



#1 In CRM, Call Centers And Teleservices Since 1982™

# CUSTOMER INTER@CTION *Solutions*®

February 2005 • Vol. 23/No. 8

[www.cismag.com](http://www.cismag.com)

## In Contact Centers... **Quality & Marketing** Are Not Part-Time Jobs

### Also In This Issue:

- Earning Customer Loyalty
- 12th Annual MVP (Marketing Via Phone) Quality Awards
- TMC Labs Reviews Salesforce.com's Winter '05 Edition
- Speech Technology Excellence Awards

## Search Engine Marketing

Increasing Post-Click Conversion Rates  
Page 58

**SPEECH-  
WORLD™**

May 24 - 26, 2005

Westin Park Central Hotel in Dallas, Texas

Co-Located with:



**IP Contact Center  
Summit™**



[speech-world.com](http://speech-world.com) • [tmcnet.com/gccos](http://tmcnet.com/gccos) • [ip-contactcenter.com](http://ip-contactcenter.com)



West At Home.  
What every customer contact  
center wishes it could be.





West introduces West At Home, an innovative work at home agent solution that's quickly revolutionizing the call center industry. With West At Home, you can have an endless labor pool of highly educated agents with the quality and skills to dramatically improve your customer communications and provide you with greater staffing flexibility. And in addition to better quality, West At Home can also lower your customer contact costs by providing this service for much less than traditional call center solutions.

So contact us today and let us show you the many ways West At Home can help you and your customers. For more information on West At Home and all of the West services, call **800-841-9000** or visit us at [www.west.com](http://www.west.com)





*By: Nadji Tehrani,  
Executive Group Publisher,  
Technology Marketing  
Corporation*

**I**n this MVP Quality and Speech Technology Excellence Award issue, I have the great privilege and honor to congratulate several industry leaders and pioneers who have earned such highly respected awards in teleservices, outsourcing

Let us all remember that companies live or die from repeat business. I would also like to make one assumption that hopefully our readers would share with me: the genuine belief that our customers and our employees are our most valuable assets. For without them, quality

IN CONTACT CENTERS, CRM & TELESERVICES...

## Quality And Marketing Are Not Part-Time Jobs!

and speech technologies. Please refer to my October and November 2004 editorials titled "[Speech Technology Analysis And Justifications](#)," [Part 1](#) and [Part II](#), for more information regarding the importance of speech technology early adoption in contact centers.

As the industry's preeminent publication since 1982, it is our paramount responsibility to not only offer our readers the highest caliber editorial, but also to provide appropriate recognition to the industry leaders and pioneers who continue to offer outstanding quality services and promote excellence in speech technology.

### Dictionary Definition

The American Heritage dictionary defines quality as, "An inherent or distinguishing characteristic; Superiority of kind; Degree or grade of excellence."

customer service is nothing more than wishful thinking.

### Henry Ford's Philosophy Of Quality And Marketing

As the inventor of the automobile, Henry Ford once said, "A good design sells cars, but quality brings them back." These words of wisdom are so powerful that they are still true today, as they were back then. However, where Henry Ford failed was on the marketing side when he said customers could buy a Model T Ford "in any color so long as it's black!"

What a shame! A man who made such a brilliant comment about the value of quality practically destroyed it by being completely insensitive to the needs of the customers. To make a long story short, others came along and offered other colors, which customers wanted, and partly as a result, Ford lost its number one posi-

tion in the industry. I believe that there is a great lesson in this for all of us, for without an effective combination and convergence of quality and marketing, companies stand to lose significantly.

### Differentiating Quality

In today's extremely competitive business environment, nearly everyone claims to offer quality service, but how many are actually delivering? Furthermore, one might say that perhaps quality should not be considered a differentiator! I believe people who think that way are 100 percent wrong, for without outstanding quality, no company can expect repeat business and therefore, it is only a matter of time before the company goes out of business.

The million dollar question follows: how, then, would you differentiate yourself from the rest of the world when they make the same claim about quality? In my judgment, there is no other way than offering converged 24/7 quality and marketing, and just as important, third-party endorsements from a respected source. In most cases, such commendations are extremely powerful differentiators. It is only common sense that third-party recognition is, by far, the most compelling reason for customers to choose award-winning products as





Digital | Clear | Efficient

[www.gnnetcom.com](http://www.gnnetcom.com)



GN 8210 with  
GN 2100 headset

### Introducing the first telephone amplifier to offer incoming noise canceling.

With the growing use of mobile phones and open work environments, background noise from customer calls can impede agent productivity. The GN 8210 uses state of the art digital signal processing (DSP) technology to digitize and dramatically reduce the background noise. When paired with any GN Netcom noise canceling headset, the GN 8210 is also the first system to offer noise canceling on both the outgoing and the incoming signal. See all the enhancements that the GN 8210 offers and hear the difference for yourself: visit [www.gnnetcom.com/stopthenoise/cs8](http://www.gnnetcom.com/stopthenoise/cs8) or contact us at 866-272-0805.

**GN Netcom**

## She just heard that she was going to experience a power outage


In fact, 250,000 other people in her area just heard the same thing. Enter Concerto Software: our contact center technology supports rapid proactive customer care campaigns, enabling the local utility company to provide advance notice of anticipated blackouts. The result? This woman received some sound advice about protecting her food and appliances, and the power company kept their customers happy by choosing not to keep them in the dark.

**Concerto Software brings 30 years of insight to proactive customer care. After all, isn't that what customer contact is all about? [Learn more: www.concerto.com](http://www.concerto.com)**



CONTACT CENTER SOLUTIONS





Insight = happy customers

opposed to unrecognized products or services.

### When To Outsource Your CRM, Customer Care And Other Sales And Marketing Functions

If the above processes (i.e., CRM, customer care, etc.) are not your company's core competency, then don't try to do it yourself. There is no room in customer care and CRM for rookie mistakes! The best solution is to find a reputable teleservices agency, visit them, check references and then outsource with confidence.

### Perception Is Reality

It is a known fact that effective marketing can create perception, and having quality nurtures perception. I hope it is becoming clear how these two seemingly unrelated disciplines are, in fact, extremely intertwined. I feel that without convergence of marketing and quality, many companies would leave millions of dollars on the table.

### Not A Part-Time Job

Over the years, I have observed many companies that literally and, perhaps unintentionally, consider both quality and marketing to be part-time jobs! You can usually spot such companies by observing their lack of success, profitability and growth, and more often than not, the companies that are not going anywhere are those that conduct business backed by part-time quality and part-time marketing!

### You Cannot Be Too Conservative

I know many companies that offer truly outstanding customer service, but they are too conservative in marketing. That is why such companies, in spite of their outstanding performance, are "best-kept secrets," which means a loss of revenue.



Companies live or die from repeat business.



Conversely, I have known several companies that had a lousy product, but they enjoyed a significant market share only because they had an outstanding marketing program! Through powerful marketing, these companies created a misleading perception of themselves as leaders, and many buyers (who did not do their homework) fell for it and bought the lousy product in question. Obviously, this is not the way it's supposed to be. But believe it or not, a true marketing genius can make it happen.

### A Message To Senior Management

The message to senior management is that even if you have the best quality product or offer the best quality service, in today's highly competitive marketplace, if you don't market, you don't exist.

### Positioning Your High-Quality Product Or Service

I have always admired the first law of positioning, which says, "It is better to be first than to be better." It is very simple to prove this law by considering that everyone remembers the first person who accomplishes a great task, but no one remembers the second person who does the same thing. For example, let me ask you a question: Who was the first man who flew over the Atlantic? No doubt, you have answered "Charles Lindbergh." Now tell me who was the second man to fly over the Atlantic? Nobody knows and nobody cares about number two. I am sure you can reach into your

memories and find the above powerful phenomenon to be true in virtually every case.

If we apply the above fantastic powerful concept to marketing, it should be simple to realize that if you don't position yourself as number one in your field, life could be very difficult because if you are not number one, you are probably number two, number three, number four or number five, and in that case, no one knows who you are. You will waste a lifetime explaining to the marketplace who you are, and by that time, you'll find you are far behind in the race. Common sense dictates that no one buys anything important from an unknown or second-class company. The moral of the story is that if you are number one in anything, market it 24/7 and position yourself as such. Exploit an empty niche. You will be amazed at the results.

### Become An Early Adopter Of Speech And VoIP Technology

In recent Publisher's Outlook columns in *Customer Inter@ction Solutions*® magazine's October and November 2004 issues (<http://www.tmcnet.com/cis/1004/po.htm> and <http://www.tmcnet.com/cis/1104/po.htm>), we discussed the extremely important role of the above technologies for the call/contact center and CRM industries. I urge you to read these Publisher's Outlooks as a prerequisite for you to appreciate how important those technologies are to the contact center. Briefly stated, as an early adopter, you will vastly improve



the quality of your customer service and reduce your costs by as much as 175 percent. May I take this opportunity to invite you to join me at Speech-World™ Conference, co-located with the IP Contact Center Summit™, located at the Westin Park Central Hotel in Dallas, Texas May 24-26, 2005. Please refer to <http://www.speech-world.com> and discover the comprehensive conference program that these shows will offer. I strongly urge you not to buy the above technologies until you have attended all of the conferences and spoken with all the exhibitors and your colleagues who will attend that particular convention. During that conference, you will be able to compare products side-by-side and benefit from the experts' advice as well as the experience of your colleagues.

