

Case Studies

ACD Direct

The Situation

In the US, Public Broadcasting Stations receive a significant portion of their revenue from individual private donors. While on-going donations are always encouraged, the stations will spend a few weeks, several times per year, specifically targeting individuals during ‘pledge drives’. Typically, special programming is played, along with live calls to action. Donors are also enticed with special rewards for varying levels of donations. Behind the live on-air talent, often a row or two of volunteers can be seen taking the pledge calls, and processing the donations from callers. These volunteers are there to simply enhance the on-air experience, as many more agents are typically needed to service all the potential callers.

The Problem

Pledge drives can often generate significant call volume. A typical station may have as many as 15 or 20 volunteers available to take calls, but when more than 50 or 60 calls come in over a 1 minute period, potential donors are forced to hold, or may even receive busy signals. The hold times could be significant, and the potential donor may change his/her mind without ever calling back.

Some PBS stations contracted with professional call centers to service the overflow, but this was ultimately not a good solution. A large spike of calls would come in for a few minutes, and then would simply end. Meanwhile, another spike might not come for another 45 minutes to an hour. This is not the type of business a typical commercial call center wishes to handle, as it puts many agents in a ‘hurry up and wait’ mode, and somebody has to pay for all the agent down time.

In addition, the PBS station was individually responsible for sending the overflow calls to the overflow centers. If a station’s infrastructure was not geared up for large spikes, as it was often the case, many calls that should have gone out to a third party ended up being abandoned, or even hung-up on.

The Solution

ACD Direct’s vision to create a unified service layer turned things around a bit. Instead of donor calls going directly to a station’s volunteer group of agents, ACD Direct would provide all ‘front-ending’ for the calls. ACD Direct would know how many volunteers were available, and would send the first of a station’s calls to its agents. Subsequent calls would be sent to a series of call centers staffed with five to ten agents, as well as at-home agents.

Many stations rely on the same periods during the year to have their pledge drives. The hourly “spiky” nature of the calls now tends to flatten-out to become a large, steady volume of calls. If a spike gets too large, ACD Direct could staff-up with at-home agents literally in minutes.

ACD Direct recruited and trained large groups of at-home agents, with a rigorous testing program and infrastructure requirements.

The only thing they didn’t have was a telephony infrastructure to complete their vision. ACD Direct and Connect First worked to enhance our Call Center in the Cloud SaaS Solution, integrated with their internal CRM and built a secure, highly available redundant network to meet the needs of the TV stations.

Find out how your organization can benefit from this technology to help you solve any of your contact business challenges. Please call us to set up a demo: 866.601.2707.

Unlike traditional products, there is no expensive software, no expensive hardware, and no expensive IT personnel. Our technology lets you scale up and down on demand. You only pay for what you use, when you use it.

