UK CLAIMS CENTER IMPROVES EXPERIENCE FOR CUSTOMERS DEALING WITH HOME EMERGENCIES

CHALLENGES

- Implement a higher capacity, more feature-rich contact center solution to ensure customer satisfaction during increased call volumes.

- Meet demanding Service Level Agreements and maintain optimal performance, 24x7.

VALUE CREATED

- Improved agent morale and increased customer satisfaction.

- Contact center agents can handle 150% of normal call volumes with capacity to spare.

- Average claim handling time reduced by a third, while callers receive a more personalized experience.

- Able to utilize call recordings much more effectively and efficiently.

- Wide range of SLAs met or exceeded.

- Created outbound calling team to enrich the customer experience while reducing incoming call volumes.

- Can now add multimedia options for customers, including email and web chat.

Insight into Inbound Callers' Needs Sparks Creation of Outbound Calling Team and New App for Contractors

CET's Home Emergency contact center is the first line of response for home emergency claims for several of the United Kingdom's (UK's) largest insurers and loss adjusters. It relies on IP Office Contact Center Server Edition from Avaya to manage those calls effectively, meet challenging service level agreements and maintain customer satisfaction.

For 48 hours, CET's 24x7 call center in the heart of England was on "surge" – the company's term for times when call volumes exceed predicted levels by 30% or more. The UK had been buffeted by the first heavy storm of the winter, damaging homes and bringing down power lines. More storms were on the way, and flooding was predicted. Yet the CET team was unphased. Calls were answered promptly and callers reassured; policies reviewed and claim processes explained; emergency teams dispatched to help with storm damage. Both clients and their customers were appreciative of the CET service in these extreme circumstances and by Monday lunchtime, CET was receiving messages of thanks from their clients for its service.

Yet for Mike Blake, CET's Home Emergency Director, the best news was hidden from all the callers. *"All weekend we had call volumes reaching 150% of normal levels,"* he reflected, *"but we only used about 60% of our maximum capacity."* That mattered to Blake because, as a highly experienced professional in the sector, he knew that there would be more severe tests to come – potentially even in the following days.

With Avaya IP Office Contact Center Server Edition (SE) in place, Blake was confident that CET had the platform so that its dedicated team could continue living up to the company motto of "Giving our all". It was all a far cry from the situation two winters previously.

Time for a Change

That was when CET first took on a major contract with a national insurer for claims fulfilment and emergency response. The high-value contract meant call volumes increased six-fold, almost immediately.

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>
> —Mike Blake,
> Home Emergency Director,
> CET

"*From the date we won the contract, we had a very short space of time to get ready to go live,*" recalled Finance Director Stephen Humphrey. "*We hadn't the time to invest in new technology upfront, but that first winter the UK suffered a series of huge storms; we faced strong operational challenges.*" Though the legacy platform itself was reliable, it was clear it did not have the functionality to handle efficiently the volume of calls CET received. Queues were longer, some callers received engaged signals, and there was no auto-attendant to reassure them. "*Ultimately, we coped,*" Humphrey reflects, "*thanks to the efforts of our team who put in very long hours under extreme stress. But we knew we had outgrown our system.*"

Lucky for Humphrey, new premises became available in the same business park in which the company was based. That meant CET could move into a far larger space, and physically extend its contact center to seat more agents in relative comfort. It also provided a great opportunity to introduce a new IT and telephony system, including a new contact center platform.

The company contacted three different providers for proposals, and in Humphrey's view, there was one outstanding solution: the Avaya IP Office Contact Center SE, put forward by Extera. "*It was an on-premise solution, which I felt more comfortable with than the cloud solutions we were also offered,*" he explained. "*Both our IT and contact managers were positive about the features, I felt Extera was a company we could work well with, and the price was highly competitive.*"

Elevating and Personalizing the Customer Experience

The new solution went live in October 2014, giving the CET team a few weeks to familiarize themselves with it before the onset of the winter weather. The platform is proving exceptionally reliable and delivers the many improvements that CET needed. Most importantly, it has increased enormously the call center's capacity. "*It gives us more lines, which is obviously key, but also helps us manage calls better,*" Mike Blake explained. "*We now have an extensive interactive voice response system, and our wallboards show how far a call is through that.*" That enables Blake and his team to identify if volumes are building and all the frontline agents are on calls, and respond by asking other members of the team to answer the phones. During surge, CET can now implement an auto-attendant, which also helps with the customer experience.

Another crucial feature is giving agents more information at the start of each call. "*Calls come in on different numbers for each of the core clients and their sub-brands,*" Blake said. "*Now agents can see exactly which brand the caller is with, and*

answer accordingly. Then the system helps them to find the right policy quickly – we deal with over 130 in total. Plus, as an added bonus, the number stays on the turret throughout the call, so they can always verify the current brand, which is important when you're on your 100th call of the day!"

