

CASE STUDY

VoIP technology increases quality for remote Contact Center services in Finland



Alcatel OmniTouch introduces transparency and performance to Midas Touch Contact Centers

Midas Touch Oy, a Finnish Contact Center and Telemarketing Service provider, established its first place of business in Lapinlahti, some 400 kilometres from the capital of Helsinki. The second center was opened in Jämsä, in central Finland. The distance between them put great quality, transparency and performance demands on the Contact Center system Midas Touch was looking for.

Midas Touch Oy only has a yearlong enterprise history, but what has happened during that year has been breathtaking. "We first gave a lot of thought to the various aspects needed to create a successful Contact Center business," one of the co-owners of the company, Markku Pihlajaniemi tells us.

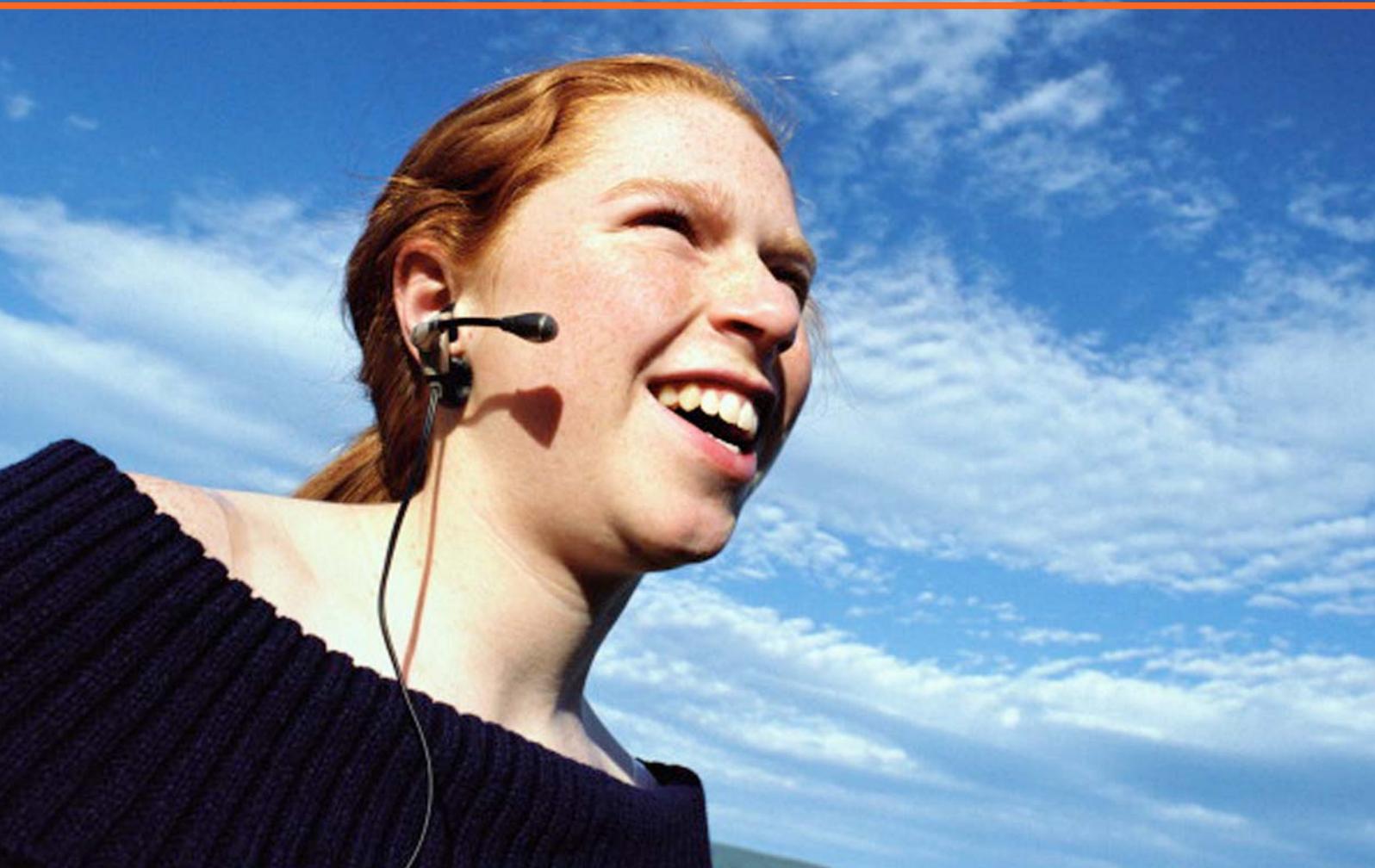
"We defined three corner stones: good personnel, investment in staff training,

and the best possible technical solution. The whole idea of our enterprise is based on quality of service. The Finnish Contact Center business has clearly been slower in getting started than elsewhere in Europe. The field has been patchy, and only few companies have offered quality service."

