

# Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

## Aspect Software Helps Knowsley Council Get Closer to its Customers

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**Cllr Brian O'Hare**

*Cabinet Member for Corporate and Customer Services, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council*

**The Company**

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council has earned an enviable reputation as a frontrunner in developing accessible services strategies for the citizens this community in the Northwest area of England – and has won several prestigious public sector awards.

**The Business Challenge**

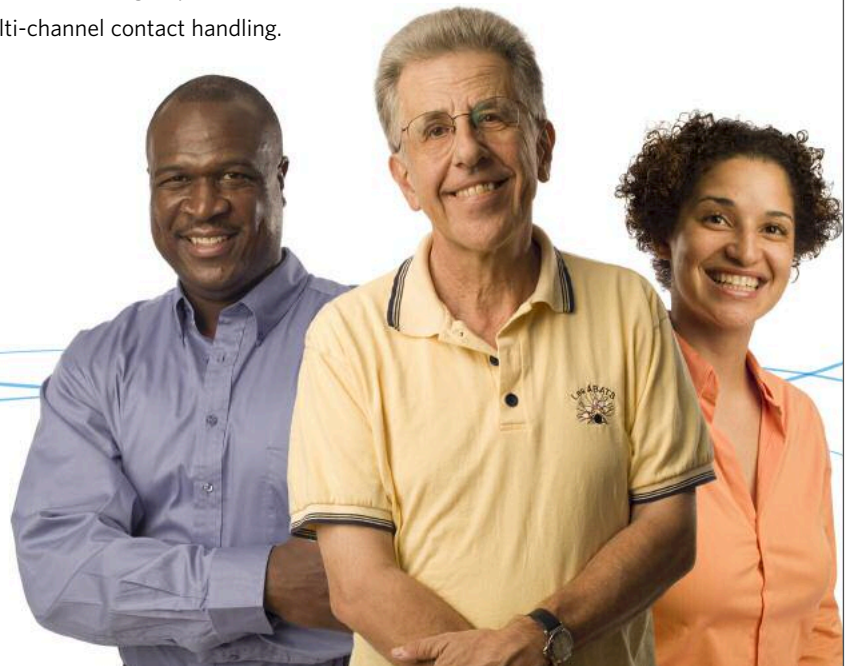
- Refocus business processes.
- Provide more contact options.
- Integrate services.

**The Solution**

Deploy Aspect® Contact Server to manage every element of customer contact while lowering costs, increasing revenues, and turning customer contacts into long-term relationships. Implement Aspect® CallCenter® ACD and reporting tools to efficiently route and queue calls, while improving customer satisfaction, reducing expenses, gathering market data and increasing revenues.

**The Results**

- Improved CRM.
- Better control of call centre administration.
- Enhanced response management.
- More effective resource allocation.
- Improved staff and call handling performance reporting.
- Ability to target specific customer groups.
- Easy transition to multi-channel contact handling.



### **Forward Looking**

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC) in the Northwest of England is one of the most forward-looking local councils in the UK in the way it uses technology to support the local community.

Its internationally-recognised Community Information Programme provides access to more than 4,500 personal computers in over 165 locations (including libraries, schools and community centres) through a broadband network, as well as via other channels (such as the phone, kiosks, Digital Interactive TV or the Council's face-to-face 'One Stop Shops').

Knowsley was awarded 'Beacon Status for Accessible Services' in 2001-02 and 'Pathfinder' status the following year by the UK Government. It is now the lead authority for the Government's National Project on workflow.

Today, the Council employs 7,500 people.

### **A Vision of eService**

Knowsley's eCouncil vision is that all Council services will, where possible, be delivered or supported electronically and be citizen-focused. It sees eServices as key to achieving this vision, insisting that eServices must not only be accessible but also convenient, responsive, innovative, integrated, high quality and cost-effective.

In 2000, Knowsley set-up a contact centre in Kirby, England to deliver speedier and more consistent service as well as help achieve Government targets for electronic access to services. The centre handles enquiries relating to: Housing Benefits, Council Tax, Planning & Building Control and Street Services. It also delivers frontline service on housing repairs and management, including lettings, for the Knowsley Housing Trust.

