

Prometric Delivers World-Class Customer Service with Avaya Voice Portal and Other Avaya Contact Center Applications

Challenge

Prometric's latest challenge was to reduce the cost of maintenance and programming for the IVR system (Genesys® Voice Portal was their existing model) and to improve the reporting capabilities. In the latest upgrade of its contact center solutions, the firm also sought to enhance the survivability and business continuity of its network, while achieving cost efficiencies and enhanced contact center capabilities.

Solution

Communication Manager 5.0; S8730 Server in Baltimore and other Avaya servers and Media Gateways globally; Avaya Voice Portal R4.1; Call Center Elite; Call Management System; Modular Messaging 3.0 and Avaya Message Store; a wide range of Avaya digital and IP phones.

Value Created

- Annual savings of \$23,000 on IVR and other contact center maintenance
- Client satisfaction with customer service delivery and reporting processes
- Ability to create customized routing and scripting for hundreds of clients
- Strong support for cross-training of agents
- Productivity increases for the IT team and contact center
- Reliable performance, survivability, and business continuity
- Scalability for future growth

BALTIMORE, Maryland – Prometric is the leading provider of testing and assessment services for the IT industry and academic institutions, managing more than 10,000 test centers in 163 countries. With 11 contact centers and approximately 600 agents, the firm successfully addresses the unique requirements of hundreds of clients, while at the same time maintaining a consistent branded experience across its global customer service network.

In this case study, we'll look at how the firm has utilized advanced VoIP communication technologies to improve/streamline management and reporting functions related to its automated self-service IVR system. We'll also see how it continually improves its contact center efficiency and productivity, achieves cost savings, and ensures business continuity.

Background

Over the past several years, Prometric has evolved its contact center functionality through several editions of Avaya DEFINITY and now Communication Manager 5.0. The firm's current robust Avaya VoIP telecommunications platform has enabled it to extend contact

center applications globally and to work toward ensuring that the caller experience is consistent across their entire network. Customer-facing communications now offer candidates:

- Internet self-service functionality for initial registration and scheduling of examinations
- Automated self-service via phone, with interactive voice response (IVR) that enables candidates to change appointment dates and/or locations, cancel, receive confirmations, and obtain directions to the nearest testing center or the location where they are testing
- Live-agent contact centers to assist candidates who have issues not resolved by the self-service capabilities, with several contact centers offering service in English and other languages

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- Global help desk which serves the testing centers

Marc Hensens, Manager of Telecommunications for Prometric, explained, *“With this communications structure, we have tried to make the most of the automated self-service capabilities that are available through the Internet and phone services, while at the same time providing accessible live assistance whenever the candidates or testing centers need it. Our Avaya infrastructure supports this approach to customer service because it enables us to manage the customization and workflow in the local centers easily and to leverage our staff across centers when needed.”*

During their latest network upgrade, Prometric sought to improve a number of functional areas through the deployment of Avaya applications that enhance system management and performance. Hensens commented, *“We considered several vendors to handle our latest upgrade project, but the only company that really seemed to understand our needs and demonstrated the ability to meet them was an Avaya Authorized BusinessPartner in our area.”*

Improving IVR efficiency and accuracy of reporting

Recently Prometric identified some critical customer service challenges related not to the Avaya infrastructure, but instead to their Interactive Voice Response (IVR) application (Genesys® Voice Portal), which provided the automated self-service component of their overall system. Specifically,

1. The system was rife with administrative difficulties. It required many servers, and setting up one client required access to various systems. Some screens were

inaccurately labeled, which created numerous problems.

2. Reporting systems were limited and unreliable, and a lot of time was lost in trying to deal with them. Most importantly, they did not provide reporting that was consistent on a global basis. This was critical because multinational clients required consistency in their worldwide reporting.

3. It was difficult to verify that SLAs were being met.

Hensens commented, *“The administrative complexities and high costs to maintain the Genesys system were challenging and time-consuming to deal with, but difficulties related to reporting were the most serious issues that we faced. We found it very hard to generate accurate reports on a global basis and to demonstrate clearly that SLAs were being met.”*

When Prometric sought to improve the system, they found that upgrading the Genesys application would cost 5-10% more than replacing it with an **Avaya Voice Portal** solution.

With Avaya Voice Portal, the IT team has been impressed by the ease of management and the professional level of reporting that is available. As Hensens explained, *“From the management perspective, Avaya Voice Portal is a tremendous timesaver. For example, a simple change function that required a half hour with the Genesys system now takes less than a minute with Avaya Voice Portal. We have calculated that the efficiencies related to all aspects of maintenance will save us over \$17,000 per year.”*

The risk of inaccurate or incomplete reporting was also addressed. Hensens explained, *“With Avaya Voice Portal, all reports are based on*

a single, consolidated server source, which virtually eliminates the risk of inaccuracy. When requested, we can take our customers through the whole reporting process to demonstrate that it is based on actual numbers. This is a much more professional approach than we were able to offer before.”

