

ALICE Receptionist



Success Profile

WORKPLACE OF THE FUTURE

NEW YORK LIFE

New York Life hires Konica Minolta's ALICE as an effective answer to "The Doorbell System"

CHALLENGE: When Ryan Aerni, a Konica Minolta National Account Executive, visited his insurance agent at the local New York Life branch in Lincoln, Nebraska, he noticed the lack of a receptionist and the delay it created in getting someone's attention in the 22-employee office. Aerni asked his financial representative if he knew of any plans to hire a receptionist. He was referred to Robert Bonk, the agency's Senior Partner.

"We don't have enough foot traffic in our building, so we didn't have enough work to justify having a human employee in the front office," said Bonk, a 20-year insurance industry veteran. "But we don't like having visitors come in, find no one out there, and all we hear is a doorbell. Visitors had to wait for someone to come and greet them. They could linger in the waiting area for some time or they would wander the halls looking for someone, which was pretty embarrassing. So we needed to address this."

Unbeknownst to Aerni, Bonk's wife and fellow employee, Jan, had been investigating virtual assistants online and watched several YouTube videos of some, including app-based programs ("iPads with buttons") and Konica Minolta's [ALICE® Receptionist](#). Bonk noted that Jan had gotten very excited about ALICE, so it was a pleasant coincidence when Aerni suggested ALICE.

SOLUTION: Through a few conversations, a few YouTube videos, working with Pete Nachtigall, Konica Minolta's Nebraska BSC, and the Workplace of the Future™ (WoTF) team, a proposal was presented to Bonk. Konica Minolta was able to get NY Life an ALICE Receptionist for a significant savings versus paying a salary and benefits for a human receptionist.

Ryan and Pete engaged the WoTF team to understand how the ALICE solution could meet and exceed New York Life's needs and expectations. Bob Prentice, the Nebraska SIS, provided on-site support for the setup of the hardware and the connection of that hardware to New York Life's network. Then the WoTF team performed the remainder of the installation through a remote session and ALICE was fully implemented in March of 2017.

New York Life has 20 end-users who can receive phone calls from the ALICE workstation and five users with video-call capabilities. When a visitor arrives and taps on an agent's icon on ALICE's touch-screen display, the agent's phone rings and they can speak with the visitor via a speaker on ALICE. Then the agent goes out to greet the visitor.

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Robert Bonk
Senior Partner
New York Life,
Lincoln, Nebraska
Branch



RESULTS: “When we had the old doorbell system, nobody knew who would run out to greet visitors,” Bonk recalled. “Sometimes we had two or three employees run out or no one would run out because they assumed someone else would go. So ALICE has actually taken some of the pressure off of our employees to have to go out and greet visitors. I just feel much more comfortable now when we have visitors. They’re not out there wandering around, wondering if anyone is here. ALICE responds to movement, so she’ll know when someone has arrived and will greet them.”

What about customer feedback? “Most have been positive,” Bonk said. “They find it fun. When scheduling meetings with clients, agents are doing a very good job of informing the client that the office has a virtual assistant and how to use ALICE when they arrive.”

With Bonk implementing ALICE into the culture of New York Life – which was established in 1845, giving it a 172-year history – he has introduced an old school world to the new world of technology.

“You never want to lose that personal touch, so virtual technology like ALICE can help make things a little better,” Bonk responded. “Everyone is very used to touching a screen nowadays – smartphones, tablets – so why shouldn’t our office modernize so that we can better engage people in our business? When visitors enter our front office today, they see both the classic office and some innovative technology. It makes people feel like, ‘Okay, this is a good mix.’”

Speaking about his overall experience with Konica Minolta, Bonk said, “It’s been really good. I really appreciate Ryan and the team. They’ve really given us enough leeway where they’ve done enough touches but weren’t too pushy. They’ve reached out, asked questions. Customer Service is such a dying art, but these guys haven’t lost that.”

NEXT STEPS: Bonk wants to put ALICE in New York Life’s Omaha office, which has a full-time human receptionist. With this, visitors to his Lincoln office will be able to see and speak with that employee via video in real time, be greeted by that individual who can then dial the respective agent in the Lincoln office for the visitor.

TECHNOLOGY:

ALICE Virtual Receptionist



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