

UNIVERGE 3C™

YMCA of Greater Louisville



Customer

- YMCA of Greater Louisville

Industry

- Nonprofit

Challenges

- Multiple locations
- Constraints on staff
- Improved customer service

Solution

- UNIVERGE 3C
- Contact Center

In 1853, the YMCA of Greater Louisville (YMCA) was founded and chartered as a membership organization—just the 10th YMCA established in the United States. Today, the YMCA of Greater Louisville has 10 membership branch locations, two membership extensions, and five outreach and administrative locations. It is the largest provider of before- and after-school care in Kentucky, and is the founder and national headquarters for the Safe Place Services youth outreach program. The Louisville Y also performs community health outreach as a YMCA Healthier Communities Association.

The YMCA of Greater Louisville is committed to building strong kids, strong families and strong communities by emphasizing its core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. To help it achieve its mission in the Greater Louisville area, the YMCA worked with NEC to install a new contact center powered by NEC's UNIVERGE 3C™ unified communications technology. The contact center currently serves 17 YMCA locations in three counties.

Challenges

Membership at the YMCA of Greater Louisville has increased tremendously in the last decade. But this growth, inevitably, strains the front-line staff. Branches field phone calls from people inquiring about membership or registering for one of the 250 programs sponsored annually by the Y—all while trying to serve the members who come into the branches in person. Especially at peak times, the staff is not able to provide the meaningful interactions that mirror its core values.

Internal customer service to the YMCA's wide variety of facilities, including the traditional branches, childcare services, headquarters, and Safe Place, was also important. Additionally, the YMCA maintains some services that must be available 24 x 7, such as the Safe Place services designed for youth in crisis. Safe Place provides crisis intervention for youth and young adults as well as housing, food and other services. Communications is a critical part of providing those services to the community.



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Solution

Ryan Kingery, YMCA of Greater Louisville’s vice president of Information Technology and Knowledge Management, explains that improving customer service and creating more opportunities for meaningful interactions were the driving forces behind the YMCA’s decision to centralize the thousand or so daily calls that come into the branches.

“We wanted to centralize all the calls that come into our facilities into one place, to be handled by a skilled and trained team that was passionate about what they do and good on the phone,” said Kingery.

When looking for the contact center solution, the YMCA team wanted a solution that not only served it well today, but also will serve the organization years down the road as its needs change and grow. A steering committee made up of branch executives, program directors, IT members and volunteer representatives was critical to deciding on the technology solution.

Kingery said that it was quickly apparent that a software-based solution, such as the UNIVERGE 3C-powered contact center, was the best fit for the YMCA’s hybrid environment. The YMCA maintains a production environment on premise and uses NEC’s software to replicate its system to a data center as a backup. A software-based system enables the YMCA to adapt more quickly as new technology emerges.

Kingery was also impressed that his team can spin up a new instance using the software without additional costs. “Redundancy, resilience and backup provided at no additional cost were huge benefits for us,” added Kingery.

By making its new contact center the primary receptor of all incoming calls, the YMCA provides better service for members calling into the Y while also freeing up staff to provide their undivided attention in the branches.

The initial goal was for the contact center to handle at least 80% of the calls coming into the branches. At one branch, for example, this translated into shifting 200 calls per day to the contact center. This gave the branch seven additional hours of staff time to interact and better serve members.

Currently, the contact center agents handle an average of 12,000 calls per month, with some months peaking up to 15,000 calls. The agents are focused on providing quality responses on the calls, leading to building genuine relationships with members.

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“Our contact center agents can put an emphasis on customer service when answering the phones. They can take as much time as the member needs to provide details on our programs and answer questions,” said Kingery. “We measure success by the quality of the calls—not the number of calls that we take.”

NEC’s contact center technology enables a returning caller to have his or her call answered by the same agent, further improving customer service and rapport between member and agent. The Y uses an API built into the operations system to route calls into the member database, which enables the agent to see information mapped to the caller ID, such as name, branch location, program participation, etc. Agents can also quickly connect to a branch to inquire on behalf of the member, very handy in tracking down a lost item left behind, for example.

Benefits

Kingery outlined the benefits of choosing NEC’s contact center solution:

- Flexibility—the YMCA is no longer tied to an on-premise solution. Because of its variety of locations, the Y can now use a private-cloud architecture to serve its constituents.
- Adaptability—as technology evolves, the YMCA can take advantage of new services.
- Remote working—agents no longer have to be on site at the contact center. In case of inclement weather or emergency closings, agents can take calls remotely. Flexible schedules are possible as well.

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- Presence—using unified communications, it’s easy to determine if an agent is in a meeting, out of the office or on another call.

Looking forward, the YMCA is exploring other functionalities available through NEC’s software-based unified communications solution so that internal and external customers will be able to communicate with the YMCA through methods that are convenient to them. One such example is texting; members will be able to text a questions to a contact center agent and receive the answer via return text. Other members may choose to web chat as they navigate through the Y’s web site. And branch staff will be able to instant message the contact center if they need to pass on information.

“I’m frankly giddy about this contact center. It’s so exciting to have agents whose unique focus is on the human interaction with our members and to relate to people and their needs,” concluded Steve Tarver, CEO for the YMCA of Greater Louisville.



Facts about the YMCA of the USA

In the U.S., the Y is comprised of YMCA of the USA, a national resource office, and more than 2,700 YMCAs with approximately 19,000 fulltime staff and 600,000 volunteers in 10,000 communities across the country.

The Y engages 9 million youth and 13 million adults each year in the U.S.

Worldwide, the Y serves more than 45 million people in 119 countries. Ys across the U.S. play an integral role in strengthening the leadership and youth programs of the Y around the world.

Members, staff and volunteers of the Y include men, women and children of all ages and from all walks of life.

The Y offers programs, services and initiatives focused on youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, according to the unique needs of the communities it engages.

The Y is accessible to all people. Financial assistance is offered to individuals and families who cannot afford membership.



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