



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FOR MEMBERS

OVERVIEW

A Pandemic Support Success Story

by Gabriel Mains, Service Desk Manager, Koch Business Solutions LP

Explore how preparedness and planning allowed one global customer service desk to minimize the impacts of the worst-case support scenario posed by COVID-19.

GABRIEL MAINS is the service desk manager for Koch Business Solutions, the service arm of Koch Industries, which employs 130,000 people in more than 70 countries and operates a conglomerate of companies, including Georgia-Pacific and Matador Cattle Company.

“We had a huge surge of incoming supports requests” as the company shifted gears to counter the pandemic.

As the novel coronavirus took over the world’s attention, Koch Business Solution had 86 agents from four call center working remotely from home. They handled 14,000 calls and 15,000 chats per month in multiple languages and solved about 75 percent of all requests on the first contact.

As the pandemic struck and the company made changes to its business, call volumes doubled week-over week, but the team was able to maintain support without interruption or major service impact.

Support levels returned to normal, even as the teams metrics improved while they worked remotely in terms of overall customer satisfy, first call resolution, knowledge base and handle times.

How did we avoid a service interruption?

- Cloud-based Tools – Technology that enables adaptability.



- BC/DR – Know the plan and test regularly.

- Managing Remotely – Metrics and measures elevate performance.



CLOUD-BASED TOOLS

Moving its tools to the cloud allowed increased flexibility – and adaptability and flexibility are keys to success.

Being in the cloud also removed the company's reliance of specific infrastructure or hardware, and allowed it to broaden its talent pool beyond its physical location.

You have to have a broad view of what you have because some things can interfere with each other.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY/DISASTER RECOVERY

A company needs a plan in place before a crisis arises. Koch had short-term, mid-term and long-term disaster recovery and continuity plans in place before the coronavirus appeared, and tested them on a regular schedule.

Businesses change often and it is easy to overlook these plans when those changes occur. When you test regularly and often you have no fear of interruption. Because of its ongoing planning and testing efforts, Koch's customer service team was able to change its work methods before rest of the company could adjust to the pandemic.

► Managing a remote workforce

- Real-time metrics enable visibility
- Understand minimum performance baselines
- Set clear goals/expectations
- Enable team communication channels for success
- Operations leads to enable performance
- Provide virtual meetings and social events



Meetings and social events keep morale up, as do impromptu calls. Managers made water-cooler calls to team members to have ad hoc conversation.

Even though the team was prepared, it was a big surprise how smoothly the transition worked. It had longer hold times than before the crisis, but that was due to increased volume. There was no service interruption at all, and productivity increased.

An additional benefit: when people started working from home, they stopped calling in to say they would be late or needed to take a sick day.

The team is discussing whether it should continue working from home into the future.



The executive summary above was written by staff from watching the presentation and many other ideas were presented. Members may watch the full presentation if wished by logging in.