Leveraging a worldwide network for business continuity

Another goal that Prometric set forth in its latest upgrade of software and systems was enhancing the interconnectivity of its contact centers, in order to achieve cost efficiencies and a high level of survivability and business continuity. By consolidating systems among their contact centers in Maryland and New Jersey, they expect to see savings of over \$6,000 each year on maintenance, plus savings on licensing and software upgrades with the **Avaya Software Support Plus Upgrade** (SS+U) agreement.

Coincidentally, on March 1, 2009, the first day that Prometric’s latest upgrade of software and systems went live, the Baltimore contact center was hit with a massive snowstorm that crippled the East Coast of the U.S., keeping many agents home and causing many candidates to call in for rescheduling.

“This was a trial by fire for our new system,” Hensens commented. “We moved many of the calls to other contact centers, where agents handled the calls until the Baltimore facility was fully staffed again. Our business continuity strategies became a successful reality, and we were very pleased with the results.” Based on the success of this initial experience, Prometric is now working on plans for more around-the-globe routing.

Addressing client requirements with customized routing strategies and agent cross-training

Prometric has also benefitted from its system capabilities for creating custom routing strategies to accommodate the needs of different clients. *“Each of our clients has its own specifications for call routing and handling,”* Hensens explained. *“For example, some clients are very specific in the routing and number of options that a candidate should hear before reaching a live agent. Some will not accept any automated scripts, while others will live by it. The result is a very complex range of needs that must be addressed in our programming and routing.”*

Additionally, there are different skill sets required for the IT and academic clients, and it’s very important that agents have the right skill sets available when they talk to candidates from either side. Prometric is actively addressing this through the cross-training of many agents.

“With more than 300 toll-free numbers coming into the Baltimore contact center alone, we needed an application that could handle the volume and complexities of our call handling processes,” Hensens stated. *“We are very pleased with Avaya Call Center Elite, because it enables us to support the routing required for the unique needs of our hundreds of clients, as well as the cross-training of agents to handle our areas of specialty. It is clearly the best multi-skilling system available on the market today.”*

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Enhancing productivity and call center performance

Prometric’s IT team has also been extremely pleased with the information and management tools that are available to monitor and analyze contact center operations, showing where improvements are needed and where it is necessary to take fast, effective action. The **Avaya Call Management System** enables supervisors to monitor and move multiple agents easily, using the familiar PC environment of the Microsoft Windows platform. There is customized threshold and exception alerting, which can help contact center managers rapidly respond to changes within the contact center.

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Hensens concluded, “The Avaya IP environment is one that we feel very comfortable working in because it is so well integrated, flexible, and easy to manage. The Avaya applications are so comprehensive, we don’t seem to need any third-party applications. It’s exciting to think about the future and all the ways that we can continue to enhance our contact center functionality within the basic infrastructure that we have established. Most importantly, our clients are very well satisfied with the level of customization that we can provide, the reporting that is supplied, and the overall performance of our communication systems.”

Prometric is also engaged in a discovery process with their Avaya Authorized BusinessPartner that will further enhance their use of the Voice Portal application. They are actively looking at future possibilities for:

- Additional use of mobility options such as Extension to Cellular and home office setups
- Multi-channel capabilities
- Additional workflow management (WFM) projects

Learn More

For more information on how Avaya Intelligent Communications can take your enterprise from where it is to where it needs to be, contact your Avaya Client Executive or a member of the Avaya Authorized BusinessPartner program, or visit “Do Your Research” at www.avaya.com.

All statements in this Case Study were made by Marc Hensens, Manager of Telecommunications for Prometric.

APPLICATIONS, SYSTEMS, AND SERVICES

- Communication Manager 5.0
- (2) S8730 Servers at Baltimore locations with (11) G650 Media Gateways
- (1) S8300 Server (IP phones plus one E1) in Seoul, Korea, with a G350 Media Gateway
- (1) S8500 Server in New Jersey – ESS mode with G650 Media Gateway
- Avaya Call Center Elite
- Avaya Call Management System
- Avaya Voice Portal R4.1
- Modular Messaging 3.0
- Avaya Message Store
- Avaya digital and IP phones
- Avaya Global Services
- Avaya Software Support plus Upgrade (SS+U)

ABOUT PROMETRIC

Prometric, a wholly-owned subsidiary of ETS, is the recognized global leader in technology-enabled testing and assessment services. Its comprehensive suite of services, including test development, test delivery and data management capabilities, allows clients to develop and launch global testing programs as well as accurately measure program results and data. Prometric reliably delivers and administers more than seven million tests a year on behalf of 450 clients in the academic, professional, healthcare, government, corporate and information technology markets. It delivers tests flexibly via the Web or by utilizing a robust network of more than 10,000 test centers in 163 countries.

ABOUT AVAYA

Avaya is a global leader in enterprise communications systems. The company provides unified communications, contact centers, and related services directly and through its channel partners to leading businesses and organizations around the world. Enterprises of all sizes depend on Avaya for state-of-the-art communications that improve efficiency, collaboration, customer service and competitiveness.

For more information please visit www.avaya.com.