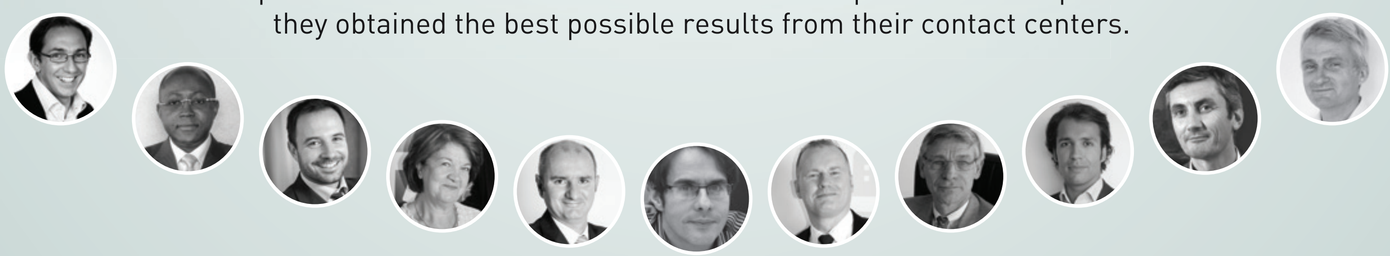
CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP EXPERIENCES

Customer services and their search for hidden knowledge

Customer service managers, outsourcers and CRM experts:
12 professionals share their customer service experience and explain how they obtained the best possible results from their contact centers.



Collection " Les carnets d'expériences " pour action !

in partnership with: EXALEAD

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FOREWORD

“We are witnessing significant changes in the area of customer relationship management. The days when companies promoted their products and controlled the relationship with their customers are over. Today's customers are more demanding and better connected than ever before and now have the upper hand. They expect a rapid response and quality service, so companies need to deliver precise information in a limited amount of time. Our aim is to restore balance in the customer relationship process by helping businesses gain customer loyalty at a faster rate and increase their sales. I hope that this **Customer Relationship Experiences: Customer services and their search for hidden knowledge** booklet will provide you with both a basis for reflection and the solutions to help you address issues relating to information access for the future of customer services."

Laurent Couillard,
CEO of EXALEAD,
Dassault Systèmes

It is difficult to "think" as customers do, without knowing them well. What might seem so obvious to everybody is still considered as a challenge for many businesses. Internet service providers and mobile operators provide us with a good example of this situation. Several other sectors of activity are envious of the close relationship Internet service providers and mobile operators have with their customers, thanks to subscription management and the proximity of their distribution network. However, according to the latest Customer Services Survey conducted by BVA and Viséo Conseil[1], since 2011, the French rank them as the two worst performers in terms of customer service quality. The survey revealed scores of 5.86/10 for Internet service providers and 5.78/10 for mobile operators while the banking sector topped the list at 6.73/10. Several reasons may explain this phenomenon: the number of subscribers, the multitude and complexity of their services, installation issues and problems regarding service provisions.

Yet, all telecom industry experts do agree on one thing: there is still a long way to go before customer knowledge can be optimized. Of course, operators have access to a wealth of increasingly precise information on both major and minor consumer habits, and all of this information is fed into CRM systems. New analytic tools are being developed thanks to technological progress, but it is still a struggle to consolidate and leverage all available information to obtain a genuine 360° view of the customer.

2.7

The average number of contact channels used by the French in 2012

2012 Customer Service Survey carried out by BVA and Viséo Conseil

It is important to note that this analysis applies to all sectors of activity. Providing customer services (via a contact center or similar), loyalty programs, customer satisfaction surveys and clearly-defined brand promises (that are weakly kept) are not enough to convince consumers and customers. Several recent surveys have underlined this fact.

According to the 2012 American Express Customer Service Barometer[2], **55% of French people surveyed believe that companies do not meet their customer service expectations.** In addition, 42% declared that they had already cancelled a transaction due to poor customer service. According to the Customer Services Survey conducted by BVA and Viséo Conseil in 2012, 75% of French people interviewed did not receive a satisfactory response the first time they phoned, even though 77% declared a preference for this method of communication. Similarly, email contact was the third most popular channel (44%), faring only slightly better than telephone contact: only 34% of French people surveyed claimed to have solved an issue with their first email.

From a more global point of view, those surveyed criticized the lack of personalized service (5.82/10), long waiting times (4.43/10) and poor response times (5.09/10). In short, customers are used to finding information they require via the Internet and this leaves businesses with no margin for error.

What can be done to improve the "first-call resolution" rate? Ideally, businesses need to capitalize on consumer knowledge by managing the various forms of interaction with their customers. However, in today's world, any attempt to structure and stock source data for use in future trend analysis would be illusory. This is simply because they evolve rapidly and it would cost a fortune. Bearing this in mind, Search-Based Applications (SBAs) would appear to be one of the most promising ways forward.

