

BRONZE WINNER > EARTHLINK

CATEGORY: CUSTOMER SERVICE OPTIMIZATION

Getting Proactive With Customers

With more than five million subscribers, Internet service provider EarthLink aims to offer what it thinks every Internet user should expect: a seamless experience, minimal online intrusions, and quick resolution to troubleshooting.

In keeping with those goals, in 2006 EarthLink launched a proactive service solution that monitors online visitors, identifies those who need help, and invites them to resolve their issues via chat before they pick up the phone or send an email.

Although chat had been in place at EarthLink since 1998, the 2006 initiative introduced using it proactively. The company realized that it could no longer grow its click-to-chat channel. "We discovered a lot of customers out there who would chat, but wouldn't hop into channels themselves," says Mike Murphy, senior manager, call center innovation. "They needed a shove basically to try the channel."

So EarthLink opted for an invitation chat strategy. Managed through LivePerson's Timpani platform, the proactive chat tool aims to increase agent productivity and provide customers with improved online navigation. So when visitors experience difficulty in the self-service channel, for example, the system triggers an automatic invitation to chat with an EarthLink representative, making it easier for customers to receive support.

In addition to allowing EarthLink to engage new segments of



customers, the solution has prompted a 20 percent reduction in call volume, a significant savings considering that each chat costs about one third the cost of a support call. The number of customers using proactive chat who say they are satisfied jumped 10 percent to 88 percent, and first contact resolution has increased 7 percent.

"Now our chat channel has the highest satisfaction rates and resolution rates of any channel," Murphy adds. "I think listening to your customers and delivering tools and options to your customers that give them answers quickly results in fewer overall contacts and higher satisfaction for customers." ★ *Mila D'Antonio*

LIVEperson