

Idaho Power

Energy company leverages service capabilities of automated voice technology.

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Angela Sperry
IS Project Manager
Idaho Power

Situation

Idaho Power, a leading energy provider for nearly half a million customers in southern Idaho and eastern Oregon, generates power primarily from hydroelectric dams and thermal sources.

But recently, Western states faced an energy crisis, resulting in well-publicized rolling blackouts and a rippling of higher energy costs. These events have impacted Idaho Power’s customer service offering as consumers who worried about high bills and energy outages flooded the call center.

The progressive, regulated utility needed an automated system as quickly as possible so that customers could help themselves and customer service representatives (CSRs) could directly help those with power outage issues. But with call volumes increasing, Idaho Power’s timeframe to execute became a critical component in meeting both internal and external expectations.

Since the implementation of Intervoice's voice-enabled information solutions, pressure on Idaho Power's call center has been relieved as a significant portion of calls have been handled by the system.

Solution and Results

Idaho Power needed a rapid response and asked Intervoice to help automate its service order fulfillment process. By selecting the Intervoice platform, Idaho Power was able to automate payment arrangements and provide basic account information and address escalating call volumes with voice-enabled information solutions.

The Intervoice platform helps companies increase available information options, enhance personalized communications, and reduce labor and infrastructure costs. By leveraging customers' existing systems, the Intervoice platform harnesses the power of Intervoice's development tools to offer a total range of hardware, software and service solutions.

"Since we had a limited time period to get this initiative online, Intervoice meticulously went over every single detail, timeline and expectation regarding the project," said Angela Sperry, IS project manager for Idaho Power. "There was a huge amount of pressure, and it was such a relief when

item by item, those things were addressed and everything was completed on time."

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"We received about 200,000 calls in the first three months of having our customer service center powered by Intervoice in which 90,000 of those calls actually were handled by the Intervoice system," said Warren Kline, general manager for regional operations for Idaho Power. "Approximately 36% of our collections transactions were handled by the system. This has been one of the smoothest technology implementations that we've ever had."

One reason for the project's success is how practical and convenient customers find the Intervoice system to use.

"There are definite expectations of our customers to manage their own transactions themselves for the gratification of responsiveness and quickness," said Kline.

The Intervoice system has not only exceeded expectations of its capabilities but has also proven its ease of maintenance for the utility. Imperative to Idaho Power was to become self-reliant by not having to rely on another company to maintain its systems. Individuals from Idaho Power were able to attend Intervoice technical training and quickly walked away equipped with knowledge of how to self-maintain the software.

Future

Idaho Power is tasking Intervoice with building new implementations.

"It was a pleasure to recommend Intervoice solutions to another business unit at Idaho Power and assure them that the implementation would absolutely be done professionally in the set timeframe," said Sperry.

Idaho Power has additional plans to make use of the Intervoice system for allowing its whitewater rafters to make rafting reservations on specific days and rivers they're planning to raft. Because rivers can go below dam levels, Idaho Power has only a few days a year that it can actually release water from these dams, allowing the community to tell the company when and where they want to raft. This becomes a time-sensitive and important service to the communities at large. By using a voice-enabled information solution to manage rafting reservations, Idaho Power experiences huge efficiencies over traditional phone system and voicemails, plus has audit capabilities for historical, long-term public records.

Verdict

The future of the electric utility industry will be characterized by competition—the right of customers to choose their own electric service provider. Idaho Power must continue to provide value in the face of this new competitive environment by selling quality electric products and services. Customer service and the efficiencies created by technology play a pivotal role with the utility—now, and in the future.

“Idaho Power understands the value of voice technology in serving its customers,” said Bob Ritchey, president of Intervoice. “As a major regulated utility in possible deregulated industry, service and responsiveness to customers’ needs will differentiate the provider among others and help pave the way for profitability.”

For nearly 20 years, Intervoice has helped global enterprises find better ways to serve their customers. Intervoice develops, implements and integrates voice-enabled information solutions that help companies improve information access and reduce costs.

With a beginning-to-end consultative approach, Intervoice focuses on optimizing solutions with its highly-experienced teams, comprehensive offerings, end-to-end support and global reach to help companies share information more efficiently and effectively with partners, customers and employees. Count on the leadership and expertise of Intervoice to help you achieve your business objectives.

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About Intervoice

Intervoice is a world leader in unified communications, powering millions of customer interactions every day. Since 1983, our standards-based IVR/voice portal and IP Contact Center solutions have ignited customer loyalty for the world's leading banks, communications companies, healthcare institutions, utilities and government entities. Our proven IMS-ready multimedia messaging, call completion and payment solutions fuel revenue growth for the world's leading service providers.

With more than 5,000 customers in 75 countries and an extensive channel partner ecosystem, we have a proven track record of helping organizations meet or exceed their business and customer service goals. How can Intervoice help you? Visit www.intervoice.com for information.

