



MicroAutomation Helps To Improve Suicide Hotline Services

Background

The Kristin Brooks Hope Center (KBHC) is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to suicide prevention, intervention, and healing by providing a single point-of-entry to community-based crisis services. It also acts as program manager for the National Hopeline Network, 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433), a suicide prevention hotline network.

The main focus of the Kristin Brooks Hope Center is suicide prevention, awareness and education. They provide help and hope through various college campus and high school events, as well as online suicide crisis chats, suicide crisis hotlines and other educational programs regarding suicide and suicide prevention.

Since the suicide of his wife Kristin in April 1998, KBHC Founder, Reese Butler, has been on a personal crusade to offer help and hope, and the option to live, to those in the deepest emotional pain. After her suicide, Reese sold their California home and used the money to start the Kristin Brooks Hope Center, a non-profit organization aimed at educating the public about suicide warning signs and the importance of proper treatment to prevent suicide.

After he discovered that there was no national suicide hotline, he started 1-800-SUICIDE and linked over 200 crisis centers nationwide, one by one, into the National Hopeline Network. People in crisis no longer had to look through their phone book to find a local hotline.

Once activated, 1-800-SUICIDE rang instantly and never stopped ringing since.



“MicroAutomation and its partners took the time to understand the importance of the project and the scope of the network’s needs and then found the best solution for us.”

- H Reese Butler III, President and Founder, **Kristin Brooks Hope Center**

Challenge

No calls make more of a life-or-death impact than those made to a suicide prevention hotline. So when the Kristin Brooks Hope Center found its 1-800-SUICIDE hotline facing technical challenges, it turned to MicroAutomation for a new, advanced call routing network solution that could help it handle more calls and deliver faster service.



The Center found itself with a major technological challenge that prevented its hotline from providing the quality service so crucial for an organization with this charter. Callers using the service could wait up to 4 minutes to reach an available counselor, and more than 20 percent of calls were being blocked or dropped by the network. In addition, the center did not have a good reporting process to understand the impact of these dropped calls or to see how many callers were currently using the network. And finally, the organization lacked an effective way to silently monitor calls to ensure that volunteer crisis workers were providing the best support as possible.

Solution

MicroAutomation was selected to help fix the technical challenges of the Suicide Hotline based upon its experience in providing advanced call center solutions. The system MicroAutomation developed for the hotline is an advanced call routing and call management tool that is based on MicroAutomation’s CallCenter Millennium (CCM) products and the Intel NetMerge Media Communication Carrier Software (MCCS) platform. The system accepts incoming 1-800-SUICIDE calls, immediately identifies the closest crisis center based on the telephone number of the caller as well as availability of the crisis center agents, and intelligently routes the call to the most appropriate crisis center with caller identification information.

Information on the crisis center availability is accessed via Computer Telephony Integration (CTI) connections to each crisis center which allow the network to monitor the call load at each crisis center in real-time. By linking each crisis center to the central network using CTI technology and utilizing the routing capabilities of the Intel NetMerge MCCS platform, the solution provides dependable call routing capabilities and allows for rapid system expansion. The new system also leverages an expansive AT&T long-distance telephone network resulting in greater efficiency and lower per call cost.

The Intel NetMerge MCCS provides a robust, scalable server platform for network applications. MCCS also provides a high-level of hardware abstraction, allowing MicroAutomation to lower the cost of its solution and deliver it more quickly. Resource management capabilities include a common control method for managing network and media resources that can save system management time and assure maximum resource utilization. The system can also be dynamically scaled up or down while in service without disrupting existing calls, resulting in minimizing downtime and providing an uninterrupted caller experience.

By building the system on open, standard-based building blocks such as the MCCS platform, MicroAutomation provided the Kristin Brooks Hope Center with communications technologies that offer modularity, flexibility and scalability to reduce costs and improve business agility.

The Kristin Brooks Hope Center's new network is deployed in a redundant configuration on the U.S. east and west coasts. Incoming calls are reliably routed to the nearest crisis center (several of which are local 2-1-1 providers) ensuring that callers are connected to crisis professionals as quickly as possible.

Summary of Results

- Real-time awareness of crisis center availability
- Hotline callers immediately connected with a crisis center counselor
- Call routing time decreased from 4 minutes to less than 30 seconds
- Total number of calls handled increased by 20%

Results

The new Hopeline network by MicroAutomation currently supports 105 crisis centers across the U.S., with approximately 200 more centers set up to be integrated into the network by the end of 2004. Several states are planning to use the system to support their 2-1-1 phone services which will help direct callers with social issues to resources that can provide assistance.

Incoming calls are routed in less than 30 seconds to available crisis center counselors across the United States. Calls are first routed by location and then by availability to ensure every call is answered in a timely manner.

KBHC's old system for the Hopeline network handled less than 250,000 calls per year and consistently produced a 20% blockage rate. With the assistance of MicroAutomation, the new system is on track to handle more than 310,000 calls per year with a 100% call completion rate. Not only did MicroAutomation assist with Kristin Brooks Hope Center's call center technology, they also assisted with reducing call center costs and improving business agility.

About MicroAutomation

MicroAutomation is a full service integrator of call center solutions and provides a broad range of professional services and products. MicroAutomation solutions are based on creating an effortless caller experience through Speech-enabled Interactive Voice Response (IVR), improving live agent efficiency utilizing Computer Telephony Integration (CTI), and providing analytics tools to report, manage and refine each solution element to maximize the overall performance of your call center.

MicroAutomation also offers contact center products and professional services including:

- The Award Winning Call Center Millennium™ Solution Series
- Complete solution design
- Configurable and custom application development
- Turnkey implementation
- Comprehensive customer support
- GSA Advantage IT Schedule: GS-35F-0419L

You don't need to be an expert to use our contact center solutions; you just need to know one. MicroAutomation is your trusted partner for proven, reliably engineered contact center solutions.

Contact Us

MicroAutomation Sales and Marketing
5870 Trinity Parkway, Suite 600
Centreville, VA 20120

Telephone: 1-800-817-2771 | Fax: 703-543-2099
sales@microautomation.com
www.microautomation.com