Analytics transform outbound collections

Learn how SAS and speech analytics have transformed debt-collection strategies and data segmentation, increasing cash collected per agent hour by 30% and liquidation by 20%.

Summary

Apex quadrupled throughput, while only growing capacity by 35%, specific new processes underpin their claim to be the most ethical debt collection agency and the technology roll-out has helped people feel on top of the factors that drive their performance. A new Cascade model creates dynamic multi-channel contact strategies in SAS, which optimise debt collection based on the latest data. Alongside this, Nexidia speech analytics has focussed coaching and freed up an average 30 hours per month for each team manager. In combination, smart integration and a rigorous continuous improvement methodology, have driven cash collected per agent hour up 30% and grown the amount of customers who promise to pay by 15%.

Key initiatives

Scalable tools for profitable growth

When AnaCap purchased Apex, a strategic decision was made to invest in technology that could help the debt collection agency grow quickly and profitably. Scalable tools have allowed Apex to deal with a higher caseload at lower unit costs, while at the same time offering better quality and supporting dynamic employee engagement. A Noble Contact Centre Suite (CCS) was implemented in 2008 and in 2009-10, Nexidia speech analytics was implemented to focus performance coaching and SAS was rolled out, using analysis to create and automate multi-channel contact strategies for debt collection. Visibility of customer data and telephone negotiator performance was critical, because the results could be fed into continuous process improvements. "Totally scalable" "A significant increase in performance" "We've nearly quadrupled throughput, but have only grown seats by 35%".

The 'Cascade' model for contact strategies

Apex created a continual improvement model called 'Cascade'. Transactional data is captured and fed into the SAS data warehouse nightly, where it is automatically analysed to create work lists - for outbound calls, text and letters. Reports are made available for team managers to cascade to negotiators - as well as for analysts who identify where efficiencies can be created. They can then quickly develop new collection 'strategies' in SAS, which detail how and when each customer should be approached, depending on their individual circumstances. SAS automatically feeds these work lists into the customer contact systems. As soon as contacts have been made, based on these actions, the data is updated and the cycle continues. "It's about minimising lost opportunities" "SAS allows us to take intelligent decisions about what will work" "It's revolutionary".

Blending, automation and multi-channel contact

Previously, Apex relied on manual dialling and an individual case ownership system. Now, SAS determines the best course of action for specific accounts and feeds that information automatically into the predictive dialler and the multi-channel contact platform. If, for example, a customer has promised to pay, the contact strategy in SAS will automatically ensure they

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"We've nearly quadrupled throughput, but have only grown seats by 35%."
Steve Mound
Chief Operating Officer

"You can have the best analyst in the world, the best tool, even the best queries, but without the ability to cascade the learnings to the agents, you can't make it work."
Richard Furlong,
Contact Strategy Manager

"Our way of moving the business on to the next level is to dispense with the intuition-led approach, and to focus on actual data on a day-to-day basis."
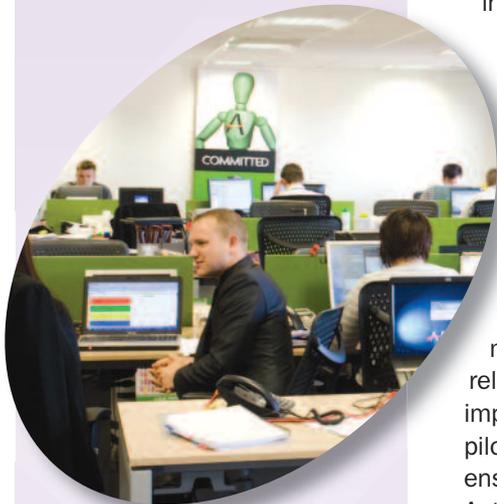**James Edwards,**
Head of IT

Professional Planning Forum

Results

- **Conversion rates up 15%**
- **Cash collected per agent hour up 30%**
- **Liquidation rates up by 20%**
- **Speech analytics achieved its anticipated 12-month return in 7 months**
- **Saves an average 30 hours per month for team managers**
- **Complaints that took two weeks to answer now take ten minutes**

Why do People Get into Debt
- 39% Change in Circumstances
- 26% Availability of Credit
- 22% Over-Extending Themselves
- 13% Increasing Cost of Living

CasCade from Apex Credit Management

"We're now reviewing 30 or 40 calls per agent per month, rather than 'the smaller sample pre Nexidia. It's a lot fairer."

