

Great Wolf Resorts

Increasing Customer Satisfaction and Reducing Agent Labor Costs With inContact

As the premier family entertainment brand and an icon in the hospitality industry, Great Wolf Resorts is focused on “creating family traditions, one family at a time.” Its 12 resorts raise the industry standard by combining quality accommodations with the finest in family recreational activities, all under one roof. The themed vacation packages provide more than 2.5 million guests each year with the ability to customize their experience to enjoy specialty restaurants, several recreational activities, spas and their well-known indoor waterparks.

With its centralized contact center, Great Wolf Resorts has been taking advantage of inContact's cloud technology since September 2012. The inContact solution enables Great Wolf Resorts to:

- Scale procedures for growth from 75 contact center agents to over 150 agents at peak
- Standardize customer feedback mechanisms and increase CSAT scores to 89%
- Project outcomes and make decisions by implementing a simulated contact center environment
- Provide a preferred work environment and support agent growth
- Manage over one million calls and 250,000 web chats each year
- Generate \$100 million dollars annually through its contact center

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-Jim LeMere
Director of the Customer
Contact Center
Great Wolf Resorts

Proving it Can Be Done

For Great Wolf Resorts, the search for better technology started with the need for a progressive and integrated solution that allowed for seasonal fluctuations. Historically, Great Wolf Resorts' contact center used a variety of legacy systems with no integration and insufficient features for supporting a call center of the size it had become. This led to inefficiencies in labor management and ineffective customer experience tracking. The previous scheduling tool was substandard and time-intensive; and the customer survey tool could only capture feedback from converted sales. Survey results were skewed and not actionable.

A proponent of innovative technology, Jim LeMere, the Director of the Customer Contact Center at Great Wolf Resorts knew they had to positively impact the customer experience and prove contact center value through metrics and reporting. LeMere wanted "on-the-fly control" and found that the best way to demonstrate value and streamline procedures was with an integrated, cloud-based solution that would scale for the quickly growing contact center.

"My philosophy is to always stay cutting-edge and make sure you do it right the first time," remarks LeMere. He began by hand-picking a team that would make the business case for inContact's solutions and act as internal champions for a move to the cloud. The plan was aggressive, but as LeMere states, "You need to push hard and prove it can be done."

Forecasting for Success

With the adoption of inContact, Great Wolf Resorts successfully reduced agent labor costs and have also experienced a 10-second decrease in average handle time. In order to predict the impact of inContact and demonstrate future success with Workforce Management (WFM), LeMere's team set up a WFM Lab that acted as a mock contact center. In the lab, they applied a variety of scenarios and tested multiple full-time/part-time shift block combinations. The Great Wolf Resorts team wanted to know how each decision would impact their agent labor costs, efficiency and revenue.

LeMere explains, "As we went through situation after situation, we were able to evaluate which model increased productivity and the corresponding agent labor impact.' We wanted to get up and running at a steady state, but we also needed to know what made the most sense for our business. It took time, but it was worth it. We were able to provide real examples to senior leadership and say, 'In this scenario, we will save \$5,000 per week.' That's pretty powerful."

With inContact fully implemented, LeMere's Workforce Manager, Nick Cooper, is able to test new ideas in the WFM Lab. He examines how a newly developed staffing model runs in the lab for a week or two. Then, only when he is happy with the result and secure in its impact on the business does the team consider it for production. LeMere projects that Great Wolf Resorts can save upwards of 15% in agent labor costs with some of the workforce modeling.

Focusing on Agent Needs

“When deciding on which WFM lab scenario we would implement, we also had to be acutely aware of the impact to our team. The change would not just influence revenue and cost, it was going to change the way our people work. You can't tell your agents that processes are changing and let it be. You have to prepare them,” states LeMere.

The number one priority at Great Wolf Resorts is creating an employee culture that “feels like coming home.” With an aggressive implementation plan, LeMere recognized the need to keep his employees empowered and informed. The team re-wrote policies and procedures while setting agents up for success through one-on-one meetings and by providing enticing perks with the new system.