80%

of French people declared that if they felt disappointed with customer service quality, this could make them change their minds about a purchase or make them cancel their subscription or contract.

2012 Customer Service Survey carried out by BVA and Viséo Conseil

These business applications are Web 2.0 solutions that rely on search engine technology and offer a wide array of benefits. Businesses can make full use of all information systems in real time by aggregating the various sources of information without interfering with existing data models or creating new ones. This provides an all-round 360° analysis of incoming and outgoing information. In more simple terms, they provide an intuitive means of revealing hidden business knowledge contained even in unstructured forms of data such as emails, SMS and corporate communications. The application displays the results in the form of customizable dashboards. Users can search for a customer and a full list of his or her contracts and display a consolidated view of all of his or her mail and calls to the contact center, by product. It is even possible to anticipate the customer's future needs by proposing additional services.
The result is improved interaction between the customer and the company.

(1) 2012 The Customer Service Survey was carried out by BVA and Viséo Conseil by telephone on September 7-8, 2012, based on a representative sample of 967 French people aged 18 and above.

(2) The 2012 American Express Customer Service Barometer is an online survey carried out by Echo Research and involving a panel of consumers aged over 18. The sample consisted of 1,000 people representative of the French population. The interviews were conducted by Echo Research on March 2-9, 2012, with a margin of error of +/- 3.1% and a confidence level of 95%. The methodology was used in 10 other countries for the Global Customer Service Barometer (Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, United States and United Kingdom).

Business & Decision

Jean-Michel Franco
Innovation and Business Solutions Manager

Kerensen Consulting

Alexandre Losson
Partner

How are new technologies like smartphones, tablets and social networks changing customer relationships?

Jean-Michel Franco: New technologies and social networks are forcing companies to change the way they do business by multiplying the number of contact channels and totally transforming consumer behavior and communication patterns. Customers are now demanding a real-time response and personalized service; they share information and expect smooth communication across the various channels. As a result, information flows are being replaced by floods of data.
For example, according to a study conducted in 2011 by a professor at Harvard Business School[1], when a restaurant is awarded an extra star recommendation on the American consumer review website Yelp, its turnover increases by between 5 and 9%. The greater the number of reviews, the greater the impact: +20% for restaurants with over 50 reviews compared to restaurants with less than 10 reviews.
In short, traditional CRM tools require complementary information management technology to provide a real-time 360° view of the customer by gathering all contact details, transaction data, contact history and contextual information.

Alexandre Losson: New technologies and the explosion of social networks have radically changed customer relationships. Such a rapid expansion has multiplied the number of contact channels and revolutionized consumer communication habits. Customers now have more freedom, and the greater immediacy of information and mobility enable them to voice their opinions about companies.
Although it is a clear advantage for the customer, for many businesses it is a difficult equation to solve. They are forced to change practices and move away from an information silo system of customer data storage that prevents access to a global view of the customer. They must introduce new processes and integrate new technological solutions to gather information, provide an appropriate response and thus avoid customer dissatisfaction.

What are the new solutions that help us "manage" or "gather" information?

Jean-Michel Franco: I would say Search-Based Applications (SBAs). They use the same technology as search engines and can be described as a range of semantic search (name, dates, types of contract, etc.) business applications that can access internal (ERP, CRM, etc.) and external (Web, social networks) information sources that are both structured (upstream system databases) and unstructured (paper, Internet, email, video, audio, etc.). They index large volumes of data in real time and display the results in the form of customizable dashboards that are easy to view via a Web browser.

Alexandre Losson: They are solutions based on internal search engine technology or SBAs. They integrate with CRM systems, and coordinate front office operations by feeding information to a single user interface and aggregating different sources of information in real time without interfering with existing data models or creating new ones.

Which sectors of activity may be interested in using SBAs?

Alexandre Losson: These solutions are useful for processing several sources of information, regardless of whether they are structured or unstructured. Sectors that come to mind include insurance, telecommunications and high-tech, as well as banking, finance and certain public services.

For businesses, what are the potential advantages of SBAs?

Jean-Michel Franco: In my opinion, they improve the quality of customer service. SBAs enable businesses to rapidly develop an information access system for their employees, customers or partners, without altering existing business information system architectures. In addition to this, by combining all corporate information assets into a unified solution, businesses benefit from improved service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty as well as a reduction in the cost of handling customer enquiries.

(1) Reviews, Reputation, and Revenue: The Case of Yelp.com - http://ideas.repec.org/p/hbs/wpaper/12-016.html

Business & Decision *key figures*

- 221.9 million euros of revenue in 2012
- 2,500 employees
- Presence in 16 countries
- 3 fields of expertise: CRM, e-Business and Enterprise Information Management

Source: Business & Decision

Kerensen Consulting *overview*

Kerensen Consulting is an international group and co-founder of the first network dedicated to salesforce.com (CCAN). The company has successfully delivered more than 200 CRM projects, collaborative work platforms and digital marketing cloud solutions across France, as well as 600 similar projects in Europe and 4,000 projects worldwide via the CCAN.

