

Products or Services

- Aspect® Unified IP®

Results

- Reduced access issues in terms of waiting time
- Increased service availability window significantly
- Reduced average handle time by nearly 40 percent
- Increased satisfaction of dealers by 80 percent

Asian Paints Ltd.

Asian Paints improves customer interactions, loyalty, and organizational productivity with unified solution from Aspect



“While we were researching different vendors and getting references, the best endorsement was given by customers using Aspect solution to organize their customer interactions. Since we wanted a cost-effective way to have several solutions in our contact center, Aspect was the right choice for us. We needed a little bit of everything, improved quality interactions, dealer interaction and high operational efficiency. With Aspect every piece fell into place smoothly.”

Mr. Deepak Bhosale
Chief Manager, Systems
Asian Paints Limited

The Company

At \$1 billion turnover, Asian Paints is India’s largest paint company operating in 17 countries. It has 25 paint manufacturing facilities in the world, servicing consumers in more than 65 countries. The group also operates around the world through its subsidiaries - Berger International Limited, Apco Coatings, SCIB Paints and Taubmans.

The Business Challenge

When the company decided to embark on an expansion plan, a key focus area was to empower its 30,000 strong dealer network—its prima facie go-to-market—which had to keep pace with rapidly evolving consumer demands and rising expectations. The distribution strategy works such that Asian Paints supplies its products to its dealers, who in turn sell it to end customers. To facilitate this process, dealers call Asian paints to place any customer order. Traditionally, dealers would call over 150 sales offices of Asian Paints in different parts of the country. However, the legacy telephony system across the sales offices was primitive and couldn’t render itself to the changing customer demands; a scenario that was attributed to some inherent lacunae. Firstly, the overall customer experience was missing because the dealers could call only during office hours. Additionally, the people attending to these calls were personnel stationed at godowns or depots and therefore did not have the right service mindset resulting in a sub optimal deal interaction experience.

While demands for better service, more responsiveness and consistency were the key asks from dealers, Asian Paints also found that end consumers were increasingly treating paints as ‘a high involvement decision’ and expecting consultancy as part of their purchase interactions. With industry analysts asserting that poor customer service constituted among the key reasons for consumers to move to a competing brand, Asian Paints was well aware that the quality of customer interactions had to be viewed as a competitive differentiator. In the context of these emerging stakeholder imperatives, Asian Paints decided to use this as an opportunity to reinstate customer confidence and build strong loyalties in the bargain.

To support the large dealer base spread across the country, Asian Paints has approximately 150 sales offices with a 500-person strong sales force. The sales force plays a key role in managing dealer relationships, explaining schemes, resolving



complaints, etc. "We were, therefore, on a lookout for a strong, flexible and scalable IT infrastructure to manage customer interactions in line with our organizational efforts to become truly customer centric," said Mr. Deepak Bhosale, Chief Manager, Systems, Asian Paints Limited.

Moreover, since dealers are the company's primary channel of interaction with the consumers, contributing to more than 70 percent of the company turnover, Asian Paints also needed a solution that would make it extremely convenient for the dealers to conduct business with them, place their orders for paint products and to resolve any queries. Asian Paints also offers different consultation and support services to their end customers. For example, Color Consultants help customers choose the best color combinations for their home/ personal spaces. Several other allied components of the business include marketing and pre-sales campaigns, customer loyalty programs and after sales, and complaint handling systems, many of which are managed in collaboration with the dealers. "We wanted to ensure that our entire organization's supply/ value chain was well integrated with this channel," added Mr. Deepak Bhosale.

Why Aspect

After extensive market research in 2009, the company decided to implement Aspect® Unified IP® to set up a next-generation dealer management system. "While we were researching different vendors and getting references, the best endorsement was given by customers using Aspect solution to organize their customer interactions. Since we wanted a cost-effective way to have several solutions in our contact center, Aspect was the right choice for us," said Mr. Deepak Bhosale.

The technology deployment was undertaken in two stages.

