

Smart Communications Improves Operations with Unified, Multi-Site Hosted Contact Center

At a Glance

The Company

Smart Communications, Inc. (SMART) is the Philippines' leading wireless services provider with more than 40 million subscribers on its GSM network.

The Business Challenge

- Existing call center infrastructure couldn't keep up with demands
- Consolidate six call center locations with unified reporting
- Add IVR self-service, CRM integration and predictive dialing
- Minimize project risk and avoid large capital expenditures

The Solution

ePLDT deployed a customized, end-to-end hosted Contact Center solution, powered by CosmoCom, that met all of SMART's needs and cost less than upgrading their existing multi-vendor system.

The Results

- United all locations on a single virtual contact center
- Unified reporting and QM gives global insight to improve service
- Increased overall call capacity
- Added self-service IVR reducing need for live interactions
- Big savings on hardware and CTI integrations costs
- Improved customer experience
- Future-proof solution

Customer Care on a Grand Scale

Smart Communications, Inc. (SMART) is the Philippines' leading wireless services provider with more than 40 million subscribers on its GSM network. SMART has built a reputation for innovation, having introduced world-first wireless data services, including a number of mobile commerce services. To support their massive and growing subscriber base SMART had more than 1,200 agents spread across six independent call center location.



Change is in the Air

SMART's large and growing customer base was putting a strain on the organization's customer service operations. SMART executives realized that their existing contact center infrastructure – a hybrid, multi-vendor IP solution – was no longer keeping up with the growing traffic. The ability to effectively scale and expand their distributed agent operations was greatly limited by dependencies on telephony hardware and the associated capacity issues. Management lacked the management reports and real-time monitoring across their centers to drive operational efficiencies.

SMART also identified a number of other compelling business needs for their call center infrastructure. They realized that adding Interactive Voice Response (IVR) would provide customers with self-service options and reduce unnecessary live agent calls. They wanted a CTI (Computer Telephony Integration) connection to their proprietary, in-house CRM application to enable synchronized voice-data screen-pop for personalized customer service. Plus, there was a strong need to implement outbound predictive dialing to meet efficiency and productivity requirements related to collections and telemarketing at SMART.

Unified Hosted Contact Center is the Answer

It didn't take too long to realize that adding to their existing call center infrastructure would likely require SMART to deploy separate IVR and CTI middleware systems with a high, upfront capital expenditure – something nobody wanted. Furthermore, the degree

of complexity to integrate new IVR and CTI to the existing system would require a huge, time-consuming effort, including an upgrade to the existing platform, and introduce potential difficulties supporting, enhancing and maintaining the integrated technologies. Combined, these factors would make the project not only costly but high-risk as well.

Figuring out how to cost-effectively achieve their goals was the big challenge. SMART management began an exhaustive trial and evaluation process with a number of major contact center technology vendors to determine which one could best to match their requirements. Among the competitors was Filipino service provider, ePLDT, who proposed their Unified Contact Center Plus (UCCP) hosted contact center service built upon CosmoCom's multi-tenant, all-in-one contact center suite, CosmoCall Universe (CCU).

With UCCP, ePLDT knew that they could provide the required features and that they had the flexible integration foundation to handle whatever direction the project took. They also were confident in the capacity and scalability of UCCP, since they had been successfully operating the shared platform since 2007 with other similarly large tenants like the customer service operations of parent company PLDT (Philippine Long Distance Telephone).

SMART Communications Case Study

One of the major challenges the vendors faced was how to get past the capacity limits of the existing telephony hardware by enabling SIP transport for voice. The existing call centers had been interconnected with a Nokia Media Gateway via multiple E1's and the competing enterprise contact center solution providers spent months of testing and configuration at the gateway level trying to add on to the existing vendor infrastructure, but still failed interoperability tests. However, ePLDT and CosmoCom quickly produced an all-IP, all-SIP contact center solution that worked perfectly with the Nokia Gateway. By directly connecting to the gateway the solution eliminated the need for the E1's and the associated capacity limits.

Having bypassed that obstacle, it soon became clear to SMART that it would cost less to replace the existing solution than to try to add on the missing features they needed. Ultimately they opted to go with the CCU-powered ePLDT hosted contact center offering because it gave them everything they needed – virtual routing, interactive voice response (IVR), recording, reporting, predictive dialing and much more – on a single unified platform. The fact that everything was unified mitigated much of the risk associated with an integrated solution. Since the solution was hosted, SMART could now consolidate all locations into a single unified virtual contact center at significant cost savings since they didn't have to make large capital expenditures to realize their vision.

The solution helps SMART to work smarter. Robust reporting enables SMART to see and manage all contact center activity across all locations and finally have the information they want, when they need it, to effectively drive operational efficiencies. The flexible reports are even customized to match the ones that SMART management was used to. Unified recording and quality monitoring eliminates the need for complex integration with the prior third-party call-logging solution, further improving scalability reducing costs.

Built-in IVR and CTI capabilities mean that SMART did not have to invest in additional gear and implement expensive, time-consuming integrations to build the self-service applications and get CRM screen-pops they wanted. Using the graphical CosmoDesigner service creation tool they are able to rapidly implement complex call flows and self service IVR for callers such as billing inquiries for their 40 million pre-paid subscribers with SMS confirmation, dramatically reducing the number of live agent calls. Interactions that do require live help are routed to the right representative complete with screen-pop integration to SMART's proprietary CRM so agents can offer more personalized service for greater customer satisfaction while reducing average talk time by 23 seconds per call.

Finally, the addition of predictive dialing enables SMART to launch outbound telemarketing and billing campaigns to help them grow their business.

Better Service at Reduced Cost

Smart Communications now has a virtual contact center with self-service IVR and virtual routing of calls to 1,200+ agents anywhere across their distributed operations. They are receiving significantly more calls now that the capacity limitations of the prior system have been eliminated, and the CRM integration enables agents to offer superior, personalized customer service to subscribers. Management has the system-wide reporting they need to drive maximum efficiency of their operations and the enhanced outbound capabilities drive new business and improve collections.

The hosted model fits SMART's budget, allowing them to grow without new capital expenditures. The net result is a better end-to-end contact center solution which is easier and less expensive to operate and more flexible to innovate upon.

Organizational Value and Benefit Provided

- Able to efficiently and effectively handle current and projected call volume
- Improved operational efficiencies and service levels with greater system-wide insight
- End-to-end contact center solution that is easier, more flexible and less expensive to operate

About CosmoCom

CosmoCom™ provides IP contact center technology for the largest and most complex enterprise requirements, consolidating multiple locations – onshore, offshore, and home – formal and informal agents, captive and outsourced operations, multi-channel communications, and multiple applications. Benefit from Consolidation 2.0 with CosmoCom technology deployed on premises or hosted by top-tier service providers.