Source: Kerensen Consulting

Capgemini
CONSULTING.TECHNOLOGY.OUTSOURCING

"By using a SBA (Search-Based Application) you can improve the performances of different customer relationship management systems"

Terence Goudriaan is the Manager of Customer Experience Development at Capgemini Telecom & Media

Companies are now storing increasing amounts of heterogeneous information and data both internally and externally. What technical challenges do companies face when consolidating, indexing and delivering all of this knowledge?

Major companies are offering increasingly convergent services and it is therefore crucial to "break down" the information silos that were previously built for each line of business. For example, in the telecommunications sector, there are IT silos for landline, mobile and Internet business. Some companies have decided to physically merge multiple silos and create a single line of applications, with all of the difficulties that this entails in terms of migration, choosing the right solution and integration. However, there is an alternative. To avoid interfering with their existing complex information systems, some major companies are partly turning to Search-Based Applications (SBAs). They adopt a conceptual approach to data alignment, as opposed to a physical approach, to provide a 360° global view of the customer.

What are the advantages of a Search-Based Application?

By adopting such a solution, you can improve the performances of different customer relationship management systems. A SBA not only provides fast response times thanks to its search engine, it also helps reduce the load on existing applications, which no longer need to supply information for each process (for example, each time a customer phones or sends mail).

What are its limits?

Although in principle, using a SBA streamlines information system interfaces, with the introduction of complicated mechanisms for synchronizing data between different applications (CRM, billing, decision making, etc.), the problem of keeping information up to date still remains.

What does this mean?

One of the main technical challenges with using a SBA is the data refresh rate between the source systems (Master Data) and the SBA, which delivers the indexed data. Real-time performance is very difficult to achieve because of the system structure itself. Inevitably, a minimum lapse of time is required for the source system to update the information and for the SBA to retrieve it in its index. However, the performances of SBAs have significantly improved, and a SBA like EXALEAD offers highly-efficient indexing times. But it is still the duty of the source systems to make up-to-date information available. To address such issues, Capgemini has acquired a high level of expertise and offers a range of alternative solutions to meet business requirements.

In which areas can a SBA be used?

It can be used for a variety of activities ranging from decision making to customer relationship management. Capgemini has invested heavily in the latter to provide its customers with the tools they require to leverage key business indicators (ARPU, AHT, FCR, retention/churn rate, etc.), gain a better understanding of end customer behavior and improve company performance.

What can companies gain by using a SBA?

I believe that they gain in a number of ways. First, the first-call resolution rate (FCR) is maximized since contact center agents have immediate access to the right information or appropriate course of action. The average handling time (AHT) is also improved, as agents not only spend less time answering queries, they also interact with the customer and provide valuable information instead of spending time sifting through multiple screens or applications.
Second, SBAs help increase the average revenue per user (ARPU), since agents propose services or products that are better adapted to customer behavior and consumption habits by cross-matching all related customer data. Third, they provide enhanced customer experience. These actions will enable companies to respond more effectively to the needs and expectations of their customers and therefore increase customer loyalty and retention (for high-value customers in particular). In addition, integration with a social CRM application can also improve the company's e-business reputation.
Finally, access to applications is simpler and more streamlined. Users have direct access to certain types of information from the SBA (360° view and other management screens), and this avoids navigating between multiple applications.

Capgemini *overview*

Capgemini is one of the world's leading providers of consulting, technology and outsourcing services, with a presence in 44 countries and more than 125,000 employees. The Group generated a global turnover of 10.3 billion euros in 2012.

"The boom in new digital technologies is forcing companies to acquire new skills"

Arnaud de Lacoste is the Managing Director and Founding Partner of Acticall, a group specializing in a large range of services for remote customer relationship management

In what ways has the emergence of information technologies triggered a tidal wave in customer relationship management?

The notions of virality, mobility and immediacy are often linked to the use of new information technologies, and they are changing the relationship between customers and brands by defining new methods of communication and exchange. We are noticing the shift from a transactional relationship to a more conversational type of relationship, in which companies no longer have the power of the word. Customers are often better informed and more agile than customer service agents. They are more demanding and impatient, too; they want to be able to contact a company whenever and wherever they want and to obtain an immediate answer to their question. They expect customer service agents to have a perfect knowledge and understanding of their customer history.

What effects are the developments of new methods of contact and new consumer expectations having on customer relationship management?

I see two main effects. First, communication between different channels has become essential. This is why a silo type of organization[1] is incapable of providing a smooth customer experience. Companies need to establish a coherent and, more important, a global contact strategy by creating links between channels, enabling customers to switch seamlessly from one to another.

