



Nortel Networks Symposium Call Center Server Links PC Connection to Excellent Customer Service

PC Connection directly markets Information Technology (IT) products to businesses and consumers worldwide. The company's outstanding commitment to its customers is reinforced with Nortel Networks* as its single vendor solution for strides in eBusiness and CRM, ensuring world-class technology to advance a Return on Relationship* with PC Connection's vendors and customers alike. PC Connection needed a contact center solution that could filter rapidly increasing call volumes to 1,250 specialized agents through networked locations and provide skill-based routing in five locations across the United States. With Nortel Networks Symposium* Call Center Server, inbound callers are immediately linked to the most appropriate representative to best serve customer needs. Achieving this impeccable level of efficiency saves PC Connection money and reduces the number of transferred calls and customers on hold, decreasing customer frustration and hang-ups. The company is able to provide prompt, seamless, and personalized communication to its growing customer base, improving customer loyalty and Return on Relationship.

"Before, it took days to receive valuable contact center reports through interoffice mail. Now, we can generate impromptu reports within seconds. This tool improves company-wide efficiency and productivity, enabling supervisors to instantly change agent skill-set assignments as customer traffic fluctuates with the shopping season, and as marketing campaigns draw attention to new products that are available through PC Connection."

Keith Wallace, Director of Telecommunications, PC Connection

PC Connection is a leading marketer of eBusiness solutions for home consumers, small and medium sized businesses (SMBs), educational institutions, and government agencies. The company offers a broad selection of over 100,000 brand name products, providing toll-free technical support, one-minute online ordering, custom-configured systems, and overnight delivery to millions

of customers. By providing award-winning customer service and support to a large and loyal customer base, PC Connection has differentiated itself from competitors and established solid partnerships with business entities.

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"With specialized 800 numbers, our customers are assured of speaking to the correct agent on first contact. As a result, our hold times have decreased from 45 minutes to 5 minutes, while our CRM initiatives through relationship building have been significantly improved."

Keith Wallace, Director of Telecommunications, PC Connection

PC Connection at a Glance

Merrimack, New Hampshire USA
<http://www.pcconnection.com>
Employees: 1,600
2000 Revenue: \$1.4 billion
NASDAQ: PCC

The company recently received the highest ranking of any computer reseller on *PC Magazine's* most recent list of the "100 Most Influential Companies in the Computer Industry," and has received *PC World Magazine's* "World Class Award" nine of the past 11 years. To remain a top marketer of IT products and a leader in providing personalized sales and service to its customers, PC Connection required a bolstered level of customer service to accommodate its recent influx of mid-sized business customers. With its five contact centers receiving nearly 50,000 calls per day, the company needed a contact center platform that was equipped to sufficiently handle the increased call traffic. As Director of Telecommunications, Keith Wallace explained, "The advanced functionality and flexibility

of Nortel Networks Symposium Call Center Server gives us the ability to increase the bandwidth of our sales, support, and financial customer services. In doing so, it allows us to keep up with the fast-paced dynamic environment created by increasing customer demands."

Initially operating contact center activity from Nortel Networks Meridian* Max, PC Connection experienced customer demands regarding anything from specific product offerings to billing questions, and sought to introduce skill-based routing with Symposium Call Center Server. The company rolled out the solution in a record time of five days with the help of Nortel Networks knowledgeable support team. A few years later, PC Connection quickly upgraded its system to network its five contact center facilities and maximize the company's human resources. "Having our five contact centers networked, we are able to hire qualified people all over the country and send customer calls to them depending on the most appropriate expertise," said Wallace. "With Symposium Call Center Server, calls from around the world are automatically sent to the technical support representatives."

The Nortel Networks solution enables real-time reports via e-mail or network folders, providing PC Connection with a report distribution system that facilitates company-wide communication. "Before, it took days to receive valuable contact center reports through interoffice mail," explained Wallace. "Now, we can generate impromptu reports within seconds. This tool improves company-wide efficiency and productivity, enabling supervisors to instantly change agent skill-set assignments as customer traffic fluctuates with the shopping season, and as marketing campaigns draw attention to new products that are available through PC Connection."

