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ack when FedEx's main mandate was, "When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight," a system designed to simply track packages was sufficient for the company.

But several years ago FedEx went on an acquisition spree, buying up entities that increased its offerings to include services like FedEx Ground. The "new" FedEx, larger in both size and scope, needed CRM software that could cross platforms to ensure that its 3,000 customer service reps could provide superior service to the 300,000 customers who call FedEx's 16 U.S. call centers each day.

When the time came to select the new system, Sheila Harrell, FedEx's vice president of customer service, strategic planning, and Scot Struminger, vice president of information technology, worked in tandem—something both say was key to the success of the implementation. "We call it Trusted Partners," Struminger says. "The idea is, having a good relationship with your counterpart on the business side is extremely important in one of these types of rollouts."

Harrell and Struminger created a team of six people (including call center reps, managers, and representatives from the IT and customer service departments), and spent a week evaluating the proposals of about seven different CRM companies. Ultimately, the group chose Amdocs ClarifyCRM.

Using Clarify FedEx has been able to integrate business



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processes and provide customers with a single point of access for all shipping needs. To do so the company devised a three-prong approach to CRM. First is the ability to identify callers and know their background—to set up a customer profile—Struminger says. "We want to know data about you; what companies you are able to ship with, your account number, your average daily revenue and volume, even what your local time is,"

he says, "so we're mentally prepared and have the knowledge to deal with you."

Second is access to a customer's interaction history. "So if you've called us multiple times in the past month, we have a record and you don't have to repeat your story," Struminger says.

The third is "to take those functions and [add them to] our internal functions, such as package tracking and pick-ups, and put it together to create an experience for the customer that is very fast," he says.

That's a significant improvement over FedEx's former method, Harrell says. "Our old system was based on an overnight model that was built to basically deal with [issues like], 'You've called me today, you want a pickup, and we're going to pick it up.' There was no need to keep a history of data for a rep to access."

Struminger has witnessed the company's new system's success firsthand. Three months ago he was sitting in one of FedEx's call centers with a customer service rep when an irate customer called. Complaining about a missed pickup, the customer yelled, "Can't you



FedEx: An Overnight Success Story

THE BENEFITS

Scot Struminger, FedEx's vice president of IT, cites the following favorable outcomes of the Amdocs ClarifyCRM implementation:

- **Precall intelligence and interaction history.** "When I know something about you and what you've done with us before, it gives me a power of authority," he says.
- **Reduced call times.** "This saves us money."
- **Increased customer satisfaction.** "This has allowed us to wow customers, and builds the brand by creating positive experiences."
- **Incremental business driven by word of mouth.** Although FedEx has not measured this, as Struminger says, "People tell other people about their positive experiences."

morons get anything right?"

"The agent was able to look at the customer's interaction history and say, 'I see you called regarding a pickup this morning. A courier was dispatched fifteen minutes later, was at your workplace thirty minutes after that, and asked someone named Tanya if there were any packages. She said no.' The customer turned apologetic, and just said, 'Wow!' And everyone wants to wow their customers," Struminger says, adding, "Without Clarify, that [incident] would have been our fault."

"What I like about Clarify is, it has the capability of going across channels," Harrell says. "Second, the management team we were dealing with was very flex-


ible and willing to work with us. That was key, because we wanted to tie into our legacy systems, which are still used to pull package-tracking data. And third, they were willing to negotiate on price."

The system was purchased in September 2000, and after a yearlong development cycle it was implemented in Memphis (the company's headquarters) in September 2001. The entire U.S. rollout was completed six months later.

The rollout required retraining the company's 3,000 call center reps.

Previously, reps were instructed to serve the customer's immediate need—what Harrell calls an order-taking approach to customer service. Now, reps have more information about the customers, and thus need a more conversational approach. "We know our customers want options, and this system allows us to have that conversation with them," she says.

Although Struminger won't share specific ROI numbers, he says there has been a marked reduction in the time it takes for call center reps to handle each transaction, as well as an increase in customer satisfaction ratings.

Based on FedEx's initial success with Clarify, Harrell expects more rewards to come from the partnership. "This gave me a foundation as a business partner to move forward and be more proactive about problem solving," she says. "That has been exciting to me, [but] I see what we've implemented as just the beginning." 

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