What is the second effect?

The boom in new digital technologies is forcing companies to acquire new skills in Web development, Search Engine Optimization and digital expertise as a whole. For example, companies now need to be capable of combining a chat application and a dynamic Frequently-Asked Question list (FAQ) to provide a smooth customer experience. They also need to supply appropriate training and tools to help customer service agents make this digital transition and, at the same time, boost their productivity.

How do new information technologies integrate with customer relationship channels (telephone, Internet, face-to-face contact, mail)?

As I mentioned earlier, consumers are good at juggling the different communication channels at their disposal. Nonetheless, they prefer phone contact, even though the overall volume of phone calls is falling. This is mainly because consumers have wider access to various high-performance customer self-service options and are more independent than ever before. In parallel, we are witnessing a large increase in the use of online chat services popular with consumers who appreciate a quick and immediate response. The use of regular mail remains stable (used mainly to address claims), while email contact is less popular.

The multiplication of the number of channels and the growing importance of the digital environment mean that companies have increasing amounts of data from different sources and silos. Is this the case for you?

Nowadays, it is true that companies handle massive amounts of information. This is particularly the case for our key account customers, mainly companies on the French CAC 40 stock market index. To manage the huge volume of information, we have installed two screens on half of our 6,000 workstations so that agents can access the windows and tools they need to work efficiently.

Acticall *key figures*

- 160 million euros of revenue in 2011
- 45 million inbound contacts and 15 million outbound contacts
- 6,000 employees
- Main clients: Orange, SFR, Bouygues Telecom, Canal +, American Express, Finaref, BNP Paribas, Air France

Source: Acticall

On average, how many applications do agents open on their screens?

They have nine windows open on average. However, the record is seventeen different applications open at the same time.

(1) Web, email, SMS, chat, telephone, FAQ, social networks, store

Proxiserve

"Our main contact is not the customer (public housing agency or private property owner), but rather the tenant"

Bertrand Goublaire is CRM Manager at Proxiserve, a company specializing in the provision of technical services for residential properties

Can you provide us with a brief description of your company?

Proxiserve is a company specializing in household care and maintenance. We offer a wide range of technical services for the management of heating systems and water and energy distribution in various types of joint-owned property (public housing, private residential buildings and commercial buildings) and private homes. Proxiserve currently manages maintenance in nearly 3 million rental homes and carries out 15,000 interventions per day.

Can you describe the particular features of customer relationship at Proxiserve?

I can list quite a few. First, we have a nationwide geographical presence, with roughly 100 agencies located all over the country and five regional offices. Second, our activity is very seasonal. There are particularly high peaks in activity between late September and early October, when customers ask us to switch their heating systems back on. Third, our main contact is not the customer (public housing agencies or private property owners), but rather the tenant. It is the tenant who contacts us when there is a problem.

Finally, increasing numbers of customers are requesting real-time delivery of maintenance reports directly to their information systems. For these reasons, we are currently providing all of our 2,500 maintenance technicians with tablets so that they can fill in their reports directly onsite. When the deployment is complete, we will no longer provide hard-copy versions of maintenance reports to customers.

In practical terms, how do you organize your schedule of interventions?

In 99% of cases, tenants phone one of our three internal customer service centers. If the tenant is recognized by the system, the customer record is displayed. It contains information about all appliances covered by their contract, details of previous interventions, maintenance work and repairs, the description of the problems and the inspector's report.

If the system does not recognize the customer, things become slightly more complicated. Our customer service agents perform a search using multiple search criteria (zip code, address, owner's name, etc.). It takes three to five clicks to find the tenant and customer record. A further three to five clicks are required to schedule an appointment with one of our technicians.

15 000
interventions per day
Source: Proxiserve

Do you use a CRM system to manage customer relationships?

Yes, we deployed a Siebel solution to manage all front office activities, coordinate our maintenance technicians' activities, schedule visits and repair work and also manage our customer and property database.

What different sources of information do you have?

The customer provides us with a property list that we include in our customer database. We also have various forms of unstructured data, such as contracts and maintenance reports.

Do you use a search engine or Search-Based Applications to index data?

No, we do not use search applications. Current response times enable us to work smoothly and we have not noticed any slowdown on our information systems. The average handling time of 1.5 minutes is acceptable. The most time-consuming part is to assess the reason for the call and fully understand the needs of the tenant.

Proxiserve *key figures*

- 310 million euros of revenue in 2012
- 3,000 employees
- 5,000 contracts with public housing agencies
- 25,000 jointly owned properties
- 130,000 individually owned properties
- 3 million homes maintained

Source: Proxiserve

MULTIPLE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP EXPERIENCES

Public Organization

Nicolas Savin is Head of Marketing for the Service Quality Department of the French National Pension Fund, CNAV

Outsourcer Specialized in the Luxury Market

François-Xavier Poëls is the founder of Approche sur Mesure

What are the specific features of your customer relationship?