#### Above All

Don't send your most important assets (your customers' databases) halfway around the world. Sure you may save a few dollars, but you may lose many of your customers due to poor quality of services, rudeness, cultural problems, language problems, possible use of your customers' database by your competitors, a lack of security and poor compliance with FTC requirements, not to mention hidden charges, terrorist attacks against American businesses, poor morale, a lack of proper training, high turn-over and the current 12 percent annual raises in salaries. Some of this may explain why Dell, Inc. and many other companies closed down their customer support departments in India and returned them to U.S.-based teleservices companies. In fact, those companies returning from offshore outsourcers account for significant growth of domestic teleservices. Please refer



**Blend 24/7 award-winning quality with 24/7 powerful marketing and dominate your market.**



to my January 2005 Publisher's Outlook for more information. **Eight Practical Guidelines For Success In Convergence Of 24/7 Quality And Marketing**

1. Blend 24/7 award-winning quality with 24/7 powerful marketing and dominate your market.

2. Be a good listener. There is nothing like being a great listener to find out specifically what the customer's needs, concerns and problems are. Train your people to be good listeners, not only good talkers!

In fact, there is a great lesson here for sales people: great sales people are not those who are good talkers. The good listeners will always outperform the good talkers because by listening, a good sales person can find out what the customer's needs are first and then by positioning his or her product as a solution to the customer's needs, such a sales person will always outperform others.

3. Be an **early adopter** of Six Sigma awareness program. (Please see Roger Lee of etalk's article on page 44.) Here, in a nutshell, is how companies can benefit from implementing Six Sigma:

- Improvements can be tracked;
- Decisions are made based on tangible data, not merely "gut feelings";
- Cross-functional team involvement;
- The focus is on the process; and
- It creates an avenue for customer concerns to be heard and acted

upon.

4. Establish a system of measuring, monitoring and tackling customer satisfaction.

5. Be an early adopter of advanced speech and IP contact center technologies.

6. Service companies must feature the following attributes:

- Offer unsurpassed quality service;
- Service must be seamless;
- Must have attentiveness;
- Must be resourceful; and
- Must be customer-focused.

7. Train workers so they can be of maximum assistance to customers.

8. Last, but not least, remember that low-cost customer service means high-customer turn-over.

As always, I welcome your comments. Please e-mail them to me at [ntehrani@tmcnet.com](mailto:ntehrani@tmcnet.com).

Sincerely yours,

Nadji Tehrani  
Executive Group Publisher  
Editor-in-Chief

If you are interested in purchasing reprints of this article (in either print or HTML format), please visit Reprint Management Services online at <http://www.reprintbuyer.com> or contact a representative via e-mail at [reprints@tmcnet.com](mailto:reprints@tmcnet.com) or by phone at 800-290-5460.

For information and subscriptions, visit <http://www.TMCnet.com> or call 203-852-6800.



#### IMPORTANT:

Please remember where you **first** read this pioneering effort before the copycats copy us (as usual) and pass it off as their own.

# CONTENTS

February 2005 ♦ Vol. 23/No. 8 ♦ Our 23rd Year of Excellence

## **CUSTOMER INTER@CTION** *Solutions*

### DEPARTMENTS

- 2 [Publisher's Outlook](#)
- 12 [High Priority!](#)
- 16 [Recommended Vendors List](#)
- 18 [Technology Highlights](#)
- 20 [Customer Inter@ction News™](#)
- 86 [The Integrated Marketplace™](#)
- 87 [Identification Statement](#)
- 87 [Advertising Index](#)
- 88 [Last Call](#)

### CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

- 36 [Want Loyal Customers?](#)  
[Don't Stop At Satisfaction](#)

By Todd Beck, AchieveGlobal  
*As customers become increasingly savvy, products more commoditized and choices more abundant, companies are finding that simply meeting customer expectations doesn't automatically translate into repeat business.*



- 38 [New Rules For Better Customer Relationships](#)  
By Alan Treffer, Pegasystems  
*Customer self-service Web applications built without regard of other contact channels have placed many companies in the position of showing customers internal inconsistencies and inefficiencies. One service channel often doesn't synch with the other, and neither takes full advantage of data in back-room systems.*

- 40 [Pay Attention To Customer Experiences](#)  
By Syed Hasan, ResponseTek Networks  
*Years after most major corporations have implemented traditional customer relationship management (CRM) systems, those*

*organizations are still losing up to 30 percent of customers annually, according to reports. Thus there is legitimate debate about whether the truly customer-driven organization has arrived.*

- 44 [Six Sigma Awareness — Let's Rejuvenate](#)  
By Roger Lee, etalk  
*Six Sigma is a disciplined, problem-solving methodology that uses statistical analysis in conjunction with the skill sets to understand the "big picture" and to break down that big picture into smaller chunks.*

### OUTSOURCING TELESERVICES

- 58 [12th Annual MVP \(Marketing Via Phone\) Quality Award Winners](#)  
*This is the twelfth year Customer Interaction Solutions® has brought you the winners of its MVP (Marketing Via Phone) Quality Awards.*

### INNOVATIVE IDEAS FROM THE TELESERVICES EXPERTS:

*A SPECIAL EDITORIAL SERIES SPONSORED BY WEST CORPORATION*

- 56 [Personal Preference: Live Agent Or Virtual Agent?](#)  
By Tracey E. Schelmetic, Editorial Director, Customer Interaction Solutions magazine
- 56 [Reduce Cost Per Order Without Sacrificing Service With "Interactive Agent"](#)  
By West Corporation

### CONTACT CENTER TECHNOLOGY

- 58 [Beyond Search Engine Marketing — Increasing Post-Click Conversion Rates With Intelligent Search](#)  
By Jason Hekl, InQuira  
*According to a MarketingSherpa survey of over 3,000 marketers, SEM accounts for*

*15 percent of total budgeted marketing expenditures, a percentage that has increased from virtually nothing a few years ago.*

### MANAGEMENT SCOPE

- 62 [12 Secrets To Finding The Right Workforce Management System](#)  
By Paul Leamon, IEX Corp.  
*For many, workforce management is often their first line of defense. These systems offer dramatic operational improvements—raising service quality while reducing costs.*



### INNOVATIVE IDEAS FROM THE NEXT-GEN CONTACT CENTER EXPERTS:

*A SPECIAL EDITORIAL SERIES SPONSORED BY TELEPHONY@WORK*

- 66 [IP Contact Center Technology: What You Need To Know \(Part I\)](#)  
[Multisite Contact Center Technology Centralization: Eliminating The Risks](#)  
By Eli Borodow, Telephony@Work and Kevin Hayden, TELUS Communications Inc.
- 67 [Overcoming "We've Always Done It This Way" Syndrome](#)  
By Tracey E. Schelmetic, Editorial Director, Customer Interaction Solutions magazine



# The MOON *is* made of GREEN CHEESE.



If you think another company  
can optimize the performance  
of your workforce the way  
Aspect can, who knows what  
else you'll believe.



ASPECT

*Based on industry-acclaimed TCS technology, Aspect eWorkforce Management reduces the complexity of single-skill or multi-skill staffing. It dramatically improves response times, cuts expenses, and increases agent and operational efficiency. To learn more about the dramatic difference Aspect can make in your business, go to [www.aspect.com/go/empowerdemo](http://www.aspect.com/go/empowerdemo). Or call us today at 1-888-412-7728.*

# CONTENTS

## SPEECH-WORLD

### 68 Speech-World News & Definitions

### 70 Advanced, Packaged Applications To Bring Speech Capabilities To The Mass Market

By Elka Popova, Frost & Sullivan

The speech technology and solution market is now entering a new stage. It is gradually transitioning from the early adopter stage to the more rapid growth stage, when speech solutions are beginning to penetrate the mass market. As speech solutions are becoming both more sophisticated and more affordable, they are attracting a larger, more diversified customer audience.

### 74 Speech Technology Excellence Awards

With new products and whole new categories of products in the contact center space, it is tough for our readers to keep up with the latest and greatest products and services. That is why Customer Interaction Solutions® launched the Speech Technology Excellence Award: so we can judge the "best of the best" in speech technology and pass our findings on to our readers.

## TMC LABS

### 82 TMC Labs Review

This month, TMC Labs looks at Salesforce.com Winter '05 Edition.



## TMCNET.COM ONLINE EXCLUSIVES

### Managing Wireless LANs And WiFi Services

By Alan Clark Ph.D., TMCnet VoIP Performance Management Columnist

Voice over IP is steadily making its way onto both wide-area and local-area networks. VoIP is enabling enterprises to converge voice and data traffic not only for telecom and operational savings, but also for the productivity benefits of integrated computer-telephony applications.

