

Case Study



Vera Bradley

Vera Bradley Strengthens Customer and Employee Ties with NICE CXone

Vera Bradley’s contact center, serving customers, retail partners and retail store locations, previously ran on a limited and outdated on-premise system. Replacing that system with cloud-based NICE CXone helped the company transition through the challenges of a 100% at-home agent model and a newer hybrid workplace structure while significantly improving the quality of customer interactions and simplifying management tasks.



90%+ REDUCTION

In call abandonment rate

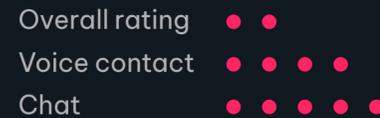


NET PROMOTER SCORE UP 3.1 POINTS

year-over-year



POINT INCREASE, YEAR-OVER-YEAR



REDUCED TURNOVER



REDUCED TIME-OFF REQUESTS



IMPROVED VISIBILITY FOR AGENTS & MANAGERS

without IT involvement



CUSTOMER PROFILE

ABOUT

Founded in 1982, Vera Bradley designs, manufactures, and sells handbags, luggage and travel items, fashion and home accessories, and gifts through its own stores, verabradley.com, select department stores and approximately 1,800 specialty retail locations.

INDUSTRY

Retail

WEBSITE

www.verabradley.com

LOCATION

Headquartered in Roanoke, IN

AGENTS

70 agents

GOALS

- Replace limited on-premise contact center platform with cloud solution
- Improve customer experience
- Reduce reliance on IT intervention for basic contact center ops
- Improve employee retention and engagement

PRODUCTS

- [NICE CXone](#)
- [NICE inView Performance Management](#)
- [NICE Workforce Management](#)
- [NICE Quality Management](#)

FEATURES

- Dynamic cloud-based contact center infrastructure
- Dashboards for all stakeholders
- Co-browsing with customers
- Agent assist virtual plug-in system
- Gamification with virtual, physical, and workplace perk rewards

01 THE BEFORE

Inconsistent execution in a challenging environment

Vera Bradley's corporate purpose statement is "To make the world a brighter place." That's a taller order than usual, in a retail climate rocked by pandemic disruptions, supply chain difficulties, and other frustrations. The company's previous, outdated on-premise contact center system was little help.

The system offered limited functionality and even more limited visibility. There was no real-time reporting, no insights into productivity on an interval or agent basis. Tweaking the smallest configuration item, even a single agent skill, was a detailed task requiring an IT professional. "IT would spend at least a day and a half every month just pulling data together in spreadsheets for our CSR scorecards," said Susan Campbell, Director, Customer Experience at Vera Bradley.



02 DESIRE TO CHANGE

A rising tide for all boats

The company wanted to revamp its contact center operation, a change welcomed by all stakeholders. Leadership wanted the overhaul to provide the highest level of customer experience and to create new employee engagement programs (including gamification) to ensure the best possible work environment. IT staff wanted to reduce the amount of time spent on maintenance and reporting while also moving to a platform with improved PCI compliance, making order processing more secure.

In addition, Vera Bradley wanted a solution that would elevate the company's profile as an attractive employer, which included the goal of introducing work-from-home flexibility (pre-pandemic). Like many companies, Vera Bradley faced labor force pressures on several fronts, specifically including the opening of a major e-commerce warehouse just down the road.

And everyone agreed that callers needed a better overall experience. The previous system had particularly ungraceful handling of full queues and offered no callback feature. Call abandon rates were unacceptably high and frustrated callers were not shy about escalating their complaints. "People were messaging our CEO through LinkedIn letting him know that the contact center was 'not taking any calls,'" Campbell said.

03 THE SOLUTION

A resilient, flexible contact center, and just in time

Vera Bradley implemented NICE CXone and related workforce and quality management solutions in time to implement a work-from-home program before March 2020. This was instrumental in supporting the need to suddenly move all agents to remote operations and also eased the company's back-to-office drive in mid-2021.

Among the many technological upgrades is a co-browsing feature. This resonates with many Vera Bradley customers who are not strongly tech literate and appreciate help completing transactions or applying promo codes.

Because the contact center supports end consumers, independent retailers, and Vera Bradley stores, agents can be called upon to address a wide range of situations. Everything from routine consumer orders to extreme weather closures of a Vera Bradley retail store is a possibility. The agent assist feature of NICE makes it easy to add another experienced representative to a call. This is particularly useful for agents working at home who can't easily hail a colleague at a nearby desk.

Behind the scenes, an employee engagement program built around gamification rewards employees with digital rewards, virtual coins redeemable for products and gift cards, as well as workplace incentives like additional breaks. Performance dashboards help leadership and individual agents alike understand output on a granular basis.



04 THE RESULTS

Strong improvements in difficult times

Call abandonment, once a sore point, is back at world-class levels. Agents are now more likely to be available and ready to take calls as they arrive. Customers quickly noticed the difference and signaled their approval. Several key survey metrics rose year-over-year, including NPS and CSAT.

Upgrading to NICE CXone and introducing work-from-home flexibility for most of the agent pool prepared Vera Bradley well for pandemic response. After returning to the office in June 2021, the company recognized that it was able to balance greater flexibility with cultural consistency, and has now rotated to a hybrid model where the typical employee works two days per week from home.

The company's workforce culture has also been strengthened by the improved depth and detail of reporting. Employees are now motivated to boost their own productivity after seeing detailed rankings published. In the past, agents had no quantitative way to judge their performance against peers. "They suddenly took an interest in improving their personal productivity," Campbell said. Vera Bradley has also been able to implement clearer and improved career tracks, including defined performance criteria necessary for an agent to join the chat-based group. These changes, along with pay adjustments and gamification, have helped the company minimize turnover at a time when many organizations are struggling to hold on to talent.

05 THE FUTURE

Building from strength

With the biggest technological challenges handled, Vera Bradley plans to continue looking for novel ways to create value and engagement in the contact center. Expanded use of gamification is one such opportunity. The company is also considering building on successes like its recently introduced outbound calling campaign which contacts customers with birthday greetings.

"NICE CXone helped us establish and maintain a **hybrid contact center model**, to give our customers and retailers a **consistent experience**, and to **increase our customer satisfaction scores** during a pretty tumultuous year for business."

SUSAN CAMPBELL
DIRECTOR, CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
VERA BRADLEY



About NICE

With NICE (Nasdaq: NICE), it's never been easier for organizations of all sizes around the globe to create extraordinary customer experiences while meeting key business metrics. Featuring the world's #1 cloud native customer experience platform, CXone, NICE is a worldwide leader in AI-powered self-service and agent-assisted CX software for the contact center—and beyond. Over 25,000 organizations in more than 150 countries, including over 85 of the Fortune 100 companies, partner with NICE to transform—and elevate—every customer interaction.

www.nice.com

For the list of NICE trademarks, visit <http://www.nice.com/nice-trademarks>