Case Study   Outsourced service providers – Contact Centres

Customer:	Vivento Customer Services GmbH
Sector:	Outsourced services provider (contact centres)
Objective:	Integration of front and back office planning in a single workforce management system
Solution:	InVision BackOffice Planning based on InVision Enterprise WFM
Benefit:	■ Planning efficiency improved by 35-40%
	■ Cost savings of about 10% due to optimised agent scheduling
	■ Increased customer satisfaction and transparent service level

Background and Challenges

Vivento Customer Services GmbH offers standalone and integrated services for Customer Relationship Management, sales, and back office functions such as scanning and document management. The 3,600 agents in the 16 service centres answer customer queries during Vivento's business hours, which include weekends and late evenings – based on the respective projects. The centres operate between business hours of 6 a.m. and 9.15 p.m. During peak times, up to 3,000 positions are occupied.

On average, approximately 240,000 requests are handled each day. Inbound call handling accounts for about 20% of the agents' work and the remaining 80% is devoted to back office tasks, i.e. the handling of e-mails, letters and fax documents. The sites are staffed to provide a high service level of 80% of the incoming calls handled within 20 seconds. In peak times, the agents are servicing more than 400 different projects for a multitude of clients.

Since the founding of Vivento in 2004, the workforce, 15% of which is part-time and 85% full-time staff, has been scheduled using the workforce management (WFM) solution from InVision Software. The InVision Enterprise WFM is used both centrally (for projects handled multi-site) and locally (for projects handled at one site only). Due to an increasing amount of back office tasks, Vivento looked to InVision Software for a tool to complement the existing WFM system already in use. The expanded application needed to support a demand-oriented approach to planning of activities. The application had to also offer the option to plan several projects within a single service centre on a parallel basis. InVision Enterprise WFM (iWFM) had proven its functionality and reliability as high quality solution partner at the parent company for more than 10 years and also was deployed by Vivento right from the beginning.

Vivento Customer Services GmbH

Vivento Customer Services GmbH (VCS), headquartered in Bonn, was started in the beginning of 2004 as a 100% Telekom affiliate. The company is among the top 3 players in the German contact centre market. VCS offers standalone and integrated services for Customer Relationship Management, sales, and back office functions such as scanning and document management. Currently, VCS operates 16 sites across Germany and employs about 3,600 highly skilled agents.

www.vivento-cs.de

InVision Software

Solution

Thanks to the back office solution of InVision Software, Vivento is now able to schedule agents in a differentiated and efficient way for both handling calls and documents. For service level adherence,the respective channels are given different priorities based on the specifics of each project: Vivento´s objective is to handle e-mails within half a day and fax requests as well as letter within one day. The InVision Enterprise WFM used priority levels to help determine forecasted work load that drives forecasting requirements. For instance, documents with a high service level which have to be processed within 24 hours, are given a priority of 100, documents with a lower service level which have to processed within one week get a priority of 50.

To avoid documents piling up and remaining non-processed, they are included permanently in forecasting and scheduling until they are finally handled considering the backlog status. This means that documents for processing are sorted into virtual folders according to subjects and tasks, and handled by the respective agents. At the end of the day, the status of the backlog folders is recorded and integrated into the forecast for the next day, with a corresponding prognosis of the incoming documents that are expected and a forecasted number of the agents required. Moreover, when a default value defined within the system is exceeded, an alert is triggered alerting the planner that the critical backlog status is in jeopardy. The planner may adjust the staff scheduling accordingly to ensure that the available documents will be processed within the given service level.

Implementation

The solution was first implemented as a pilot at the Vivento sites in Frankfurt and Gelsenkirchen; the all-out operation started in the beginning of June 2009. Prior to the all-out operation 16 lead planners were trained, who then in turn trained the remaining 30 planners. The application functions as follows: Using a data communication interface, the data required for forecasting the number of future incoming documents is fed into the InVision Enterprise WFM system from the external system and used for setting up the forecast. The subsequent calculation of the agents required for back office tasks uses the following values: the current backlog status, the forecasted average handling times and the given service level in days, hours or minutes. The forecasting is done by means of a default backlog script and is performed for a pre-defined period of time (e.g. 44 days) and separately for each activity.

