



A little extra for the Halifax

ContactPartners has allowed the Halifax to generate an extra £0.5 million in premium income from the sale of regulated products through its direct channels division in under a year, and provides a seamless link between its web site and contact centre.

When Halifax began selling regulated products via direct channels in February 2007 it was determined to take an integrated approach. "We wanted to pursue a 'joined up' channel strategy that would allow our customers to pass seamlessly between the internet and our telephone based sales teams," explains Head of Regulated Telephone Sales, Simon Wassell.

Clicktocal capability was already in use across several other divisions of Halifax and its parent, HBOS, was introduced in autumn 2007 to provide click-through connectivity between the Internet and the bank's regulated sales contact centre operation in Leeds. "It has proved invaluable," says Simon. "Before its introduction we were aware that sales opportunities were being lost because people failed to complete their transactions online. The option to connect directly to an agent via ContactPartners' clicktocal technology sidesteps that failure and gives us the opportunity to save the sale. In under a year, it has allowed us to secure around £0.5 million in premium income."

Saving the sale

Conversion rates have been impressively high. Introduced first to support Halifax's Guaranteed Growth Bond and, more recently, its equity based ISAs, ContactPartners has delivered sales conversion rates of over 40%. "That's similar to the results we achieve through our telephone channel," says Simon. But with one important difference. "Our telephone channel deals only with existing ISA holders. Since they are only being invited to top up an existing investment, one would expect the conversion rate to be higher than average. By contrast, 75% of the enquiries that come via our internet channel are from new customers. Given those circumstances, the conversion rate is, indeed, impressive."

Managing time – catching the sale

ContactPartners' technology has proved particularly useful during the peak ISA selling period between February and April. As sales enquiries escalate dramatically, the number of calls increases more than 10 fold. The clicktocal technology allows customers to schedule a call at a time that's convenient to them, rather than calling the centre and risking delays or queues. "Of course we still have to make sure that agents are available to make those calls," says Simon, "but even across the busiest selling periods we have been able to do so, secure in the knowledge that the call will be made at the appropriate time. That translates, quite simply, into great customer service!"



CUSTOMER PROFILE

Halifax is one of Lloyds Banking Group's main brands in England and Wales. Lloyds Banking Group is the largest retail bank in the UK with one in three people banking with the Group.

INDUSTRY

Financial Services

WEBSITE

www.halifax.co.uk

LOCATION

United Kingdom

BUSINESS NEED

- An integrated channel strategy
- Prevent lost and incomplete online sales transactions
- Improve contact flexibility for customers

SOLUTION

- Multi-channel advice
- Clicktocal web/telephony integration technology

BENEFITS

- An extra £0.5 million in premium income from the sale of regulated products
- A seamless link between its web site and contact centre
- Improved sales conversion rates of over 40%
- Improved customer service



The ability to schedule calls is one of ContactPartners' greatest strengths. The Halifax contact centre is open from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and from 9am to 1pm on Saturday, but careful use of the call scheduling facility means that Halifax's sales window remains open even when its contact centre is closed. "We've designed the call request form so that, if someone is surfing our site outside of hours and requests a call back, they'll be invited to schedule it for a time when we're open. The sales opportunity is firmly secured and the customer's expectations are managed from the outset," affirms Simon.

Future plans

Halifax has clear plans to increase the use of its direct channels for the sale of regulated products. Three new products will be introduced to the Halifax's portfolio later this year and plans are currently being developed to make them available on line, supported with the clicktocal facility. "With these new products we will be firmly engaged in new customer acquisition, where we believe clicktocal can offer greatest value," says Simon with confidence.

Furthermore, Halifax is working with ContactPartner's management to extend the use of clicktocal to the price comparison sites that are fast becoming a key feature of the sales landscape for financial services.

ContactPartners' Director, Russ Hopcraft, explains "We're investigating how, by placing the clicktocal icon alongside our clients' offerings on price comparison sites, we can encourage customers to make direct contact. Our contacts at Halifax, recognising that this could give them a strong competitive edge, are working closely with us on this project."

The service will deliver a clear win-win for Halifax and the price comparison sites alike, Russell insists. "Halifax will steal a march on its competitors, while the price comparison sites will be able to use the management information ContactPartners captures to accurately measure and demonstrate the value it delivers to its stakeholders in terms of sales opportunities."

This innovative and business focused approach is typical of ContactPartners' team, says Simon. "From the outset they've helped us, not just to implement the technology efficiently, but to use it to improve our commercial performance. Their focus on business opportunity and measurable results is a rare quality in technology vendors, and one we particularly value."

About Halifax

Halifax is a Lloyds Banking Group plc company. Lloyds Banking Group plc is the largest retail bank in the UK - one in three people bank with the group. Lloyds TSB and Halifax are the main brands in England and Wales and Bank of Scotland is the main brand in Scotland.

Lloyds Banking Group's goal is to be the best financial services provider in the UK. We believe this means we must build a leadership position not on the basis of scale but on the foundations of reputation and recommendation.

"With these new products we will be firmly engaged in new customer acquisition, where we believe clicktocal can offer greatest value."

Simon Wassell, Head of Regulated Telephone Sales, Halifax

"From the outset they've helped us, not just to implement the technology efficiently, but to use it to improve our commercial performance. Their focus on business opportunity and measurable results is a rare quality in technology vendors, and one we particularly value."

Simon Wassell, Head of Regulated Telephone Sales, Halifax



ContactPartners Ltd
10 Ashurst Court
Wheatley
Oxford
OX33 1ER
United Kingdom

T +44 (0)333 123 2580
F +44 (0)333 123 2581
E info@contactpartners.com
W www.contactpartners.com