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CASE STUDY

Ferrell Companies Accelerates Productivity in Salesforce.com® with Dragon NaturallySpeaking®

Voice Recognition Replaces Hand Typing for Organization's Sales Representatives Saving Approximately 60% of Their Time by Automating Tedious Manual Processes

CHALLENGE

Increase the productivity of an injured employee using a CRM tool that currently requires a significant amount of hand typing and mouse clicking in order to create detailed customer records and follow-up emails.

SOLUTION

Use Dragon NaturallySpeaking's award-winning voice recognition to eliminate the need to manually type. Create macros for complex update processes that require multiple tasks in different applications to accelerate repetitive information collection workflows.

RESULTS

In spite of injury employee was able to log calls much faster than any of the other sales reps that hand typed. Using voice recognition also turned out to be much faster than his pre-injury typing speed upwards of 60 words per minute. Individual's use was so successfully, the organization replaced hand typing with voice recognition for firm's sales people and doubled their call volume - saving 60% of the time that they used to spend on repetitive tasks such as sending e-mails and logging calls inside of the salesforce.com application.

For over 34 years, Ferrell Companies has been serving the construction industry by providing cutting-edge software technology solutions designed to save time and money for contractors. Software has come a long way since they started business in 1972, but their passion and determination to provide exceptional customer service has not dwindled. In fact, the organization is so dedicated to providing their clients with the best possible customer service, they constantly incorporate process enhancements in order to be faster, more accurate, more responsive and with a greater efficiency than their competitors. This philosophy is one of the keys that have made the company so successful.

Managing an existing base of customers for any business organization and finding time to prospect for new ones is a daunting task. Electronic customer relationship management technologies would seem to be the perfect solution to help streamline the customer/prospect contact and tracking process. Unfortunately, one of the main drawbacks of these types of software programs is that the prospect or customer data still has to be hand typed to load it into the system. The more comprehensive the tool, the slower it can be to add or update the contact records. What's more, when information is typed by hand, errors are frequently introduced. It is no secret, the more time a sales person spends managing their information, the less time they have to prospect and close new deals.

"Dragon NaturallySpeaking has been extremely beneficial to the company. Using it has doubled the call volume for my sales guys, which in turn hopefully will mean more deals for us as a company. I would say that it saves 60% of the time that we used to spend on repetitive tasks such as sending e-mails and logging calls inside of the salesforce.com application."

Jerad Ferrell,
Executive Vice President of Sales
and Marketing - Ferrell Companies

Jerad Ferrell is the Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Ferrell Companies. As a provider of software tools, his firm is continually prospecting for new clients throughout the day. He is no stranger to the sometimes drawn out process needed to sell thousands of dollars of software to organizations in today's business environment. As the head of sales and marketing, he knows how important it is to be able to find information quickly with a few keystrokes or mouse clicks. According to Ferrell, "I was always one of those people who could type very detailed notes quickly

inside of our contact management application - salesforce.com. Several months ago I dislocated my index finger while playing with my two year old son. I was surprised that such a minor injury could have such a dramatic affect on my ability to type."



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As is the case with many people, a hand or arm injury puts them on a quest to find a tool that will allow them to remain on the job even if they are unable to type on a keyboard or use a mouse. Ferrell was no different. *"I knew that Dragon NaturallySpeaking was a player in the industry who had mastered voice recognition software. The fact that it was integrated with salesforce.com made it a no-brainer decision to move forward and purchase a copy for myself. I chose to go with Dragon NaturallySpeaking instead of competitor products because there are no other alternatives in my opinion. My initial testing with Dragon NaturallySpeaking gave me some great results. For instance, in spite of my injury I was able to log calls much faster than any of the other sales reps that hand typed. In reality, using voice recognition was also much faster than my pre-injury typing speed upwards of 60 words per minute. Of course, over time my finger healed. After that I started to evaluate the productivity of my individual sales reps. Specifically I monitored their performance inside of the salesforce.com application. What I learned, was that they were keeping really short notes on the calls that they made to limit the amount of typing required. Consequently, when they did want to keep detailed notes, or perhaps send an e-mail response to a customer, they were taking an inordinate amount of time to type the information by hand. I found several of my salespeople were like "Johnny One Finger" on the keyboard. I knew there had to be a better way. After I used Dragon NaturallySpeaking and found how good the integration was, in addition to the fact the Nuance is partnered with salesforce.com, it became apparent that now was the time to implement a voice recognition solution throughout the organization."*

"Our process prior to using Dragon NaturallySpeaking was very painful. Logging calls took a better part of each sales rep's entire day. Even though they were able to make a phone call in approximately 2-5 minutes, they spent the next 5 to 15 minutes logging the call and sending a response manually via e-mail. Because of this I was essentially only getting about 4 to 5 good calls per hour from each of my employees. When I watched a Dragon NaturallySpeaking demonstration with one of my employees who is an average typist, he immediately commented he thought he would be able to double his call volume just by using Dragon NaturallySpeaking in the salesforce.com comments field alone!"

"From this evaluation I made the decision to purchase a copy for each of our sales reps. Now they use Dragon NaturallySpeaking every day, for virtually everything we do; logging calls in salesforce.com, drafting e-mails, creating

letters and proposals servicing the construction industry for document management and workflow products. We envision eventually being able to integrate the Dragon NaturallySpeaking solution with our other product offerings. As a team, we probably edit 160 records per day in salesforce.com, draft 50 to a 100 e-mails, and probably 10 to 20 quotes/proposals per week. We have found that anything that involves us typing an extended amount of text can be quickly automated by using Dragon NaturallySpeaking."

"We use Dragon NaturallySpeaking with the entire Microsoft® Office suite, within salesforce.com, and even for applications such as developing our website in Adobe® Dreamweaver. After a couple hours of use and understanding how to use a software dictation application the product is extremely accurate. Using it sure beats the heck out of typing everything manually. Dragon NaturallySpeaking has been extremely beneficial to the company. Using it has doubled the call volume for my sales guys, which in turn hopefully will mean more deals for us as a company. I would say that it saves 60% of the time that we used to spend on repetitive tasks such as sending e-mails and logging calls inside of the salesforce.com application. As far as the money it saved, we really haven't done an investigation at that level because we still employ the same number of people. Were I do feel that we're receiving the greatest benefit is being able to spend more time on revenue-generating tasks such as talking with prospects as opposed to logging calls."

"I am excited to see all the places we will be able to use Dragon NaturallySpeaking at our company in the future. For us it has been strictly about boosting the performance of our sales staff. Using the product is definitely a cultural change. I am a young executive who is willing to try innovative things like Dragon NaturallySpeaking. I had a difficult time convincing the rest of my ownership team that this was a good project and that it would indeed pay off. The initial thought was this was a luxury item or a high-tech toy that was not really going to deliver the results that I was so ambitious about. This couldn't be further from the truth. Dragon NaturallySpeaking has delivered on its promise in every way that I had hoped. By the way...I completed the interview questionnaire for this story in less than 10 minutes, whereas typing it by hand would have taken me approximately 30 minutes to an hour!"

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