

Answering the call to accelerate business growth and enhance profitability

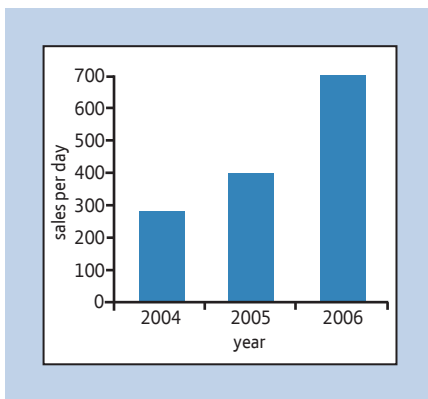


Chart showing the growth in average sales per day since the new BT call centre solution was implemented in 2005

BT contact centre solution helps enable Australian outsourced contact centre operator Mercury Blue to improve its business model

Executive Summary

Mercury Blue is a small, fast expanding outsourced contact centre specialist serving principally Australian clients, providing both outbound calling and in-bound call reception capability. Communications technology plays a pivotal role in the business and is the key enabler to maximise productivity and maintain the low infrastructure costs that are necessary for it to compete effectively in its chosen market.

The existing contact centre technology used by Mercury Blue, although still relatively modern, would not scale to meet business need and had become a barrier to its commercial success. A new managed service solution provided by BT comprises two principal elements – a call transaction processing platform from Aspect and an integrated outbound workflow solution from PowerConnex.

The BT solution is a unitary pricing contract that allows Mercury Blue to pay monthly on the basis of the number of agent positions. It serves up 60 agents at one time operating on a three-shift system and processing around 20,000 calls each day. The new system has helped revolutionise the Mercury Blue operation, enabling improved call centre agent efficiency and effectiveness. Since the system has been in operation not only has the company increased efficiency and profitability but it has also won the SA Great Regional 'Best New Business' and 'Best Large Business' awards.

“We considered a number of possible suppliers but we were immediately impressed with the BT offer. BT had clearly conducted a thorough analysis of our needs and responded with a proposal that fulfilled every one of our requirements – backed by innovative commercial terms.”

Peter Hockin
Chief Operating Officer
Mercury Blue

Case study

Mercury Blue

“The BT system is easy to use and very reliable. In the year since it has been installed we have managed to substantially increase our revenue with the same staff resource. This has given a great boost to business efficiency and profitability.”

Stephen Hall
Marketing Director
Mercury Blue

Marketplace

Located in the Adelaide Hills, South Australia, Mercury Blue is a small but fast expanding outsourced contact centre specialist serving principally Australian clients. It provides both outbound calling and in-bound call reception capability. Services include: sales lead generation, qualification and closure; anniversary, thank you and reminder calls; customer satisfaction surveys; and marketing database verification.

Established in 2004 the company works in close partnership with its clients and prides itself on its rapid and flexible response to their business and marketing campaign needs. Mercury Blue services a number of diverse businesses. Its main client is Telstra, the former Australian PTT and the leading telecommunications and information services company in Australia today.

Business opportunity

Communications technology plays a pivotal role in the business and is the key enabler to maximise productivity and maintain the low infrastructure costs that are necessary for it to compete effectively in its chosen market.

The existing contact centre technology used by Mercury Blue, although still relatively modern, had become a barrier to its commercial success. Mercury Blue concluded that to deliver its ambitious growth targets it needed leading edge technology that resolved both reliability issues and technical limitations. It was also essential for the new solution to be linearly scalable to cost effectively support up to 300 agents.

Other key requirements included the capability for Mercury Blue to switch quickly and seamlessly between different campaigns, facilitate tailored real-time reporting and provide the ability to create bespoke scripts for customer interaction. This would enable a quick response to changing client requirements – one of the company’s unique selling points.

Peter Hockin, Chief Operating Officer at Mercury Blue, says: “We considered a number of possible suppliers but we were immediately impressed with the BT offer. BT had clearly conducted a thorough analysis of our needs and responded with a proposal that fulfilled every one of our requirements – backed by innovative commercial terms. They demonstrated a good understanding of our business and were able to showcase similar systems they had provided, which added to our confidence.”

BT solution

The managed service solution provided by BT comprises two principal elements: a call transaction processing platform from Aspect and an integrated outbound workflow solution from PowerConnex – a contact centre application provider specialising in the Australian market. The solution serves up to 60 agents at one time operating on a three-shift system and processing around 20,000 calls each day.