To read the full article, please visit <http://tmcnet.com/88.1>

### Managing Organizational Change: Stop The Insanity!

By Louise Anderson, Performance Management Columnist

Mergers & Acquisition (M&A) activity continues to dominate the telecommunications industry. Although it is generally undertaken with the intention of offering better products and services to the marketplace, it

often does just the opposite. Why? As telco managers focus on changing their organizational structure as a result of mergers, acquisitions or plans to streamline, they begin to lose sight of the forest for the trees and forget their most important asset...the customer!

To read the full article, please visit <http://tmcnet.com/90.1>

### Answering E-Mail From Angry Customers: How To Turn Furious People Into Fans

By Marilynne Rudick and Leslie O'Flahavan, E-WRITE

In a perfect world there would be no angry customers. The product would work flawlessly, it would arrive on time, and no customer would wait — listening to elevator music — for 30 minutes. But absent that perfect world, you will have angry customers.

To read the full article, please visit <http://tmcnet.com/89.1>

TO RECEIVE FREE INFORMATION  
FROM OUR PREMIUM  
ADVERTISERS, PLEASE VISIT  
[freeinfo.tmcnet.com](http://freeinfo.tmcnet.com)

## CUSTOMER INTER@CTION Solutions®

### Executive Group Publisher

Nadji Tehrani (ntehrani@tmcnet.com)

### Group Publisher

Richard Tehrani (rtehrani@tmcnet.com)

### Editorial

203-852-6800 (cispress@tmcnet.com)

Editorial Director, Tracey E. Schelmetic

Assistant Editor, David R. Butcher

### TMC™ Labs

203-852-6800 (tmcclabs@tmcnet.com)

Executive Technology Editor/CTO/VP, Tom Keating

### Art

203-852-6800 (cisart@tmcnet.com)

Senior Art Director, Lisa D. Morris

Art Director, Alan Urkawich

### Executive Officers:

Nadji Tehrani, Chairman and CEO

Richard Tehrani, President

## To Subscribe, Call: 203-852-6800

Or write to the circulation director at [srusso@tmcnet.com](mailto:srusso@tmcnet.com). Subscription rates (published monthly): Free for qualified subscribers in the U.S.A. only. For non-qualified U.S.A. subscribers, \$49. All Canadian subscribers, \$49. All Foreign (air mail), \$85. All orders are payable in advance in U.S. dollars drawn against a U.S. bank. Connecticut residents add applicable sales tax.

Circulation Director, Shirley Russo ([srusso@tmcnet.com](mailto:srusso@tmcnet.com))

**Reader Input:** CIS encourages readers to contact us with their questions, comments and suggestions. Send e-mail (addresses above), contact our Web site ([www.cismag.com](http://www.cismag.com)) or send mail.

We reserve the right to edit letters for clarity and brevity. All submissions will be considered eligible for publication unless otherwise specified by the author.

**Reprints:** For authorized reprints of articles appearing in CIS, please contact Reprint Management Services at 1-800-290-5460 or e-mail them at [tmc@reprintbuyer.com](mailto:tmc@reprintbuyer.com).

**Lists:** For list rentals, please contact Lisa Horder at [lisah@l-i-s-t.com](mailto:lisah@l-i-s-t.com) or call 914-765-0700, ext. 107.

## Advertising Sales: 203-852-6800

Kevin J. Noonan, ext. 124 ([knoonan@tmcnet.com](mailto:knoonan@tmcnet.com))

Executive Director, Business Development

Allan Brown, ext. 278 ([abrown@tmcnet.com](mailto:abrown@tmcnet.com))

Midwestern, Texas Regional Manager

Glenn Maiorano, ext. 279 ([gmaiorano@tmcnet.com](mailto:gmaiorano@tmcnet.com))

Eastern, Midatlantic, Canadian Regional Manager

Karl Sundstrom, ext. 119 ([ksundstrom@tmcnet.com](mailto:ksundstrom@tmcnet.com))

Western, International Regional Manager

## Exhibit Sales: 203-852-6800

Dave Rodriguez, ext. 146 ([drodriguez@tmcnet.com](mailto:drodriguez@tmcnet.com))

Vice President of Conferences and Online Media

## Online Advertising & Newsletter Sponsorship

Dave Rodriguez, ext. 146 ([drodriguez@tmcnet.com](mailto:drodriguez@tmcnet.com))

Vice President of Conferences and Online Media

Kevin J. Noonan, ext. 124 ([knoonan@tmcnet.com](mailto:knoonan@tmcnet.com))

Executive Director, Business Development

Karl A. Sundstrom, ext. 119 ([ksundstrom@tmcnet.com](mailto:ksundstrom@tmcnet.com))

Global Accounts Manager

### Editorial Offices are located at

One Technology Plaza, Norwalk, CT 06854 U.S.A.

**Customer Service:** for all customer service matters, call 203-852-6800.

**CUSTOMER INTER@CTION Solutions®** magazine has been the voice of the industry since 1982. It is written by industry practitioners for industry practitioners and is regarded worldwide as the "Bible" of the industry. An annual Buyer's Guide is provided as a feature of the December issue.

Copyright © 2005 Technology Marketing Corporation. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without permission of the publisher is prohibited.

Customer Inter@ction Solutions® and the TMC Logo are registered trademarks of Technology Marketing Corporation.

## A Technology Marketing Publication



One Technology Plaza, Norwalk, CT 06854 U.S.A.

Fax#: 203-853-2845

Sales Dept. Fax#: 203-838-4070







## Create your own organizational masterpiece.

It's easier than you think. Because Monet gives you everything you need to manage up to 1,000 agents. At a price that makes sense for as few as 25.

You get the tools to accurately forecast call volume and timing. Confidently schedule by agent skills and experience. Try 'what-if' scenarios. Manage seasonal volumes and create schedules for special days or day parts. Develop customized shifts and schedules. While you still have the flexibility to manage your team in real time.

Monet also seamlessly integrates with nearly every ACD, and is as easy to install as it is to use. So easy, you'll be up and running in just a day or two. Which not only helps you improve your team's performance, but gets you started earning the fastest return on investment around – as fast as three months.

Ready to be a creative genius? Find out how Monet can help you create an organizational masterpiece. Visit [www.monetmasterpiece.com](http://www.monetmasterpiece.com) to learn more. Or call 310-207-6800 and we'll create a customized online demo that will address your specific forecasting, scheduling and call center management needs.

# Monet

*The Art of Workforce Optimization™*





By: Rich Tehrani,  
Group Editor-in-Chief,  
Technology Marketing  
Corporation

## Search Engine Marketing

Search engine marketing, or search engine optimization (SEM and SEO, respectively), are terms you're probably hearing a lot lately. It's a field that is brimming with activity these days. As with many tools, it's used well by some companies, and abused rampantly by others. On the one hand, most companies are working to legitimately increase their search engine rank to raise the profile of their companies. On the nefarious side, other companies and individuals are using unethical tactics to raise their

My first observation is that generally speaking, the sites that rank highest are news sites. Many blogs also rank very high. The reason for the high ranking has to do with the frequent updates that both these kinds of sites get.

Bearing this in mind, how do you leverage these ideas for your Web site that sells clothing? Without question, the most obvious way to do this is to keep your site updated with lots of apparel news and fashion tips.

Get creative in your thinking.

# Search Engine Marketing, VoIP And Other News From The Telecom Front

own profiles — a practice known as search engine spam.

The complete picture of what constitutes search engine spam is beyond the scope of this column, but essentially it's a tactic to trick search engines into ranking your site higher than it would normally appear. Again, there is a gray area between what a search engine considers legitimate and what it considers spam. For example, in most cases, using tags and titles with intelligent naming conventions is a legitimate practice and won't get you in trouble. Deliberately using a certain few words over and over again on your site to artificially rank the site higher can be considered spamming, depending on the frequency of the practice, among other factors.

The goal of this column is to educate companies on what they should be doing to increase their search engine rank, while staying in the bounds of ethics, not to mention the law. I won't be teaching "tricks," but I will share observations about what works and what doesn't.

Let's consider that you are an apparel manufacturer and you launched a site that focuses on sales in the clothing business. Imagine having your site, or a spin-off site, become the most important site people visit when they are looking for clothing sales. In other words, you would have links to the Macy's Labor Day sales site and discuss what the best values are that week. Think of the marketing you can do to the people that depend on your site. You can offer coupons or promotions on this site for your own clothing line. The options are numerous.

Then there are blogs. Everyone seems to be blogging nowadays. Blogs are a great way to generate sticky content that gets virally communicated. Think of a blog in the same manner as you would sending speakers to industry events. Many companies like to have speakers at events because it creates excellent exposure for the company and, more important, helps the company attract new customers.

Blogging works like speaking, but without the travel expense. It's important to dis-

cover, within your company, who makes a good blogger and who doesn't. Job title doesn't guarantee success as a blogger: There are many CEO-level people who don't possess a tight enough grip on grammar to blog well without the aid of editing by another person. These people should be identified and filtered before they blog. It's also important to understand that the more you blog, the more people will read it. There is likely an exponential relationship to readers versus number of blog entries per day. Feel free to visit my blog at [richtehrani.com](http://richtehrani.com) to see my latest thoughts.

