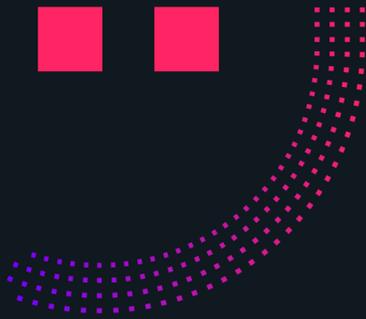


Case Study



Vera Bradley

Vera Bradley Embraces Digital-First Omnichannel with NICE CXone

Luggage, handbag, and accessory retailer Vera Bradley has been modernizing a business model started in 1982 to meet changes in customer expectations as well as evolution in service models and technology. After a successful transition from aging contact center software to NICE CXone, the organization has investigated ways to both broaden and deepen the solution's reach. An examination of long-term consumer preferences for service channels sparked interest in a digital-first omnichannel strategy and highlighted the advantages of bringing a wider range of contact options to customers.



\$1 MILLION

Annual savings from contact center schedule optimizations and resulting in the reduction of 23.5 operating hours per week



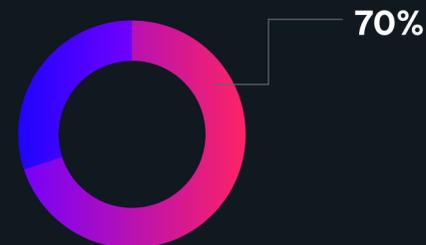
\$50,000

Annual savings from calls resolved in IVR self-service



70% REDUCTION

In call abandonment due to improved service and stability



1 IN 3

Share of Vera Bradley customers choosing voice over other channels, down from 3 in 5 a few years ago



CUSTOMER PROFILE

ABOUT

Founded in 1982, Vera Bradley designs, manufactures, and sells handbags, luggage and travel items, fashion and home accessories, and gifts through its own stores, verabradley.com, select department stores and 1,600 specialty retail locations.

INDUSTRY

Retail

WEBSITE

www.verabradley.com

LOCATION

Headquartered in Roanoke, IN

SIZE

70 agents

GOALS

- Convert processes to digital-first omnichannel
- Add sister brand to cloud contact center solution
- Enhance agent flexibility
- Improve agent activity insights
- Improve customer self-service options

PRODUCTS

- [NICE CXone](#)
- [Omnichannel Routing](#)
- [Interactive Voice Response \(IVR\)](#)
- [Workforce Management](#)
- [Performance Management](#)
- [BI Reporting and Dashboards](#)

FEATURES

- Digital-first-omnichannel workflow for customers and agents
- Highly configurable IVR
- Agent engagement and gamification programs
- Available AI-enabled bot experience
- Flexible, automated scheduling
- Surfly

01 THE BEFORE

Moving past shopworn contact center software

Vera Bradley's previous on-premises contact center system was a multi-vendor environment—fragmented and in clear need of replacement. Voice and chat were siloed. SMS and social media were unsupported. Reporting was extremely limited and business experts could not configure skills. Scheduling was completely manual, from spreadsheets to individual time-off requests. Small configuration changes required significant IT intervention, and real-time insights were impossible to obtain. "We did not have a way to analyze basic essential KPI's such as contacts per hour, handle times, productivity or average speed to answer," said Susan Campbell, Vera Bradley's Director of Customer Experience.

02 DESIRE TO CHANGE

A breaking point highlights new opportunities

The previous voice solution would sometimes fail outright, presenting callers with silence or a dial tone. Digital queues would also become difficult to manage during peak periods. Those thwarted customers were not shy about alerting Vera Bradley's senior management to the issue. "Some would find our CEO on LinkedIn and send a message. That fact, and input from our IT team, were important drivers to create an updated customer experience," Campbell said.

The company noticed a steep long-term decline in demand for voice interactions (down to just 34% of contacts in 2023 from 60–80% in recent years) and wanted to better meet customer demands for flexible channel choice. "Customers want to talk to us through their channel of choice, not our channel of choice or what we think is best for us," Campbell said.

Aside from these factors, cybersecurity requirements for retailers in general put all of Vera Bradley/s operating practices under review. NICE offered the necessary PCI compliance protocols. For the first time, Agents could work from home. Prior to the pandemic, 82% of the department was certified to work from home, making the transition during COVID flawless.



