

# Shop At Home, Inc.

Self-service and CRM integration manage rapid growth in home shopping

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**Wayne Lambert**

*Executive Vice President and CIO  
Shop At Home, Inc.*

**The Company**

The second-oldest television shopping network, Shop At Home reaches more than 61 million households via broadcast, cable and satellite television.

**The Business Challenge**

- Better automate customer order process and order status inquiries.
- Improve agent productivity.
- Reduce productivity costs.
- Maintain customer service levels.

**The Solution**

Aspect® Customer Self Service™ is a full-featured voice portal platform that can use public switched telephone network (PSTN) and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) connectivity to deliver voice self-service applications. It can automate transactions normally performed by agents while giving customers increased convenience and privacy. It was integrated with Shop At Home's existing Aspect® CallCenter® ACD that queues, routes and provides reporting for customer calls and Aspect® Enterprise Contact Server™, which offers a graphical interface that integrates with the customer relationship management software.

**The Results**

- Rapid response to changing conditions.
- Increased sales.
- Improved convenience for customers.
- Reduced calls to agents - voice portal now handles 10 percent of orders.



"All of our upgrades with Aspect Software have been smooth. When we've needed help, they've been here."

**Bob Miller**

Vice President of  
Information Technology,  
Shop At Home, Inc.

Looking for a Tiger Woods rookie card or a diamond bracelet for your wife's birthday? Shop At Home, a fast-growing television and Internet retailer of specialty collectibles, creates a shopping experience that's pleasant and convenient for customers, and efficient for the company, with Aspect Software solutions.

Aspect® Customer Self Service™, the first Aspect Software application to be implemented at Shop At Home, cuts telephone ordering time in half. Aspect Customer Self Service is an interactive voice recognition product that supports advanced, multilingual speech technology that enables sophisticated self-service interactions.

But that's just the start of the television network's plans to improve customer service by phone and Web through integrated customer relationship management (CRM).

Shop At Home—the nation's fourth largest television home shopping network and the thirteenth largest television broadcaster—reaches more than 61 million cable and satellite households through its network of affiliated broadcast systems and owned and operated television stations. The company sells specialty consumer products, such as sports collectibles, autographed memorabilia, knives, coins and gemstones over broadcast, cable and satellite television and through its website [www.collectibles.com](http://www.collectibles.com).

Shop At Home headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee, is home to its state-of-the-art digital broadcast facility, customer contact center, website, and warehouse and shipping facilities. Staffed by rotating shifts of 100 agents specializing in sales and customer service, the contact center reaches its peak traffic time at 2 a.m. EST, when it receives from 500 to 600 calls, mostly from men ordering sports collectibles.

With an average sale at close to \$200, Shop At Home serves a discriminating clientele. The Shop At Home product-selection strategy is obviously on target. The network has experienced 40 percent revenue growth each year for the last five years.

#### Rebuilt Infrastructure Supports Quality CRM

To keep up with such rapid growth, Shop At Home is reinventing its technology infrastructure to support integrated customer relationship management. The company has installed an Oracle database and financial, inventory, and human resources systems, upgraded its Retek customer transaction system, and launched its [collectibles.com](http://collectibles.com) website.

As a key part of this technology overhaul to increase capacity and ensure customer satisfaction, Shop At Home chose Aspect Customer Self Service to handle ordering and customer service issues, such as order status and package tracking.

"We chose Aspect Software after an extensive evaluation of at least four systems," explained Lambert. "Aspect Customer Self Service has an easy-to-use interface that allows us to make script changes and updates faster, modify applications to meet specific needs, and perform most of the maintenance in-house once the applications are launched."

And the scalability of the solution allows for increased throughput of orders beyond the scope of an agent-based solution, translating into additional sales and revenue. Within two days of launching the new Aspect Customer Self Service automated solution, Shop At Home realized \$50,000 in sales—\$30,000 of which was in the first afternoon alone.

#### Automation Wins Customer Acceptance

Aspect Customer Self Service gives customers the convenience, the constant access and the privacy of self-service with the option of requesting live assistance. More than just an IVR system, Aspect Customer Self Service lets customers use the touchtone telephone, speech recognition, email, fax and

the Web to perform self-service transactions around the clock. Customers can even switch from one medium to another during a single transaction.

Placing orders is simple. After watching televised presentations by a rotating group of on-air hosts, customers call a toll-free number and are prompted to choose a live agent or use the self-service application. For self-service, they enter their telephone number and are identified by the database. Customers can choose the current on-air item, which is automatically entered into their order, or they can select another item by keying in its numeric code. Aspect Customer Self Service confirms availability, prompts for credit card information, confirms the order, price and shipping requirements, and thanks the customer.

“All of the self-service prompts are recorded by our on-air talent, which lends a familiar touch,” added Lambert.

Whereas an agent-assisted call lasts about four minutes, a typical self-service order takes less than two minutes to complete.

The Retek customer transaction application records the order in real time so the customer can call back immediately with an order inquiry and talk to a live agent who can see the transaction on the customer service information screen.

With the Aspect Software solution, the percentage of customers choosing self-service has more than tripled. The network’s previous voice portal system was handling between two and three percent of daily sales and about the same percentage of customer service calls. Now self-service accounts for a consistent 10 percent of the total call volume, meeting Shop At Home’s goal.

#### **Totally Integrated Functionality is the Goal**

These technology upgrades are a major step in Shop At Home’s long-term plan to achieve what Lambert calls “totally integrated functionality.”

“We want to build applications once and use them to perform a number of different functions. For instance, Aspect Customer Self Service and our collectibles.com website use the same application programming interfaces to take orders, which are transferred to the Oracle database in real time. This is just one example of the level of integration we planned.” said Lambert.

#### **Aspect Software Provides a Smooth, Low-risk Growth Path**

Shop At Home has been an Aspect Software customer for more than five years. Bob Miller, Shop At Home’s Vice President of Information Technology, considers Aspect Software product upgrades and new product implementations to be “low risk.” “When we moved to Nashville from Knoxville, Aspect Software worked hard to make that a smooth transition. All of our upgrades with Aspect Software have been smooth. When we’ve needed help, they’ve been here,” said Miller.

Shop At Home views Aspect® Enterprise Contact Server™ and its applications as its contact server of choice to meet the high level of systems integration the company envisions between its contact center, website and retail CRM application.

“We are going to implement a seamless integration using Aspect Enterprise Contact Server capabilities and give our agents a single set of simplified rules to follow,” explained Miller. “All of this integration translates into better customer service. Our agents can focus on the customer rather than the system and make the customer ordering experience as pleasant and uncomplicated as possible.”

#### 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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