
The Impact of Automated Return-Call Systems

“A Real-World Case Study”

by

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Executive Summary

The goal of our research was to evaluate the impact that the Atmos Energy (hereinafter, “Atmos”) call center experienced following their implementation of Virtual Hold Technology’s (hereinafter, the “Sponsor”) automated queue management return-call system (hereinafter, the “Virtual Hold System”), which allows customers to request a return call from a call center rather than wait in a queue for their call to be answered.

Specifically, we wanted to determine the impact that offering callers the option of a return call rather than requiring the caller to remain in queue had on:

1. customer satisfaction;
2. CSR performance; and
3. operating costs.

Our objective was to measure and quantify the performance levels that the call center realized following the implementation of the Virtual Hold System, and calculate the corresponding financial benefit to Atmos.

The highlights of our research findings are summarized below. This executive summary forms the basis of the remainder of this case study.

Our Most Important Findings

After installing the Virtual Hold System, Atmos experienced the following changes:

1. approximately 60% of their calls were successfully completed;
2. over 97% of the returned calls were successfully completed;
3. average handle times for answered calls decreased by 10%;
4. approximately 38% of the callers who rejected the return call offer hung up before the call was answered;
5. staffing was reduced by the equivalent of 17 full-time CSRs during the peak heating season;
6. cost per call for the five month heating season following implementation of the Virtual Hold solution was 39% lower than the cost per call in the comparable period a year earlier;
7. toll costs for calls waiting in queue decreased by 93% for the comparable heating season periods;
8. cost per call dropped 39% for the five month heating season compared to the comparable period the previous year earlier; and
9. cost reductions in cost per call allowed Atmos to pay for the Virtual Hold System within 4 months, with added savings to pay the annual maintenance charge for more than 5 years.