

CASE STUDY:

TURNKEY SOLUTION DEVELOPS BRAND LOYALTY AND DELIGHTS CUSTOMERS ACROSS OEM'S SUPPLY CHAIN



In 1947, the founder of this ACCENT client introduced a one-step process for developing and printing instant photographs, creating a photography revolution. By the end of the century, the company held US patents second only in number to Thomas Edison. Today, the company that pioneered instant photography is now one of the most recognized consumer electronics brands in the world and has established itself as a global leader in the production of LCD televisions, digital cameras, digital photo frames and more.

➤ The Challenge

For nearly 70 years, the consumer electronics Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) had been a world-wide leader in instant photography – developing, manufacturing and marketing cameras, film and accessories to consumers, commercial customers and business partners across the globe. But as the new millennium approached, the convergence of photography, computing, telecommunications and consumer electronics caused a shift in the way consumers captured and shared memories. To effectively compete in the changing marketplace, the manufacturer sought to drive growth by introducing innovative

new products for the digital age. So in 2003, the company entered the consumer electronics market, adding portable DVD players and LCD televisions to its growing list of products. By 2004, it was the number one portable DVD brand in the country. But as consumer demand grew, the OEM became increasingly frustrated with the performance of its field service, contact center and product return providers. Onsite field service visits were five times higher than originally expected and back-orders were on the rise. Additionally, call volume was twice as high as forecasted resulting in a substantial increase in hold times and abandoned calls. To further complicate matters, the OEM had no single point of contact or centralized reporting across its service provider network. This lack of visibility



made it nearly impossible for the OEM to effectively manage each service channel. Consequently, customer satisfaction was dwindling – and fast.

➤ The Discovery

In November 2006, the OEM began its search for a turnkey solution that would encompass contact center operations, reverse logistics, depot repair and field service as well as parts planning, purchasing, distribution and management. It was especially important to the OEM to find a strategic partner who could serve as a single source provider for all of its customer service and supply chain needs. Equally as important, the OEM wanted a company that would protect its respected brand and delight its customers at every step in the process.

The OEM was first introduced to ACCENT through a rigorous RFP process. As part of the proposal, ACCENT partnered with a leading supply chain solutions provider and a third-party field service provider to service the OEM's consumer electronics and household appliances. By combining leading inventory and order management solutions with ACCENT's unparalleled customer care, the team presented the OEM with an unmatched foundation for growing high-quality customer relationships across the supply chain.

➤ The Solution

Serving as the program integrator, ACCENT's supply chain solutions partner developed a customized and integrated web portal for use by all service network partners. Mirroring the look and feel of the OEM's existing website, the portal connected the OEM and each service provider into one system – enabling web-based access to order processing and inventory management across all service channels. Additionally, ACCENT's

proprietary contact management system was seamlessly integrated with the portal, allowing engagement specialists to track and manage all technical support calls as well as retrieve real-time information about the end user's product, including warranty data. In all, the solution encompassed technical support, field service, reverse logistics, parts and accessories sales and reporting.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Approximately 30 engagement specialists were initially hired to provide technical support for the OEM's consumer electronics and household appliances. Once the underlying problem was identified, engagement specialists attempted to resolve the issue by using product information and technical schematics from a knowledge base to walk consumers through the solution. In instances where an issue could not be resolved, it was escalated to a Tier 2 support specialist who provided a more in-depth level of technical support. The most difficult or advanced problems were further escalated to a team leader or assistant program manager who partnered with the OEM for support and resolution based on pre-defined guidelines. For issues requiring in-home service repair, ACCENT's engagement specialists issued service requests to the field service provider through the central web portal. To ensure the knowledge base was accurate and up-to-date, Tier 2 specialists were also responsible for working directly with field service technicians to test, document and upload solutions.

