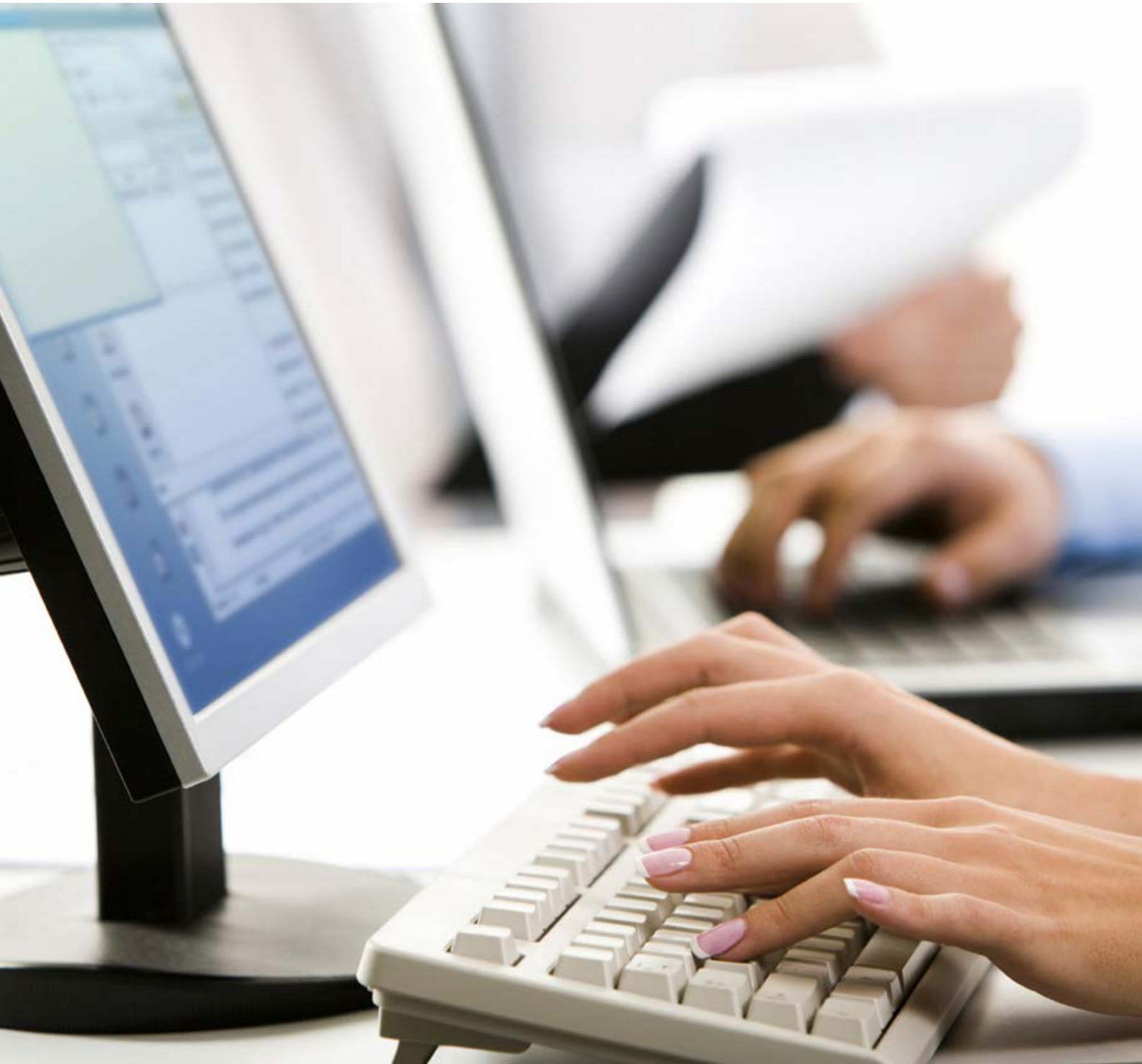


NS&I Case Study

Building the Customer Focused Back Office



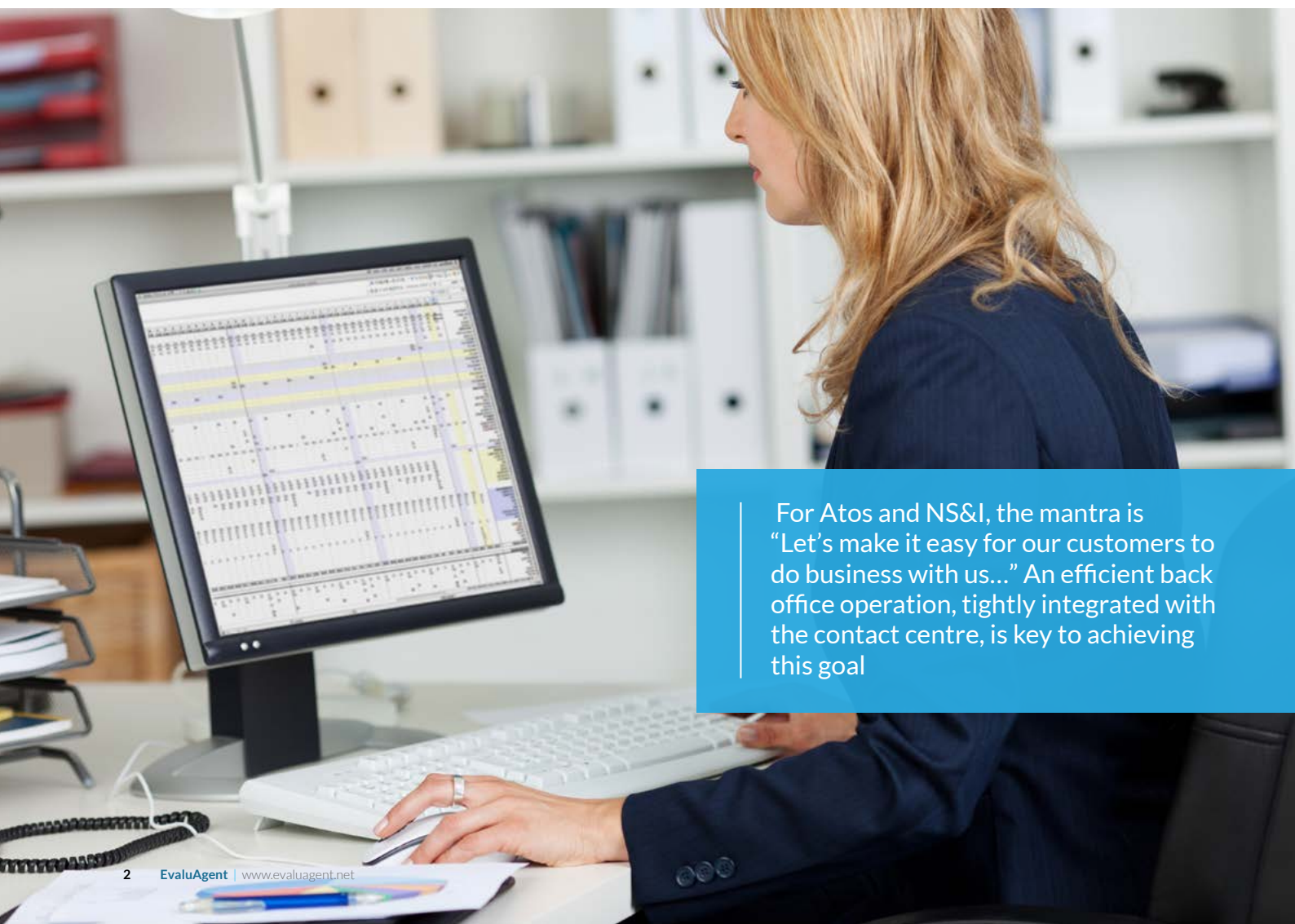
About NS&I

NS&I is one of the largest savings organisations in the UK, offering a wide number of financial products and services to over 25 million customers. As a state-owned organisation it has very particular requirements with regards to customer service, and a complex network of stakeholders.

Its contact centres and back office customer support centres are outsourced to international digital services provider Atos, with four sites housing over 300 front-line agents and over 600 back-office staff, in Blackpool, Durham, Glasgow and Chennai.