One thing worth pointing out is the legal ramifications of blogging. Who owns the content, and what about copyrights and redistribution, etc.? You will want to decide who owns your blog content and determine a copyright strategy. The legal world is still grappling with the concept of blogs, including what should and shouldn't be posted on them. For example, a flight attendant was recently fired from Delta for posting questionable pictures of herself on her blog, and in a separate incident, a Google employee was asked (apparently, quite politely) to remove a blog entry because he divulged compensation details as well as minutes from an internal company meeting. This ordeal was recounted in a blog entry titled "Oops" (<http://99zeros.blogspot.com/2005/01/oops.html>).

## Partnering

A quick way to further boost SEO is to partner with industry Web sites that can supply news to your site, or allow your blogs to be hosted on the partner's site. For example, going back to the apparel manufacturer

# Puerto Rico: The Ideal Contact Center Location.



Puerto Rico is the new choice for your contact center location. In Puerto Rico, you can enjoy the benefits and protection of operating within a United States jurisdiction with the added tax benefits of operating under a foreign tax structure.

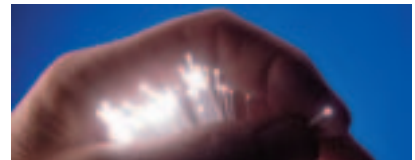
## **An Operations Haven**

- *Puerto Rico boasts one of the world's most sophisticated telecommunications systems.*
- *Our labor force is readily available, highly educated, computer literate and bilingual, to easily relate to your U.S. and Latin American clients.*
- *Abundant real estate available at highly competitive rates.*

- *Federal and Municipal workforce assistance programs are available, as well as training and incentives packages.*

## **A Most Profitable Location**

- *As Controlled Foreign Corporations, U.S. based contact centers generating income from offshore sources are subject to a tax rate ranging from 7%-2% with no withholding tax on dividends or distributions.*
- *200% deduction for investments in training.*



- *Accelerated depreciation of investments in plant and equipment.*
- *No import duties on call center equipment.*

Plus, you're on familiar ground, with U.S. monetary system, U.S. patent laws and regulations, and the security and quality of life you expect.

To learn more about all the benefits Puerto Rico offers, visit our website at [www.pridco.com](http://www.pridco.com) or call 1-888-5-PRIDCO



The advantages of going offshore. The security of being home.



example, you might approach *Vogue* and see if they will host your blog. Obviously, your blog will receive much more attention on such a prominent Web site than on your own. A magazine such as *Vogue* may charge you for this, but it would likely be worth the cost, depending on the fee and how important SEO is to your company.

Understand, though, that running news on your site gets tricky. On the one hand, it's a great way to generate traffic, but it's important that you establish controls on what runs on your site. If you are Salesforce.com, it's likely you don't want a Seibel news release boasting of their dominance in hosted CRM on your site. If you are Nike, you don't want to discover on your site that New Balance just shipped its ten millionth shoe.

As you probably realize at this point, SEO is not an issue that can be fully covered in one or two pages. What may be the best article I have ever read on SEO is contained in this issue of *Customer Interaction Solutions*®, on page 58. It is titled "Beyond Search Engine Marketing — Increasing Post-Click Conversion Rates With Intelligent Search" by Jason Hekl of *InQuira*. It is a must-read, in my opinion.

## IP Contact Center Race

I recently had a chance to make a site visit to a contact center in Indianapolis, Indiana. The company, Finish Line, is a retailer that sells sneakers and some apparel, primarily via their hundreds of stores located around the country. What most impressed me is that this is one of those companies that really understands technology and how to use it to the company's advantage. The company's contact center consists of about 50 agents, all working diligently over VoIP. Finish Line told me that what they really like about VoIP is the ease of setting up new agents...just one wire to the desktop.

Finish Line currently uses *Interactive Intelligence* solutions. They informed me they shopped around with Avaya, Cisco and other companies, and none could do what Interactive Intelligence does. Thus far, Finish Line reports they have seen no drawbacks to IP contact center technology, and they are looking forward to having wireless

SIP-based phones so they can monitor agents on the go.

## Google As Screen Pop

I recently blogged about the idea of *Google* getting into VoIP. Currently, there is a great deal of speculation about this happening, and the rumor started as a result of a personal ad Google ran regarding the need for dark fiber and a person who can manage it. Whether the rumors are true is anyone's guess, but what is worth thinking about is the fact that Google is slowly building desktop alternatives to Microsoft from desktop search to e-mail. Will VoIP integration with their current search, e-mail and address book products be the way Google jumps ahead of Gates' baby?

If you think about it, isn't Google in an interesting position to do a search on incoming callers? Imagine when your phone rings and the caller I.D. reads "Jim's Mortgage Company." Wouldn't it be interesting if, in addition to the call, you received a screen pop with the results of a Google search? Imagine if Google organized all of the results by tabbing different results into related categories so you could click on a tab marked "Better Business Bureau," or "Legal Issues" or, on a positive note, "Case Studies," or "Customer Lists."

Even if Google doesn't get into VoIP directly but chooses to work with other providers, wouldn't it be great to integrate this search functionality with caller I.D.? Imagine if Google connected such a system to its corporate search appliance. You could also have tabs for "Invoices Past Due," "Orders Sold" and "Notes." Imagine the data-mining possibilities inherent in this scenario. Business intelligence departments should be drooling at the prospect. You could have a range of vital content at your fingertips when someone calls. You could literally know everything about the caller before you answer. Imagine getting a call from the purchasing manager of GE and knowing her stock price just went up 10 percent a moment before she called. You might see all published articles that include her name. Imagine notifying her about the article that says she is a financial genius.

I am more enthusiastic now about the

future of communications than at any time in the past. I see the true openness afforded by VoIP, and I see the ability for us to communicate in a much better way than ever before. What is different about communications today than at any time in the past is that any company is able to drastically alter the communications landscape and the way we think about communicating. *Vonage* popularized VoIP, *Packet8* popularized videophones, and *Skype* showed you can have millions of people download your VoIP software in a matter of months with no marketing and no sales force.

Contrast this to 10 years ago, when innovation came from only large telecom companies and was sold to you as part of a closed system from a single vendor. The future of telecom, in my opinion, is VoIP 2.0, and it is everything we will be able to do now that calls travel over IP. Think of the power and control we will have when we are able to integrate any application we want with virtually any communications system. The Google example alone can likely improve contact center efficiency by a minimum of 10 percent if implemented correctly. The potential is there. We really need to keep an open mind and wait for the best and brightest to dazzle us.

## Shameless Plug

Our Speech-World/IP Contact Center event comes to Dallas, May 24-26. This is the only event in the world focusing exclusively on IP contact center and speech technologies. These are the most exciting areas in the contact center business right now, and TMC is excited to host a community of call center decision makers eager to improve the productivity and efficiency of their customer service. I personally hope to see you there. Please check out <http://www.speech-world.com> for details.

Sincerely,


*Rich Tehrani*

Rich Tehrani  
Group Publisher, Group Editor-in-Chief  
rtehrani@tmcnet.com

For information and subscriptions, visit <http://www.TMCnet.com> or call 203-852-6800.



Subscribe FREE online at [www.cismag.com](http://www.cismag.com)



To improve customer satisfaction,  
start by satisfying your agents.

Your agents are the primary link to your customers. Keep your agents happy and they'll take care of everyone else. Our new SupraPlus™ family of headsets can help. With superior sound quality and a stylish, lightweight design, they'll keep your agents comfortable all day.

GET A **FREE SUPRAPLUS HEADSET**. TO QUALIFY, CALL 866-304-6652 OR VISIT [PLANTRONICS.COM/SUPRAPLUS](http://PLANTRONICS.COM/SUPRAPLUS).

© 2004 Plantronics, Inc. All rights reserved. Plantronics, the logo design, Plantronics and the logo design combined, SupraPlus, the voice tube, clear-color trade dress and shape trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of Plantronics, Inc.  
Must complete a questionnaire to qualify for the free SupraPlus headset. Call 866-304-6652 or visit [www.plantronics.com/supraplus](http://www.plantronics.com/supraplus) for full details.



# 2005 Recommended Vendor List

## The TMC Seal of Approval



The following Recommended Vendors have distinguished themselves by winning one or more of TMC's coveted awards, earning them the TMC Seal of Approval.

