

Making Efficiency Scalable for Messagemail's Telephone Answering Service

Messagemail is a flexible virtual office service provider offering a professional telephone answering service to businesses that need a reliable, efficient point of contact for customers and future prospects.

Based in London, the company is proud of its "answered within three rings" guarantee and its in-house call centre, where calls are answered with a personal touch by Messagemail's close-knit team. The telephone answering service has grown increasingly popular, but for Messagemail that popularity itself eventually became a problem.

Data Dependency in Telephone Answering Services:

More businesses use telephone answering services now than at any other time in history. Many of Messagemail's clients are small to medium sized businesses that need a telephone answering service to:

- Help their small business make a big professional impact
- Deal with an overflow of calls at busy times
- Cover telephone reception duties when the client's own operators are on leave
- Provide a professional telephone response to their customers without the expense of full-time receptionists

All of this means that Messagemail's top priority is to make every call a seamless experience, so that the caller feels they're speaking to a member of the client company's team and not a faceless call centre operator halfway around the world. To fulfil that mission, Messagemail requires instant access to the pertinent information. From the moment a call comes in, Messagemail's operators need know which client company the call is for, how to greet the caller, how the client would like calls to proceed, and what data to report after the call has been handled.

Problems of Speed and Scalability:

Using Microsoft Outlook to handle all their client contact data meant that the Messagemail team's call answering efficiency depended on how fast they could find the caller's details within Outlook. "It was limited and left a lot to the operator," said Tara Vorster, Messagemail's account manager. "Scripts had to be manually searched for within the database and opened manually. With an increasing client base and call volume, the manual element was getting more and more problematic. In addition, the billing cycle was taking too long."

Any telephone answering service will sooner or later reach a point when they can't take on more clients without sacrificing efficiency – the systems they used at the business' launch simply can't cope with increasing client numbers and increasing call

volume. By the start of 2013, Messagemail had reached that critical moment when the company's growth became an obstacle to its effectiveness.

Outlook wasn't fast enough to maintain the high standards of call answering efficiency Messagemail intended to deliver for its clients. The more popular the telephone answering service became, the harder it was to track and recall all the right data in the short time it takes for a phone to ring three times.

"If we had stuck with the old system, we would not have been able to grow our business as fast and efficiently as we are now."

– Tara Vorster, Messagemail Account Manager

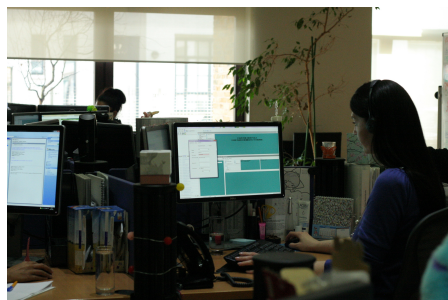
Discovering a More Effective Call Answering Solution:

After receiving recommendations from more than one trusted business acquaintance to explore nSolve's answering service software, Messagemail decided in February 2013 that it was time to make a change for the better. nCall is an automated software solution for call answering services, created by nSolve to alleviate the strain that time-sensitive information retrieval places on telephone answering service providers.

"Call scripting software is something that we had been considering for a number of years and after much research as well as positive feedback from industry peers, nCall seemed a perfect fit", Vorster said.

Messagemail found the switch to nCall simple and non-disruptive. "The bulk of the work was collating our client information and instructions from Outlook into a workable database for importing to nCall", Vorster recalled. The collation process went smoothly, though given the number of clients Messagemail already handled, it was somewhat time-consuming to bring all the Outlook data together manually into a standardised report. Had Messagemail originally used Microsoft Excel or Access for their client data, the process might have been much swifter.

"Once the data was collated into Excel, the actual import was very simple", Vorster said. "We also timed a telephony upgrade to coincide with the migration to nCall". Messagemail's operators found the nCall software "very straightforward to use... the team picked it up almost instantaneously". She describes nCall's support provision during and after implementation as "exemplary - Leo and Paul always respond almost instantaneously with either a solution or a promise to have one soon".



