

# Government Agency Improves Service and Designs Smart Strategy to Hire Much-Needed Contact Center Agents

## Case Study

### Situation: Double Phone Calls, Double Trouble

When website changes prominently displayed the customer service 1-800 number for a government agency, the amount of incoming calls virtually doubled overnight. Suddenly the agency struggled to serve roughly 1,000 calls per day from constituents seeking assistance with state-provided services. Call hold times hovered at two hours, and call handling times were mysteriously getting longer. Customer complaints had grown so loud that the Governor was soon involved. A mandate was issued to improve the quality of customer service delivered by the department, and contact center leaders were under pressure to fix the problem fast.

With just 20 contact center agents serving the calls and technology systems that had not been optimized to manage the new demand, agency leaders needed to perform a quick yet thorough evaluation of the situation and design a step-by-step plan for improvement. After reaching out to their contact center technology provider for support, they were soon introduced to EPIC Connections.

Since 2010, EPIC has been a strategic partner of the technology provider, helping companies both implement and optimize their technology investments with workforce- and operations-focused best practices. The agency quickly hired EPIC to help the team clearly define gaps, identify recommendations, and draft a solution roadmap.



**INDUSTRY:** Government – state agency

**SERVICES/PRODUCTS:** RapidCheck Assessment

**METHODOLOGY:** Assess, Design

**SOLUTIONS:** IVR Enhancements, Workforce Optimization, Operating Model Improvements, Performance Reports, Management Best Practices, Customized Strategies for Success

### Solution: Fast-Track Gaps and Quick-Hits

EPIC's contact center industry veterans performed a four-week analysis of the contact center, interviewing key stakeholders and evaluating the operational procedures and technology environment. Afterwards, they presented 15 current-state findings with recommendations that could be immediately leveraged for improvement:

Root Cause Challenge	Immediate Solution & Benefit
<p><b>IVR Inadequacies</b> incorrectly implemented call-back process duplicated calls. Transfer errors increased queues, and IVR messaging confused callers.</p>	<p><b>IVR Enhancements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved features reduced call-back times and errors, freeing customers from waiting in line and enhancing their service experience</li> <li>IVR menu optimization and transfer error corrections minimized call abandonment</li> </ul>

Traded telecom penalty fees for more agents

Root Cause Challenge	Immediate Solution & Benefit
<p><b>Underutilized Technology and Inconsistent Processes</b> Standard contact center management best practices were not applied consistently nor enforced, and system reporting capabilities were not being fully utilized</p>	<p><b>Technology &amp; Process Enhancements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance dashboards, KPI reports, and training empowered leaders to take corrective action and effectively manage</li> <li>• Reports helped the team evaluate call patterns, volumes, KPIs, and correct scripts</li> <li>• Separate agents were dedicated to handling easy-to-serve callers, reducing wait time</li> </ul>
<p><b>Service Limitations</b> Spanish calls went unanswered. Agent skillset data was outdated, so calls were routed to new agents who were not yet proficient.</p>	<p><b>Skills-Based Workforce Optimization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spanish and specialty calls were prioritized and routed correctly, minimizing call abandonment</li> <li>• Skills-based routing improvements connected the right agent with the right calls</li> </ul>

“Thank you EPIC! This was very helpful. **You have been incredibly valuable.** I truly appreciate all of your help.”

-Contact Center Director at a state agency

## Result: Improved Service & Surprising Insights

Eager to make the immediate improvements, the agency worked with EPIC to implement the recommendations to their contact center technology platform, management approach, and operational processes. The IVR and call flow was soon streamlined, making it more usable, understandable and efficient, and the contact center technology was fully utilized with trained management leveraging real-time reports for maximum performance and workforce optimization. The result: A clear plan with movement toward an improved customer experience utilizing optimized technology and governance principles.

*But the implemented improvements did NOT have a noteworthy impact on the two-hour hold times and lengthy call handling times.*

Through the process, EPIC had uncovered a larger problem—a newly implemented back-end processing system slowed service operations, requiring excessive system navigation and after-call work that increased total call handle times by 100%. The solution was not evident, since the issues had not been addressed nor consistently reported. As the true root cause, this challenge was beyond EPIC's current scope of work.

To provide the most value, EPIC designed a second, long-term strategy with ten additional recommendations to solve the core processing problem. The roadmap offered advice on what to start, stop, and continue, but more importantly it provided a detailed cost analysis and staffing model outlining the exact investments needed to reach acceptable service levels. The dynamic staffing model (Erlang C) allowed agency leaders to weigh the cost of more agents against the benefit of reduced call holding times, striking a balance between the budget and the Governor's mandate. Better still, EPIC identified ways to potentially justify the cost of additional agents, reallocating funds from excessive telecom usage and penalty fees (est. at \$25,000/mo) to hire much-needed service agents.

### Not the Problem You Thought it Was...

Initially agency leaders thought their core problem revolved around the IVR system and the need for technology optimization, but they soon learned their situation was more complex.

Understanding that discovery processes sometimes reveal deeper challenges beyond reach, EPIC is dedicated to delivering ROI on every engagement. In this case, EPIC experts worked quickly to build out a secondary roadmap that both defined the exact agent headcount needed to deliver superior service and also found the funding needed to enable the solution.