03 THE SOLUTION

A fresh omnichannel approach to contemporary CCaaS

Vera Bradley wanted a cloud-based system that would consolidate communication channels, offer real-time reporting, shore up PCI Level II compliance while allowing agents to spend some days working from home in a hybrid model, and provide agent engagement through gamification. The company implemented NICE CXone and related workforce and quality management solutions to support these business goals. "Moving to a cloud-based system from an on-premises system provided us with so many additional opportunities, including working from home," Campbell said. "And it was exciting to move to the CXone native chat and gain features like team calling during an escalated chat."

CXone makes it easy for Vera Bradley to delineate between sales and service contacts for more precise reporting, staffing, and revenue attribution. Self-service options are also significantly improved and better meet the needs of the 80% of Vera Bradley customers who say they want self-service options for tasks like product returns, warranty information, and product registration. A comprehensive gamification and incentive program keeps agents informed and motivated to achieve both tangible cash bonuses and superior rankings on performance management dashboards.

The contact center handles more than 200,000 annual customer inquiries through NICE solutions through calls,

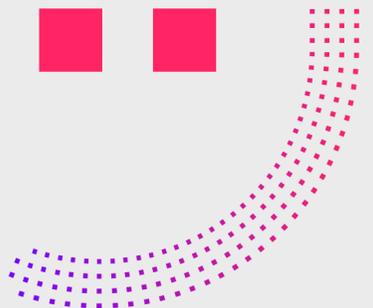
chats, email, and now SMS. With SMS and the beginnings of social media support in place, Vera Bradley decided to begin implementing a digital-first omnichannel approach. "This will streamline our preferred vendors, create synergies between brands and create revenue savings," Campbell said.

04 THE RESULTS

Strong payback on key initiatives

Each initiative has shown substantial payback. The IVR self-service function alone generates \$50,000 in annual savings, as an IVR resolution costs less than 4% of the cost of an average agent connection. Workforce optimization analysis showed Vera Bradley that it could eliminate 23.5 hours per week from the contact center's hours of operation, which saves the organization \$1 million annually. Improved platform stability has significantly improved call abandonment rates, now down 70%. Internal NPS scores show improvements, with agents signaling above-average ratings in overall departmental satisfaction as well as feeling equipped for their jobs. Customer satisfaction (CSAT) scores are also holding steady despite several business updates. "With NICE, we were able to manage volume and skill to campaigns where we needed extra help," Campbell said.

Vera Bradley can keep its current hybrid work policies (one day per week in-office) running strong with the CXone CCaaS architecture, which is accessible from remote



locations as well as in the physical contact center. Email workflow is also more robust, switching from a “pull” queue model to a “push.” The company has further refined this approach to keep its top agents in digital channels free during peak hours or larger-than-usual queue sizes.

Time is the other watchword of Vera Bradley’s results – both freeing more of it and better controlling it. Because business users can extensively customize CXone, the contact center is not so dependent on outside communications with IT organizations just to make modest changes. And team leads have complete control over intraday schedule changes and skills availability.

05 THE FUTURE

A “future-focused” continued pivot to digital-first omnichannel

With the CXone technology and experience now well-established, Vera Bradley continues to look at the realities of its planned digital-first omnichannel strategy, which will allow customers to have exchanges with agents who know the complete history of their interactions, regardless of channel. “NICE gives us the ability to be future-focused,” Campbell said.

The company is looking ahead to optimizing the DFO platform. Vera Bradley is also keen to incorporate AI into the customer experience. “We would like to improve our chatbot experience to be more interactive,” Campbell said. “We love idea-sharing and exploring possibilities with other NICE users in the NICE User Group.”

“I feel like NICE wants to make us a better version of ourselves. And there aren’t a lot of other companies that really invest in thought leadership, especially around how AI will forever change the face of the contact center.”

SUSAN CAMPBELL
DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
VERA BRADLEY

About NICE

With NICE (Nasdaq: NICE), it’s never been easier for organizations of all sizes around the globe to create extraordinary customer experiences while meeting key business metrics. Featuring the world’s #1 cloud native customer experience platform, CXone, NICE is a worldwide leader in AI-powered self-service and agent-assisted CX software for the contact center—and beyond. Over 25,000 organizations in more than 150 countries, including over 85 of the Fortune 100 companies, partner with NICE to transform—and elevate—every customer interaction.

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