



INTERACTIVE INTELLIGENCE®

Deliberately Innovative

Case Study

Contact Center Automation

- Multichannel 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

Business Process Automation

Communications-as-a-Service

Summary

Customer: Horizons Regional Council



Headquarters: Palmerston North NZ

Industry: Local Government

Challenge: Maintaining inbound and outbound calls during a natural disaster

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 organisations.

Product Replaced: Dialogic CTADE

Benefits:

- All-In-One software platform
- Disaster fail-over - SIP trunks can continue to make outbound calls
- Inbound interactive voice response (IVR) hotline
- Reduced call costs



Council Deploys Interactive Intelligence Solution for Flood Alert System

About Horizons Regional Council

In the world of local government and regional authorities Horizons Regional Council tends to stand out. Firstly, there's the name. Where most councils have adopted a location-based name, Horizons is a refreshing alternative. Horizons is located in the North Island of New Zealand. More than 220,000 people live within the region which covers 22,215 square kilometres of land and accounts for just over eight percent of New Zealand's total land area. Geographically, it's a region of contrasts, from volcanic heights to coastal plains. In amongst it all, there are also a number of rivers fed by the region's moderate rainfall and its annual snow melt.

www.horizons.govt.nz

Water, water, everywhere

Then there's the issue of technology. Horizons has developed a reputation for out-of-the-box thinking and innovation in the way it applies technologies to enhance service to ratepayers. It's an approach that is perfectly illustrated in Horizons' recent development of the region's automated flood warning system.

Floods are not uncommon and can impact farmers, their crops and livestock, businesses and residences located in the river catchments. Therefore, rainfall figures and river heights are of major importance to the locals of the Horizons region.

Since the late nineties Horizons Regional Council has been monitoring its waterways with custom built electronic devices that take accurate readings of rainfall and river data every 30 minutes at around 150 sites within the region. The data is uploaded to Horizon's Hydrology Department where it is checked before being published on the Council's website and loaded onto a dedicated inbound interactive voice response (IVR) hotline for concerned citizens affected by rising water levels.

The same data is used for the Council's outbound flood warning system. Locals subscribe to a free alert system which is triggered when a river rises to a certain height. Farmers, for example, may ask to be alerted when a river rises a relatively low amount so that they have plenty of time to move livestock. Householders are more likely to request alerts that indicate a flood is imminent – or occurring.

Originally, these outbound alerts were manually made by Council staff. William Gordon, Team Leader, Infrastructure Technology at Horizons Regional Council notes, "The service was provided in an emergency. If there was a flood, staff would come in at whatever time of night or day and manually phone the list."

Taking a proactive approach

All this changed in early 2010 when Horizons replaced its existing IVR phone system with a new Interactive Intelligence IP [Internet protocol] telephony solution. The move was prompted by disaster recovery considerations, a desire to introduce redundancy into the IVR system and because of the recommendations of Interactive Intelligence.

"The risk with our previous system was that it had a single point of failure. Interactive Intelligence allowed us to create redundancy with another server located at another site in case of failure," Gordon explains. "For similar reasons we were also looking to move to using SIP [session initiation protocol] trunks to the telephone lines." SIP trunks enable organisations to replace traditional fixed analogue or digital telephone lines with a less costly data connection. In addition, they offer greater flexibility in location: As long as you can obtain a data connection, you have access to the phone.

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Gordon continues, "With SIP trunks and redundancy, if anything happens to the building where our main system is housed, our disaster recovery site now has a copy of all our data, an Interactive Intelligence box and SIP trunks so we can continue to make outbound calls."

Inbound and outbound calling

One of the main differences between the previous software and the new Interactive Intelligence IVR system is that it the organisation now benefits from SIP capabilities. The main benefit of SIP itself, apart from being less costly to provision and maintain, is that the same trunk can be delivered to multiple sites because it uses IP (Internet Protocol) for call transmission. To do this with normal phone lines would mean a dedicated trunk at each site – doubling the cost.

Just like before, people can still phone in to the dedicated river system hotline and follow the voice prompts to access water flow and river height data. They can also elect to subscribe to flood warning alerts but the calls are no longer made by council employees. Instead, as soon as alert is triggered by rising water, the Interactive Intelligence system automatically calls every person on the appropriate alert list and delivers an automated flood warning message. It's a process that reduces delays and which frees up staff for other tasks during critical times.

Gordon points out that it's not just householders and farmers who rely on the warnings. Many Council managers and staff subscribe to the lists so that they are alerted to situations where they may need to take action such as opening floodgates.

The flood warning system had its first real test just a few weeks after going live. A relatively small flood led to more than ten thousand inbound and outbound calls being dealt with over the course of three days. Another flood occurred just a few months later. The IVR system handled both occasions with ease.

At present Horizons Regional Council operates 15 phone lines through the IVR system but due to the use of SIP trunks, Gordon expects to be able to double this capacity to meet additional call demand during emergencies. "We couldn't have done this cost-effectively with a non-SIP based solution," he observes. "We would have had to pay for 30 lines all the time."

"The flood warning system is the most critical system that we run internally," Gordon says. "A number of other regions are doing similar kinds of things to this but apparently, none are quite like our IVR system."

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INTERACTIVE INTELLIGENCE™

Interactive Intelligence, Inc. (Nasdaq: ININ) offers unified business communications solutions for contact center automation, enterprise IP telephony, and business process automation. More than 3,500 organizations worldwide currently benefit from the company's open, all-in-one IP communications software suite, which can be deployed as a premise-based or communications-as-a-service (CaaS) solution.

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