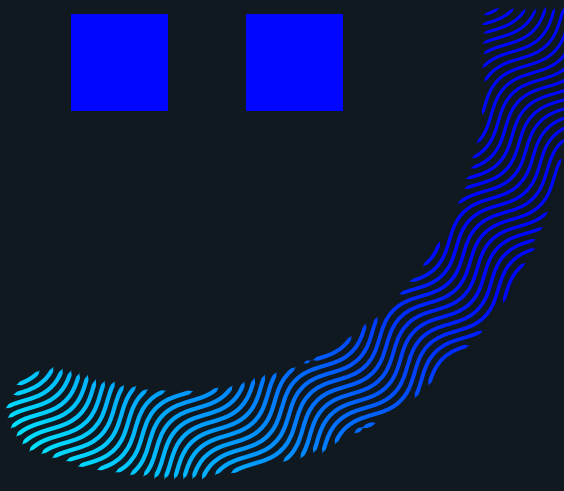Case Study

AvantGuard Increases Efficiency Amid Rapid Growth with WFM and EEM

A dedication to service, innovation, and technology has fueled steady organic growth for AvantGuard since the alarm monitoring company opened its doors in 1977. In recent years, the pace of growth has accelerated quickly due to multiple acquisitions that expanded AvantGuard's market in the U.S. and Canada. As the company rapidly added locations and agents to accommodate this growth, leaders knew they needed to evolve how they managed the AvantGuard workforce.

$550K SAVED IN **FIRST 7 MONTHS**

EXPECTED $940K SAVINGS OVER **NEXT 12 MONTHS**

REDUCED ↓ SCHEDULER HEADCOUNT BY 1 FTE

CUSTOMER PROFILE

ABOUT

AvantGuard is a premier provider of wholesale alarm monitoring, offering professional monitoring services, cloud monitoring, and hybrid partnerships. AG utilizes the most advanced monitoring technology with eight state-of-the-art, redundant call centers, along with skilled, caring operators who respond promptly and compassionately. AvantGuard proudly meets or exceeds all industry standards of excellence in North America.

INDUSTRY

Alarm monitoring

WEBSITE

www.agmonitoring.com

LOCATION

Headquartered in Ogden, Utah

AGENTS

600 agents

GOALS

- Improve agent retention
- Increase agent satisfaction
- Maintain service levels and forecast accurately amid rapid growth

PRODUCTS

- NICE IEX Workforce Management (WFM)
- NICE Employee Engagement Manager (EEM)
- NICE Value Realization Services (VRS)

FEATURES

- Forecast and schedule optimization engines
- Advanced reporting
- Automated intraday analysis and optimization
- Mobile app schedule access

NICE

Case Study

01 THE BEFORE

Unsustainable forecasting and scheduling processes and a part-time workforce

AvantGuard relies heavily on its agents to ensure that it is able to meet its goal of delivering the fastest response times in the industry. With much of its agent workforce drawn from nearby universities, the company must schedule and manage a large population of part-time employees whose availability changes every few months along with their classes.

Before implementing NICE Workforce Management (WFM) and Employee Engagement Manager (EEM), AvantGuard had to do all of this by hand, making scheduling a major pain point for the company. There were no formal WFM tools or processes in place. Shift coordinators and managers manually created and tracked schedules using spreadsheets, email, and chats—a process that was inefficient and error-prone. Agents were unable to view or interact with schedules and requesting time off was a cumbersome process that required supervisors to approve or deny each request.

02 DESIRE TO CHANGE

Accommodating rapid growth

With plans for continued growth, AvantGuard knew that it needed to scale its operations to meet the desired future. To simply add more people to its scheduling and forecasting teams would not be efficient, nor would it provide an optimal experience for its agents. The company turned to NICE WFM and EEM with Value Realization Services (VRS) to improve retention, service levels, and agent satisfaction.

03 THE SOLUTION

Modern workforce management with IEX WFM and EEM

AvantGuard had an aggressive timeline to implement the new solutions, and the company worked with NICE VRS to smooth the process. The partnership enabled AvantGuard to get the solutions up and running quickly while accommodating AvantGuard's unique contact center environment, including the lack of an automatic call distribution (ACD) system and its heavy reliance on part-time employees.

The team started by gathering availability from agents and getting them in the WFM system, setting up daily and weekly work rules, importing historical data into WFM, building forecasts, and scheduling out shifts for the agents. Once the system was configured appropriately, AvantGuard partnered with VRS to devise and deliver training materials, including e-learning modules and in-person learning, for agents and supervisors.

EEM was launched shortly after WFM, enabling AvantGuard to automate and improve a wide variety of multiskilled scheduling and planning activities. Features include intraday activity scheduling and alignment to actual needs; automation that virtually eliminated the shift coordinator role; and capabilities that replaced the attendance line and enabled agents to manage and update their own availability directly in EEM.

04 THE RESULTS

Better outcomes and fewer repeat contacts

AvantGuard fully integrated their NICE workforce management solution with guidance from VRS. They followed VRS' advice to reallocate shift coordinators to more value-added roles. The company realized an estimated savings of more than $550,000 in the first seven months alone by:

- Improving agent occupancy
- Reducing the cost of agent attrition
- Reducing staff time spent managing forecasts, schedules, and intraday demand
- Reducing supervisor time spent managing schedule changes
- Reducing overtime

The new solutions have freed supervisors from the need to serve as backup when agents are stretched thin, allowing them to spend more time providing guidance for their teams. Agents now have visibility into their schedules from their mobile devices and can update their own availability as often as they need to. They can use EEM, rather than the attendance line, to report absences and receive personalized communication when voluntary time off and shift changes are available.

