GENESYS™

Contact center outsourcer
harnesses the cloud to meet diverse client needs

Cloud flexibility and ease of use enable EMS to create cost-effective
customer service solutions and increase business success

ems CRM
Humanizing Customer Service

Customer: EMS Inc.
Industry: Business services (contact center outsourcing)
Location: Omaha, Nebraska
Agents: 175 to 300, depending on time of year

Challenges:
* Lack of control hinders customer responsiveness
* Limited customization restricts business and efficiency
* Lack of innovative features threaten to diminish customer experience

Summary

EMS is a single outsourced contact center that operates as 12 distinct centers—all with vastly unique configurations. In total, they manage more than 500 phone numbers, and have about 400 inbound call profiles with more than 400 workgroups.

To support such diverse client requirements, EMS relies on the ease of use and flexibility of the Genesys PureConnect™ cloud platform. With a single dedicated IT administrator, they support nearly 50 clients, providing a full range of multichannel features, including a plethora of customized apps and integrations. Delivering a quick turnaround on client requests gives EMS a major competitive advantage. And, with a platform that accommodates virtually any new technology or industry trend, they are confident they will retain a reputation for best-in-class customer service.

Lack of control slowed ability to meet customer demands

As an outsourced contact center, EMS meets a diverse set of client needs. To provide these varied services, EMS deployed a hosted contact center solution by EchoPass, which eventually couldn't keep up with the company's needs.

"In the beginning, we felt we had the Cadillac of contact center solutions," said Paul Staehlin, Director of Operations for EMS. "But over the years, we found the system increasingly limiting."

In particular, lack of control was an issue, according to Chris Kaldenberg, IT Operations Manager for EMS. "Being able to support multiple clients whose needs can change on a dime requires fast adaptability," he said. "We can't afford to call a vendor or submit a trouble ticket and wait days for an answer."

Solutions:
- Genesys PureConnect platform
- Features used include IVR, ACD, email, chat, recording and Interaction Web Portal (IWP)
- Extensive use of PureConnect APIs for integrations and customizations

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Paul Staehlin
Director of Operations, EMS

The EchoPass solution didn't meet this need for speed. "The simple act of setting up a user for chat took nearly three weeks," said Staehlin. "In our world, three weeks doesn't cut it. We need to do this in three hours or less."

Limited customization, control and visibility compromised customer service

A lack of customization also was a big problem for EMS. "We were locked into a very narrow set of customizations," said Kaldenberg. "For instance, we were limited to only a few IVR options for callers. As an outsourcer, this put us at a serious competitive disadvantage."

Evolving quality monitoring and security requirements created additional challenges. "Recording, encryption and security requirements were rapidly evolving," said Kaldenberg. "But our system didn't give us the ability to control recording and encryption to meet unique client standards, nor did it allow our clients to view their data directly and make ad-hoc decisions."

A lack of internal visibility compounded the problems. "Our system couldn't give us real-time visibility into an agent's skill set, configuration or conversation," said Staehlin. "Without this visibility, and no way for supervisors to interject on a call, we had little way to identify customer service issues and certainly no way to proactively address them. This also made it difficult to increase efficiencies."

Growing focus on customer experience highlighted the need for system upgrades

Industry trends also exacerbated the need to add new features. "Over the years, we felt that our system wasn't getting refreshed," said Staehlin. "With our clients more frequently asking about things like omnichannel, we stood to lose business by not having these more innovative features and a more flexible platform."

As industry pressures to improve the customer experience grew, EMS felt a new contact center solution was critical to their survival.

"As a customer service outsourcer, our main differentiator is giving our clients and their customers an experience that goes above and beyond," said Staehlin. "That means not just offering any mode of communications channel, but making interactions personal and proactive. It was clear that our existing solution was crippling our ability to differentiate, thus threatening our success."

Ease of use overtakes the competition

EMS sought a new contact center solution that was nimbler and gave them more control. They issued a lengthy RFP and narrowed the field down from about 20 vendors to three; the finalists included Genesys, InContact and ShoreTel.

A key part of the decision-making process was to bring in EMS "power users" for product demos. This group included select agents, supervisors, administrators and managers. When asked for feedback about the Genesys PureConnect platform, EMS power users unanimously preferred its interface. "Without exception, our power users loved the PureConnect intuitive user interface and general ease of use," said Staehlin.

