

RESPONSE

Building Rewarding Relationships
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Background

Since 1996 RESPONSE has provided a consular information and appointment booking process on behalf of the US Embassy in London and the US Consulate in Belfast.

This account requires us to handle enquiries from callers across a diverse demographic population, which range from general enquiries through to callers with extremely sensitive or difficult personal situations. On average, we currently handle in excess of 5,000 calls per week although this can change radically due to seasonality.

The Challenge

Provision of a number of contact centre services which are staffed by experienced and multi-skilled advisors supporting:

- Non-Immigrant Visas
- Immigrant Visas
- Department of Homeland Security

Provision of a robust platform for the timely, effective and efficient dissemination of consular information, related guidance and support to client groups including:

- the general public
- the travel industry and airlines
- the legal community
- third country missions
- non-governmental organisations
- US departments and agencies

The service must operate within strict guidelines and processes at all times and must take account of the caller's individual circumstances, thus ensuring that calls are handled diplomatically and sensitively, whilst complying with legislation.

Public Sector



The level of sophistication and flexibility of the appointment booking system developed by RESPONSE, with its associated script support, FAQ and fee payment functionality, produced significant benefits for this Embassy's visa operation.

Scheduling an appointment is now faster, resulting in a better-prepared applicant, the system handles emergency appointment requests with greater efficiency and transparency, and electronic fulfillment means we are no longer beholden to mail delays.



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The Solution

The service itself is comprehensive. It includes automated services (telephone messages and web) and live advisor services to provide advice and information related to immigrant and non-immigrant visas, to make and manage appointments to the US Embassy in London and to manage the various other activities related to the service. This includes collecting payments, managing all correspondence (mail, email, SMS) and ensuring that all knowledge content is maintained and utilised to keep pace with the changing requirements of the client.

To support the increasing complexities of the visa application process, RESPONSE launched a new web-based client application, developed using our Relatis® platform. This system made significant improvements in the appointment booking process and also ensured that the FAQs became a knowledge management tool for staff. These FAQs are maintained and updated remotely by the client and provide staff with “a latest” news feed to keep them up to date on any changes.

RESPONSE also implemented a survey to improve core values such as customer satisfaction, problem resolution and ease of contact. This also allows scope for feedback to improve any area of the operation where the customer feels we could be more efficient.

In addition, we introduced group bookings to allow third party visa consultants or employers the capacity to book multiple appointments on a commercial level for up to 100 applicants at a time. Further improvements have also been identified and will be implemented to allow customers direct access to this service from the US Embassy's website.

The changes deployed have resulted in a much improved customer experience that has increased efficiency and reduced costs by dramatically reducing the time spent on arranging appointments.

Service Improvements:

- Improved client relationships to ensure the US Embassy feels fully engaged with both our short and long term strategies for the department
- Introduced a group based appointment booking service
- Implemented web based self service for end users
- Implemented enhanced, multi-channel fulfilment and access for end users
- Implemented technology to share knowledge between all stakeholders
- Implemented technology to manage, measure and control escalated cases between stakeholders

We have successfully evolved our processes, tools and support services over time to ensure each of our advisors offer advice and support that is accurate and effective every time, ensuring a high level of customer satisfaction.

This was highlighted when RESPONSE received recognition by our peers when we were awarded Public Sector Outsourcing Project of the Year in 2007 by the National Outsourcing Association.