

Cargiant revs up Customer Engagement in the Cloud with Enghouse Interactive, Cisco & 365IT

The Customer

Based in White City, North-west London and founded 40 years ago, Cargiant is the world's largest used car dealership. The business now supplies over 1,000 cars a week and has up to 8,000 cars in stock. Its reputation has been built around its ability to offer great product at unbeatable prices. The dealership buys vehicles in bulk and its ability to drive through a high volume of turnover and keep its costs down, enables it to pass on savings to its customers and offer unbeatable choice.

Cargiant has a long-established reputation for innovation, having pioneered the idea of a car supermarket back in the 1970s. It is this innovative thinking that has helped keep them ahead of the pack over the years. Today they are continuously looking at new ways of engaging with customers and delivering added value to them. Here, we look at how Cargiant has achieved its goals with the help of technology partner, 365IT, and the Enghouse Interactive's Communications Center (EICC) and Cisco's Call Manager, all in a simple cloud environment named PureCom.

Changing Nature of Customer Engagement

With the ongoing migration to digital communications technology, success in automotive sales today depends more than ever on car businesses being able to successfully harness the growing volumes of information that they have at their disposal and using it to keep customers and prospects continuously informed, both online and in the showroom, about the offers they have available.

As Marta Trindade, Call Centre Manager Cargiant explains: "customers today increasingly expect to be kept informed about all the vehicles we have on offer and so the key role of our contact centre is to ensure we are providing them with as much information as we can to help to inform and ultimately drive our buying decision.

This is becoming more challenging as the nature of customer interaction is changing all the time," she adds. "We are seeing a proliferation in the range of different communications devices and methodologies with which our customers are choosing to interact.

"The proportion of people using the latest digital technologies to contact us goes up exponentially every year. This year, we envisage 65% of our online visitors are using mobile devices to get in touch.

As a result, customer demand is no longer confined to the working day," she adds. "We see spikes first thing in the morning when people are getting ready for work, or on their daily commute, and then again at lunchtime. Typically, in the evening, with customers at home, the proportion of emails sent from laptops grows as the volume of mobile calls falls away."

All of the reasons above plus a need to update its existing telephony system, which was no longer supported, drove Cargiant to implement a flexible telephony and contact centre solution capable of meeting this growing and ever-changing demand.

Cargiant wanted to explore a number of financial solutions which would allow them to adopt this new technology and start reaping these benefits quickly, yet at the same time offering them predictable cost and control.

In order to address the issue and meet the challenge, Cargiant looked at several solutions on the market from a range of different providers before, with the help of trusted IT partner, 365IT, it took the decision to implement a digital communications platform, integrating phone and emails.

It was a decision taken by Cargiant's call centre, customer services, maintenance and IT management teams, all working together in tandem.

"We recommended PureCom – a managed communications platform that enables improved customer experience which can be delivered either on-premise, or through a hybrid or cloud environment. The benefits of an opex-based model were extremely attractive to Cargiant and this was the chosen platform that we moved forward with," says Luke Yaghmoorali, Account Manager, 365IT.

PureCom's core platform utilises best-of-breed Cisco Telephony for back office users and the intelligent communications routing and recording functionality via the Enghouse Interactive Communications Center (EICC) solution.

This functionality would immediately enable the contact centre manager to have a 360° view across all incoming and outgoing communications, making it easier to monitor and track email and call queues; run reports on interaction trends and schedule available staff more accurately.

Marta Trindade, Call Centre Manager, Cargiant, said: "Having used an older version of EICC previously (Zeacom), most of our staff were familiar with the set-up.

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We therefore required very little training on the software but more importantly we already understood how the system worked and how best to configure it for maximum advantage.”

“Being able to draw on their expertise of our trusted partner 365IT was another key business benefit,” she added. “They understand the way our contact centre works and they could therefore advise of how best to integrate Cisco and EICC with our existing infrastructure and platform and optimise the potential of the solution. That insight has been critically important to us already and will also be key when we need to adapt the system in the future.”



Reaping the Rewards

One of the great benefits Cargiant has been able to achieve through implementing EICC is an improved reporting capability. Since installing it, Cargiant has been able to extend its reporting capability from voice only to emails and to other communications channels. This has helped the management team improve its understanding of what is happening in the contact centre, and therefore make more informed decisions about the overall approach.

Cargiant has carried out reporting on a daily basis on such areas as queue volumes, average call duration and agent performance for eight years, but the new system has enabled it to carry these reports on emails. “We use the feedback we get from the reports to address issues with the teams and to make informed changes to the overall tactics and strategy that we use in the contact centre going forward,” continues Trindade.

Another important advantage is enhanced integration. According to Trindade: “the new system is connected to our CRM solution, and that means that for the first time, caller ID information is made available to the agent in real-time as the customer phones in. We can bring in information from our customer database to help the agent, so we know who the caller is, at what stage of the purchase they are and that capability is further enhanced by the use of on-screen pop-ups which alert agents to relevant caller information. All of this allows us to deal with calls more quickly, resolve queries much faster and achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction.

“Since implementing EICC the average duration of contact centre calls has gone down from three minutes to two and a half, and that in turn has decreased average wait time significantly,” she adds.

Cargiant also uses call recording to monitor agent calls both to ensure that customers are getting the best possible service but also that they are compliant with automotive industry guidelines and the latest financial payment regulations. The new EICC solution renders this process easier by making it faster and more straightforward to track calls than it was previously.

Thinking Ahead

Looking to the future, Cargiant has plans to evolve the system by putting in place web chat facilities. In line with the approach adopted throughout the whole period of engagement, though, such an implementation will only take place in conjunction with a carefully considered tactical and strategic planning process.

According to Trindade, “when you are undertaking a project of this kind, you need to have complete clarity about what you are looking to achieve before you even start putting the nuts and bolts of the technology in place.

It’s a complex undertaking. You need to assess all of your existing processes in the contact centre from queues to the answering protocols to the make-up of your teams and decide if you want to change anything. That’s where the knowledge of engineers is often crucial in helping you to decide how particular changes in the platform and in the overarching infrastructure could potentially help you to achieve your goals. Engineering expertise can also be invaluable in helping you to explore key ‘what if’ scenarios before you start the implementation.

Further flexibility is provided to Cargiant by the opex pricing model that 365IT has made available to them. According to Trindade, “this enhanced flexibility is important to us and makes it much easier for us to bring in extra agents at times of peak demand.

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As Trindade concludes: It’s yet another example of why this project has worked so well for us at Cargiant. In today’s increasingly competitive automotive sector, operational agility is vital. Firms like ourselves need to react quickly to customer demands and new market trends if we want to achieve business advantage. The EICC solution, installed and ably supported by 365IT has played a critical role in enabling us to achieve these goals.”

Learn more about Cargiant at www.Cargiant.co.uk.