



18th Annual Government Contact Centre Summit 2018

A Journey of Replacing Technology Platforms for a Virtualised Contact Centre

Ahead of the [18th Annual Government Contact Centre Summit 2018](#), **Kevin Kelly, Manager Customer Service Delivery, Service SA, Department of the Premier and Cabinet** shares insight how Service SA has set up a virtualised contact centre and the impact this has had on overall staff engagement, performance and customer satisfaction.

What are some of the pros and cons of implementing a virtualised contact centre?

Kevin: Creating a virtual contact centre was a great initiative for our business. In terms of the benefits of implementing this, regional employment was by far the biggest benefit that we have gotten out of it. In a place like South Australia, employment can be a problem. So we have been able to create two thirds of our contact centre workforce based in regional locations. We definitely save costs because we don't have a big city based contact centre, which can be a costly exercise and the staff have really gotten behind it.

But one of the real benefits of a virtualised contact centre has been the ability to create a 'one workforce' approach. This means people in our contact centre channel or our face to face environments have the opportunity to work in either channel. It gives them job diversity and it also helps because when there is demand in one channel we can move resources from one channel to the other to try and prop it up. This only happens in emergency situations but it has worked very well for us."

What steps did you take in your contact centre to seamlessly roll-out a virtual contact centre?

Kevin: Virtualising a contact centre is a really big step and it's not something that you can do effectively in a short space of time. In our case, we did it over a three year period. So we gave the staff that were working in our city based location plenty of time to adjust to the idea that they would be moved out into a metropolitan centre.

We set up our hubs pretty much on north, south and east side of the city and we tried to align people to centres that were close to their home. Over the three year period we gradually, through attrition, started to gradually build the contact centre in regional locations instead of filling positions in the city or metropolitan.

Some people that were working in our contact centre channel were quite happy to move into the face to face channel. So we have a 55 seat contact centre and it is a big change management process, it





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involves a lot of consultation with staff. It was really important to us to get advocates and get them onside with the changes and why we were making the changes. And it worked very well for us.”

How are you using real-time performance to ensure strong adherence reporting?

Kevin: When we went to market recently to upgrade our technology, one of the real things that we were looking for is to have visibility of real-time performance. We knew that our service performance was quite good, but we also knew that there are elements in our business where staff probably weren't performing at the optimal level.

Having real-time performance measures in place gave us that deep dive level of information that we needed to be able to identify where some of the weaknesses were in the business and then manage those people. For many reasons people perhaps were not performing at the level that we wanted. Some of it could have been that they were trying to do their best they needed to be not adhering to their rosters for various reasons. Or there were times where they were struggling answering customer's questions, so they needed to go into follow up mode and ask for help.

Being able to monitor in real-time really gave us the opportunity to keep track of how the business is going and how the queues are going. We found if there was a surge in customer demand, we were able to move resources in. If we found a surge in customer demand was because people weren't really adhering to their rosters, we were able to get in touch with the centre managers and get them to go and have a quiet conversation with the staff and find out why they are not on their rosters.

What types of methods are you using to engage at high levels and get better outcomes from your frontline team?

Kevin: Our business has been going through some significant change management as long as I have been there which is seven years now. There are always things changing. For example, we may be changing policy which changes customer behaviour and we have to bring our staff along that journey.

At the moment, the biggest change that is happening in our business is to try and educate customers on how to interact on the online channels. Of course when you are talking to staff about encouraging customers to move online, the first thing they think about is: what is that going to be doing for my job?

Change management is really important. The best way to go about it is by communicating with staff in several ways. I find that the most effective way is for our leadership team to be out and about to our centres. Engaging with staff and helping them to understand the 'why' and not just what we are doing. It's about listening to their concerns and looking at how we need to address them to effectively adopt the changes.





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In the case of encouraging customers to move into the online space, what myself and the others in the leadership team have been saying to staff is that it is inevitable that people will transact online, we see it in every other part of our lives. So it is going to happen whether we like it or not.

What we are doing as a leadership team is working with other agencies across government to try and bring in other work to supplement as customers migrate into the online channel. In terms of change management it is about the leadership being upfront and engaging with staff but we also supplement that with other things like communicating with our staff through our share website and we put up as much information as we can.

We also send emails out to the staff. We have telephone briefs and staff meetings where they are continually updated on business strategies. Of course when we go through our planning cycle we ensure that we engage our frontline staff in that planning cycle and try and use them to bring them into forums where they can contribute to our future plans. It is all about trying to get them engaged in the direction we are heading.

What is the value of attending the Government Contact Centre Summit 2018?

Kevin: I think it is wonderful to come along to the Government Contact Centre Summit. After being in the business for a long time it is always great to hear about the new technologies that are coming in to the market place. But it is even better to hear the case studies from different contact centres across government and see how they are actually working with the technologies to improve their business and improve the performance of their staff. So the opportunity to actual network and interact with other people is just gold. And the Government Contact Centre Summit is the forum that creates that environment.

Interested in learning more?

Join us at the LARGEST and ORIGINAL Contact Centre Summit for Government Professionals at the **18th Annual Government Contact Centre Summit 2018**.

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