



MicroAutomation Speech-Enabled IVR Solution Reduces Operating Costs for National Government Services

Background

National Government Services, one of the Anthem, Inc. companies, is a Federal Government contractor responsible for processing Medicare claims for healthcare facilities and practitioners in several states for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The company is headquartered in Indianapolis, IN and has offices and claim processing contact centers in seven states that span the Northeast and Midwest regions of the United States. On an annual basis National Government Services (NGS) processes over 208 million claims and makes benefit payments of \$87.9 billion. NGS receives an average of over a million calls per day but also handles peak call demand days such as Mondays after holidays.

Challenge

CMS mandates monthly performance standards for all of the Medicare administrative contractors including NGS. These include an All-Trunk busy rate of less than 5% per month for the incoming lines. These mandated performance standards translate into 95% of callers completing their call the first time and 80% of callers experiencing no appreciable wait times.

In addition, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) mandates that patient information only be released to authorized users with a need to know to meet privacy guidelines. As a result, detailed caller identification information must be collected from callers including a National Provider Identifier (NPI), a Provider Transaction Access Number (PTAN), and the patient's Medicare number, birth date, gender, and name to ensure privacy and claim accuracy. These regulations must extend the length of each call and complicate the information systems requirements for identification matching since complex alphanumeric account numbers are used to identify healthcare providers and facilities and patient names can be difficult to recognize using standard technology.

NGS determined that major enhancements and new automation technologies had to be incorporated into their existing legacy contact center infrastructure to meet the challenging CMS and HIPAA requirements. The new enhanced contact center solution needed to be implemented in a very short time frame to meet the anticipated call volumes from new jurisdictions NGS was expected to support.

Solution

In the 1990s, MicroAutomation had implemented a Computer Telephony Integration (CTI) solution for one of NGS' acquired companies, Empire Medicare Services. When NGS was faced with this new challenge, they turned to MicroAutomation for guidance and assistance based on a history of service and reliability of MicroAutomation solutions.



MicroAutomation's recommendation was to implement an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) solution designed to make customer self-service easy to use, expedite the processing of claims, and relieve the customer service representatives from the rapidly increasing call volumes. Overall, the system had to be effortless for customers to use and provide information faster than the call center.

MicroAutomation designed a speech-enabled Interactive Voice Response (IVR) solution that provided the ability for callers to be quickly authenticated by an automated system and perform 9 common eligibility and claim status transactions without the need to speak to a customer service representative. The solution leverages Advanced Speech Recognition (ASR) and Text-to-Speech (TTS) technologies from Nuance to meet the stringent authentication standards required by HIPAA.

The solution was developed using VoiceXML, an open standards IVR application programming language that enables the application to run on any IVR platform giving NGS flexibility in selecting the IVR platform best suited for their environment. Access to the backend mainframe and database systems is implemented via web services allowing the IVR application to support new backend systems when available and enabling the backend interfaces to be reused by other solutions such as NGS' web portal. The solution also includes a comprehensive reporting package to track and record each transaction completed by the caller and measure the effectiveness of the IVR.

Results

MicroAutomation's speech-enabled IVR solution was designed, developed, and operational within five months allowing National Government Services to immediately handle a 30% increase in call volume and, for the first time ever, handle the maximum call load that NGS experiences during "Black Monday", the term that NGS affectionately refers to the Monday after the long Thanksgiving holiday weekend. The self-service technology has reduced operating costs, improved service levels by virtually eliminating call blockage, and has significantly reduced wait time when callers require a customer service representative.

More importantly, the automated solution has been able to meet the stringent HIPAA privacy standards incorporating 6 points of authentication and setting the standard by which CMS would require all Medicare Contractors to comply. In addition, the solution complies with the Federal Government's multi-tier architecture guidelines requiring applications to be layered into a Presentation layer, Business Logic Layer, and Data Layer for additional data security.

"MicroAutomation delivered a great solution on budget, on time and under tight time constraints. The company's professionals were reliable and lived up to their commitments"

- Elisa Elderbaum
National Government Services

About MicroAutomation

MicroAutomation is a full service integrator of call center solutions and provides a broad range of professional services and products. MicroAutomation solutions are based on creating an effortless caller experience through Speech-enabled Interactive Voice Response (IVR), improving live agent efficiency utilizing Computer Telephony Integration (CTI), and providing analytics tools to report, manage and refine each solution element to maximize the overall performance of your call center.

MicroAutomation also offers contact center products and professional services including:

- The Award Winning Call Center Millennium™ Solution Series
- Complete solution design
- Configurable and custom application development
- Turnkey implementation
- Comprehensive customer support
- GSA Advantage IT Schedule: GS-35F-0419L

Summary of Results

- 82% self-service utilization rate in the IVR
- ROI achieved in 4 months
- 24-Hour availability for callers
- Reduced operating costs and increased service levels through faster completion of calls
- Enhanced call tracking for transaction-based reporting and continuous improvement of the solution

Customer service has improved dramatically for NGS with callers now having the option to perform transactions 24-hours a day using the new system. And, with transaction-based reporting, NGS is now able to track the usability of the IVR and report not only information on completed calls required by CMS Service Level Agreements but also information on completed transactions, a far more important measure of the effectiveness of the self-service solution.

MicroAutomation's technical depth, business process expertise, and extensive network of partners expedited the implementation of the new NGS IVR solution. MicroAutomation implemented best-of-breed products and provided customization and integration services centered on National Government Services' needs, culminating in a world-class contact center solution.

Since the original deployment of the solution in 2003, NGS has been able to move the IVR application to four different IVR platforms with ease allowing them to always utilize best-of-breed technologies without worrying about dependency of the application on any one platform. The flexibility and scalability of the solution has allowed NGS to grow the solution and span multiple sites to meet geographically separated redundancy initiatives for their contact center operations.

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