



Ventura Provides Award Winning Customer Support with HEAT

Company Name

Ventura

Industry

Contact Centre

Business Benefits

- Streamlined reporting and issue analysis
- Automated incident escalation
- Knowledge base
- Improved customer satisfaction

Quick Stats

Employees:	3,500
Users:	200
Incidents per week:	1,600

BACKGROUND

Economic pressures have forced companies to review the traditional contact centre model and examine new practices. With an emphasis on performance, contact centres now need to fine-tune operations to become profit-driving centres of excellence. Ventura is one of the UK's leading providers of outsourced customer contact solutions, and has invested time, money and effort to ensure higher levels of employee and customer satisfaction.

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*Lee Madden, Business Service Desk Manager,
Ventura*

Part of Next Plc, Ventura has over 30 years experience of delivering customer support. Starting life as Club 24 Ltd, the credit arm of Hepworths, the company branched out to providing credit services for various major high street retailers and in 1996, was renamed Ventura. The company now provides outsourced customer service management to a

list of clients including O2, Northern Rock, The Woolwich, Freeserve and Thames Water.

SEAMLESS CUSTOMER SERVICE

Ventura acts as the ‘invisible’ service arm of its clients. When a credit agreement on a purchase is made, the retailer’s in-store technology links to Ventura, where credit checks are made and accounts are opened. Ventura then handles the full life cycle of the account, from administering address changes and sending out new cards to collections, where necessary. Ventura also conducts telemarketing campaigns on behalf of many of its clients.

As testament to its success, Ventura has received several industry awards, including Customer Service Call Centre of the Year; CCMA Call Centre Manager of the Year; Global Call Centre Manager of the Year and the Personnel Today Award for Organisational Change.

MULTIPLE HELPDESKS

To provide exceptional customer service on behalf of several clients while remaining invisible to the customer is a difficult challenge. It is particularly tough as each client uses different information systems. So Ventura needs a wealth of IT support know-how and specialists.

Before 1996, Ventura’s support was organised along functional lines putting the emphasis on the user to identify the kind of problem i.e. hardware, software or networking before calling the appropriate support number.



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There was a need for a single all-encompassing Service Desk. Specialised support centres were not efficient. End users could not be relied on to identify the fault properly before seeking help. So the support centres received many calls they couldn't resolve. This situation did little to increase customer satisfaction in addition to causing logistical problems for Ventura. Each support team had its own way of dealing with and tracking queries. With the increasing number of calls, managing all the information looked like an impossible task.

CONTROLLING THE ENVIRONMENT

Ventura chose HEAT to manage the revised Service Desk. “Setting up the department from scratch, we knew we would probably have to make changes to the system as it hit a live environment” said Business Service Desk Manager Lee Madden, “HEAT proved to be straightforward and adaptable; we could make it look how we wanted and update the areas we reported on easily and quickly. It also links to the Lotus email system already in use for reporting calls and faults.”

Although there are still several different IT support teams, instead of providing seven different numbers, Ventura now has one Service Desk for any query.

The Service Desk receives an average of 800 emails and 800 calls each week. While a high proportion of issues are closed at first line, the remaining ‘incidents’ are escalated through HEAT to second line support analysts. HEAT is then used to track incidents and record the actions taken until the call ticket is closed.

When a high priority incident is logged, HEAT produces an email, containing a brief description of the fault and information on who is dealing with it. This automatically informs all IT managers and a number of senior operations managers who could otherwise be unaware of a business critical fault. Email notification is also sent immediately this incident is closed.

CLOSING THE LOOP

Unnecessarily open calls are more than a nuisance for any Service Desk; they take up valuable time and

resources. Ventura's Service Desk, like any other, found while users were quick to report a problem, the same emphasis was never placed on reporting the resolution. This meant vast quantities of incidents were resolved but remained active on the system. Chasing these calls was a laborious task that consumed vast amounts of the Service Desk's time. An email would have to be sent to each user with an open call and enter the details by hand. After this, a journal entry would be logged for each email sent. Using the auto-task facilities in HEAT means the process is now automated, making more time for support analysts to resolve problems, and making the amount of unnecessarily open calls negligible.

COST CENTRE TO PROFIT CENTRE

In making the customer contact centre more efficient and therefore profitable, reporting has come under increased scrutiny. The demand for detailed and timely service level reports can be a huge burden for a Service Desk Manager. HEAT allows Ventura to produce comprehensive reports with ease. Lee Madden commented “It used to take 2-3 days to produce the service level reports each month, but with HEAT it takes approximately half an hour and these monthly service packs contain more detail than was ever possible in the past.”

PROBLEM SOLVING

HEAT's reporting functions are proving beneficial to more than the production of historical service level information. Ventura has recently begun to use HEAT as a problem management tool. By building a knowledge base and analysing common error messages and trends in issues logged, the Service Desk can identify the roots of regular problems. This means faster resolution times and a better service to Ventura's clients. Lee Madden explains, “Once a call has been logged, the Service Desk can search HEAT for previous instances of the same problem to see how they were resolved and exactly who dealt with them.”

The Service Desk has itself become a centre of excellence and one of the many reasons Ventura is regarded as a customer service leader by the contact centre industry.