

CASE-IN-POINT: CLOUD CONTACT CENTER HELPS WMPH VACATIONS ENRICH CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

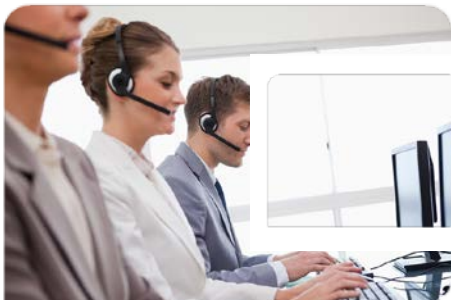
→ **Omer Minkara**, Research Director,
Contact Center & Customer
Experience Management
in t

WMPH Vacations is a mid-size travel company based in Delray Beach, Florida. The company name stands for ‘we make people happy,’ a guiding principle influencing its business activities.

Background

WMPH has nine sub-brands, each of which sells cruises to customers through distinct websites, including iCruise.com, AlaskaCruises.com and HawaiiCruiseOutlet.com. Given that each consumer has unique expectations from a cruise, the organization uses its websites as a touch-point to educate buyers about different options. Once buyers learn the different options available, they are then encouraged to interact with the contact center for a one-on-one consultation to help design a cruise that meets their unique needs. To this point, Greg Meyer, Director of Systems Integration at WMPH Vacations, says, “Our contact center really is a sales and relationship hub for our business.”

The company operates what would be considered a mid-size contact center, with approximately 90 seats. The ability to address customer needs as they arise in a personalized and timely fashion is a key objective for the business. Given that WMPH is located in an area that occasionally experiences hurricanes, business continuity at times of severe weather events is a strategic priority, in order to avoid any disruptions when it comes to addressing customer needs. As the company was operating an on-premise contact center, two years ago it decided to deploy a cloud-based communications infrastructure (see sidebar on next page) that allows it to maintain its communications within the business, as well as with customers.



"Our contact center really is a sales and relationship hub for our business."

**~Greg Meyer,
Director of Systems
Integration, WMPH**

Change in the Technology Infrastructure

WMPH used several different criteria to short-list multiple cloud contact center providers; among them were deployment and per seat subscription costs, as well as the ability to integrate the solution with existing systems, such as its back-office PBX (private branch exchange). Meyer states, “We utilize numerous enterprise systems, such as our in-house CRM as well as back-office PBX. We selected our vendor given the up-time of its services as well as ease of integration with our existing systems. It was also helpful that the vendor worked closely with our team during the deployment phase to ensure that the solution is best tailored to our needs.”

While business continuity was the main driver of WMPH’s decision to change its contact center infrastructure, during the process it also found that the contact center agents didn’t have deep insights into customer data captured through different touch-points. Indeed, Meyer indicates that agents were challenged by cross-sell and up-sell opportunities, as they didn’t have enough visibility into the customer data captured via its on-premise automated call distribution (ACD) system, and that account information within CRM wasn’t well-integrated within its communications activities. “As we were updating our contact center infrastructure, we also decided to upgrade our internal processes to empower our agents,” says the Director of Systems in Integration in WMPH. Meyer adds, “Today, our agents are able to access a rich variety of insights (e.g. the brand associated with a particular account, previous website activity and historical purchases) via screen pop-ups made available by integrating our in-house customer relationship management (CRM) system with the agent desktop.”

The Result: Cloud-based Contact Center Infrastructure Facilitated Better Business Performance

The company currently uses multiple channels to interact with its clients. These include the web, phone, email, direct mail, social media and IVR. Further complicating its ability to deliver consistent and

Definition: Cloud Contact Center

Cloud-based contact center deployments allow businesses to utilize the services of a third-party provider to deploy and manage part of, or the entire, contact center infrastructure. For the purposes of this research, Aberdeen defines two cloud contact center deployment models:

Public cloud: Contact center applications are hosted on a third-party provider’s premises and managed entirely or partly by the provider. There are three different forms of cloud deployments within the public cloud. These are:

- **Software as a Service (SaaS):** A third-party provider is responsible for application management and control; the company only manages the data
- **Hosted:** A third-party provider hosts applications in the cloud on servers owned by the cloud provider, but the business is responsible for managing the software
- **Hybrid (private and public):** Contact center applications run simultaneously in the public cloud and in-house. This group is categorized within public cloud because part of the contact center infrastructure is provided by a third-party provider

In-House: Contact center applications are hosted within the company premises where the organization is responsible for managing and controlling these applications on company owned computing hardware.

Definition: Omni-Channel Customer Care

Aberdeen uses the term “omni-channel customer care” to define strategic buyer interactions designed to deliver seamless experiences across multiple channels (e.g., phone, social media, web, mobile, and email) and devices (in-store, laptop, and smart phone). The end goal of these programs is to ensure that the context and experience from each channel and device carries over to the next touch-points to ensure consistency of conversations via multiple touch-points.

“One impact that is very easy to attribute to our cloud contact center deployment is that we build deeper and more personalized relationships with our buyers.”

~Greg Meyer, Director of Systems Integration, WMPH

personalized interactions to each buyer is the company’s use of nine unique brands. To accomplish its objective of delivering truly personalized service to its clients, WMPH needs to capture data on customer interactions taking place with each of its brands, and be able to do it through all touch-points. Greg Meyer indicates that, as part of the changes in their contact center infrastructure, they have streamlined the data flow across different systems within the business and therefore the company is able to deliver seamless messages to customers of each brand across all touch-points – a key requirement of omni-channel customer care (see sidebar).

In addition to the business continuity and data integration capabilities, another benefit WMPH enjoyed as part of its cloud contact center adoption is streamlining the customer interaction processes. To this point, Meyer says, “Building one-to-one relationships by connecting each customer to a dedicated agent is an important part of contact center activities. One of the benefits that came with our cloud deployment was the ability to automate our customer routing system so clients are automatically connected to the agent they last interacted with.” It’s important to note that customers ultimately have the option to connect with different agents, as WMPH is able to tailor its routing activities based on such requests.

When asked about the impact their cloud contact center deployment made on the business, Meyer shares that the company now enjoys the ability to empower its agents with critical data needed to truly personalize the cruise purchase and service experience of its customers. Specifically, “One impact that is very easy to attribute to our cloud contact center deployment is that we build deeper and more personalized relationships with our buyers because of the technology-driven insights our agents have at their fingertips. This really helped us enrich our customer conversations.” During the course of its cloud deployment over the past two years, WMPH has also seen a rise in its number of contact center agents, customer transactions, as well as its revenue. While Meyer says it’s hard to attribute the company’s cloud deployment alone for this success, he indicates that success in building better customer relationships enabled by the company’s cloud contact center played a key role – one that the company expects to further grow over the next several years.

About Aberdeen Group

For 26 years, Aberdeen Group has published research that helps businesses worldwide improve performance. We identify Best-in-Class organizations by conducting primary research with industry practitioners. Our team of analysts derives fact-based, vendor-agnostic insights from a proprietary analytical framework independent of outside influence. The resulting research content is used by hundreds of thousands of business professionals to drive smarter decision making and improve business strategy.

Aberdeen's content marketing solutions help B2B organizations take control of the Hidden Sales Cycle through content licensing, speaking engagements, custom research, and content creation services. Located in Boston, MA, Aberdeen Group is a Harte Hanks Company.