### Teleservices Outsourcing

#### West Corporation



#### InfoCision Management Corporation



### List and Sales Lead Databases

#### infoUSA



#### Left Bank Solutions



#### Mercom



### CRM/Contact Center Software/Hardware

#### Amae



#### Aspect Communications Corp.



#### GN Netcom



#### IEX Corporation



#### Jacada



#### Sennheiser Electronic Corporation



#### Spectrum Corporation



#### Stratasoft, Inc.



#### Telephony@Work



#### Witness Systems

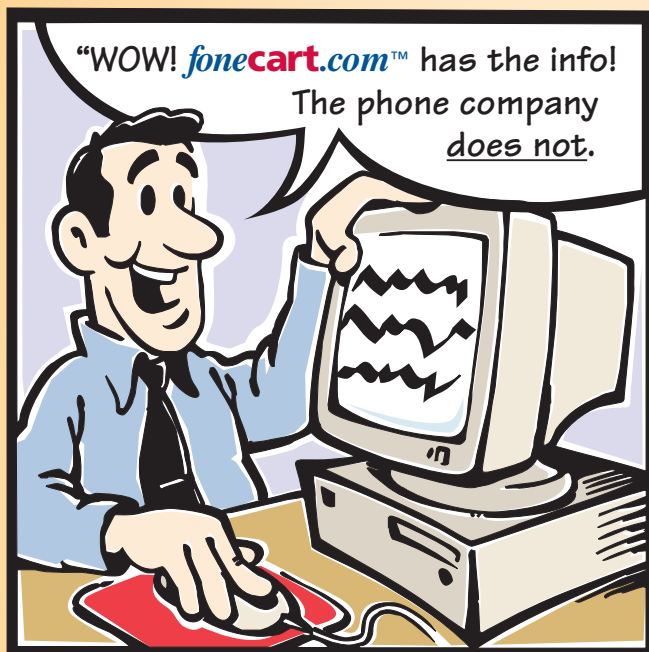


For information about how to get on the Recommended Vendor list, see <http://www.tmcnet.com/mediakit/cis04/soa.htm>



# **FREE...** **Directory Assistance** **Available on Your Website**

*If you have a website and you are not offering Directory Assistance, you are missing out on a valuable service needed by your site users.*



Only **fonecart.com™** provides phone numbers and addresses, plus exclusive information not available with phone company directory assistance or other popular websites.

## **220 Million People**

- Estimated Household Income
- Years at Address
- Dwelling Type
- Estimated Home Value

## **14 Million Businesses**

- Phone Number
- Address/Location
- Years in Business
- Name of Owner

We can offer FREE Directory Assistance to your users. We will even create a Private Label for you so your users will think it's offered by you. And, the best part is, it's FREE and no charge to you!

**fonecart.com™**

**Call David Schajatovic at 866.313.8327**  
**and receive a FREE 30-Day Trial!**

**fonecart.com™**  
a division of infoUSA®

5711 S. 86th Circle  
PO Box 27347  
Omaha, NE 68127

Phone: 866.313.8327  
Fax: 650.389.0707  
**www.fonecart.com**

This monthly feature generally offers, unbiased and without endorsement, product options to readers. February's exposition is slightly more abstract; the information subsequently offered is not so much of a product as it is of a technology that makes products possible.

tual call center — as each variable agent in this agent program is linked through the central VACD technology. (See the illustration.)

During peak calling periods, the network's overflow call volume is directed to West's Virtual ACD, which enables West to quickly route calls and data to one of the compa-

ACD-based home agent solutions.

Being a customized, blended model, this alternative to offshore solutions also enables clients to deliver a higher level of care to their customers, and it can help them avoid high infrastructure and operational overhead costs.

Additionally, with West at Home linking through the central VACD technology, West has a better opportunity to effectively manage seasonal call spikes and unexpected call overflow situations by using intelligent call management technology to ensure efficient call traffic management and agent utilization, which sets it apart from other ACD-based home agent solutions. Such extensive agent management systems include Web-based monitoring and communication tools, as well as agent CRM system tracks for all contacts.

The technology can be implemented on a managed or hosted basis.

West currently supports thousands of agents located nationwide, annually processing millions of minutes in the Virtual ACD environment.

Lewis and Clark did it; likewise the Manifest Destiny pioneer expansion. Mid-19th century emigrants left Ireland to do it. The Dodgers baseball club did it. Even the great Beat writers of NYC followed decades later. The company hopes that its Virtual ACD and its home-based agent program will initiate call centers, also, to go West, in technology and service rather than in geographic direction.

For information and subscriptions, visit <http://www.TMCnet.com> or call 203-852-6800.



# West VACD Removes Agents' Geographic Limitations

2005  
CUSTOMER INTER@CTION  
Solutions  
EDITORS' CHOICE

By David R. Butcher,  
Assistant Editor, Customer Inter@ction Solutions® Magazine

West Corporation's **Virtual ACD** ([define](#) - [news](#) - [alert](#)) (automatic call distributor) is a centralized call- and data-routing platform, the purpose of which is to remove the limitations of traditional call center solutions and to offer an extensive network of agents — hopefully educated and highly skilled — located throughout the world. The company's VACD technology is VRU (voice response unit)-based, therefore eliminating geographical limitations of agent location.

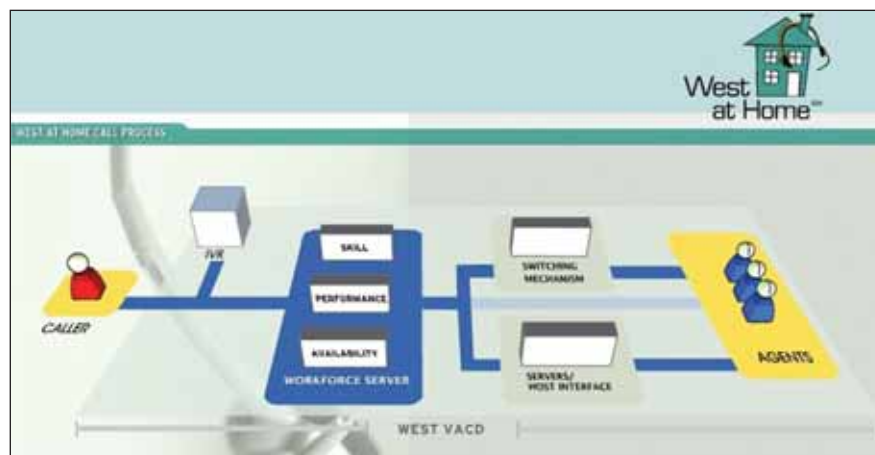
(West has extensive VACD hubs with 135,000+ port capacity — agent-to-port relationship — in addition to full IVR/ASR integration, to handle large programs. There are four data centers in the United States running VACD.)

And because of the taut, intimate relationship between the technology and the solution, VACD simply cannot be discussed without mentioning West at Home, as the former enables the latter. Different from other home-based agent programs, West at Home is one part of a complementary suite of outsourced customer acquisition and customer care solutions.

The company's fully redundant VACD is directly critical to West at Home, the aforementioned solution that combines traditional call center agents, offshore and nearshore agents, and home agents — in essence, a vir-

ny's home-based agents located nationwide or to traditional call center agents, over a secure Internet connection. The VACD automatically determines where to direct calls, through an integrated, skills-based routing scheme, in order to assure seamless call delivery to the best-suited agent on an as-needed basis. This technology enables West to support various distributed workforces, including traditional call center agents, home agents, near-shore and offshore agents, as well as a client's own employees.

West's infrastructure is intended to provide companies with increased flexibility and an interminable labor pool, thus improving greater cost efficiencies than the common





# Miracle Worker?

Contact Center Managers  
today need to....

- ✓ Earn customer loyalty
- ✓ Upsell/cross-sell successfully
- ✓ Increase revenue and yields from an often finite customer base (while lowering costs)
- ✓ Manage risk and meet compliance standards
- ✓ Reduce staff turnover and ignite brand evangelism!

Capturing and evaluating interactions with customers has become essential. And yet the business case for investing in today's quality management technology goes far beyond the old concept of catching the rogue call center rep misleading customers or behaving unprofessionally. Today's technology allows for an impact that is far more reaching than the one-dimensional "QA Checklists" of the past.

Email  
[miquers@mercom.com](mailto:miquers@mercom.com)  
today for your free copy of the white paper

*Establishing a Return:  
Business Motivators for  
Recording and Quality  
Evaluation in Contact  
Centers* to learn more  
about the business case  
for today's quality  
management and how  
Mercom's Interaction  
Performance Suite can  
help you do the  
impossible.

**Mercom's Interaction Performance Suite**  
*Capture. Measure. Refine. Surpass.*



Mercom Systems, Inc  
Lyndhurst, NJ USA  
888-MERCOM1  
[www.mercom.com](http://www.mercom.com)



## New Products...

### Contact Center Software

#### SPSS' New Clementine 9.0 Supports Predictive Modeling Oracle Data Mining

SPSS Inc.'s latest version of its data mining workbench, Clementine 9.0, leverages the analytics software/solutions provider's open, standards-based architecture to offer explicit integration with Oracle's Database 10g. Oracle Database 10g supports predictive modeling with Oracle Data Mining, enabling the building and scoring of models directly within the database.

"To access, build and deploy models provided by Oracle 10g will enable analysts more manageability, higher efficiency and greater productivity," SPSS Senior Product Manager Peter Caron said.

Clementine 9.0 provides analysts with the ability to use the Clementine interface to build, browse and score models in the Oracle Database 10g, using techniques available with Oracle Data Mining. Oracle Data Mining algorithms, including Naïve Bayes, Adaptive Bayes Network and Support Vector Machines, appear as nodes in the Clementine interface. These techniques can be used like any other techniques that are native in Clementine.

