Sovereign

Investment in Future Technology
Helps Sovereign Meet Customers'
Housing Needs

BUILDING A QUALITY CUSTOMER COMMMUNICATIONS ENVIRONMENT

Sovereign is a social landlord and one of the UK's largest housing associations. The organisation provides around 60,000 properties for approximately 130,000 people across the south and south west of England and has a development programme where they build and sell properties. It is committed to providing more homes, better places and excellent services to customers and is driven by social purpose, placing those customers at the heart of everything it does.

THE CHALLENGE

In 2016, Sovereign merged with Spectrum Housing Group, creating a new organisation with 1,800 employees, including 150 contact centre agents, spread across multiple locations. Prior to their merger, the two organisations were operating separate IT estates along with different telephony and contact centre platforms.

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>
> Sam Dart, Head of Digital Technology Services
> SOVEREIGN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

INDUSTRY
Housing Association

GOALS
To rationalise systems and deliver a 'single pane of glass' solution to take their customer experience to the next level

SOLUTIONS
Communications Center

Quality Management Suite

BENEFITS

- One streamlined solution, bringing cost savings and efficiencies across the organisation

- Improved customer service through the ability to process higher volumes of calls and emails

- Greater visibility of customer and agent interactions through call and screen recording

- A clear migration path to Microsoft Teams

- Quick to onboard new agents through an easy to use and intuitive user interface

Enghouse Interactive

enghouseinteractive.co.uk

In order to drive efficiencies throughout the organisation they needed to migrate all staff, regardless of location, onto a single holistic contact centre and UC environment.

Sovereign wanted a scalable future-proofed "single pane of glass' solution which would integrate with business critical applications including Housing Management, Human Resources and Repair systems, taking their customer experience to the next level.

At the same time, they wanted to ensure their customers could contact them at a time of their choosing and, through their preferred channel of communication, without crucial information about themselves or their enquiry being misplaced.

Their existing telephony and contact centre infrastructures could not offer the flexibility and functionality needed to meet Sovereign's "digital first" channel strategy aimed at improving tenant satisfaction whilst simultaneously reducing costs to serve their customers.

Working with their technology partner FourNet, Sovereign opted for Communications Center (CC) from Enghouse Interactive to integrate with its existing Skype for Business UC environment. By transitioning to a digital environment and adopting CC, Sovereign is now able to process higher volumes of calls and emails through its contact centre, and deliver exceptional service to its growing customer base

THE SOLUTION

Sovereign had previously taken the decision that Skype for Business would be the platform for the combined contact centres. Staff previously at Spectrum Housing Group were used to using physical phones on desks but the move to headsets and softphones entailed changes in working practices.

Sovereign also knew, however, that having a high-quality contact centre solution in place to complement this core unified communications platform would be key. The customer service team at Sovereign is always busy. It has a large customer base who contact them to report repairs to their homes or to rebook and chase appointments, so it required a platform capable of handling large volume and demand. It also needed to be easy to use and require very little training to speed up the on boarding of new agents.

Following an extensive formal tendering process, Sovereign selected FourNet, to implement Communication Center as its standardised contact centre and integrate it into their Skype for Business environment. FourNet ensured that all calls moved smoothly between the two systems and that Sovereign were able to extract contact centre data in SSRS, along with data feeds from other business critical applications such as rents and repairs platforms. Also, the TouchPoint client in CC has made it easy for the agents to get up and running on the solution and has given Sovereign a good adoption rate.

Sovereign are currently rolling out Microsoft Dynamics 365 throughout the organisation. One of the compelling reasons for selecting Communications Center is its ability to integrate with D365 so that they can track and consolidate all activity. It also gives agents a 360 degree

view of the customer to help them provide informed answers and will also open up other channels of communication. Sovereign are primarily using CC for Voice and Email but plan to bring on new channels in the near future.

"CC is proving to be a robust solution when it comes to handling call volumes and its close integration with Dynamics is another major plus point," according to Sam Dart, Head of Digital Technology Services, Sovereign Housing Association.

"We are impressed with the roadmap for CC and we have confidence that not only is investment being made in it but that it is being developed in line with a wider and complementary product portfolio. We needed enterprise level technology which CC clearly is if you look at the list of businesses using the product"

Sam Dart, Head of Digital Technology Services
SOVEREIGN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

REAPING THE REWARDS

The ability to use Teleopti workforce management functionality in conjunction with CC is another big benefit for Sovereign. This enables better planning, saving supervisors time and improving agent morale by allowing agents to self-serve.

"Teleopti gives you a great deal of insight into how you can best operate an efficient and effective contact centre," says Dart. "It provides real insight into communications channel usage trends, what times of day are busiest and where there might be issues for agent availability for example. Coupled with that, it empowers agents to be more flexible in terms of when and how they work and it allows them to easily book and manage their time without constantly having to get a manager involved."

Sovereign also benefits from the Enghouse Interactive Quality Management System (QMS). It has made extensive use of the solution's call recording functionality and has now extended this to encompass screen recording. The ability to not only listen to interactions but also see them is invaluable to team leaders. Enghouse Interactive's QMS is key in helping agents and enabling Sovereign to improve its service. Being able to identify process inefficiencies or areas to concentrate on during agent training is invaluable as is celebrating great service.

Also, by using scorecard functionality, Sovereign has been able to access agents in a fair and consistent fashion, which has helped increase agent morale, reduce staff attrition and improved the customer experience.

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According to Dart: "From a contact centre perspective, we need that ability to measure the interactions to see how successful we have been and identify areas for improvement and the Quality Management Suite provides this for us. As QMS develops over time, we anticipate being able to quality score a growing number of our channels."

Sovereign has also been impressed with the support and versatility FourNet has shown throughout the process. Sovereign wanted a small replica solution to allow them to train new agents and supervisors on in a non-live environment before switching to the live system and also to test new features. FourNet set up a "Sandbox" non-production test environment, which is a unique element to the solution.

LOOKING FORWARD

Sovereign is currently looking into running upgrades on Skype for Business, QMS and Teleopti workflow management capabilities with a longer term plan of moving CC to Microsoft Teams. Also, as Microsoft Dynamics rolls out, it will start looking at integrating it with their contact centre platform. This will change how the contact centre receives information and how contacts get delivered to them but also how

Sovereign shares those capabilities more widely across the organisation.

Sovereign is also exploring the potential of offering webchat as another communication channel for customers, along with enhanced artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities and additional self service and automation tools such as real-time speech analytics (RTSA).

"From a capability perspective and in terms of how we intend to grow our channel offering to customers in the future, the Enghouse Interactive products delivered in conjunction with FourNet are absolutely achieving those goals for us"

Sam Dart, Head of Digital Technology Services
SOVEREIGN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

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ABOUT ENGHOUSE INTERACTIVE

Enghouse Interactive's integrated suite of solutions includes multi-channel contact centre, self-service, attendant operator consoles, video collaboration and workforce optimisation. This wide portfolio places us in the unique position to offer customers and partners a complete, fully featured solution from a single vendor.

These solutions support the full range of deployment methods from premise-based to private, public or community cloud and even hybrid requirements.