Frontline staff primarily handle inbound service enquiries via phone and email, but also manage outbound sales; in the back office, staff process paper and email requests from customers across a wide range of essential operations - including sales and payment processing, death claims handling, prize draws and queries - as well as resolving customer complaints, with a rapid response team making outbound calls to proactively resolve customer issues before they turn into complaints.

Like any organisation in the financial sector, customer experience is a huge priority for NS&I. It is a necessity for them to be a customer centric business, with a multi-channel contact centre at the heart of that vision. For Atos and NS&I, the mantra is "Let's make it easy for our customers to do business with us..." An efficient back office operation, tightly integrated with the contact centre, is key to achieving this goal, ensuring optimal speed and efficiency of transactions to deliver a quality customer experience.



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The challenge

To achieve its customer centric vision, Atos identified a need to integrate the back-office more tightly with the contact centre and simplify back-office customer support processes to make them less prone to mistakes. While the management team was aware of volumes of rework, and repeat contacts - defined as contacts resulting from the failure of earlier processes to satisfy the customer's needs - the spreadsheet-based management information offered limited insight into the scope and scale of the problem.

Within the back office, there was a tendency towards fire-fighting and reacting to "one-off" customer issues that weren't being grouped together and analysed to understand the bigger picture. With only a basic quality assurance programme in place, it was difficult to identify mistakes unless they resulted in a complaint. At the same time, with limited formalised feedback and coaching procedures in place, it was almost impossible to ensure that errors were being fed back to agents in order to avoid repeat contacts from dissatisfied customers.

As with any organisation where work is processed in multiple locations, lines of communication were not always as effective as they could be. The outcome for some customers was errors and long lead times in order to have their query resolved. Meanwhile, agents were struggling to deal with significant levels of difficult and complex queries resulting from a business still very dependent upon the use of paper-based customer-contact forms. All of this was inevitably having an impact upon agent morale and customer satisfaction.

NS&I and Atos needed a way to understand the scope and scale of the rework issue, measure agent performance and understand the root causes of rework and complaints in order to drive business change and support agents with constructive feedback that could be turned into actionable coaching. Atos was tasked with finding a solution that would provide:

- A way of measuring a variety of back office processes to ensure that customer requests were being dealt with correctly in order to reduce rework and complaints
- An opportunity for Team Leaders and process experts to work together to define the quality standards for each process
- A performance management system that would make team members aware of their own performance and identify specific areas for performance improvement to make coaching more effective
- A systematic approach to quality assurance to ensure mistakes are identified at an early stage to avoid customer complaints.



Within the back office, there was a perception that staff were constantly fire-fighting and reacting to "one-off" customer issues that weren't being grouped together and analysed to understand the bigger picture.

The solution

Following the highly successful implementation of **EvaluAgent** into its front-office call centre and a stakeholder-led engagement process, Atos rolled out the **EvaluAgent's** cloud-based back-office suite across all three UK centres in less than three months. The **EvaluAgent** back-office suite enables back-offices to manage, support and engage employees using customer-focused metrics such as quality, rework metrics, and real-time customer feedback. The deployment has given agents, team leaders and contact centre managers the ability to:



Efficiently and effectively monitor back-office performance indicators (PIs) including customer-focused elements of emails and letters and adherence to back-office processes and policies



Capture and report real-time feedback from customer contacts and deliver this direct to the agent's desktop



Manage and track repeat contacts and identify the root cause of rework



Schedule, manage and record collaborative agent coaching



Close the loop by tracking and reporting on subsequent improvement via that coaching



Introduce gamification into the back office by assigning agents points and rewards for showing improvement and consistent performance



Semi-automate the collation and reporting of contractual back-office PIs and make results much more visible across multiple sites and geographies to enable increased co-operation and collaboration.

During the roll-out, several ambassadors were selected to be **EvaluAgent** 'evangelists' within the back-office, cheerleading the benefits and helping team members adjust to using the software.

"I can honestly say that the EvaluAgent software has produced a big change in the culture of the back office. By encouraging team members to take responsibility for their own performance, we have created a more collaborative coaching system that empowers our staff to continuously raise their game. It just feels like we are all one team in the back office now, whatever our job role."

