



## Best Practice: Centralized Call Center for City Services Access

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**CITY: STOCKHOLM**

**POLICY AREA: TECHNOLOGY**

### BEST PRACTICE

The City of Stockholm set up a Call Center for non-emergency services in 2007, with the aim to help residents gain access to a wide range of city services. The Call Center has since significantly reduced hold and processing times, and provided uniform responses to callers – regardless of where in Stockholm they live. Stockholm's Call Center complements the city's website [www.stockholm.se](http://www.stockholm.se), and for those who do not regularly use the internet, such as elderly residents, it is an important point of access.

### ISSUE

In March 2004, Stockholm completed a survey in the Bromma District, which revealed that a large proportion of calls to the district administration did not reach the required officer. The majority of those seeking advice had to call repeatedly and tried several different numbers including the city's switchboard, various administrators, and the city's help line before their call was received and their question answered. The survey also showed that only in rare cases it was the appropriate officer who answered the call. The average of answered calls was approximately 20-45%.

Based on this survey, a strategy was developed in order to improve Stockholm's phone services and complement the city's e-services portal.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The development of Stockholm's Call Center was based on the following objectives:

- 85% of all calls should be answered within one minute.
- 70% of all queries should be resolved during the first call, i.e. the client's question would either be answered directly, or he or she would be provided with a file number and information for further assistance and with the goal to quickly resolve the case.
- Reducing the amount of time it takes for a caller to receive correspondence via e-mail.
- The number of calls to administrators should be reduced by an average of 50%.
- The proportion of internal calls to the switchboard should be reduced by 50%.

### IMPLEMENTATION

#### The Case Process

The residents of Stockholm mainly access city services and conduct transactions via the phone, or the internet. The number of physical visits to government offices is steadily decreasing. It is clear that Stockholm residents still prefer to contact the city by phone. Queries received by fax, e-mail or letter are scanned and uploaded to a digital Customer Relations Management system. The sender is informed of the handling process of their query accordingly. Queries received over the phone are dealt with the same way. The Customer Relations Management system categorizes each case based on the nature of the query. Statistics on incoming cases are analyzed and presented to city administrators continuously, who in turn can make suggestions of improvements.

The Call Center's personnel has received thorough training to quickly provide information in the relevant fields, such as pre-schools, building permits, environmental programs and social services. Instead of transferring calls personnel are required to



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handle the query directly. Frequently asked questions include those related to elderly care assistance, pre-schools, billing, fee calculation, appeals, etc.

### Benefits gained by the City

The number of calls to the City's switchboard has decreased dramatically, and city administrators are no longer burdened with high numbers of calls. The efficiency of solving matters is helped by a function which quickly finds the appropriate officer, and sometimes the responsibility of a certain query overlaps between officers based on their different areas of expertise. Since Call Center personnel have access to scanned documents such as invoices, they can often answer basic questions, enabling specialists at city offices to devote more time to handling more complex errands.

### COSTS

The City of Stockholm has spent an estimated 4 to 5 million SEK (\$540,388 to \$675,485 USD) on evaluative surveys and planning processes prior to the launch of the Call Center.

The investment cost for Customer Relations Management system, including switchboard and physical premises and interiors, was approximately 3 to 4 million SEK (\$405,291 to 540,388 USD). The annual cost going forward is estimated to be 2 million SEK (\$279,000 USD).

Expenses for personnel are not included in the above figures.

### EVALUATION AND RESULTS

The City of Stockholm has achieved the following:

- Greater service flexibility and accessibility.
- 82% of callers assisted by an officer within one minute; 93% in three minutes.
- Quick access to information and management of basic requests leading to a significantly higher proportion of queries resolved directly, or after a very short waiting time.
- 70% of all calls related to elderly care (as measured the first quarter of 2009) answered directly.
- Increased control over the volume and nature of calls as a result of close monitoring.
- Statistics on various types of cases produced on a daily basis, and compiled quarterly for the relevant department. This approach makes it easier to work proactively and with targeted action plans.
- Increased opportunities for customers to choose when and how they would like to be contacted. Requested feedback is given to the customer wherever possible. .
- The ability to manage service levels for different queries including assisting users with e-services.

### TIMELINE

2005-2007	Pilot Call Center operations for pre-school and elderly care were set up in two Stockholm districts.
2008	Launch of Call Center for elderly care for the entire city.
2008	Launch of Call Center for preschool matters for the entire city.
2009-2010	Expansion of Call Center services (i.e. parking, traffic, waste management, and elementary schools).
2011	Launch of e-service for complaints, feedback and troubleshooting for the City's activities. Customers are directed to find the relevant form. The received notifications go directly to the process system of Kontaktcenter, where statistical data is stored. The cases not dealt with by Kontaktcenter, are transferred



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to the appropriate department in the City administration. Upon receiving a query, a customer number for further correspondence is sent to the user.

### LEGISLATION

Not applicable.

### LESSONS LEARNED

The goal of the City of Stockholm was to streamline city services, support the functionality of the website and provide assistance to those lacking access to the website. The City has continuously carried out improvements of the Call Center, including voice control routing in order to immediately direct the caller to the appropriate Call Center officer.

### TRANSFERABILITY

In order for a city to establish a similar call center, it should aim to consolidate information for city services, consistently monitor calls to develop appropriate support systems and train and empower personnel to resolve matters as quickly as possible. All information should be kept centrally and online to enable staff members to access relevant information and solve the query immediately.

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