

Extending 311 Call Centers with Self-Service Capabilities

The Challenge

311 call centers have earned a reputation for helping forward-thinking municipalities meet the rising expectations of the public for better, faster, and more efficient service, while managing costs. By offering the public one central number to call for a range of services, citizen satisfaction rates are soaring at well over 90 percent while at the same time cities are saving millions of dollars in operational efficiencies.

As 311 non-emergency call centers gain traction and call volumes rise exponentially every year, governments are faced with a new challenge – how to maintain high customer service levels while holding operating costs steady?

San Francisco 311 is a case in point. The city's one-stop customer service center quickly became an invaluable part of city life for residents, with calls reaching 2 million after the first year and escalating to 3 million after the first 15 months. As of March 2009, the call center had answered 5.5 million calls and had a monthly volume of approximately 350,000 calls. Supporting the City's increasingly popular call center are 76 full-time Customer Service Representatives (CSRs), 10 part-time CSRs, 7 supervisors and 13 other executives, trainers, business and quality assurance analysts, and IT administrators.

The city turned to Lagan for a way to extend their Lagan-powered 311 call center to include web self-service capabilities.



“We were seeing an increase of about 25,000 calls each month with no limit in sight—we couldn’t simply keep adding CSRs.”

– Andy Maimoi, Deputy Director,
San Francisco 311

The Solution

Lagan Self Service allows government organizations to take advantage of the full potential of electronic service delivery. Governments can provide citizens with access to information and integrated services via the Web whenever is convenient for them – 24/7 – with no additional staff support.

A range of information and services online

Requests for information

- Trash/recycling pickup schedules
- Public transit schedules
- Community center hours

Paying for goods/services

- Pay a parking ticket
- Pay for a dog license
- Pay property tax

Requests for service

- Street/Sidewalk cleaning
- Graffiti removal
- Abandoned vehicle reports

General feedback

- Suggestions for specific departments
- Satisfaction survey
- Feedback on self-service features



Information can even be posted seasonally. For example, Lagan customer, the City of Fort Wayne, IN, posts leaf pick-up in the fall and weed removal in the summer. In addition, local governments looking for ways to support their response to the current economic crisis are finding that Lagan Self Service can play an important role. For example, the City of Minneapolis has added information on economic development and job opportunities to its Lagan Self Service portal.

An impressive return on investment

In addition to the convenient anytime, anywhere aspect to the Web, it is also an extremely cost-effective method for service delivery. The online channel offloads calls to 311 so that more citizen inquiries can be handled with the same number of CSRs. Furthermore, Lagan Self Service can be configured by business users without the need for web development experience, speeding time to implementation and reducing development costs.

With costs per click much lower than costs per call, return on investment from Lagan Self Service is measured in months, not years. A study by Boston-based research firm, Gartner, on the Minneapolis 311 call center found a significant return on investment when residents used the Web instead of calling 311, which forces agents to log cases on the customer's behalf. The study found that each telephone call or email inquiry cost an estimated \$4.50, while Web self-service cost 50 cents per inquiry. Once Minneapolis extended its Lagan 311 solution to include Lagan Self Service, 20 percent of cases were logged onto the city's Web site rather than the call center, which has saved thousands of dollars annually.

Lagan Self Service Features and Benefits

Feature	Benefit
Web-enabled	Offer access to services that accommodate disabled users and vulnerable groups by meeting accessibility guidelines.
Easy to use, incorporating assistive techniques	Citizen only completes relevant information for the transaction and can refer to additional relevant information when necessary without recourse to staff members.
Ability to submit service requests without the need for staff intervention	Rationalize the number of call center sites and staff. Cost per web inquiry can be 90-80% less than the cost of a call.
Tracking ability	Citizens can track status of their service request online, reducing unnecessary contact.
Easily embedded within existing web presence	Extend current technology/infrastructure investments.
Integrated to back office fulfillment	Forms a contract between the citizen and government and provides accountability.
Can be configured in a high-available environment	24/7 access to services.
Ability to span multiple departments, systems and functions	A one-stop-shop that provides a wide range of services from a single site.
Repeatable and consistent quality of service	Citizen receives consistent service delivery and experience which does not depend on the staff member contacted.
Various deployment options	Select the most economical and speedy option: Hosted Service, common area within existing web site, via existing service web links.



Why Lagan

Many of the most innovative and successful 311 call centers have selected Lagan Self Service to enhance service delivery while managing costs including: San Francisco, Minneapolis and Fort Wayne. Designed to help local governments exceed citizen expectations in both prosperous and challenging times, Lagan 311 has become the defacto standard in North America and Gartner has given the company the highest possible rating in their MarketScope for Local Government CRM products in 2007. More than 170 government agencies around the world rely on Lagan software to serve upwards of 37 million citizens worldwide. Learn more by visiting Lagan on the web at www.lagan.com and download the San Francisco Self-Service case study from our resource library at www.lagan.com/resourcelibrary.aspx.

Self Service Success at a Glance

When call volume to San Francisco's 311 customer service call center started to grow at a rate of 25,000 additional calls each month, the city turned to Lagan to extend its Lagan 311 solution to include Lagan Self Service.



Call Center

- Monthly call volume: 350,000
- Calls answered in first two years: 5.5 million
- Languages supported: 175+
- Services/Departments supported: 88%

Self-Service

- ROI: Less than 7 months
- Call Center volume drop: 10%
- Requests for service: 2,000/month in first two months
- Deployment time: 8 months
- Page views: 180,000 in first 2 month

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