Customization and access to performance data are key

On the feature front, EMS liked that the PureConnect platform offered them visibility into performance and associated customization options.

"The PureConnect platform gave us access to real-time activity and the ability to customize reports," said Staehlin. "We could drill down into details, add and remove fields, and set alerts for pre-determined thresholds. We could do all this uniquely for each client—even setting up web portals to display data they could access directly. When you're managing dozens of accounts at a time, all with different requirements, this is huge."

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IT Operations Manager, EMS

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Director of Operations, EMS

All-in-one architecture and competitive pricing add value

Another selling point was the PureConnect architecture. "As we dug into the technology of the top vendors, we found most weren't all-inclusive," said Kaldenberg. "With the PureConnect platform, we wouldn't need to tack on separate systems for additional functionality. On a single platform, it encompassed everything from voice and chat, to email and SMS—even advanced functionality such as artificial intelligence."

Price proved to be a selling point as well. "The PureConnect solution was significantly less expensive compared to the other products on our short list," said Kaldenberg.

"It was the best of both worlds. It combined the nimbleness and innovation of the cloud, with the control and customization of an on-premises solution," said Staehlin. "And as a leader on the Gartner CCaaS Magic Quadrant, we were confident Genesys would be around for a long time."

Smooth, four-month migration of complex environments

EMS deployed the PureConnect platform within four months. The company had to document every client configuration on the legacy system. The Genesys team then mapped them all to the PureConnect platform; this involved about 100 different call flows, including IVR paths and options.

"Genesys supplied us with a project manager and engineers who helped us every step of the way," said Staehlin. "Based on the documentation we gave to the Genesys team, they drew up the entire roadmap for our contact center."

When EMS flipped the switch, everything went as planned. "We didn't get a single customer complaint," said Staehlin. "That was the fifth system migration I've done, and it was by far the smoothest."

The initial deployment supported the company's 80 agents who, at the time, serviced about 20 clients. EMS has since grown to between 175 and 300 agents, depending on the time of year. Currently, those agents support more than double the number of clients.

EMS uses PureConnect IVR, ACD, email, chat, recording and Interaction Web Portal features. The company also removed their desktop phones and only uses the PureConnect softphone interface.

Since they deployed the PureConnect platform, EMS has experienced 100% reliability. "As an outsourcer, providing critical customer support to nearly 50 customers, we simply can't afford to go down," said Staehlin. "Remarkably, we've had no downtime since deploying the PureConnect platform. This exceeds the industry standard of five 9s."

Ease of use and flexibility cuts costs and wins new clients

One of the most dramatic benefits of the PureConnect platform is that it enables EMS to run on a skeleton IT crew. "We manage hundreds of agents and hundreds of numbers, yet because of the ease of use of the PureConnect platform, we're doing that with just one dedicated administrator," said Staehlin. "It's really unheard of and, as a result, it has saved us hundreds of thousands of dollars annually."

In addition, the PureConnect Interaction Web Portal feature lets EMS give clients access to their own performance statistics, quality measurements, time-off reporting and more. "Although we're a single contact center, we really manage 12 discrete centers independent of one another," Staehlin said. "With minimal configuration, we were able to give each of our clients their own portal so they can see directly what's going on in their contact center. It was so easy to set up, yet it's a major differentiator in our business."

The ease of use of the PureConnect platform also has enabled EMS to build solutions faster, which won them new business.

"We had a client come to us who needed a direct interface into Salesforce," said Staehlin. "The client asked, 'How fast can you do this?' I said we could give a live demo in two days. We were up against a very large competitor and the client gave them a week to do the same. We successfully demoed our solution two days later, as promised. After a week, our competitor still had nothing. The ability of the PureConnect platform to quickly and easily create integrations was why we won this business. It's a huge competitive differentiator."

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And as a company that isn't afraid to dig into their contact center system, EMS found the PureConnect solution virtually limitless in what it can do, according to Kaldenberg.

"The flexibility and customization options have opened the door to things we never thought of," he said. "This has given us confidence that we can meet virtually any client request, regardless of new technology and changing industry trends. As an IT guy, I look forward to someone coming to me with a problem because I know I've got a platform that will give me an answer. Truly, we're only limited by our own creativity."

Visibility increases agent efficiency and expands services

Visibility into performance data yielded other important benefits, noted Kaldenberg.