Team Leader
NS&I



The results – a change in operational culture

The **EvaluAgent** back-office suite delivered a Return on Investment within six months. The positive impact of the **EvaluAgent** software has been felt at every level of the business, from frontline agents to board level, delivering operational and efficiency improvements, improving agent morale as well as positively impacting the customer experience.

A wide range of anecdotal and measurable performance data highlights the success of the implementation:

Improvements in efficiency

Since the introduction of **EvaluAgent** the amount of work items being received by the back office has fallen by a staggering 21%. A third of that result has been driven by a reduction in rework based on root-cause analysis and enhanced agent coaching facilitated by **EvaluAgent**.

Reduction in complaints

By addressing agents' behaviour as well as skills gaps the **EvaluAgent** software produced rapid improvements, with service-based complaint volumes dropping by 10% over the last twelve months.

Agent performance improvement

Agents across the board have shown consistent improvement in their performance as a result of more visible quality results and the resulting coaching and feedback; over 10,000 coaching and feedback sessions have been completed and documented since the system went live.

Increased collaboration across sites

For agents and team leaders, one of the biggest improvements is the positive impact **EvaluAgent** has had on the general culture in the back-office centres. With clearer and more concise performance data, operational managers across sites are better placed to understand the root cause of issues and work together to deliver a better experience for the customer.

Impact on the bottom line

The implementation quickly returned efficiency savings of £800,000. This achievement, together with the improvement in customer experience as evidenced by the reduction in complaints and repeat contacts has ensured that **EvaluAgent** has delivered the business case that was originally proposed to stakeholders. Furthermore, these results were achieved in less than six months.

While **EvaluAgent** is helping NS&I provide better customer service, Atos and NS&I also receive a great level of support from the experienced **EvaluAgent** team, who take a very hands-on approach to ensuring the contact centres get the most from the system.



Work items received in back office fallen by

↓ 21%



Service-based complaints down by

↓ 10%



10,000

Coaching and feedback sessions completed



Delivered efficiency savings of

£800,000

in six months

"I really enjoy having more regular coaching and feedback. It has helped me to understand what I need to do to improve my performance as well as highlighting areas where I am doing well. This enables me to take an active role in my own development and gives me more confidence when dealing with customers."

Team Member
NS&I



"EvaluAgent has enabled us to implement a systematic approach to quality assurance that is also tailored to our existing back office processes. As a result we have reduced customer complaints and rework requests, but perhaps the most significant success indicator is the impact this has had driving performance conversations between Team Leaders and their team members. They now have much more meaningful conversations based on fact rather than gut instinct. This has resulted in a more trusting relationship between the agent and their line manager and the development and commitment to real value adding actions that improve performance and where success can be measured."

Andreana Carrigan
Head of Operations, NS&I



The future

Based on the success of the **EvaluAgent** roll-out to the UK operations, discussions are underway to implement the solution into the offshore operations in order to link all of the Atos customer support centres together into a single back-office function. This will allow all agents to have access to a fully closed loop system for driving improved performance and making it as easy as possible for customers to have their queries resolved in a timely manner.

A wide-angle photograph of a modern, open-plan office space. The ceiling is high with exposed white pipes and long, rectangular fluorescent light fixtures. The floor is a light-colored, polished surface. Rows of white desks are arranged on both sides of a central aisle, each equipped with a black ergonomic office chair. Small potted plants are placed on the floor between the desks. In the background, more desks and office equipment are visible, creating a sense of depth.

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About EvaluAgent

EvaluAgent is workforce optimisation and people management software designed for call centres and back-office operations.

It is cloud-based and offers a suite of modules that can be plugged together in any combination, with little or no need for integration with your existing systems.

We've specifically designed it to improve contact centre operational efficiency and boost employee and customer loyalty.

Get your FREE demo of Evaluagent at www.evaluagent.net/demo



DigitalCity, Bridge St West
The Boho Zone
Middlesbrough
TS2 1AE

 www.evaluagent.net

 info@evaluagent.net

 0800 011 9688