

message pad

success » story

Background

Lewisham Homesearch, the council and housing association partnership, has worked with Message Pad since 2006, relying on their contact centre services to handle calls from a diverse customer base. Recognising that the principal challenge for their own service is managing the huge peaks and troughs in call traffic, Lewisham Homesearch's choice of provider has brought them a cost effective solution regardless of demand levels – meaning a reliable service for Borough's customers and families.

A SERVICE FOR THE COMMUNITY

Due to the nature of the Lewisham Homesearch service and the process by which properties are advertised and made available, their priority requirement for a contact centre provider was flexibility; variability in call demand is huge, calls are only received on 4 days of the week and the service is not required in any week following a public holiday.



When the service is in use, call volumes can double or halve on a weekly basis depending upon the availability of properties within the Borough. With such an emphasis on flexibility and scalability, Message Pad utilised its 'People on Demand' bureau team of agents to ensure callers always receive a response when they call.

Aside from the flexibility required, there is also the challenge presented by such a diverse set of social and ethnic backgrounds of the Homesearch customers, many of whom have English as a second language. Recognising this aspect of the service from the start and incorporating specific training for the Message Pad agents has ensured a supportive customer experience is enjoyed by all callers irrespective of their background.

The development of a hybrid call handling application, drawing upon the Homesearch web based solution and the extended functionality of Message Pad's **intelligentContact** solution, was completed in three weeks and the service launched following a further week's training of agents in three of Message Pad's contact centres.

Lewisham Homesearch had previously outsourced this element of the service for a number of years but, since the launch of the Message Pad service, the London Borough of Lewisham has reported marked improvements. Indeed, initially awarded as a 12 month contract the service now operates on a rolling basis.

Feedback from all partners involved with the partnership pinpoint a number of key benefits that the Message Pad service has brought:

- Greater saleability of call handling resource giving improvements to the number of calls answered and speed of answering
- A more equitable commercial structure with payment for agent time used rather than for an inflexible fixed resource
- Availability of a back-up data capture application in the event of a temporary loss of Homesearch's web based solution
- Availability of digital call recordings of all inbound enquiries for query resolution
- Frequent and in depth management information
- Proactive and focussed account management.

Rob Peat, Message Pad's public sector services manager, commented:

"Whilst we were principally tasked with inbound call handling, we have also successfully completed outbound customer satisfaction research on behalf of the Borough which, we feel, has further cemented this successful relationship and we look forward to working with Lewisham Homesearch on many more projects now and in the future."



Benefits

- **Flexibility** – call traffic varies greatly requiring a solution which can always meet demand
- **Scalability** – Message Pad's unique 'People on Demand' facilities ensure all customers receive a prompt response
- **Proactive** – experienced account management ensures the service can anticipate and meet new challenges

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