In 2002, the Council expanded its contact centre by increasing staff numbers and improving the technologies used. This included replacing an existing Automatic Call Distributor (ACD) that was limited in its functionality and ability to carry out on-site, real-time changes to call handling business rules. It also had limited call logging intelligence. The new ACD needed to integrate with Knowsley's Telewest Centrex service and to a planned Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. It also had to support the thin client environment used within the Council's 'One Stop Shops' and contact centre—an environment based on Citrix Meta Frame technology.

Following an extensive competitive tendering process where many options were considered, Knowsley placed an order for a 50-agent Aspect® CallCenter® ACD to more efficiently route and queue calls, together with Aspect Contact Server, which simplifies the management of email, Web, and voice contacts by allowing contact center managers to write a single set of business rules that use customer data to direct the routing of contacts coming across all channels. The installation was completed within six weeks from the date of order.

### **Improved Management Control**

Aspect CallCenter ACD enables Knowsley to answer and manage calls in a more structured and organised manner. By creating a balance between multiple service calls and single service calls for employees with generic working skills, it has also delivered greater job variety and satisfaction. Call handling performance has improved as a result of the wide range of call management options available.

Management can now better control ACD configuration, more effectively deploy customer contact staff resources by better matching skills to tasks, and gather intelligence on call volumes, call patterns and levels of performance.

Agents have also benefited. They now only receive calls for which they've been trained, are able to more easily confer with team leaders about caller enquiries and receive regular coaching and support.

### **Another Dimension**

Aspect® Contact Server software adds another dimension. Through integration with a new Onyx CRM system, it has facilitated additional services, including the delivery of relevant customer data to agents' PCs as calls are delivered to their desktops. By identifying callers' numbers and matching these with Citizen Records on the database, the system is able to recognise who has called, whether they called before, what they called about and then route them to the agent they spoke to last or to a specialist.

"The Aspect Software contact centre [solution] gives us with the sophisticated features and management control we need to fulfil our service commitments," claimed Kevin Peers, Deputy Director of Corporate and Customer Services, Knowsley MBC. "Our customer service managers can dynamically manage the routing of customer contacts in response to shifting patterns of demand."

Increased flexibility is exemplified by Knowsley's ability to react to events such as emergency road closures that can adversely impact services such as refuse collection.

"We're now able to record information for callers from the affected area explaining the situation and advising them of revised collection times," explained Peers. "This will satisfy most callers and allow our contact centre staff to focus on customers needing more detailed or personal assistance."

### **A Multi-Channel Future**

Aspect Software provides Knowsley with an easy upgrade path to email, Web, short message systems (SMS), and other online media—without having to invest in expensive new systems and system integration work. Knowsley is also examining ways in which its 'One Stop Shop' staff can link to the Aspect® CallCenter® ACD during quiet periods to help with telephone enquiries.

Cllr Brian O'Hare, Cabinet Member for Corporate and Customer Services said, "Aspect Software demonstrated a clear understanding of our requirements and seemed best placed to meet our needs both in terms of the way its products would integrate to our front and back-office systems and the way it would allow us to seamlessly add new customer contact channels."

### **Meeting Targets**

The new contact centre is helping Knowsley meet tough service delivery performance targets set both locally by the Council and nationally by the government. "The combination of Knowsley's CRM development and the Aspect CallCenter ACD affords us the capacity to offer services that transcend Council boundaries (e.g. through partnership agreements and as part of consortia) as the general structure of service provision arrangements changes nationally in response to the government's Local Government Online ambitions," said Michael Durkan, Head of Accessible Services, Knowsley MBC.

#### About Aspect Software

Aspect Software, Inc. founded the contact center industry and is now the world's largest company solely focused on Internet Protocol (IP) and traditional voice-based products and services for customer service, collections, and sales and telemarketing business processes. Each day, Aspect Software powers more than 125 million customer-company interactions at thousands of in-house and outsourced contact centers around the globe. Its trusted Signature product line offers automatic call distributors (ACDs), dialers, voice portals and computer telephony integration (CTI). The company's leading Contact Center Performance Optimization product line provides workforce management, quality management, performance management and campaign management applications. And, its pioneering Unified IP Contact Center product line delivers a comprehensive, multichannel solution. Headquartered in Chelmsford, Mass., Aspect Software has operations across the Americas, Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia Pacific. For more information, visit [www.aspect.com](http://www.aspect.com).

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