

Apropos Technology

Success Story

Apropos Technology and Vantive Empower Westinghouse Security Electronics with Improved Customer Service

WSE, formerly Westinghouse Security Electronics, Inc., is a global company that develops and manufactures commercial proximity access control systems. Even as one of the top four global suppliers in the industry, WSE commands only four percent of this highly competitive and fragmented market. With hundreds of competitors, commoditized products and distributors willing to carry competing product lines, WSE realized that a higher level of customer support was required to create differentiation and to grow market share. According to Ralph Gagliardi, director of customer service at WSE, Service is an absolutely huge competitive differentiator in this industry. WSE needed a state-of-the-art call center management solution to effectively manage and track calls and increase customer service. WSE turned to Apropos Technology to deliver this competitive advantage.

WSE sells through approximately 398 distributors, with more than 50,000 end-user sites installed, receiving 98 percent of its calls from distributors for installation support; the other two percent come from end-users. Prior to installation of the Apropos solution, agents handled approximately 2,000 calls per month with no automatic call distributor (ACD), no call tracking resulting in long wait times and low customer satisfaction. Customer hold times ranged up into hours, with occasionally ones as long as half-a-day! WSE desperately needed to reduce these hold times, improve customer service and establish a strong call tracking and management system.

Apropos Solution Selected

After a thorough review of vendors offerings including features, functionality and price, WSE selected Apropos Technology and Vantive (a leader in the front-office software market and an Apropos application partner) to provide the solution. WSE deployed the solution in conjunction with a Lucent Definitely G3 switch. With the Apropos/Vantive solution, WSE was able to nearly double the number of calls handled without increasing the number of agents. Currently, there are approximately 20 technical support and customer service agents using the system.

We needed insight into the number of support calls coming in and why they were calling in order to close the loop with product development, said Ralph Gagliardi, director of customer service at WSE. In short, we needed to improve the business and management of our call center.

WSE chose Apropos over competing alternatives for several reasons, including:

Great customer service from the start. Gagliardi commented, Everybody at Apropos that we come in contact with is very professional and easy to work with. The relationship was great from day one, which established a real comfort zone for us. Apropos has been great to do business with.

Apropos Technology

Success Story

- New technology and feature set. Apropos cradle-to-grave reporting capabilities and resource management tools enable the call center manager to easily monitor the agents and activities in the call center. The multimedia queue provides a powerful visual tool for routing and accepting interactions, and empowers agents to make intelligent decisions. Apropos multi-media queue gets agents involved in their own destiny, said Gagliardi.

Allowing them to preview calls puts them in control and gives them more complete caller information.

- Value. The Apropos system delivered the most robust set of capabilities at a competitive price.

The Apropos solution is a key component in the WSE call center environment, which includes Vantive's Enterprise application version 6 and its PC Client version 7 using an Open Database Connectivity (ODBC) Application Programming Interface (API) enabling the Apropos system to extract information from the database server. The system enables the call center to manage the flow of calls for market demands and in general, to manage and track calls by category.

All calls come through an 800 number and are routed to the Apropos server from the Lucent switch. The Apropos interactive voice response (IVR) system automatically identifies the caller and prompts the caller for product or case information. The Apropos server queries the Vantive database and looks up the account information by the case number. Apropos routes the call to the appropriate agent and triggers a Vantive screen pop with the user name, company name, company phone number and last entry for the customer onto the agent's desktop.

With Apropos multimedia queue and data directed routing, agents are presented those calls and answer based on their skill set. For example, if the caller's issue is one handled previously by a particular agent, that agent can easily view and take the repeat call. If the call is for technical support versus customer service (product tracking, inventory) the agent can select the call with which they are most skilled to handle. By enabling agents to cross-train, and with the implementation of the Apropos solution, WSE was able to increase the number of calls handled per month from 2,000 to 3,600. In addition, customer wait times have dramatically decreased, with 75 percent of calls answered within three minutes or less. The Apropos application helps to monitor the success of cross-training agents, enabling the call center supervisor to manage the agents and their skill sets more effectively. Gagliardi concurred, "The Apropos solution has been a great asset in aiding me to monitor and understand the success of cross-training agents. We have been able to double the number of calls handled, without increasing the number of agents."

Benefits:

- Decreased wait times from up to half-a-day to approximately three minutes
- Empowered agents with caller information and call selection control
- Increased the number of calls handled twofold by the call center without increasing the number of agents
- Increased customer satisfaction levels
- Improved productivity through cross-training
- Valuable insight into quantity and purpose of calls through robust reporting tools



WORLDWIDE HEADQUARTERS AND NORTH AMERICAN SALES

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