For months, agents had been asking for weekends off, but the previous system made it a painstakingly manual process. With inContact's solutions, Great Wolf Resorts could deliver on that request in a timely manner. In order to engage employees in the switch to inContact, LeMere shared that the new solution could easily manage a program that provided rotating weekends off. “That gained a lot of buy-in right away. I wanted to let my Pack Members (LeMere's term for his team) know that we listen and plan with their feedback in mind. Of course they were excited about having some weekends off, but more importantly, they knew we cared about them and that we were being transparent. That was worth a lot when it came time to roll out the new program,” says LeMere.

inContact has proven valuable for employee and manager relationships well beyond implementation. With Quality Monitoring (QM), there is a heightened level of communication between Team Leads and agents. Rather than spending large amounts of time pulling reports out of the system, managers now spend 85% of their time proactively coaching. Two-way communication enabled by integrated technology and processes supports active dialogue, allowing Team Leads to immediately correct issues as they arise.

Improving the Customer Experience

Prior to implementing inContact, collecting customer feedback at Great Wolf Resorts meant utilizing an inadequate online survey tool that could only be sent to converted customers. Responses provided little insight into the overall customer experience and people that did not make a purchase were never given an opportunity to share feedback. All that changed when Great Wolf Resorts implemented ECHO, inContact's customer satisfaction feedback survey.

"Before ECHO, our data was skewed and we were unable to coach our agents based on specific feedback. With inContact, agent awareness is at an all-time high and we offer 100% of our customers the opportunity to provide commentary on their experience. Their voices are heard," states Courtney Franklin, LeMere's Call Center Manager.

With ECHO, Great Wolf Resorts' agents have access to their individual results. The access takes the guesswork out of how customers are responding and provides real-time performance metrics. This allows them to modify behaviors and improve as they go rather than waiting on supervisor feedback.

Great Wolf Resorts also uses ECHO to reward agents for strong performance. The incentive program recognizes agents that have achieved a certain level of customer satisfaction (CSAT) in front of their peers. And, agents are partially compensated on score – the higher their score, the more money they make.

"Our CSAT score has gone up significantly since employing ECHO," shares LeMere, "We currently sit around an 89%, and we are able to report it because we know exactly where that number comes from. I am able to stand behind that rating and give our senior leadership clear insight into how our customers feel about us."

Gaining Simplicity and Flexibility

The ease of managing the inContact platform and integrating its technology with business processes have yielded solid benefits to LeMere. Being familiar with contact center best practices and day-to-day management, LeMere and team can easily make changes using logical call flows and scripting tools.

LeMere's team also uses the system to load balance for business continuity and service level management using the percent allocation tool. "It's easy to run and we don't have to get IT involved in the basics. Our percent allocation switch intelligently looks at our program flow and routes our calls to the right locations accordingly," says LeMere.

With the success to date, LeMere is now exploring additional ways to help the Great Wolf Resorts' contact center achieve projected growth and reduced costs over the prior year. The team continues to forecast the impact of potential changes with the WFM Lab and utilizes customer feedback to direct the team. LaMere states, "By making inContact's solutions a standard, we adapt quickly to changing customer needs and ultimately make better business decisions for our customers."

Great Wolf Resorts At-A-Glance

Challenges

- Address seasonal spikes in call volume
- Eliminate haphazard processes to manage workforce scheduling
- Create customer feedback mechanisms and standardize agent coaching
- Reduce agent labor costs and cost per call
- Forecast outcomes and demonstrate value to the business
- Eliminate time and expense spent maintaining on-premise call center systems

Results

- Enjoy needed flexibility and features at minimal cost
- Predict impact of workforce scheduling changes
- Scale agents up or down seasonally
- Increase customer satisfaction rating by several percentage points
- Decrease average handle time by 10 seconds
- Empower supervisors to spend 85% of their time coaching and training agents
- Save in agent labor costs through optimized Workforce Management

Solutions

- **Analytics-Driven Quality / Interactive Voice Response Solutions** – quickly matches callers in your queue to the agents who can best help them
- **ECHO Customer Satisfaction Feedback Survey** – Gather real-time comments with customer satisfaction surveys while the call is still fresh in the customer's mind and get invaluable information about your agents' performance and your processes
- **Quality Monitoring** – Capture your staff's interactions with customers and quickly score them against pre-defined criteria
- **Workforce Management** – Achieve balance in employee needs, customer satisfaction, and cost containment by ensuring the right agents with the right skills are available at the right time
- **Call Recording**