Then, the demand-oriented optimisation of all activities is done by starting the job optimisation. To do this, three different options for changes and adjustments in the backlog script are available for the planner: One option is the assignment of different priorities for different back office activities to influence the significance of the activities as soon as the job optimisation is carried out again. Another option is to manually adjust the number of the agents required. The third option is the manual adjustment of the forecast values of the expected document volume.

"We do not only want to offer our customer a high service quality, but to actually enthuse them with our service. With InVision back office planning, we finally have a solution for an effective scheduling of document – separately from telephony. By using the back office solution of InVision Software, we did not only increase our planning efficiency by 35-40%, but also achieved cost savings of about 10% per month. I am convinced that we will be able to achieve further saving potential after the roll-out of the solution at all 16 sites across Germany."

Ralf Lindner
Head of Planning, Vivento Customer Services GmbH, Bonn

After starting the backlog simulation, the planner can see how the service level will develop based on the given parameters and how many documents will remain unhandled (i.e. how the status of the backlog folders will presumably change) in the InVision module OnlineCockpit by means of charts and evaluations. If the results are not satisfying, the planner again can adjust the priority of activities, the agents required or the forecast values and do another simulation. The adjustments can directly be followed in the OnlineCockpit. The intention is to simulate the status to be achieved by means of continuous adjusting, in order to remain below the critical backlog status. This way, the planner may identify possible capacity bottlenecks at the forecast stage and adjust the staff scheduling accordingly. This way, the planner may identify possible capacity bottlenecks at the forecast stage and adjust the staff scheduling accordingly.

Benefits

Beside considerable cost savings of about 10% due to reduced overtime hours of the agents as well as the concurrent reduction of project outsourcing to third parties, Vivento achieved a significant increase of the planning efficiency of 35-40% by using the InVision back office solution. The planning effort has been considerably reduced: In former times, a group of 46 planners needed three days per week and project. Now, all this is done in one day. Therefore, the planners are noticeably disburdened from routine tasks and have more time for management-oriented analysis.

Before using the new back office solution, the scheduling was done for each project on an Excel spreadsheet. Now, it is possible to schedule numerous parallel projects in a demand-oriented way and to react directly to the volatile workload. The visually appealing graphical display of the OnlineCockpit enables a 100% transparency with regard to the service level – on a daily and weekly as well as on an intra-day basis. Now, the customer can be told precisely when a project will be finished. This ensures high customer satisfaction as Vivento is able to adhere to the agreed service level thanks to demand-oriented back office planning.

Outlook

The plan in mid 2010 is to expand the back office solution support the demand-oriented scheduling of the 400 employees at the two scan centres of Vivento Digital Services (VDS) in Gelsenkirchen und Osnabrueck. At the scan centres, analog documents are transferred into files – from paper documents such as letters, fax print-outs, certificates and books to graphical material like pictures, transparencies or radiographs. Moreover, sensitive or non-transportable documents, e.g. from historic archives, are registered on-site.

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Headquarter

Germany
+49 (2102) 728-0

Worldwide Offices

Austria
+43 (1) 5999 9174

Estonia
+372 618 1524

France
+33 (0)1 73 29 47 77

Italy
+39 (02) 872 86-550

Switzerland
+41 (44) 308 38 05

Scandinavia
+46 (8) 678 08 90

Spain
+34 (91) 789 3405

The Netherlands
+31 (0) 26 35 27 537

United Kingdom
+44 (121) 503 2620

United States
+1 (630) 799 8370

InVision Software Ltd.
Baskerville House, Centenary Square
B1 2ND Birmingham
phone: +44 (0) 121 503 2620
fax: +44 (0) 121 503 2621
e-mail: info@invisionwfm.com
www.invisionwfm.com

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Software