Nicolas Savin: Proximity, easy access and the competence of our technicians. These are three essential elements in our customer relationship policy. The fact is that 97% of all workers have at some time in their lives paid contributions to the national pension scheme. We have estimated that, potentially, 50% of these people may ask us a question at some point in the year. We therefore need to be capable of providing consistent levels of service and accurate information to this entire population.

François-Xavier Poëls: Making customers dream is one of the keys to the success of luxury brands. For this reason, good management of incoming calls is strategic. Customer contact must reflect the high quality of service provided in a brand's stores. Customers expect service to be personalized, closely followed up and flawless. Customer service agents need to have in-depth product knowledge and a perfect understanding of consumer perception.

In addition, agents are selected for their brand affinity; they understand the philosophy and values of the brand they represent. They are invited to attend fashion shows, training and new product presentations in stores and are totally immersed in the brand they represent, even in our offices. They work in separate rooms where there is an exclusive working environment for each brand.

What is your main communication channel?

Nicolas Savin: Most often, people contact us by telephone using the direct number of the national pension fund, 39 60. This channel accounts for half of our annual volume of incoming calls. However, to adapt to current trends and match the needs of our users, several years ago we began developing a multi-channel approach by increasing our methods of contact: regular mail, pension offices and information centers and the website. We are currently focusing on the website in particular. Internet users can search for information regarding their rights, ask questions, obtain an estimate of their pension and submit an application or access their individual benefit statement online.

François-Xavier Poëls: Ninety percent of our work involves handling incoming queries (requests for information about products, prices, availability, after-sales service, etc.), both by telephone and by email, or redirected calls from stores (we reply to calls on behalf of stores). In fact, e-commerce support is becoming an increasingly important part of our business, accounting for 25% of current activity.

What different sources of information do you require to answer queries?

Nicolas Savin: We need several types of information. The first sources of information we use are the career details supplied by employers in their annual declarations of social data. In subsequent stages, our legal team ensures the proper application of the legal and regulatory framework. The third essential phase involves exchanges with other pension funds and public partners.

François-Xavier Poëls: To answer questions from customers, we work exclusively with information, data and photos provided by the brands. This includes details about the companies themselves, their products, points of sale, services and programs as well as their sales guides. Information is stored internally and can be accessed using software we developed in-house with InfoTel.

When monitoring your customer relationship performance, what criteria do you use for measuring efficiency or quality?

Nicolas Savin: We use all the essential, traditional performance indicators when monitoring the performance of our customer relationship system. However, we keep a very close eye on the quality of customer relations, in particular by monitoring the repeat incoming call rate; in other words, when a customer contacts us at least twice for the same reason. This indicator provides a simple means of measuring call-handling performance. We need to keep it under control for our multi-channel information systems to function effectively.

François-Xavier Poëls: We are as far away as you can possibly be from the engineering and standardized approach adopted by conventional call centers. We believe that it is quality rather than quantity that matters. Our call-handling rate is therefore very high and our service level agreements exceed normal industry standards. Ninety-eight percent of all calls are answered, and a minimum of 90% within 20 seconds.

CNAV *key figures*

- 16 regional pension funds and five funds in French overseas departments, 299 pension offices and 1,000 information centers
- In 2011, the national pension fund received 10,383,859 calls for all types of queries
- Awarded 1st prize at the Podium de la Relation Client* in the Public Sector Services category in 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009 and 2008

* Annual customer relationship management awards organized by BearingPoint and TNS Sofres

Source: CNAV

Approche sur Mesure *key figures*

- 5 million euros of revenue in 2012, one-third of which is generated in France
- 6 million euros of revenue forecasted for 2013
- 125 employees
- Subsidiaries in Italy, Belgium, United States, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tokyo
- Customers: Emporio Armani, Eres, Fendi, Fred, Estée Lauder, Chaumet, Lalique, Lacoste, and others

Source: Approche sur Mesure

LA POSTE | SOLUTIONS BUSINESS

"We have observed an increase in sales productivity of between 15 and 20%"

Alain Drillet is Business Development Manager at La Poste

At what moment or in what circumstances did La Poste decide to focus on contact centers for generating revenue?

Due to the reduction in mail volumes, in 2009 La Poste decided to develop its sales organization and focus its activities on small- and medium-sized businesses in particular. To do so, we needed to mobilize our sales force and improve its performance. At the time, our 600 telemarketers were working in eight regional centers, answering 500,000 incoming calls, making 1.5 million outgoing calls and generating a turnover of just over 900 million euros.

What were your expectations?

Our telemarketers and trade unions were complaining about their working conditions. They were particularly unhappy with their sales tool interface, claiming it lacked scalability and user-friendliness. Customers were also complaining that it was taking too long for calls to be answered. It is true that the Siebel application we interfaced with our call center management tool for front office operations was complicated. The data input system was poorly designed and access time to customer records seemed endless, requiring up to 11 clicks to display all of the information....Even then, the name of the customer company was not displayed in full on the home screen.

