



ABN AMRO and eGain

Gaining competitive edge with superior eservice

Company profile

ABN AMRO Services Company (AASC) supports the information technology needs of ABN AMRO in North America. AASC is a unit of ABN AMRO North America, Inc., which is headquartered in Chicago and has USD 90 billion in assets and more than 19,000 employees. Subsidiaries include LaSalle Bank in Chicago and Standard Federal Bank in Michigan.

Challenge

After conducting an extensive survey of its corporate customer base, AASC executives identified the need to improve online customer service. The solution to their service needs would have to work within their existing environment and enable agents to handle multiple service channels.

Solution

AASC leveraged eGain's customer service suite to provide superior service through email, live web assistance, and web self-service. With eGain, AASC has set new standards in the financial services industry and now offers a wide range of electronic banking services to business customers through its CashPro website.

Results

- Over 4,000 AASC corporate clients receive service through the channel of their choice including phone, email, and the proprietary CashPro website.
- Customers can receive service 24x7 with the help of RITA, a lifelike, interactive, self-service agent on ABN AMRO's website. RITA offloads more than 800 customer inquiries monthly from AASC's agents.
- Following the initial deployment, the customer base has continued to expand, while the number of AASC customer service agents has remained constant.
- The Chicago-based customer service team has exceeded performance goals in virtually every area of activity including response times and customer inquiries handled per agent.

ABN AMRO Services Company (AASC) distributed a survey to its electronic banking customer base to discover ways in which services might be improved. "Our customer surveys indicated that we were lacking in the support area," frankly admits Milton Santiago, Senior Vice President of Electronic Banking in North America. "We had been offering traditional telephone support, but customers were finding that process frustrating."

Among the findings was that AASC many customers seeking assistance on the company website found the online experience far from satisfactory. "If they only had one phone line and couldn't find the information they needed," explains Santiago, "they had to disconnect from the Internet and dial the phone support number."

Customers expressed appreciation for the services that AASC was providing, but Santiago realized that "they were looking for other channels to connect with the bank." Santiago saw that many issues could be addressed with a comprehensive online customer service solution which provided support across email and live online assistance, and was complemented with a robust, self-service solution.

Santiago's job encompasses all activities related to AASC's electronic banking services "from vision to development to marketing to deployment and servicing." He was tasked with developing an online service infrastructure which was sophisticated and agile enough to address the wide-ranging needs of corporate

financial managers, but not so complex as to require specialized skills to use the system.

Choosing eGain's customer service suite

To address this challenge, Santiago did his homework accordingly. "First of all, I didn't want to spend time looking at everything," he said. "I only wanted to look at the top five companies. We did our initial research using consulting sources such as Gartner and Forrester. We went to technology- and CRM-focused conferences. We spoke to people who outsource support solutions of this type. eGain's name came up a lot."

Among the list of priorities was that the technology solution had to be web-based. "We wouldn't consider anything else," Santiago states. "I didn't want any software or plugins between the customer and agent. Our customers need to access our services from anywhere in the world. I also needed something that would meet our strict security requirements."

Santiago wanted a product that was compatible with the AASC firewall using a regular network connection and the browser on any PC. "Early on, I learned that just because a company has a great software product, doesn't mean they have a great web product."

After an in-depth review of the leading brands and numerous "real world" tests, Santiago chose eGain's customer service suite.

“The eGain solution has made it possible to service new customers effectively, enhance our relationships with existing business clients, and gain a better understanding of our customers’ needs. Outstanding service is a competitive differentiator, and eGain has helped us gain that edge.”

Milton Santiago,
Senior Vice President of
Electronic Banking

eGain[®]
Trusted by Leaders™

World Headquarters

345 East Middlefield Road
Mountain View, CA 94043, USA
T. 650-230-7500, extension 9
1-888-60-eGain, extension 9
F. 650-230-7600

www.egain.com, info@egain.com

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Delivering a cost-effective means to provide superior customer service

From eGain’s software suite, AASC has deployed applications for managing email, live online assistance, and web self-service to support cash management and financial services for a customer base of more than 4,000 corporate clients.

Santiago was intent on developing a technology infrastructure that would deliver superior value to customers without an increase in head count. As much as possible, he wanted to direct customers to self-help solutions. “There was no way we were going to handle thousands of email inquiries without hiring a huge staff, so that wasn’t the focus,” he says. However, that doesn’t mean email isn’t important in the AASC service program. The email engine provides a level of intelligence that allows the correspondence to be routed to the appropriate bank representative who responds within 15 minutes. “These are critical, sensitive emails that have to do with financial transactions,” Santiago explains. “The people sending these emails are very senior financial executives, for example a CFO who might need to transfer a million or even a billion dollars.” Furthermore, he adds, “These are people who have a very low tolerance for pain. So, we must provide a superior level of customer service.”

Offering personalized online service in real time

According to Santiago, one of the key differentiators offered by eGain is the ability to handle “true web collaboration, real cobrowsing, not simply page-pushing.” AASC agents can actually see what a customer is doing in real time. “We can see the screen they are on, or what the error message is. Our customers are amazed when they realize what we can do to help them.”

AASC offers programs that enable financial managers to conduct a variety of transactions from payroll funding and money wiring to mortgage title transfers

and vendor payments. “Often, these are mission-critical operations,” Santiago emphasizes. With eGain’s applications, agents can review the chat queue and prioritize customer requests. “For example,” Santiago offers, “we can distinguish between someone who has a question about their monthly statement and someone who is having trouble transferring funds.”

Reducing inbound calls

AASC also uses eGain Assistant to create a self-service virtual agent called RITA, which stands for Real-time Internet Technical Assistance. This virtual agent works around the clock, never takes a break, and requires no vacation nor benefits. Soon after deployment, RITA handled 880 sessions every month. “That’s great, because that’s 880 calls my agents don’t have to handle,” says Santiago. Of those 880 sessions, two to four remain unresolved and require additional assistance. As a result of RITA’s performance, AASC is currently developing a second eGain Assistant-driven program.

eGain has enabled the AASC support team in Chicago, which has nine agents, to quickly handle corporate customer inquiries from around the globe using their choice of service medium, including emails, live assistance on the website, and phone calls. “That’s the kind of efficiency and productivity we were looking for,” Santiago declares. “We wanted to minimize our growth; but, at the same time, we had to meet customer demand for better support and more options for delivering that support. Today, we are way ahead of the competition in this regard.”

Santiago praises eGain for delivering on its promise to supply multichannel customer service solutions to Global 2000 companies. “The eGain solution has made it possible to service new customers effectively, enhance our relationships with existing business clients, and gain a better understanding of our customers’ needs,” he said. “Outstanding service is a competitive differentiator, and eGain has helped us gain that edge.”