NICE · CXone

Case Study

211 United Way of Connecticut

CUSTOMER PROFILE

United Way of Connecticut supports state residents by providing information, education and connection to community services.

WEBSITE

https://www.ctunitedway.org

NICE CXone SOLUTIONS

- CXone Omnichannel Routing
- CXone Email
- CXone Chat
- CXone Workforce Management
- CXone Feedback Management

RESULTS ACHIEVED

- Transitioned 2-1-1 agents to working from home in less than a week
- Built new client's contact center system with CXone in less than a day
- Designed new IVR tree in one afternoon
- Eliminated the possibility of busy signals as the volume of incoming calls surged
- Eliminated hardware expenses
- Acquired new clients due to CXone's scalability and flexibility

ON THE NICE SOLUTION

"The fact that we could transition our agents to working from home in less than a week during COVID-19 is a testament to the CXone cloud platform's flexibility and scalability."

Jesse Blakeslee
Director of IT Operations
United Way of Connecticut

2·1·1
Connecticut

United Way of Connecticut Uses CXone to Connect Callers to Essential Services During COVID-19

ABOUT UNITED WAY OF CONNECTICUT

When Connecticut residents need help, they turn to the United Way of Connecticut. The non-profit organization is a critical link in connecting state residents to essential services such as utility assistance, food, housing, child care, elder care and much more.

It operates multiple 2-1-1 services, which are information referral lines that connect callers to essential health and human services, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In times of disaster, 2-1-1 is one of the first lines of community support. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it experienced massive increases in call volume. Agents addressed callers' concerns, from "What is COVID and what do I need to do?" to "I can't pay my rent this month" and "I'm worried about feeding my family."

Case Study

THE CHALLENGE

However, United Way of Connecticut's on-premises Cisco system was a hindrance to providing excellent service. It couldn't handle the dramatic fluctuations in call volumes and required excess phone line capacity.

"If a disaster occurred, we had to quickly order more lines because our system was generating busy signals," explains Jesse Blakeslee, Director of IT Operations. "Even when we doubled capacity, callers were still getting busy signals. The worst thing was that we couldn't get rid of those excess lines, and most of the year we were paying for something we didn't need."

Because Cisco was an on-premises system, it required United Way of Connecticut to maintain and replace hardware, which made budgeting for unexpected upgrades difficult. "Much of the Cisco functionality was obsolete years ago. I had to spend another $50,000 to keep our system current," says Leo Pellerin, Chief Information Officer. "I didn't look forward to those surprise capital outlays."

"CXone is the reason we continue to succeed and attract new business. Without it, we wouldn't even be a consideration for some of the contracts we try to obtain. It's been great for us."

Leo Pellerin, Chief Information Officer
United Way of Connecticut

THE SOLUTION

Leo and Jesse knew other 2-1-1 organizations around the U.S. had migrated to cloud contact center solutions and were no longer wrestling with the same problems. It was time for United Way of Connecticut to make the switch, too.

"We looked at a couple of vendors," says Leo. "But they didn't have the functionality we wanted. We decided on NICE CXone™ because it is a proven entity among 2-1-1 services."

Unexpected expenses are now a thing of the past, because with CXone, United Way only pays for the capacity it actually uses. "We've shifted from capital expenditures to a predictable operational expense," explains Jesse.

"Because CXone runs in the cloud, we no longer need to buy and maintain hardware like we did with Cisco. We're not going to Finance every five years asking for more money to upgrade equipment."

OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED

IVR self-service options connect callers to COVID-19 information

During the COVID-19 pandemic, when call volumes increased dramatically, Jesse and Leo had to find a way to quickly connect callers with the information they needed. Setting up self-service options in the CXone IVR was the answer.

"We created IVR options to answer callers' most frequent COVID-19 questions," explains Jesse. "Our goal was to quickly give them information and reduce the number of calls sent to the agents."

"It's very intuitive and fast to set up IVR scripts using CXone Studio," says Jesse. "Studio has a graphical interface, so it's easy to visualize the phone tree and call flows. Cisco was so complex that we couldn't change the IVR ourselves—we had to bring in professional services."

"I'll never forget the first CXone demo I saw. I realized I could build the entire IVR call tree in an afternoon—that was the moment I was sold on CXone!" he enthuses.

Agents quickly transitioned to working from home

The pandemic necessitated moving all of United Way's agents to working from home as quickly as possible. With the CXone cloud platform, it was a fast transition.

"Even before COVID-19, we regularly had our 2-1-1 agents work from home to ensure that our operations would stay up and running in case

of a disaster," explains Leo. "It was a very quick transition—in five days, the office was empty."

United Way's other two contact centers, though, were still using Cisco, so Jesse built those systems from scratch using CXone. "We had planned to move them to CXone eventually but hadn't gotten around to it. COVID-19 forced that transition," says Leo.

With CXone the two new contact center systems were up and running in a few days. "Even though the agents had never used CXone, they learned it very quickly because it's so intuitive," says Jesse. "The fact that we could get them live in less than a week is a testament to the CXone cloud platform."

"It was CXone's scalability that enabled us to make the transition to working from home so quickly," says Jesse. "With Cisco, it would have taken months to plan out moving the agents home including ordering more phone lines to handle the volume. With CXone, we just log in and increase our capacity, and we're ready to go."

Scalability attracts new clients

CXone and the cloud's scalability also plays a key role in attracting new clients. Leo describes how the Connecticut Department of Public Health needed a contact center system set up within a week for a new campaign.

"We were the only ones they talked to who said, 'Yes, we can do that within your time frame.' We developed their new system in less than a day. That's a powerful example of what CXone can do—something we could never have accomplished with other contact center systems," says Leo.

CXone enabled United Way of Connecticut to thrive and maintain business continuity, even during the COVID-19 crisis, by quickly moving agents to working from home while still servicing high call volumes.

Leo also credits CXone's flexibility and scalability as the primary reasons for attracting new clients. "CXone is the reason we continue to succeed and acquire new business," he says "Without it, we wouldn't even be a consideration for some of the contracts we try to obtain. It's been great for us."