



» ista Deutschland GmbH:  
Call Center Solution  
for 19 Branch Offices «

**Open Communications references**

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## » Summary «

ista is the world's leading company providing usage-based billing for energy and water. In addition to the strong home market in Germany, with its headquarters in Essen and 19 branch offices throughout the country, ista is also represented in 23 other countries, including the USA, Russia and China. In total, ista has over 1,400 permanent employees in Germany. The focal point for all IT topics is Münster.

### The task:

- Implementation of a call center solution at all 19 German branch offices to optimize schedule administration for reading the heating meters.

### The solution:

- HiPath 3800 and HiPath 4000
- "HiPath-Ready"-certified contact center software agenTel, including the flexible voice portal solution Axxium from the Siemens Advanced Partner Voxtron

- Modular and scalable product that has open interfaces for integration of CRM and ERP systems, databases, as well as front-end and back-end servers
- Training of administrators and other personnel

### The benefits:

- Central administration of the HiPath systems
- Billing per active, logged-on user
- Simple operation and very low training effort for the administrators
- Management of the system through trained ista personnel
- Central overview in Münster of employee capacity utilization in all 19 branch offices
- Connection to the right contact in under one minute
- Option for connection of the software to the existing SAP systems

» "We assume that our customers will be just as satisfied with the new solution as we are."

Gunnar Reinboth  
Department Head IT Services  
ista Deutschland GmbH

[www.ista.de](http://www.ista.de)



# » A new date for reading the heating meter – in less than one minute! «

ista is the world's leading company providing usage-based billing for energy and water and offers building managers, building owners, and energy utilities a range of services, such as delivery and installation of measurement equipment, recording of consumption, and usage-based billing. In addition to the strong home market in Germany, ista is represented in 23 other countries. Worldwide the company had sales of 489.9 million euros in 2005.

Nineteen branch offices throughout Germany report to headquarters in Essen. ista Germany has a total of more than 1,400 employees. The focal point for all IT topics is Münster.

## **Optimized communication in customer contact**

"Reading meters for power and water is a very seasonal business," explains Gunnar Reinboth, Department Head, IT Services at ista in Münster. "Since the deadline day for reading heating meters in Germany is December 31, we have the highest number of calls from December through February." For example, when tenants who have been informed by postcard in advance of an impending meter reading are unable to make the scheduled appointment, they call their regional ista branch. All these calls used to go to the main switchboard of the branch offices. Of course, the employees there could only handle one caller at a time," recalls Reinboth. "And we didn't have any overview of how many calls were coming in and how many were being lost, for example, because the number was busy," explains the IT boss. On average, ista Germany receives 200,000 calls a month. In the peak period from December to February, it is quite a bit more.

When the leasing contracts for 18 Hicom 150 systems ran out across Germany, and a Hicom 300 ran out in Münster, the time was right for implementation of a new communications solution. In July 2005 Reinboth and his team issued a request for quote in which four telecommunications providers participated. Among other things, it encompassed a call center solution designed to get the existing calling problem under control.

"Siemens and Voxtron simply offered us the best price/performance ratio," says Gunnar Reinboth. "In addition, we had already had good experience with Siemens and its technology partner for a similar solution at our Duisburg site." The decision went to 18 HiPath 3800's and one HiPath 4000, which could be administered from a central location, as well as the "HiPath-Ready"-certified contact center software agenTel from the Siemens Advanced Partner Voxtron.

## **The modular call center solution from Voxtron**

The contact center suite agenTel implemented at ista is a modular and scalable product that had open interfaces for integration of CRM and ERP systems, databases, as well as front-end and back-end servers. CTI functions increase workplace productivity.

In addition, for ista, Voxtron used the flexible voice portal solution Axxium, which is contained in the contact center software agenTel. Its special feature is the Interactive Voice Response, which forwards calls through voice announcement or DTMF dial. The voice portal also makes it possible to access databases, in order, for example, to check customer numbers, read meter readings aloud or prepare statistics. The agent software offers Outlook integration and CTI functions. "There are also plans to connect the software to the existing SAP systems in the year 2008," says Reinboth.

## **Billing per user and the simplest operation**

The call center solution from Voxtron provides billing per active, logged-on user. For the 1,200 agents at ista who are not always present, this is an extremely cost-effective model. "If an employee does not answer after the fifth ring, the system automatically logs that person out," explains the IT boss. Operation for the agents is as simple as possible, and very little training is required for the administrators.

For the central administration of the HiPath systems and the agenTel contact center, three IT specialists at ista were trained by Siemens and Voxtron trainers. One clear advantage for ista: "Now we have the entire management of the system in our own hands, from name changes after marriage to system functions such as group connections or call pick-up," explains Reinboth.

## **Better accessibility increases customer satisfaction.**

Based on a customer survey prior to implementation of the new solution, one thing was certain: The ista customers do not want an automated voice system, but rather to reach an employee personally as soon as possible. The goal is to always reach the right contact person in under a minute. We are already reaching this goal in 95 percent of all cases," says the ista IT boss happily. Another advantage of the new solution: "In Münster we have a central overview of the capacity utilization of employees at all 19 German branch offices." A survey in the fall is designed to show how well ista customers like the increased accessibility. "We assume that our customers will be at least as satisfied with the new solution as we are," says the ista IT boss.

