



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:** Creative Memories



**Headquarters:** Yellow Springs, OH

**Industry:** Direct Selling

**Challenge:** Replace proprietary communications system with a system that would provide enhanced interactive voice response prompts, integrate with other databases, and provide a more efficient and flexible way for a multinational company to provide customer service.

**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:**

- Call handle times decreased by 10 seconds
- Email turnaround decreased from several days to hours
- Saved nearly \$30,000 in equipment
- Agents can process approximately 55,000 calls and 10,000 emails per month

# Universal Queuing and IVR Help Multinational Direct Selling Firm Reduce Costs and Enhance Customer Service



## About Creative Memories

Creative Memories is an employee-owned direct selling company that teaches people to preserve memories in keepsake albums. Today, this multinational company has more than 70,000 consultants worldwide providing high-quality photo storage products, which include a collection of photo-safe albums, mounting products and album-making supplies. Services include hands-on assistance through home classes, workshops and other events. The company is headquartered in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Its parent company, Antioch Co., is based in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Creative Memories was founded in 1987 and is a member of the Direct Selling Association.

[www.creativememories.com](http://www.creativememories.com)

## The Challenge

By the fall of 2001, Creative Memories had grown from a two-person start-up to a multinational company with more than 70,000 consultants serving customers worldwide. Along with this growth came the need for a more efficient and flexible way to provide customer service to its consultants.

At the time, the company used a proprietary communications system that offered limited interactive voice response prompts and was not integrated to other databases. With consultants spread across the U.S., Creative Memories needed to find a way to provide additional self-service options for improved 24x7 support, and new automation capabilities such as email queuing for faster response time.

Creative Memories considered upgrading its existing system, but with two contact centers located in St. Cloud, Minnesota and Sparks, Nevada respectively, the company would have had to undergo a costly and time-intensive upgrade.

“We really wanted to create a virtual call center where consultants could call in or email us and the routing process between the two centers would be totally transparent,” said Gail Stanger, director of consultant services for Creative Memories. “Our existing system didn’t enable us to utilize our total labor pool and it also made it more time-consuming for consultants to get the information they needed, like checking an order’s status or reviewing promotional programs.”

## The Solution

Creative Memories enlisted the help of Avtex, Inc. ([www.avtex.com](http://www.avtex.com)), a Bloomington, Minnesota-based applications and systems integrator to find a new solution. Avtex reviewed the company’s specifications and, after an extensive RFP process, recommended a software-based interaction management product from Interactive Intelligence Inc. called *Customer Interaction Center*® (CIC).

CIC runs on a single Windows 2000 server and includes applications such as built-in switching, voice mail, unified messaging, interactive voice response, universal queuing, screen pop, supervisory monitoring, multi-site support and reporting. Its all-in-one architecture was designed to eliminate the need for integration, thus reducing costs and simplifying administration.



"CIC's transparent routing...[and] supervisory and reporting functions have reduced the need for supervisory intervention and greatly improved quality of service. "

Avtex installed CIC in November 2001, replacing the company's existing system at its two call center sites. Avtex also installed a back-up CIC server for increased fault-tolerance. Today, CIC supports 113 users across both sites. Creative Memories contact center processes, on average, 55,000 calls and 10,000 emails per month from consultants and customers across the U.S. and Canada.

CIC was customized for skills-based and priority routing of calls and emails to help agents most efficiently respond to inquiries. CIC's IVR was also customized to provide consultants with a variety of menu options, including order placement, automated order status, returns, career plans, policy and procedure information, and technical support. The IVR came equipped with a whisper feature, which Creative Memories uses to anonymously announce consultants to agents.

CIC was integrated to several of Creative Memories existing applications, including its SAP software. When receiving a call, agents now get a SAP screen pop on their computer containing vital consultant information based on the ID number prompted by CIC's IVR. For monitoring services, Creative Memories also integrated CIC to its Witness Systems software, which provides on-demand recording and enables supervisors to monitor real-time agent statistics across both sites from a single interface for improved quality assurance.

## The Benefits

Creative Memories training manager, Kathie Winscher, cited CIC's ease-of-customization and integration as its biggest strengths. "With our previous system, we only had a couple of IVR options," Winscher said. "CIC has enabled us to create a half dozen IVR options with sub-menus, which, in combination with our SAP screen pop, has helped us decrease the initial handle-time of calls by approximately 10 seconds per transaction."

"Creative Memories has also decreased costs by swapping out its \$300 apiece station sets...for standard analog phones supported by CIC."

Another major benefit of CIC, said Winscher, is its universal queuing function. "Other communications systems offered multimedia routing and queuing but did not offer a universal queue," explained Winscher. "With CIC, we can set routing rules once and apply them across communication types. We can also adjust these rules based on the communication type—or any criteria, for that matter. For instance, our call volume goes up on the first and last days of the month due to our sales cycle. Using CIC, we've been able to manually decrease the weight of an email on these days to more efficiently handle the higher call volume."

Winscher said that as a result of CIC's flexible universal queuing feature, the company has increased turnaround time on emails from several days to several hours, without sacrificing service via the phone.

Creative Memories has also experienced improvements in quality assurance as a result of using CIC. "We know our customer service has improved because we now have a unified view of agent activity across both contact center sites," said Stanger. "CIC's transparent routing has enabled us to build a truly virtual contact center. This, combined with its supervisory and reporting functions, have reduced the need for supervisory intervention and greatly improved quality of service."

Stanger adds that Creative Memories has also decreased costs by swapping out its \$300 apiece station sets at the St. Cloud site for standard analog phones supported by CIC. This has amounted to a savings of nearly \$30,000 on equipment alone.

"There are a lot of companies out there trying to differentiate services," concludes Stanger. "We always invite potential consultants to tour our contact center facilities to let them know that our motto—'high-tech with a high touch'—isn't just an empty marketing slogan. CIC has played a critical role in helping us to fulfill that motto by transforming our call center into a truly interactive customer care center."



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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