

Case study: Hearing-Impaired Community

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Summary

Customers with disabilities are simply: customers, who also may have to interact with a company or brand and see their queries resolved. The fact that they may use different ways of communicating, tells us we need to adapt our way of interacting in order to be inclusive. At the end of the day, they come for our services and it is our job to help them. Being aware of the gap that existed in contact center solutions, a platform was developed, through which agents and clients can communicate using sign language.

Background

Back in the day contact centers did not exist and issues were managed in person, it was probably easier to deliver accessible customer service. Agents could easily notice if a client had some kind of hearing impairment and act accordingly, for instance, by grabbing a notebook and allowing them to write.

As today's contact centers show a greater gap between agents and customers, individuals with disabilities must not be forgotten in the customer service processes. As contact centers are not accessible by default, that is something to be discussed and implemented in order to serve and benefit everyone. We want all our customers to be able to contact us.

Challenges

The fact that call centers are not accessible for the impaired community is a problem still faced all over the world.

Call centers must then be made accessible to every person, and agents must be trained to deal with those interactions.

Projects

Collab deployed its first solution addressed to the hearing-impaired community back in 2013 in [Vodafone Portugal](#). This contact center solution allows individuals with hearing loss to interact with the company through HD video calls.

The technology is still being used by Vodafone Portugal after all these years and is, therefore, mature. A solution that **works on Nubitalk, Collab's cloud**.

More recently, [South African Sign Language was declared the 12th Official Language](#) in the country, leading to some requirements:

1. Customer service must be accessible with Sign Language
2. Translation to Sign Language must be available in every contact center

Biggest Challenge

To create an inclusive contact center solution that allows hearing-impaired people to interact with companies.

Technology Used

OneContact

Key Benefits

1. Enhanced customer experience
2. Interaction through high quality video calls
3. Contact center solution suitable for the hearing-impaired community

Following these governmental requirements, Collab worked on a project for a big telco in South Africa. The solution has been implemented in 2022 and consists of agents who speak South African Sign Language and are able to interact with customers through high quality video calls.

Important to mention that each one of these agents must go through an **intense learning course**, where the staff learns how to communicate with these people, who are much more informal in speaking terms and do not have a so vast vocabulary. This means every interaction and communication must be adapted to the hearing-impaired.

Another project was implemented by Collab in France, where a **company specialized in providing customer service in Sign Language** provides outsourcing services to companies that require that type of assistance.

Insurance companies soon started to pay attention to this challenge, in order to help their customers with hearing loss to solve any problem they might face in case of an accident. In Portugal, Collab implemented a call center solution for a [tier-1 vehicle insurance company](#), that aimed to help the hearing-impaired community. Using Sign Language, they **act as an intermediary (through voice)** between the customer calling and other people involved in the incident, who might not understand Sign Language.

Benefits and Conclusion

Worldwide, an estimate of 430 Million people live with disabling hearing loss.



People with special needs are now happy to be themselves and to be able to resolve their issues without reaching out for external assistance.



This enhances the customer experience and allows customers to use the communication mode that best suits their needs.



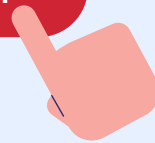
It represents an important inclusion and social responsibility milestone, where no human being is excluded.



Collab is also looking into future steps towards evolution, aiming to combine chatbots and artificial intelligence technology in sign language in order to enable access to information for people with hearing impairments.


Check Out our website!

collab.com





Collab Headquarters:

Avenida D João II, N. 51 - Bloco B, 2nd floor C
1990-085, Lisbon , Portugal

 collab.com

 info@collab.com

 +351 211 248 678

 +44 2037 501244