

Snowgum Travel & Adventurewear Transforms Customer Service Capabilities with RiseXperience and Amazon Connect

Executive Summary

Snowgum Travel & Adventurewear is the premier and only privately-owned Australian adventurewear brand in the market, established in 1926. Like many other businesses and retailers during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on the state of Victoria in Australia, Snowgum faced unique challenges to remain in operation. They had to keep their people working, move solely to online sales and fulfilment, and keep up with the dynamic needs of customers during this time.

After evaluating the market for small-business enablement technology providers, Snowgum decided to implement RiseXperience – an on-demand, digital omni-channel CX solution built on Amazon Connect.

Within a month, Snowgum transformed its customer experience (CX) operations by leveraging AWS cloud CX technology, allowing its team to work from home and service customers via digital channels previously untenable. With RiseXperience, Snowgum was able to extend its reporting, service, marketing and engagement capabilities; provide an unparalleled service experience for its long-time customer base; and keep up with unprecedented online demand.

About Snowgum Travel & Adventurewear

Snowgum Travel & Adventurewear has been established in Australia since 1926, and is the country's premier travel and adventurewear brand. A homegrown and well-known brand name in the adventure apparel market, Snowgum prides itself on creating and producing the majority of its inventory from conception to store-ready stock, sourcing their own fabrics and gear components in their own original designs.

100% Australian and family-owned and servicing customers all around the world, an obsession with customer satisfaction is one of Snowgum's core values. They differentiate themselves with a focus on quality and fit, and back every item in their range with a robust 'money-back' guarantee.

Background

Apparel retailers have in recent times been highly disrupted by a myriad of societal and economic trends and events. The rise of digital platforms has changed the retail landscape, and now more than ever, companies are taking new approaches to cutting costs and driving profitable growth. Snowgum Travel & Adventurewear, a homegrown and well-known Australian brand name, has itself experienced the effects of this, pivoting to selling their gear online in 2013 as a result.

About Snowgum Travel & Adventurewear:



Snowgum is Australia's premier online travel and adventurewear brand, having been founded in 1926.

100% Australian and family-owned, Snowgum creates and produces most of its inventory from conception to ready stock, sourcing their own fabrics and components in original designs.

Snowgum prides itself on stellar customer service as well as quality and fit in its products, backing every item ranged with a robust 'money-back' guarantee.

Earlier in 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, strict lockdown laws were enforced in Victoria, Australia – some of the toughest and longest civil restrictions in the world. The Victorian retail industry was further devastated by this move, with the large majority of brick and mortar business premises being shut down for an indefinite period, lasting more than six months.

Customer Challenges

Snowgum entered an urgent and unprecedented period once the Victorian lockdown restrictions were announced to stay in business. Within just a few weeks, they needed to figure out how to move their sales 100% online, communicate this to their customers, help their staff keep working, and continue to provide the personalised customer service and support the brand is known for.

“We had no idea what we were in for, and the information being cascaded down from the government was changing by the day.”, says Ross Elliott – Managing Director and Owner of Snowgum. “We were most concerned at that point about how we were going to keep our people in jobs. We didn’t have any planning time – we just got told the store needed to close.”

Initially, Snowgum’s customer service setup consisted of two landlines – one for their retail store in Oakleigh, Victoria, and one at their warehouse and online fulfilment centre in Epping. If customers needing assistance called while a line was engaged, they’d simply get an engaged tone and need to try again later.

Further, whilst having a functional e-commerce website, Snowgum’s service channels on the web was limited. There was no capability on their website to offer LiveChat/Leave a Message services, nor a way in-house for them to efficiently manage emails within their incumbent systems.

Even with a custom-built CRM in place, the customer calls that did get through to a staff member would take a lot of time to resolve, as customer service agents needed to manually look up customer details within their CRM to troubleshoot order-related issues or pull up their Snowgum engagement history.

“With sales moving completely online, and with a surprisingly large percentage of our customer base being net-illiterate, we had to change things fast. We had hundreds of orders per day, so we knew we’d be getting a bunch more calls than before, a bunch more requests for assistance, and we were not ready,” says Elliott. “We needed something which could change this for us, and change it quickly.”

Key Considerations

As a family-owned, small-medium enterprise (SME), cost-effectiveness and value were always key factors in Snowgum’s evaluation of technology solutions. Previous research on solution options and costings from cloud contact centre market leaders had indicated a high upfront cost and fixed monthly licence fee-model was industry standard.

Amazon Connect’s revolutionary consumption-based pricing model was therefore a standout feature of the RiseXperience platform, where paying only for the number of logged-in minutes the Snowgum team would use, proved financially compelling for a lean customer operations team.

Further, agility was paramount characteristic desired from both a service provider and a solution. The government-mandated deadlines for lockdown imposed on businesses across the state was non-negotiable, whether owners and managers had had sufficient time or resources to prepare for this or not. Having never previously engaged a cloud technology system integrator or managed service, Snowgum required the space to ideate, pivot and modify a solution during the project delivery process itself, to fit their rapidly evolving requirements and unpredictable needs.

