

# Top Office Supply Retailer Saves 15% in Live Agent Costs with Improved Order Return Process

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RETAIL INDUSTRY

## Success by the Numbers



Call Finish Rate



Savings in Live Agent Costs



Average Call Time Decrease

Challenges	Solutions	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Calls too complex for simple IVR system</li><li>○ Poor call finish rates, contributing to caller frustration</li><li>○ Poor natural language understanding capabilities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Proactively communicated with customers to ensure all necessary information was confirmed</li><li>○ Better captured and processed consumer dialogue with 100% Natural Language throughout entire call</li><li>○ Collected customer feedback to improve future service quality</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 64% improvement in successful order returns</li><li>○ Cut order return call times in half – from 6 minutes with a live agent to 3 minutes with AI automation</li><li>○ Saved 15% in live agent costs</li></ul>

This retailer is a leading office supply brand that offers customers a selection of office and electronic goods and their related services at everyday low prices.

The brand began working with SmartAction to enhance their existing legacy IVR system with intelligent self-service capable of handling return processes independently. With dial-ins for both consumers and business partners, the solution needed to handle return orders of all types and complexities. The AI-powered solution from SmartAction contains product return calls so that live agents can focus on helping customers with other requests.

### Challenge

On top of managing over 2,200 retail stores, the business enjoys an online presence in over 40 countries. As consumers shift to online shopping for its convenience, the result is an influx of orders. Yet with 30% of online purchases ending up returned and 92% of consumers more likely to purchase again from a retailer if returns are easy, returns have become a critical aspect of ecommerce.<sup>1</sup>

The brand's traditional IVR system was outdated, only capable of basic data collection. It essentially served as a note taker for agents, processing and transcribing what callers were saying and submitting that information. Live agents would then be responsible for reaching out and completing the transactions. The automation was poor at processing details associated with order returns, and that resulted in only 16% of order return calls ending in success. Low success rates drove caller frustration and transfers without the necessary information to complete the return.

## Solution

Contrary to the high cost and ongoing expense of the traditional professional services model, SmartAction's cloud-based "AI-brain" was purpose-built for the contact center, with templates that support every industry and pre-built components that service hundreds of call types and chats from order management to roadside assistance. This made it quick and easy for this retailer to implement natural language understanding with zero professional services within an affordable, predictable usage pricing model. After customizing SmartAction's proprietary "AI-brain" to support this retailer's specific needs, they were able to introduce AI automation sooner than expected. Since every SmartAction solution includes a suite of services and benefits as part of the per-minute-usage, this retailer now has a dedicated team of CX experts that provided ongoing customization, tuning, and enhancements to the application for improved process and containment over time.

Working closely with the retailer, SmartAction delivered a product returns application within the span of six short weeks. Using 100% Natural Language Understanding allowed for improved capture of customer responses, which facilitated more accurate and effective communication.

The automation identifies and confirms the account associated with the return and proactively asks questions to determine which items are being sent back. Customers can speak conversationally as the system performs backend database calls to confirm which items are returnable. Once the return is confirmed and accepted, the intelligent solution triggers shipping labels and an order confirmation to be sent out via email.

Before hang up, the company wanted to close the call by recognizing the customer's "reason for return," in an effort to gain more insight on how to improve customer satisfaction with products in the future. The entire engagement is conversational, quick, and easy.

## Results

The office supply brand saw immediate impacts after launching the application. While finish rates prior to implementation were at 16%, order returns currently achieve an 80% success rate. Callers are no longer greeted by an inefficient voice self-service system, and that has significantly reduced frustration and boosted brand loyalty. This advanced contact center automation has reduced the need for transfers to live agents, and as a result, they are now better allocated.



Finish rates prior to SmartAction were at **16%**, and currently achieve an **80%** success rate.

By introducing AI to their customer experience, even for a narrowly scoped process like order returns, the office supplier has saved 15% on live agent costs, delivering strong ROI to the overall business.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.invespcro.com/blog/ecommerce-product-return-rate-statistics/>