customer satisfaction and employee morale. Based near Cambridge (UK), the company has over 20 employees and is quoted on the Alternative Investments Market (AIM), adhering to the disclosure standards required by the London Stock Exchange.



your call is our call

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