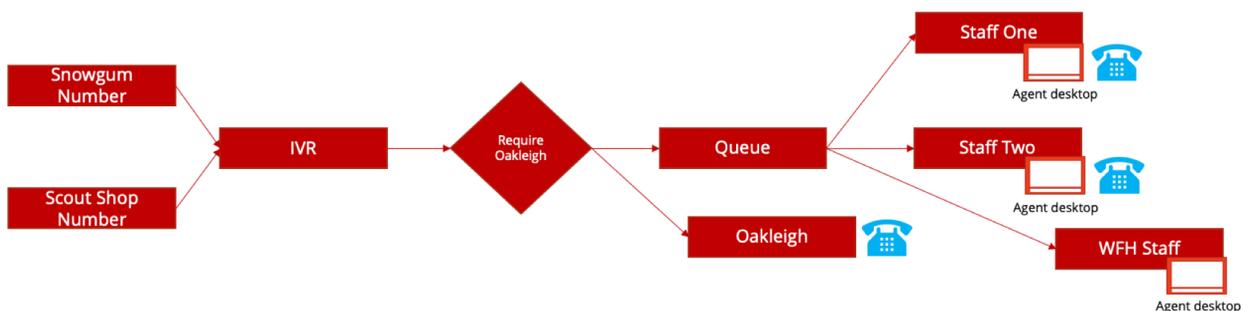
RiseXperience as the Solution

After carrying out in-depth analysis into Snowgum's CX needs both current and future-state, Rise.CX implemented RiseXperience: an end-to-end, digital cloud contact centre for Snowgum based on Amazon Connect. The solution comprised eight modules, including Voice; Webchat; Email Routing; IVR; Voicemail; CRM integration; Reporting & Analytics; and Amazon API Integration.

Snowgum's RiseXperience implementation included support for up to 10 agents based across Victoria, and enabled staff to work both onsite as well as from home through the COVID-19 lockdown – something they had never been able to do before. The project also involved integration into Snowgum's bespoke Stamina CRM, providing agents with screen-pops and on-demand historical customer information, such as previous order history and details. The RiseXperience Omni-channel solution option also provided fully-enabled voice, email routing and webchat components, giving Snowgum a complete, future-proof CX solution.

Voice features included standard call recording, agent-controlled pause/resume, call transfer/supervision and voicemail, and Rise.CX also co-developed an Amazon Lambda integration to custom REST API, working closely alongside CRM provider Stamina.

From inception to Go-Live, RiseXperience for Snowgum was delivered in a little over four weeks, coinciding with the hard deadline for all business premises to close in Victoria until further notice.



Results and Customer Success

Through its powerful reporting and analytics tools, the RiseXperience platform provided Snowgum a view of their business's CX performance they never had before, including metrics such as call length, hold times and abandonment rates.

Within a month of the Snowgum team using RiseXperience, the company has reported a ~20% reduction in time taken to resolve phone calls received, as well as daily occurrences of issue resolution they previously would not have been able to capture.

In supporting a lean operations team, Snowgum now has the ability to follow up on customer contact where this data was previously lost in unsuccessful connections and abandonments. This has meant that customers who would previously have abandoned carts due to a lack of readily available customer assistance have now been able to receive focused attention from Ross and his team, resulting in new sales and converted customers.

Direct integration into the in-house Stamina CRM also means the Snowgum team instantly sees a customer's data record pop-up upon receiving a call, allowing them to shorten engagement time and even provide informed upselling opportunities for current or previous customers. Agents can now also transfer call or customer record information to each other as needed during case management and redirection.

By supplying industry best practice contact functionality such as an end-to-end IVR and call routing, as well as voicemail enablement, Snowgum's customer contact experience was uplifted and able to support approximately five times the number of calls it was able to previously, and is currently consistently receiving great customer feedback.

Working with Rise.CX

"The experience from beginning till the end of the project with the Rise team was awesome. The team was very experienced and knowledgeable, but friendly and patient as well – super important in dealing with someone like myself!", Ross jokes.

The Rise.CX and Snowgum team worked closely together from solution analysis and design right through build, testing and then supporting Go-Live. From the outset, the Rise team took a deep-dive into Snowgum's current business and operational ecosystem, providing recommendations and designing with a lens towards a future-state that went beyond the initial implementation.

During build, Rise's Agile delivery approach allowed for short feedback loops, direct customer inputs and agile UAT during the RiseXperience configuration process, allowing agile runtime adjustments to be made throughout the engagement. This provided Snowgum clear visibility of the detailed solution and delivery process, enabling a seamless transition through to the business team when Go-Live day came around.

Conclusion

"RiseXperience has enabled us to do so much, in such little time. We've been able to support and follow up on every case of customer contact, convert and generate new sales, review a customer's history sometimes even without them realizing they were a previous customer, and overall provide the appropriate level of service and the ability to design the right customer experience journeys for a company at our level", Ross says.

With AWS cloud infrastructure underpinning the RiseXperience platform, Snowgum has been able to leverage powerful cloud computing capabilities on the most comprehensive cloud provider in the world – all whilst being a local, small-medium enterprise (SME) (albeit globally-minded!), based in Victoria.

Ross concludes, "At the end of the day, RiseXperience has allowed our staff to work from home, or from wherever, really. In a time like right now, any semblance of stability or support staff can be offered to continue working is incredible. And that's exactly what we've been able to do, pivot and keep our people in their jobs – while making our customers happier with our service."

As Snowgum continues to grow in online sales, RiseXperience and Amazon Connect will support them to scale their customer experience operations, landing true technology adoption in the laps of one of Australia's most well-loved businesses.

About Rise.CX

Working with organisations of all levels and sizes, from small-medium businesses right through to large enterprises and government entities, Rise.CX exists to transform Customer eXperiences on the world's most trusted Cloud provider.

We enable companies to start or evolve their digital enablement journey through market-leading technology, and our people-centred approach allows us to land true digital adoption that lasts through ROI.