"The PureConnect platform gives us all the tools we need at our fingertips—real-time data and statistics that have a huge impact on everyone, from agents and supervisors to managers and clients," said Kaldenburg. "Agents, for instance, can now see the customer's name, number and other details when they pick up the phone. This has enabled them to focus on the customer, instead of the tools they're using, so they're more engaged."

Increased agent efficiency has improved availability, noted Staehlin. "We measure the time an agent is available for interactions, which we equate with efficiency," he said. "Prior to the PureConnect platform, we were averaging about 68% agent efficiency. That metric has increased to about 76%. That's a big savings in staff-related costs."

Reduced call abandon rates is another advantage. "PureConnect metrics have enabled us to handle calls more efficiently," said Staehlin. "As a result, we went from abandon rates of about 6.5% before deploying the PureConnect platform to 4% after deployment. With industry standards running around 5%, that's huge."

EMS also saw an increase in agent retention. "Our agent turnover rate dropped from about 40% to about 24% after deploying the platform," Staehlin said. "The PureConnect solution made agents' jobs easier while empowering them to be more successful. This has made our agents happier and saved us dollars in recruitment."

Genesys partnership maximizes ROI

While EMS has very much taken the reigns of their PureConnect deployment, they still occasionally rely on Genesys for guidance.

"We're not a huge contact center by most measures, but when we have questions or ideas, Genesys is quick to respond," said Kaldenberg. "This sense of urgency sends a clear message that our importance isn't based on the number of seats we occupy or money we spend. Their responsiveness, along with superior technology and top-notch people, have enabled us to get more out of the PureConnect platform, so we can continue offering best-in-class customer service."

Last year, Staehlin attended a Genesys conference and was asked by an attendee how he liked the PureConnect platform and working with Genesys. "I'm pushing nearly 30 years in the contact center business and the PureConnect solution is the single best platform I've ever worked with," replied Staehlin. "It's taken my job and my company to new levels. And working with Genesys has been off the charts. From Day 1, our relationship has been great and, over the years, our partnership has only deepened."
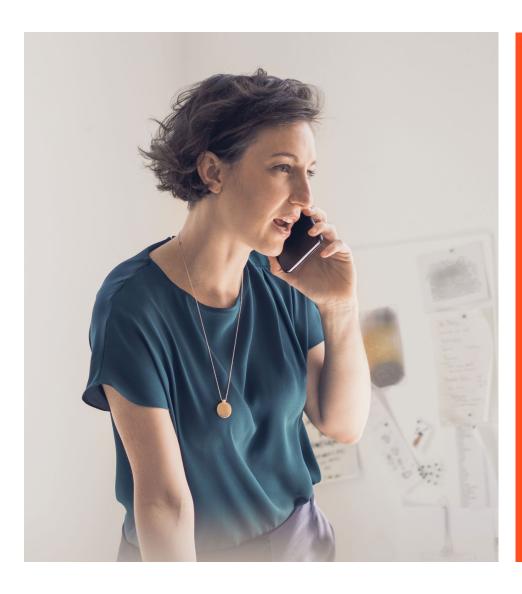
PureConnect APIs facilitate new features and technologies

EMS plans to develop customizations and build integrations—making full use of PureConnect APIs. "What gets us excited is being inventive, really exploiting the endless PureConnect APIs to create a better experience for our clients and their customers," said Staehlin.

"Every time I attend a Genesys conference, I see innovative technologies that are truly jaw-dropping," said Kaldenberg. "Two that we have on our near-term roadmap are SMS delivered via chat and artificial intelligence (AI). For AI, we're brainstorming about how we can use it to guide a customer through a service or tech support scenario. AI is really revolutionary and it's just another example of what Genesys offers that will allow us to transform how customers interact so we can drive a more positive experience."

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Paul Staehlin, Director of Operations, EMS

RESULTS

Saved
hundreds of thousands of dollars annually on IT resources

Ease of use
wins new business

10% increase
in agent efficiency

2.5% reduction
in call abandon rates

50% reduction
in agent turnover

ABOUT GENESYS

Genesys® powers more than 25 billion of the world's best customer experiences each year. Our success comes from connecting employee and customer conversations on any channel, every day. Over 10,000 companies in more than 100 countries trust our #1 customer experience platform to drive great business outcomes. Genesys on-premise and cloud solutions are built to be fluid, instinctive and profoundly empowering. Combining the best of technology and human ingenuity, we work the way you think.

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