

## eircom VOICE RECOGNITION (e-VR) CASE STUDY

### Background

eircom is Ireland's leading provider of a comprehensive range of advanced voice, data and Internet services. With 76% share of the Irish fixed-line market, eircom currently has 2.2 million fixed-line telephone access channels in service. eircom has a customer base of over 1.2 million customers and handles almost 7 million inbound sales and service calls annually to both existing and potential customers via a network of eight contact centres throughout Ireland. These centres are manned by some 400 agents.

### Challenge

eircom handles in excess of 130,000 inbound calls to its service centres each week. eircom wanted to place a greater emphasis on the quality of their customer service, while at the same time position itself to respond to an increasingly competitive environment.

In responding to this challenge eircom had some key issues it wanted to address;

- Provide all callers with a high quality customer service
- Extend its customer access to being 24/7/365
- Ensure all customer calls were routed to the appropriate agent
- Maximise the productivity of the customer channel to optimise customer service
- Position eircom to grow this channel in the most cost efficient way

### Solution Overview

eircom identified speech recognition self-service as the solution to establish automation on its customer service channel. The "1901" customer service line deals with both sales and service enquiries for existing and potential customers. SpeechStorm™ provided the eircom Voice Recognition (e-VR) solution, based on the Genesys VoiceXML platform and Nuance Speech Recognition technology. These technologies work together to create a dynamic call experience.

The e-VR solution is an automated speech telephony service that is fully integrated via the SpeechStorm developed agent solution with over 20 eircom applications and encompasses a rich suite of services including Computerised Telephony Integration (CTI) to all consumer and business contact centres, allowing customer identification and query at the agent desktop. The speech-enabled solution responds to voice commands rather than the telephone keypad input, leading to shorter calls and the automation of functions that could not previously be automated, while providing a richer more interactive customer experience. The use of speech has allowed eircom guide its customers to successful query resolution in the timeliest manner while providing increased agent capacity to deal with calls that cannot be self served by the customer.

The e-VR solution was initially rolled out to over 1 million eircom customers giving instant access to account queries and payments. The solution was fully implemented, from inception to go-live over an 8 month period. Today almost 7 million calls are handled annually by the e-VR solution.



"eircom is committed to offering the highest quality customer service. The e-VR programme clearly demonstrates how speech technology can improve the customer experience while also reducing call centre costs. The gains with the e-VR system have been significant and customer feedback has been very positive."

Barry O'Toole  
Head of Retail Programmes  
eircom

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### Results

- **Delivery of new and improved products and services**

eircom now offers fully automated services including order placement, bill payment, fault reporting and general account enquiries, with services available 24/7. This level of flexibility improves the customer experience by giving callers the choice of how and when they conduct business with eircom.

- **Enhanced efficiency of the contact centre**

The e-VR solution has eliminated double handling of calls, automated simple transactions and improved the identification and routing of calls. In addition eircom can now respond to enquiries faster and more cost effectively, without agent intervention.

- **Brand differentiation**

The e-VR solution has enabled eircom to differentiate from the competition by demonstrating their customer focus and drive to improve the caller experience. eircom has also developed their own phone persona that is unique to eircom, further strengthening their brand.

- **Cost savings**

Today over 13,000 calls per week are handled without agent intervention. 2,000 calls are no longer double handled due to call routing. Payments and billing transactions are well ahead of the business case.

- **Return on Investment**

eircom invested €million in the e-VR solution. Their goal is to achieve return on investment by the second year of operation and reduce annual operating costs by 20% in the third year. Today eircom is well on track to achieve these goals.