



Back office specialists become customer experts at Bassetlaw District Council

London, UK, 15th September 2010. Bassetlaw District Council has invested in the Macfarlane CallPlus suite of contact management, self-service and business insight applications to deliver an innovative solution to improve service quality.

Installed in May 2010 across three separate locations, the Macfarlane software:

- Now handles part of the high demand customer calls into the Council, providing an automated greeting before intelligently passing callers through to appropriately-skilled advisors
- Manages all switchboard calls
- Delivers detailed call handling management information
- Enables remotely-located council tax staff to handle additional council tax and debt recovery calls; and customer services agents in the Council's One Stop Shops to take taxation and switch board calls
- Records calls and provides easy access to recordings for monitoring purposes, clarifying customer concerns and delivering service improvement

The installation of the Macfarlane CallPlus system has already had a dramatic impact on service operations – enabling the Council to get trained agents to waiting calls much more flexibly. While the Council's previous telephone system was capable of rudimentary tasks (such as transferring calls, managing direct dial calls and voicemails) it was not smart enough for modern customer call handling. A percentage of calls to Council Tax and some other key departments were not being answered to the council's high standards and real time peak flow management information was in need of improvement.

In addition, the Council had no workforce scheduling capabilities. So when, at busy times, the switchboard function would need more staff, Bassetlaw Council had no 'dashboard' information to make real-time scheduling decisions.

CallPlus has addressed all of these issues and played a part in meeting broader Council objectives as Andrew Burton, Bassetlaw District Council's Head of Revenues and Customer Service explains. "As well as making efficiency savings in our Revenues and Customer areas, we have been looking to improve accessibility and Right First Time contacts with the Council's front line customer service personnel".

"In 2010, for example, we've made significant efficiency gains in the Customer areas and in Revenues through document management implementation, process change and cashier closure. This has freed up trained customer staff to take Switchboard and Council Tax calls. These have always been high volume areas and we believe that, by enabling us to get more trained advisors to phones at busy times, the new system will help us reduce time to answer. It is important that customers know that we are there to take their calls."

"We aren't looking to move to a centralised contact centre operating model" he adds. "So when it came to a technology solution we were looking for one that could intelligently and flexibly route calls to existing call handling groups as well as help us deploy additional resources to answer calls without employing extra staff or needing larger offices to accommodate new customer service teams."

"Macfarlane's CallPlus delivers these capabilities with a great deal of flexibility. For example, Advisors can now log in to take peak time calls, provide lunch cover – and even log in from home. Managers also have the flexibility to access call recordings to clarify customer concerns and deliver service improvement before they turn into complaints. They use CallPlus for training and monitoring by listening to a random set of calls and by reviewing calls and issuing instructions to staff if, for example, a mystery shopping call alleges that no corporate greeting had been given."

"The arrival of CallPlus has even led to a change in office layouts" he says "with Council Tax staff delighted about how quiet the processing side of the office has become. Yet staff reserve the highest praise for the ability of the system to allocate calls to agents in turn, meaning there's never any arguments over who has had their unfair share of calls!"

In the future, Andrew expects to use additional capabilities within the CallPlus product suite and plans to bring the Benefits department into the Council's customer revolution soon.

“We would like to congratulate Bassetlaw District Council on their innovative solution and fantastic achievements” said William Gray, Managing Director, Macfarlane.

About Macfarlane

For the past decade Macfarlane has been helping local authorities to put in place effective communication strategies and technology to transform the way they engage with citizens.

More local authorities have deployed Macfarlane applications than any other solution to enable them to establish centralised citizen-focused contact centres, connecting each and every citizen with the most effective resource to deal with their enquiry.

Macfarlane is now enabling local authorities to evolve to the next generation of citizen interaction embracing multiple media and self-service applications to better serve the Now Generation Citizen. <http://www.macfar.co.uk/>

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