

Damovo provides speech recognition system to Hertz European Service Centre in Ireland

- Multi-lingual solution will handle 100,000 telephone calls in first year
- Automated speech recognition delivers more flexibility and better service to customers
- Enables reservations agents to spend more time on sales calls and generate additional revenues

Dublin, 13 November 2008 – Damovo, the business communications provider, today announced the implementation of an advanced speech recognition system for Hertz at its European Service Centre in Swords, Co. Dublin. The intelligent customised solution is expected to handle more than 100,000 telephone calls in the first year alone. With multi-lingual ‘virtual agents’ responding to routine customer enquiries, Hertz is improving its offering to both customers and employees, while driving down costs.

Hertz is the world’s leading general use car rental brand with more than 8,100 locations in 147 countries. In 1996, Hertz opened a European Service Centre (HESC) in Dublin to manage customer bookings from across Europe. It now employs 1,100 people from 30 different nationalities in a vibrant, multi-cultural environment. Most employees work as reservations agents and currently answer more than 5 million customer calls per year. As many of these calls are simple and routine enquiries, Hertz went to market for an automated self-service application to reduce waiting times, increase sales and offer more flexibility to customers.

Based on its track record deploying major high-quality, speech-enabled applications in Ireland, Damovo won a seven figure contract to provide an automated speech recognition system for the HESC. Damovo designed a customised self-service solution that answers all routine enquiries from customers. This includes branch information and requests to check, modify or cancel a booking. Customers simply speak to a virtual agent, which identifies the individual reservation, makes changes if required and repeats the information to customers for confirmation.

The multi-lingual solution has been rolled-out to some of the Hertz Europe's largest markets, including the UK, Germany and France. Feedback from customers has been overwhelmingly positive with ease-of-use, 24/7 availability and reduced call times all adding to the customer experience. From an employee perspective, agents have become more motivated and productive, with added time to focus on revenue-generating calls. In turn, Hertz is benefitting from increasing revenues, lower costs and better resource management – particularly when managing spikes in call volumes at Christmas and during the summer months when the car rental market peaks in Europe.

Damovo's solution is based on open architecture and integrates fully with the HESC's contact centre telephony system and its global corporate database. It has incorporated software from Nuance Communications, the global leader in speech recognition applications. Damovo also provides round-the-clock support.

Teresa Purtill, Director of European Reservations and Customer Services, Hertz, said, "As the first point of contact for tens of thousands of customers across Europe, our reservations centre in Dublin plays a crucial role for Hertz. Our priority is to provide the highest levels of service and availability to our customers and this solution allows us to offer a more effective and convenient service. Our reservation agents are also happier as they have more time to focus on customer sales calls. Damovo's understanding of complex contact centre environments has led to the implementation of a sophisticated speech recognition system that makes our customer service operation more effective, while improving the overall customer experience."

John McCabe, managing director, Damovo, said, "Hertz has always been a leading choice in the highly-competitive car rental market. It has sustained popularity and growth by offering customers a fast and flexible service. This highly-intuitive system uses natural language to offer self-service options to an increasingly mobile and time-conscious customer base. We are pleased to be involved in another exciting project that pushes automated speech technology further into the mainstream."

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About Damovo

Damovo designs, implements, supports and manages business communications. Its range of end-to-end communications solutions and services improve the way organisations work by connecting them with their people, information and clients. Damovo has 30 years' experience in delivering data, mobility and voice solutions, and long-standing relationships with some of the leading vendors in this market, such as Ericsson, Cisco, and Nortel. This heritage enables Damovo to provide organisations with the best communications solution for their requirements, while guiding them from consultancy and design, through to implementation, support and education.

Damovo operates in 10 countries worldwide and employs over 1500 people. Its clients in Ireland include: CIE, ESB, AIB, Irish Life and Permanent, Hibernian Insurance, Dublin Institute of Technology, Trinity College Dublin, HSE, University of Ulster, Enterprise Northern Ireland and First Trust. For more information visit www.damovo.ie

About Hertz Europe

Hertz is the world's largest general use car rental company, operating from over 8,100 corporate locations in 147 countries. In 2008 Hertz celebrates its 90th year of delivering quality car rental solutions to leisure and corporate customers.

Product and service innovations such as Hertz #1 Club Gold, specially designed NeverLost satellite navigation systems, Hertz in-car DVD Entertainment and unique cars offered through the company's Prestige, Fun and Green Collections, set Hertz apart from the competition.

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