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## ScS Group

Transforming online sales for  
one of the UK's largest furniture  
and flooring retailers

Case study



**Region:**  
UK

**Sector:**  
Retail

**Product/Solution:**  
imiengage for inbound and outbound call management, IVR, and web chat.

# Deflecting 1,500 calls a day – keeping up with the pace of digital change

Founded in the 1890s as a family-owned business in the North East of England, ScS built its reputation on providing outstanding value for money and an excellent customer experience. Today, ScS Group is one of the UK's largest furniture and flooring retailers. It's grown to become a listed company with more than 100 stores nationwide, offering quality and choice across an extensive range of made-to-order upholstered furniture, carpets, and flooring.

"Our customers appreciate our handmade products, rigorous quality control, and exceptional value" says **Dan Bennett, Head of Online Sales at ScS Group**. "We're a listed company with a family feel, and it's important to us that every customer gets the best possible experience."

As customers have become more willing to buy big-ticket items online, digital sales at ScS have grown fast. But, one of Dan's biggest challenges when he joined ScS was that the company's processes and tools hadn't kept up with the pace of digital change.



## About ScS Group:

ScS Group is one of the UK's largest furniture and flooring retailers. It's grown to become a listed company with more than 100 stores nationwide, offering quality and choice across an extensive range of made-to-order upholstered furniture, carpets, and flooring.



## Challenges:

Tools hadn't kept up with the pace of digital change. Manual processes were impeding productivity. Inbound and outbound customer contact was treated separately.



## Objectives:

Integrate and automate a multichannel customer contact approach to support sales growth that encompassed IVR, SMS, email, and web chat.

# Business challenge

## Breaking down the barriers to sales growth

When a customer places an order on the ScS website, they don't pay for the item online. The customer provides contact details, and a member of the Online Sales team gets in touch to confirm the order, arrange finance, and discuss lead times and delivery.

"What that means is that unless we speak to the customer, we haven't really got an order," explains Dan. "It's a very manual process that was impeding productivity. Our inbound and outbound customer contact tactics were treated as separate entities, and we lost more productivity with people switching between them. Plus, it was very difficult for me to have full management oversight or do effective resource planning."

Of course, not every customer picks up the phone when ScS calls to confirm their order. So, contact center staff were sending follow-up emails and SMS messages they'd written themselves.

"I had no visibility or control over who was sending what, when they were sending it, or what the messages said," says Dan. "We needed a way to integrate and automate a multichannel approach to sales that encompassed calls, SMS, email, and web chat."

Dan knew he needed tools that would help ensure every lead had an appropriate and timely follow-up, and give him the ability to manage the contact center team in real time. And, having seen in a previous role what could be achieved with **imiengage**, Dan knew exactly where to find the right support.



# Solution

## Transforming the contact center with integration and automation

With **imiengage**, the new customer contact management platform, ScS has automated the outbound dialing process, so the company could control which customers get a call, when they're called, and how frequently. It's also blended inbound and outbound contact so that every member of the Online Sales team handles a fair mix of both.

Integration of other contact channels has also helped improve contact center efficiency and customer experience. ScS has now automated branded SMS and email follow-ups, with approved content and copy, that give customers a consistent look and feel throughout their buying journey. Multichannel integration has also allowed ScS to test voice, SMS, and email contact strategies to learn which combinations and timings get the best response rates.

The integration of web chat on the platform also helps ScS provide seamless experiences for its online customers. If customers using web chat decide to make a purchase, ScS can transfer the chat transcript to an outbound queue, so the salesperson who calls has full visibility of the conversation and can pick up where the chat agent left off.

“I now have oversight of what my people are doing. I can also see where my inbound call demand is, so I can resource effectively.”

