

Giving sales its place in the sun

The profession of sales may not have earned the widespread admiration in Europe that it's traditionally enjoyed in the US. But SalesSense International is looking to change all that, with its vision of a technology-fuelled total sales and customer engagement organisation. SalesSense is prioritising customer satisfaction and embracing a next-generation communications infrastructure that delivers unprecedented flexibility.

Ten years ago, Irish company SalesSense International bore little resemblance to the organisation it has become: from just a handful of employees focusing on field sales, today the company has more than 230 employees. This highly skilled team is not only the feet-on-the-street sales force for some of Ireland's best-known brands, it also provides the personnel behind one of the country's most advanced omni-channel customer engagement centres, where customers choose how they want to engage with the brand.

Opened in Dundalk in 2015, with enabling infrastructure from AirSpeed Telecom, the SalesSense's next-generation centre breaks new ground in Ireland's contact centre industry. The company provides a complete, omni-channel service to its clients, and it's also pioneering a cloud-centred technology model that allows the organisation to rapidly scale in response to opportunities, including embracing international prospects and exporting this Irish led global drive.

A customer-centric vision of omni-channel sales and service

It was in 2013 that the company decided to build the new omni-channel centre from scratch, based on a simple vision: whether customers wanted to text, tweet, ring, go to a website, post on Facebook or send an e-mail, SalesSense would have a single view of the customers and their communication preferences. The organisation's priority is to provide superb, memorable customer engagement. *"We believe if we do the right thing by our client, and by their customers, everything follows behind that,"* said Simon Brown, Chief Operations Officer for SalesSense.

Counting among its clients major enterprises like Vodafone and Bord Gais Energy, SalesSense provide both customer sales and customer service using its omni-channel centre and field sales

force. The SalesSense field sales organisation knocks on hundreds of customer doors each day. The insights and information it gleans are added to its central knowledge store to help provide a 360° view of the customer.

"We believe that if all you are is a telesales organisation, a field sales organisation or a traditional BPO, all you're going to be doing is passing customers from pillar to post," Simon said. *"We want to provide our clients with every single route to market and become the benchmark for best in class internationally."*

ICT infrastructure that's secure, hosted and ready to scale

SalesSense's infrastructure includes its cloud-based contact centre platform, covering all standard and social media channels; a significant investment in speech-to-text analysis and speech analytics; no-fail secured connectivity from AirSpeed Telecom and a SIP telephony infrastructure from AirSpeed to support all inbound and outbound calling.

AirSpeed and SalesSense at a glance

- Dual redundant connectivity via 100Mbps fibre and 6Mbps licensed wireless
- Secure VPN access to cloud-hosted contact centre infrastructure
- AirSpeed Cloud Protect high-performance managed firewall service
- Continuous, secured access to critical apps hosted in SalesSense Dublin datacentre
- Premium SLA with 24-hour proactive network and service monitoring
- SIP voice services for all inbound and outbound calling at SalesSense's state-of-the-art customer engagement centre
- Strategic technology relationship to provide flexible communications infrastructure, fully leveraging hosted services
- Underlying infrastructure supports rapid scaling, e.g. the potential to add hundreds of new agents at short notice, in any geographic location

AirSpeed worked closely with SalesSense to design, secure and provide resilience in the circuits that today provide its Dundalk centre with continuous access to the hosted services it relies on, both in the cloud and in its own datacentre in Dublin. AirSpeed's high-performance managed firewall service, AirSpeed Cloud Protect, plays a vital role in ensuring robust network security.

The relationship approach that lets SalesSense deliver on its promise to customers

"We are hugely dependent on connectivity," Simon said. "When we looked at all the providers, the only one who could give us the total flexibility and solution we needed was AirSpeed. Some operators we spoke to gave us the feeling that they're only used to dealing with very large global players, and that we might not get the focus our business demands. AirSpeed made us feel that irrespective of size, all their customers carry the same priority and are treated the same way."

On a practical side, AirSpeed's ability to provide truly seamless failover between wired and wireless connectivity in Dundalk was vital. Only AirSpeed was able to deliver seamless failover from fibre to wireless and that failover really is seamless, with tests showing that if a digger were to cut through the access fibre in Dundalk, the wireless would take over instantaneously.

Looking forward, SalesSense is using the communications and technology infrastructure supported by AirSpeed to deliver on its strategic vision: using its field sales organisation and its omni-channel customer experience centre as complementary resources which can bolster each other's growth and help SalesSense attract new international clients.

"We are in discussion with customers in the US and the UK and are currently running two campaigns into the UK market," Simon said "Our plan is to use the strong field sales organisation we've built in Ireland to bring in opportunities for the customer engagement centre."

"There's such tremendous growth potential for us, which is why I can't overstate how important it is to have partners like AirSpeed who give me peace of mind: if I pick up the phone, they make sure things get done. One thing people say about SalesSense, is that we are "doers." When we say 'done by Friday,' it means just that. And that's how AirSpeed works with us: they're a partner who looks at the end result and what has to happen in order to achieve that end result and they make it work."