NICE

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WFM also reduces the burden on schedulers as well as the errors inherent in manually scheduling a large number of agents. Before implementing WFM and EEM, Net Promoter Score (NPS) and exit surveys of agents always surfaced a high volume of complaints related to schedules and time off.

"Two or three months after we launched WFM, there was not a single complaint about scheduling agents outside of their availability, time off, or anything like that," said Justin Holmes, Workforce Engagement Manager at AvantGuard. "Agents are able to adjust on the fly, and we can replicate that in real time with the changes that we see as well and make adjustments to their schedule. It's a huge, huge weight lifted off of the schedulers."

And perhaps most critically, the increase in agent occupancy and efficiency has allowed AvantGuard to maintain service levels and response times amid rapid growth. Average handle time (AHT) is down, as is time to first action (TFA).

"NICE has helped us keep a healthy balance," Holmes said. "We've brought on another 300,000 accounts since the launch of NICE, and we've been able to keep those metrics right where we want them to be."

05 THE FUTURE

Proven and ready to scale

With plans for continued growth, both organically and through acquisition, AvantGuard is continuing to optimize its use of WFM and EEM. The company is evolving how it manages occupancy in real time and automates shrinkage tracking within WFM. It is adopting some of the solution's more advanced features, including multiweek scheduling, holiday fairness, and long-term forecasting using Personnel Planner.

"**I think we'd be a little bit lost without the visualizations and the tools that NICE offers us.** As we grow so much and so rapidly, it becomes hard to visualize all of that and know where your agents are, whether they are productive, and whether they are doing what they're supposed to be doing. We have gained so many efficiencies, and the scheduling process as a whole has become much easier. And, VRS helps us understand the things we're doing really well and also the challenges we have and the things we need to fix."

JUSTIN HOLMES
WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT MANAGER
AVANTGUARD
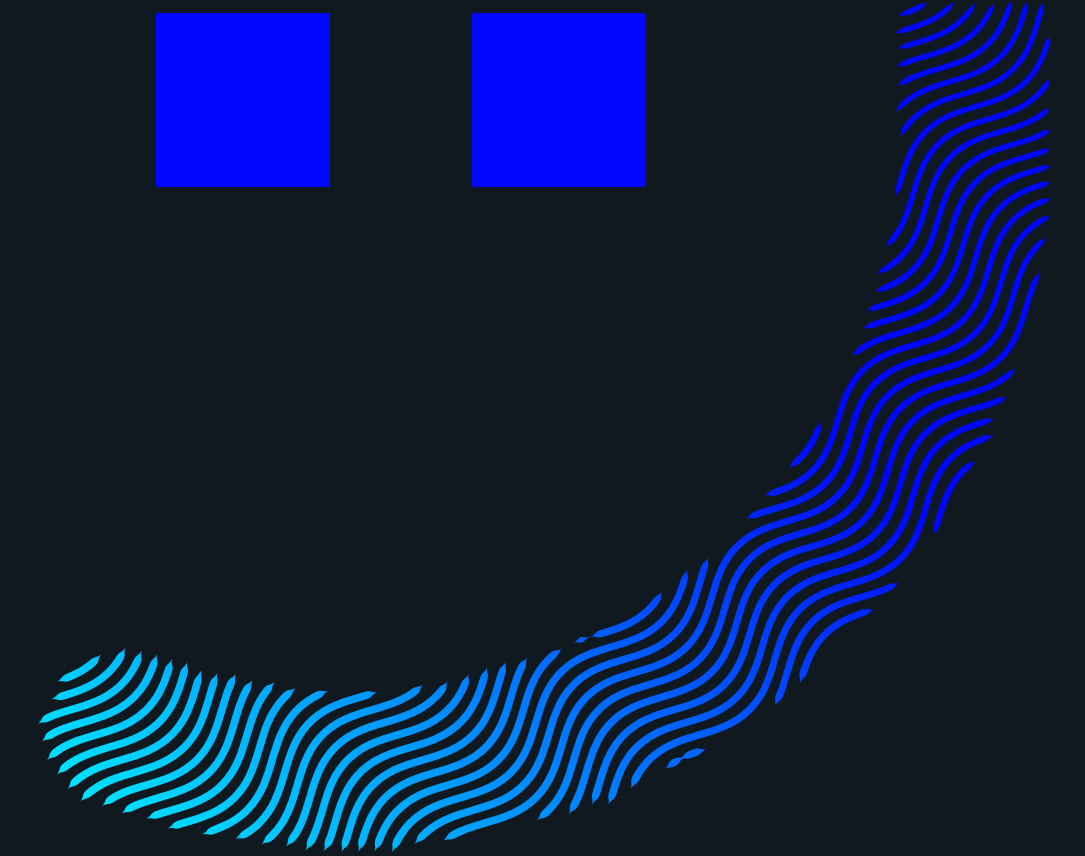
About NICE

With NICE (Nasdaq: NICE), it's never been easier for organizations of all sizes around the globe to create extraordinary customer experiences while meeting key business metrics. Featuring the world's #1 cloud native customer experience platform, CXone, NICE is a worldwide leader in AI-powered self-service and agent-assisted CX software for the contact center—and beyond. Over 25,000 organizations in more than 150 countries, including over 85 of the Fortune 100 companies, partner with NICE to transform—and elevate—every customer interaction.

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