



Mercedes-Benz Financial Services UK Ltd Case Study

Mercedes-Benz Finance introduces agile
24/7 customer management using automated
payment option from Encoded

Mercedes-Benz Finance is the finance leasing company of Daimler Financial Services AG in the United Kingdom. Based in Milton Keynes, the organisation provides a full range of innovative finance and leasing packages as well as service products to both passenger car customers and the extensive Mercedes-Benz dealer network. Established in 1990, Mercedes-Benz Finance works closely with Mercedes-Benz UK Ltd which is responsible for the distribution and marketing of the company's prestigious, world-renowned luxury car brand throughout the country.



Mercedes-Benz





First for consumer choice and flexibility

In the last few years, Mercedes-Benz Finance has focused heavily on innovation, introducing a package of flexible payment options that are designed to help consumers in a tough economic climate without having to compromise on style or quality. These personal finance plans cover everything from no requirement for large deposits, fixed payments tailored to individual budgets as well as traditional hire purchase contracts offering payments at fixed interest rates over an agreed period of time.

According to Simon Lowings, Senior Manager Credit Risk Operations at Mercedes-Benz Financial Services UK Limited, "As the recession has taken a firmer grip over the past few years, our agile, flexible approach to customer management has become popular. We have seen our volume of business increase substantially. As a result, we've introduced smarter ways of working and new technology to support our commercial success. A major transformation follows our recent investment in the latest Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and automated payment solutions from Encoded to deliver the same great service to customers without the need for additional headcount."

Automation urgently required

Mercedes-Benz Finance employs a team of collections agents who take payments from customers and advise those who are in arrears or have repayment queries. The call centre is open from 8.30am until 7pm on weekdays and from 9am until 5pm on Saturday with around 50% of calls coming from customers wishing to make payments. Traditionally, collections agents dealt with taking routine payments from customers using their debit or credit cards this was a time-consuming process that prevented agents from proactively chasing late or non-paying customers. The whole process was very manual; follow-up with customers was either by letter or telephone and there was no facility allowing customers to make payments out of office hours. The time had come to overhaul the system and replace it with a fully automated end-to-end payment process that would significantly enhance the efficiency of the credit operations department and minimise the impact of outstanding debt on the company's bottom line.





Interactive Voice Response technology is critical

Speedy implementation and excellent project management skills were top priorities for Mercedes-Benz Finance when selecting a new solution and, after conducting a thorough review of the marketplace and short listing three vendors, Mercedes-Benz Finance named Encoded, specialists in Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and automated payments, as the company's supplier of choice.

Simon Lowings commented. "Encoded's clever technology has the power to authenticate the caller, inform them of their outstanding balance and accept full or part payment without the need for agent intervention. Our collections agents can now devote the majority of their time to the activities that matter most, quickly identifying problem areas and collecting monies in a timely way. This is good for agent morale, good for customer service and good for business."

Providing a secure, round-the-clock service, boosting productivity

Since deploying IVR automated payments from Encoded, Mercedes-Benz Finance has noticed a series of benefits not least a simple-to-use, 24-hour, 365-day service. Today, customers of Mercedes-Benz Finance can make payments at any time of the day, every day of the week without ever having to speaking to an agent. As one of a limited number of IVR providers in the country to achieve Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) compliance, customers of Mercedes-Benz Finance can also rest assured their data is securely protected at all times. When customers call in, the first option on the telephone menu is making a payment. After pressing one on their telephone keypad or mobile phone, customers are routed through to Encoded's autopay facility.

For Mercedes-Benz Finance, the introduction of Encoded's automated payment functionality has driven down the number of calls requiring agent assistance with around 30% of customer arrears payments now being made automatically and each requiring only 5 minutes to complete. Collections agents have the information at their fingertips to contact late or non payers quickly either by telephone or by SMS text message. This means agents can devote more time to non-payment related issues, saving time, money and improving customer service.

"Working with Encoded has been a very positive experience. From the start, the team knew exactly what we wanted and delivered on time and on budget."

Simon Lowings
Senior Manager
Credit Risk Operations
Mercedes-Benz
Financial Services UK Limited



Fast Facts:

- The Encoded project was implemented swiftly, on time and on budget
- Customers now have an easy to use, round-the-clock payment facility that is completely secure
- Collections agents can now do more with less without the need for additional headcount
- The number of calls requiring agent assistance have been driven down with around 30% of customer arrears payments now being made automatically and each requiring only 5 minutes to complete
- Agents have the information they need at their fingertips to contact late or non payers quickly either by telephone or by SMS text message
- Agent time has been freed up to devote to non-payment related issues, saving time, money and improving customer service

Building the perfect foundation for future success

Mercedes-Benz Finance has been particularly impressed by the exceptional level of support provided by Encoded, a sentiment backed up by Simon Lowings.

“Working with Encoded has been a very positive experience. From the start, the team knew exactly what we wanted and delivered on time and on budget. Superb project management capabilities and rapid response times guaranteed a well-executed and successful deployment. We now have an excellent technology framework that will put us in good stead for the future, helping us to boost our own productivity, deliver a continually great experience to our customers as well as capture new revenue-generating opportunities from a highly efficient credit operations department.”

Next on the horizon is attaining 100% customer self-service and automating other services such as settlement quotes. Mercedes-Benz Finance also plans to extend the use of Encoded, taking advantage of the system's advanced functionality to create a truly multi-channel communications environment. Simon and his team are considering making more use of SMS to contact customers reaching the end of current contracts and using IVR to conduct customer surveys quickly and efficiently in the future.

ENCODED
secure automated payments

Encoded Ltd
1 Stanley House Kelvin Way Crawley
West Sussex RH10 9SE United Kingdom

t 0845 120 9790
f 0870 830 1945
e sales@encoded.co.uk
www.encoded.co.uk



About Encoded

Encoded is a leading provider of interactive voice response solutions and automated payment solutions. All the company's services are designed to fulfil three key objectives:

- Reduce costs by automating business processes**
- Increase sales by offering new fulfilment channels**
- Improve customer service by maximising resource efficiency**

Encoded was established in 2001 to offer affordable, pay-as-you-go solutions to the growing telecommunications requirements of small and large businesses. Today, the company's software regularly supports 30 million customers and 10 million calls globally and automates £60 million of secure payments without operator intervention.

For more information please visit www.encoded.co.uk