

Inter-Tel

Case Study: Oklahoma Telemarketer Restriction Act Consumer Registry, Oklahoma Attorney General's Office



Limiting telephone solicitations to Oklahoma residents

Oklahoma's Telemarketer Restriction Act, passed in 2002, and effective January 1, 2003, prohibits telemarketers from contacting Oklahomans who register for the Don't Call program. Telemarketing companies who want to do business in Oklahoma are required to obtain the list for a quarterly access fee of \$150, and are prohibited from contacting the numbers or selling information on the list. Additionally, telemarketing companies that do not adhere to the statute can be found in violation of the state's Consumer Protection Act.

The Business Challenge—development, installation and implementation of a cost-effective customized IVR application

The attorney general's office had a web site and e-mail system to handle online registrations to the Do Not Call list. Residents could also register by mail or through a phone-in system. The attorney general's office anticipated a huge response, but the large volume exceeded expectations. People had trouble connecting to the web site because of high traffic and others received a busy signal when they called in.

In order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the registration program, the attorney general's office decided to offer residents an automated call-in option and began a search for a communications company that could respond to their needs.

"We would sit down with other companies and tell them that we needed a highly automated system that gave us a verification method and obtained information," said Thomas Bates, Oklahoma's Assistant Attorney General, "and they would look at us and laugh. They'd say 'that's just not possible, and if it were possible a state agency like yours couldn't afford it.' Then they'd proceed to tell us what they thought we needed and what they would give us."



The Inter-Tel Solution

Jeff Hartwig with TRAVIS Voice and Data, an Inter-Tel dealer, didn't laugh when he heard what needed to be done in little over a month's time. Instead, he called the Inter-Tel Custom Solutions team. Together they created a demonstration to show the attorney general's office that they could install a communications platform that included an interactive voice response (IVR) application that would not only address the needs of the program, but would also help reduce costs.

"I guess our primary concern was will this work," said Eric Welsh, an information technologist for the attorney general's office. "They told us what they could do, and I'm not sure if we believed them or not based on the previous vendors we dealt with."

TRAVIS Voice and Data and Inter-Tel were able to provide the office with a customized IVR application that integrated with the state's online registry—in only 20 days—a requirement necessary to allow as many Oklahomans as possible to register before the first quarterly deadline: December 1, 2002.

Consumer sign up is free, but the attorney general's office was charged by the minute for calls on their 800 line. In response, TRAVIS included a feature that would automatically route toll-free calls to their nearest hub, creating a more cost-efficient system.

An additional requirement was software that responds to both English and Spanish-language callers. "They had a new script for us," said Welsh. "They told us where to put it [in the system] and it worked perfectly."

Why Inter-Tel

According to Hartwig, Inter-Tel not only met its customer's needs—it surpassed them. On the first call-in registration day, Oklahoma's telephone registry system received 25,000 phone calls. Hartwig stated that the fully-automated IVR application, accessible 24 hours a day, "handled more traffic on its first day than any other voice registry system in the U.S."

The system was installed on deadline and under budget. "All of this work on Oklahoma's Don't Call Registry had to be done with very little money. We were not given additional funds to implement," said Bates. "Inter-Tel and TRAVIS Voice and Data have given us an IVR system that, if it is not the best, it is one of the best and most user-friendly phone registry systems in the country."



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