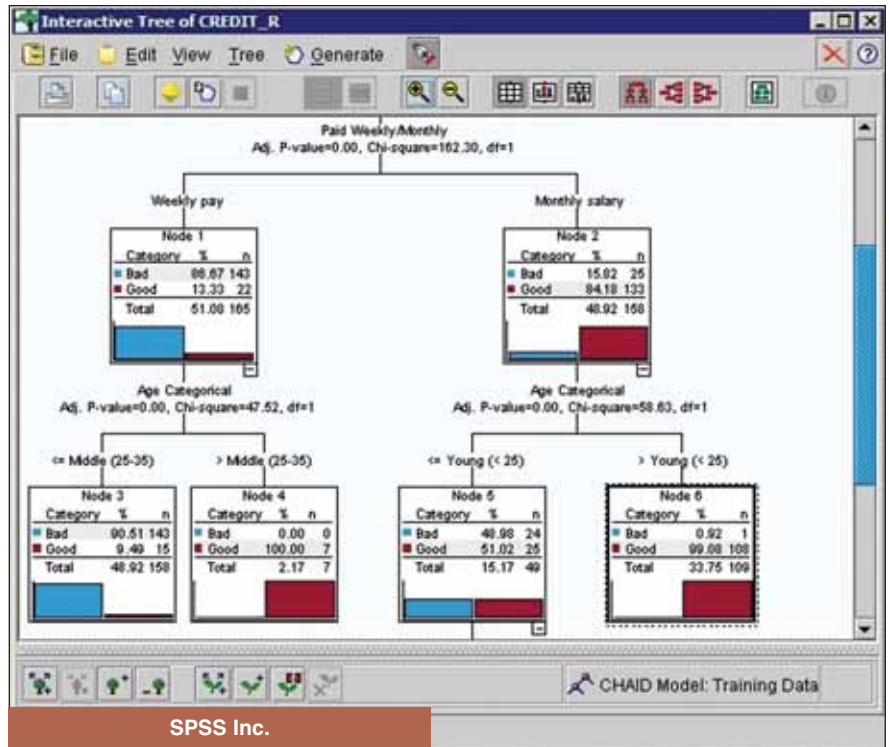
Clementine 9.0 is now available.

<http://www.spss.com>

#### Syntellect Launches New Contact Center Suite

Syntellect Inc., a provider of self-service and live-assistance solutions and services, has officially launched its new contact center product suite, Continuum, a combination of the company's previously released Vista 5.0 and Interchange, creating an end-to-end contact center solution that incorporates both live agent and self-service systems into a unified, single-platform offering.

Continuum is offered in a "plug and play" modular format so it can be purchased and used by customers today, while ensuring the ability to add new communication channels in the future, both for self-service and live assistance. The core offering exhibits the ability to automatically capture and pass both customer-specific navigation and transactional data during a



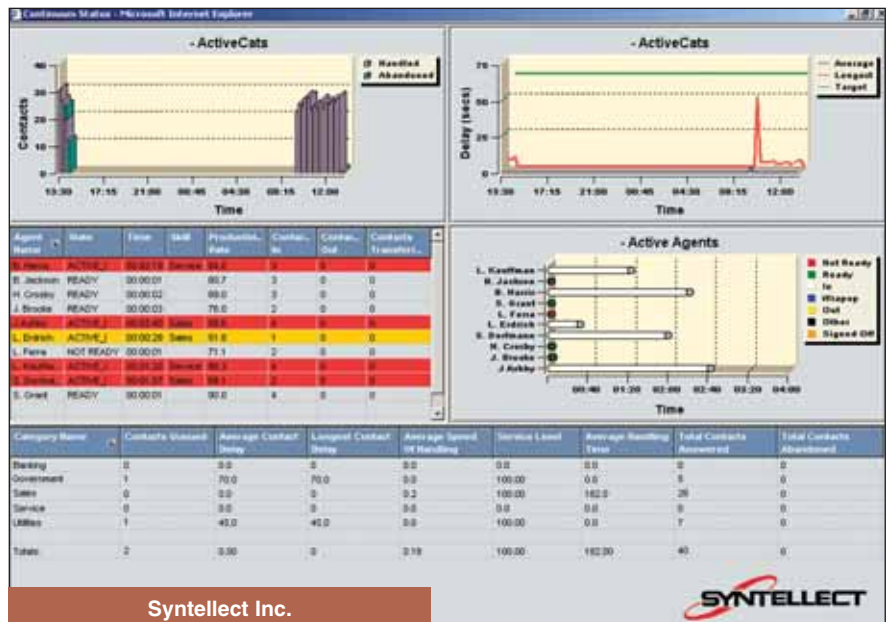
SPSS Inc.

self-service inquiry to the agent desktop, should a customer need to talk with an agent.

Additionally, Continuum delivers a "future-proof, state-of-the-art" solutions suite on an open platform supporting standards such as VoiceXML and VoIP, and is positioned for emerging standards like CCXML and MRCP. Additional

enhancements include the latest in speech recognition and text-to-speech technology; published APIs for easy access integration with other interfaces/existing solutions; consolidation, load balancing and multisite linking; unified reporting; and complete redundancy/disaster recovery.

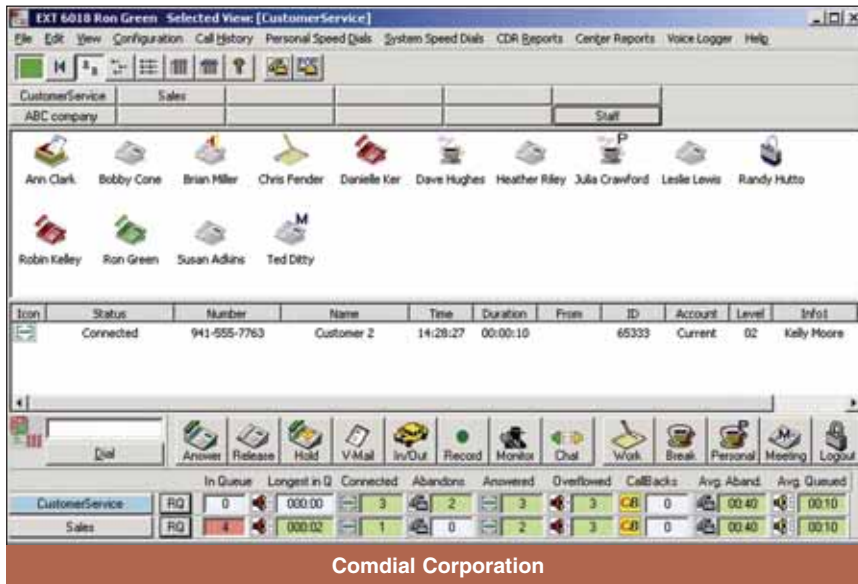
<http://www.syntellect.com>



Syntellect Inc.

SYNTELLECT

Improve  
first call  
resolution.



### Comdial Announces Contact Center Solution

Comdial Corporation, a provider of communications solutions, has announced a new solution for the small to midsized business contact center market. The CONVERSip Contact Center offers the tools to manage external call volumes and to improve the efficiency and performance of employees.

The CONVERSip Contact Center, an integrated communications suite, offers the following capabilities: skills-based routing; unified voice messaging; call recording; historical and real-time reports; efficient capturing of all incoming calls; and high call volumes processing, all to deliver an improved level of service without any additional software at more affordable cost for inbound, outbound or blended contact centers.

"One of the primary benefits of the CONVERSip Contact Center is its ability to reduce the time it takes our customers to handle and manage calls" Tom Rickert, principal of Gregg Communications and a Comdial channel partner, said.

This solution assists management personnel in maximizing their resources by providing easy-to-use, real-time reporting tools that graphically demonstrate call volumes, queue times, productivity levels and agent activity. In addition to its reporting capabilities, one of the CONVERSip Contact Center's unique

features is a new call-back feature that allows callers to leave a message to hold their place in the queue without remaining on the phone. Callers are then automatically contacted by an agent when it is their turn in the queue.

<http://www.comdial.com>

### SIPfoundry Announces 3 Solutions To Advance SIP Adoption

SIPfoundry, a non-profit organization for the development of open source Session Initiation Protocol (SIP)-based communication solutions, has announced the availability of three new software solutions with the intention of advancing the adoption of SIP technologies within the telephony and enterprise communications markets.

sipX, the SIP PBX for Linux, is a 100-percent SIP, 100-percent open source PBX, for end users, OEMs and developers. sipX is a complete, fully documented, easy-to-download/-install/-manage SIP PBX, voice mail, auto-attendant and SIP proxy. Available now, this SIP PBX for Linux is fully interoperable with SIP-compliant media gateways and phones, and is fully manageable via Web-browser interface.

reSIProcate is a SIP stack unencumbered by any one company's commercial agenda. reSIProcate provides a complete and standards-compliant implementation of the key IETF RFCs relating to SIP, including enhanced security features,

Improve  
workforce  
planning.

Improve  
agent  
effectiveness.



NAT Traversal, Instant Messaging and Presence.

SIPfoundry is providing formal support for the SIP Forum Test Framework (SFTF) to accelerate adoption of SIP protocol. Designed and written by the SIP Forum, and hosted by SIPfoundry as the SFTF SIP Interoperability Project, the SFTF is a growing body of open source test suites that help SIP product users and vendors ensure standards conformance and interoperability.