A unique dimension of PC Connection's contact center platform is the personalized hotlines that can be used to handle specific business partners' promotions and expedite customer support issues. When a computer manufacturer wants to promote a sale, for example, PC Connection has the ability to rapidly install a specialized 800 number through Nortel Networks Symposium Call Center Server. These numbers ensure that all customer calls are routed to a particular group of agents with the skill set to handle the specialized traffic. Additionally, repeat customers can be assigned a personal 800 number that will immediately route them to their specific account manager. Because many clients request these hotlines be highly customized with greetings and promotions, an advanced level of programming is necessary. "The ease of creating new scripts on Symposium Call Center Server gives us the flexibility to offer a unique service, helping us fulfill our partners' strategic requests and generate additional revenue," said Wallace.

Solution Set

- **Hardware Platform: Compaq, HP, and IBM**
- **Operating System: NT and OS400**
- **Client Operating System: Windows 98 or 2000**
- **Database: Sequel and Oracle**
- **eBusiness Solutions: Symposium Call Center Servers, Symposium NCC, Symposium Web Client, (3) Meridian Option 81C; (2) Meridian Option 61C**
- **Users: 1,400**
- **Monthly Volume: 330,000 outgoing calls; 400,000 incoming calls**

From Meridian Max to Symposium Web-Based Client

PC Connection has 1,250 agents and uses Nortel Networks Symposium Call Center Server to monitor the company's five contact centers. These agents utilize over 60 skill sets, and have nearly doubled the rate at which the contact centers are able to handle calls, substantially improving their customers' PC Connection experience. "Nortel Networks Symposium Call Center Server helps us direct a range of customer interactions through skills-based routing that was not possible before," said Wallace. "With specialized 800 numbers, our customers are assured of speaking to the correct agent on first contact. As a result, our hold times have decreased from 45 minutes to 5 minutes, while our CRM initiatives through relationship building have been significantly improved."

PC Connection's confidence in the quality of Nortel Networks products and services is evidenced by the company's active pursuit of future business ventures with the CRM and eBusiness products as the single-vendor solution. PC Connection is looking at Nortel Networks Symposium Web Client, and foresees a significant reduction in time spent updating desktops with new versions of client programs. "With Symposium Web Client, we will significantly lower the total cost spent on client maintenance by having everything consolidated on a single network server," said Wallace. "We have been a loyal customer to Nortel Networks for 10 years, and we plan to maintain our relationship with them as we look to expand our CRM initiatives in the future to consistently generate more loyal customers."

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About Us

Nortel Networks eBusiness Solutions provides the applications, services, and infrastructure that enable companies to create a high performance eBusiness environment. High performance eBusiness combines the power of the Internet with corporate assets, suppliers, and partners to deliver more profitable and seamless customer experiences. By using Nortel Networks solutions to deliver superior customer service across all touch points, our customers can achieve the highest Return on Relationship*. For more information, please call +1 800 4NORTEL (U.S. and Canada). For all other areas, contact the sales office nearest you, or visit us on the Web at www.nortelnetworks.com.

Challenges:

- **A call center platform with skill-based routing to handle increasing call volumes to the respective sales or service agent, thereby increasing CRM initiatives**
- **Reporting capabilities to improve company-wide knowledge and communications regarding internal departments and client accounts**
- **A networked contact center solution to instantaneously share reporting and human resources across remote locations**
- **Real-time CRM solution capable of easily facilitating and modifying business partner promotional campaigns**

Solution:

- **Replace Meridian Max with Symposium Call Center Server in a networked environment to route incoming calls appropriately and provide timely service to all customers**
- **Beta testing of Web Client 4.0 to reduce client maintenance costs**

Results:

- **Specialized call routing reduces customer wait time by 75 percent and doubles number of customer interactions each agent can handle, increasing customer loyalty and business profitability**
- **Customized hotlines queued to appropriate agent by skill set fulfill business partners' needs, and create additional revenue opportunities**
- **Instant networked reporting capabilities improve company-wide data sharing and operational efficiency**



<http://www.nortelnetworks.com>

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