

Apropos Technology

Success Story

Absolute Quality Provides Complete Customer Satisfaction with Apropos Technology's Call Center Solution

Absolute Quality, Inc. of Hunt Valley, Maryland, is the world's largest provider of testing and technical support for entertainment, educational and multimedia software. The company services four of the top 10 publishers in the industry, representing close to 80 percent of market revenues.

Absolute Quality is recognized as a leader in game software testing and support in both single and multi-player environments. The company provides software developers with a wide variety of back office support functions, which include functionality and compatibility testing, translation and localization services, customer technical support and user manual preparation and review. In addition, the company has a major presence in bringing game and educational software to market.

software is released. By working closely with publishing and development clients, Absolute Quality works as if they are an in-house operation for quality assurance and technical support.

Absolute Quality's technical support center plays a significant role in all aspects of product support for its clients. From the creation of a knowledge base of information, based on testing experience and client input to web, e-mail, interactive voice response (IVR) and fax support for end users, Absolute Quality puts the entire support program together. The

Integrated testing and technical support is what gives Absolute Quality an edge over its competition. If they can be involved throughout the entire development and testing process, Absolute Quality is in a significantly better position to support the client's products after the

program enables Absolute Quality's clients' customers to access FAQs, E-mail, Web self-help, tech tips, Web E-mail, play hints and direct support of any kind through any interaction mode. Apropos and Vantive (a leader in the front-office software market and an Apropos application partner) enable the management of the entire process through dialed number identification service (DNIS) and IVR input so that the customer can be routed based on agent skill sets.

In addition, customers can utilize a knowledge base on the Absolute Quality Web site to gain access to FAQs and other support so agents are free to answer customers that require special attention.

The Problem

Prior to mid-1998, Absolute Quality supported its client-base with an IVR connected to an Intertel Axxess PBX. Development and implementation of the IVR scripts was a tedious, limited process. Call distribution was handled by simple ACD functionality within the PBX and the set-up required to provide effective support was inefficient. Not only was the system unable to handle growth, but reporting was limited to simple PBX output, requiring a great deal of time and effort to create meaningful customer statistics.

Absolute Quality realized that with the ever-changing entertainment and educational software markets growing so rapidly, and its existing clients requiring increasing levels of service, a new solution was necessary.

Providing Call Center Solutions That Build Valued Relationships



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The Apropos Solution Selected

After a thorough review of vendors' offerings including features, functionality and price, Absolute Quality selected Apropos Technology to provide the solution to support its capacity and growth dilemma. The 60 agent call center in Hunt Valley, MD utilizes the Apropos solution integrated with the world's largest Intertel Axxess PBX and Vantive 7 for customer relations management and knowledge base development.

Absolute Quality selected Apropos for two specific reasons:

- Apropos' experience with high volume call centers
- Apropos' Total Interaction Management™ capabilities

As an outsourcing company, it is incumbent upon Absolute Quality to deliver capacity in terms of appropriate hold times and proper interaction distribution along with as much meaningful data to its clients as possible. "The combination of all media types being managed, tracked and reported on was exactly what we needed. And Apropos, through its Total Interaction Management solution, was able to deliver all these requirements," said Stephen Muirhead, president, Absolute Quality.

"Absolute Quality's business is intensely seasonal, with Christmas accounting for the bulk of our traffic," stated Muirhead. "Our clients try to develop products that will be attractive Christmas presents, thereby requiring us to handle approximately 30,000 interactions per day during the week of Christmas through New Year's day. We encounter our peaks beginning December 26," added Muirhead.

With this in mind, the decision to implement Apropos before the holidays was made around the end of May. "We actually pushed Apropos for a very rapid imple-

mentation, which went smoothly with the first deployment going live in September 1998. Suffice to say, we were very pleased with the delivered results," said Muirhead. Absolute Quality's Automated Technical Support scripts are very involved and with their large number of different clients, there was a lot of IVR scripting to be completed in time for the Christmas rush. According to Muirhead, the implementation went quickly and smoothly.

During the Christmas rush, Absolute Quality's traffic patterns changed dramatically. A dramatic increase in automated support was realized compared with the prior season, which was mainly live support. This increase provided Absolute Quality with the boost

needed to handle the holiday traffic. Hold times were four minutes or less with client costs per interaction dramatically decreasing. This meant all around customer satisfaction.

Absolute Quality utilizes the following Apropos features:

- Fax-back
- IVR
- Screen Pop

"Our 1998 Christmas season was a walk through the park compared with the previous year," said Muirhead. "The Apropos solution has produced all around customer satisfaction."

Future plans include an upgrade to Apropos Version 4 with the implementation of its interaction management functionality. In addition, Absolute Quality opened a 30 agent technical support facility in Glasgow, Scotland in June 1999 utilizing the Apropos solution and will increase to 50 agents by year end. Concurrently, a testing office opened in Alameda, CA with 25 test agents. The technical support center in Hunt Valley will also increase to 120 agents within the year.

An independent study conducted over the holiday season showed that Absolute Quality was at the top of the list for tech support providers providing excellent data for Absolute Quality to use in their sales process. The data rated included:

- Absolute Quality was the provider offering the most and the best services
- Hold times and response times drastically lower than the competition



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