

# Panini lets readers play and win with interactive speech recognition

colt

## Customer name

Panini Deutschland GmbH

## Business

Publisher of magazines, comics, mangas, stickers and trading cards

## Industry

Publishing, Media

## Challenge

Panini chose Colt to develop an automated voice hotline that would facilitate participation in its competition.

## Products and services

Service phone numbers, IVR

## Partner

StarTech Stuttgart, Germany

## Colt supports magazine launch with a dedicated hotline

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Panini Verlags GmbH is Germany's largest publisher in the junior and teenage space, and the country's largest publisher of comics and graphic novels. Panini is also famous for its range of sticker collections - including the popular football albums - and organises a growing number of promotions and competitions to make these products more engaging. The publisher increasingly aims to extend the reach of its magazine business beyond juniors and teenagers to adult audiences.

### Pope Francis as a media event

"In Germany we launched the magazine 'Mein Pabst' (My Pope) to engage with this target group," explains Ronald Schäffer, Director of Distribution, IT and Logistics at Panini Stuttgart. To add further value to readers and subscribers, Panini wanted to celebrate the magazine launch with exciting competitions. Readers were invited to complete crosswords, Sudoku grids and other puzzles in the magazine, and

then give their answers by phone to participate in a draw offering various prizes, including cash.

Panini knew that a reputable phone platform was essential to establish a clear distinction in the public perception between their hotline and the so-called "rip-off numbers" operating in Germany, where callers are kept on the line for as long as possible purely to increase the cost of the call. With this in mind, the publisher decided to create a bespoke competition hotline with automatic speech recognition, identifying correct answers automatically and entering them into the participant list. "We wanted it to be as user-friendly as possible for our readers, basically just call, give your answers and participate," Ronald summarises.

### A unique, custom solution

Panini had been a satisfied customer of Colt's Voice Line Services for years, so once the competition project was given the green light, they chose to partner with Colt and its local distributor

StarTech for the deployment of the interactive hotline. A Panini Germany partner for several years, StarTech collaborated with one of Colt's internal IN specialists to implement the voice solution.

Together they designed and developed a bespoke solution, adapting Colt's proprietary building blocks to the requirements of Panini's competition hotline. "We had the opportunity to explain our needs in detail and to actively contribute to the development of the solution," Ronald recalls.

The publisher had set a challenging timeline for the design and implementation of the solution: The hotline was to go live within three months of project kick-off. The collaborative work and collective efforts by all stakeholders ensured the voice solution was launched on schedule, together with the first issue of "Mein Pabst" magazine.





“The solution for our competition hotline was custom-made to meet our requirements, making it extremely easy for our readers to participate.”

**Roland Schäffer**  
**Director Distribution, IT and Logistics**  
**Panini**

#### **A winning solution**

The hotline met Panini's requirements for an easy and seamless experience for callers. The speech recognition system guided them through the entire process. The Colt solution was able to distinguish between the correct and incorrect answers. However, a wrong answer would not mean the end of the road as participants would typically get a second chance. A correct answer would give the caller automatic entry into the prize draw.

The competition was closed automatically once the maximum number of participants was reached. Only the personal contact details of those prize draw participants were kept, and the data of the other players was deleted to prevent further use.

For Ronald, the competition delivered positive results: “The project was a complete success and we achieved the goal we had set ourselves. Our close collaboration with Colt and StarTech meant we were able to develop a perfect solution for our readers. They were able to participate in our competition through a user-friendly, intuitive hotline.” Not only did Panini achieve a high-quality user experience at low effort, but they also built the perfect solution for future projects.

The first chapter of Panini's global success story was written in 1945, when the Panini family opened a news stand in Modena, Italy. Today, the Panini Group and its 12 wholly-owned international subsidiaries operate in over 100 countries.

The company is the world leader in self-adhesive stickers and trading cards. The Panini Group as a whole publishes around 400 sticker and trading card collections per year. It is a multinational organisation and one of the leading publishers of children's magazines and books, comics, manga and graphic novels, in both Europe and Latin America. Panini is also involved in numerous multimedia programmes.

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