



Equidebt Case Study

How Veritape helped Equidebt achieve PCI DSS compliance

EQUIDEBT
LIMITED

Established in 1992, Equidebt is the UK's only dedicated provider of debt recovery solutions to the banking and financial services sector. In a recent survey of the UK's top 260 debt collection agencies, Equidebt was ranked within the top 5 best trading partners. Equidebt specialise in debt collection, debt purchase and financial difficulty management. Given the volume (6000 calls per day) and nature of their transactions, call recording is a key requirement for Equidebt.

Equidebt already had call recording in place. Why did they decide not to continue with that supplier?

The decision to change call recording suppliers was prompted by one of Equidebt's key clients – a major bank. In a business where telephone calls are crucial, the bank was keen to ensure that Equidebt would be PCI DSS compliant before they renewed their contract with Equidebt. The PCI DSS guidelines dictate the security requirements companies must adhere to when processing credit card transactions. Compliance with PCI DSS rules meant that Equidebt had to find a solution which would not store sensitive payment card information given during the course of a telephone call, while still recording the call itself.

Equidebt, who had been a long-time user of NICE recording systems, talked to them at the time and explained the situation. There was an urgent need for Equidebt to become PCI compliant within three months, and several other business requirements needed to be met, such as speedy implementation and minimum disruption to their business.

Equidebt's call recording supplier offered two options, one of which involved replacing the current system with a costly brand new system. The other option was

to upgrade the existing system, but this potential upgrade was still in a test phase and was not going to be ready in time for Equidebt to meet their deadline. There were also some previous integration issues with Equidebt's dialler that were likely to be an issue again.

These were the key factors which prompted the decision to look at alternative call recording systems.

What were the key things Equidebt wanted to achieve from call recording?

Primarily, the main objective was for Equidebt's call recording to be PCI DSS compliant. Vikki Wilkins, Director of Business Improvement at Equidebt comments: *"With a major customer requesting this within a short deadline, the pressure was on to find a solution that would be easy to implement within the timescales and would deliver the business requirements."*

There were other criteria that needed to be met also. Firstly, smooth integration was paramount - there was no time for a lengthy and disruptive integration with Equidebt's current systems. Ease of use was a major requirement. Also key was the ability for call recording to be flexible and tailored to Equidebt's bespoke requirements. Equidebt needed to be able to identify specific calls by pinpointing certain pieces of information within the call and sending them to the QA team speedily. Vikki Wilkins elaborates: *"Quality Assurance is of key importance to Equidebt, and we have a stringent checklist to which every collector needs to adhere. Ongoing monitoring of the collections floor call quality was a necessity."*

How did Equidebt evaluate the options for a new call recording system?

After extensive research into alternatives, Equidebt drew up a shortlist of possible suppliers.

However, none appeared to be able to address the issue of PCI DSS compliance satisfactorily.

One option presented was as follows: during the course of a telephone conversation with a debtor who was going to make a payment over the phone, they would be transferred to an external automated IVR system.

Whilst this would solve the problem of keeping the payment card details out of the recorded telephone call, it was not a viable solution for Equidebt, who felt that they would lose control of the call at that point, and be unable to influence the outcome of the call.

Another option presented by another supplier was for the debtor to use their telephone keypad to type in their payment card details, which would be sent to a new application on the collector's desktop. Says Vikki Wilkins, *"Equidebt did not want to add another onscreen application for collectors to navigate their way around thereby adding another layer of complexity to handling the call."*

What were the key drivers in the decision to use Veritape?

Veritape's software was evaluated against these other options and found to closely match Equidebt's business needs. PCI DSS compliance would be achieved by the Veritape Call Control module, which would respond to certain pre-defined triggers (i.e. specific pieces of information from the agents' screens) during the call, and bleep out sensitive information without any need for manual intervention by the agent. More importantly, compliance could be achieved well within the desired timeframe (which was not the case with alternative suppliers) therefore meeting the requirements of Equidebt's client.

At an initial meeting to assess Veritape's suitability, Equidebt were impressed by the level of knowledge from the Veritape team, particularly relating to the PCI DSS requirements. This inspired confidence in Veritape and was a factor in the final decision.

Veritape also met Equidebt's criteria for ease of implementation and integration with their current systems. Veritape provided the software for deployment and Equidebt's IT team, together with Veritape's technical team, were easily able to deploy to the required desks. Configuration was done remotely with full transparency to Equidebt's IT staff.

The turnaround time for installation exceeded Equidebt's expectations, as Vikki Wilkins explains: *"The timescales given originally were within one week from the original request, which we did not realistically expect to achieve. However the Veritape team managed to get everything installed quickly. The implementation was very simple and the majority of the installation was done remotely, by the Veritape engineers, this also meant little or no involvement from our IT team."*

Veritape was also chosen for its ability to be tailored to specific business requirements. With a high volume of calls recorded every day, it was essential for Equidebt to be able to easily locate and retrieve specific calls at a moment's notice. Specifically, Equidebt wanted Veritape's software to capture the client reference number, and certain other pieces of on-screen information contained in the header bar of the agents' screens so that these could be used to retrieve a call instantly, to meet internal compliance requirements.

Traditional hardware call recording systems do not have the ability to do this as they sit separately from the agents' computers and are not able to 'grab' information from the screen. Previously, Equidebt would need to run a report, track down who was handling that account, and then try to locate the precise call recording. Veritape's ability to respond to Equidebt's individual needs was key factor in the purchasing decision.

Several months on, how would Equidebt summarise its experience of Veritape?

Equidebt has been using Veritape for their call recording since August 2009 and feel that expectations have definitely been met. *"The application is user friendly and intuitive to use"*, comments Vikki Wilkins.

Equidebt has been impressed by the after-sales support offered by Veritape. Vikki Wilkins goes on to comment: *"When an issue occurs, the Veritape IT team respond quickly and resolve it. They also 'go the extra mile' - rather than just fixing the problem, they ask what is needed from a business perspective. They are also very good at taking feedback on board and integrating it into ideas for future developments. This level of attention is not something we feel we would get from a larger supplier."* To summarise, Vikki Wilkins says: *"Veritape really fits the bill in terms of our business needs for call recording. I wouldn't hesitate to recommend Veritape to another company."*