We needed to adopt a scalable, iterative and customer-centric approach that would improve working conditions for our end users. It was absolutely essential, especially as we were also building our multi-channel strategy.

What were your criteria when choosing your search solution?

La Poste wanted to avoid a complete overhaul of its existing application infrastructure; it would have been too time-consuming and expensive. We preferred an agile solution that would enable us to aggregate the existing information systems, index all our information sources and databases (internal information, ORT business information agency ratings, sales offers and products, etc.) and provide an intuitive, user-friendly interface that would require less user training.

We therefore turned to Capgemini who designed a front office project to replace our Siebel customer relationship management tool. It is based on an EXALEAD application that enables search and access to data from our various information systems.

How long did it take to deploy the chosen solution?

The project was launched in September 2009, and after a pilot phase in Marseille and Bordeaux in 2010, it was made available to all of our call center platforms in early 2011.

What conclusions do you draw from this integration?

Our operational teams expressed their overall satisfaction with the solution, and none of the telemarketers wanted to go back to the old interface, despite a few bugs in the early stages. More precisely, the user-friendly interface was highly appreciated by our employees, who found it modern and commented that "It scrolls up and down and it's quick!" In addition, thanks to this solution we eliminated the constraints we had with the previous tool for both information access and input. From an internal point of view, this integration also proved that we are attentive to the needs of our sales force and, in particular, those of our telemarketing teams, even during a period of budget cuts.

What are the advantages?

There are many. I am probably repeating myself, but it was important for us when we launched this project. The tool was capable of mobilizing our sales force and they were satisfied with the new resources we provided to help them with their work.

We have also observed an increase in sales productivity of between 15 and 20%. The net number of prospecting calls increased across all platforms and so did the number of final sales. Finally, the Net Promoter Score[1] became positive. We progressed from rates between -20 and -25% to +2%, which is rare for BtoB remote sales.

(1) Used to measure customer relationship quality, and most importantly, an indicator of customer behavior

La Poste *key figures*

- 8 call centers across France
- 600 telemarketers
- 900 million euros of revenue

Source: La Poste

"We have recorded a 50% increase in productivity"

Yves Mao is Global Services Director at Orange-Ivory Coast Telecom (Ivorian subsidiary of Orange)

What are the particular features of customer relationship management at Orange-Ivory Coast Telecom?

There are two particular aspects. The first is linked to the legal and regulatory framework in Ivory Coast. Although our strategy is to offer deals and services that benefit from synergies between the landline, Internet and mobile networks, legislation requires us to divide our activities into three separate legal entities, with three distinct customer databases. Under such circumstances, it is difficult for us to obtain a 360° view of our customers and find how to access such information.

The second aspect involves access to customer records. In France, a telecom company uses a customer's first and last names for identification purposes. In Ivory Coast, it is not as simple, as there are many homonyms. Finding a client by entering only his first and last names is very difficult, so we were forced to enter an additional variable, the telephone number.

What channels are used to address queries?

The Orange-Ivory Coast Telecom group has the largest physical distribution network in the country, with branches (privately owned and franchises), partners and a concept that is unique to Ivory Coast, "cabinards" or phone cabins run by informal retailers selling telecom products. Customers also contact us by phone and we have noticed a recent rise in the use of Internet and social network channels.

Which tool did you decide to use?

Our aim was to find a solution that enabled unified access to fragmented sources of data spread across our three business sectors (Internet, mobile and landline telecommunications). It also had to provide us with a 360° view of our customer, whose name can be spelled in different ways and for whom we have several means of identification. We decided to choose the EXALEAD solution.

What initially attracted us was its semantic search feature. We were then impressed by the quick response times, especially as we have huge amounts of information concerning our Orange network subscribers. We have a volume of over 14 million items of information.

The tool has been operational since November 2012. Can you provide us with an initial assessment of results?

Before we introduced the EXALEAD solution, our customer service agents had to rummage around in no fewer than nine applications before they could process a customer file. After integration, we recorded a 50% increase in productivity. File processing times have dropped sharply, from a previous average of 15 to 20 minutes to just eight minutes.

In addition, we carried out a satisfaction survey among users of the application. They expressed the need to quickly find information from a single access point, without having to know in advance where information is located, whether it is in a database, an application or on a network drive. More than 80% of our customer agents were satisfied with the new solution.

