



Case study

Department of Health leverages contact center solutions to vaccinate Virginia

verizon[✓]



Challenge

At one time, the Commonwealth of Virginia was lagging behind most of the country in terms of getting its constituents vaccinated against COVID-19. Now, Virginia ranks 13th among states for percentage of population fully vaccinated. Throughout the pandemic, expectations from Virginia residents have been high, but initially the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) had no centralized operation where people could go to get information about getting vaccinated.

Adding to the complexity, policy changes surrounding the vaccine were frequent, and misinformation was rampant.

Solution

The Commonwealth of Virginia already had a contract with Verizon for technology services, so the company was in a strong position to expand the existing partnership by setting up a contact center to help vaccinate Virginia. VDH worked with Verizon to utilize its existing relationship and technology contract to streamline and facilitate the process. The chief champion for the strategy was the Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Transportation, as the department already had a large call center available for use.

The new contact center for the vaccine rollout was fully functioning at scale in only seven days.

The Virtual Contact Center (VCC) is composed of various technologies, including self-service interactive voice response, voice call back, SMS and email functionality.

With network-based interactive voice response (IVR), inbound requests could be efficiently routed so that an individual requesting information could quickly obtain the solicited data.

This means that no matter what channel people chose to interact with the contact center – whether through phone, email, text or social media – their inquiry would be intelligently routed to the appropriate call center agent for a more personalized and productive interaction.

The Commonwealth initially asked for 50 call center agents, but many more agents were needed to meet increased demand. The agility of the solution allowed them to rapidly scale up to 1,000 agents within 24 hours, with the ability to handle 10,000 simultaneous calls from 35 regional health districts.

82,000 outbound calls were performed to schedule vaccination appointments.

 **1,000 agents**

 **35 regional health districts**

 **82,000 outbound calls**



Outcome

As call center operations ramped up, the Commonwealth of Virginia skyrocketed from 50th to fourth in the nation in vaccination rates, according to a local news report.

Numerous factors contributed to the positive outcome, but the Department of Health indicates that one of the keys to success was the ability to adapt to meet the needs of the Commonwealth's population. For example, by accommodating more languages, engagement escalated dramatically. Initially, only English and Spanish languages were available. The VDH quickly added over 100 language callbacks, including Cantonese, Hindi, Japanese, Mandarin and Arabic. For the hard of hearing or deaf, American Sign Language (ASL) was also accommodated, with a transition to video if required.

Partnerships with Walmart, Walgreens and Giant pharmacies were also critical, and continue to be leveraged.

The Commonwealth is now working to perform targeted outreach with churches and community centers to help invest in at-risk and under-vaccinated communities.

Looking ahead, VDH is excited to leverage similar capabilities as the VCC, while adding new technologies like artificial intelligence and chatbots.

“The rates of change for the request were pretty aggressive, and Verizon kept up with it every time we needed something. That’s why there were daily meetings, weekly meetings ... so technology issues could be brought up. Verizon was able to adapt to that change.”

Suresh Soundararajan
VDH chief information officer

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