<http://www.sipfoundry.org>

## Empirix Launches Solution To Manage, Improve Nortel IVR Platforms

Empirix Inc., a provider of Web and voice application solutions, has launched a new solution to help companies manage and improve the performance of Nortel Networks MPS 1000 interactive voice response (IVR) platforms. Empirix's OneSight for Contact Centers, an end-to-end voice application management solution, now combines automated voice transaction monitoring with new OneSight Telephony Monitors to allow organizations to quickly and easily collect representative customer experience data along with appli-

cation and system metrics from all elements of a Nortel MPS 1000 environment.

The resulting solution, OneSight for Nortel MPS 1000, allows customer service executives and contact center/IT operations staff to proactively pinpoint and address customer-impacting issues hidden within their technology infrastructures. With this new solution, customers can correlate end-to-end caller experience with the health of each Nortel MPS 1000 component and its critical links to other telephony and data resources. This integrated management solution — part of a series of solutions for contact center systems — enables customers to more quickly identify and isolate probable causes of common technology issues.

<http://www.empirix.com>

<http://www.nortelnetworks.com>

## ATTENTION VENDORS!

Send your **News and Product Releases** via e-mail to **cispress@tmcnet.com**.

Whenever possible, please include high-resolution (minimum 266 dpi) color graphics (.BMP, .EPS, .TIF, or .JPG).

## Web-Based Customer Service

### Microsoft Introduces Microsoft Solution For Hosted Messaging And Collaboration

Microsoft Corp. recently announced Microsoft Solution for Hosted Messaging and Collaboration 3.0, a next-generation hosted service that addresses the requirements of small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs). The new offering, made available through Microsoft's service provider and hosting partners, builds on the strengths of Microsoft Solution for Hosted Exchange 2003 by adding support for hosted versions of Microsoft Office Live Communications Server 2005 and Windows SharePoint Services. The solution, available now, is intended to be a cost-effective way for SMBs to enjoy the robust, enterprise-class e-mail, shared calendaring, contacts, document collaboration and instant messaging capabilities typically used by larger companies.

"With Microsoft Solution for Hosted Messaging and Collaboration, we will be able to share information and manage workflow throughout the organization with much greater efficiency," Amy Rutt, president and CEO of Ciracom, an information technology consulting firm, said. "Equally important, because the applications are offered as a service, we can focus on managing our business, rather than allocating precious resources to on-site systems."

Microsoft Solution for Hosted Messaging and Collaboration is a hosted version of Microsoft's family of productivity server products: Microsoft Exchange 2003, Live Communications Server 2005 and Windows SharePoint Services. For service providers, the solution offers a scalable, multiservice platform through which they can deliver a rich set of productivity services to small and medium-sized businesses, as well as to enterprises and consumers. The solution also provides proactive monitoring, provisioning automation, delegated administration and centralized management, allowing service providers to consolidate their existing e-mail systems onto a single platform and to reduce the cost of deployment, ongoing operation and support. Microsoft Solution for Hosted Messaging and Collaboration enables ser-



Empirix Inc.



vice providers of all sizes to expand their product portfolio to generate additional revenue streams.

<http://www.microsoft.com>

### **Colibria Unveils Server To Evolve Converged Presence-Driven Communications**

Colibria AS, a developer of mobile instant messaging and presence (IMPS) technology platforms, has unveiled its new generation core network mobile platforms. The carrier-grade Colibria Companion Instant Messaging and Presence Server is a scalable, flexible and future-proof solution designed to support advanced new presence, messaging and multimedia services quickly and economically; to support network and service evolution seamlessly and efficiently, enabling converged presence-driven communications to be realized on IMPS- and IMS-enabled networks.

"This will provide mobile operators with the optimum scaleable platform to deliver value-added services that fully reflect the burgeoning possibilities of pres-

ence technology," Colibria CEO Keith Gibson said.

Colibria's technology platform provides mobile operators with a seamless pathway to deliver and evolve IMS and IMPS services and applications, unlocking new revenue streams to boost ARPU.

This messaging and presence enabler delivers certified OMA WV support for presence, instant messaging, groups, shared content and core features. The Colibria Companion comprises the full range of core components — Presence server, Instant Messaging server, Groups server, IMPS PC and Mobile Clients, Communities and Blogs server and clients, plus Chat server.

The presence interfaces and APIs can be used to share presence information between a variety of applications, supporting new and existing applications that use presence information more intelligently, enhancing standard telecom services.

<http://www.colibria.com>

### **Citrix, SAP America To Jointly Offer Bundle For SMBs**

Citrix Systems, Inc., a provider of access infrastructure solutions, and SAP America, Inc., a provider of business software solutions (and subsidiary of SAP AG), have announced the future joint offering for small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) that bundles SAP Business One with Citrix MetaFrame Presentation Server. The joint offering facilitates the deployment of SAP Business One and provides fast/secure access remotely or over the Web to business-critical applications and information for end users in companies with up to 250 employees. The companies also have unveiled a go-to-market strategy that aligns the two companies and their channel partners.

Together, SAP and Citrix are leveraging their focuses to provide this joint offering, designed to be practical and economical, for small and medium-sized businesses to quickly deploy SAP Business One to remote users, while providing many of the same technological advantages enjoyed by larger industry leaders.

<http://www.citrix.com>

<http://www.sap.com>



Colibria AS


Subscribe FREE online at [www.cismag.com](http://www.cismag.com)

**Improve  
business  
practices.**

**Improve  
revenue  
opportunities.**

**Improve  
your  
bottom line.**

©2005 Witness Systems

By combining with  **BLUEPUMPKIN**, Witness Systems is leading the market with the innovation and resources to define and transform contact center workforce optimization. This alliance of two market innovators delivers a single, tightly woven

# Improve

solution dedicated to helping you drive performance.

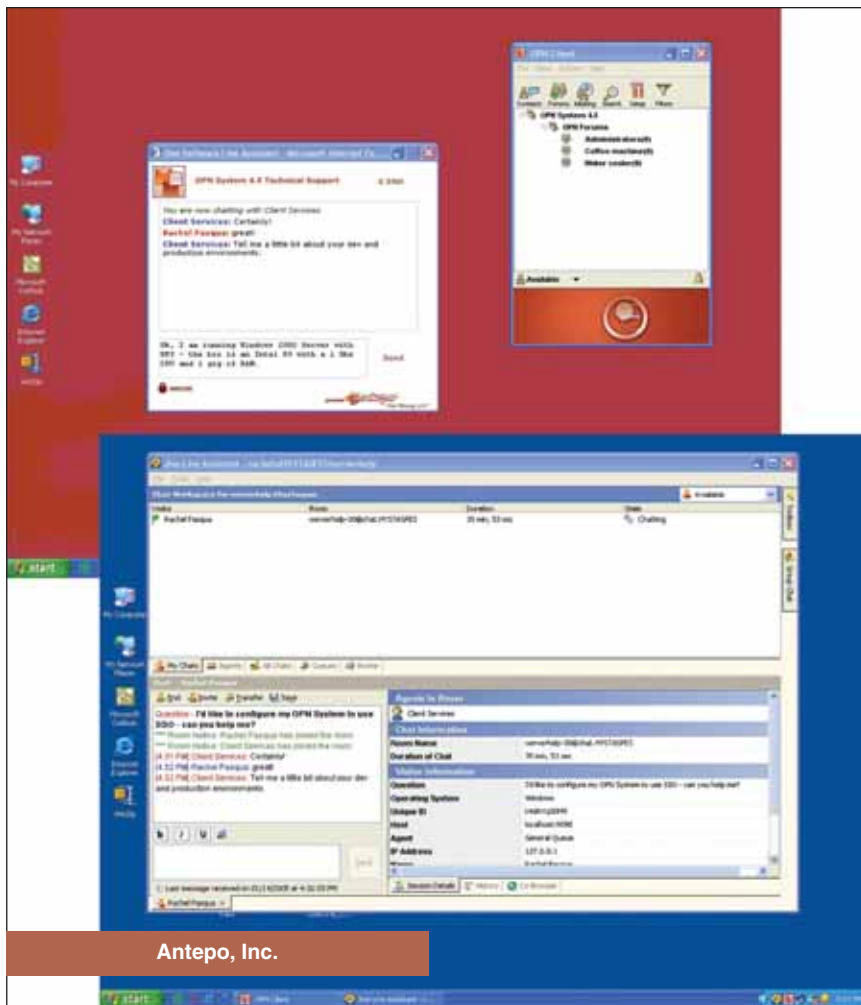
Now, you have one source for: Quality monitoring.

Workforce management. Performance management.

And e-learning. Witness Systems and Blue Pumpkin.

We're working hard to help you improve everything.

**Call 1-888-3WITNESS or visit [www.witness.com](http://www.witness.com).**



## Antepo, Jive Partner To Offer IM/Customer Support Integration

Antepo, Inc., a provider of a secure, interoperable Enterprise Instant Messaging (EIM) system, together with Jive Software, a provider of customizable, Java-based collaboration applications, has announced a strategic partnership. Through the agreement, Antepo and Jive Software will partner to develop a best-of-breed, standards-based CRM software solution based on Antepo's Open Presence Network (OPN) System. The solution will integrate the EIM and Presence capabilities of Antepo's OPN System with the customer support and knowledge base functionality of Jive Software's Live Assistant solution. As a result, enterprises will gain access to a robust, reliable platform for real-time communications, collaboration, sales support and customer service. Together, they intend to offer a

powerful system for Web-based CRM in virtually any enterprise IT ecosystem – "with the scalability, reliability and security that today's businesses demand."

