Five9

Sentinel
Success Story

Improving Contact Center Operations
Through the Cloud

Sentinel Customer Acquisition struggled with a premise-based dialer that was expensive and out-of-date. When the company implemented Five9, Sentinel found that the ease-of-use, seamless integration with third party applications, and scalability of the cloud enabled it to maximize the efficiency of its contact center—resulting in consistent profits.

SENTINEL
CUSTOMER ACQUISITION

Company Profile
Sentinel is a growing, interactive contact center that provides inbound and outbound communications for its clients.

- Experts in business-to-business and business-to-consumer customer acquisition
- Services include lead generation, sales and service programs, and converting abandoned-cart data into paying customers
- Contact center with 75+ agents

Industry
Business acquisition

Website
www.shsgroup.net

Challenges

- Outdated, premise-based phone system
- Large expenses for maintenance and IT support
- Lack of flexibility to scale quickly
- Required seamless integration with third party solutions

Solution

- Blended inbound/outbound solution from Five9
- Real-time agent performance monitoring
- Seamless integration with other applications

Company Background

Texas-based Sentinel Customer Acquisition is an interactive contact center with expertise in business-to-business and business-to-consumer customer acquisition. The company works with clients to analyze their business needs and determine solutions that will increase sales through new customer acquisition. Sentinel supports clients' inbound and outbound campaigns, and its services include lead generation campaigns, sales and service programs, and converting abandoned-cart data into paying customers.

The company's contact center employs 75+ agents who perform both inbound and outbound calls. Sentinel currently averages thousands of inbound calls per week, and can easily scale during large direct mail campaign mail drops using the Five9 system. The company also makes between 40,000 and 70,000 outbound dials per day, 30% of which are connected.

The Limitations of an On-Premise Solution

Prior to implementing Five9, Sentinel used the Siemens dialer from SER Solutions, which wasn't cost-effective. The dialer required a $250,000 upfront investment, plus yearly license fees in excess of $25,000 to receive technical support. If technical problems did occur, the wait to get a resolution on any issue ranged from a couple of hours to several days. Additionally, Sentinel needed to employ in-house, certified IT experts to manage and maintain the system. Moreover, the long-distance charges Sentinel incurred with their on-premise system were incredibly steep—between $30,000 and $50,000 every month.

The last straw, according to Sentinel CEO Jason Myers, was when Siemens stopped providing updates and support for its dialer. "We learned an important lesson: Never buy a dialer from a company whose main business isn't dialing technology," said Myers.

It was clear that Sentinel needed to find a better solution.

Switching to the Cloud

When Sentinel decided to make a change, Myers and his team looked exclusively for a cloud contact center solution. "We believed that technology was headed toward the cloud, and clearly that's where it has gone," said Myers.

With the cloud, Sentinel would get the functionalities it needed without having to set up, maintain, or update hardware. It also would be more cost-effective, because there wouldn't be up-front capital expenditures and the company wouldn't need to hire IT experts to maintain the system. Additionally, calling rates would be significantly cheaper than the landline rates they were previously paying.

Myers and his team evaluated several cloud offerings and found that Five9 was the best fit for Sentinel. "It came down to Five9 and Ytel," said Myers, "We ran both systems simultaneously and Ytel's X5 phone caused many issues because we had to have its soft phones installed and synchronized properly."

However, there was another reason why Sentinel selected Five9. "We ultimately decided to go with Five9 because of the people," said Myers "I really enjoyed working with the professionals at Five9."

Improving Agent Efficiency

Sentinel agents spend approximately 75% of their time taking inbound calls, while the remaining 25% is devoted to outbound calls. To get agents up and running quickly when they start their workday, Sentinel wanted to avoid making agents log into multiple systems—such as a softphone, computer, and dialer screen—to begin taking or making calls. As part of the Five9 Agent Desktop Toolkit, the CTI Web Services API connects the Five9 web-based softphone to Sentinel's other applications—including its agent scripting application—so agents login only once and can begin taking calls in as little as 60 seconds.

"We want our agents to be as efficient as possible," says Myers. "The faster we can get them logged in, the more successful we are."

Utilizing the intelligent routing capabilities of the Five9 Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) cloud software also helps Sentinel provide a better customer experience by ensuring the right agents handle the right calls. Features such as skills-based routing put calls in the right queue and with the most knowledgeable agent.

Supervisor Control

To ensure contact center operations run smoothly and effectively, agents are monitored closely.

"Supervisors are always listening in on calls," says Myers. "At any given time, there are seven to eight people outside the production floor listening to calls in real time."

Not only do supervisors silently monitor calls, but they are also empowered to escalate from silent monitoring to "whisper coaching" advice to agents, or even "barging in" on calls to speak with all parties if necessary. Says Myers, "Real-time coaching equals real-time sales conversion—and that means revenue growth."

Integrating with Third Party Systems

Sentinel uses both Lime Light CRM and IgniteProfit in its contact center. With Five9 cloud APIs, the company seamlessly integrates Five9 with both solutions, enabling Sentinel to develop comprehensive reports tailored to its management team.

"The depth of real-time reporting that we get from Five9 is incredible," says Myers.

Scaling with Clients' Needs

Although Sentinel serves customers in many industries, one of the busiest periods for the company is the political season. The ability to scale up or down as needed is vital to Sentinel's continued success. When the company acquires a political client, they need to add seats quickly.

"In the political season, things move at lightning speed and our clients cannot afford to wait," explains Myers, "When a big campaign comes in, we have to be up and running in less than 48 hours. The great thing about Five9 is that I can put in an order today, and tomorrow 50 stations are live. The ability to scale on demand quickly and easily with Five9 has helped us be successful."

In the September through November timeframe, things are especially hectic at Sentinel and big election years are even more crucial for the company. When national politics take center stage, especially during presidential elections, Sentinel heavily relies on the Five9 system's ability to easily scale up or down as needed.

Relationships and Results

When it comes down to it, what Myers appreciates most about Five9 is the relationships he has established. He knows that he can pick up the phone at any time to call his account representative to resolve any issue.

"With Five9, I know I always have someone who will work on my behalf to find answers and get problems solved," said Myers. "In terms of service and satisfaction, Five9 excels."

The relationship that Myers enjoys with the Five9 team is enhanced by results Sentinel has realized thanks to the robust capabilities of the Five9 system.

"Our dialer and contact center expenses have been cut by 60-70% easily," says Myers. "We've been in business for six years, and we didn't see legitimate profit until we switched over to Five9."

Get More Information
Call 800.553.8159 or visit
www.Five9.com