

Enabling Superior Customer Service

Windstream moves an enterprise-class contact center to the cloud for a major energy services provider

As one of the largest retail providers of electric, natural gas and home services in North America—with its parent company based in Europe—a major energy services provider processed approximately 1.3 million calls per month for sales and customer service. The Company views every call as an opportunity, either to win a new client, or provide great customer service, and has set a goal of first call resolution as a top priority. To deliver on its goal, it came to Windstream for an advanced contact center solution. A long-standing relationship and multiple successes deploying Windstream network services with City Communications secured the motivation to move forward.

UTILITY COMPANY

Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Utilities: Energy and home based services provider
Customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6,500 employees• 1,100 agent employees• 1,000+ outsourced agents• Retail provider of electricity and natural gas for residential and business customers• Home services provider, such as electricians, plumbing, home warranty and more
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resolve customer issues within one call• Replace under-performing technology—outdated with new• Identify customers to provide a match to correct agents• Record calls for compliance
Solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Windstream CCaaS, powered by Avaya
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased first call resolution• Call center consolidation by using analytics to increase productivity• Flexible staffing by utilizing “agent anywhere” capabilities, including off-shore• Savings of \$2 million/year• A platform that can be leveraged and configured across multiple business units

Who’s Calling, Please?

For two years, the Company tried to address several key challenges to transform the way they interacted with their customers, including a multi-tenant virtual contact center deployment. But their aging contact center—as well as a poor, newer contact center in a cloud implementation—held them back. The deployment lacked the flexibility of adding new applications, integrating with back office systems and scaling to fluctuating needs.

Since not all of the incoming calls could be identified and routed to the appropriate customer service representative, each one was handled the same—without any intelligent call routing. Additionally, regulatory bodies mandated that all contact center conversations be recorded. The result? Frustrated customers, wasted agent resources, non-compliance and negative impacts on revenues.

Transforming customer experience

To turn their situation around, the Company adopted an overall corporate mission to improve their customer experience. To drive this change, they needed to leverage the advantages of interactive voice response (IVR), integration to the back office, communication with desktop applications and the flexibility to change all of these at the “speed of business.”

However, the level of integration with their previous IVR platforms didn't allow for appropriate call routing. It lacked the ability to do effective call reporting or recording. Additionally, it was unable to leverage both in-house and remote agents. Ultimately, it couldn't clearly identify which calls were revenue opportunities, or which ones were opportunities to provide good support for existing customers.

The Company turned to Windstream. After learning more about Windstream Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS)—powered by Avaya, the award-winning contact center solution—it quickly became a foundational element of their customer experience transformation. Mandating that all contact center conversations be recorded. The result? Frustrated customers, wasted agent resources, non-compliance and negative impacts on revenues were eliminated.

Rising up to the cloud

By replacing the Company's aging contact center infrastructure and failing cloud service with a dedicated, cloud-based CCaaS solution, the Company could now leverage a single-tenant environment to eliminate "noisy neighbor" syndrome—with the potentially negative impacts on cloud performance—ensuring control over its environment for enhancements or upgrades.

The solution includes a customer self-service IVR, computer telephony integration, and capabilities that help agents identify callers to provide personalized service. The solution also comes with Quality Assurance—as call monitoring and recording—to enable regulatory compliance.

As a managed service, Windstream CCaaS, powered by Avaya, offers application availability and uptime of 99.99%.

Agile call handling. Superior customer care.

Today, the Company's new cloud-based contact center processes over two million calls per month. Calls are routed to the appropriate agent. Plus, the system is integrated with the correct databases to enable first call resolution.

The new deployment also enables the Company to consolidate its systems and expand as needed. Over 400 employees are on the new platform—with plans for an additional 5,500, including 1,100 internal contact center agents. Over 500 outsourced agents are coordinated on it as well. The new contact center can leverage a pool of remote agents during busy times and pay for

only what they need. For example, if summer is historically a busy time for the Company, it can ramp up its agents and its usage to take calls and then scale down during winter.

Additionally, the system also allows the Company to capture calls—both voice and on-screen information—to leverage for training and compliance purposes. The combination of both the screen and the voice interaction lets the Company see how a call was resolved and use techniques gleaned from that agent to improve interactions.

Paying it forward at \$2 million a year

By bringing inbound customer calls to a favorable resolution within IVR (IVR containment), along with reduced handle-times, the Company is able to save \$2 million a year and re-direct it towards the business. The new CCaaS solution allows them to think about future plans such as customer segmentation, which will take first

call resolution to the next level. It also plans to expand to global call routing to ensure customers are matched with the appropriate agent. The strategic nature of the added components of the ecosystem, such as email, chat, SMS and social media, will allow the Company to communicate with their customers in the manner each customer prefers.

“We built a contact center that could flex the muscle of the Avaya platform. The Company requires an enterprise-grade contact center, and Avaya is the base foundation for a scalable, flexible design and resilient business continuity.”

Kevin Kopco
Contact Center Solutions Practice
Leader at Windstream

The Company is also looking at enhanced branding capabilities to preserve existing branding from companies they have acquired, in order to ease customer transition.

The platform developed by Windstream has done more than solve a business problem; it has created opportunity. “We can't expand without the right platform,” said the Company's director of asset management. “This one, created by Windstream and City Communications, is it.”