

Kennebunk Savings strengthened its fraud defense with Nuance



~18k

customers enrolled
in voice biometrics

179k+

customer
verifications so far

280k+

calls handled with
support from
Nuance

CHALLENGE: Kennebunk Savings wanted to strengthen its defense against fraudsters, without compromising on its convenient banking experiences.

SOLUTION: The bank became the first community bank in New England to implement voice biometrics, choosing Nuance's solution to authenticate customers in seconds using their natural speech.

RESULTS: Nearly 18,000 customers have enrolled in the bank's voice biometrics service—reducing average call handle times, improving experiences for both customers and agents, and increasing agent retention.

A growing threat of fraud for community banks

As large, multi-national banks adopt voice biometrics to keep their customers secure, more and more fraudsters are targeting smaller community banks and credit unions. Kennebunk Savings recognized this growing threat and wanted to improve its defense to keep its customers protected.

Kennebunk Savings is a mutual savings bank with 18 branches across southern Maine and seacoast New Hampshire, with a dedication to delivering personalized banking services to its communities.

"A lot of fraudsters are sitting at home trying to figure out our weak points. Knowing we have Nuance biometrics as an added layer of security has really been a great benefit for us."

— Jennifer K. Johnson, Senior Vice President, Senior Customer Experience Manager, Kennebunk Savings

To initially strengthen its defenses against fraud, the bank added extra knowledge-based security questions during its authentication process, making it harder for fraudsters to take over customers' accounts. But these precautions increased call times and resulted in a decrease in customer satisfaction.

"We would spend half the call verifying the customer, and often couldn't fulfill the customer's request over the phone," says Bradford Paige, President and CEO of Kennebunk Savings.

The bank wanted to find a solution that could offer greater defense against fraudsters, without having a negative impact on customer and agent experiences.

Seamless, automatic customer authentication

Kennebunk Savings implemented Nuance's passive voice authentication and intelligent fraud prevention solution to securely authenticate customers seamlessly as part of their conversations with agents.

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— Jennifer K. Johnson,
Senior Vice President,
Senior Customer Experience
Manager, Kennebunk Savings

“It seemed like the obvious solution,” says Johnson. “Nuance was a clear industry leader. They have years of experience compared to new players, who didn’t have the depth of knowledge Nuance could provide.”

Nuance’s solution automatically compares a caller’s speech to the voiceprint associated with their account, and advises the agent within seconds whether to grant or deny the caller access. The biometric security solution analyzes more than one thousand behavioral and physical voice characteristics—such as word choice, pronunciation, and tone—to accurately determine between genuine callers and fraudsters.

To enroll customers in voice authentication, Kennebunk Savings doesn’t target customers with outbound calls they’re likely to be suspicious of—instead, the bank waits for customers to get in touch. And when they do, they’re invited to enroll in the service.

A better experience—for customers and agents

Kennebunk Savings has been able to reduce and—in some cases—eliminate the need for knowledge-based authentication, keeping its customers protected while creating convenient and seamless banking experiences.

It’s not just the bank’s customers who appreciate the new authentication process, either. Since implementing Nuance’s solution, Kennebunk Savings has seen agent retention increase, while average call handle times have fallen. “Nuance is a game-changer for our agents,” says Johnson. “They’re no longer under pressure to make difficult decisions when authenticating customers—they can focus on delivering standout customer service.”

As the first community bank in New England to implement voice biometrics technology, it’s setting a new standard in security and customer experience for community banks. “It’s the easiest project we’ve ever been through,” says Chelsea Fournier, Vice President and Customer Delivery Manager at Kennebunk Savings. “I could talk about Nuance all day long.”

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