



Hastoe Housing

Enghouse Helps Rural Housing Specialist Achieve 100% All Round

AN ENGHOUSE INTERACTIVE CASE STUDY

Overview

INDUSTRY

Housing Association

CUSTOMER PROFILE

UK's leading Housing Association in rural properties

GOALS

Needed a multi-media contact centre solution that would flex and grow with the changing needs of their customers

SOLUTIONS

Enghouse Interactive Communications Centre & Quality Management Suite

BENEFITS

- Efficiency gains in call handling resulting in improved customer satisfaction
- IVR messaging keeps customers informed and enables agents to handle more complex enquiries
- Improved reporting capabilities to aid informed decisions
- Call recording to maintain quality and address any training needs

Background

The well-used terms "sustainable" and "affordable" are not just empty words for Hastoe Housing. It prides itself on finding innovative solutions to enable local people to remain within their communities and now owns and manages over 7,000 homes in over 70 local authority areas. In 2011 they completed their 200th village scheme, confirming its position as the UK's leading specialist rural housing association.

Hastoe Housing customers are made up of leaseholders, shared owners or tenants and are spread across a wide geographical area between Cornwall and Devon in the west, and Norfolk and Lincolnshire in the east. From these locations, it's easy to understand one of its major challenges. Getting to see customers can mean a long drive, so high quality interactions by phone or email are paramount.

As Amanda Harris, head of customer services, explains: "We offer a wide range of services to our local communities which is managed through a small contact centre of just eight advisers and a portal for online self-service. But our main interactions are by phone so it's vital to have the right system in place to ensure calls are handled effectively."

"Also, as our call rate is very dependent on events such as bad weather conditions where we have marked peaks and troughs, we needed a system that could handle a sudden surge of calls. Our previous call routing system was causing some dissatisfaction and wasn't robust enough for the job in hand and we also needed to improve reporting capabilities."

Gauging the Challenge

Hastoe Housing began looking for a solution that could handle these variations in call numbers, provided clearer statistics for reporting, had a good wallboard so that everyone could assess the current situation at a glance and a call recording system that was easy to review for quality monitoring, coaching purposes and complaint disputes. They also wanted a fully futureproof system that would not only handle email, texts and social media, but could also adapt to developing any future communication channels.

"We reviewed the market in detail and assessed a number of potential solutions," adds Harris. "We knew that we did not want a cloud-only approach because when we opted for one in the past, it had not worked out particularly well. What we were looking for, however, was a solution that was easy-to-manage and run, and that delivered clear and concise updates and reporting. That narrowed the field down to a total of three to which we gave serious consideration," says Harris.

Of the options under review, Hastoe particularly liked the "look and feel" of the Enghouse Interactive Communications Centre and found that there was a lot more on offer in terms of functionality compared to the more costly solutions on the market. Working with reseller G3 Comms, Harris and her team looked at reference sites and also knew that other housing providers had been happy using this solution. "This gave us confidence that it was robust, had the functionality we needed at an affordable price and it would work well for us," she says.

The solution has now been implemented by G3 Comms. It relays proper IVR messages giving callers their place in the queue and provides the ability to limit calls in the event that there is a very high volume of calls. The contact centre can get very busy, very quickly and the ability to manage the call load and have automatic messages telling people what is being done and that the situation is under control has been positively welcomed by customers.

"We did have call recording on the previous system, but it was far more difficult to access calls, replay them and assess their quality. With QMS, call monitoring has improved dramatically – a process which was slow and painful before".

Amanda Harris, Head of Customer Services,
HASTOE HOUSING

Hastoe has also invested in Enghouse QMS. "We did have call recording on the previous system, but it was far more difficult to access calls, replay them and assess their quality," says Harris. With QMS, call monitoring has improved dramatically – a process which was slow and painful before. Harris estimates that the contact centre team leaders' time is significantly reduced because of a more efficient interface. "I think on monitoring we probably save something like a good half day or even a day a month," she says.

This improved quality control process has also had a positive knock-on effect on training, helping the team enhance the quality of the interaction with customers. And with a different scoring matrix, Hastoe has made some procedural changes that has improved efficiency within the contact centre.

No downtime plus major efficiency gains

Hastoe has had help from Enghouse and G3 Comms its reseller partner throughout the implementation and this support is now ongoing. However, uptime has been 100%, so there's been little need for intervention. "Our previous system was only up and running about 90% of the time and that really wasn't good enough," says Harris.



She confirms that they have also made efficiency gains in call handling, particularly around transferring and conferencing calls when issues need escalating. Also with the ability to assess call numbers and where they are coming from enabled them to make best use of their staff resources.

Yet, it's clear that keeping customers happy is the most important goal for Hastoe. "We have had to try to manage the load across a small team and this has been a challenge – but our customers know this and are usually prepared, within reason, to wait if they know where they are in a queue," says Harris.

Our customers are now getting a better experience; in fact in surveys they are showing up to 100% satisfaction, with the average sitting at around 95/96%

Amanda Harris, Head of Customer Services
HASTOE HOUSING

Looking to the Future

Harris emphasises the importance of getting the basics right for Hastoe. However, she is also ambitious for the future. She sees email and social media management as the "missing link" at the moment and emphasises that Hastoe definitely plans to use this side of the solution in the future. She doesn't want to stop there either and is eager to explore the system's other capabilities. "For example, we'd like to try screen popping and experiment with the CGI link to our CRM. Also, the use of more visuals should help us respond faster, more fully and more appropriately to our customers," she concludes.

About Enhouse Interactive

Enhouse Interactive develops and supplies the widest range of customer contact solutions on the market through an extensive network of value-added partners. Enhouse Interactive's integrated suite of solutions includes multi-channel contact centres, outbound, self-service, attendant operator consoles and quality management. These solutions enable organisations to classify and respond to customers in the way that they want: quickly, efficiently and successfully, with minimal effort.



Learn more at www.ensembleinteractive.co.uk