

Case Study

Merkana Reisen GmbH & Co. KG

Individual service with guaranteed availability thanks to OpenScape Office contact center

As an owner-operated Lufthansa City Center agency, Merkana Reisen GmbH & Co. KG is a reliable and competent partner throughout Germany for upmarket business and personal travel. Because with the Merkana service oasis, your vacation starts with your booking. Companies appreciate the individual business offerings and smooth procedures that are the hallmark of travel with Merkana. For this quality-conscious company, each customer is someone special. In order to ensure optimal contact with every customer via their preferred medium of communication – e-mail, fax or telephone – Merkana decided to create a contact center with OpenScape Office.

The task

The company – located in heart of Remscheid in the Bergisches Land region of Germany – has long relied on communication solutions from Siemens Enterprise Communications, because an efficient, high-availability communications infrastructure is the basis for successful service. But until recently the company's management lacked the transparency it needed in order to react flexibly during peak periods and keep delays to a minimum also when the call load is high. What this company with more than 20 employees needed was a high-performance but uncomplicated contact center solution to optimize availability and make it possible to match resource planning to the call load based on meaningful reports in real time. The application also had to allow for future expansion and for seamless integration into the existing communications solution.

The solution

Computer retailer Telefonbau Schneider, which has already been advising Merkana Reisen in all communication technology matters for many years now, determined that OpenScape Office was the ideal solution to meet all of the requirements of this vacation and business travel agency in Germany's Bergisches Land region. As a unified communications solution for medium-sized companies, OpenScape Office enables more efficient communication and significantly higher customer satisfaction. The multimedia contact center integrated in OpenScape Office offers presence status functions and ensures optimal contact options via all standard communication channels – fax, e-mail and telephone.

The benefits

- Higher customer satisfaction thanks to better availability
- Smooth transition and fast acclimation through intuitive PC user-interface
- Optimized work routines, which offer opportunities to increase earnings
- Greater flexibility due to enhanced transparency about the contact load
- Seamless integration in the existing infrastructure
- Investment protection, because existing telephone and communication systems can still be used
- Reduced operating costs thanks to easy administration
- Future-proof platform that offers expansion options



Customer focus – distance plays no role

Merkana Reisen GmbH & Co. KG, a Lufthansa City Center established in 1993, is one of the most popular travel agencies among upmarket companies that value smooth travel processes and cost efficiency in equal measure. People traveling for pleasure or on personal business appreciate the individual advice and competent service associated with bookings at Merkana. Because the owner-operated company knows that customer satisfaction is a basic guarantee of business success. More than 20 employees based in Remscheid take care of business and private customers throughout Germany. A constant level of availability plays a vital role here – and this is where Merkana's management recognized potential for improvement. Because it lacked control over the call load during peak periods – and therefore also lacked the ability to react flexibly to those fluctuations. A communications system and telephones are a good basis, but they provide only a limited capacity to optimize communication processes sustainably.

What was sought was a solution that combined telephony, fax, voice messages and e-mails as communication media.

In order to facilitate communication between team members, the solution had to display the presence status within the team. In this way, everyone can see whether or not the person they want to contact can be reached by phone.

In order to achieve the desired transparency about the call load, reporting functions were needed. And all of this had to be installed on the existing communication system in order to protect the investments that had already been made.

“Good telephones are important, but do not guarantee good availability. The key is transparency about the call load, in order to be able to react flexibly when necessary. And that requires reporting on the complete communication load in real time and making evaluations over extended periods of time for optimal resource planning.”

Alexandra Beital
General Manager of Merkana Reisen GmbH & Co. KG

“OpenScape Office enabled us to further optimize our perfect service in a measurable way. This is borne out by the evaluations of our call load and the significantly shorter delays during peak call periods.”

Alexandra Beital
General Manager of
Merkana Reisen GmbH & Co. KG

All-inclusive booked with OpenScape Office

Merkana Reisen opted for an all-inclusive package of a special kind: OpenScape Office from Siemens Enterprise Communications. OpenScape Office is the unified communications solution with the integrated contact center, which has been specifically tailored to meet the needs of small and medium-sized companies. As a pure software application, OpenScape Office includes everything that Merkana needed in order to further optimize its customer service.

Computer retailer Telefonbau Schneider implemented the solution, which was integrated seamlessly into the existing infrastructure. Following a short orientation phase, the Merkana employees are now using the multimedia contact center included in OpenScape Office, which combines e-mail, telephone and fax in one application. One of the especially practical features is that any customer whose telephone number, fax number or e-mail address is known can be forwarded automatically to a specific employee.

This preserves personal customer relationships and prevents them from getting lost in the typical anonymity of conventional call centers. If a question requires follow-up or clarification during a conversation with a customer, the agent can handle this via Instant Messaging. That means every customer inquiry can be answered competently and efficiently – an essential part of achieving a high level of customer satisfaction.

The comprehensive reporting options of OpenScape Office provide the required transparency about the call load. Thanks to the reporting system on the current call load and agent workload, it is possible to react immediately when the delays become too long for callers. Additional employees can be deployed quickly and easily as needed. This enables the team to react in the customer's interest always and under all circumstances.

The personal call journal also represents an indispensable tool. It logs incoming and outgoing calls so each employee can follow the calls they've handled – and it identifies any missed ones immediately. So all that time-consuming thumbing through piles of notes with requests for calls and call-backs is now a thing of the past.





Integration-friendly

OpenScape Office still has plenty of other features that Merkana has yet to exploit. The customer-focused perfectionists from Remscheid are thinking about creating a close link between OpenScape Office and their in-house communications system Tobit, for example. That would permit the call to go directly through that system – in much the same way as with the integration of OpenScape Office in Microsoft Outlook. This would eliminate the need to switch back and forth between the two applications, thereby increasing the added value of OpenScape Office even further.

“Especially when unforeseen events occur, customers expect prompt availability – we saw this once again most recently when the airlines were grounded by the eruption of the volcano in Iceland. Thanks to OpenScape Office, we were able to adjust our customer service capacities to the situation immediately. The call load was too much for other companies to handle, but we were able to inform our customers about alternatives without long delays. An indispensable advantage for all of our business customers.”

Alexandra Beital
General Manager of Merkana Reisen GmbH & Co. KG

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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Hofmannstr. 51
81359 Munich, Germany

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