

8x8

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Prominent retailer puts customer experience first, leading to record-breaking profits.

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Industry
Retail



Headquarters
Redditch, UK



8x8 Products:
8x8 Work and Contact Centre



Primary Reason Chose 8x8:
Need to create seamless interactions with customers – tying into unified communications for employees

Highlight Metrics

- 736 sites benefit from 8x8 solutions in just 6 weeks
- 4,000-plus extensions ported over
- 4,852 staff empowered with unified communications
- 765 colleagues equipped with state-of-the-art contact centre tools
- Retailer on track for record profits, despite economic downturn

Founded in 1892, Halfords is the UK's leading motoring and cycling business, providing services and products through its 444 stores, 367 garages, and 120 mobile motoring services vans. Recent acquisitions have allowed Halfords Group plc to expand the total number of its garages, trading under the name of Halfords Autocentres providing MOT tests, servicing, and repairs, as well as its mobile van motoring service. Halfords has seen steady growth amidst tougher trading conditions during the pandemic, with like for like increase in its cycling, e-mobility, and garage businesses as well as strong performances in its motoring business, despite the lockdown conditions.

The challenge: Improving customer experience

With the huge increase in customer contacts during the pandemic, Halfords has been working to ensure that it can provide customers with the best possible customer experience. The on-premises telephony system wasn't adaptable or scalable, and suffered issues.

"Customers would call a store but couldn't be transferred to another store location, Autocentre, or team. Instead, staff would have to provide a different phone number or pass along customer details to the appropriate colleague, asking them to phone customers back. In the meantime, queues would form at the counter. It was labor-intensive and frustrating for everyone," explains Gareth Brophy, Head of Customer Support at Halfords. Other legacy systems also made it difficult for Halfords to utilize metrics to track and improve the customer experience. However, teams from across Halfords joined forces to find a communications solution that met the needs of office staff as well as contact centre colleagues.

"It was a real group effort, involving our customer support, retail, Autocentre, IT, digital, and facilities teams," says Brophy. "We wanted to make it simple for customers to interact with us – and to see us as one brand. The solution had to be cloud-based, robust, and future proof." It was crucial for Halfords to have one phone number published on its new website for customer enquiries, with callers able to self-select the appropriate department.

The solution: Communications put customers in the driving seat

Halfords chose a comprehensive cloud communication platform provided by 8x8. This ties employee communication and the contact centre colleagues together – to enable users to deliver and monitor the customer experience throughout the organization.

Teams in Halfords' contact centre can now engage with customers using the tools that their customers want including voice, web chat, email, SMS, call-back, and social media, plus analytics. Support teams and other office workers will also benefit from improved abilities to get customers the right resources quickly. Administrators will be able to onboard new employees or change permissions with a few clicks on a web-based dashboard.

“Choosing 8x8 allowed us to adapt and provide thousands of colleagues with an integrated communication platform.”

Gareth Brophy, Head of Customer Support, Halfords

Additionally, Halfords will be using 8x8's platform to integrate third-party business apps like Salesforce, Teleopi, and PCI Pal to simplify usage and data monitoring. Halfords also used 8x8's Premium Plus Support to accelerate deployment and received educated management, and maintenance services. The 8x8 support team is also helping the company understand incoming data to gain insights that will inform next steps.

The roll-out happened rapidly and included the porting of over 4,000 extensions. Within six weeks, 8x8 was deployed at 736 sites, reaching speeds of 62 sites-per-day. Within eight weeks, nearly 200 contact centre colleagues were up and running. This increased to 765 by the end of 2020 – including a new team in South Africa – as the contact centre becomes even more pivotal to Halfords' success.

Gareth Brophy, Head of Customer Support, Halfords, said, “We needed to launch quickly and were very demanding, but 8x8 rose to the challenge. It was impressive.” There's more innovation ahead too, as Halfords explores WhatsApp and Facebook contact channels, as well as using its 8x8 platform to trial outbound sales for auto parts and services, providing colleagues with the ability to take secure payments over the phone. “With 8x8, we're now starting to allow customers to interact with us when they want, how they want, on the platform they want. For retail, that's the future,” says Brophy.

The results: Communications contribute to record-breaking profits

After a year of having the benefits of the 8x8 platform being realized, Halfords is on course for record-breaking profits. The 8x8 contact centre solution achieved immediate buy-in from colleagues, who became empowered to serve customers better, wherever they're working. Meanwhile, office staff relish being able to stay connected from anywhere with a single app for voice, video, and chat on their laptops and mobile phones. Customers can now reach virtually anyone in the business by calling just one number. 8x8's integration with Salesforce means customer details appeared instantly on colleagues' screens. Live web chat and the call-back service have reduced queuing and lost calls.

“I've seen the board turn from red to green,” says Brophy. “Calls are resolved faster and customers are getting a better experience, boosting our Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) and Net Promoter Scores.”

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For more information, call **0333 043 888** or visit **8x8.com**

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