



How Missouri Used AI-Powered Call Center Technology to Cut Constituent Wait Times in Half

Overview

Like every other state, Missouri has faced a sharp rise in constituent calls — and resident expectations — in recent years. The increase put significant strain on Missouri's ability to serve its residents, and it brought the state's legacy call center to a breaking point.

With skyrocketing call volumes and persistent staffing challenges, Missouri turned to artificial intelligence (AI) technology to transform its call center capabilities. The result shows what is possible when a state takes a fresh and proactive approach to an entrenched problem.



The Challenge: A Call Center Stretched Thin

The sheer quantity of calls coming into Missouri's central state government contact center had become difficult to manage. Contact center workers struggled to keep up, leaving callers with extremely long wait times and poor experiences.

"At the time, we used an on-premises solution that resulted in a lot of limitations for us," says Nichole Conway, program manager for the Missouri Department of Social Services. Conway's department alone was responsible for managing some 30,000 people per month applying for public assistance through an interview process, with many interviews taking place over the phone. With that kind of volume, Missouri's on-premises solution simply couldn't keep up.

The most glaring evidence of the solution's shortcomings was the average wait time for calls — one hour and 26 minutes. This left constituents feeling frustrated, unhappy and often angry. And because of the nature of the calls — applying for public assistance, in Conway's agency's case — the conversations were already predisposed to elevated emotions and heated interactions.

The technical shortcomings impacted employees as well. "Keeping staff spirits up was a serious point of concern," Conway says.

The state needed a new approach, so it assembled a call center task force. The goal was to drive communication between agencies,

discuss best practices, share pain points and develop a plan to improve government call centers through better technology.

The Solution: An AI-Powered Contact Center

The call center task force brought in multiple vendors to present possible solutions. When they met with Genesys, Conway says, they immediately saw the benefits of the company's cloud-based, AI-powered solution. "Genesys gave us a demo, and we all just fell in love," she laughs.

Over multiple meetings with the task force, Genesys worked to understand the current challenges, set a new vision and develop an implementation road map for how to get there, says Genesys Senior Sales Executive Scott Dunn.

"We wanted to identify their issues, why the issues need to be addressed, and the impact that solving those issues could bring to the state," Dunn says.

Part of that conversation was about helping state IT leaders understand the value of AI, which the Genesys solution incorporates to automate appointment scheduling and give equal access to all constituents. "They had no idea the technology existed and that they could leverage it the way Genesys does," Dunn says.

"Previously, we had a very manual process," says Conway. "A resident would fill out a form to request an appointment, which

Missouri's legacy call center technology resulted in:

- **Extremely long wait times for constituents, who frequently waited on hold for hours only to be disconnected before reaching anyone**

- **Difficulty hiring and retaining call center workers**

- **Cumbersome reporting and a lack of transparency**

would then generate a SharePoint task for an employee to call that person to schedule an appointment time.” Genesys’ AI-driven calendaring solution streamlines that process by letting constituents easily schedule their own appointment without waiting for a state employee to call. That means fewer phone calls in to the call center, improved customer experience and less busywork for staff.

“The first hour Genesys was up and running, Missouri constituents scheduled over 30 appointments,” Dunn says. “It made the state rethink the way it was solving constituent issues and answering questions.”

The Results: Call Wait Times Cut in Half

Missouri has deployed the Genesys contact center solution for more than 40 state agencies and departments, according to Dunn, and the impact of the new system has been tremendous.

Call wait times have been cut by 53%, from an hour and 26 minutes to just under 40 minutes. Callers are less frustrated, and contact center employees can focus on connecting constituents to the information and services they need.

The new low-code, cloud-based solution makes it much easier for agencies to make changes without having to go through the IT development team.

“General management of the on-prem solution was handled by our Information Technology Department, which also supports all other state agencies and has limited resources. If we needed any changes, even simple prompt or menu changes, we had to contact them,” Conway says. “Genesys allows us to easily manage all that in-house, without a lot of prior technical expertise. That was a huge success for us.”

Other benefits of the new solution include:

- **A better approach to hiring.** With the remote login capabilities of the cloud-based solution, the candidate pool for call center employees is no longer



confined by geography. Now, agencies can identify candidates across the state, even if they’re not within driving distance of agency offices.

- **Greater reporting efficiency.** Reports that once took employees hours to generate can now be produced at the push of a button, significantly increasing productivity and transparency at the agency-by-agency level.
- **Stronger cybersecurity.** The cloud-based software provides a secure interface for user information and complies with FedRAMP cybersecurity protocols. The solution is continuously upgraded to address new security threats without requiring any new security resources or expertise in-house.

Build on Your Peers’ Success

Missouri’s old on-premises call center system — with its clunky scheduling process, poor user experience and inability to scale — made it extremely difficult for the state to meet constituent needs.

But Missouri is hardly alone.

“A lot of state agencies are still operating on legacy green screens,” Dunn says. “It can be a scary transition moving from on-prem to the cloud. I would encourage other states to talk to those that have implemented the technology. It can be secure and user-friendly at the same time.”



Missouri’s new contact center solution cut call wait times by 53%.

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