



CASE STUDY

COOPERS OF STORTFORD

Transforming order fulfilment through strategic outsourcing partnership with iContact BPO

After experiencing challenges with their initial outsourcing venture, Coopers of Stortford, a UK-based catalogue retailer, partnered with South African BPO provider iContactBPO in August 2024 to handle their orders fulfilment. The results have been transformative, delivering significant improvements in customer experience, operational efficiency, and business performance.

The Challenge

Coopers of Stortford faced multiple operational challenges that were impacting customer satisfaction and revenue:

- **Seasonal fluctuations**, requiring rapid scaling of staff during peak periods
- **High recruitment and retention costs** in the UK contact center industry
- **Inconsistent service quality** from previous remote-working outsourcing model
- **Poor technology integration** with dispersed agents in various geographic locations
- **Declining order conversion rates** and increasing product returns

"The crunch came when we audited our numbers and saw the direct impact of poor agent quality and the remote working environment – we simply were not converting the right number of order calls and we were losing revenue," explains **Emma Newman, Head of Customer Experience at Coopers of Stortford.**



The Solution

After a careful selection process, Coopers of Stortford engaged iContactBPO to handle their order fulfilment operations. The partnership began as a trial in August 2024 and quickly demonstrated remarkable divergence from their previous outsourcing experience.

"The change was like night and day," says Newman. "We loved the way iContactBPO worked – especially their processes and protocols to manage agent engagement, training, retention and quality assurance."

Key elements of the solution included:

- **Centralised contact center environment** with a collaborative team structure and a conducive work environment for agents
- **Seamless technology integration** with Coopers of Stortford's existing platforms
- **Flexible staffing model** to manage seasonal fluctuations without compromising quality
- **Shift from 'cost per call' to FTE model** prioritising value and skills over cost
- **Hands-on senior management** with direct access and involvement



Results and Benefits

The partnership with iContact BPO has delivered multiple benefits for Coopers of Stortford:

- **Improved customer experience** through higher agent engagement and empathy with customers of an older generation, who appreciate personalised interactions with agents.
- **Increased order conversion rates.**
- **Proactive problem-solving** made possible by agents committed to finding solutions and the sharing of on-the-job experiences to address challenges, from stock-outs to delivery challenges.
- **Enhanced quality assurance** through immediate in-situ feedback and intervention.

Newman highlights the agents' exceptional service ethic: "The engagement and empathy of the South African agents is something I have not experienced in my career before – it's next level. The training and development of agents is ongoing and there is constant motivation for agents to excel and go further and do more."

Key Success Factors

- **Formal Contact Center Environment** The centralized operation provides consistency, quality control, and collaborative learning that simply wasn't possible with remote workers. "We get the flexibility of the workforce our business needs, without having to compromise on quality," Newman explains.
- **Technology Integration** iContact BPO's technology-agnostic approach enabled seamless integration with Coopers of Stortford's platforms. "We resolve technology challenges collaboratively," says Newman, noting how issues that previously took days to resolve are now tackled in mere hours.
- **Managing Seasonal Fluctuations** The partnership successfully navigates the ebb and flow of seasonal demands, while maintaining consistent quality. Newman appreciates having "a partner that is willing and able to adapt to our evolving business needs, rather than enforcing a rigid playbook."
- **Agent Quality and Retention** Moving from a 'cost per call' to an FTE model has significantly improved quality. "There is no replacement for the consistency and quality that comes with having a skilled, trained agent that constantly learns on the job and then applies those learnings for service enhancement," says Newman.
- **Accessible Management** Direct access to iContact BPO's management team ensures quick resolution of issues and alignment on objectives. Newman values "a solid commitment of the team – from agent level to team leaders right through to the most senior leadership."

Coopers of Stortford's partnership with iContact BPO demonstrates the importance of looking beyond cost to find true value in outsourcing relationships.

As Newman concludes, "The right BPO provider not only brings cost savings but also insights, quality assurance, technology and processes, speed and efficiency. iContact BPO's hands-on senior management and skilled and trained agents deliver great customer experiences and repeat orders for our business."

The success of this partnership highlights how strategic outsourcing, when the right partner is in place, can transform business operations and drive sustainable growth.