

Turning the Potential of Unified Communications into Results—in the Contact Center

Seamless Customer Service™ Helps Aspect® Technical Services Achieve Measurable Improvements in Customer Satisfaction

You've probably heard the buzz about unified communications. Deploying unified communications (UC) across the enterprise can increase employee collaboration and productivity and significantly lower costs such as telephony expenses.

But where does the contact center fit in?

Companies deploying UC may be in different stages of their rollout, applying UC technologies to various communication processes across different departments. Expanding a UC strategy to a contact center extends the benefits outside the enterprise to the end customer. This case study highlights a unified communications deployment across a global contact center environment with multiple locations and languages, and ultimately demonstrates the return on investment (ROI) from integrating UC into a customer contact strategy.

State of the Contact Center Environment

Aspect Technical Services is the customer support arm of Aspect, a unified communications solutions provider. Aspect Technical Services provides 24x7x365 customer service in 14 languages across 10 contact centers around the world. They employ more than 400 highly skilled remote support engineers, with 30 percent of these working remotely from home.

Through a combination of phone, web and on-site services and tools, the Aspect Technical Services Global Customer Support team supports mission-critical contact center applications for thousands of companies around the world. To ensure high levels of service, each customer has an assigned support team who is familiar with their environment. Incoming calls are routed first to this team, who works closely with field services and continuing engineering teams to rapidly resolve any issues.

Need for Unified Communications

Aspect reviewed its existing legacy technical environment and business interaction model and determined that the company had a fragmented infrastructure due to mergers and acquisitions over a number of years. In addition, there were opportunities to streamline the overall environment and processes by eliminating the siloed infrastructure that existed with different legacy telephony hardware in place in various offices and world regions.

"The Ask the Expert capability in Seamless Customer Service is so much more than instant messaging. Having the ability to pull up the experts in the enterprise with the skill sets you need with a click of a mouse, then being able to route and report on that interaction—that's power."

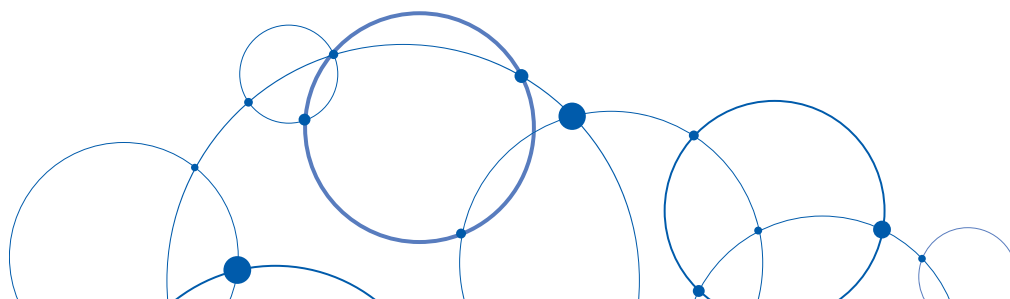
Bruce Hallowell,
Vice President, Global
Customer Support
Aspect

Solution

Seamless Customer Service, a UC application for the contact center.

Benefits

- Decreased hold time 76 percent.
- Increased overall first day resolution rate by 7 percent.
- Improved time to reach skilled support technician by 8 percent.
- Increased customer satisfaction by 6 percent.



“It’s critical for us to stay on the most recent releases in our contact center so that we can take advantage of what the products offer. When we deployed Seamless Customer Service, we quickly saw how the UC capabilities streamlined communications in our contact centers and improved the speed of customer- company interactions. It gave us a great opportunity to build our expertise on the UC application, provide input to our product management team, and validate the projected improvement metrics—and the results so far have been impressive.”

Tonya J. Long,
Senior Director, Global
Technical Operations
Aspect

Additionally, the multiple inbound call handling solutions made it difficult for Aspect® Technical Services to have a consolidated view of the overall contact center performance. The inability to transfer calls between systems at times caused delayed responsiveness on issues requiring escalation. A change would enable more effective communication and collaboration among a staff spread across many time zones and in a mix of office and work-at-home environments.

