

Texas telecomm's Web application grows sales so rapidly that reps begin exceeding year-end goals in the first quarter.

Executive Summary

Challenge: Guadalupe Valley Telephone Cooperative was hit with a double whammy. They were losing revenue to new competition moving in, AND they had grown so large that they were losing the very government loans and subsidies that had made their start possible fifty years ago.

It was so dire, that their steering committee projected that without some major changes, they would be out of business within 5 years. They needed to make it easier for their salespeople to sell, so they decided to go to the Web.

Solution: Using the mrc-Productivity Series, GVTC's IT director Alfred Perez created this live Java Web application including an electronic signature capability that sales reps could access wirelessly. **And, with no prior Java experience** he was able to research, build, paint, and test it...in three weeks time.

Results: This application is so easy to use, and so convenient, that I&R sales representatives have started exceeding their sales goals left and right.

With only Q1 behind them, 62% of them are at or ahead of their goals, **and 24% of them have actually met or exceeded their sales goals for the full year.**

traditional landlines. As a result, GVTC was losing revenue.

Additionally, they had grown so large that they were losing the very government loans and subsidies that had made their start possible fifty years ago.

The company's steering committee commissioned a study to evaluate revenue and profit margins and made a startling discovery. If GVTC remained as it was, without changing business tactics, they would be out of business within 5 years.

So, they had to act fast, and they needed to get creative.

Basics

Guadalupe Valley Telephone Cooperative (GVTC) is on its way to exceeding its sales goals in 2005... from one little Web application they took live in mid-January.

GVTC, in the once-rural Texas hill country, has grown from very modest beginnings into the largest telephone cooperative,

and the ninth largest telephone/cable/broadband company in Texas. But with this growth, GVTC had a big problem.

There was not only an influx of area competition from telephone/cable/broadband conglomerates like Time Warner, but there was also an increase of users moving to mobile phone companies rather than ordering

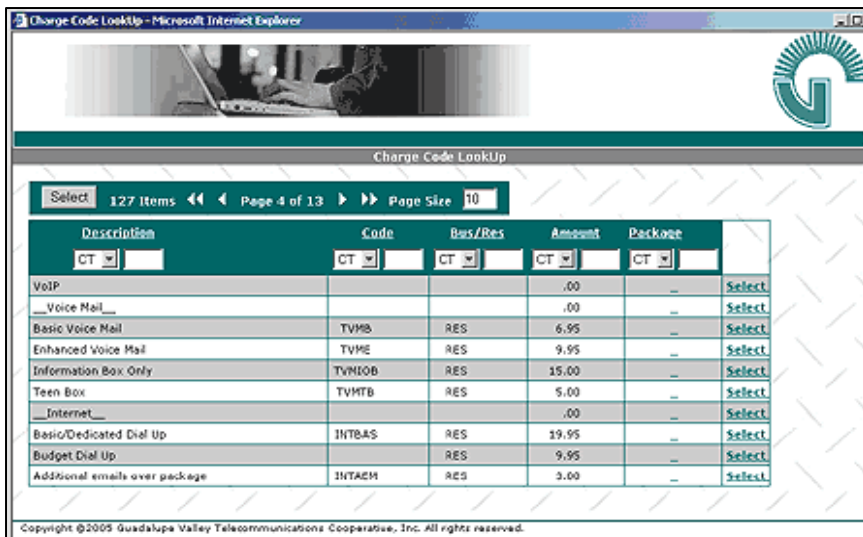
Challenge

They began looking at where they could grow sales, and they realized they weren't paying enough attention to their current customer base. And, one of their biggest assets was all but being ignored: their Installation and Repair (I&R) employees.

The I&R team is GVTC's first line of communication with new customers, and the only face-to-face contact the majority of customers would ever see. They also knew that for every new or existing customer who required an installation or repair, there would be an opportunity to sell them additional products or services, such as a DSL line, a cable package, call waiting...or larger service packages to draw traditional telephone users to cable, and/or Internet.

So, GVTC created a commission structure, and pre-printed order forms that the representatives could fill out when they were onsite at a customer's home. Then, they waited for the revenue to stream in.

But, it didn't happen.



This screen shot shows a list of available features, and technicians can simply click select to update their customers preferred services.

First, the process took too much time. The I&R techs would have to fill out long forms, and save them up during their shifts to drop off with customer service. Then, customer service would have to process the forms and enter the data into their system, and then pass the forms onto billing. Billing would then pass the information to payroll so that the techs could receive their commission. And commission wasn't coming fast enough.