The Aspect Enterprise ACD is a highly reliable call transaction-processing platform designed to handle a large volume of incoming and outgoing calls. It routes incoming calls in accordance with predetermined criteria and providing extensive information about every call transaction. The solution features voice messaging, IVR and announcement capability as well as a host of call queuing options, and will scale to support 1,500 agents.

PowerConnex offer a suite of applications that together provide the means for advanced and highly efficient management and scheduling of outbound calling. The integrated solution includes the PowerCall predictive dialling application, utilising call forcing where ‘hot’ calls are presented to call centre agents as soon as they are ready to start a new transaction. PowerScript – a scripting tool – provides the capability for the rapid creation or modification of call centre agent dialogue scripts. Comprehensive management and performance information is provided through the PowerWise application.

Case study

Mercury Blue

Although Mercury Blue's main line of business is outbound calling it is increasingly being asked to take responsibility for inbound enquiries and sales calls. The BT solution provides the means to blend the different call types giving the ultimate in flexibility and helping to maximise staff utilisation. For example, in the absence of incoming calls, individual agents can make productive use of their time by making outbound calls for another campaign, thus improving productivity.

Installation and the all-important systems integration work commenced in July 2005. Stephen Hall comments: "We were very impressed with BT's project management and the level of support it provided during the implementation. BT was always there for us, to help iron out the inevitable bugs that will occur with a transition of this kind.

To complement the technology, BT provides a fully managed service wrap with a 24*7 helpdesk and maintenance support. The BT solution also includes the ultimate in terms of commercial flexibility as it allows Mercury Blue to pay for the solution by number of agent positions on a monthly basis. This has enabled Mercury Blue to finance the solution as current account expenditure without the need for capital funding, while the solution itself provides the flexibility to grow with the business.

Results

The new call centre technology supplied by BT has revolutionised the Mercury Blue operation and has provided the platform for significant re-engineering of business processes. This in turn has delivered almost immediate benefit through improved efficiency and effectiveness. Immediately following the implementation of the BT system, sales performance increased from an average of 275 sales per day with the old system to 400 sales per day with the new system. With much of Mercury Blue's revenue determined by sales performance this productivity improvement translates directly to the bottom line.

Stephen Hall says: "The BT system is easy to use and very reliable. In the year since it has been installed we have managed to substantially increase our revenue with the same staff resource. This has given a great boost to business efficiency and profitability."

Since the original implementation the system has continued to evolve. With such rapid business growth Mercury Blue has now opened a second site to house up to 30 remote call centre agents. The company wanted to retain an integrated call centre platform and selected BT to extend the core system to serve the new site remotely, using a 2Mbps circuit linking the buildings. Matthew Hockin, Director IT & Communications at Mercury Blue says: "The technology provided by BT has greatly aided our recent seamless expansion into a brand new similar sized centre on the Gold Coast, Queensland."

Peter Hockin concludes: "In our game communications technology is the heart of the business and BT have proven that they have the right products and technical resources to support us. Such was our confidence in the new BT system that shortly following the implementation in August 2005 we decided to enter the South Australia Great Award for Best New Regional Business – an award that we subsequently won."

Why BT?

- Leading edge technology solution that met all requirements
- BT systems integration expertise and service capability
- Innovative and flexible 'pay as you go' commercial terms
- BT understanding of the Mercury Blue business and confidence in BT's ability to deliver

Case study

Mercury Blue

Technology blueprint

Aspect Enterprise ACD is designed to handle up to 200,000 inbound and outbound calls per hour, routing them in accordance with customer requirements and agent skill set. The solution includes IVR functionality and can provide announcements and voice messaging facilities as well as call back messaging capability. The system provides for a powerful and flexible array of call queuing capability including skill mapping, prioritised queuing, caller directed call queuing and overflow agent group queuing. The system can scale up to 1,500 trunk ports and 7,500 different call centre agent IDs across 992 agent groups.

PowerScript is a scripting tool that enables fast and effective creation or modification of a call centre agent script and is specifically designed for non-technical users. The tool also allows for the capture and replication

of the dialogue of the most successful call centre agents and displays this as scripts on agents' screens, providing learning to boost the performance of lower achieving team members.

PowerCall is an outbound predictive dialling solution that enables more calls to be made each hour. It is able to forecast agent availability and present a live call to an available agent having screened out connections to fax machines and voicemail systems. PowerWise provides comprehensive real time and historic management information that allows management to monitor campaign and individual performance. Individually tailored reports with powerful graphics can be produced quickly and simply without any specialist programming knowledge.

Main BT products and services

- BT provided Aspect Enterprise ACD and PowerConnex call centre technology
- BT systems integration
- BT 24*7*365 helpdesk and maintenance support services

Offices worldwide

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