Implementing the Unified Communications Contact Center Application

Aspect implemented Microsoft® Office Communications Server across 1,800 employees in 20 global offices. To leverage this new UC technology in the contact center, Aspect Technical Services deployed Seamless Customer Service™, a unified communications application for the contact center that delivers all the tools needed for comprehensive call response, including comprehensive inbound routing, coordinated voice self-service to live service and Ask an Expert functionality to provide integrated assistance to help improve first call resolution and enhance the overall customer experience.

The Ask an Expert functionality is powered by Office Communications Server and empowers agents with UC capabilities, such as presence detection, instant messaging (IM), and conference calling. Ask the Expert enables the support engineer to quickly and easily use presence identification and skill criteria to find an available expert and rapidly address customer questions that may not be available in the knowledge base.

Seamless Customer Service also provides skill-based routing and prioritized routing capabilities that are critical to the Aspect Technical Services team-based approach.

These allow the most appropriately skilled support engineer available to handle a customer inquiry. And, at the end of each interaction, a post-call voice survey helps Aspect Technical Services measure customer satisfaction with their service experience and allows them to continuously identify opportunities to further improve service and support.

Improved Collaboration across the Enterprise and the Contact Center

With Seamless Customer Service and Office Communications Server in place, Aspect Technical Services now has instant visibility to worldwide contact center resources and those in the enterprise who are available to assist with customer inquiries. Support staff can call anyone in the enterprise with point-and-click simplicity, and even route a customer interaction directly to that expert if necessary. This eliminates the wait time to request assistance and effectively expands the pool of available resources for the Aspect support center.

For example, a customer calling for technical assistance may ask a question about a completely different solution or about the latest product roadmap. Previously, a support engineer would research the answer and reply back to the customer at a later time. Now, the support engineer can easily send an instant message to the on-call product management resource, obtain the information and relay the answer to the customer. The Ask an Expert feature logs and records this entire process, making it available for resource allocation analysis and for quality compliance.

The entire Aspect Technical Services staff now has conferencing functionality at their fingertips and can easily jump from IM to live calls when needed. Seamless Customer Service and Office Communications Server simplifies remote support with desktop sharing, which increases collaboration and enables information sharing to resolve issues more quickly. The unified messaging capability has been especially valuable to the team leaders and their managers, as all voice mails are received through Microsoft Outlook email and can be easily forwarded and/or retrieved through mobile devices.

Senior Aspect Technical Services staff has found the consolidated historical reporting invaluable, allowing for rapid evaluation of team performance, call volume demands, and other factors critical to delivering an efficient and high-quality support service.

Seamless Customer Service™ Return on Investment (ROI)

Customer satisfaction is the highest priority for Aspect® Technical Services and is constantly being measured and evaluated. Since implementation, Seamless Customer Service has delivered measurable improvements in key customer experience metrics.

When the automated post call survey identified call wait time as a frustration area for customers, the Global Operations team responded by utilizing the new unified architecture to implement more efficient call routing through the worldwide resource pool to the most appropriate available resource based on factors such as product, language, region and issue severity. In the last year, call hold times have been reduced by 76 percent, from an average of 2.5 minutes per call to just 44 seconds per call.

Since the initial introduction of the Ask an Expert capability, the overall first day resolution rate has increased by 7 percent and the time to reach a support technician with the correct skill set has improved by 8 percent.

And, the teams using Ask an Expert have shown overall increases in Transactional Survey Overall Customer Satisfaction scores by 6 percent, measuring 4.79 on a scale of 5.

Culture Change for the Better

Adopting a unified communications model will require a cultural shift for end-users, whether in the enterprise or in the contact center. However, the Aspect Technical Services team quickly adapted and now relies on the streamlined routing, reporting and collaboration capabilities to achieve their performance goals.

Adopting Seamless Customer Service has helped Aspect Technical Services enhance their inbound processes, improve real-time communication and more comprehensively measure outcomes, resulting in gains in efficiency, performance and customer satisfaction.

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About Aspect

Aspect provides software and consulting services that turn the potential of unified communications into real business results across the enterprise and in the contact center. Applying 35 years of insight and experience, Aspect helps more than two-thirds of the FORTUNE Global 100, as well as small and medium enterprises, power their business processes with communications. For more information, visit www.aspect.com.

