



Northeast Region Utilities Company Doubles System Completion Rate with new Speech IVR

The Challenges

This utilities service provider is a super-regional energy services and delivery company and is the parent company of several electric and gas utilities that distribute services across several states in the Northeast. Their customer base has tripled in the last three years - jumping to almost three million subscribers. The growth of the company presents challenges to maintain customer satisfaction levels in their contact centers and insure standardization of supporting information systems for each company's contact center.

They are measured by each state's regulatory body on either average speed of answer or an overall customer satisfaction rating. With these measurements and the growth of the customer base, they recognized that there was a distinct need from customers for more self-service options to offload the influx of calls to agents.

In addition, they have a wide range of customers with disparate languages, cultural backgrounds and socio-economic levels. In fact, in some remote areas, some customers are still utilizing rotary-dial phone devices! This made the legacy touchtone system inoperable for these particular customers, who were required to speak to an agent to take care of their basic needs.

They determined that to meet all of these requirements, major enhancements had to be implemented into their existing contact center infrastructure.

The Benefits

The new contact center solution developed by MicroAutomation for the northeast region utility services provider:

- Approximately 35% of customer calls are handled by the new IVR system - almost double the completion rate in the old touchtone system
- The recognition rate has jumped to 98%
- Customers have more Self-Service options, enabling fast answers to their queries and frees up agents for the complex caller issues
- The platform is VXML-based, allowing the company to provide more Self-Service options on both the web and phone systems

The Solution

MicroAutomation provided contact center solutions consisting of Speech-enabled Interactive Voice Response (IVR) or Self-Service options; Computer Telephony Integration (CTI) or Call Control capabilities and Analytics and Reporting tools for one of the utility provider's sub-companies. Due to the successful implementation there, they turned to MicroAutomation when they needed to develop a new Self-Service solution for their own growing customer base.

They needed a solution which would empower callers with Self-Service options, improve the average speed of answer and take pressure off of contact center agents while they were transitioning to the new standardized information system.

The other benefit of implementing a Self-Service solution was to address the length of the new customer account numbers - which were longer. Thus, speech would reduce errors of accessing account information.

The Self-Service solution would also assist the rotary phone users to obtain the basic information they need in a more quick and efficient manner - thus, freeing the contact center agents to handle more complex customer service issues.





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Technical Implementation

MicroAutomation was responsible for integrating the following technologies to build the new solution: a VoiceXML platform based on open standards; Intel Dialogic voice cards; Nuance Open Speech Recognizer (OSR) and Text-to-Speech (TTS) technologies on a 288-port initial deployment solution. The solution also offers touchtone navigation for callers.

- The self-service menu includes:
- Access Account Information
- Pay By Phone
- Request a Duplicate Bill
- Meter Readings
- Outage Reporting

MicroAutomation worked closely with the utilities provider in designing the call flow and application to fulfill their specific needs. The solution was deployed on time and within budget.



About MicroAutomation

Commercial, government and 911 customers worldwide have benefited from MicroAutomation's expert design, development, deployment and support of their contact centers for over 20 years. Outstanding creativity, the ingenuity and forethought of our engineers and partnerships with a wide-range of leaders in our industry allow us to continually provide our clients solutions that surpass expectations. www.microautomation.com

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