

“We just passed our first anniversary since deploying SpeechBridge and serviced hundreds of thousands of inquiries with zero downtime.”

- Andrew Jones
Director of Technology
Applus+ Technologies



CHALLENGE

Applus+ Technologies provides the State of Illinois with its next generation vehicle emissions test program. They needed to provide millions of motorists with testing facility addresses, hours of operations and testing wait times 24/7/365.

SOLUTION

SpeechBridge provides motorists with automated, advanced customer self-service applications to provide this information.

BENEFITS

- Plug and play integration into their existing IP-based phone system.
- With support of leading industry standards, the development time and cost was greatly reduced.
- With the state having hands-free cell phone usage legislation, motorists can get information using simple, spoken commands.
- Applus was able to recoup their investment in under three months.

When you have a high volume of inquiries and need to provide advanced self-service solutions, better serve your callers and save money with Communications Automation.

Customer Profile

Applus+ Technologies, headquartered in downtown Chicago, is a leading provider of government and automotive solutions for vehicle testing in the United States. Applus+ creates custom self-service offerings for the DMV community and inspects approximately 1.8 million vehicles each year for the state of Illinois.

Business Situation

Applus+ Technologies works with the State of Illinois' Environmental Protection Agency and operates its next-generation vehicle emissions test program and needed to expand their contact center capabilities for an interactive self-service solution for motorists to:

- Find the location of the closest facility
- Obtain the latest wait time at on-demand facilities
- Hear address information and hours of operations for each facility

"We needed to re-configure our network and make it more convenient for people to use," said Maggie Carson, spokeswoman for the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, which oversees the air pollution emissions and testing laws. "The closures and addition of new technology to make the testing quicker will save the state about \$30 million a year."

The Solution

Motorists call a toll-free number and are greeted with a brief list of options. The spoken request is recognized by SpeechBridge, a query is made to an Applus+ database via Web Services, and the information is spoken to the caller with the embedded text-to-speech engine. SpeechBridge acts as a virtual customer service agent and services callers in an automated fashion, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

“Implementing SpeechBridge has allowed us to service a high volume of inquiries from motorists needing wait times and address information without having to add a significant number of live agents.”

- Richard Fitzherbert
Executive Implementation Manager,
Applus+ Technologies



The Benefits

Applus+ realized the following benefits:

- **Plug-and-play integration with ShoreTel phone system:** SpeechBridge offers a standards-based appliance that works with any SIP-based VoIP solution was up and running in less than an hour.
- **Flexible speech application platform:** support of VoiceXML and Web Services, simplified the development and cost of the solution.
- **Safe, hands-free interaction for callers:** Illinois has hands-free cell phone usage laws and now motorists can interact using spoken commands rather than the telephone keypad.

ROI Analysis

SpeechBridge services calls for 12.5 cents/call versus an estimated cost of \$1.50/call using live agents, saving approximately \$345,000 in year one.

Scenario A: SpeechBridge	Scenario B: Live Agents
SpeechBridge Pro 8 port system	8 customer service agents
Applus Database Development/Web services definition	Annual salary per agent = \$36,000
Approx. 250,000 calls serviced year 1	PTO/Benefits/Work space per agent = \$11,000
Approx. cost of deployment = \$31,000	Annual cost of live agents = \$ 376,000
Cost per call = \$0.125	Cost per call = \$1.504

Summary

SpeechBridge's support of open standards, helped simplify integrating speech-automation into Applus+' existing IT network and communications solutions. This enabled Applus+ to leverage existing infrastructure investments and bring advanced customer self-service solutions to the State of Illinois' Environmental Protection Agency's vehicle emissions test program.

The Applus+ and Incendonet engineering teams worked together to design, develop, and deploy the customer self-service speech applications. Applus+ was able to perform queries for callers by connecting to its Oracle database with SpeechBridge's support of Web Services. The entire process from initial discussion to live customer deployment was completed in less than ten weeks.

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