



INTERACTIVE INTELLIGENCE®
Deliberately Innovative

Case Study

Contact Center Automation

- Multimedia Recording & Quality Monitoring
- Customer Feedback Management
- Outbound/Blended Dialing & Campaign Management
- Network-based Pre/Post-Call Routing
- Web Self-Service & Knowledge Management
- Workforce Management

Enterprise IP Telephony

Enterprise Messaging

Summary

Customer: Cost-U-Less



Headquarters: Rancho Cordova, CA

Industry: Insurance

Challenge: Replace multiple phone systems with a dedicated IP voice network that integrates Web chat. Ensure that the new system would accommodate the old phone lines until management was convinced that IP telephony was the right solution.

Solution: *Customer Interaction Center®* (CIC) is an all-in-one communications software suite that provides multi-channel contact center automation and enterprise IP telephony functionality for mid-size to large customer-focused and interaction-intensive organizations.

Benefits:

- Sales up 15 percent upon system going live
- Hold time down from five minutes to less than 30 seconds
- Eliminated expected need for four to five new hires
- Two call center agents re-purposed because of increased capacity/efficiency
- No overall cost increase; investment immediately cost-justified



Cost-U-Less Insurance Deploys IP-based Communications System to Provide Superior Multi-Channel Customer

About Cost-U-Less

Cost-U-Less (800-390-SAVE, www.costulelessins.com) is one of California's largest non-standard auto insurance brokers, with more than 70 locations throughout the state. Based in Rancho Cordova, it has been in the insurance business since 1980. Cost-U-Less is part of Keenan Holdings, which also runs Stonewood Insurance Services, Statewide Insurance Services and other related businesses in the insurance industry.

The Challenge

Cost-U-Less had several different phone systems in its administrative offices, retail offices and contact center. Its sister companies used different phone systems altogether.

"The phone systems were functioning at an acceptable level, but were inefficient when we had to make changes and we had no real-time data to see how well we were managing our call center," said Christopher Ewing, president and CEO of parent company for Cost-U-Less, Keenan Holdings. "Calls were getting dropped because customers were spending too much time on hold, and agents had to use a completely different system to chat with customers over the Web. Plus, it was expensive to run."

Cost-U-Less had already gone through one failed voice over IP (VoIP) deployment from a hosted solutions provider and from consultants who didn't bring value. It had cost the company business and had led to lost calls, and Cost-U-Less had actually taken a step back by removing its VoIP system.

After careful consideration, Cost-U-Less selected a flexible VoIP network configuration, combined a reliable, single-platform communications solution from Interactive Intelligence.

The Solution

The network design included a dedicated IP voice network, just like a traditional phone PBX. The centerpiece of the new system would be contact center automation software from Interactive Intelligence, called Customer Interaction Center® (CIC).

CIC offered applications such as interactive voice response (IVR), automated call distribution (ACD), end-to-end reporting, call recording, real-time supervisory monitoring, desktop faxing, unified messaging, and more.

While other vendors offered "single" solutions, these often amounted to a collection of multiple products by different third-party providers.

"We decided that trying to deploy and manage a 'multi-box' system would be too costly and complex," Ewing said. "We selected CIC because it eliminated these issues, while still offering best-of-breed applications."

Cost-U-Less also liked the fact that Web chat was inherently built into CIC. "While we already had a Web chat system, it wasn't integrated with our phones, nor did it offer real-time management," Ewing said.

CIC was also able to work as a hybrid TDM and IP system, thus capable of incorporating the company's old phone lines, which further convinced Cost-U-Less that this time its investment in VoIP would work.

The CIC deployment was completed in July 2006.



"We were able to use CIC out of the box without the expense of a bunch of programmers. I was very impressed."

"It was a very smooth deployment," Ewing said. "We did not have a single major issue with the rollout, and we were able to use CIC out of the box without the expense of a bunch of programmers. I was very impressed."

Today, Cost-U-Less uses CIC to support 91 contact center agents and 42 business users.

The Benefits

Cost-U-Less reported an increase in sales of 15 percent following its CIC deployment.

"The second CIC went live our sales went through the roof," Ewing said. "Our hold times dropped from about five minutes to less than 30 seconds. CIC's automated routing, supervisory alerts, and other features gave us the transparency we needed to more effectively manage calls, which had a direct and immediate impact on customer service and sales."

CIC also helped Cost-U-Less save on payroll. According to the company, its previous system had been so inefficient that the company was planning to add agents just to keep up with the same call volume. Using CIC's IVR and Web self-service applications, however, Cost-U-Less was able to offload calls from live agents, thus eliminating the need to hire new ones.

"As a result of CIC's self-service applications, we not only avoided hiring new agents, but we were able to transfer two of our existing 12 agents from the call center into other departments for increased operational efficiencies," Ewing said.

One agent even relocated to Thailand and was able to continue working for Cost-U-Less.

"Using our new VoIP network and CIC's remote agent features, we were able keep a valuable agent who relocated to Thailand," Ewing explained. "He logs into our system here over a VPN, and when calls come in he's in the queue just like everyone else. The call quality is superb, plus we have the added benefit of using him to field after-hour calls."

"Our hold times dropped from about five minutes to less than 30 seconds."

Web chat has always been a useful tool at Cost-U-Less, but now as part of CIC's unique single-platform architecture, the feature has become an even greater asset. "One of the best things about the CIC deployment is that its built-in phone and Web chat applications cost us no more than what we had been paying for our old chat function alone," Ewing said.

Cost-U-Less agents are also now able to use a single desktop computer interface for managing calls, email, faxes, and web chats. According to the company, that's especially important in an industry where high turnover is common.

"CIC has cut our training time from a couple of days to a couple of hours by requiring agents to learn just one interface to manage all interactions," Ewing said. "Simplified training and interfaces such as this that empower agents to do their jobs better all contribute to higher employee retention."

Ewing adds that deploying applications such as Web chat as part of a single platform architecture can mitigate problems associated with load-balancing interactions.

"While phone traffic tends to follow reliable patterns, Web and email traffic tend to spike," Ewing explained. "Contact centers that are forced by technology to separate agents by types of interactions can find some agents swamped while others sit idle."

A final benefit reported by Cost-U-Less has been CIC's high degree of flexibility. "Using CIC's GUI-based customization tools, we can now pull additional people into a work group in minutes as demand requires, either manually or automatically, based on pre-set criteria," Ewing said. "These same tools enabled us to easily create pre- and post-call customer surveys."

CIC's single point of administration has also eased the burden of IT, according to Ewing. "CIC enables us to make changes on the fly," he said. "Rarely do I have to bother our IT staff with questions like 'can we do this?' or 'how does this work?' CIC is so intuitive that I can not only figure most of this stuff out on my own, but I can often deploy it with no assistance. This has enabled our IT staff to more effectively focus on their day-to-day tasks, while maintaining the company's ability to quickly respond to customer requirements."

According to Ewing, overall, CIC has delivered everything it promised. "CIC's wide array of multi-channel applications, its ease-of-use, and its flexible customization options have given us infinite capacity to grow and change, which means our technology investment is protected no matter what the future holds."



Interactive Intelligence Inc. (Nasdaq: ININ) is a global provider of unified business communications solutions for contact center automation, enterprise IP telephony, and enterprise messaging. The company's innovative standards-based, all-in-one communications software suite was designed to eliminate the cost and complexity introduced by multi-point vendors. Founded in 1994 and backed by more than 3,000 customers worldwide, Interactive Intelligence is an experienced leader delivering maximum customer value through its comprehensive solution-set comprised of premise-based and hosted offerings, including software, hardware, consulting, support, education and implementation.

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