

NEWS from:

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Jackson Insurance Agency Hires Perfect Receptionist, Works 24/7

Who said it's hard to find good help these days? No one at the Barker Weber Agency in Jackson, Michigan.

At the 20-person full-line insurance agency, SANDi works 24 hours a day seven days a week answering client calls, forwarding calls, paging, retrieving messages and more, just to keep the 20+ employees of the firm accessible to its clients. She helps manage 14 lines, while the agency receives more than 4000 calls a month. You may say "no wonder she works 24/7," but SANDi wouldn't have it any other way. SANDi is a voice-activated call processing system developed by Sound Advantage, a California company, and installed and serviced at Barker Weber by XFER International, an Ann Arbor company.

According to Larry Rowley at Barker Weber, his firm was looking into replacing and upgrading its old PBX-style phone system, but decided it was too expensive at the time. It seemed another receptionist was in the company's future. "We like to have a live voice answer the phone for our customers." Mr. Rowley said. Then a fax came in from XFER International.

The message introduced the benefits of SANDi to a business like Barker Weber that wanted to keep up with call volumes without losing the friendliness of a pleasant human voice. "We were intrigued with the SANDi software," Mr. Rowley continued, "and began to see what SANDi could do for us."

With SANDi on-board and a new phone system to boot, Barker Weber handles calls more efficiently than ever. SANDi picks up within a few rings if the live receptionist is on another call. The caller simply says the name of the person or department they wish to contact. SANDi transfers the call to that person and waits to make sure they answer. After hours, SANDi not only directs all calls to the appropriate mailbox, but can forward calls to employees off site when asked. No annoying pushbutton menus at Barker Weber. SANDi answers, screens, and routes calls all day every day with simple voice commands—and is always pleasant.

“The fact that SANDi is voice activated has diminished the learning curve for callers as well as our employees,” Mr. Rowley pointed out. “Training was easy, and all of our employees picked up on the system right away. We investigated other phone systems, but it seemed as though you would need a decoder ring to pick up the phone and talk,” he said.

“As a service business, we want our clients to be able to reach us any time,” Mr. Rowley said. “I have directed SANDi to page me should any calls go into my mailbox. When I answer my page, I can then have SANDi call back the telephone number our client keyed into my mailbox. This makes for fast, efficient client service—just what they need, especially in emergency situations.”

Installation of SANDi was simple and non-disruptive to the agency’s business. “In only two days, XFER International had removed the old system hardware and put in the new, making a line-by-line change, keeping all lines functional in the interim. And then XFER International worked hand in hand with us to tweak the system to suit our particular needs, even providing Saturday service when we needed it early in the installation process,” Mr. Rowley added.

SANDi is a phonetic-oriented Windows NT software application which can be used as an add-on to existing phone systems or, as in Barker Weber’s case, with a new system, according to Mike Hartke of XFER International.

Its main component is called Perfect Receptionist, which connects to a phone system to automatically answer calls—multiple calls—screening them all and forwarding when

needed; SANDi can handle from 4 to 200 phone lines—ideal for small but growing businesses. A Perfect Mail add-on takes messages, and can be called to check and return messages—hands free with simple voice commands. Perfect Dial allows users to store names and numbers for automatic voice dialing from any phone.

If the Barker Weber Agency in Jackson, had a middle name it would be service, and the agency is constantly looking for ways to polish its reputation as a leading provider of insurance in Michigan. It seems to have found one in SANDi, a voice-activated receptionist and message management system.

If you are wondering what SANDi sounds like, call toll free 1-800-438-9337 and ask for SANDi.

Barker Weber is on the web at www.barkerweber.com.

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