CASE STUDY: Hyperlink

HYPERLINK DRIVES SUCCESS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WITH NEXT GENERATION SOFTWARE

Hyperlink is a Boost Mobile cellular Master Agent. The company supports and facilitates Retailers who sell Boost Mobile cell plans and phones to consumers. Hyperlink currently works with approximately 600 Retailers across the Northeast region of the U.S., with plans to extend its market share within the region.

For over 17 years, Hyperlink has relied on Robocom's Next Generation Software System to manage its operations. "Our business is in constant change; as we've advanced, so has our technology. Next Generation has kept pace with our needs and the needs of our Retailers each step of the way," explains Sue DiPanfilo, Accounting Department Manager at Hyperlink.

Using Next Generation, Hyperlink has streamlined the entire order process. When an order comes in from a Retailer via the web, it is automatically placed on hold so the accounting team can verify if that Retailer is in good standing. Once that is determined, the order is released from hold. The ticket then prints out in the equipment department where employees on the floor pick and pack the order. Using scanners, they trace the entire order, capturing the serial numbers and UPS label information upon completion. Once the order is shipped, both Hyperlink and the Retailer can tack the order through the Next Generation online portal.

Prior to choosing Robocom, Hyperlink maintained all of its information via Excel spreadsheets, including inventory and commission data. Everything was essentially managed manually. The company kept physical counts, hand wrote shipping labels and invoices, tracked all shipments and sales using spreadsheets, and even kept track of commission information by hand.

"Our goal was to grow our business. This manual work was not a good use of our employees' time," says DiPanfilo. "To boost productivity and keep our competitive edge, we decided it was time to introduce automation into our operations."

ROBOCOM PROVIDES FLEXIBILITY AND ESSENTIAL B2B FUNCTIONALITY

Hyperlink evaluated a number of inventory management and point of sales systems, but chose the Robocom Next Generation Software package because it was the most flexible system to meet their unique requirements.

SOLUTION SNAPSHOT

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Hyperlink relied on manual methods for managing information and the majority of its processes, which impacted productivity and the company's ability to scale its business.

ROBOCOM SOLUTION

The organization chose Robocom's Next Generation Enterprise Resource Planning solution to automate and manage all aspects of its supply chain management processes, from tracking inventory, order capturing and processing to picking, shipping, determining commissions and financial processing.

RESULTS

By automating its processes and achieving real-time visibility into its operations, Hyperlink has increased productivity, improved the Retailer experience, significantly increased its market share and achieved a competitive edge by meeting the demands of the digital economy.

"With Robocom, we could customize the solution to fit the specific needs of our industry, and we would have the flexibility to make changes as our business grew and evolved," explains DiPanfilo.

Using Next Generation, the company achieved productivity gains almost immediately through changes like automatically generated UPS labels and the ability to track inventory in real time. Fast forward 17 years, and Hyperlink still relies on Next Generation to run its business, though the system has evolved significantly over time.

"Next Generation is extremely adaptable. We have been able to take the same platform and change it over time to support the complex and ever-evolving requirements of the digital economy," says DiPanfilo.

One significant change was the addition of the Next Generation Business to Business module (B2B), which enables Hyperlink's Retailers to place orders via the website. "This feature is essential to maintaining our competitive edge and to driving additional productivity benefits as our business grows."

Hyperlink has customized the feature in a number of ways. It can offer Retailers online incentives for ordering a minimum number of phones. For example, during the online order process, a message will pop up and say: "You have ordered thirteen units. If you order seven more, shipping will be free!"

Hyperlink has also customized the system to flag orders for out of stock items. This enables the company to manage customer expectations and improve the overall customer experience.

Preventing duplicate orders is another custom feature for Hyperlink's B2B module. Often, Retailers will input more than one order for the same items, by mistake or because they are hoping it will accelerate the delivery process. Sales representatives used to have to double check for any duplicate orders, prior to shipment. Now, if the B2B system identifies that a Retailer is submitting numerous orders for the same item, they will receive a warning message such as: "You have already placed a similar order for these products. Are you sure you want to place another order?"

Another valuable feature of the B2B module is the ability to send automatic notifications regarding repairs and credits. If there is an issue with a product, the customer will return it to the Retailer, and the Retailer will send it to Hyperlink, who will then send it to Boost Mobile to be fixed or replaced. When Hyperlink receives a defective product and generates the repair order, the system automatically sends the Retailer an email letting them know that they have received the product and the repair is in process. In turn, the Retailer has the information it needs to keep its own customer up to date on the repair status.

Hyperlink has customized Next Generation to help streamline the commission process as well. Each time a Retailer makes a sale and activates the phone for the consumer, it is entitled to compensation. Hyperlink is able to track all of that information using the serial numbers and Retailer codes, and then determine the accurate amount of compensation due.

EXPANDING MARKET SHARE WHILE DELIVERING EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

A comparison of Hyperlink's business before and after Next Generation is essentially night and day, says DiPanfilo. "We have had the system so long and our operations have changed so dramatically, it is hard to even calculate specific metrics at this point. But I can say it has been just huge – completely changed the way we do business."

"This system really supports our mission and our culture of transparency. Real-time visibility has been a tremendous advantage for our Retailers. They know where they stand at all times and feel confident about the information in the system, which translates into a confidence about doing business with us."

From a competitive standpoint, Hyperlink's industry is unique in that it isn't competing against other phone distributors, but rather other Boost Mobile distributors. Since the products are the same, the competitive differentiator comes from Hyperlink's ability to deliver a high level of customer service and an exceptional customer experience.

Hyperlink's culture of support goes beyond simply performing its "contractual" duties, consistently challenging itself and its associates to be a truly remarkable enterprise. Critical to the company's mission is its commitment to ensuring its Retailers are empowered to provide the highest quality customer experience. "Our mission is what sets us apart, and Next Generation really helps us stay true to our ideals," says DiPanfilo.

Since first implementing Next Generation, Hyperlink's market share has grown substantially, expanding its footprint from just a couple of states to the entire New England region of the US. "Having Next Generation in place has become a staple talking point when speaking with prospective Retailers," explains DiPanfilo. "We are able to tout the features and functionality of our automated system: 24x7 online ordering, real-time visibility into shipments, invoicing information and more. That has proven to be a significant competitive advantage for us."

DiPanfilo says Hyperlink has been able to expand successfully because its system is the same, regardless of where the Retailer is in the country. "Next Generation is our foundation of support and it works no matter what state or region we are working with. We have the right infrastructure in place for our business. We can adapt to market changes, advance our business to meet the needs of the digital era, and continue to absorb business using Next Generation – all while staying true to our commitment and vision to deliver the highest level of customer service."

ABOUT ROBOCOM SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL

Robocom Systems develops, licenses and supports Supply Chain Execution software solutions, including Warehouse Management, 3PL Billing, Transportation Management, Voice Technology and Labor Management. An Enterprise Transportation System and Enterprise Resource Planning System round out the Supply Chain Execution offering. Robocom's investment in research and development is keenly focused on the needs of the business leaders responsible for the day-to-day results in warehousing, distribution, third party logistics, transportation and trucking operations. For more information visit www.robocom.com

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