

## sundance

### Overview

Headquarters: Salt Lake City, Utah

Industry: Retail

Contact Center: In-house

Website: [www.sundancecatalog.com](http://www.sundancecatalog.com)

### Customer Profile

Famed actor, director and visionary of independent filmmaking, Robert Redford founded Sundance in 1969 to promote the works of artists and craftspeople. The Sundance Catalog's eclectic mix of clothing, jewelry, accessories, and home decor are predominantly exclusive and offered through its catalogs, website, retail stores, and an outlet store.

### Business Situation

With a growing number of customers placing orders on its website and limited headcount, the Sundance contact center struggled with providing efficient and cost-effective support to web shoppers.

### Solution

- InstantService live chat
- InstantService email management solution

### Benefits

- Reduces costly phone support
- Handles more customer inquiries, faster
- Provides productivity tools for agents
- Offers enterprise-grade uptime

## Sundance Catalog Handles 200% Increase in Chat & Email Volume with InstantService

“We are extremely confident in the InstantService solution. Every day we rely on it to answer our customers’ questions and increase their satisfaction with the Sundance brand.”

Tim Taggart, Director of Customer Service and Fulfillment at Sundance

*A pioneer in multichannel retailing, Sundance Catalog has been offering its customers online, text-based support for nearly 10 years. Since 2005, Sundance has seen the volume of live chat requests double and email requests increase four-fold. By using the productivity tools built into the InstantService chat and email solution, the retailer has been able to handle those requests with the same number of agents, controlling costs while delivering a consistent and high-quality customer experience.*

### Business Needs

Forty years ago, Robert Redford purchased land at the base of beautiful 12,000-foot Mount Timpanogos in Utah's Wasatch Mountains. With its natural beauty of giant pines and aspen trees, streams and wildflowers, the Sundance Village emerged.

At the base of the Village was a tiny store which guests would frequently contact, requesting special items they had seen while visiting Sundance—clothing, artisan jewelry, home furnishings and more.

Over the next 20 years, requests for the store's unique offerings grew considerably. As a result, Robert Redford called together a few of his colleagues to discuss starting a mail-order catalog to fill these requests and to make Sundance's unique items available to a wider audience.

The first Sundance Catalog mailed in 1989 and six years later, the company launched its web presence to an ever-growing number of fiercely loyal customers.

Today, 60 agents (100 during the holidays), based in the company's centralized contact center in Salt Lake City, handle inbound phone-based customer inquiries and sales orders.

"Our goal has always been to provide a high-touch, personalized service experience to our customers," says Tim Taggart, director of customer service and fulfillment at Sundance. "With more and more customers shopping online, we needed to offer convenient, alternative options for them to ask questions – options that didn't jeopardize our service levels and increase our phone volume."

Offering text-based support was a natural extension to Sundance's service offering and multichannel strategy. "Like most catalogers, we run a fairly lean operation," adds Taggart. "We look to technology to help us be more efficient and keep our costs in check."

## Solution

Sundance selected InstantService's live chat and email management solution in 2000. After it first deployed the solution, the company saw most shoppers gravitate to email to ask questions. As the confidence and satisfaction grew with email, so did the usage of chat for those "got-to-know-now shopping questions," states Taggart.

The new text channels have continued to grow in adoption. In 2008, the company racked up nearly 45,000 chat interactions and over 30,000 email conversations, indicating a more than 200 percent increase in the last five years.

"We've learned that customers are more likely to use chat to ask pre-sales questions... questions about the products, the fit, the fabric, sizing, and so on," explains Taggart. "They turn to email for more post-sales inquiries, questions about their order."

Shoppers also appreciate the anonymity of chat, according to Taggart. "Customers may not be comfortable asking certain types of questions on the phone, about perhaps discounts or returns, but chat makes the interaction easier...less emotional."

## Benefits

With InstantService's unified console dashboard, which combines both chat and email, agents see all incoming requests and are automatically assigned interactions as they come in.

### Handle more customers, faster

"With the phone, agents can only handle one call at a time," Taggart explains. "With chat and email, one agent can interact with three different customers about three different requests. Our agents love the ability to multi-task and service more customers quickly."

Sundance has set high standards for response times. Its typical response rate for chat inquiries is within seconds and a couple hours for an email inquiry, which they are able to meet even in the busy holiday season.

Contributing to these speedy responses is the shared knowledgebase included in the InstantService console. This enables service representatives to pull standard responses to questions and then personalize and tailor them to the individual request. "This saves our agents a great deal of time and allows us to maintain personal connections with our customers."

### Reduce costly phone support

While phone-based support still represents the majority of the customer interactions, it has decreased overall as the adoption of text-based tools has grown.

"The big news for us is that we've done all of this without increasing headcount," Taggart adds.

## Looking forward

A veteran of the contact center, Taggart is impressed by the performance of the InstantService product. "I've looked at other chat and email solutions in the market," he adds. "Unlike many other web technologies, I have complete confidence in InstantService's solution and uptime performance. It's solid – like a phone switch. It just doesn't falter."

"The InstantService team is also impressive, and we look forward to uncovering even more best practices with them in the future."

## InstantService, Inc.

InstantService, Inc. is a leading SaaS provider of customer communication technologies for online businesses and contact centers. InstantService offers an integrated suite of live chat, email management, knowledge base, web site analytics and lead capture solutions to increase sales and enhance customer service. InstantService's hosted software application easily integrates with existing ecommerce and CRM systems, facilitating valuable relationships between companies and their customers - the first step of customer relationship management.

To learn more about InstantService, visit <http://www.instant-service.com> to chat with a representative.

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