FIELD SERVICE

Upon receipt of a service request, ACCENT's field service partner scheduled and dispatched a service technician to the consumer's home. While onsite, the technician repaired or replaced



defective products, performed preventative maintenance and offered installation services. With immediate access to skilled resources nationwide and proven ISO 9001:2000 quality processes, ACCENT's field service partner provided the OEM and its customers with world-class maintenance services and support. And, since all service requests were generated through one central web portal, both ACCENT and its supply chain and field service partners had complete visibility into the repair process – from the initial customer call and status of ordered parts to the in-home repair and return of defective merchandise.

REVERSE LOGISTICS

In instances where defective merchandise was returned, ACCENT's supply chain solutions partner managed the reverse logistics process – expediting products through returns, inspection, refurbishment and repair. Recertification tests were first conducted on all returned merchandise, separating usable parts and products from those in need of repair, refurbishment or disposal. Usable merchandise was then repackaged and warehoused until it was returned to stock, returned to the client, sold "as is" or liquidated to maximize revenue recovery. Parts and products that were in need of repair or further evaluation underwent comprehensive diagnostic testing and failure analysis from specially trained, A+ certified technicians. Onsite mechanical, quality, process and electrical engineers then completed the necessary repairs. Throughout the entire process, the OEM had complete and immediate data access to returns, product failure and first call resolution data across the supply chain.

PARTS AND ACCESSORIES SALES

ACCENT's engagement specialists also created,

updated and managed parts and accessories orders. When consumers called to order or exchange parts and products, ACCENT's engagement specialists validated warranty data and checked inventory balances on their behalf. For out-of-warranty claims, specialists provided consumers with the option of purchasing replacement parts or products. Through an established relationship with a third-party credit card processor, ACCENT processed orders and managed the reconciliation process on behalf of the OEM.

REPORTING

Through the central web portal, customized reports were delivered to the OEM based on its exact specifications, allowing the company to effectively measure and track all key service metrics – in real time – 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from any location worldwide. Integrated into the web portal was ACCENT's sophisticated reporting tools, which utilized COGNOS software and Online Analytical Processing (OLAP) technology. Using these web-based tools, the OEM also had instant access to call statistics and key performance metrics, including first call resolution as well as the amount and age of outstanding trouble tickets. Additionally, executives could drill down and segment program data for comprehensive analysis.

➤ The Implementation

Within just 22 business days, ACCENT and its service network partners created a complete solution to meet the OEM's contact center, field service and reverse logistics needs. Overseeing the entire implementation and ongoing relationship was ACCENT's supply chain solutions partner who had a dedicated program manager onsite



with the OEM to ensure seamless service channel integration. Each day, ACCENT's customer service representatives fielded more than 2,000 calls while the field service provider completed more than 120 in-home service repairs. Additionally, ACCENT's reverse logistics partner began receiving and warehousing more than 250,000 parts and shipping out hundreds of service parts daily. After the initial implementation, the service network began handling consumer and retail returns as well as performing all necessary repairs and recertification processes.

The Results

Almost immediately, contact center and field service support improved – instantly boosting customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. In fact, within the first year alone:

- > **End-user refunds dramatically reduced from \$300,000 per month to just \$10,000 per month;**
- > **Back orders were reduced by 98%;**
- > **First Call Resolution averaged 91.5%; and**
- > **Cost per service call visit was cut in half.**

By integrating all service providers under one system, the OEM not only saved \$2 million annually but now had real-time visibility and improved communication across all service channels. And, through the implementation of parts and accessories sales in the contact center, revenue per call dramatically increased by 981% within the first thirteen months of the program – equating to over \$1.5 million in new revenue. In all, ACCENT managed more than 689,000 customer service and technical support calls prior to the OEM's corporate restructuring in 2009.

> We're the Customer Relationship Experts.

Building valuable relationships with your customers at any and every stage in the customer lifecycle takes the right tools and strategies. And nobody offers you more of them than ACCENT. We're experts in providing solutions at every touchpoint, from customer acquisition to loyalty and everything in between. So if you're ready to drive more value from your customers—and to grow relationships along the way—visit us at accentonline.com or call 866.623.0018.



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