



Helping to build the Contact Centre of the Future for Home Retail Group

Sabio is working with Home Retail Group, the UK's leading home and general merchandise retailer, to provide a comprehensive next generation technology platform for the Group's 'Contact Centre of the Future' programme.

Home Retail Group operates one of the UK's largest customer contact operations for its major retail brands including Argos, Homebase and Habitat. Working with Sabio, this major contact centre transformation project is set to unlock significant operational savings through the deployment of an integrated suite of technology solutions from vendors including Avaya, Verint, Nuance and Conversocial.



→ OPERATIONAL CHALLENGE

Home Retail Group's provision of new services and additional product ranges had driven increased customer contact complexity that the Group's contact centres were struggling to manage. In particular with customer resolution issues accounting for some 82% of overall call volumes. Home Retail Group had a fragmented contact centre technology system and needed to develop and deploy a 'Contact Centre of the Future' to help address its service challenges. The retailer selected proven contact centre specialist Sabio as its technology partner to help enable and deliver the technology element of its major 'Contact Centre of the Future' project transformation.

→ SOLUTION

Bringing together core technologies from vendors such as Avaya, Verint, Nuance and Conversocial – as well as its own specialist applications, Sabio is working closely with Home Retail Group's Customer Services team to create a comprehensive platform for the Group's 'Contact Centre of the Future' that features best practice technology components, backed by Sabio's comprehensive Support services. Adopting a phased deployment approach, Sabio is working with Home Retail Group to unlock a series of incremental improvements over the initiative's 5-year timetable.

→ RESULTS DELIVERED

Cumulative benefits are projected to account for significant project savings. Technology results include:

- Deploying next generation Avaya infrastructure to support Home Retail Group's 1,700 operational staff across five key contact centre locations
- Automating simpler customer activities through the use of Interactive Voice Response (IVR)-enabled self-service and online technologies
- Improving first time resolution by empowering advisers with the right information
- Providing a more flexible resource model through the application of best practice Verint Workforce Optimisation technologies

Home Retail Group

Home Retail Group is the UK's leading home and general merchandise retailer, bringing together some of the UK's most recognisable retail brands including Argos, Homebase and Habitat. With sales of £5.7bn in the last financial year, Home Retail Group continues to maintain its leading market positions despite a challenging environment.

With more than 80,000 products, Home Retail Group's successful internet and mobile channels make the company a market leader in multi-channel retailing, supported by its national network of over 1,000 stores. In addition, Home Retail Group's Financial Services business offers customers a range of credit and insurance products such as the Argos and Homebase store cards.

Home Retail Group is committed to strengthening its customer propositions in an environment where shopping behaviours are changing rapidly. It has transformed the Argos brand through the development of highly successful internet and mobile commerce channels, and is also investing in further multi-channel capabilities to improve the Homebase customer proposition.

Acknowledging complex customer contact demands

For Home Retail Group the development of its digital and mobile channel propositions is placing an increased focus on the role of the contact centre within the customer journey. According to Paul Downham, Head of Operations for Contact Centres at Home Retail Group: "Given the nature of our Argos and Homebase businesses particularly, we've always got to provide customers with a means to contact us with their queries, order requirements or any concerns they may have. Whether the transaction is online, from a mobile or in-store, there's still a need for a high quality customer support."

"That's why the role of contact centres remains key for our business, especially given that the ability to execute across all aspects of an interaction clearly determines the level of ongoing confidence that customers have to both engage with and purchase from Home Retail Group companies," he added. "However technological advances and changing customer expectations have meant that the demands placed on major corporate contact centre operations have

become much more complex, and we knew that our own existing contact infrastructure had reached its effective limits."

Transitioning to a best practice communications infrastructure

Home Retail Group's contact centres had been based on a legacy Nortel telephony system that had been in place for some 10 years but was proving an increasing barrier to productivity.

"Our contact centres are an essential part of our offering, whether that's receiving financial services payments, taking orders or handling customer enquiries, so it was critical that we had an efficient, reliable platform in place to handle our significant call volumes," recalled Paul Downham. "We knew we had to replace our Nortel system, and it made strong business sense to upgrade our infrastructure as part of a much wider customer contact transformation project."

To deliver this, Home Retail Group set out its 'Contact Centre of the Future' vision, a wide-ranging initiative that would serve the requirements of not only customers, but also the

CASE STUDY



contact centre workforce and broader business. Central to this was the ability to deliver a quality service that successfully balanced costs with customer needs.

