



Automation: When, Where and How

27th June 2013 - Tracy Lancashire – Senior Manager Contact Centre



Automation at Dacorum

- **When**
 - First customer call
- **Where**
 - Switchboard internally and externally
- **How**
 - Using automation agents and speech recognition



Automation at Dacorum

- Using Automation since 2004
- Virtual operator with a speed dial for staff to call colleagues
- Expanded to include vendor/contractors for internal calls
- DDI for members to dial in and ask for staff using speech recognition
- 2009 we implemented Virtual Agents
- Virtual Agents handles customer reports of missed bin collections and job application pack requests
- Jan 2011 launch of one number service



Original Objectives

- To implement virtual agents to provide an automated service to deal with all switchboard calls
- To introduce one single number for customers to contact
- Integration with existing Call Centre to manage failure calls
- Training of all relevant staff
- Operator Services to 'go live' by the agreed date
- Reduction of 1 FTE
- Providing a service 24/7
- Work towards reducing call wait times
- Improve Customer Satisfaction



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Calling DBC? It's as easy as 1, 2, 3...

It's now simpler
to contact us:

- 1 Dial 01442 228 000
- 2 Say the name of service or person you want eg Housing/John Smith
- 3 You'll automatically be put through

This one main number has replaced the existing Customer Services' numbers with the prefix '867', that will be gradually phased out.

The new automated system – provided by local Hemel-based company Telephonetics VIP Ltd – replaces our current switchboard and enables us to deal with calls more quickly and effectively. It uses a similar voice recognition system used to book cinema tickets over the phone.

There will always be a backup person to speak to if you can't get through after two attempts. All direct dial numbers remain the same.

Not sure who to ask for?

The main services whose numbers have changed are:

Council Tax

Benefits

Housing Repairs

Payments

Planning

Housing

Complaints

Waste Services

Landscape

Pest Control

Pollution Control

You can still call the freephone council housing repairs line direct on **0800 018 6050**





The Results

- Reduced the number of operators to 1.1 FTE's
- No staff needed to cover the switchboard as calls managed by the voice recognition system
- Any calls that fail go to the existing Contact Centre (13 services)
- Very few official complaints (approx 10)
- Single number for customers to call



Operation Functionality

- How do you handle calls that are not auto routed?
- If they go to a contact centre can the agent do a cold hand off or do they have to wait for answer?
- Have you retained Switchboard functionality for calls that need human intervention?
- What about calls for other bodies, partners (PHP)? Can a message be played saying *please call Mr 'X' direct*?
- How do you handle out of hours calls?



Lessons learnt?

- Clearly define what you want from Automation
- Existing processes and telephone/voicemail systems need to be included in the overall scope of the project
- Ensure staff buy-in
- Interaction between internal and external systems needs to be understood.
- Who are you?



And now...

- Over 200,000 calls received in the last 12 months
- Over 350 staff names in system
- 70% of calls answered in 20 seconds – currently achieving 100%
- 95% of calls recognised and handled automatically last month
- Disambiguation feature gives better performance
- QueueBuster recently trialled