

## Case Study: Sprint

Continual Alignment of People, Processes and Technology Leads to Improved Customer Satisfaction



### THE COMPANY

One of the largest telecommunications providers in the United States

### THE CHALLENGE

Allowing agents to better serve customers by aligning technology with maturing processes and standardization of tools within Sprint

### THE SOLUTION

KANA Global Services and KANA Response

### THE RESULTS

12.5% increase in customer satisfaction score in Q209, the largest move of any provider reported by American Customer Service Index, May 2009.

Decrease in number of calls/contacts per subscriber and increase in first-time call resolution.

Optimized KANA Response deployment allowed Sprint to maximize ROI associated with existing investment in technology and improve overall customer service scores.

### KANA's Global Consulting Services helps Sprint derive maximum value from KANA Response.

Sprint – which provides a range of wireless and wireline communications services to consumers, businesses and government users – has been focused on improving the overall customer experience, including first call resolution and customer care satisfaction.

Since 2004, KANA Response has played an integral role in Sprint's customer management infrastructure, helping the company's hundreds of e-chat customer service agents field the growing popularity of email queries.

While the system has helped Sprint efficiently respond to customer inquiries, over time the requirements and the overall approach to email management changed substantially. After many years of use, it became clear among management that the technology supporting customer service needed to be aligned with best practices — better reflecting maturing service processes and the standardization of tools across the organization. Sprint felt that KANA Response, the only email and web form management solution that fully automates the process of capturing, documenting, interpreting, routing and prescribing answers to customer service queries, was the right system to help them meet their goals.

### Leveraging Existing Investments

"The KANA Response deployment needed a best practice alignment to meet new and growing demands within the service department. We'd improved processes throughout our customer care organization to better serve customers and wanted our technology implementation to reflect this evolution," said Sherri DePriest, project manager at Sprint.

DePriest's division inherited the system after three years of use by other groups that had been supporting it. Management of KANA Response had been shared jointly by all groups, and the initial implementation was followed by a dramatic increase in use by other departments. By the time DePriest and her team took over, the number of agents using the system had doubled, and her



team required new, advanced capabilities in email automation. These capabilities were included in the KANA Response offering but had not been leveraged yet by Sprint.

Specifically, DePriest's customer service division began to see service escalations from routine tasks such as misrouted emails. These missteps ran counter to Sprint's customer service mission and were affecting agent productivity. As administrators updated KANA Response routing rules or added new ones to help resolve these routine issues, the changes caused additional issues. The ongoing maintenance required for the email routing rules, as well as that of the entire system, had an overly complex design from a process perspective and was not focused on improving the agent and the customer experience, which was becoming an important benchmark in overall customer satisfaction.

Given KANA's reputation in the marketplace and Sprint's experience with KANA Response, the company was confident the solution could easily help them achieve their goals. So, DePriest and her supervisor decided to reconfigure the implementation, focusing primarily on the internal deployment and ongoing management of KANA Response which would better leverage both the core and advanced features of the system. After reengineering, Sprint redeployed it across the customer service department with a sharp focus on usability from an agent perspective, and aligned the system tightly with internal and industry best practices and business process improvement.

"The team looked at many options to solve these problems," said Kim Hale-Surles, manager of e-customer service for Sprint. "We decided that our best approach lay in aligning the current system with emerging best practices so that we were using its full capabilities and adhering to best practices in email management. That has turned out to be a very good decision from the standpoint of productivity and customer satisfaction, as well as cost and time. And, the capabilities of KANA Response have exceeded our expectations."

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*"The extensive preplanning made this project go like clockwork. We were amazed to see the whole thing come off in just two hours. That set the bar for future updates we continually conduct."*

*Sherri DePriest, Project Manager, Sprint*

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## **KANA Services Spelled Successes**

Sprint came to KANA Global Services division looking to improve the way they managed routing rules in the KANA Response system. Not only did the KANA Global Services consultants help Sprint's customer management team redesign their existing KANA Response implementation, they also helped Sprint leverage critical capabilities that the customer service department wasn't using at the time.

The preparation for the redesign and alignment of the KANA Response system took almost four months. During this time, KANA consultants worked closely with Sprint's customer management teams to assess their goals, and to help them design an implementation strategy that reflected the maturation of their service processes and the standardization of tools company-wide. The company also wanted to strategically plan for future growth. This effort required substantial planning and coordination.

Clint Kaeding, Senior Consultant in the KANA Global Services division spearheaded the effort. He explained, "Sprint's original organizational structure consisted of 10 departments that were designed around their billing systems. This was a practical approach from an agent segmentation standpoint during the early days following the merger, but it lost its value as the organization began to consolidate and customer service agents were cross-trained on the joint 'Sprint Nextel' products, process and systems."

The goal of the project was to move to a function-based department and agent queue structure that would allow for more meaningful trending of customer inquiries and simplify user management. Essentially, Sprint wanted to increase customer satisfaction by improving agent productivity and quality. Nearly twice as many groups in KANA Response were established to satisfy these goals. While the creation of the new groups was pretty straightforward, the mapping and migration of users, information categories, queues, standard phrases and so on, and designing routing rules that corresponded with all these entities was extremely complex. To simplify things, the KANA consultants focused on the following:

- Ensure consistency by refining the information that the customer service representatives use to answer email.
- Ensure routing efficiency (emails are going to the right queue and are seen by a customer service agent who has the appropriate skills to field the customer request)
- Implement changes faster by leveraging various administrative features in KANA Response
- Provide agents with the information they need by aligning customer service agents to the right department.

Clint adds, "We ultimately rolled out a revised category structure, improved rule structure, and other tuning enhancements that had been the catalyst for the project."

All the planning and collaborating paid off. The optimization of KANA Response was rolled out in less than two hours as planned. This was critical for Sprint's continued achievement of ongoing quarter-over-quarter improvement in customer satisfaction, which it reports along with its financial results.

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*"The capabilities of KANA Response have exceeded our expectations."*

*Kim Hale-Surles, Manager of e-Customer Service, Sprint*

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DePriest commented that, “The extensive preplanning made this go like clockwork. We were amazed to see the whole thing come off in just two hours. That set the bar for future updates and alignment with evolving best practices that we continue to conduct.”

## Reengineering as Part of an Ongoing Process

The overwhelming success of the KANA Response project helped Sprint’s management recognize the vital role that ongoing reengineering plays in overall system maintenance. Sprint now continually evaluates the technology that impacts customer satisfaction, including KANA Response, to ensure that it is best suited and optimized to address critical business objectives.

“Since the redesign, we’ve integrated a number of additional groups into the KANA Response system –basically doubling our pool of users to more than seven hundred people,” DePriest said. “This is a result of more groups hearing about KANA Response and how it has provided effective, global email management for the team.”

Streamlining the information available to agents has made the lives of the agents easier and helped to improve customer satisfaction. With only highly relevant information accessible to them, the agents don’t lose time and customer patience sifting through unnecessary categories to find the appropriate solution. These modifications have dramatically improved agent productivity and effectiveness as evidenced by Sprint improving first call/contact resolution.

Sprint has already seen improvement in agent efficiency and accuracy as a result of the reimplementation, along with an increase in customer satisfaction and first-time contact resolution. In 2009, University of Michigan researchers validated Sprint’s improvements when they reported that the company’s customer satisfaction score increased 12.5%, the largest move of any company on the survey (American Customer Service Index, May 2009). Additionally, the company has seen a decrease in the number of calls per subscriber, a gold standard for satisfaction measurement within the telecom industry.

To learn more about how the KANA can help you create customers for life, call **1-800-737-8738**.