

WHIRLPOOL

WHIRLPOOL CORPORATION BOOSTS CUSTOMER-CENTERED EFFICIENCY, SAVINGS

Appliance Company Sets out to Capitalize on CRM Software Investment, Boost Customer Experience

Whirlpool Corporation is the world's leading manufacturer and marketer of major home appliances. The corporation markets Whirlpool, KitchenAid, Brastemp, Bauknecht, Consul and other major brand names to consumers in more than 170 countries.

The company puts a premium on service, especially at its North American Customer Experience Centers, where agents field about 50,000 customer calls per week, with an emphasis on capturing caller information.

In 2004, Whirlpool found that its call-center solution was capturing contact information for less than half of its customers. The company knew the issue was reducing its efficiency, but it was also concerned about the larger impact.

The Problem

Poor data quality creating inefficiencies and limiting customer interactions and experiences

The Solution

TARGUSinfo On-Demand IdentificationSM for CRM & marketing

The Result

Upgraded data quality, improved the customer experience, raised productivity and call-center morale



'We wanted the best possible solution to match the needs of the company with the needs of the customer and TARGUSinfo provided us with that ability.'
— Jarrod McNeese, Technology Solutions Lead for Whirlpool

Whirlpool identified three related areas of need:

- Elevating customer service
- Acquiring more accurate customer information for its CRM database
- Raising agent morale in its Customer Experience Centers

Whirlpool put a priority on improving CRM database accuracy because it uses customer addresses for a variety of communications such as direct mail, use-and-care guides, appliance parts and any recall notices.

“It was definitely a problem with less than half of the customer data populating,” said Laurie Walter, an Operations Process Manager for the Customer Experience Center, “because our intention is to enable our CRM applications with features that can be leveraged for potential global usage.

“Without having the customer information automatically populated when a customer contacts the call center, it was impacting our efficiencies and holding us back.”

Inefficient Solution Frustrated Customers

The company discovered that some customers' calling experiences were being impaired when it couldn't immediately link the callers to their CRM database entries.

Whirlpool's agents were spending too much time manually collecting contact information. In some cases, customers grew frustrated because it was taking agents too long to transcribe name and address data before getting to the customers' reasons for calling.

What's more, when new CRM database entries did not match a customer or were mistyped, it led to duplicate entries. Customers that had to call Whirlpool several times did not always get matched to the right CRM database entry, forcing them to detail the same issue multiple times. This led to some frustration.

'It is a huge improvement on the call flow from the customers' viewpoint. Now, they can get right into the conversation of, 'How can we help you?'

— Laurie Walter, an Operations Process Manager for the Customer Experience Center for Whirlpool

“We measure customer loyalty,” Walter said, “and one of the key drivers for customer loyalty is to have knowledge of your previous call into the call center.”

'We Want the Best'

To regain efficiency and create a measurable improvement in customer relations, Whirlpool set two goals: identifying 90% of customers the instant they call and shortening the calls by an average of 60 seconds.

The company used TARGUSinfo On-Demand Identification for CRM & marketing in an integrated, multivendor solution to the problem. Whirlpool chose TARGUSinfo because of previous success with its On-Demand Identification for existing Interactive Voice Response applications.

“We have had really good success together so we went straight to TARGUSinfo at that point and started investigating what tools it has that would best help us,” said Jarrod McNeese, Technology Solutions Lead for Whirlpool.


“TARGUSinfo seems to be No. 1 in the industry from our viewpoint. We wanted the best possible solution to match the needs of the company with the needs of the customer and TARGUSinfo provided us with that ability.”

Reaching Efficiency Goals Helps Meet Other Priorities

Whirlpool started using TARGUSinfo services to instantly populate the contact information fields in a “screen pop,” a window that automatically appears on agents' screens when they pick up calls.

Now, when callers are connected, agents can verify contact information instead of having to enter it. Once agents have established that the contact information is correct, they can press a single button to import the data into the CRM database.

“TARGUSinfo is invaluable for us to prevent agents from mis-keying



information and entering bad data,” McNees said. “We really want to have good, reliable data to effectively manage customer relationships.”

Whirlpool Corporation quickly hit its goal of shortening customer calls by 60 seconds, with On-Demand Identification services accounting for nearly half of that reduction. “TARGUSinfo is a key player in improving the performance of the call center,” Walter said.

From this new efficiency, Whirlpool achieved an immediate boost to its CRM data quality.

They also fulfilled two long-term priorities: improved caller experiences and employee morale in the Customer Experience Centers.

Removing a Speed Bump for Customer Relations

The improvements multiplied when On-Demand Identification services integrated easily Whirlpool’s systems. The multivendor solution enabled Whirlpool to turn a better customer data capture rate into a direct lift for calling experiences.

Whirlpool is nearing its goal of tying CRM database entries to 90% of its customers the instant they call. This eliminates the possibility of an agent accidentally creating a duplicate entry.

“It saves you from the logistic nightmare of trying to search for a customer file when they have a complaint,” Walter said.

“In talking to our supervisors, it is a huge improvement on the call flow from the customers’ viewpoint. Now, they can get right into the conversation of, ‘How can we help you?’ ”

Employees Immediately Focusing on Customers

Whirlpool has also reached its goal of lifting agent morale at the Customer Experience Center.

“As a leader in the call center,” Walter said, “if I’m not taking action to improve the system, then I will have a higher turnover rate because people are not happy in their jobs. I will have more irate customers because of having to repeat everything.

“The far-reaching aspect for me as the leader is I’m actively engaged in fixing what the employees want me to fix so that they can better do their jobs,” Walter added.

“That’s really rewarding,” McNees said, “to be able to implement a successful solution to the call center, to see the results on the people’s faces and in their comments. It really keeps us going. We’re trying to cater to the agent because the agent is catering to the customer.

“Our No. 1 priority here at Whirlpool is the customer. Whatever we can do to make it easier for the consultant is going to put a smile on their face and that smile comes across the phone to the customer.”