Teleopti Success Story  National Express

Teleopti WFM helps National Express to keep passengers on the move

National Express is the largest operator of scheduled coach services in the UK, operating high frequency services linking more than 900 destinations across the country, while Kings Ferry and Clarkes of London are long-established providers of private hire and commuter buses. The organisation also runs bus services and is the market leader in the West Midlands, the largest urban bus market outside of London.
Round the clock customer service essential to keeping passengers on the move

Central to the National Express coach operations is a busy contact centre with over 160 agents working complex shift patterns to provide service around the clock to ensure customer response on every day of the year. With the key hours covered from 8am until 10pm, the contact centre ensures that there is always someone available to respond to customer calls not to mention respond to the increasing number of online queries via Facebook, Twitter, email and live chat. Even outside of these core times the night team and the network operations team are available to respond to calls when the main customer service centre is closed.

The centre provides customer service for different aspects of its business, including sales calls to book and change tickets, enquiries about special travel assistance and lost property, plus refund requests and standard complaints. The contact centre also consists of the network control teams, responsible for handling calls concerning operations, whether re-routing vehicles to avoid motorway hold ups or arranging replacement buses or coaches in the event of breakdown.

Agent schedules that meet the needs of the business

For customer service leaders at National Express the challenge is to provide a seamless, responsive service to customers while ensuring that all agents have the required rest breaks and holidays. With staff employed on different contracts, from full-time to part-time and the need for weekend cover, creating schedules that comply with working time regulations, ensuring staff wellbeing and meet the needs of the business is a tricky business.

Until recently the company had been using an incumbent system to schedule staff shifts, however, it required a lot of manual intervention to create and change rotas. The old system lacked the ability to forecast into the future. Recognising the need for a more flexible, automated solution, the National Express management team selected Teleopti WFM. Unify Communications, a Teleopti business partner, initially introduced the WFM solution and managed the implementation working a longside Teleopti. Unify continues to provide first-line support to the National Express team and has been heavily involved in wider transformational projects within the National Express contact centre.

Golam Rabbani, Performance Manager at National Express, explained, “We looked at several web-based applications and sought recommendations for a new software solution. The feedback on Teleopti’s workforce management (WFM) solution
was very positive. It has already proven beneficial by enabling us to speed up the scheduling process and build forecasts based on actual call data.”

Holidays, bad weather and travel delays – all in a day’s work
National Express has 180 staff in total on Teleopti WFM, of which 160 are contact centre agents with the remaining staff being managers and team leaders.

The solution has been invaluable in supporting the company’s aim to deliver outstanding customer service. The contact centre receives between 1800 and 2000 calls a day, increasing to 2500 at peak times, such as holiday times and rush hours, all of which are handled to resolution. Instances of bad weather can significantly increase enquiries both to the Network Control Centre (with breakdowns and traffic problems) and to the main customer services team handling calls about delays in the service.

Fortunately, Teleopti WFM allows for the customer services teams to schedule additional agents who can work from home and be kept in contact by way of the cloud-based solution, therefore providing a seamless service. For some staff this also enables them the flexibility to be available for shifts in addition to their contracted hours.

Last March we had forecast 61,000 calls for the month but with the snow the call numbers increased to over 80,000. We just couldn’t forecast for incidents like these, but with the flexibility that Teleopti WFM offers we have a better chance to manage the increased call numbers.

Lawrie Neal, Resource Planning Analyst.

Teleopti MyTime, the staff portal, also provides a secure way for agents to view their shifts in advance and request changes or swaps. If they have the same skill sets or shift patterns as a colleague, then changes can be easily made on the go, using the mobile app. In other cases, the managers will rerun the shifts, ensuring that changes and holiday requests are accommodated, while checking there is sufficient cover. Using Teleopti WFM to schedule the rotas provides the management team with a long-term view of up to six weeks in advance.

A flexible, automated solution for improved staff schedules
Since implementing Teleopti WFM, National Express has seen considerable benefits, including increased visibility of shift patterns for staff. The automatically updated call data also provides a quick view of call demand against the forecast.

Using the weekly resource forecast within Teleopti WFM enables overtime requests to be planned more cost efficiently. The managers are also using metrics from the solution to manage call rates and agent breaks, to ensure adherence to working time legislation, while minimising the impact on service levels.

With the reports and forecasting features in Teleopti WFM it’s much easier to monitor adherence to working hours. We can plan for holidays and adjust/decline requests or additional leave according to our forecasts. This is particularly useful for key holiday periods. I’m already expecting a huge number of requests for certain days next year and the good news is I am now able to plan well ahead.

Golam Rabbani, Performance Manager

Planning for an even better service delivery
The benefits of using Teleopti WFM don’t stop there - future plans include analysing call metrics and using more of the gamification features to help team managers improve both individual agent and team performance as well as work efficiencies.
Why Teleopti?

“The biggest difference since using Teleopti WFM is that our staff can see their own shifts on their mobiles and request shift changes easily without having to get manager approval. Plus, as a cloud-based solution it gives us the ability to accommodate peaks in demand by keeping in touch with agents and allowing remote working if required. We can track our forecast against actual calls for future planning purposes and base our schedules on previous data. All we have to do is tweak the forecast instead of totally rebuilding the schedule which means a difference of 30 minutes work instead of six hours,” concluded Golam Rabbani.

National Express operates both bus and coach services in the UK. In Bus, National Express is the market leader in the West Midlands – the largest urban bus market outside of London. It also runs bus services in the cities of Coventry and Dundee.

In Coach, it is the largest operator of scheduled coach services in the UK, operating high frequency services linking more than 900 destinations across the country. Kings Ferry and Clarkes of London are long-established providers of private hire and commuter buses.

National Express Group is a leading public transport operator with bus, coach and rail services in the UK, Continental Europe, North Africa, North America and the Middle East. Passengers made 882 million journeys on our services in 2017.

For more information, please visit: www.nationalexpressgroup.com

Unify Communications, a global cloud service integrator, provides hosted and true cloud telecommunications and contact centre solutions. A supplier to worldwide organisations, Unify specializes in the implementation and support of true cloud transformation solutions, having built strong relationships with global vendors. Named 16th in the Deloitte Technology Fast 50, and a shortlisted finalist in the UK Cloud Awards and National Technology Awards, Unify works tirelessly to deliver exceptional standards of support to their customers. The quality of the solutions they offer, the strength of their partner and customer relationships, and their continuing emphasis on quality service means Unify continues to act as a disruptor within the mid-enterprise space. Visit their website at www.unifyus.com

Teleopti, a Calabrio company, helps organizations empower their employees to provide outstanding customer service through our cloud-first workforce management (WFM) software. We are a global team of innovators and experts focusing 100% on WFM, enabling companies with user-friendly automation and optimization of omnichannel forecasting, scheduling, and people management. Teleopti WFM supports companies’ profitability by elevating operational efficiency, employee engagement, and customer experience. Since the start in 1992 we have grown our customer community to 100 countries, collaborating with partners worldwide, and today Teleopti WFM plans and empowers over 500,000 employees. For more information visit www.teleopti.com