

AVIVA™ Improves Support Desk with Live Chat

About Aviva

Aviva is a leading provider of life and pension products in Europe (including the UK) with substantial positions in other markets around the world, making it the world's sixth largest insurance group based on gross worldwide premiums at 31 December 2009. Aviva's main activities are long-term savings, fund management and general insurance with worldwide sales of £45.1 billion and £380 billion of funds under management. Employing in excess of 46,000 employees serving over 53 million customers in 28 countries around the world.

The Case for Support Desk Live Chat

Aviva is the world's 6th largest insurance group, with over 46,000 employees and around 53 million customers worldwide. As with all organisations of this size, Aviva faces many challenges, one of which is managing the people and the technology that they use. In 2007, the IT support division was providing technical support via phone and email, two costly channels. Two senior support managers at this time were chatting via instant messenger and they quickly recognized an opportunity: use live chat as a channel to provide technical support to those employees.

Within Aviva each employee's computer contains the contact information for the various company departments, listing phone numbers and general email addresses. The addition of a new contact channel, to support in excess of 46,000 people requires some significant planning. Mark Bennett, head of the IT Service centre within Aviva commented "In 2009 we completed the addition of a chat icon to the desktops and watched staff embrace it. We were surprised how fast adoption took place and just a year on, we know that 77% of employees have tried our chat service."

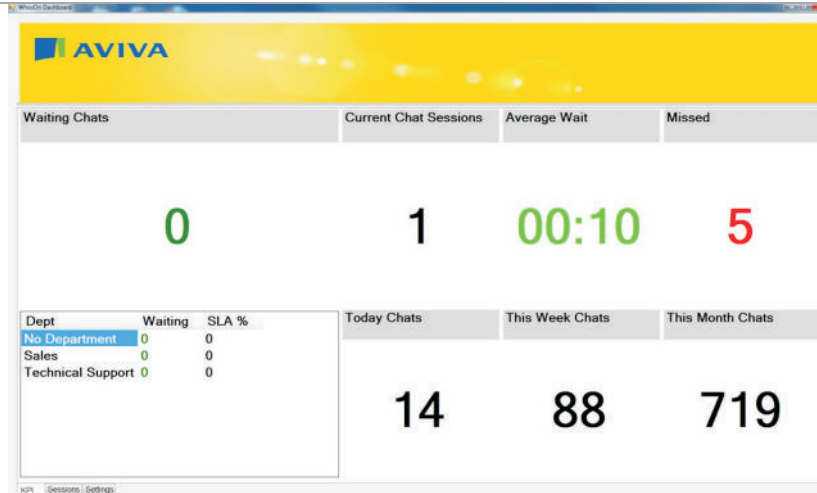
A portion of the call center support analysts were assigned the additional duty of handling chat. "In our experience, having analysts handle both phone and chat support cases hasn't been as effective, we're now separating those duties" said Mark. While some organizations encourage agents to take as many chats as they feel capable of handling, Aviva set a limit on concurrent chats using a standard feature in WhosOn. "We wanted to ensure a quality experience and shorter resolution times and felt that could be best achieved if our agents were limited to 3 chat sessions at one time."

Live Chat Customization

For any large organization, an opportunity to refine operations exists when there is good access to data and reports. "We looked at a number of live chat providers and found the reports and metrics available in WhosOn to be more detailed and advanced. We have the ability to create custom reports and work towards continual improvement of the live chat channel" said Mark. To cement the commitment to improvement, Aviva commissioned Parker Software to design a contact/call centre dashboard which is displayed on seven flat-screen monitors within the contact centre. A variety of metrics are available to staff and management, such as the average wait time before live chats are taken, number of live chats missed and more (see image below). With these numbers, Aviva set about improvements like becoming more efficient in the provision of live chat. "As we became more efficient we were able to reduce the number of analysts handling live chat and reallocate those FTEs to other areas to provide service."



Contact Centre Live Chat Wallboard



Live Chat an Alternative Contact Approach

One number in particular paints a picture of how live chat has changed Aviva's operations. "We know that nearly 25% of our contact volume has shifted to the live chat channel. The availability of data allows us to see that the number of cases has not changed significantly; employees are just transitioning to the live web chat which is good because agents can handle multiple cases. This shift means the company can reduce its expenditure: telephony infrastructure to support 40,000 people can be very expensive. By comparison, live chat is not."

Another customization which added significantly to the efficiency of live chat was the addition of a 'Request Monitoring' feature. WhosOn already provides a whisper feature where other members of staff can view the live chat and 'whisper' input to the agent. 'Request monitoring' adds a button to the live chat window which allows the analyst to request the assistance of senior analysts to resolve a case.

"Since our live chat application is for support of employees, the site monitoring features go largely unused. I would estimate we only use 30% of the features offered by WhosOn, but that 30% has added considerably to the contact centre operation at Aviva. The product is solid and we look forward to the forthcoming enhancements."

Live Chat Becomes the Preferred Support Contact Channel

In the eighteen months since the introduction of WhosOn live web chat for technical support it has become a preferred channel for support. When asked about the future for chat at Aviva Mark explained that there is a strong appetite for live chat across departments. "Since launch we have been receiving requests from many departments that interact with our 46,000 plus staff, including Human Resources (HR). Because we're well beyond a trial and the benefits are well established, offering web chat to support other departments will go quickly."

Key Highlights

Aviva's European division recognized an opportunity to cut costs in the provision of technical support to their 46,000 + workforce through the implementation of live chat technology.

Eighteen months since deployment to the desktops, 77% of staff have made use of chat.

One quarter of all support cases have shifted from traditional call center contact to the live chat tool.

The addition of web chat has resulted in operational savings of over £1 million annually.