

Video Collaboration Increases Sales for U.K. Financial Firm

Customer Case Study



Remote Expert Smart Solution helps Nationwide improve customer service while beating mortgage market competition

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Nationwide

Industry: Financial services

Location: United Kingdom

Number of Employees: 15,000

Challenge

- Improve customer satisfaction
- Enhance access to experts
- Reduce leakage of business to competitors

Solution

- Cisco Remote Expert Smart Solution
- Cisco Services for planning, design, build, and deployment

Results

- 2/3rd improvement in new mortgage business
- Double digit improvement in customer net satisfaction
- 2/3rd reduction in cost of sale

Challenge

Today's customer expects to be able to do business with a building society or bank when it's convenient for them, rather than when the institution can 'fit them in.' If the building society or bank fails to meet that expectation, the customer is most likely to leave and go to the nearest competitor. Aptly known in the trade as leakage, this phenomenon is becoming more problematic in the low interest rate environment, leaving less margin to attract customers solely on price.

As the world's largest building society, with a relationship with 1-in-4 households in the UK, Nationwide prides itself on being easy to do business with, and putting the needs of its members at the heart of what it does. Its mutual status means it's always looking to do the right thing for its 15 million members, and it has around 700 branches being served by around 400 specialist mortgage advisors.

Andrew Nation, senior manager, future customer outcomes at Nationwide, says: "We tried to maximize the use of consultants by allocating a greater part of their time to busier branches, and arranging appointments in less busy branches around this. However, meeting member expectation of an appointment when it was convenient to them can be difficult. So to provide the best possible service, we wanted to find a way to increase our capacity."

If the organization could provide more efficient access to its experts, it would not only resolve customer service challenges, but also capture market share from competitors. Taking on additional consultants was not the answer: time was already being spent waiting for customers to arrive.

Solution

The recently introduced Cisco® Remote Expert Smart Solution for Retail Banking, which enables virtual face-to-face customer meetings using high-definition video, provided a unique solution to Nationwide's dilemma. "Cisco was very keen to explore this solution with us in the U.K. market," says Nation, "and a Cisco Services supported pilot was proposed across six branches in Wales and the north of England."



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Andrew Nation
Senior Manager, Future Customer Outcomes
Nationwide

As part of the Nationwide Remote Advisor pilot, the company took some mortgage consultants out of the branches altogether and encouraged members to try the service. In each of the six pilot branches, Nationwide set up a private space with a video screen, providing a link to four contact center-based mortgage consultants.

Attention to detail was critical: the remote advisors were uniformed and occupied pods looking like branch offices. Branch staff used Instant Messaging (IM) to check on consultant availability whenever a customer had a mortgage query. With a member of the four-person advisory team alerted, the customer was connected. Once connected, the customer saw and talked with the advisor in real time, was able to review documents and mortgage choices with the expert, and received printed documentation for review or signature. After that initial video-enabled meeting, subsequent consultations were scheduled using the same medium.

Underpinning the Smart Solution is a number of Cisco technologies such as Cisco Unified Contact Center and Cisco TelePresence® System EX Series videoconferencing units. Cisco Unified Border Element Enterprise Edition supports SIP (session initiation protocol) connectivity, and the systems are hosted on Cisco UCS C-Series Rack Servers.

Cisco Services was involved in high-level and low-level designs, and worked on deployment aspects including software configuration and acceptance testing. “The support of Cisco Services was essential in bringing the pilot to fruition,” says Nation. “There’s nobody else with that level of knowledge. We couldn’t have done it without them.”

BT Global Services, which partners with Nationwide in the provision of managed wide and local area network services, worked closely with Cisco Services to take account of the demands of the Nationwide Remote Advisor service on the company’s U.K. network infrastructure. Meanwhile Computacenter performed a similar function for the IT infrastructure. This design phase was followed by handover and post-implementation support by Cisco Services in the form of knowledge transfer sessions.

“When we had implementation problems and needed to catch up, Cisco Services brought a global expert over from New York to ensure the implementation was right. That helped recover lost days,” Nation says. When it went live, the Nationwide Remote Advisor service was the first deployment of the Cisco Remote Expert Smart Solution in the Cisco EMEA (Europe, Middle East, and Africa) theater.

Results

Nationwide measures success on three parameters: customer experience, new business uplift, and cost. “Our question was about our members’ response,” says Nation. “As delivering a brilliant service is key for Nationwide, it didn’t matter what commercial benefits could be achieved if our members weren’t happy with it. We therefore needed to know if they saw the Nationwide Remote Advisor service as good as having a face-to-face consultation.” Applicants took a short survey: 93 percent said it was an excellent or good face-to-face meeting replacement and, including average scores, the level rose to 98 percent.

The remote advisors were offering exactly the same information as an in-person consultation, so the customer satisfaction improvement was likely due to an advisor being immediately available. In a further question in the survey, over a third of respondents said they would have considered going to another provider if they had not been able to get a Nationwide appointment there and then. That seems to indicate that immediate availability helped reduce leakage.

The building society also benchmarked Nationwide Remote Advisor customer satisfaction scores against face-to-face consultations. It found that for the branch mortgage consultant they achieved net satisfaction of 70 percent from its members, while nearly 90 percent for the Remote Advisor experience: again attributed to instant access. To confirm the theory, 10 percent of Nationwide Remote Advisor customers were re-contacted and asked why they preferred it. That research confirmed that not having to wait was what made the difference. “It seems that meeting the expectation of customers for an appointment on their terms makes for more satisfied customers overall,” Nation says.



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Nationwide calculated the long-term baseline mortgage-selling rate for each of the six branches in the pilot. With Nationwide Remote Advisor deployed, performance rose by two-thirds, which more than justified a wider system deployment. Nation says: “The Cisco solution has helped us improve customer satisfaction and staff efficiency while at the same time increasing mortgage sales. The business case in favor of the Cisco solution stacked up quickly.”

In addition to the Nationwide Remote Advisor benefits, branch-based mortgage consultants have become more efficient with the fewer number of branches they need to visit, and there’s also a mileage cost saving. At US\$0.76 a mile for drivers, that saving soon adds up. Taking all those things together, Nationwide is more than satisfied that its Remote Advisor service has made a significantly positive impact on the service it provides to customers and to bottom line commercials. And it’s more environmentally friendly, a fact the building society is highlighting to its staff in an internal case study.

Next Steps

Having established the benefits of Remote Advisor, Nationwide is planning to fully deploy it in order to supplement its existing branch workforce. The program involves adapting network infrastructure, putting more branches online, and adding new contact center resources.

So what next for Nationwide Building Society? Well it already has firm plans to expand the service to more branches, while developing further use cases across its extensive product range. “Longer term who knows, maybe we’ll see how we can offer this type of service to our customers from the comfort of their own home,” concludes Nation.

For More Information

To learn more about the Cisco architectures and solutions featured in this case study please go to:

www.cisco.com/go/remoteexpert

www.cisco.com/go/services

Product List

Remote Expert

- Cisco Remote Expert Smart Solution
- Cisco Unified Contact Center
- Cisco TelePresence System EX Series
- Cisco Unified Border Element Enterprise Edition
- Cisco UCS C-Series Rack Servers

Cisco Services

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