Defining Contact Centre of the Future requirements

"We wanted an integrated approach that would help our customers to feel in control when they shop with us, and as their order progresses," explained Paul. "To do this we needed to build a solution that allowed us to recognise our customers when they got in touch – regardless of the channels involved – and that also gave our agents access to each customer's history. We also wanted to give customers the ability to resolve their simpler queries by themselves."

To achieve this, Home Retail Group needed a contact centre technology infrastructure that could support the right channels and services for its different brands and their customers, and one that was flexible enough to respond to their changing needs. "We also wanted a solution that could continually evolve, and that we could fine tune based on customer feedback, input from our agents, as well as the kind of insight that can only come from in-depth analytics," he continued.

Working with a proven contact centre technology specialist

Home Retail Group analysed potential options and decided that a next generation Avaya-based contact centre platform was the right foundation. "We knew that we needed a range of complementary contact centre technologies to really deliver on our vision, so we investigated which specialist partners could give us access to the breadth of expertise we required," explained Paul.

"It quickly became clear that Sabio was not only the best qualified Avaya Connect Platinum Partner, but also had all the in-house skills to provide other elements of our solution including network services expertise, Workforce Optimisation skills, in-depth IVR self-service capabilities, as well as extensive applications and multi-channel insight. Sabio also was able to provide the resource and coverage we needed to ensure that our eventual solution would perform optimally thanks to the nationwide services team."

Unlocking incremental savings for Home Retail Group

Sabio's technology solution for Home Retail Group has been designed as a phased deployment, with different "Contact Centre of the Future" elements combining to unlock incremental savings as the project progresses.

The solutions deployed or scheduled for deployment by Sabio for Home Retail Group and its businesses include:

- A core Avaya Aura® Communication Manager platform
- A self-service, natural language IVR solution to help reduce transfers and Identify & Verify customers prior to speaking to an agent for the Group's Financial Services operation
- Comprehensive Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) Trunking and Avaya Session Manager technology to ensure the highest levels of service availability, as well as enabling flexibility for approaches such as homeworking
- An extensive Verint Workforce Optimisation suite incorporating Impact 360® Workforce Management (WFM) to replace a previous QMax system, Recording, Quality Monitoring, as well as powerful Speech Analytics technology
- A Performance Management scorecard
- Avaya Aura® Proactive Contact to replace Home Retail Group's earlier generation dialler system
- Avaya Proactive Outreach Manager (POM) to support the creation and delivery of automated voice, email and SMS messages for customers
- Sabio's own web-based Thin Client desktop telephony application that delivers significant savings per call for Avaya infrastructures
- Sabo Customer Feedback, with one-click handover from softphone to survey, as well as comprehensive scorecard integration

- A major self-service IVR customer service project for Argos to enable more intelligent call distribution and faster response for customers
- Enterprise social media management support using Conversocial social customer service technology
- Management Information and Reporting Consultancy
- Ongoing 'Contact Centre of the Future' technology support through Sabio's Service operation

Home Retail Group has been working closely with Sabio to stage the roll out of the 'Contact Centre of the Future's' different technology components, with incremental benefits identified for each of the ten major projects over the next five years of the programme. Significant savings and performance improvements have already been identified, with a similar amount targeted through future initiatives including key areas such as digital and mobile.

Examples include the 'Being There for the Customer' programme, where the implementation of a Verint Workforce Management solution will help achieve more accurate scheduling of advisor shift patterns.

Natural language self-service IVR projects for both Home Retail Group's Financial Services and Argos Customer Service will also help increase First Contact Resolution by identifying customers at the point of contact and connecting them to the most appropriately skilled person.

Ensuring customer service is a key differentiator with Sabio

Paul Downham acknowledges that the scale of Home Retail Group's 'Contact Centre of the Future' transformation is challenging. *"We were determined to make customer service a key differentiator for our retail brands, and that has required a major shift from our previous call centre factory approach to the next generation contact centre environment that we're creating."*

"We knew we needed a technology partner to help us achieve this, and that's where Sabio comes in. It's rare to find a contact centre systems integration specialist that can offer in-house skills and proven expertise in all the key technologies we needed to build a best practice, 21st Century customer contact operation. With its blend of long-term Avaya, Verint and Nuance accreditations, backed by strong social media, digital and multi-channel resources, Sabio makes an ideal technology partner for our critical 'Contact Centre of the Future project'," he concluded.

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