

Sprint Brings Efficiency to Billing Adjustments

challenges

- resolve billing disputes faster to save money
- coordinate work across different teams and legacy systems

solution

- 90 day initial deployment of disputes management process
- integration with call centers and legacy billing systems

benefits

- reduced resolution time from 12 to 2 days
- project payback achieved in first 6 months

Sprint is a global integrated communications provider serving more than 26 million customers in over 100 countries. With approximately 60,000 employees worldwide and over \$27 billion in annual revenues in 2004, Sprint is widely recognized for developing, engineering and deploying state-of-the-art network technologies. Handling customer billing disputes and adjustments for consumers and corporations, however, was becoming operationally challenging and noticeably impacting revenue. In fact, according to Billing World Magazine, companies lose as much as 11% of annual sales to revenue leakage – i.e. unnecessary or erroneous concessions to customers. Analysts estimate that telecommunications sales and service calls average 3.5 minutes and cost over \$4.50 per call. Before implementing Business Process Management (BPM) software, Sprint's costs were often in excess of this average.

In an effort to improve efficiency and minimize revenue loss, Sprint decided to implement a BPM platform. They recognized that their multiple billing systems would be too costly to modify to accommodate the required research and resolution functionality. After an intensive vendor review, Sprint chose Lombardi's Teamworks to automate the process and provide better visibility into its performance. The team rolled out the new billing adjustments application in only 90 days.

Diagnosing the Problem

The disputes management process involves receiving a dispute from a customer, determining the appropriate action (settle immediately or send for investigation) determine the correct adjustment and ensure a refund is made in a timely fashion. Analysis of the current process led to many revelations. The volume of adjustments was increasing, but they were often inaccurate – which caused yet more customer inquiries. The adjustments took too long to calculate, required many manual tasks and handoffs, and were inconsistent. Also, too many different departments and divisions were involved in the research, resolution and approval of disputes.

But it was difficult to know the full extent of the problem because there was a lack of visibility into the process – typical in cross-department processes with manual steps. The disputes team itself suffered from a high turnover rate and a long ramp-up time. Finally, the underlying systems couldn't change fast enough to keep up with new product offerings or business changes - creating the need for frequent work-arounds.

Sprint's New Process

With Teamworks, Sprint was able to deploy a new disputes management process that allows them to:

- **Work Smart with Web-Based Task Management.** Teamworks was used to automate the adjustments process and manage the flow of tasks to different workers based on workload and skill set. The tasks are automatically prioritized based on business rules in order to ensure timely completion. Teamworks gathers all the required information to make an adjustment decision from a variety of systems and presents it on a single screen to a researcher – greatly streamlining the process. The researcher makes a decision on the dispute and if it is over a certain dollar amount, it is forwarded on to a manager for approval via e-mail. If approved, the adjustment is sent to the billing system and the customer is automatically notified.

Sprint reduced resolution time from 12 days down to 2.

- **Standardize Best Practices.** Teamworks provides an interactive coaching paradigm that steps users sequentially through tasks, clearly displaying their options, necessary information and required decisions. This makes it easier for new agents to get up to speed. It also ensures that old agents are kept current on policy changes.
- **No Surprises with Real-Time Performance Reporting.** Contact center managers can now log-in to the Teamworks portal to view different real-time reports that tell them how the process is performing. Visibility gives managers the opportunity to diagnose problem areas and determine new ways of improving the process. Beyond visibility, they also have control. Through this portal, managers can instantly spot problem trends, reprioritize work, and reallocate staff as necessary.

The Path to Process Excellence

Teamworks is designed to easily handle business change. Once the initial process was live, the Sprint team was able to change and upgrade it every 3-4 weeks incorporating user feedback and new features from end users. This is in contrast to traditional applications with average change cycles in the 6-12 month range.

The immediate benefits from the Teamworks implementation were dramatic:

- Increased call-center productivity by 9%
- Reduced both invalid and incorrectly processed adjustments by 10%
- Reduced the time to resolve a billing dispute from 12 to 2.5 days
- Saved millions of dollars in disputed billing in the first six months of production
- Enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty
- Experienced immediate increases in operational efficiency and a more motivated, easier to train workforce

About Lombardi

Lombardi is a leader in business process management (BPM) software for companies, systems integrators and government agencies. We offer award-winning BPM technology, know-how and services to help our customers succeed with their process improvement initiatives.

Lombardi is behind some of the largest, most successful BPM implementations in the world. Our customers include Allianz Group, Aflac, Banco Espirito Santo, Barclays Global Investors, Dell, El Paso Energy, FETAC, Financial Services Authority, Ford Motor Company, Hasbro, ING Direct, Intel, Maritz Travel, National Bank of Canada, National Institute of Health, Safety-Kleen, T-Mobile, UCLH, Xbridge and numerous governmental agencies. For more information, visit www.lombardi.com.