Dan Bennett, Head of Online Sales at ScS Group

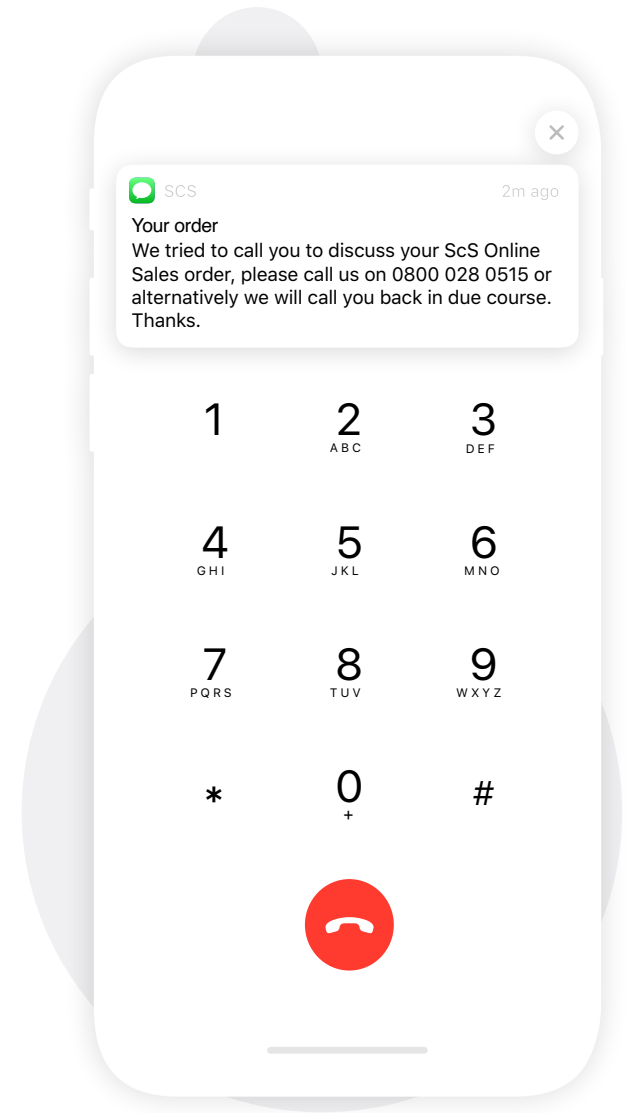
# Business impact

As part of the **imiengage** deployment, ScS also implemented an IVR to help deflect inbound service calls from its sales people. “Our sales phone number is front and center on the website, but we have a lot of existing customers who have service or delivery queries who phone that number,” says Dan. “Now, we can route customers to the right place – that’s deflecting around 1,500 calls a day, so my team can focus on handling the 600 to 1,000 daily sales calls that we get.”

In a hyper-competitive retail landscape, rapid implementation of the platform was also important for ScS. “**imiengage** was ready to be deployed within five weeks of signing the contract, but we delayed deployment for a few weeks until after our winter sale, when we could focus properly on doing rigorous UAT,” says Dan.

One month after ScS deployed its new customer contact platform using **imiengage**, the UK went into its first COVID-19 lockdown, and Dan’s entire team switched to working from home. “Obviously, we had to shut all of our branches during the lockdown, but there was zero business disruption for my team. In fact, we saw a massive increase in online sales as customers were spending more time in their homes,” he says.

“We were able to transition to working from home with very little effort. It’s actually been great for us, so we probably won’t insist on people coming back to the office full-time – using **imiengage** enables me to handle that flexible and remote working very easily.”



# Results

## Dramatic sales growth – and a high-productivity team

Coping with the huge increase in sales during the pandemic has been a lot easier for Dan's team with **imiengage**. "We could never have handled the level of growth we've seen without **imimobile**," he says. "It has enabled me to serve 175% more business while only growing contact center staff by 25%."

With blended inbound and outbound voice channels, automated SMS and email, and full, real-time visibility of contact center operations, the Online Sales team's productivity took a giant leap forward.

"I've got the right level of MI and the ability to resource-plan properly, we've optimised our inbound and outbound channels, and automated multichannel sales workflows," says Dan. "All of those things combined gave me a 20% uplift in productivity, pretty much overnight."

ScS chose to implement **imiengage** on-premises, and the results it's achieved have more than outweighed the initial cost. "Without factoring in the uplift in productivity or the increase in sales we saw as a result of having the solution, it already had a 48-month payback period on the CapEx," says Dan. "As it turned out, once it went live, we saw a 5% uplift in sales almost immediately because we were engaging with more customers. Deploying **imiengage** probably paid for itself in the space of about 10 days."

But Dan and the ScS team aren't resting on their laurels. They're already looking at ways to work with **imimobile** to automate more processes or eliminate unnecessary ones – in Online Sales and across other customer-facing departments too.





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