

The Cheshire Invests In synTelate® for effective and efficient service

The Cheshire views world-class customer service as the cornerstone of its commitment, ensuring that it excels in the provision of member services. This is supported through investment in training, technology and services.

INTRODUCTION

The Cheshire is the UK's eleventh largest independent building society. Established in 1870, the Cheshire is firmly committed to mutuality and has achieved significant growth through the provision of a consistently competitive range of investments, mortgages and complimentary financial services products.

The Cheshire launched its Customer Contact Centre in September 2000 to provide its members with a complimentary channel to the traditional branch network.

The main goals of the customer contact centre are:

1. To handle enquiries effectively and efficiently between the hours of 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 4pm Saturday
2. To broaden the Cheshire's reach beyond its core geographic area
3. To allow accurate monitoring of advertising effectiveness

To meet these aims the Cheshire decided to invest in software that would provide customer advisers with supporting information at the appropriate point in the call. The system is intended to provide a framework for providing world-class service.



The Software

synTelate is designed specifically for call centre activities by providing

- Accurate and efficient data collection
- Direct controlled access to company Intranet during the call
- Increased agent effectiveness
- Reduced training time of new agents
- Powerful management information for informed decisions

The Requirement

"The contact centre was opened to provide a customer focused delivery channel to new and existing members and is an integral part of the Cheshire's Customer Experience Management strategy. Previously calls were answered by specialist teams who were also processing the applications, often leading to delays and frustration. The contact centre provides members with accurate and timely information on their mortgage and investment requirements in a more efficient manner. The software therefore needed to be compatible with our established processes while providing a user friendly interface."

Gordon Johnson, Customer Contact Centre Manager, The Cheshire

Additional requirements of the software included

- Ability to establish and search the database
- Write information to other databases
- Interact with the Cheshire's existing Intranet
- Provide a tool for support and training

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Solution

CALL GUIDING

Personality is important when conducting business over the telephone; however, it is also essential that agents understand the processes they must follow. synTelate acts as a call guide, providing the agent with a variety of prompts, verbatim text and customer care processes. In particular, as a financial services organisation the Cheshire has certain mandatory information to impart to the customer, synTelate's flexibility assists by allowing the verbatim text to appear in one colour, the prompts in a second and customer care processes in a third, making the whole call guide easy to follow without hindering the personal nature of the telephone interaction.

FLEXIBILITY, MARKETING & REPORTS

The ability to identify the success of advertising spend has proved a vital tool, utilising unique codes, and Direct Dial Index (DDI), it is possible to classify the publication and advert the applicant is responding to, how many applications progress beyond initial enquiry and how many convert to new business. This reporting facility allows the marketing department to optimally target its advertising spend, synTelate's flexibility and ability to turn a new script around in 3 days ensures the call centre team can quickly respond and meet the needs of a pro-active marketing department. The Cheshire also specified that a well-established software vendor must provide this.

TRAINING

Ensuring all staff understand the variety of products on offer, the telephony system, and the compliance procedures is imperative for financial institutions. As a consequence, the cost of recruiting and fully training a new member of staff is exceptionally high.

synTelate has reduced the training time of new agents, by 50%. Previously staff required 6 weeks training on products and telephone systems before they could answer their first call and it was anticipated synTelate would reduce this by 25%. However, the figures show that new staff can be active within 3 weeks of joining the call centre.

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"The reduction on training time has in itself been a major area where synTelate has paid for itself."
Matt Berry, Resource Analyst, The Cheshire

SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

The Cheshire continues to strive for the best in all its services to members. The introduction of a carefully crafted call guide linked to the central database ensures any complaints are handled in a personal and effective manner. The data collected allows the Cheshire to monitor its services, product offering and to continue to investigate new methods of improving the relationship with its members.

"synTelate has proved to be an effective tool and assisted in taking the heat out of what can often be a difficult phone call. Both staff and members now benefit from the improved complaints procedure and know that action will be taken to rectify the situation."
Rob Moore, Resource Analyst, The Cheshire

RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI)

synTelate has been key to the success of the call centre, surpassing first year targets and helping establish the Cheshire as more than just a regional building society.

Benefits of synTelate

- 🔗 Improved sales and service offering to new and existing members
- 🔗 Efficient and effective handling of calls
- 🔗 Reduced staff training time
- 🔗 Accurate and profitable marketing spend
- 🔗 Supported growth in market share

Client Relationship

"People are increasingly prepared to deal with companies at a distance, by the phone or the Internet, Cheshire needed to expand its business beyond its 51 branch network. The call centre was the clear method of achieving this and synTelate was the obvious tool to assist us in meeting our targets. The overall accuracy, improved quality and speed of response that synTelate provides us which has surpassed our targets and expectations.

Developing call guides based on our established sales processes proved to be simpler than we anticipated, while controlling the access to our Company Intranet ensures our customer advisers always have the relevant information at their fingertips. With 5 changes in mortgage rate alone last year, it is vital our advisers are fully equipped with the most up to date information, without the necessity to search various databases, allowing them to concentrate on satisfying the needs of the customer.

Overall effectiveness and efficiency savings have been made with the letter and e-mail templates within the call guide, ensuring that actions are completed and recorded to the database at the close of the call. Advisers are secure in the knowledge the necessary actions will be completed by the specialist processing staff."

Gordon Johnston, Call Centre Manager, The Cheshire

"The diversity of products, the financial restrictions and increased competition makes synTelate the ideal product to assist financial organisations to develop and grow their business. Positive results for the Cheshire provide positive results for synTelate and clearly assist in establishing call guiding as a necessary tool for effective call centres."
Kevin Clark, CEO, Initiative Software Ltd