

Evolving to a cloud-based, omnichannel contact center

- **Business needs** – The company wanted to enhance its customer service and increase call center efficiency.
- **Networking solution** – An array of services from AT&T Business improved agents' effectiveness and enabled them to better assist consumers.
- **Business value** – Expanded productivity, superior customer service
- **Industry focus** – Finance
- **Size** – Mid-sized company

About Power Finance Texas

Power Finance Texas was established in 1992 to offer responsible yet fast cash lending to consumers with less than perfect credit. The company offers online personal installment loans to meet customers' financial needs. A user-friendly website enables people to apply for a loan and receive the money in their bank account quickly, often the same day.

The situation

The company managed its own Private Branch Exchange (PBX) system and an older model dialer for automated customer calls. When steady growth forced Power Finance Texas to move to larger quarters, officials decided to investigate new and more efficient telephony support solutions to improve productivity and provide even better customer service.

Solution

The AT&T Cloud Contact Center platform helped Power Finance Texas transform its customer care operations. The platform combines robust contact center functionality with the AT&T global network and a powerful suite of voice and collaboration tools. The solution helped Power Finance Texas's efficiency and enhanced their already outstanding customer care.

Help with unexpected expenses

Many Americans are habitually cash-strapped. The pandemic has only made the situation worse. Nearly four in 10 Americans today say they would not be able to come up with \$1,000 in an emergency.¹ Power Finance Texas was founded to help people who need cash fast to cover an unexpected medical bill, home or car repair, or other pressing need.

“We’ve been in the short-term personal finance space for over 30 years,” according to Power Finance Texas Chief Information Officer, Jeremy Elkins. The company helps people who have less than perfect credit. Its application process is simple and convenient, and for more than a decade, customers have been able to use the internet to apply for a loan.

“When you go online and submit an application, you’ll get an answer right then and there,” Elkins said. “We don’t make you jump through a bunch of hoops. If you’re approved, we can get you the money today.” In one recent year, the company serviced over 135,000 loans.

Making it easy for people to submit applications has helped Power Finance Texas grow its business and eliminate its brick-and-mortar store model. “As times have changed, we’ve changed and we’re now completely online,” Elkins said. Customers who prefer to talk with a representative can call Power Finance Texas and speak with an agent who can answer their questions and help them apply for a loan.

Moving its loan management software to the cloud has helped streamline the company’s application process and improve the customer experience. The

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Chief Information Officer,
Power Finance Texas

cloud gives Power Finance Texas agents quick access to the data and tools they need to assist customers quickly. “Helping the customer needs to be fast,” Elkins said. “Our agents can’t wait five minutes for information to load.”

Simplified operations

Power Finance Texas has long counted on AT&T Business to provide vital support services. “I’m a one-man IT shop, so I do it all,” Elkins said. Using services from AT&T Business simplifies his work life. “It’s nice not to have to deal with so much on my plate.”

The company uses AT&T Dedicated Internet service for connectivity. “It’s stable and it works,” Elkins said. “If there’s ever a problem, AT&T Business is on top of it and calling before I know we’re down. It’s great.” AT&T Office@Hand provides voice, meetings, and collaboration services to the company’s corporate office. And SIP trunking with AT&T IP Flexible Reach lets staff easily route calls to any device.

¹ <https://www.bankrate.com/banking/savings/financial-security-january-2021/>

AT&T Business also helps Power Finance Texas protect its customers' sensitive information. It uses AT&T Secure Web Gateway, powered by Zscaler, a managed cloud service that can detect and block web-based threats, and AT&T Cybersecurity network vulnerability scanning to defend against ever-evolving dangers.

"When it comes to security, there are so many new threats every single day," Elkins said. "We like having that extra layer of security with AT&T Business watching, monitoring, and sending me notices if there's a problem or something I need to be aware of."

A forward-thinking approach to technology

Like most IT executives, Elkins likes exploring new technology to support company operations, but he doesn't add a solution until he's sure that it's stable. "That's important, especially for me, since I'm the person that has to fix anything that goes wrong," he said. "So, I need stability, but I do like to geek-out on the latest technology."

"We try to be forward-thinking and look where technology can take us and what technology can do for us," he said. "I wouldn't say we use technology just for the sake of technology, but when we see a benefit, cost savings or productivity increase, we will definitely embrace it."

Elkins had been looking for ways to improve the company's contact center phone system. He saw an opportunity to make the upgrade when continued growth led it to move to larger quarters. "We had been managing our own PBX for the last 10 years," he said. "We were outgrowing it and knew there were better products

out there." The strength of the relationship between Power Finance Texas and AT&T Business led Elkins to contact his AT&T account representative for advice.

Voice and collaboration tools in the cloud

The account representative from AT&T Business recommended the AT&T Cloud Contact Center platform. It combines robust functionality with the AT&T award-winning global network and a powerful suite of voice and collaboration tools. The AT&T Cloud Contact Center platform delivers highly reliable, agile, scalable, and highly secure capabilities.

The AT&T Cloud Contact Center platform has enhanced efficient customer service. "It helped us dramatically cut the time from when someone's been pre-approved on our landing page to the time that we call them," Elkins said. "It's less than 30 seconds, in most cases."

"The AT&T Cloud Contact Center solution has definitely made a huge productivity increase," he said. "I would be shocked if it hasn't doubled our employees' productivity, because they no longer have to wait for the information that they need to assist our customers."

Productivity and performance

The solution also helped Power Finance Texas save time in reaching out to current customers to remind them when a payment is due or deliver other messages. "We were able to automate some of the routine voicemails," he said. "When a person has to call and leave the same message up to 100 times in a day, it's very hard to sound chipper and nice," Elkins said.

Relieving employees of these routine tasks has enabled them to focus on interacting with customers, answering their questions, and assisting with the application process. Before the company started using the AT&T Cloud Contact Center platform, Elkins estimates that about 80% of customer interactions involved voicemail. “Now probably 90% of their interactions are with a person,” he said.

AT&T Business has also made it easier for Power Finance Texas to document performance and productivity. Because of the automation, customer care representatives may spend less time on the phone, but the time they spend with customers is more productive.

Finally, Elkins noted that AT&T helped Power Finance Texas lower its costs. “It was a no-brainer for us. We decided to add the platform in a heartbeat.”

Elkins gives credit to his account representative for recommending services from AT&T Business that are fit to Power Finance Texas’s needs. The rep keeps Elkins in the know on new solutions that might benefit the company. “I have a great rep who is very proactive,” Elkins said. “When he reaches out to me it’s not because he’s trying to sell me something, which is very nice. He’s just making sure that things are going well.”