

Case Study

LateRooms.com

How contact center transformation has enabled LateRooms.com to shrink their cost of sales

LateRooms.com, one of the UK's leading online accommodation specialists, has updated their contact center, transforming the way their staff work and the communications technology they use. This has enabled them to halve their cost of sales while increasing their conversion rates. At the core of their transformation was their partnership with Siemens Enterprise Communications, which has supported their IT transformation and delivered a state of the art contact center solution – the OpenScape Contact Center.

The task

- Transform the call center environment to support continued rapid growth, while driving service improvements
- Improve call handling and minimize cost per call
- Provide a robust workforce management system
- Access more accurate management information and reporting to allow full visibility of call center performance and fulfil customer service improvements target
- Ensure system resilience and scalability to support ongoing business growth including global expansion

The solution

- OpenScape Contact Center solution from Siemens Enterprise Communications
- Call Director integrated IVR capability
- Impact 360 Workforce Management software from Verint
- Range of professional services to support implementation and training needs
- Siemens Enterprise Communications converged IP communication platform - HiPath 4000
- Ongoing maintenance and technical support

The benefits

- Increased calls to booking ratios by over 50%
- Reduced cost of sales by 50%
- Reduced call volume by 35%
- Improved first contact resolution
- Programme payback in less than 12 months

Overview

Set up in 1999, LateRooms.com is one of the UK's leading online accommodation specialists – offering customers access to millions of deals across the globe (ranging from luxury hotel chains to small B&Bs world-wide). After rapid year-on-year growth, LateRooms.com was bought by Firstchoice in 2007 and due to a merger became part of the TUI Travel plc Group of companies in 2008.

To continue supporting their growth, the company was keen to further improve customer service while driving business efficiencies. In particular, company management wanted to totally transform their Manchester based call center in order to achieve reduced cost of sales and have full visibility of call center performance.

The strategic change process was initiated by Call Center Director, Kaye Robertson, who designed a new management structure with clearer lines of responsibility for sales and service. In just over a year, LateRooms has completely overhauled the way people work, the technology they use and the way they use it. They have also moved to a new building in Manchester.

As Kaye Robertson explained:
"We did everything at once. It would have been nice to spread it out, but we needed a 'big bang' approach."

Working with Siemens Enterprise Communications

LateRooms started to work with Siemens Enterprise Communications in 2007 to develop a tailored solution to meet their specific needs around:

- Growth and scalability
- Service innovations and future proofing (i.e. introduction of multimedia channels)
- World-class reporting & work force management

Using its unique understanding of contact center processes, reporting needs, technical integration and open architecture, Siemens Enterprise Communications designed a state of the art contact center solution, which

included: OpenScape Contact Center, Call Director and the Verint Impact 360 Workforce Management software.

The solution was deployed for 120 agents, handling on average one million calls per year. This was backed by extensive training of line managers, team leaders and contact center agents.

The Results

With focus, drive and the right technology, LateRooms was able to deliver some significant transformation initiatives – including:

- Flexible contact center hours and roll-out of rotational shifts
- New people development program and introduction of new salary schemes (against a balanced scorecard of KPIs – relying on the information provided by the Siemens Enterprise Communications OpenScape Contact Center solution)
- Process improvements driven from ongoing root cause analysis of calls reasons. Key changes here included for example the development of a new automated referral service cutting the offline booking by 55% and automated cancellation via the IVR – where a specific script was developed jointly with Siemens Enterprise Communications.

LateRooms' managers are now using operational statistics from OpenScape Contact Center to drive a range of continual customer service and operational improvements, including better management reporting, decision-making and staff resource allocation – putting the contact center at the heart of the business.

“Continuously driving efficiencies and customer service improvements is part and parcel of our team. The Siemens Enterprise Communications OpenScape Contact Center Solution has been a key enabler in our ability to deliver exceptional customer service. The power of the information we can get from the system is world-class and truly enables us to make timely and effective business improvements.”

Jo Helire-Glynn
Head of Call Center Operations
B2C Division TUI Travel PLC



The Benefits

- Overall calls to booking ratio has increased by over 50%, mainly due to the intelligent call routing where queries can be routed to staff with appropriate skills therefore preventing repeat calls.
- Improvements in call routing technology mean unnecessary contacts are identified and eliminated, leading to a reduction of 35% in the number of calls – despite a year on year growth in bookings of 50%.
- Significant savings in staff costs (circa £2 million) – due to improved resources planning and workforce management.
- Increased first call resolution.
- The easier reporting has also enabled team leaders to identify performance improvement areas for staff and to arrange more targeted coaching sessions as and when required.
- Overall cost of sale cut by 50%.
- Pay back in less than 12 months.

Where company line managers want to make investments in support of innovations, they can provide the board with the proof points for adopting the business case.

As Kaye Robertson, Director of Call Center Operations, commented:

“Now there’s real faith to say where you can invest to get a return.”

Siemens Enterprise Communications OpenScale Contact Center solution also enables integration with other communications channels, which offers scope for service innovations such as direct web chat with customers in the future.



About Siemens Enterprise Communications:

Siemens Enterprise Communications is a premier provider of end-to-end enterprise communications solutions that use open, standards-based architectures to unify communications and business applications for a seamless collaboration experience. This award-winning "Open Communications" approach enables organizations to improve productivity and reduce costs through easy-to-deploy solutions that work within existing IT environments, delivering operational efficiencies. It is the foundation for the company's OpenPath commitment that enables customers to mitigate risk and cost-effectively adopt unified communications. This promise is underwritten through our OpenScale service portfolio, which includes international, managed and outsource capability. Siemens Enterprise Communications is owned by a joint venture of The Gores Group and Siemens AG. The joint venture also encompasses Enterasys Networks, which provides network infrastructure and security systems, delivering a perfect basis for joint communications solutions.

For more information about Siemens Enterprise Communications or Enterasys, please visit www.siemens-enterprise.com or www.enterasys.com

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