Stage 1 – Pilot

Asian Paints implemented Aspect Unified IP for 50 agents at four sales offices. This pilot was set up for two different services, with multiple telephone connectivity circuits—one for order taking and the other for query handling. Aspect's solution was also integrated seamlessly with the newly launched web-based user friendly dashboard built on the SAP platform that was designed to take orders and answer all queries. A toll-free service was also launched, which allows calls to be monitored at the agent level.

Even at this early stage, Asian Paints witnessed reduced waiting time for callers and a 33 percent increase in service availability.

Successful Upgrade to Latest Version of Aspect Unified IP in 2013:

The company has successfully upgraded from earlier version to latest version of Aspect Unified IP with functionality like automatic call distribution (ACD), predictive dialing, voice portal capabilities (IVR), Internet contact, workflow management, multichannel recording and quality management to help organizations achieve their customer service, collections and sales and telemarketing business process goals.

Stage 2 – Expanding the Horizon

In the second phase, the company activated its automatic outbound calling and added 16 more units into the setup, covering 5,500 dealers for more than 350+ agents. In this case, Aspect integrated with the technology used to create the web-based interface.

Several other mechanisms were built in during this phase, such as process re-engineering and standardizations for dealers. A profile change among agents was affected, with order taking and order punching being merged into a single entity, and agent training being standardized around high quality interactions calls and for calls with poor CSAT levels, was tracked and an automatic outbound call made to deliver a more effective customer experience. Apart from the dealers, Asian Paints also extended this service to rest of the partner ecosystem including contractors, interior designers and end customers who buy directly and the response has been nothing less that excellent.

"The innate efficiency of the system allowed the agents to spend more time on value addition such as consulting and up-selling, in turn delivering not only better customer and dealer satisfaction, but also higher revenue," said Mr. Deepak Bhosale.

In its current state, Aspect Professional services team is working to integrate with SAP system to unify call flows, business processes, and desktops. The integration will allow real-time access to SAP customer data thereby help to enhance agent productivity, improve monitoring and provide consistent customer experience across various touch points such as voice, email, and chat.

Results

"The implementation then brought us a lot of benefits and gave us three year headway over competition, as the competition has now started to realize the benefits of such a system and has started adopting similar approaches to manage a customer", said Mr. Deepak Bhosale.

Post implementation Asian Paints achieved significant improvements in the productivity of contact center agents due the technology. Customer satisfaction levels also improved. As a result of the deployment and integration with transaction systems, agents now have a 360 degree view of dealers and dealer histories before calls are taken. Consequently, Asian Paints witnessed a 40 percent drop in average call handling time, and an 80 percent satisfaction increase among dealers. The average service availability window increased by 33 percent and overall waiting time was reduced significantly, leading to an effective 40 percent reduction in manpower. We also conducted a dealer satisfaction survey post implementation, with close to 85 percent of the dealers giving the service a very good rating.

Asian Paints has extended the technology to two additional contact centers thereby building in redundancy.

The company also observed that its 'go to market' programs were implemented faster. Because of centralized communication, the current contact centre framework gets in touch with the dealers and informs them in the event of a new product or service launch.

This has been a vast transformation from the erstwhile process when someone had to manually go to the dealer's office, show them the updated information and then follow through with a call from the branch head.

Scaling up operations in terms of opening new sales offices was far more seamless. Moreover, Asian Paints saw a well-connected and collaborative organization that is in line with the demand of its dealers and their customers.

Looking Ahead

Armed with the positive experience of the initial two stages, Asian Paints is looking at creating the next-generation customer interaction operation based on the contact center model.

Evaluation or planning is underway to undertake several of the following:

- **Performance metrics reporting through business warehouse**
- **Providing fax channel for the dealers**
- **Introducing newer channels like chat, web portal, VoIP, kiosks etc.**
- **Performance management and workforce management**
- **Aspect® Social**

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About Aspect

Aspect is the only software company with a fully-integrated interaction and workforce optimization platform for enterprise contact centers globally that need to profitably (and seamlessly) orchestrate people, processes and touch points in an era when the contact center is the new center of the customer experience. For more information, visit www.aspect.com.