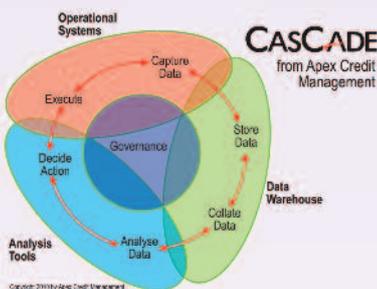**Kerry Hodgetts,**
Bought Debt Team Manager

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aren't contacted again unnecessarily, because it dynamically picks up changes to the customer's database records. Conversely, if data reveals a customer has a higher propensity to pay, the contact strategy will increase the volume of targeted SMS, emails, Interactive Voice Messages (IVM), letters and/or outbound calls aimed at that individual. To cope with the increased inbound volumes generated by this approach, negotiators have been up-skilled to undertake inbound and outbound calls – making Apex a truly blended contact environment. "We dealt with 1,000 to 1,500 cases per head pre-dialler. Now it's more like 5,000" "Data drives decisions" "It's streamlined".

Targeted coaching through speech analytics

Speech analytics allow Apex to focus on specific call techniques, such as using the right phrase at the right time to extract a promise to pay. Historically, team managers had difficulty proving whether negotiators followed the right procedures as they only listened to a relatively small sample of agents overall calls, per month. Nexidia now audits 100% of calls and delivers analysis to team managers' desktops every morning, saving them 30 hours a month in call listening and selection. Time has been reinvested in coaching, which has increased by 50% and is more targeted as managers are able to evidence where and how calls can be improved. Critically, telephone negotiators have been fully involved in the technology's roll-out. Their input is used to re-write queries for best effect, and enthusiasm for the tool has proliferated with the realisation that it helps people hit their bonus targets. "Analysis over anecdotes" "Before Nexidia, only experienced agents hit targets" "Managers have a lot more free time now".

Ethical debt collection is people-focussed

Apex prides itself on an ethical approach to debt collection and a working environment that is now totally people-focussed – key differentiators in their market. They moved to a new building, with outstanding facilities for a relatively small employer, transformed communications and drove the implementation of analytics through engagement of the team members in a pilot team. Analytics has also given the company a mechanism to actively ensure full compliance with financial regulations. Calls citing 'Financial Services Authority' or 'Office of Fair Trading', for example, are flagged through Nexidia, and acted on instantly where necessary. This ethical stance gives financial services clients confidence that Apex will protect their brands. "We listen to more calls now than ever" "Helps prove to clients we're meeting and bettering their needs" "It puts us at the top of our game".

"Before Nexidia, I never hit a target in four months. Since Nexidia, I've only missed one."

Stewart Kennedy,
Telephone Negotiator

"You can listen to another collector's call if you know they … get good results."

Nick Ship,
Telephone Negotiator

"Nexidia gives us a tool to help us coach and provide more support. It's transparent."

Caz Ballinger,
Contingent Team Manager

"SAS allows us to intelligently settle debt. It's about presenting the right opportunity to the right collector at the right time – about giving them the intelligence they need to get the best result."

Andy Ibberson,
Commercial Analyst – SAS & Projects

"If, at any time during the cycle, we find more information about the customer, we can use it to drive the strategy for that particular customer."

Stewart Cox,
Head of Sales & Marketing

Apex Credit Management Ltd aspires to be the UK's leading ethical, data-driven and innovative debt collection agency and were winners at the 2010 Credit Today awards. Acquired by AnaCap Financial Partners in Nov 2007, Apex have over 300 staff and a broad client base across the banking and finance sectors – managing almost £2 billion of debt. Apex uses SAS, Nexidia speech analytics and Noble Systems' Contact Centre Suite.