



Accelerating Penetration Rates, Productivity, and Payments

International Auto Manufacturer

→ Case Study: First-Party Collections

An international manufacturer of premium vehicles wanted to improve its early-stage collections processes by increasing its calling capacity and account penetration. The challenge was to achieve higher calling levels in a cost-effective manner, without adding new staff. Through a three-month pilot, the company proved that SoundBite automated voice messaging helps first-party collections teams accelerate performance while putting the brakes on expenses.

The Business Challenge

The financial services call center employs 250 agents, of which only 25 are dedicated to collecting on 30+ day past due accounts. All other agents are focused on product and service sales. In 2006, the burden on the collections team was increased when they were asked to begin handling 15-29 day past due accounts. Previously, these accounts were handled by a separate team utilizing dialer technology. Limited calling capacity, however, meant that most of the early debtors received only one or two call attempts per week. This team was reassigned to sales activities.

After conducting a detailed business analysis, the managers concluded that there wasn't any spare capacity within its existing collections group. They needed an innovative way to increase calling capacity and penetration rates within the 15-29 day group without hiring additional resources.

The SoundBite Solution

The financial services group teamed up with SoundBite Communications to conduct an outbound calling pilot utilizing automated voice messaging (AVM) to communicate with the 15-29 day segment. A key goal of the pilot was to determine whether or not AVM could help increase the number of self-payments made through the company's existing payment system. This was important because the company wanted to increase penetration rates and payments, but not live agent connections. At the same time, self-payment is often preferred by the company's affluent customers.

The company selected SoundBite for its effectiveness, pricing, and flexibility. SoundBite's usage-based pricing ensures that call centers are never locked into expensive contracts and that expenses scale with seasonal fluctuations.



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With SoundBite in place, outbound call attempts were immediately increased to three times, five days a week. The script encouraged debtors to make payments using their touchtone keypads. The agent transfer option was strategically positioned late in the calling script to encourage automated payments.

Results

The three month pilot proved that automated voice messaging significantly improved the first-party collections processes. SoundBite helped the financial services group:

- Increase account penetration rates to 80-90%. With SoundBite, the company could reach out to debtors they had never contacted before.
- Reduce costs by nearly 90% as compared to the use of live agents
- Improve calling capacity. The company estimates an increase of over 1,200% as compared to live agents.
- Control inbound call levels. For the entire pilot calling campaign, the agent transfer rate was less than 1%. This was considered a major success in the overall campaign.

With the success of the pilot, the auto manufacturer is moving forward with AVM as a core component of its collections and customer contact strategies. In fact, SoundBite's cost-effectiveness and flexibility actually enabled the company to put the pedal to metal and expand its use of AVM beyond the pilot within its existing budget.

About SoundBite Communications

SoundBite Communications is a leading provider of automated voice messaging solutions that are delivered through a Software as a Service (SaaS) model. Organizations rely on SoundBite's on-demand solution to initiate and manage customer contact campaigns across a variety of collections, customer care, and marketing processes. SoundBite helps organizations increase revenue, enhance customer service and retention, and secure payments, and can improve contact center efficiency by increasing agent productivity and enabling agentless interactions. The company's multi-tenant customer communications platform is used by organizations across a number of industries, including collection agencies, financial service providers, retailers, telecommunications providers, and utilities. SoundBite's service has the capacity to initiate more than 14 million calls each day, and in 2006 clients used the service to place nearly one billion calls.