Orange-Ivory Coast Telecom *key figures*

- 5th largest company in Ivory Coast
- Orange has the largest physical distribution network in the telecommunications sector in Ivory Coast, with 99 stores, of which 32 are privately owned and 67 are franchises. Orange-Ivory Coast Telecom also distributes its services through a network of 14 exclusive partners, and more than 80,000 retailers commercialize Orange products

Source: Orange

"SVP handles over 2,000 questions per day, delivering an immediate and well-argued response in 80% of the cases"

Muriel Lafargue and Olivier Filliau are respectively Information Manager and Marketing Director of SVP group, a French company providing information services and decision-making support for businesses and local authorities

Since 1935, SVP Group has been known for its range of decision-making services. The company provides managers and decision-makers with the information and answers they require on a daily basis in the course of their profession. Have Internet and, more generally, new information technologies, changed your business?

Olivier Filliau: Today, more than ever before, maintaining reliable sources of information and ensuring rapid access to concrete answers are critically important for professionals.

Simple questions no longer exist. Queries are increasingly sophisticated, if not complicated, and are becoming more urgent. This explains why the phone is still, by far, our most popular contact channel, used for about 80% of queries. For all of these reasons, we need to be available and responsive.

Muriel Lafargue: SVP currently handles over 2,000 questions per day, delivering an immediate and well-argued response in 80% of the cases.

What resources you have at your disposal to answer customer questions?

Olivier Filliau: Our recognition as an authority in our field depends on our team of 200 experts, who are all specialists in their fields of expertise (human resources, taxation, business and trade, communication, procurement, health and safety, standards and regulations, etc.), and they all have a Masters degree or PhD. In addition, our document database is unmatched by any other. We have 80 years of archives and access to over 10,000 databases.

Muriel Lafargue: To be able to use this information, we rely on 50 document managers specializing in information research and management and a dozen "intelligence researchers" who focus mainly on marketing and economic research online.

Olivier Filliau: In addition, we have an international network of correspondents in over 40 countries, who help us assist companies on international expansion issues (expatriation, import/export, search for suppliers or subcontractors, business setup, etc.).

Your business relies on your ability to respond rapidly to your customers' questions. You therefore need to access information in your database as quickly as possible. Bearing this in mind, do you use an internal search engine?

Muriel Lafargue: Yes we do. We integrated an EXALEAD search engine back in 2007 to improve access to more than a million digital documents indexed in our database. It took less than six months to implement and deploy the entire project, from the initial comparative test phase to its release across all departments.

Implementation was rapid, given the scale of the project. It involved 30 core functions, such as formatting, indexing rules, search methods and the basics of database queries. The introduction of this new tool also meant that new work procedures needed to be defined for the documentation teams.

Can you give a brief description of how it works?

Muriel Lafargue: The information is scanned and indexed by our document managers. The EXALEAD engine enables users to carry out full-text searches, in much the same way as they would with Web search engines. Information search is easier, as users no longer need to fill in forms with lots of different search criteria.

What does an SVP expert's front office application look like?

Muriel Lafargue: The desktop looks much like an information portal. Obviously, the display varies according to the expert's profile and field of expertise. It includes the main sources of paid-access information, links to institutional websites, SVP applications and the EXALEAD search engine.

SVP group *key figures*

- 60 million euros of revenue in 2012
- International presence in 40 countries
- 30,000 customers, 7,000 subscribers (businesses, local authorities, consultants, and more)
- Immediate response in 80% of cases

Source: SVP group

EXALEAD

"Deliver the right information at the right time and in the most intuitive way possible"

Benoit Bourdé is Business Development Executive and Product Manager of EXALEAD OneCall

Can you give a brief description of EXALEAD OneCall?

This application was designed for call centers and customer service teams who have direct contact with customers. Its role is to provide a 360° global view of the customer, delivering the right information at the right time and in the most intuitive way possible, to increase customer satisfaction and help make businesses more profitable.

OneCall provides companies with real-time access to accurate and relevant information stored in different internal databases or on the Web. In short, it places agents in a stronger position to assist their customers and generate more sales opportunities.

Would you describe OneCall as a "game-changing" solution?

Yes, I believe it is quite an appropriate description. OneCall is indeed a "game changer", as it has not simply changed the rules of the game; it has changed how we play. Agents have access to all the information and data they need, therefore interaction with customers is improved, so businesses can change gears, enjoying closer communication with their customers and providing a better customer experience.

What sectors of activity and types of businesses may be interested in OneCall?

Our application is designed for any company that has a BtoB or BtoC network, operating in a complex and fiercely competitive environment and with a desire to build a more responsive and efficient relationship with its customers. Sectors of activity that come to mind include telecommunications, insurance and energy, as well as public services. Like consumers, users and citizens now tend to be better informed. As a result, public services are also expected to answer increasingly complex questions in a very short period.

How does your application work?

It is a search engine that consolidates and enriches data from different sources (websites, file servers, EDMS, CMS, databases, directories, etc.) in a single index. The engine performs a semantic analysis across all structured and unstructured data (HTML, PDF, Word, Excel, XML, video, images). Using text mining (text analysis) and Web mining (Web data analysis) techniques, it retrieves and displays the information on a single screen in a simple dashboard format. It does all this in less than a second.

