When Customers Text, Everybody Wins

IMPOWER

impower.solutions ↗

In a world of messaging overload, where the chance of an email being opened is less than 1 in 3, IMPower enables any organization to communicate with customers through text messages or Facebook Messenger – now the preferred method for many generations. Built on Avaya OneCloud CPaaS, this versatile, massively scalable solution enables businesses from restaurants to NFL stadiums to open new revenue streams, increase conversion rates and enhance customer experiences.

Avaya Powers First-of-Its-Kind Customer Messaging from Impower Solutions

In a world of messaging overload, where the chance of an email being opened is less than 1 in 3, Impower enables any organization to communicate with customers through text messages or Facebook Messenger—now the preferred method for many generations. Built on Avaya OneCloud CPaaS, this versatile, massively scalable solution enables businesses from restaurants to NFL stadiums to open new revenue streams, increase conversion rates and enhance customer experiences.

"Customers prefer messaging to any other form of communication, so brands that want to create a great relationship with their customers and provide wonderful customer service are moving to texting," says Adi Bittan, co-founder and CEO of Impower Solutions. "It's also much cheaper and easier for businesses to handle texting and messaging than phone calls, emails or live chat. There's a win-win situation here."

A CPaaS That Scales

Adi Bittan and co-founder Oren Dobronsky conceived the idea for Impower Solutions while founding the now popular restaurant, Oren's Hummus Shop in Palo Alto. Dobronsky noticed that, while all his customers had smart phones, if they wanted to communicate with the restaurant they had to call or email. If customers could connect with businesses via text, they might get answers faster, buy sooner or resolve a complaint. Thus the two started Impower Solutions.

To enable digital communications between businesses and customers, Impower Solutions initially tried two cloud platform as a service (CPaaS) solutions. They were not as strong with respect to 'burstability'—the scale and speed to throttle up as needed.

"Before, when a business would sign up for our service we would have to provide them with a brand new, separate texting number, which meant they had to publish another number on all of their marketing materials and website," Bittan says.

Impower Solutions found a solution in Avaya OneCloud CPaaS with a development platform and APIs that allow businesses to communication- enable any application, workflow or business process. With Avaya OneCloud CPaaS, it's easy for developers and non-developers to use sophisticated application development capabilities. Plus, Avaya OneCloud CPaaS would enable IMpower Solutions to text-enable its clients' landlines.

CHALLENGES

- Many consumers– especially millennials (9 out 10) – prefer not to call a business, and email open rates hover around 30 percent

- When disgruntled customers vent online, those poor reviews can severely impact a business

- IMpower Solutions sought to text-enable landlines so that businesses would not need a separate number to receive messages

VALUE CREATED

- With more customers texting instead of calling, support costs drop and customer satisfaction scores soar

- IMpower Solutions and its clients discovered that conversions increase when customers can get answers via text prior to purchase

- AvayaOneCloudCPaaS provides all the critical messaging capabilities IMpower Solutions needs, and allows the company to scale

SOLUTION USED

- Avaya OneCloud CPaaS

In Avaya OneCloud CPaaS, Bittan saw a platform that met the company's needs now and as it grows.

"The Avaya OneCloud CPaaS platform was a natural choice for us because it enabled all the critical messaging capabilities we needed, and allowed us to scale up reliably and quickly, using the business's existing phone number. Plus, with a company like Avaya behind it, we felt confident in our choice."

Before rolling it out to customers, the team at Impower Solutions tested Avaya OneCloud CPaaS extensively to make sure it worked reliably at scale. Impower Solutions wanted to ensure that the platform would hold up if, say, 85,000 people in a single stadium an NFL team is a client) use it simultaneously. Likewise, on the business side, Impower Solutions verified that Avaya OneCloud CPaaS could scale to thousands of lines and users.

We met with the product head for Avaya OneCloud CPaaS, who explained how the technology could scale to serve millions of landlines," Bittan says. "And OneCloud passed all our tests."

To message businesses, end customers simply text the business' number, find the business on Facebook. No matter how the business chooses to respond or how many employees are involved in the conversation, Impower Solutions always delivers messages back to the customer wherever they started the conversation: text, app or Messenger.

Text-Enabling Existing Landlines—While Preserving Voice.

Impower Solutions has gone on to serve over 20,000 businesses, such as a leading Bay Area sports franchise, Better Business Bureau of Los Angeles & Silicon Valley, and the popular ecommerce business, Man Crates (one of the fastest-growing businesses in the U.S. in 2016).

> **The Avaya OneCloud CpaaS platform was a natural choice for us because it enabled all the critical messaging capabilities we needed, and allows us to scale up reliably and quickly.**
>
> — **Adi Bittan,** co-founder and CEO of Impower Solutions

"My mission is to text-enabled every business in America," says Bittan. "OneCloud positions me to move towards that goal."

