Five9

Bernard Success Story
Reaping Results from a Pure Cloud Solution

"All American" US-based contact center outsourcer Bernard initially employed an on-premise contact center system for outbound calls and a cloud solution for inbound calls. Moving to a single, blended cloud solution from Five9 saved time and money while improving agent productivity, post-call processes, and capacity for future innovation.

BERNARD

Company Profile
Bernard is a leading US provider of contact center outsourcing to major telco companies and others.

- Customers include five of the largest cable companies in America
- Up to 400 agents, working remotely and from three contact centers
- Approximately 230,000 inbound/outbound calls per month

Industry
Contact center outsourcing

Website
www.bernard.com

Challenges
- Extensive agent training for separate inbound and outbound systems
- Data management and reporting a laborious manual process
- Outdated, premise-based outbound dialing solution

Solution
- Blended inbound/outbound cloud telephony solution from Five9
- Significant operational cost savings
- Scalability to add or subtract seats quickly
- Increased number of contacts per hour by 160 percent
- Compliant dialing of cell phones
- Integration of social and mobile customer engagement

Company Background
Based in Daytona Beach, Florida, Bernard provides comprehensive inbound and outbound contact center services for leading US telecommunications companies, including five of the top 10 cable companies in America. The company is the nation's only complete provider of back-office services to the cable industry and has been the "Preferred Billing and Customer Care Provider" for the National Cable Television Cooperative since 2008. Bernard prides itself on creating jobs in the US and focuses on hiring veterans and military spouses.

From three US-based contact centers and home offices across 22 states, up to 400 Bernard customer care agents handle a total of roughly 230,000 calls each month. Approximately 60 percent of call activity is outbound, including new customer acquisition, subscriber upgrades, and other targeted sales and marketing campaigns. Inbound calls range from billing inquiries and payments to technical support and sales. Bernard firmly believes that there is no difference between customer care and selling. When it comes to customer retention and growth, every contact counts.

Inadequate Existing Solutions
Previously, Bernard employed two separate contact center systems: an on-premise system for outbound calls and a cloud solution for inbound calls. Before the company's call center agents could make or answer calls, they had to complete extensive training on both systems, each very different from the other. Separate systems for inbound and outbound calls also required separate data analysis and reporting, making production of client reports a laborious, manual process.

In addition, each of the incumbent systems had its own shortcomings. The premise-based phone solution had become outdated, and upgrading it would have required a significant capital expenditure and extra IT support staff. The company's old cloud solution, on the other hand, lacked the ability to conduct outbound dialing on the scale that Bernard's large customers required.

The Power of Simplification
"To replace the two contact center systems, we began looking for an easier to use, more cost-effective solution, and we found it in the Five9 Virtual Contact Center," says Matt Zemon, president and chief executive officer of Bernard. "Five9 gives us all of the functionality that we were looking for from our two disparate solutions and combines them into one single solution that enables us to continue to grow our business."

"With the Five9 blended solution, we only have to train agents on a single platform, and that training is applicable no matter what type of calls they are making or receiving," says Zemon. Post-call analysis and reporting is also much easier. "Five9 enabled us to automate the entire client reporting process, saving us hours of tedious work every month."

Zemon also notes that implementation of the Five9 platform went extremely smoothly, thanks to the Five9 Professional Services organization, which guided Bernard through the transition process from start to finish. "The Five9 migration team did an excellent job helping us achieve all our goals as quickly as possible," he says. "The certification Five9 provided prior to going live enabled us to rapidly become completely self-sufficient."

Reducing Costs and Unpredictability

By consolidating from two platforms to Five9, Bernard avoided a significant capital outlay to upgrade its premise system, as well as slashed ongoing expenses, including staffing costs. The company no longer requires the services of a three-member overnight data processing team, and two general telephony support roles have been reduced.

"There's no question that using Five9 has reduced our overall operating costs," says Zemon. "Besides additional staff, we used to have a huge number of phone lines coming into our call centers before we went to a soft phone solution. Moving from phone lines to Internet bandwidth has slashed our telephony charges in half."

In addition, the Five9 cloud solution and its pay-as-you-go pricing enables Bernard to keep costs predictable and controlled, as there are no upfront investments or bloated IT maintenance budgets to contend with. Depending on seasonal needs, the number of telesales agents Bernard requires flexes up and down. "Since our Five9 solution is completely in the cloud, we can scale up or down almost instantaneously based on the needs of our clients," explains Zemon. Bernard agents and supervisors can be added anywhere; all they need is a headset, a computer, and an Internet connection. "We can set up new clients in hours, rather than the days or weeks it took with our old solution."

Increasing Productivity Across the Company

Client setup is just one area of increased efficiency for Bernard. The Five9 solution's out-of-the-box integration with Salesforce.com allows Bernard to more efficiently store and manage call information in its CRM. "Our supervisors and managers can monitor agent operations in near real time from any device anywhere, and post-call teams can support post-call activities in near real time without duplicating efforts."

Five9 has also made Bernard agents more productive. Features such as powerful predictive dialing capabilities and an intuitive user interface empower agents to handle myriad types of calls and make the most of every minute.

"The solution's enhanced answering machine detection capability is also excellent," notes Zemon. "And its wireless dialing option allows our agents to continue making outbound calls to cellular phones in a TCPA-compliant manner. That's extremely important because half of the numbers on some of our clients' lists are wireless. Since switching to Five9, we have experienced a 160 percent increase in contacts per hour."

Foundation for Future Innovation

"Another advantage of going with a total cloud solution is that it won't become outdated, as our premise-based system did," asserts Zemon. "We pay attention to the Five9 product roadmap. Five9 innovation becomes our innovation. In essence, we get to improve the product we offer our clients without having to pay for R&D ourselves."

Bernard is looking forward to offering its clients the ability to engage their customers via social media and mobile devices using Five9 SoCoCare. In the near future, the company will be able to combine rich social feeds from blogs, articles, and social network posts with the ability to reply and direct-message authors—all from one, unified platform. Bernard contact center agents will be able to process these social interactions like any other customer interaction. "We expect to see demand for a cross-channel, social, and mobile customer experience increase significantly in the future, and, when it does, we will be ready thanks to Five9."

"Five9 gives us all of the functionality that we were looking for from two disparate solutions and combines them into one single solution that enables us to continue to grow our business."

Matt Zemon
President and Chief Executive Officer,
Bernard

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Call 800.553.8159 or visit
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