



DB DIALOG TELEFONSERVICE

IMPROVING SERVICES AND SAVING COSTS WITH AN INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

“With SAP Business Communications Management software, we save a six-digit figure on an annual basis for forwarded calls.”

Jürgen Meierotte, Head of Customer Solutions Technology, DB Dialog Telefonservice GmbH

QUICK FACTS

Company

- Name: DB Dialog Telefonservice GmbH
- Headquarters: Berlin
- Industry: Professional services
- Products and services: Call centers for German railway
- Revenue: €45 million (2007)
- Employees: 1,800
- Web site: www.db-dialog.de

Challenges and Opportunities

- Improve ability to react quickly to changing demand and unforeseen events
- Handle high call volume more effectively
- Reduce costs of forwarded calls
- Provide management with complete overview of operations
- Offer customers more ways of getting in touch

Objectives

- Replace all separate call center systems with a single communication platform
- Balance workloads at individual locations by introducing a virtual call center
- Enable company-wide monitoring and reporting
- Enable multimedia routing for calls, e-mails, and text messages

SAP® Solution and Services

SAP® Business Communications Management software

Implementation Highlights

- Interruption-free implementation of the new solution
- Creation of a virtual call center by integrating all 6 call center locations

Why SAP

- IP-based communication platform for call centers and enterprise telephony
- Location independence
- Quick implementation of new services
- Extensive range of functions
- Open system standards enabling technological integration with existing call center infrastructure
- Scalable and adaptable solution with state-of-the-art IP technology

Benefits

- Ability to use call center resources more effectively
- Achievement of high service levels
- Significant cost reductions for forwarded calls
- Quality assurance with the use of monitoring and analysis tools
- Ability to offer new services and functions

Third-Party Integration

- Hardware: HP servers
- Database: Microsoft SQL Server 2005
- Operating system: Microsoft Windows Server 2003



For many customers of the German national railway company, Deutsche Bahn AG, or DB, the journey starts long before they board a train. Since some passengers prefer not to use the online booking systems, DB offers most of its services over the telephone. Passengers can speak to customer service advisors about connections and schedule changes and can book tickets by telephone. The calls are answered by agents in one of six call centers owned by the DB subsidiary DB Dialog Telefonservice GmbH (DB Dialog). The company is responsible for more than 30 different services, including the BahnCard discount program, complaints management, and information about lost property.

Each year, DB Dialog handles more than 12 million customer interactions, 9 million of which are over the telephone. How does it handle this volume of calls? It uses SAP® Business Communications Management software, which enables the company not only to offer a continuously high level of customer service, even at times of peak demand, but also to tap into new markets.

Reacting Quickly to Changing Conditions

Over the past few years, it has become clear that reacting quickly to unforeseen events is a particularly important aspect of DB's customer service. Poor weather conditions, for example, can lead to schedule changes, and the demand for information at such times is very high. "We couldn't react quickly enough to these kinds of events with our old telephone system," says Jürgen Meierotte, head of customer solutions technology at DB Dialog. "The system comprised

several components from different manufacturers, so setting up a cross-location crisis hotline was very difficult." This was one of the reasons DB Dialog decided to establish a single platform for its communication system. In so doing, it chose SAP Business Communications Management software.

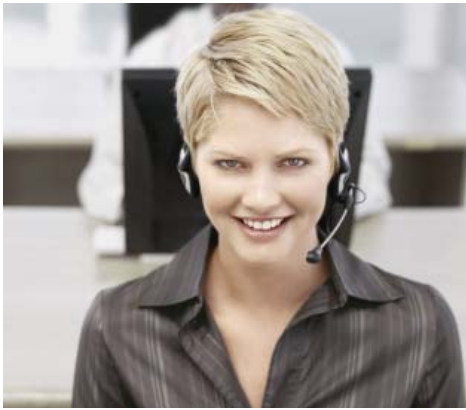
Reducing Costs, Increasing Capacity Utilization

The cost factor was instrumental in DB Dialog's decision to select SAP. Its forwarding fees had been particularly high in the past, and one of its aims with the new software was to save costs in this area. "DB customers who call a service number get put through automatically to one of our six call centers. It makes no difference whether an agent in Berlin, Frankfurt, Hamm, Hannover, Karlsruhe, or Schwerin answers the call," says Meierotte. In the case of special questions or problems, the employee at the call center

diverts the call to a specially trained agent – sometimes at another call center location. Since DB Dialog previously used the Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) telephone system, it was charged for forwarding calls in this way. "That amounted to several thousand euros a month. With SAP Business Communications Management, we save all these costs," Meierotte explains.

