

CASE STUDY



## “Berlin Telephone”: Handling 25.000 Calls a Day

### AT A GLANCE

**Organization**

Berlin IT Service Center  
(a public-law institution)

**Business Sector**

Public Sector

**Employees**

Approx. 480 (2010)

**Sales**

Approx. 107 million € (2010)

**Number of calls to “Berlin Telephone”**

Approx. 25.000 per day  
Approx. 6 million per year

**USU Products in Use**

USU KnowledgeMiner

**Website**

[www.itdz-berlin.de](http://www.itdz-berlin.de)

One of the core business areas of the Berlin IT Service Center is its operation of “Berlin Telephone 900”, a central, direct-line service telephone number for citizens of the State of Berlin. The 98-person call center at “Berlin Telephone 900” handles up to 25,000 calls a day. To readily access important information located in various knowledge sources, the call center uses the intelligent search technology provided by USU KnowledgeMiner.

### The Challenges

- Create a “single point of contact” as a central information service for Berlin’s citizens
- Reduce the workload on Berlin’s public administration by knowledge transfer from administrative department to agents in a call center
- Ensure a 98-person call center to handle 25,000 calls daily
- Integrate an intelligent, self-learning knowledge base
- Implement VoIP for simultaneous data exchange between the call and ticket systems

### Project Milestones

- Resolution passed by the Senate of Berlin, establishing the “Service City Berlin” with its key project: “Expansion of Berlin’s municipal service telephone system to become the national service line 115”
- Project put out to bid in 2004; to be implemented in several phases
- The concept of merging data and language is inherently difficult to implement
- The CRM application from Siebel implemented as the leading IT system
- Integration of USU KnowledgeMiner into Siebel system in early 2007
- About 50% of Berlin’s municipal agencies (some 50,000 branch offices) are call center customers (2008)

### Why USU was selected

- Technology partner of Siemens IT Solutions and Services for knowledge management
- Good references - successfully implemented in the municipal call center in Cologne
- Comprehensive technology offered by USU goes far beyond the functionalities of a mere full-text search engine
- High integratability into Siebel CRM
- Short deployment times
- Technical and specialized competencies of USU staff plus their great flexibility

### Benefits

- Creation of a direct line to Berlin’s public administration (central information, advisory and directory service)
- Highly efficient service capable of handling 25,000 calls a day
- Broad acceptance of call center due to its fast, consistent and high-quality, verified responses
- Improved image of public agencies
- Dramatic decreases in workloads at city agencies
- A “landmark project”, Berlin’s telephone service has become a regional model for Germany’s national service line 115



The company headquarter in Berlin



Brandenburg Gate

## 900 - The number for all questions

Back in mid-2004, a study of telephone traffic in the central telephone exchange at the Berlin IT Service Center showed that an average of 30% to 50% of all callers could not be properly forwarded. At the same time, a study of 7,500 calls placed to a local district office revealed that only 68% of "talking time" was actually suited for call centers. These results were the basis for the core goals in establishing a central information, advisory and directory service – "Berlin Telephone 900" This system for providing standardized answers to inquiries was also intended to greatly reduce call volumes at Berlin's associated public agencies.

## CTI and knowledge management in call centers

The multi-level administrative structure (front office of the central call center, back offices of public administrations and the experts in specific agencies) is mapped and modeled in the CRM system from Siebel. The great challenge here was in synchronizing the telephone and ticket systems. Another major issue was setting up an intelligent knowledge base aimed at supporting the efficient transfer of knowledge from the specific agencies through the call center to the callers themselves. To achieve this, in 2007 USU KnowledgeMiner with its self-learning search technology and integrated knowledge base was deployed. After a short test phase, call center agents could quickly access all information relevant to calls and provide reliable information. This information comes from the Intranet/Internet pages of Berlin's public admin-

istration, approved as reliable references, as well as solution documents especially created for providing answers from the call center – overall some 1,100 knowledge sources. The system also "translates" popular, commonly used terms within the correct semantic context. This feature is made possible by 2,500 terms cross-referenced with synonyms.

## Local success a model for national service number 115

Whether it's a matter of officially leaving a church, a divorce, late-payment notices or the new "fine-particle" emissions sticker, call center agents deal with many major and minor citizen concerns. In fact, city agencies are familiar with 3,200 typical "life situations." Each call agent handles up to 400 calls a day – patiently, politely and with the right answers. The overall goal is clear: Call-center coverage of city agencies, state authorities and tax/revenue offices is to climb from currently around 50% to 100%. In addition, the call center is striving for an 80% resolution rate, which has already been achieved for some topics. After the announcement of "Service Number 900" at the CeBIT 2007 and its promotion on the city's Intranet/Internet, the number of callers has steadily increased – to up to 25,000 citizens per day. What's more, even now "Berlin Telephone" is ready for the future: The technical capacities of the call center allow it to answer up to 10,000 calls per hour, and this technology is already ready today for integration with the planned German national direct line 115 to public administration.

*"When it comes to its application architecture, Berlin Telephone is technologically truly cutting-edge. This includes the options for flexible integration of additional public agencies, the simultaneous forwarding of calls and tickets and the well-structured knowledge provision directly at the initial point of contact. This is exactly what it takes to handle the up to 25,000 calls per day so far and the increased numbers expected with the future national citizens' direct service line D115."*

*Konrad Kandziora  
CEO, Berlin IT Service  
Center*