

Elsevier streamlines customer service for books and journals with SmartPoint

Submitted by: SmartPoint Technologies

Thursday, 12 March 2009

LONDON, UK – March 12, 2009 – Elsevier, the world's leading publisher of science and health information, has selected SmartPoint, to deliver a simplified, connected view of customer information in its EMEA customer service department for scientific books and journals.

Elsevier employs more than 7,000 people in over 75 locations in 25 countries. It has a global scholarly community of 600,000 authors publishing 2,000 journals and 19,000 books with 2,000 new books each year. The EMEA Customer service department for books and journals, based just outside of Oxford, UK, has 80 customer service agents (CSAs) and handles 10,500 customer contacts a week.

Elsevier wanted to improve the efficiency of its books and journals customer service department by streamlining the number of systems accessed in the course of responding to customer enquiries. A key objective is to reduce call times and provide a more connected view of customer information for its CSAs.

“Currently, to answer a typical customer enquiry, place an order or look at existing orders, agents are required to navigate a very structured and rigid path through our systems that not only requires them to open far too many screens, repeating information input in each, but also means that contact resolution times can be lengthy,” explained Peter Pounds, General Manager of Books Customer Service for Europe at Elsevier. “We needed a solution that would work with our existing systems and provide agents with an immediate summary of relevant customer information for each contact,” continued Pounds.

Importantly, the solution needed to deliver real-time product and customer information from third party systems as well as information stored within Elsevier's sales order processing and transaction system, Author2Reader™.

“When a customer calls in, SmartPoint automatically picks up the account reference number from the core system and then displays relevant order information residing across all systems in the SmartPoint dashboard,” said Pounds. “For example, agents need information from DHL's tracking system to provide the delivery status for recent transactions, so when the order is displayed in SmartPoint, the agent can drill-down for more details without needing to open DHL's website and search for the order by consignment number.”

SmartPoint also delivers a custom part in the dashboard which connects to Elsevier's bespoke delivery charge calculator. The weight of each book is stored against its International Standard Book Number (ISBN) number and as each new order is placed, SmartPoint will automatically update the total order price for the CSA and the customer as order lines are entered. Currently, delivery charges are only visible in the system at the end of the order process when it is onerous to cancel or amend the order should the customer so wish.

Elsevier will now be able get a lot more out of their existing systems than ever before. “With SmartPoint, I can tailor views to our data at a group and individual level so I do not need to make

changes to the core sales order system which would affect all users,” commented Dan Walker, Local Application Manager at Elsevier. “The dashboard approach to delivering information provides me with more flexibility and control at a local level without needing to make costly changes to code which is the traditional solution.”

Financially, SmartPoint enables Elsevier to benefit from reduced costs for the customer service department. “With SmartPoint, there is no need to train CSAs in detail how to use each and every system because all the information they need is delivered directly to their desktops,” stated Pounds. “Furthermore, by improving the efficiency of the department we will be able to handle more calls but without the need to increase headcount.”

SmartPoint was recently included in the Call Centre Focus ‘Hotlist 2008’, and Call Centre Helper’s ‘Top Ten Call Centre Software’. SmartPoint customers include: Abbott Laboratories, Canterbury City Council (http://www.smartpointsoftware.com/images/stories/pdf/canterbury_city_council_case_study.pdf), City of London (http://www.smartpointsoftware.com/images/stories/pdf/CityofLondon_CaseStudy.pdf), Medway Council (http://www.smartpointsoftware.com/images/stories/pdf/Medway_CaseStudy.pdf), Midwich and Zycko.

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About Elsevier

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About SmartPoint

SmartPoint delivers context-based, real-time customer information (<http://www.smartpointsoftware.com/index.php/product>) directly to the call centre advisor’s desktop. This enables contact centres to optimise customer service, operational efficiency and reduce costs by automatically providing advisors with relevant and timely information thus avoiding the need to manually search multiple systems.

As well as providing a superior customer experience, SmartPoint allows advisors to fulfil contact centre

targets by increasing first call resolution, providing a single view of the customer on one screen and reducing call times therefore increasing efficiency.

SmartPoint Technologies is a member of the TIS Software group of companies. The TIS Software group has many hundreds of customers operating in more than 30 countries including Abbott Laboratories, Bailey Teswaine, Fuller Smith and Turner, Fired Earth, London Transport, Virgin Media, Midwich, City of London, Medway Council and Ashford Borough Council.

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