

Apropos Technology

Success Story

Southern California Edison Personalizes Human Resources with Apropos Solution

Southern California Edison (SCE) is the second largest electric utility in North America. The SCE Employee Information Center supports 18,000 current employees and 10,000 retirees. The 10 Human Resources (HR) agents handle approximately 500 calls per day assisting with all types of HR issues including health care, payroll, open enrollment, 401K, retirement, etc. With only 10 agents to support 28,000 people, SCE was in need of a solution that would enable its agents to pre-screen callers, log calls automatically, see how many callers were

in queue and be prepared to handle the call.

Prior to the integration of the Apropos solution, SCE had an antiquated ACD system—with which all agents were required to answer all call types unless IT reconfigured the phone system (a 1-2 week process). "It was impossible to determine how many callers were in queue, let alone who they

were and what they were calling about. The agents had no pre-call information to help them prepare - all calls were answered blind," said Christine De Natale, SCE's manager of customer services for the human resources service center.

Another challenge SCE was faced with was choosing a solution that would interface easily and effectively with SCE's existing environment. SCE had an older communications infrastructure and wanted a powerful solution to work with it. A solution that would not require SCE to update all the hardware.

SCE conducted a thorough review of over 15 vendor's offerings. Decision criteria included price, functionality and features. Apropos Technology's solution was chosen specifically because it was a software solution and was able to work with SCE's existing communications infrastructure. Apropos also demonstrated that it had superior features for the supervisor and the agents. SCE had found along the way that many of the vendors' solutions that they reviewed were hardware based, and would subsequently put them in a situation where growth would always mean large expense.

Apropos Technology Chosen

Apropos was selected for the following reasons:

- Apropos provided SCE with a software solution. Many other vendors had solutions that were more hardware based.

- Apropos was able to work with SCE's existing communications system without updating it.

- Apropos had better features for the supervisor and the agents.

How the Solution Works

Apropos Technology installed its solution to work with existing communications and business infrastructures as required. When a call enters the center, Apropos conducts a database search of PeopleSoft to identify the caller and then populates a Tivoli ServiceDesk template.

SCE has an interface to the Host system via PeopleSoft to gather the Human Resource information and trouble tickets tracking system via Expert Advisor with the DB2 and Sybase Corporate databases and Ethernet LAN connection. "Agents still have to jump back and forth among applications, but they all start by taking a call from the Apropos agent application," says De Natale.

Before Apropos Technology infiltrated the corridors at SCE, all calls that entered the Employee Information Center were answered blindly by the agents. Agents were frustrated, not only not having any pre-call information to help them prepare to take the call, but all agents had to be trained to handle all call types before they could take a single call because they had no method for pre-screening or selectively routing the various call types.

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SCE's platform runs on Windows NT with a Windows 95 operating system. It has a Sybase database, a PeopleSoft database with Tivoli ServiceDesk (formerly Software Artistry Expert Advisor) as its Customer Repository Management application.

The Results

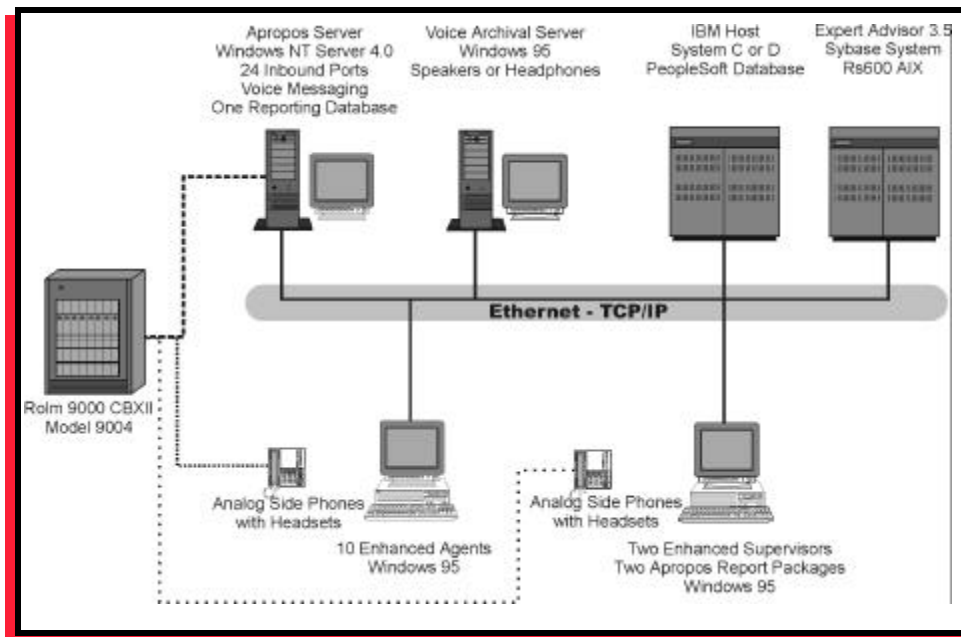
The Apropos solution has impacted SCE in many ways. Productivity of the center has been improved dramatically. Specifically the solution has improved productivity in four main areas:

1. With Apropos, SCE has visibility for the first time into the efficiency of its call center. With Apropos solution, first call resolve is at an impressive 95 percent!
2. Increased visibility of all steps taken within the center through robust cradle-to-grave reporting.
3. Increased call logging from 70 percent to 100 percent!
4. With dynamic call routing SCE can capitalize on each agent's strengths. By matching the customer with the best agent to handle his or her issue, SCE optimizes the quality of the service provided.

The Apropos solution also provided increased visibility for all interactions in the center through its robust report system. Apropos reports on all the activities within the center both real-time and historically. These reports are run daily and monthly and provide everyone with a "look" into what is happening. In addition, the taping of each phone call has enabled SCE to deal even-handedly with disputes without having to go through a "he said/she said" routine.

De Natale states, "Apropos has given us the ability to manage our call center in a real-time way."

With the on-screen call queues, the HR agents can handle calls in a more personalized manner. Agents can see who's calling and what the caller is calling about before they even take the call. De Natale states, "Agents can determine if it's appropriate to take a call out of sequence and preview a caller's history before saying hello and greeting them by name. The screen-pop and the pre-filled trouble ticket also provide 100 percent logging of calls. Prior to Apropos, we were lucky if our agents logged 70 percent of the calls. In addition, with the improved service levels and self-service options provided by our state-of-the-art call center, SCE is enhancing its ability to attract and retain top quality employee talent."



The call center supervisor realizes what control the Apropos solution has provided — now there is complete visibility into the center throughout the day and adjustments can be made on the fly in real-time. By being able to change the agents' assignments easily, agents can receive only those calls which they are able to handle efficiently and effectively. De Natale thinks this is a great tool when training new agents.

De Natale says the investment was definitely worth it!



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One Tower Lane, 28th Floor, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois 60181, Phone 630/472-9600, Fax 630/472-9745, <http://www.apropos.com>

INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND SALES

Arundell House, 1 Farm Yard, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 1QL, United Kingdom, Phone 1753 838800, Fax 1753 838801