It is worth noting that OneCall also provides a number of operational tools, such as performance indicators and input screens, that enable users to enter a phone number, an email address or to note an appointment.

What needs to be done before OneCall can be integrated?

OneCall is a complementary solution for existing customer relationship management software. It is deployed on top of a CRM system or any other business application that a company has already installed. To implement the solution, there is no need to change the existing information system architecture and overall framework.

How long does it take to integrate the OneCall solution?

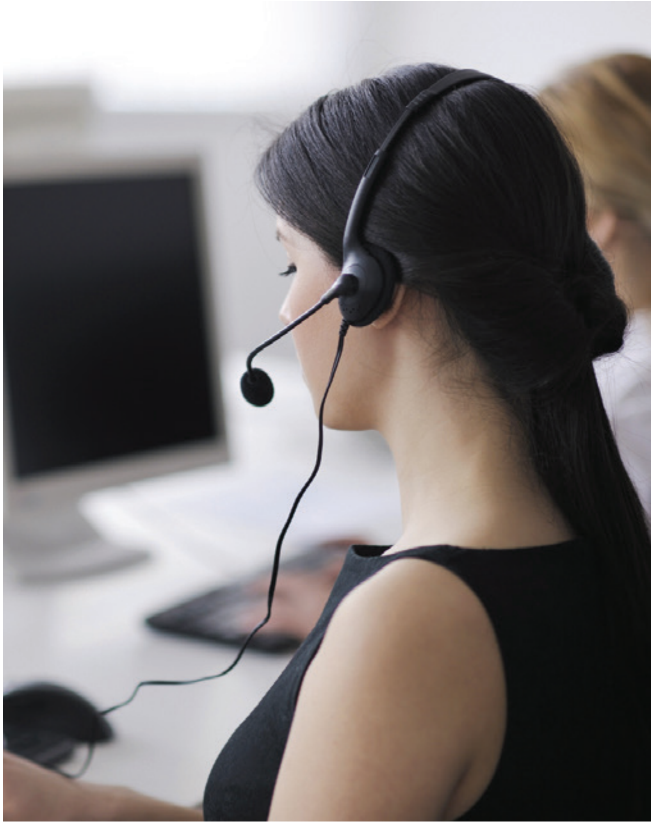
Our lead-times are quite short. If we take an example of a call center with 600 workstations, it takes about three months: Two months are required to install our application on half of the screens at pilot sites. It usually takes a further five to six weeks to fine-tune the solution to closely match business requirements before it is finally deployed. It is important to remember that our technology is "scalable" and therefore capable of adapting to increased load. There is no need for additional servers when user numbers increase.

Such an agile and speedy response is possible because OneCall is a packaged solution based on a data model, connectors and 20 widget screens.

What can a company expect to gain by integrating OneCall?

A solution like OneCall offers a number of advantages. It helps reduce costs in the short term by improving first-call resolution time by 10%. For example, Orange-Ivory Coast Telecom reduced the cost of a call by approximately 35%, the equivalent of a one-month ROI. It improves customer satisfaction rates and loyalty by promoting closer communication with customers. And it provides sales support with its Next-Best-Action feature that enables agents to propose the most appropriate products, deals or actions to adapt to the customer's needs according to the context.

For users, it is also a simple tool to use. Access to information is easy and intuitive, as the solution employs everyday language. The interface is streamlined, providing a clear, uncluttered view of the most relevant information. Such features reduce the amount of training time required. OneCall should lead to a reduction in staff turnover in call centers.



EXALEAD *overview*

- EXALEAD is a brand belonging to the Dassault Systèmes group
- More than 350 customers, 500,000 intranet users and over 110 million Internet users rely on EXALEAD and its 100 partners worldwide to access their data systems and deliver information that makes sense
- 14.1 million euros of revenue in 2012
- EXALEAD received the 2008 AFDEL award for the French software publisher with the highest growth rate

Source: EXALEAD

The Experiences Booklets

The Experiences Booklets are a series about concerns faced by specific industry sectors. Capitalizing on the experience of major players on the market, the Booklets offer a new vision of their subjects. Because a pragmatic approach is more valuable than a long discourse, these day-to-day experiences of decision-makers help us understand major future trends.
This Experiences Booklet is about the future of customer service and new technologies for accessing customer information.
It was written by the journalist Guillaume Fedele for the company "pour action !" in partnership with EXALEAD.

pour action !

pour action ! is a marketing, editorial and business development agency, specialized in the IT industry.

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pour action ! - 32 rue des Jeûneurs - 75002 Paris - France
Siret: 440 685 246 00033
VAT registration number: FR70 440685246
www.pouraction.fr
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Customer services and their search for hidden knowledge

EXALEAD, Dassault Systèmes

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