



## CONTACT CENTRE

## EMBARKING ON A LARGE SCALE AND COMPLEX DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

### THE OPPORTUNITY

Hillarys is the UK's leading manufacturer and retailer of window blinds, curtains, shutters and awnings. It operates two dedicated call centres, which also includes the contact centre operations of a sister company, and was looking to undertake a programme of digital transformation across these sites to better manage its 17,000 weekly call volume, its growing team and the way it connected with its customers.

Hillarys has always been quick to innovate - understanding that continually transforming its operations and IT infrastructure enables the company to embrace changing customer trends as they happen. Focusing on implementing digital transformation across its contact centres, Hillarys turned to IPI to provide solutions and consultancy to address its business challenges.

### BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Savings in overtime costs
- Streamlined Operations
- Improved agent performance at every interaction
- Enabled Hillarys to introduce home-working
- Attrition rates have dropped to well below the industry average
- Improved Customer and Employee Experience
- Improved efficiency and quality



**EXCEPTIONAL  
CUSTOMER CONTACT**

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# HILLARYS

You'll love what we do

## HOW WE ENABLED IT

Working together, IPI devised a staged approach to digital transformation.

Firstly, IPI looked at the management of its outbound calls – a primary method of lead generation, for Hillarys that was in need of an overhaul. Hillarys was using a costly external supplier, however, the quality of leads provided was not strong and the sales conversion rate was lower than expected. As such, IPI recommended that Hillarys brought the management of its outbound calls in house. IPI rolled out Avaya's Proactive Outreach Manager (POM) to provide an automated outbound campaign management tool. POM enables Hillarys to create highly engaging, interactive campaigns for potential customers via agent-based predictive dialling and interactive services.

Secondly, IPI was keen to improve Hillarys' inbound call management process. Hillarys processes up to 17,000 calls per week. At peak periods, this puts the team's internal resources under significant strain – increasing the amount of overtime required. By implementing Avaya IP Office with ACCS (Avaya Contact Centre Select) using POM Hillarys call centre team can blend calls – enabling them to assist the inbound team when required.

With the efficiency of internal operations boosted, the next phase of the project was focused on Hillarys' external relationship with customers. To truly connect the customer journey, Hillarys needed to understand which channels customers were using and what impact marketing activities had on the channels customers choose. It also wanted to get a clearer idea of how these decisions varied by region.

## £500k

Saved through automated outbound campaign management

Productivity of homeworking staff increased by

## 15%

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“Over the years, IPI has become much more than a supplier to us, they are a fully trusted partner with an innovative mindset that is rare in the industry. Their unwavering focus on the contact centre market together with their in-house developer capabilities, means IPI has both the vision and the capabilities to help us realise our digital transformation plans.”

Julian Bond, CIO - Hillarys

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To facilitate this, IPI implemented Computer Telephony Integration (CTI) for Hillarys' call tracking and analysis solution from Infinity. This complex project links together 16 different IT systems, allowing Hillarys to better understand the effectiveness of its different marketing activities in facilitating customers' journey, from first browsing on its website to picking up the phone.

IPI also worked closely with Hillarys to deliver a migration to Digital Contact Centre with a staged migration from Nortel to Avaya IP Office with ACCS (Avaya Contact Centre Select) using POM. This takes Hillarys from on-premise hosting, to a hybrid solution and eventually to a private cloud. This migration is part of a strategic and phased approach, which will see Hillarys modernise its systems.

Most recently, IPI has rolled out AWFOS (Avaya Workforce Optimisation Select) for voice recording and Teleopti workforce management to the contact centre teams at Hillarys. The tool provides Hillarys with a comprehensive workforce management overview system helping to more effectively forecast and plan upcoming work volumes. With this solution, Hillarys is now better placed to meet demand from its agents - both on-premise and in the field - while it can also ensure best practice, by benchmarking real-time call handling data against historical performance. The tool also allows Hillarys to notify its workforce of updates with clear communication channels.



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## OPENING THE SHUTTERS ON INNOVATION

Hillarys has taken a phased approach to implementation, carefully selecting solutions that it can embed fully before embarking on the next project. Through a careful and strategic combination of non-tech and technology solutions, Hillarys has successfully enhanced the customer journey for its expanding customer base and improved staff engagement.

**Effective use of technology** - Hillarys has streamlined its operations since working with IPI. The implementation of POM saved upwards of £500K on the previous system, improving efficiency and ensuring consistent quality across the board. The ability to blend calls has also saved on costly overtime.

The new workforce management tool provides Hillarys with greater insight into their agents' work and considerably improves the work process, with Hillarys staff able to work from home and agents to swap shifts and request holidays electronically – saving 20 hours per week on the previous manual system. This also has helped to reduce the number of declined holidays and has had a 5% reduction in unplanned absences. Overall, the tool has helped improve agent performance at every interaction, all at one of the industry's lowest total cost of ownership profiles.

**Better engaged workforce** - The ability to blend calls has helped to alleviate pressure on inbound call staff and reduce overtime. The technology has also enabled Hillarys to introduce home-working – enabling team members to work from home and cover out-of-hours requests, work that would have previously fallen to the inhouse team on overtime, resulting in productivity levels of homeworking team members increasing 15%. Most crucially, this change in workplace culture now means that the contact centre team feels better engaged and attrition rates have dropped to well below the industry average.

**Better customer experience** - Improving the CX has been a key focus, especially the digital transformation of customer interactions with Hillarys' wide range of consumers using a variety of communication channels, from chatbots to phone calls.

The investment in telephony systems has been a necessary foundation. By utilising technology and equipping agents with tools to enhance efficiency and improve the speed of resolving customer issues, the number of escalations and consequent cost of resolution have been significantly reduced with backlogs of outstanding issues falling by 30% as well as other significant improvements, measured through NPS and market research focus groups.

**Maintain pole market position** - The effective use of technology is one of the key profitability drivers identified by Hillarys' CEO. When coupled with additional non-tech changes, Hillarys has experienced significant and consistent growth in turnover and profit over the last five years with the sales team seeing a higher conversion rate of customers, boosting sales figures with a double-digit turnover and profit growth within that time.

## OUR CUSTOMER IS HAPPY BECAUSE

In IPI, Hillarys has found a trusted partner that offers in-house development capabilities and integration tools, in a way that previous suppliers – many of them bigger players – had failed to do. Through IPI, Hillarys has embarked on a large scale and complex digital transformation project, making use and maximising the investment in Hillarys' existing infrastructure.

IPI has used its in-house development capabilities and integration tools to enhance Hillarys call centre operations – helping the team to maintain its pole position, enhance the customer's experience and better engage its workforce.



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