

CASE STUDY

Transport Authority Dramatically Improves Customer Communications



Industry

Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) is the premier transportation provider in the Capital Region of New York State, NY; providing regular route bus services, shuttle systems and paratransit services. CDTA has approximately 650 staff working across five CDTA office locations and serve more than 45,000 customers each weekday.

Services

Regular route bus services, shuttle systems and paratransit services.

Technology

Contact center solutions

The Challenge

Ensure reliable communications with customers on a 24 x 7 basis

The Solution

Combined communications and contact center solutions from MAC Source, Avaya and Zeacom

The Benefits

- Improved customer satisfaction
- Flexibility to communicate with customers via voice, email and fax, with future opportunity to add Web and SMS functionality
- The ability to adapt and react to customer concerns during emergencies
- Streamlined administration

The following case study details how CDTA is using Zeacom's multimedia call center to successfully manage thousands of calls each day, keeping its customers happy and on schedule.

"ZCC allows us to tailor the auto attendant voice answering message to announce daily operational status such as weather, road and traffic conditions. Customers receive real time updates without needing to contact a live agent."

Rick Ferris,
Superintendent, Flexible
Services, Capital District
Transportation Authority

The Challenge

Old Technology, Low Customer Satisfaction

Every time a winter storm threatened the daily commute, CDTA's call volume would swell to as many as 3,000 calls per day. It was during these weather conditions that CDTA's own staff had the most difficulty getting into the office, making it even harder for CDTA to handle the large volume of calls on such days. CDTA decided to carry out a customer satisfaction survey which revealed that only 34% of CDTA's customers considered it easy to get through to the call center. CDTA's biggest challenge was servicing its customers via three different call centers, each using a different call

center platform. The disparate call center systems ran on legacy platforms and could not be integrated with each other. In addition, CDTA was unable to measure call center performance. They had no idea how long customers were waiting on hold or how many calls were missed. The only available data was the total number of calls received each day. CDTA realized it was time to upgrade its call center and assigned MAC Source, their communications solutions provider, with the task of finding a comprehensive contact center solution that would address their call center needs.



The Solution

As part of a two-stage upgrade, CDTA worked with MAC Source to upgrade its Avaya IP office systems to the latest software and hardware platforms, and purchased new call center software from Zeacom. CDTA combined three call centers into a single platform through Zeacom's Communication Center, and connected all five of its office locations through a single IP-enabled PBX (Private Branch Exchange).

Technological Innovation

Zeacom Communications Center (ZCC) lets agents efficiently manage queues across all media – phone, email, fax, and web callback –directly from their desktop. With Zeacom's Presence feature, CDTA agents have full visibility within the call center and can see if someone is on the phone, away, on a break, or available to take a call. Agents can also instant message each other internally to ask a question rather than put the customer on hold to get the answer.

Zeacom's Multimedia Queuing technology ensures that customers are not passed around, but are instead routed to the appropriate person for a quick and knowledgeable response. Emails are promptly addressed by having them delivered to the email queues – not just an email inbox. Faxes, which previously arrived on a fax machine, are now more efficiently managed from the desktop. The system provides an array of customized announcements that inform people of their status in the calling queue, and automated email responses inform customers that their respective inquiry is being processed.

In addition to significantly reducing caller abandonment rates, Zeacom software helps agents make the most of their time. All correspondence is facilitated directly from an agent's desktop. Notes, action items, and potential problems can be reported immediately, providing management with the analytical tools it needs to ensure customer satisfaction and enhanced agent performance. Zeacom also helped relieve the stress of peak calls that most commonly occur during inclement weather. Easy-to-update automated responses now notify customers of delays or emergencies.

Benefits

Rick Ferris, CDTA's Superintendent of Flexible Services, cites a number of benefits derived from the Zeacom Unified Contact Center. "Our new system allows us to track call waiting time and agent talk time. This allows us to place agents on call lines with the most demand, which helps us reduce wait times for our customers."

Accurate Reporting: The inherent reporting and analysis features in ZCC have helped CDTA identify gaps in their response procedures, and train new employees. CDTA is now able to view its busiest times (as well as its slowest times) to manage agent schedules accordingly.

Reduced Call Abandonment: Customer communications have been enhanced in a variety of ways, through the use of voice, email, and fax. Perhaps the most important benefit is that CDTA can now react swiftly during storm emergencies in order to keep its customers informed regarding the status of their daily commute.

"Before we used ZCC, only 34-percent of our customers felt it was easy to get through to our call center. Our most recent customer survey indicated that 87-percent now feel it's easy to reach us."

Rick Ferris,
Superintendent, Flexible
Services, Capital District
Transportation Authority



Life Before MAC Source/ Zeacom Solution

Phase 1:

- 2005: 34% customers said it was easy to get through
- 2007: 74% customers said it was easy to get through

Life After MAC Source/ Zeacom Solution

Phase 2:

- Aug. '09: 87% customers said it was easy to get through

The above results are from the CDTA STAR Paratransit department

“This software enables our administrators to respond to Call Center Manager requests much more efficiently and effectively than in the past,” said Mary Palmatier, Telecommunications Administrator, CDTA. “Creating new agents, voice announcements, making changes in call delivery options and reporting on our most important metrics are all able to take place faster, ultimately resulting in enhanced communication levels with our customers.”

Planning for the future

“There’s still more we can do to improve our customer communications, and as our needs evolve, we’re confident that MAC Source and Zeacom will grow with us”, concludes Ferris.

- CDTA is planning to add Call Recording, IVR, SMS and Web chat to its Zeacom Communications Solution.
- CDTA is planning to provide remote worker functionality to its system; agents will be able to stay home on bad weather days yet put in a full day’s work.

About CDTA - www.cdta.org

The Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) was created in 1970 by the New York State Legislature, as a public benefit corporation, to provide regional transportation services by rail, bus, water and air. Today’s CDTA is the premier mobility provider in the Capital Region, providing regular route bus service, shuttle systems and paratransit services. CDTA subsidiaries own and operate the Rensselaer Rail and Saratoga Springs Train Stations. CDTA also operates the Northway Xpress Commuter Service between Saratoga County and downtown Albany. Today, 650 people work at CDTA to deliver a transit system that serves more than 800,000 people who live and work in the region, transporting more than 45,000 customers each weekday.

About MAC Source - www.macsourceinc.com

MAC Source Communications Inc. is a complete solutions provider, headquartered in Syracuse, NY, with branch locations across NY State as well as Chicago, IL. Our core business is the design, implementation, and on-going support of converged communications products and services. Specializations include IP Telephony, Unified Messaging, Contact Center, Mobility applications, and other IP Network services.

About Zeacom - www.zeacom.com

Zeacom is a leading provider of complete Unified Communications solutions. More than 140,000 daily users within 2,800 small and medium-sized organizations in 25 countries use Zeacom’s business communications software to improve organizational efficiency and enhance the customer service experience.

MAC Source U.S. Locations

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