Case Study: Consumer Goods

Simply service

An international quick-service chain implements global customer service solution to simplify operations and improve IT support for franchisees.

Quick-service restaurants operate in a ruthless competitive environment on razor-thin margins. Employees are valuable assets—and the highest operating cost. Efficiency in IT service operations is critical to profitability, while waiting for much-needed IT service and support increases personnel costs, frustrates users and has a negative impact on the bottom line.

Better service. Increased sales

Cognizant was retained by a global restaurant chain to review and redesign IT service and support for business operations before adopting a new global platform for point-of-sale (POS) and payment terminals, kitchen display systems (KDS) and back-office operations.

At a Glance

We helped our client develop and implement business process services for a new IT services platform that optimizes IT support, speeds issue resolution and reduces costs.

Outcomes

- Quality management framework and focused training improved help desk agents’ knowledge.
- Help desk critical issue escalations dropped by 66%, and AHT for service calls lowered by 40%.
- Escalations on priority one cases were reduced by 90%.
- Average time for IT trouble-ticket resolution dropped from 20 hours.
The company—with 9,000+ distribution points in the U.S. and 11,000+ outlets worldwide—faced franchisee dissatisfaction with its outsourced IT services provider. Quality scores for the help desk were plummeting and complaints about agent knowledge, long call-times and slow resolution of issues were increasing.

Operational simplicity and IT services are critical to fulfilling millions of daily customer orders while holding down costs. The company needed to improve customer experiences, reduce average handling time (AHT) and raise help desk quality scores.

**Delivering the benefits**

Cognizant was tasked with addressing issues that impeded smooth and fast customer service, while implementing requisite software and hardware to improve functionality, reliability and ease of use. We also were asked to lessen the time franchisees and other operators needed to spend troubleshooting IT issues.

We studied the client’s operating environment, reviewing its needs for internet data, voice, business continuity planning and other technology requirements. We collaborated with information architects to learn what issues drove most requests for assistance, developing a plan for each required technology to ensure support services were transitioned smoothly and were scalable.

We performed root-cause analysis by each line of business. We generated insights on how to prioritize recurring issues and reduce AHT for service calls, optimize staffing levels and implement metrics to measure improved performance.

Our forecasting and staffing approach provides seamless service delivery that immediately met the client’s stipulated service levels. We customized an open-source Radiant platform to support its pending migration to Oracle’s Simphony platform. We customized training modules and knowledge-transfer principles based on empirical data, such as what issues drive most IT service calls and call-arrival patterns, combining them with ServiceNow service management software to produce meaningful analytics on customer interactions.

**Realizing key metrics**

Our solution delivers IT support from a single center, providing cost savings while promoting continuous improvements through process excellence using digital automation and analytics. We reduced staffing requirements by 10%, AHT by 40%, customer dissatisfaction by 15% and repeat calls by 8%.

We reduced annual call volume by 10% through call redirection to a self-service portal and with a mobile application that allows individual stores to create tickets, view reference guides for common issues and check status. Interactive voice response enhancements use algorithms to parse voice messages at peak call-volume times to prioritize issues; when a significant outage occurs, prioritized issues receive faster responses. Since deployment, escalations on priority cases have dropped by 90%. Excluding issues escalated to hardware vendors, we reduced the average time spent resolving issues from 20 hours to four. Technical issues requiring escalation decreased by 66% and have stayed constant at this lower level.

By digitizing the quality function, we gave the client’s quality assurance team more bandwidth to focus on targeted coaching and on continuously adding to the knowledgebase. We also implemented functionality to customize reports and analyze insights.
**Improved service now**

As additional stores are opened, the organization continues to leverage Cognizant’s help desk services. Utilizing our quality framework, which allows us to more easily transition knowledge to new agents over time, Cognizant’s more than 120 full-time employees assure that our client receives consistent quality service. For this large global franchiser, digitizing core processes gives store owner/operators the operational and IT support they need to be more efficient and profitable, driving value for the brand.

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**About Cognizant’s Retail and Consumer Goods Practice**

Cognizant’s Retail and Consumer Goods practice partners with retail supermarkets, department stores, specialty premium retailers, and large mass-merchandise discounters and consumer goods companies in the grocery, general merchandise, apparel, home and office, and consumer electronics segments to help both embrace the future of shopping, transform the customer experience in-store and online, and build the capabilities needed to win in the digital world. We work with leading retailers and consumer goods companies around the world, including 9 of the top 30 global retailers and 6 of the top 10 consumer goods companies, and are consistently ranked as a top provider in Consumer Goods Technology’s annual Readers’ Choice Awards. We leverage our deep domain and consulting expertise to provide supply chain, merchandising, store, ecommerce, trade promotions, sales effectiveness, marketing services and analytics solutions across the retail and consumer goods spectrum. Our experience includes social, mobile, analytics & cloud (SMAC Stack™) and making meaning from Code Halos™—the information that surrounds people, organizations, processes and products—to create unprecedented levels of value for retailers and consumer goods companies.

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**About Cognizant Digital Operations**

Cognizant Digital Operations helps clients re-engineer, digitize, manage and operate their most essential business processes, lowering operating costs, improving user experiences, and delivering better outcomes and top-line growth. Across the practice, we are creating automated, data-driven platforms and industry utilities. We help clients run better by applying traditional optimization levers, and we help them run differently by creating competitive advantage through making their processes digital-ready, which often leads to more effective operating models and corresponding top-line revenue growth. For more information, please visit cognizant.com/cognizant-digital-operations.

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**About Cognizant**

Cognizant (Nasdaq-100: CTSH) is one of the world’s leading professional services companies, transforming clients’ business, operating and technology models for the digital era. Our unique industry-based, consultative approach helps clients envision, build and run more innovative and efficient businesses. Headquartered in the U.S., Cognizant is ranked 193 on the Fortune 500 and is consistently listed among the most admired companies in the world. Learn how Cognizant helps clients lead with digital at www.cognizant.com or follow us @Cognizant.