

CASE STUDY



The customer

Dial-a-Cab is the largest black cab co-operative operating in central London with a fleet of 2,200 drivers and an annual turnover in excess of £42 million.

The solution

ASC MARATHON TDI communication recording platform, fully integrated with existing ASPECT ACD, for bulk recording of all customer and driver interactions and call tagging with additional information for swift retrieval.

The benefits

- Increased speed of responsiveness to customers
- Increased customer retention and satisfaction
- Improved overall business efficiency

Dial-a-Cab, the largest black cab co-operative operating in central London, continues to lead the field in applying technology to achieve service excellence.

It all began in the back of a cab 50 years ago, when four taxi drivers decided to start a business together. They could not possibly have envisaged it growing into what Dial-a-Cab is today, the largest black cab co-operative operating in central London, with a fleet comprising of approximately 2,200 drivers and an annual turnover in excess of £42 million. Nor in 1953 could they have imagined the enormous advancements of computer technology, particularly in the field of radio communications, and how Dial-a-Cab was to set the pace in 1989 by pioneering the first fully computerised communications system to be used in a licensed taxi, at a cost of nearly £4 million. Since then, the company has continued to lead the field in applying technology to achieve service excellence. It became the first taxi company in the world to install in all its taxis a completely new touch screen MDC (Mobile Data Computer). It was again first in developing a unique real-time, taxi booking system, which allows anybody with access to the Internet, even with a laptop sitting in an aeroplane, the ability to book a taxi on account or with a credit card. They had again another first in providing an Internet Portal for their clients' authorised personnel to extract invoice details and management information on-line in real-time.

ON-TIME, ALWAYS

"We are committed to provide the highest level of service in the field and this is what makes us stand out from the competition." stated Keith Cain, Board Member, Driver Operations Manager. "You would be amazed by the expected level of service in this business. When we first introduced

our computerised system, the biggest complaint was that we were arriving too quickly!" With over 95% of Dial-a-Cab business coming from 10,000 corporate accounts, including the top 20 London companies, on-time pick up and drop off is of paramount importance. And customers, in this sector, are quite vocal and ready to complain. "It is a very common occurrence to have customers saying that they ordered a cab for 10 a.m. where your records show 9 a.m. instead. Our worst case would be the inability to make contact with a customer at a given address because of wrong address details." said Cain, "When this occurred, we always had to give the customer the benefit of the doubt. Each 'misunderstanding' was costing us money and could have lost us customers, too. Hence we quickly identified a clear need for adopting a voice recording solution in our control centre".

AT THE HEART OF A BLACK CAB

Dial-a-Cab control centre is at the heart of the company's business. The control centre provides the link between the customers and the independent drivers, with 15,000 calls handled daily by 105 agents on shifts to provide a 24 hours x 7 days service. The company has a brilliant agent retention track record, currently a rare instance for contact centres. Most of the agents have been with the company for quite a long time, with some of them having reached over 20 years of service. A co-operative and team building culture is promoted on the floor, where competition amongst groups is not encouraged and away-days playing paintball with the CEO are regularly organised.



CASE STUDY Dial-a-Cab



"In our business, what differentiates us from our competitors is the speed of responsiveness to the customer. Activa and its solutions have helped us in our effort to excel in this extremely important aspect of our customer service."



When call recording was first introduced, it was based on open-reel technology, and it was then that Dial-a-Cab and Activa Solutions started working together. Activa helped Dial-a-Cab with the maintenance of the old system and introduced the benefits of digital recording. The need for digital recording was prompted mainly by the speed at which calls had to be retrieved for verification purposes. "We have to locate and replay contentious calls as fast as possible to solve any arising dispute in the shortest period of time." stated Cain, "Activa Solutions was the obvious supplier of choice given the solid and established relationship we had with them. However, we wanted to make sure we were going to implement the best technology available in the marketplace that suited our needs. For this reason, we issued a tender amongst all the potential suppliers. Activa Solutions still came out on top, for both product offering and price." The installation of ASC MARATHON TDI in the control centre was seamless, in a plug-&-go fashion, and the integration with the existing ASPECT Automatic Call Distribution system was also quickly set up.

REAPING THE BENEFITS FOR CUSTOMERS, DRIVERS AND THE BUSINESS

The benefits of the new MARATHON call recording system became apparent very soon after. "We reduced the time to retrieve individual calls from 15 minutes down to a few seconds. This for us could make the difference between keeping and losing a customer." commented Cain, "We also tag the calls with all the caller information available, making call retrieval even more immediate. Before MARATHON TDI, we could only rely on the booking reference number for call searches, but in cases such as estimates, where the booking reference number is not generated, it meant a potential 50 hours of calls to listen to before finding the required one." Due to MARATHON browser based interface,

Dial-a-Cab gained other organisational productivity benefits by allowing both the account managers and top management to access call information directly, for answering specific queries, without taking up valuable agent time.

The MARATHON system has been used extensively by Dial-a-Cab's supervisors for training purposes, in both individual coaching and group sessions. "We believe in training as a path to excellence. Before hiring a new agent, they have to undergo a 4-week training program to assess their suitability for the task." said Cain, "Confrontation can happen very frequently, so top customer skills are required at all times. Only after 4 weeks of training, newly trained agents can finally take live calls. Supervisors then use the recorded calls for ongoing development, with particular attention to calls that generated a query or a complaint."

Both Dial-a-Cab customers and drivers benefited, in different ways, from the usage of the MARATHON system. Dial a-Cab has been able to help its customers in resolving legal proceedings with disgruntled employees and helped with Police enquiries when, for instance, an ex employee had been booking taxi trips on the former employer's account. Additionally, all of Dial-a-Cab's independent drivers have their radio calls recorded for dispute verification and they have an emergency button in the taxi that, when pressed, will record the conversation inside the cab. This facility is there to protect the driver and once again has helped with Police enquiries when one of Dial-a-Cab's drivers was mugged at gunpoint.

"In our business, what differentiates us from our competitors is the speed of responsiveness to the customer." concluded Cain, "Activa and its solutions have helped us in our effort to excel in this extremely important aspect of our customer service."