The SAP software also enables the company to use the resources at its call centers more effectively and increase the level of service it offers. The software brings together employees from all the locations to form a virtual unit and enables them to operate as a group. For example, if the call volume in Berlin is high, the employees in Schwerin automatically support the team in Berlin. "SAP Business Communications Management enables us to achieve a very high service level and offer our customers top-quality services," says Meierotte. Approximately 90% of the calls are answered within 20 seconds – a rate that is well above average and that puts DB Dialog significantly ahead of its competitors.

The standardized platform also offers centralized control options to support DB Dialog's demanding requirements. Instead of having different interfaces and tools, all the call centers use the same monitoring and analysis tools. The operational management team knows exactly what is happening in each call center and has a complete overview of the situation. How many agents are logged on? What skills are available? How high is the call volume?



“We wanted the new technology to adapt to our customer service processes. Consequently, everything worked from day one without any problems.”

Jürgen Meierotte, Head of Customer Solutions Technology, DB Dialog Telefonservice GmbH

Supporting Efficient Planning

Having a complete overview of all the call centers enables management to plan resources much more quickly and efficiently. Directors of operations do not have to find their bearings with each call center. Furthermore, precise reports supply real-time information about capacity utilization, giving managers the opportunity to react quickly.

“SAP Business Communications Management provides us with comprehensive data that is formatted in the same way for all the call centers. This gives us a source for very precise, standard-

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ized reports. This was not previously possible because we had different systems from different manufacturers,” says Meierotte. “Now we have a clear picture of our performance. This is critical for planning our capacities.”

Before the test phase of SAP Business Communications Management was over, DB Dialog had successfully set up a customer hotline across several subsidiaries. Then a severe winter storm in January 2007 resulted in a large number of cancellations and changes to the German railway schedule. The SAP software was not due to go live until later, but because DB Dialog needed additional service personnel to give passengers up-to-date information

about the changes to the schedule, the project manager gave the green light to go live with the software. Within a very short time, thousands of calls could be answered with the IP-based system. Since the call centers work together to spread the high volume of calls, the service level remains high.

Recording Calls for Quality Assurance

The upgrade to the new software passed largely unnoticed by the agents working in the call centers. “Our aim was to proceed as unobtrusively as possible,” explains Meierotte. “The new

solution has not resulted in any changes for our agents on the telephone or for our customers. This made the switch much easier.” All the services from the old system were mapped on a one-to-one basis. “We wanted the new technology to adapt to our customer service processes. Consequently, everything worked from day one without any problems,” Meierotte recalls.

In the second stage of the project, DB Dialog is investigating the numerous new options SAP Business Communications Management offers. It is particularly interested in the measures that support quality. In the future, for example, DB Dialog plans to record telephone calls,

with the customers' permission. “This helps in terms of quality assurance and in terms of security, since the recordings can be used as legal evidence, if required,” says Meierotte.

More Ways for Customers to Get in Touch

An option that is of particular interest to the company is multimessaging. This allows e-mail, text messaging, and telephone calls to be integrated on a single platform. As a result, customers have even more ways to get information or use the services offered by DB Dialog. The company can use the multichannel system to help ensure that the quality of the service is equally high across all the communication methods available to its customers.

The option to integrate smart phones in the system would be particularly beneficial to managers at DB Dialog. “Approximately 40 employees have manager status, and managers have to be constantly available,” explains Meierotte. “The SAP software makes it possible to integrate smart phones that use the free-of-charge wireless local area network for telephone calls that managers make when they are in the office. When managers are away from the office, their cell phones simply log into the mobile network.” Another advantage of smart phone integration is that managers can use the phone to maintain their availability status. Their colleagues can then see, for example, when a manager is attending a conference and cannot be contacted. Moreover, managers can be contacted on one phone wherever they go.

Meierotte sees this as a very clear advantage of the solution: "Instead of maintaining several address books in various databases, we could access all contact details from one source that is always up-to-date. That is a clear advantage over the current fixed network/cell phone combination."

Ideal Platform for Further Development

With the IP-based communication solution provided by SAP, DB Dialog has taken an important step toward the future – not least in terms of its service portfolio. Currently, the service provider mainly offers inbound calls and services. Soon, the company hopes to generate a quarter of its revenues from outbound services. "We're planning to significantly enlarge this area within the next 12 months. This includes recruiting a large number of new employees and offering a wider range of services," says Meierotte.

SAP Business Communications Management provides the ideal technical platform for this expansion. The solution is completely scalable, allowing new employees and even entire locations to be integrated in the system. It supports both inbound and outbound call centers and is also the ideal communication platform for the office telephony needs of the company.

Consequently, DB Dialog can react quickly to market requirements and deploy resources flexibly. "The solution enables us to make adaptations. For example, we don't need any new technology for campaign management for outbound orders. We can implement the tool to do this in SAP Business Communications Management," explains Meierotte.

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