

FOCUS ON THE CUSTOMER: CUSTOMER SERVICE AT VORWERK

Syskoplan Reply: Multidivisional Call Centre with automated rule-based and integrated processes optimises customer service.

THE CLIENT

The cliché of the vacuum cleaner sales-man no longer holds true these days. Since its foundation in 1983 and the beginning of direct marketing for the cleaning system Kobold 1930, Vorwerk & Co. KG has become the third largest direct marketing company worldwide. The international family-owned enterprise not only operates Kobold Systems, but also sells the food processor Thermomix, the ironing system Feelina as well as fitted kitchens. The household appliances are exclusively sold via door-to-door distribution. Each of these product sectors is organised independently and has its own sales organisation. Furthermore, the Vorwerk companies Jafra Cosmetics and Lux Asia Pacific sell their products via direct marketing.

Today, the group employs approx. 578.000 people in more than 60 countries. Alone the Kobold Systems divisions, including Fitted Kitchens, Thermomix and Ironing Systems, employ around 5.000 employees and approx. 26.000 sales consultants.



Direct marketing is the main pillar of the company. The “Household Appliances” division manages a total of over 4 million customers. In 2005, the largest division, Kobold Systems, celebrated its 75th anniversary and the sale of approx. 100 million Kobold units. Vorwerk’s claim to build a lifelong emotional relationship with its customers poses major challenges with regard to the overall customer service. At the same time, the various “household appliances” necessitate very different business processes. A damaged kitchen cannot be sent by mail like a vacuum cleaner. For this reason, each division has to date been operating its own customer service and own call centre.

THE CHALLENGE

The Vorwerk group decided to use an in-house standard for the overall processing of

its core business within the international sales companies. This also involved redesigning the customer service processes. The idea was to create a central system that could be rolled out progressively in all 14 sales companies. Vorwerk opted for the SAP® products R/3®, BW and CRM as a technical platform, and chose Syskoplan Reply as its development partner. The planned CRM system included inter alia the setup of a Customer Interaction Center (CIC) for consultants and customers. An important goal in this respect was to integrate customer processes of all sales divisions under one single interface.

Due to the lack of user support and low efficiency for both call centres and back office workplaces, the current tools were to be substituted completely. The following tasks were to be fulfilled by customer service:

- Creation of an intuitive tool that is easy to operate, shows all information about the customer “at a glance” and optimally supports the agents (users) with the processing of service enquiries
- The plan was to relieve the strain on agents with respect to routine tasks as much as possible, while ensuring that standard functions run automatically.
- In addition, complex rules for the processing of customer enquiries were to be simplified, not least due to the high skill levels required and the associated time-consuming induction period of a call centre agent.

THE SOLUTION

Vorwerk started the VISSION project: “Vorwerk International Solution for Sales and Integrated Order Processing”. The development of a multidivisional CIC for order processing and customer service is part of the overall project. Other aspects are marketing and field sales control.

The system is based on SAP® CRM with the Customer Interaction Center. Various upgrades beyond SAP standard functions were also implemented.

The principal upgrades of SAP CRM standards are:

- Visibility in one place: All customer-related processes were made visible and accessible in one place to create a consistent view of the customer.
- Context Sensitive Handling: For optimal user guidance, the system automatically detects which processes regarding the customer are admissible in a specific context based on the combination customer, process and service organisation. Only these are provided to users.
- Decision Support Tool: The tool supports all decision processes and enables the fast and correct processing of enquiries based on the service principles of Vorwerk.
- Automated Process Execution: Standard processes have been mostly automated, to relieve the strain arising from routine activities and to make it possible to focus on important tasks.

Overall, by establishing the customer as the main focal point, a complete, uniform and consistent view of the customer was created. This heralded the beginning of a change in corporate culture, away from a mere contract view towards an integral customer view, providing all customer-related information, including customer history, in CIC and in one interface.

The highly-developed system fulfils all requirements of a sophisticated customer service and covers the special requirements of Vorwerk's direct marketing. It was

possible to simplify processes and significantly increase service quality. The automation of processes and routine functions from customer contact in front office to downstream processing and transaction realisation in back office simplifies handling. This also includes various processes such as sales and delivery processes, billing, commissioning of sales staff as well as reporting.

The application performance is excellent with, for example, response times of around 0.4 sec. for customer search; the display of customer history requires 1.8 sec. This application made it possible for Vorwerk to significantly reduce the training and induction periods for users.



THE BENEFIT

Syskoplan Reply was significantly involved in the development of the international core architecture and supported Vorwerk, as the first international company focussed on direct marketing to implement an infrastructure based entirely on SAP® systems.

The developed software package was successfully introduced at Vorwerk International Switzerland, Thermomix and Ironing Systems Germany as well as Kobold and Thermomix France. The application was successfully commissioned for the largest company Kobold Systems and Fitted Kitchens Germany. Milestones are the go-live for Kobold Austria and the associated release change for all other sales companies that already work with the CIC. At the same time, the multidivisional CIC was put into operation, thus creating the decisive technical IT foundations for the integration of the call centres of all Vorwerk divisions.

"Syskoplan Reply is one of the major development partners involved in the implementation of our central IT strategy. The vast process and IT know-how, and Syskoplan Reply's strong commitment to the project significantly contributed to its success." Ralph Eger, CIO of Vorwerk.



Syskoplan Reply is a leading IT services provider in the SAP environment and develops innovative, flexible and reliable IT solutions, particularly in the areas of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Business Intelligence (BI). We implement innovative IT solutions, using adaptable and agile IT platforms extended with customer-specific components. This enables our customers to differentiate in the market and create sustainable competitive advantages. In addition, our customers benefit from our close partnership with SAP, strong industry knowledge and our partnership based collaboration. The inclusion in the network of the European IT service provider Reply opens up access to the knowledge of over 3,000 IT experts. In 2010, the Reply network of companies had a turnover of approx. 384 million euros in the main offices in Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom. For further information visit www.reply.de

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