Smart Call Recording

One vital benefit of IP Office Contact Center SE for CET is the built-in digital call recording capability. *"Call recording is essential for the insurance industry, because if there are any customer complaints or fraudulent claims, investigators need the full audit trail,"* Blake explains. *"We used to rely on a separate call recording system, but when we had to retrieve a call, it sometimes meant listening through hours of conversations to find the right one."* With IP Office Contact Center SE, however, each call is stored as a digital audio file, and the audio library is searchable in a range of different ways – by customer reference, time of call, or agent. Supervisors can quickly hone in on the right call, listen back, and find the information they need, which is not only important for CET but also for the insurer.

Optimizing Staffing and Customer Experience with Advanced Reporting

The Avaya solution also offers richer reporting capabilities, with the ability to break down call data to a granular level to meet client requirements, as well as to improve their own knowledge of the system so they can create still more bespoke reports. *"More detailed client reporting is important, but we also want to use it to help optimize our resource planning,"* Humphrey explained. *"It can make us more efficient –*

understanding calling patterns and staffing up around peak times. We are already far more efficient than we were, but there's a clear opportunity to go further."*

For now, the most important piece of data is the confirmation that CET is meeting its core service level agreements. *"We have to answer calls within a set number of seconds,"* Blake stated. *"We have dozens of targets, but if we don't achieve that core one, the others become irrelevant. And with Avaya, we're achieving it."*

That clearly means a better experience for callers – as does the fact that the new system has helped reduce the average call duration. *"Our Avaya solution provides agents with so much of the required customer data that we no longer have to waste time asking callers for it,"* Blake explained. *"Combined with other IT improvements, this has helped us reduce the average time to complete a claim by a third – which callers really appreciate."*

Having more satisfied callers also adds to a better working environment, which in turn helps the company retain its trained and skilled staff. The environment as a whole is clean, welcoming and – for a busy call center – surprisingly quiet. Morale is up and the agents recognize the role that Avaya has played in this, confirming how much easier it is to work with and how much more effectively they can respond to customers.

Visibility into Incoming Calls Sparks Innovation

The Avaya solution has also helped change the roles of some of the agents. *"We've set up a small team to make outbound calls – updating*

customers on claim status and confirming when a tradesperson will visit,"* reported Blake. *"That has a huge impact on customer satisfaction – and it actually helps us manage inbound volumes: every update we send proactively means one less incoming call."* This is something that CET could not consider previously, Blake stated. *"Because we didn't have the visibility of incoming calls, we couldn't really dedicate a team to outbound. Now that Avaya has given us greater control, we can."*

Another benefit of the increased visibility was that the company gained an understanding of how many of its calls came from contractors who were sent out to inspect or repair damage. These ranged from requesting details or directions to simple confirmation that they were on site with the customer, to policy enquiries. *"We realized there was an opportunity to reduce these calls,"* said Humphrey *"so we developed an app to manage the process. They get comprehensive location details on their phone or tablet. The app also gives contractors the ability to do health and safety checks and take before and after photos. It's much more effective – and it's something we wouldn't have been able to do without the Avaya solution."*

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There is already room to expand the operation, and take the Avaya solution to its full line capacity. CET's immediate plans focus on introducing richer multimedia capabilities, including email and web chat, to give customers more options, and extending the Avaya solution to another site via SIP trunking. *"We're exploring that with Avaya and the business partner, Extera"*, Humphrey confirmed. *"They're an excellent partner for us: they're very attentive and responsive. I felt from the outset they were a company we could work well with, and they have definitely helped us get the most from the new Avaya solution."*

At this point for CET, the Avaya solution is completely assimilated into daily operations. *"Now it's just part of the way we work,"* concludes Humphrey, *"and an ongoing opportunity to refine and extend the outstanding service we deliver."*

About Extera

Established in 2001, Extera provides customers with business communications systems, voice and data cabling, and online ordering and managed services specializing in tailored support solutions for real-time communications environments. Extera supports all sizes of business from SMB (small, medium business) to large corporations. For more information: **http://www.extera.co.uk**.

About CET

CET is a specialist provider of services to the UK infrastructure, civil engineering, construction, property and insurance industries. CET Property Assurance provides a wide range of specialist services to the Property Insurance and Maintenance markets; including 24/7 emergency response, subsidence investigations, crack and level monitoring and drainage surveys, mapping and repairs. The company's headquarters and contact center are in Castle Donington, England.

About Avaya

Avaya is a leading, global provider of customer and team engagement solutions and services available in a variety of flexible on-premise and cloud deployment options. Avaya's fabric-based networking solutions help simplify and accelerate the deployment of business critical applications and services. For more information, please visit www.avaya.com.

SOLUTIONS & PRODUCTS	
Avaya IP Office Contact Center	Avaya IP Office Server Edition