



Case Study

1-800-flowers.com

1-800 Flowers.com® Realizes Dramatic Increase in Operational Efficiency with VPI's Agent Productivity Software

Business Profile

1-800-Flowers.com started as a chain of retail stores in the New York Metropolitan area in 1976 and has since expanded into one of the most recognized brands in the gift retailing and catalog industry.

Business Challenge

1-800-Flowers.com needed a unified system for accurately scheduling agents, reporting on performance and effectiveness, and distributing this information to its 2,000 contact center agents in real time across 9 sites.

Solution Overview

1-800 Flowers selected VPI's Activ! Performance Suite to handle real time distribution of key performance metrics directly to agent desktops as well as dashboard-based messaging and agent-centric eLearning.

Significant Benefits

- Higher Worktime Utilization
- Increased Performance and Service Levels
- Increased Agent Retention and Satisfaction
- Measure the Impact of Training
- Consolidated Scheduling and Reporting across all 9 sites

In 2005, well-known gift retailer 1-800-Flowers.com saw a significant jump in agent productivity and conversion rates within its nine-site call center operation, triggered by the adoption of VPI's **Activ! Performance Suite™** of contact center performance management solutions early in the year. With on-screen dashboards that allow each agent to monitor his or her performance in real time and a variety of other reporting, messaging and training tools, agents at 1-800-Flowers.com now are handling an average of five additional transactions per day with 1 to 3 percent increases in conversions and upsell. Result: more profit.

Wanted: Better Data

With up to 2,000 agents in nine locations handling orders for products from poinsettias to plush toys, managers at 1-800-Flowers.com face a daunting challenge in tracking agent performance and effectiveness. Traditionally, performance data was obtained by combining order and call data from separate company databases. This took too much time and effort, failed to supply real-time information, and provided no way to quickly share the results or intervene if agents were not meeting desired performance thresholds. "We're always looking for ways to increase our productivity and effectiveness," said Lou Orsi, Director of Vendor Relations and Strategic Projects for 1-800-Flowers.com. "Most of our reports were produced at the end of the day, and it is very difficult to react proactively when you're not accessing information in a timely manner. We needed real-time performance reports so that agents, managers and even our executive-level team could see how we were doing on any given day at any given hour. Our goal is to continually assess what we can do to make their lives easier."

One Stop with VPI

In searching for software to help maximize agent productivity, managers at 1-800-Flowers.com rejected a series of single-function applications that would have required integration of five or six different packages from different vendors to meet their objectives. Instead, they turned to VPI's **Activ! Performance Suite™** — an integrated set of performance tracking, reporting, messaging and training tools that offered the additional benefits of affordability and open architecture for easy integration into their existing IT environment. With VPI's **Activ! Intelligence** and **Activ! Coaching** modules in place, 1-800 Flowers.com began to see results almost immediately.

"We can measure anything that we track...Activ! Intelligence can capture that data and deliver the information to whomever you authorize to receive it. A huge benefit is that we can get all of this information from all of our nine sites."

-Lou Orsi
VICE PRESIDENT

Any Metrics, Any Time

Activ! Intelligence collects both real-time and historical performance information from multiple telephony and business systems — including 1-800-Flowers.com's Avaya inbound call management system, Pipkins Vantage Point workforce scheduling program, Voice Print's call recording and workforce performance optimization solution and an internal customer relationship management application — and then consolidates the data into reports with different views for agents, managers and executives. Significantly, data for all five company call centers and four outsourced partner sites can be merged into a single report.

Real-time metrics ranging from average talk time to sales volumes are displayed in customizable, "always-on" dashboards that run in a narrow horizontal band across agents' and managers' screens to provide on-the-spot insight into each agent's or group's productivity. "The dashboard has been fantastic because it allows agents to self-monitor and to see how they're doing on a daily and even hourly basis," Orsi said. "It has created a positive, competitive environment. No one wants to have the highest talk time." Historical metrics are presented in agent scorecards and web-based reports for in-depth analysis.

"Having all of the key performance indicators right in front of us has really enhanced operational efficiency. The dashboard has been fantastic because it allows agents to self-monitor and to see how they're doing on a daily and even hourly basis."

-Lou Orsi
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Dashboard News Flashes

Another key benefit for 1-800-Flowers.com is the real-time messaging function provided by **Activ! Intelligence**. With this tool, managers can send preshift announcements and bulletins of any kind directly to users' dashboards. These messages can be sent to an individual agent, a group of agents, an entire center or the entire staff, providing an efficient means of communicating policy changes, reminders or other information. This reduces management overhead and also yields a huge savings in paper.

Powerful Training Tools

VPI's **Activ! Performance Suite™** has also equipped 1-800-Flowers.com with an easy means of disseminating training materials as well as automatically intervening when agents are under-performing. With the **Activ! Coaching** module, training courses, follow-up quizzes and coaching tips can be delivered to agent dashboards either on a specific schedule or whenever a given agent falls above or below a predefined threshold in a certain activity. Unsatisfactory work habits can be flagged and corrected before any negative consequences are realized. These tools have particular value during peak periods such as Valentine's Day when the company must train a large number of new agents in a short period of time, and for ensuring that training materials delivered at any time are effective. "Our training team can create and send out a quiz based on training content that has just been provided, and then revise materials to clarify points that agents didn't understand," Orsi noted. "This has been a huge benefit."

More Transactions, More Profit

The real-time intelligence and other capabilities of VPI's **Activ! Performance Suite™** have generated significant returns for 1-800-Flowers.com, including a marked increase in worktime utilization, an average of five additional transactions per agent per day, 1 to 3 percent increases in conversion and upsell statistics, and a reduction in FTE requirements. Orsi gives much of the credit to the real-time visibility provided by Agentivity's dashboards: "Having all of the key performance indicators right in front of us has really enhanced operational efficiency." The data provided by **Activ! Coaching** has also made it possible to respond quickly if targets aren't being met, "It's vital to find out early on instead of waiting until the end of the day", and to set up an employee incentive plan, "Now we can easily identify who our top performers are". In these and other ways, VPI's **Activ! Performance Suite™** is helping 1-800-Flowers.com do internally what it does for its customers: smell the roses.