"At first, I was skeptical, but now I'm a texting convert," comments James Stillian, Head of Customer Support at Man Crates. "Texting has been huge for our ability to scale. It's amazing for customers and agents love it too"

"We're able to tell clients, 'You don't have to change anything about your existing voice capabilities, or materials. All you have to do is tell customers you can actually now call or text us," Bittan says.

"They don't believe it at first, that they can receive texts on their landlines and nothing happens to their voice capabilities," she adds. "The first thing they do is text themselves."

Businesses can receive their messages through email, a web dashboard, their mobile phones or existing help desk software. Via the dashboard, they can configure who should receive messages, when and what level of permissions they have. Automated routing based on keywords ensures messages reach the most appropriate individuals, departments, systems, and even third party suppliers. During non-business hours, the business number Co-founded by restaurant owners and tech entrepreneurs Oren Dobronsky and Adi Bittan, Impower Solutions serves more than 20,000 businesses as of end of June across the country with direct, private and scalable messaging solutions.

https://impower.solutions kick back an auto-reply that someone will get back to the customer during normal business hours.

Higher Satisfaction Scores with Texting

This new line of communication has been particularly critical for brick- and-mortar businesses that must find new ways of engaging with customers both in the physical and the digital realms.

"In the online experience, it's harder to create the face-to-face interaction of the retail store," says Ari Tahover of Oh Nuts!, an IMpower Solutions client. "That is why we love having IMpower Solutions. Texting using the IMpower Solutions platform allows us to uphold an equal standard of care for both online and offline shoppers."

"This service has become invaluable for us," he adds. "I haven't found another method of communication that comes as close to a face-to-face exchange."

With "Chat-Bots," Agents Focus On Higher-Value Inquiries

With its NFL team client, Impower Solutions was faced with the need to handle an increasingly high volume of inquiries all coming in a concentrated window: before and during game day. Impower Solutions achieved this with the help of messaging chat bots, which partially automate the response process. Artificial intelligence (Ai) and natural language processing (NLP) technology identifies what the customer wants. Because 80 percent of inquiries are about the same issues, the IMpower Solutions solution recommends a reply for agents, who can simply hit "send."

"Agents love it," Bittan says. "They can spend more time creating value for customers. Everybody wins."

> **We're able to tell clients, 'You don't have to change anything about your existing voice capabilities, or materials. All you have to do is tell customers: 'you can actually now call or text us.**

— **Adi Bittan,** co-founder and CEO, Impower Solutions

The Impower Solutions team and clients have been pleasantly surprised that customer interactions go well beyond asking for support or providing feedback. Customers text with questions prior to purchase, creating opportunities for conversions and upsells. With more customers texting instead of calling, support costs drop as well.

In customer satisfaction surveys, Impower Solutions found that 75 percent of end customers who text a business using the service award their experience an 8 or higher. Fifty percent score it a perfect 10. "It's very hard to get customer service scores this high and texting is the way to do it," Bittan says.

For the NFL team, Impower Solutions effectively created what Bittan calls "concierge texting." Integrated with its CRM application, Impower Solutions recognizes and directs messages from VIPs to a specific team or account manager for a faster response. Satisfaction levels are through the roof.

The Untapped Potential of 'Almost-Conversions'

Impower Solutions and its clients discovered another unexpected outcome of enabling texting – increased conversions. When customers can get answers prior to purchase, they are more likely to buy. For some businesses, "almost-conversion" conversations constitute 35 percent of all messages.

"Businesses are most surprised by how many people want to be customers but are turned away by the phone hurdle," Bittan says. "If there's one more question before checkout or booking, they don't want to call. We're finding that messaging helps with these important almost- conversion moments."

As messaging only grows in popularity, Impower Solutions is well positioned for growth and trusts Avaya as a key business partner in its journey.

"Avaya has been really responsive in meeting our needs," Bittan says. "Having OneCloud CPaaS with Avaya in the background ensures that, as we go to bigger and bigger companies, they know we have a reliable backend."

About IMpower Solutions

Co-founded by restaurant owners and tech entrepreneurs Oren Dobronsky and Adi Bittan, Impower Solutions serves more than 20,000 businesses as of end of June across the country with direct, private and scalable messaging solutions.
https://impower.solutions

About Avaya

Businesses are built on the experiences they provide and every day millions of those experiences are built by Avaya (NYSE:AVYA). For over one hundred years, we've enabled organizations around the globe to win—by creating intelligent communications experiences for customers and employees. Avaya builds open, converged and innovative solutions to enhance and simplify communications and collaboration—in the cloud, on premise, or a hybrid of both. To grow your business, we're committed to innovation, partnership, and a relentless focus on what's next. We're the technology company you trust to help you deliver Experiences that Matter.

Visit us at www.avaya.com

AVAYA | Experiences That Matter