

Improving Customer Service and Productivity

Varolii helped Alaska Airlines reap a three-month ROI with interactive customer communications.



Alaska Airlines was looking for a more effective way to get time-sensitive information to passengers without draining internal resources. By delivering personalized itineraries to thousands of passengers within minutes of a flight change, Varolii has not only enhanced the airline's customer service, but also cut costs, resulting in a rapid return on investment.

Looking for an Improved Process

Consistently at the forefront of technological integration, as the first airline to sell tickets online and the first carrier in the world to allow customers to check in for flights via the Internet, Alaska Airlines was looking for an even more effective way to serve customers.

According to the airline, proactively informing passengers when their flights are changed is a critical element of customer service. Traditionally, when weather conditions or other factors cause flight delays and cancellations, Alaska had to pull a large number of its agents off inbound sales calls to personally contact each affected customer. On this one-by-one basis, agents were often unable to reach all the passengers in time. This was not only frustrating to Alaska and its customers, but also affected the airline's revenue potential: when many passengers needed to be contacted, the wait for inbound calls could increase to as much as 30 minutes, negatively affecting customer service, loyalty and retention.

High Quality Interaction with Seamless Integration

Varolii integrated tightly with the airline's Sabre reservations system and customer contact databases, accommodated complex business rules, interacted through multiple communications channels, and automatically registered customer responses. And, as a hosted service, Varolii did not place an additional burden on the airline's IT resources.

Varolii designed a personalized voice message to communicate the details of each passenger's new itinerary including airline, flight number, departure date, departure time, and gate number. The messages are composed of high-quality voice recordings, with only the passenger's name read through text-to-speech technology. Recipients can use their keypad to confirm the new itinerary, connect back to a live agent, or forward the message to others.

Alaska Airlines
Horizon Air

CLIENT

Alaska Airlines

CHALLENGE

Enhance customer service levels without tying up internal resources.

SOLUTION

Interactive customer communications that notify thousands of customers of flight status with options to self-serve within minutes.

RESULTS

- Immediate (three-month) ROI
- 66% cost savings per customer interaction
- Improved customer service
- Increased speed in contacting customers
- Allowed agents to focus on more revenue generating inbound calls

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“I’ve done a lot of ROI studies of our technologies and this is by far the quickest payback I’ve seen. And the payback is more than financial.”

*- Karen Wells
Alaska Airlines, Manager of Network Operations*

While the Varolii system is interacting with customers, Alaska can view real-time reports on all facets of the delivery, including how customers are responding, how long they’ve listened, if they’ve forwarded the message to others, how many messages have been left on answering machines, and more.

High Scalability

In the first few weeks, Varolii developed a solution that successfully communicated with more than 100,000 passengers.

“We never would have been able to reach all those people otherwise,” says Wells.

“Without Varolii, we would have had to pull agents off of inbound calls to notify people – which would have been devastating to our service level,” she says. “And even then, we wouldn’t have been able to reach everybody. We would have had people showing up at the airports not knowing they had been rebooked.”

Instead, Alaska was able to keep its agents focused on inbound calls, maintaining a remarkably low wait time, “two to three minutes, not thirty,” Wells notes. “By using Varolii to notify people of their new itineraries, we could keep our agents creating revenue.”

Impressed with initial results of the Varolii solution, Alaska quickly expanded its implementation of the service, adding email and wireless devices to passengers’ notification options.

Maximizing Service - Minimizing Costs

Soon after implementing Varolii, Alaska Airlines realized significant benefits:

Increased Revenue – Because Alaska’s agents now have more time to answer inbound sales calls, the airline generates greater revenues.

Cost Savings – While each agent call costs the airline approximately \$1.60, the automated Notifications cost only \$0.54 – a 66 percent savings.

Scalability – While agents can make an approximate 500 calls per hour, Varolii can scale to simultaneously contact 20,000 or more.

Customer Approval – Alaska has received numerous compliments on the service, but not one negative comment to date.

Simple to Manage – Because internal staff can create, manage, and edit Varolii applications themselves without having to do any “coding,” the airline is also saving considerably on consulting services.

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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