Growing a Contact Center business

"We have also had to learn to combine all our expertise that we, as owners, command," points out Markku Pihlajaniemi. "Only by working together we can create a strongly concentrated knowledge base."

"The Contact Center technique based on IP enables us to deliver outsourced customer service and marketing and sales projects anywhere in the world," according to one of the co-owners of Midas Touch Oy, Markku Pihlajaniemi.



Midas Touch opened its first Contact Center in Lapinlahti, eastern Finland – a city of 7,000 inhabitants, which is a five-and-a-half hour drive from Helsinki. The Lapinlahti center soon gained a twin in Jämsä, a town located in central Finland. A third center is already planned somewhere else in Finland. The first choice was Lapinlahti, because the company found good and motivated people there. “As we invest a great deal in training, we are hoping that there will not be too much turnover,” explains Markku Pihlajaniemi.

Technology as a key to success

“The Alcatel Contact Center Voice-over-IP technology makes it possible for us to outsource customer services, marketing and sales assignments anywhere in the world. Outsourcing jobs outside Finland can, however, create some problems, due to our unique language,” says Markku Pihlajaniemi.

Midas Touch had challenging demands regarding its Contact Center system for the simple reason that the system itself is the core element of their business: the technical solution is therefore vital to them. The highly experienced owners of the business carefully examined 10 different systems, and chose the Alcatel OmniTouch Contact Center solution: “not just a telephone system for us, but the tool that does it all.”

“We wanted a system without any boundaries, enabling us to pick and choose and mix all kinds of contacts – whether they are calls, e-mail messages or contacts acquired through the Internet.” With this investment in telecom technology, Midas Touch aims above all at cost effectiveness.

“This also means that our staff will benefit from sensible working methods: they are not wasting their time waiting for calls.” Pihlajaniemi prefers the so-called “predictive” call system, essential for smooth operations. Predictive call system means, that the system doesn’t connect any calls

The quality of services and the distances put high demands on the Contact Center system.

unless there is someone to answer. This makes a big difference for working convenience.

The solution for a demanding Contact Center

“The Finnish Contact Center market is going through a phase in which the wheat is being sifted from the chaff,” says the Midas Touch system producer Jyrki Lehtinen, Sales Manager of Song Networks. Song Networks is a Scandinavian broadband operator and systems producer, which operates in Finland as well as in Sweden, Denmark and Norway.

At the same time, Contact Centers want to break away from the classical telemarketing services. This puts high demands on the solution to be implemented. In practice, the Midas Touch Contact Center system was built on top of the Song Networks VoIP-compliant broadband network. In Lapinlahti well over 70 per cent of the inhabitants and businesses already have the possibility to connect to the regional broadband network.

The Lapinlahti Contact Center was already fully operational last summer, and Jämsä has been operational from February 2004. “Midas Touch has been a good client in that they have known what they wanted from the start. I believe that their solution is the first really complete Contact Center solution in Finland,” concludes Jyrki Lehtinen.

Fine-tuning the solution

A technical finesse of Midas Touch is that the Jämsä center uses the same local area network via the VPN link as does the Lapinlahti center, which is situated a couple of hundred kilometres away.

Their calls and data are transmitted via the same connection. Calls go out to the world from Lapinlahti, where the “brains” of the system are located. If, for example, Lapinlahti is running a campaign, the people in Jämsä can take part in it and vice versa, i.e. the workload between the centers can be divided flexibly. “Therefore performance and transparency of the VoIP network between the two centers are absolutely essential,” comments Lehtinen.

Challenges

- Be the first complete Contact Center in Finland
- Deal with long distances between different service sites
- Integrate all the sites into one single network

Solutions

- Complete Alcatel OmniTouch Contact Center solution, integrating voice, email and Internet
- IP telephony
- Built on top of VoIP broadband network
- Predictive call system

Benefits

- Cost-effectiveness
- Joint campaign management between sites
- High flexibility in combining touch points
- Improved customer service
- Increased productivity
- Scalable / Future-proof solution



Business Partner Info

“In these early days, we may have had to tighten the small screw more often than usual,” says Lehtinen commenting on last year's project. Since the telephone server is essentially the same thing as the company's operations, it also requires maximum reactivity from the supplier. “If the client has a problem, it must always be taken seriously and sorted out immediately.”

Song Networks

Scandinavian broadband operator and systems producer Song Networks operates in Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway. The business idea of the company is to offer the best data, Internet and voice transmission to broadband solution companies, public communities and home customers in all Scandinavian countries with their partners.

