fonolo

This Public Service Agency Slashed Abandonment Rates by 65% and Cut Hold Time in Half with Fonolo Call-Backs

OREGON PERS

Customer
Oregon Public Employees Retirement Service (PERS)

Industry
A public service agency administering state public employee benefits.

ROI
Lowered hold time by half

Decreased abandonment rates by 65%

Call Center Environment

- 16 retirement counselors (agents)
- 550-1300 calls per day
- 180,000 calls per year
- Cisco Finesse phone system

The Company

Oregon Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) has been delivering benefits to Oregon's public employees and their families since the 1940s. Safe to say, they know what it means to be reliable! Oregon PERS takes its core values of respect and dependability seriously as it educates members and delivers retirement benefits, health insurance for retirees, and a voluntary deferred compensation program. For this organization, customer service is key. So, when they noticed their members experiencing very long hold times while accessing customer service, they wanted to do better.

The Challenge

Oregon PERS' call center answers members' questions about their pensions, health care, legislation changes and other issues that can affect their benefits. They answer up to 1,300 calls per day, and over 180,000 calls each year.

Some volume spikes are predictable, explains Melissa Piezonka, Oregon PERS' Member Information Center Manager. Mondays are busy and so are post-holiday periods. Bigger spikes follow seasonal and scheduled annual events like an annual customer survey poll, a yearly pension expo, or tax season. Any new legislation that could impact pensions always triggers larger call volumes.

Another complicating factor is the length of calls can vary dramatically. Oregon has the second most complex pension program in the US, and client questions about disability benefits or changes in legislation can take time to answer.

"We might have a five-minute call, or a 45-minute call," says Melissa.

Volume spikes and unpredictably long calls were challenging for agents and frustrating for clients. Before adopting Fonolo's Voice Call-Backs, Melissa says the organization was suffering a call abandonment rate of 26%.

> "Our abandonment rate went way down, and our average wait time was cut in half. Literally, in half."

Melissa Piezonka
Member Information Center Manager at Oregon PERS

The Solution

Oregon PERS was looking for a solution to help smooth call volume spikes, reduce hold time and lower their high abandonment rate. The solution had to be compatible with their Cisco Finesse phone system.

Melissa says the organization was impressed with Fonolo after an initial 30-minute demo. A follow-up in-person meeting convinced them that Fonolo's Voice Call-Backs were the solution they were seeking.

Once the purchase was approved — an exacting and time-consuming process for public organizations like Oregon PERS — **Fonolo was installed, tested, and deployed in under one week**. Melissa says the installation was easy, and the tech support continues to be excellent. Oregon PERS quickly rolled out Fonolo to their entire team, and they haven't looked back.

"Fonolo is easy to work with and proactive in their support," says Melissa

The Results

Before Fonolo Call-Backs	After Fonolo Call-Backs
Abandonment Rate: **26%**	**Abandonment Rate:** **8.95%**
98.9% acceptance rate for call-backs offered.	
Saved 75,000 minutes of hold time in first 50 days.	

Oregon PERS deployed Fonolo's Voice Call-Backs in June 2019 and quickly saw the results they were looking for. Call abandonment rates dropped by 65 percent, and the organization saved 75,000 minutes of hold time for their customers in the first 50 days. The average wait time was cut in half.

Melissa says they use the data provided in the Fonolo Portal to track their success. It all adds up to a better customer experience: "Anytime we can make it a better experience for our customers, that's better for us", says Melissa.

The organization also takes satisfaction in knowing they are offering their customers an authentic solution—not just deferring their hold time until later.

"I've experienced other call-back systems where you request a call-back, they call you back, and then you sit on hold for another 20 minutes. But that's not what happens with Fonolo. The agent is on the line for the customer, which was another big selling point for us," says Melissa.

"Fonolo's Voice Call-Backs is great," says Melissa. "We are all proud to have it and offer it to our customers."