The process also left a lot of room for error and it was expensive to preprint the forms, and time consuming to not have any growth in revenue.

Then the Vice President of Operations had a brainstorm. He decided that moving to a paperless system could make a big difference, and he went about making it happen.

Solution

"The problem was, we didn't have a lot of time," explained Alfred Perez, Senior Programmer Analyst at GVTC, "We found out they wanted us to create the Web application the week before Thanksgiving break about this

project, and that they wanted it done by January 1st. With vacations during the holidays in between, I just didn't think it would be possible."

"We'd purchased the mrc-Productivity Series originally for reporting, but I knew the tool was versatile for Web development, so I contacted mrc. The product specialists called me right back and told me the mrc-Productivity Series could handle it without a problem."

But within those three weeks, Perez was able to create a Web application for the Tech team that they can access wirelessly while they are on site. They actively receive updates on specials/services, select only services needed, and display only legal on services selected. Then, customers review, and sign the form electronically with all of their order information automatically entered into the live database for system-wide access by billing, payroll, and customer service.

"One of the most useful features is the signature capability," says Perez. "We bought hardware from Topaz software to allow

customers to sign their order forms electronically and the Web result looks just like the paper form we had before, but it's cleaner. The paper version was long because it had to include all of the options and all of the legal for those options. The electronic version only shows the choices (and the legal for those choices) that they've selected. There's not a whole lot of extraneous information taking up space."

The application ties directly into GVTC's billing and service order system, CommSoft, a software package that runs on the IBM iSeries. The application is also integrated seamlessly with a homegrown application system for calculating commissions.

The results speak for themselves.

Since the process became convenient and fast, I&R sales have taken off. With only the 1st quarter under their belt, over 62% of the sales force in question is at or above their individual sales goals to date, and more than 24% of them have already reached or exceeded their entire sales goals for the entire year.

Conclusion

And that was just the beginning.

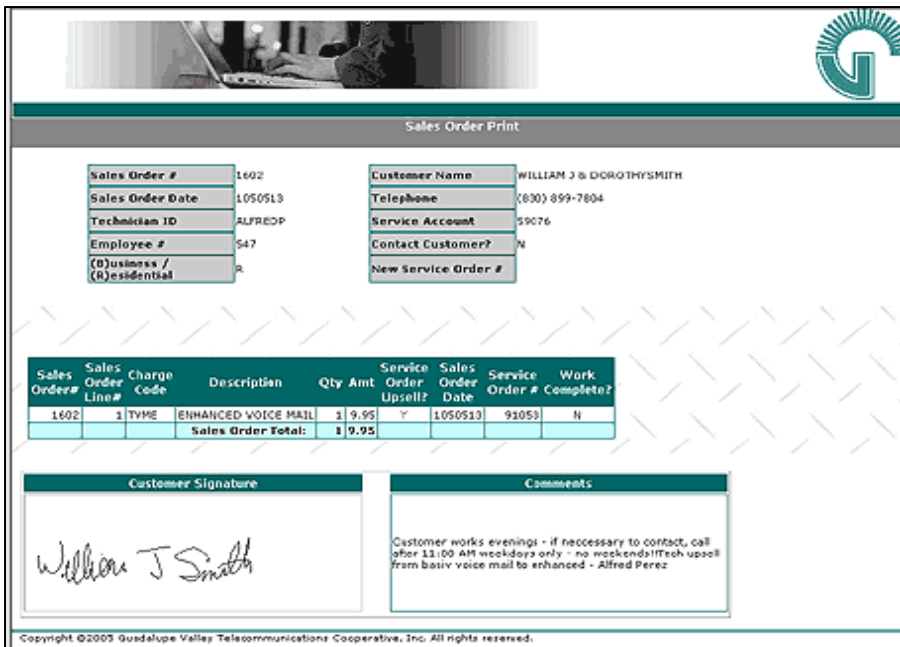
Alfred is not stopping there, "It is my vision to have everything Web-based so we're not tied to any client." He's already working on a payroll application for time-tracking, and one that allows accounting to manage numerous finance tasks from one screen.

"With the speed that the mrc-Productivity Series lets us work, we're on track to be paperless in no time."

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This screen depicts the where the customer signature and technician notes are displayed, as well as the current status of the services, billing, and work order.