

Leading Mail Order Retailer Keeps Agents Focused on Selling while Improving Customer Service

With Varolii Communications, Norm Thompson Outfitters notifies customers of order status without draining agent resources.



As one of the country's premier catalog retailers, Norm Thompson receives millions of incoming calls each year. Many of these come from customers wanting to know when their packages will arrive. In keeping with its reputation for superior customer service, Norm Thompson wanted to provide customers a more efficient way to offer shipment status updates, so they didn't have to call in. The company deployed Varolii's interactive customer communications to automatically update customers by telephone, at their request, when their order status changed. Both customers and agents were spared unnecessary service calls, and the customers raved about the convenience.

Making Customer Satisfaction Efficient

Steve Jones, Vice President of Marketing, recognized that if Norm Thompson found a more efficient way to get routine order status information to customers, many calls would be eliminated – saving customers the effort of calling in and freeing their 150 year-round agents to take more sales calls. Jones discovered that Varolii enabled them to proactively update customers on the status of their orders, thereby preempting many unnecessary inbound calls.

Simple Integration

Integration proved simple and quick. Varolii's fully hosted application did not require heavy up-front costs and provided installation, training, system maintenance and support. And its open-standard XML format readily integrated with its enterprise data system.

"It offered us the opportunity to deploy such an advanced solution without having to replace everything," said Matt Abraham, Norm Thompson's Vice President of IT.

Up and Running

Varolii got the solution up and running for Norm Thompson in less than three weeks, deploying applications for Order Shipping Notification, Returns Acknowledgement, Exchange Shipping Notification, and Back-order Update.

Norm Thompson decided to deliver phone notifications as their primary channel based on initial customer input. Varolii took the company through the process of Message Mastering™, crafting the right message for the intended audience using professional voice actors to reflect the persona of the Norm Thompson brand.

NormThompson

CLIENT

Norm Thompson Outfitters

CHALLENGE

Reduce inbound order status calls to keep agents focused on selling and increase customer satisfaction through proactive contact.

SOLUTION

Varolii's interactive and personalized order status application.

RESULTS

- 86% customer participation rate
- 87% of customers provided positive feedback
- 34% of customers indicated they would choose Norm Thompson over other retailers because of Varolii communications
- 35% of customers chose to receive monthly Varolii communications for special promotions and sales

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- Steve Jones

Norm Thompson Outfitters, Vice President of Marketing

Customers Rave

Norm Thompson went live with Varolii right before the busy holiday season. During this time, whenever a customer called to place a new order, the agent asked if they would like to be automatically updated on their order status. Varolii then monitored the company's databases, extracted the relevant order information in real-time, assembled the personalized voice messages, and delivered customized phone calls to deliver the requested updates.

The results showed tremendous improvement over business as usual. Varolii succeeded in meeting one of the company's primary objectives of reducing inbound service calls: only two percent of notification recipients said they called in to check on their orders – significantly fewer than the amount of customers who did not receive a notification.

Further, after just four weeks, a third-party survey documented that:

- 86% of recipients responded positively to the Varolii communications
- 87% said they would choose the service again
- 34% said they would choose Norm Thompson over another retailer because of the notification service
- 35% expressed interest in receiving once-a-month notification on special promotions and sales

Expanding Across the Enterprise

By providing this proactive, customer-driven service, Norm Thompson has gained a new competitive advantage. “It's given us a unique way to be a pioneer again,” says Jones. “Varolii has given us a great opportunity to jump ahead of our competitors.”

Norm Thompson has since extended its use of Varolii by notifying customers if their orders will not be delivered by the expected date, a particular benefit during the holiday season.

Jones sees even more potential for leveraging Varolii in the future. “More of our tasks can be automated to improve service and reduce labor costs,” he says. “Further, there are potential applications with Varolii for cross-selling, up-selling, and viral marketing – enabling customers to forward alerts about special promotions or events to their family and friends free of charge. This feature can significantly extend the reach of our original marketing effort.”

ABOUT VAROLII

Varolii® provides on-demand communication software and services that enable organizations to more effectively reach and interact with their customers and employees, getting the best result from every interaction.

www.Varolii.com

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