Improved Efficiency and a Better Customer Experience:

With nCall, the process of receiving calls and pulling up the information necessary to answer each call appropriately became much faster and simpler.

Messagemail gave each client a Direct Dial-In telephone number to which the client could forward calls when they wanted Messagemail to answer. Some clients used the Direct Dial-In number only at specific times, while others chose to give the number to all their clients and leads as the first point of contact. When calls arrived at Messagemail, the new nCall software noted both the caller's telephone number and the Direct Dial-In number to which the call was placed or forwarded.

nCall then checked which client had been allocated that unique Direct Dial-In number, and immediately displayed that client's details on the Messagemail operator's computer screen. With all the necessary details in front of them, operators were able to answer each call as swiftly and knowledgeably as though they were a full-time member of the client company's reception team.

After the operator handled the call according to the client instructions on-screen – taking a message, transferring the call to the appropriate member of the client's team, or completing other tasks such as taking online orders or support requests – nCall automatically recorded the details of the call outcome according to the client's requirements and forwarded the recorded information via email, fax or SMS.

Impressive Results from Day One:

Messagemail was now able to complete the cycle of call handling and reporting with greatly reduced effort on the operator's part, and provide a smoother caller experience at the same time.

The first difference Vorster noticed after switching to nCall was, she said, "streamlining of the whole call handling process, saving significant time on call handling and almost completely eliminating the margin for operator 'human error'."

This massive reduction of the operator error rate was brought about by nCall's Caller History feature, which Messagemail's team love, as well as several other error-reducing features. "Caller History provides not only spellings of names but also contact numbers for messages, and it is immediately apparent –if the Caller Line Identification [caller ID] is not withheld— when one is speaking with a frequent caller," Vorster explained.

She cited nCall's ease of detail capture, call transfer and message sending among the reasons for the impressive boost in Messagemail's telephone answering performance, as well as the way nCall automatically 'pops' the relevant data on to the operator's screen. "Screen popping has been a very useful tool, especially where the greeting is lengthy or not the norm, or contains unusual company names."



Messagemail's telephone operators also appreciate nCall's Form Designer, Temporary Call Actions, and handy collection and reporting of call and operator statistics, all of which make Messagemail's service faster, more productive and more accountable.

Ongoing Excellence, Made Easy:

Almost a year later, Messagemail remains very pleased with the results of the switch to nCall answering service software. Vorster reports that Messagemail's in-house call centre operators enjoy using nCall and all agree that it makes their work much easier.

Clients and callers are also more satisfied with their experience of using Messagemail, which means that customer retention is now easier both for Messagemail and for its clients. As Vorster explained, "nCall has made it possible for us to provide a significantly more efficient experience for both the caller and client, as well as maximising outcome on short call durations."

The flexibility and scalability of nCall means that the wide variety of Messagemail's clients poses no problem. "On the rare occasions where the field or facility we needed has not been available, we add the instructions to nCall's Notes section. The message form designer facility allows for a lot of client-specific fulfilment," Vorster said. Looking back, the team at Messagemail are relieved that they will never again need to search through Outlook for the data they need to answer each incoming call correctly within three rings.

Asked what path of action Messagemail would recommend to other telephone answering services who are struggling to keep up with a growing client base and increasing call volume, Vorster doesn't hesitate:

"We have found nCall to be a game changing addition to the infrastructure at Messagemail. Anyone considering using nCall should most certainly make the investment, they will not regret it."

Client: Messagemail Ltd

Industry: Virtual Office Services

Number of employees: Fewer than 25

Challenge: Scaling a telephone answering service

Solution: nSolve Call Answering Service software

About nSolve:

The nCall answering service software is developed and supplied by nSolve. For further information please visit www.nsolve.com.