



Insurance Quoteline ensures FSA regulatory compliance using VoIP technology supplied by AltiGen Communications

Customer Profile

Founded in 1998 following the merger of several regional brokers, the company origins of Insurance Quoteline can be traced back to 1910 when the first of these companies was formed – so with nearly 100 years' experience Insurance Quoteline knows a bit about insurance. Today the Blackburn-based company is a nationwide broker offering a wide range of business and personal insurance policies.

According to Ian Hollins, Managing Director of Insurance Quoteline, "Our aim is to be your first choice for insurance providing the best cover at the lowest price with service you can rely on. The company has developed online quote facilities and diversified from traditional personal insurances into SME business covers and are currently developing a specialist schemes unit. The business model supports electronic trading wherever possible and was the first UK intermediary to place business using the Industry standard "Polaris" rating tool and one of the few to offer instant comparative quotations for SME business Insurance. "Our people make our business. We are members of the Investors in People scheme and we encourage ongoing training and personal development in a friendly environment," continues Hollins.

Telephony Challenge

In order to continue to deliver the standard of service that the company's reputation has been built upon, Insurance Quoteline has had to overcome several new business, regulatory and telephony challenges. The UK insurance market is highly competitive and is becoming increasingly regulated through the Financial Services Authority (FSA). The regulations are essentially evidence-based and are designed to protect both the interests of the company and their customers.

What this means in practice is that all calls have to be recorded according to FSA guidelines. For example, if a customer states that he has no driving convictions and it subsequently transpires that he indeed does have, then Insurance Quoteline is able to furnish the proof through the AltiGen technology that they provided the insurance on the basis of the information provided. Conversely if it were to transpire that the company had misinterpreted a customer response then the evidence is available so that the matter can be corrected.

Insurance Quoteline therefore took the decision in May 2004 to upgrade and modernise its telephone system to conform to the new conditions of the market place. Ian Hollins was impressed by the on-site and remote support provided by AltiGen specialist reseller ComVerge Ltd and decided to install the AltiGen AltiServ IP technology.

Based in California, AltiGen Communications was the pioneer and developer of the first “All in One” Converged Phone System in 1996 and today has a large customer base with over 15,000 systems installed across the world. It has a unique unbroken 8 year engineering cycle and is the most awarded US product with over 45 industry awards and is NASDAQ quoted (ATGN).

Benefits, Feedback and Results

The AltiGen technology enabled the flexibility of Insurance Quoteline's employee working arrangements to be improved at a stroke and this was most noticeable in the increased usage of home-workers. Now about 15% of the workforce are part-time home-workers, e.g. women working from 4.00 - 8.00pm at home in the evenings or at weekends. The set-up costs of the home-working have been minimal – approximately £350 per worker for the AltiGen VOIP technology and the internet connection – which signifies a considerable cost-saving on office-space and this is of course a saving that will increase commensurately every time a new home-worker is taken on. This arrangement is especially attractive to Insurance Quoteline at the moment as their offices have reached their capacity. The AltiGen technology also enables existing employees to work more flexibly either early in the mornings, late in the evenings and at weekends. This benefit of greater efficiency is important because the insurance industry has to place great emphasis on staff recruitment and retention.

The AltiGen system has enabled Insurance Quoteline to provide the required compliance evidence and also the ability to use “real” calls to aid staff training. It also enables skills-based call routing enabling a smarter working approach leading to an estimated increase of 20% in cross-selling business. In addition to the already-identified call cost savings of about 25% over and above the least-cost routing, the AltiGen system has delivered additional operational benefits of overhead reductions, increased staff performance monitoring, productive call patterns, call management and general workflow improvements. An additional service provided by Insurance Quoteline is to seamlessly integrate their some of their suppliers to the AltiGen system. An example of this is if a customer calls Insurance Quoteline following a breakdown, the system can immediately transfer them to a breakdown assistance company and make use of the same call-recording features. This helps the customer and also can be used to resolve any future ensuing differences of interpretation of the call – easy if everything is recorded!

Looking to the future the AltiGen technology will enable the recruitment of additional home-based agents and more flexible working arrangements. There will also be further “new” technology integration such as the one-number-follow-me & mobile extension anywhere technology and the introduction of niche-products and specialist schemes.

For more information please contact:

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