



PEARL Agency GmbH
www.pearl.de

Case Study

Excelsis provides outstanding voice portal and outbound IVR services to Europe's largest mail order company for computer software and equipment

Initial Situation

The PEARL organization is Europe's largest mail order company for computer software and equipment. With just a few hundred employees, PEARL realizes impressive total revenue in the nine-figure euro range. In addition to its website, www.pearl.de, the PEARL catalog is the flagship of the company's successful mail order system and is sent to approx. 950,000 homes. More than 4 million direct mail order customers can choose from up to 13,000 products, enabling the the company to market and establish its products quickly and in a targeted manner.

PEARL customers have access to a 24/7 service hotline for orders and customer service.

Challenge

The existing infrastructure in PEARL's Call Center was struggling to handle the company's strong growth. The system was no longer able to assign all of the incoming calls to the appropriate Call Center agents or other appropriate

parties and customers calling the hotline were sometimes kept on hold for long periods of time.

The mail order specialist needed a solution that guaranteed the efficient and customer-friendly processing of all calls. PEARL needed to find a way to ensure all customers could contact an agent and have their calls be taken care of quickly and conveniently, particularly at peak times. Some additional core requirements for the solution were upgradeability, scalability and stability.

Solution

PEARL chose to replace the existing system with a new voice portal from Excelsis and Voxeo. The services were built on the previously available services, but were upgraded during the dialog design to utilize dialog systems featuring natural language. The first stage of completion integrated the main functionality for automated callback management based on Excelsis Callback. The caller has the option to request a callback if there is going to be a long wait. Depending on the call center's current degree of utilization, the callbacks are automatically controlled and carried out through the system as outbound calls.

The PEARL voice portal was developed and customized using Excelsis Prequalification and Excelsis Callback, as well as Voxeo's VoiceObjects Server. The integration and customer-specific adaptations were quickly and easily implemented with the help of standard Excelsis products and the strong development support of VoiceObjects Server. The new system's capacity was expanded considerably, commensurate with PEARL's growing business volume.



“With this new voice portal, we are now able to add another building block for highly efficient processes in the Contact Center. Our customers profit from the shorter wait times.”

Sascha Barth, Call Center Supervisor bei PEARL

Sascha Barth from the Pearl Call Center is very satisfied with the voice portal and Pearl plans to continue to expand on its voice self-service offerings for customers in the future.

PEARL’s new voice portal can be accessed via different phone numbers and, after a short prequalification, directs the caller to the appropriate call center agent. It also approximates how long callers will have to wait until they are directed to an agent. If the expected wait time is longer than a freely definable maximum value the voice portal offers to call the customer back. If customers want to take advantage of this service, they simply state their name and phone number.

The system constantly checks whether the right call center agents are available and, as soon as they are, forwards the callback request with the help of the Excelsis Outbound Dialer. It greets the customer by name and then immediately connects them with an available agent. The customer also has the option to request a callback at a later time or cancel the callback if the issue has been taken care of in the meantime..

“The Pearl solution includes the best of the best of portal technology. Our applications run on Voxeo’s VoiceObjects Phone Application Server which is the best platform on the market for self services based on technical standards and open systems.”

Christian Sauter, CEO Excelsis

For PEARL, one of the advantages of the new phone-based voice portal is improved workload capacity for the call center agents. Peak times can be covered better and lulls can be utilized more effectively using callback management.

The core of the solution is Excelsis Prequalification and Excelsis Callback. These applications contain the business logic for skill-based routing, wait time management and the callbacks. The system was integrated into the existing call center infrastructure with the help of Voxeo’s VoiceObjects Phone Application Server, which serves as the runtime environment for the Excelsis solutions. The administration and configuration of the voice portal system and monitoring and reporting at the business level can be controlled via the Web-based Excelsis Management Console.

Summary

PEARL needed a new voice dialog system to best meet the company’s goal of delivering the best customer service while keeping up with strong company growth.

With the help of standard products from Excelsis and Voxeo, Pearl realized an innovative and future-compliant system that is absolutely state of the art. The system is characterized by its intelligent control mechanisms, customer-friendliness, upgradeability and technical stability.

PEARL’s new system is an excellent example of a voice dialog system that provides considerable added value for the customer, and return its customers, with the help of innovative and intelligent processes. The solution, which is based on open standards, can be upgraded in the long term on a professional as well as a technical level.

Excelsis Case Study – Voice Portal and Outbound IVR for mail order company PEARL

Requirements

- Efficient and customer-friendly call handling
- Outbound dialer for customer call-backs
- Scalable and expandable
- Highly available and stable
- Seamless integration into the existing call center infrastructure
- Platform based on open standards

Highlights

- Intelligent capacity management for call centers depending on expected waiting times
- Automatic callbacks using the outbound dialer which can be controlled by customers
- Gradually expandable architecture
- Open technical and professional standards (e.g. VoiceXML, GrXML, JAVA, SIP, HTTP, SOAP, TCP/IP, SQL)
- Technical integration via Voxeo's VoiceObjects Phone Application Server and mature standard interfaces
- Simple, web-based configuration of all settings
- Comprehensive analytics and reports

About PEARL

The Pearl Group is a consortium of successful companies with focus on trade, marketing and publishing. The activities of all subsidiaries (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, USA and China) are mainly targeted at the computing market. Due to the open structure within the group every company is able to adapt to the national specifics, to act flexible within its field of activity but also to use the multifaceted synergies within the large network. The ability to make extremely quick decisions within the single companies and to a large extent independent and engaged acting employees characterize Pearl as an outstanding flexible and lean structured company network. All these factors allow the Pearl Group, with just a few hundred employees, to make a considerable overall turnover in the nine-digit Euro area.

Pearl expects best prices, highest quality without exception and, almost importantly, boundless fairness. In return, Pearl is not only a customer, but a consistent, competent and fair partner who works engaged for common objectives.

Millions of mail order customers in Europe enable Pearl to market and establish products fast and targeted. Pearl catalogs in runs of millions offer information about the wide range of products. Numerous prizes and honours by trade journals for products or services prove highest possible quality and successful press and public relations. With about 16 million software magazines to be released Europe-wide, multiple distribution channels and further synergy possibilities are available.

About Excelsis

Excelsis is one of the internationally leading suppliers of solutions for self services based on voice and web portals. With software by Excelsis companies from numerous branches automate their contact center processes.

Excelsis offers products and solutions for companies from the sectors of banking, telecommunications, media, industry and trade, traffic and logistic as well as intersectoral software for speech-enabled information systems, customer management and help desk automation.

Customers include + 400 well-known companies in more than 20 countries. Excelsis has partnerships with global technology suppliers.

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Technology and Project Partners in this Project