Antepo's OPN System offers an instant messaging solution that drives real-time communication and collaboration between employees, customers, suppliers and partners, while offering enterprise-level control, security, integration and compliance. Jive Live Assistant provides a Java-based interface for online sales and support interactions, as well as features to set up routing rules, automate ticket resolution, access the Jive Knowledge Base and other content repositories, and more.

The joint solution leverages the open XMPP protocol, and it will be available to new and existing customers in the second quarter of 2005.

<http://www.antepo.com>

<http://www.jivesoftware.com>



WITNESS SYSTEMS

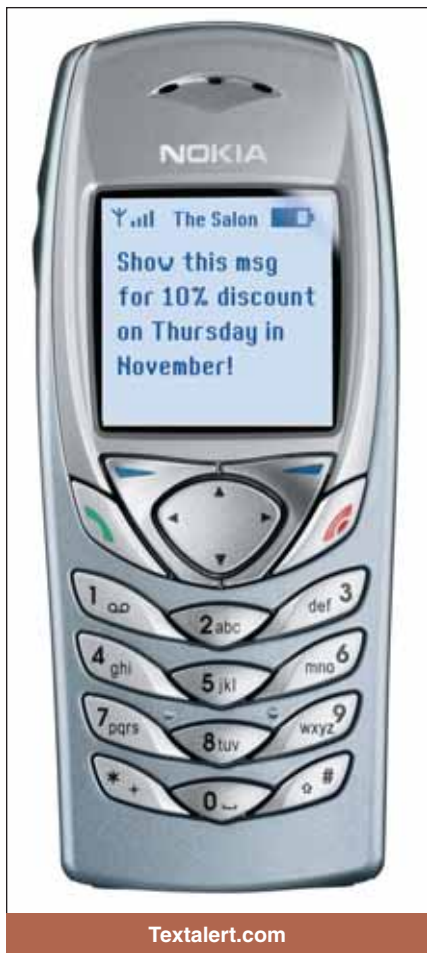
*It's your goal. It's our philosophy.  
Improve everything.™*

**everything.™**

Witness Systems announces its  
combination with Blue Pumpkin.  
Now the single source for all your  
workforce optimization needs.

[www.improveeverything.com](http://www.improveeverything.com)





Textalert.com

## Textalert.com Launches SMS Marketing Solution

Textalert.com, a provider of SMS (short message service, i.e., text messages) marketing campaign solutions, has launched its SMS marketing campaign solution for small and medium-sized businesses to take advantage of mobile marketing.

Marketing via SMS has traditionally been the domain of large organizations; now businesses of all sizes can send marketing text messages, such as special offers, coupons and promotional announcements, direct to customers' cell phones, using the new online service.

Having collected customers' cell phone numbers, users of Textalert.com simply enter the message, input the numbers of their customers into an online address book, and click "send".

The service operates on a pre-paid credits system, and there are no sign-up or subscription charges. No additional software is required to use the system, which

can be accessed from any Internet-connected PC. Furthermore, Textalert.com is enabled to send messages through all major United States carriers.

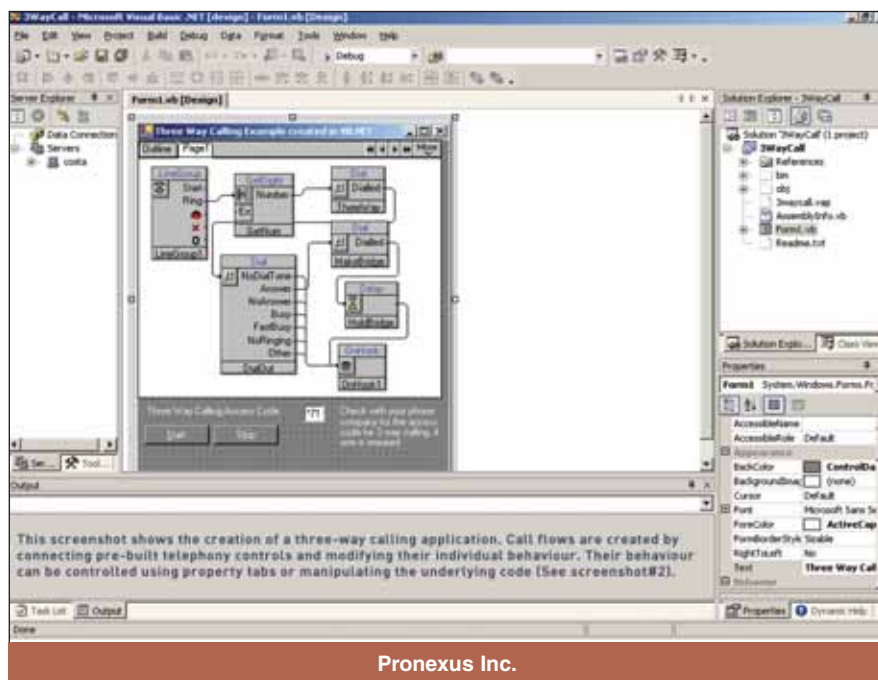
<http://www.textalert.com>

## Speech Technologies

### Pronexus Announces Rapid Application Development Environment

Pronexus Inc., a provider of computer telephony and speech software solutions, has announced the release of VBVoice 5.3, a rapid application development environment for creating scalable and flexible telephony applications, such as speech-enabled IVRs and hardware-less VoIP solutions, among others. VBVoice 5.3 can deliver the scalability and reliability for developing and deploying effective IVR and other telephony applications; introduces a range of new management options; and adds support for Intel NetStructure DM/V voice boards.

VBVoice 5.3 also expands on Pronexus' Application Console by offering both the existing Visual Basic 6 console and a .NET version. This console permits centralized administration and reporting for call centers, hosting organizations and other large-scale environments. It allows



Pronexus Inc.

## Happenings...

### TechTeam Global Announces Acquisition of Sytel, Inc.

TechTeam Global, Inc., a provider of information technology and business process outsourcing support services, has announced its purchase of all outstanding stock of Sytel, Inc., effective as of January 3, 2005. Sytel, with over 300 employees, is a diversified information technology services and solutions company, providing managed network services and advanced enterprise solutions.

The terms of the transaction included a purchase price of \$18.5 million, with an additional sum of up to \$2.0 million that may be paid by TechTeam upon the renewal of a customer contract that is scheduled to expire in early 2005. Further payments may be made to Sytel's shareholders during the two years immediately following the acquisition upon Sytel's attainment of specified gross profit objectives and the satisfaction of various other conditions.

<http://www.techteam.com>

<http://www.sytel.com>

### eTelecare International, Phase 2 Solutions Changes Name Of United Operations

eTelecare International, Inc., and Phase 2 Solutions, Inc., two call center outsourcers, are changing their name to eTelecare Global Solutions, Inc., effective immediately. The companies, which merged in May 2004 when eTelecare acquired Phase 2 Solutions, are

them to answer and distribute calls to different applications residing on one or more telephony servers. It manages and routes calls based on specified rules; monitors application performance; and logs calls and events.

VBVoice 5.3 also introduces support for Windows 2003 (Standard and Enterprise) on Intel Dialogic hardware. It includes a new hardware interface optimized for peak performance and flexibility in resource management.

VBVoice 5.3 is now available.

<http://www.pronexus.com>

### **MIPS, Third-Party VoIP Solutions Developers Offer MultiChannel Voice On Single Chip**

MIPS Technologies, Inc., a provider of industry-standard processor architectures and cores for digital consumer and business applications, together with D2 Technologies, HelloSoft, RADVISION and Trinity Convergence, has announced a solution for multichannel VoIP applications, including VoIP residential gateways, IP phones, VoWLAN (Voice over Wireless LAN) phones and terminal adapters. VoIP solutions enabled by all aforementioned companies offer semiconductor companies high performance in a 32-bit synthesizable processor core, giving them the flexibility to lower costs by implementing advanced VoIP capabilities on a single processor.

The MIPS32 24K core offers semiconductor companies the performance to eliminate the DSP and to subsume VoIP functionality into the host CPU, including four or more voice channels, while providing additional headroom for new features and services.

Numerous third-party developer partners support MIPS-based VoIP solutions with a variety of voice-related modules. MIPS-based VoIP solutions, including Centillium, Infineon, Toshiba and Texas Instruments, currently provide VoIP solutions using a MIPS core as the host CPU.

MIPS-Based VoIP solutions are available today for licensing.

<http://www.mips.com>

<http://www.d2tech.com>

<http://www.hellosoft.com>

<http://www.radvision.com>

<http://www.trinityconvergence.com>

## **ATTENTION VENDORS!**

Send your **News** and **Product Releases** via e-mail to **[cispress@tmcnet.com](mailto:cispress@tmcnet.com)**.

Whenever possible, please include high-resolution (minimum 266 dpi) color graphics (.BMP, .EPS, .TIF, or .JPG).



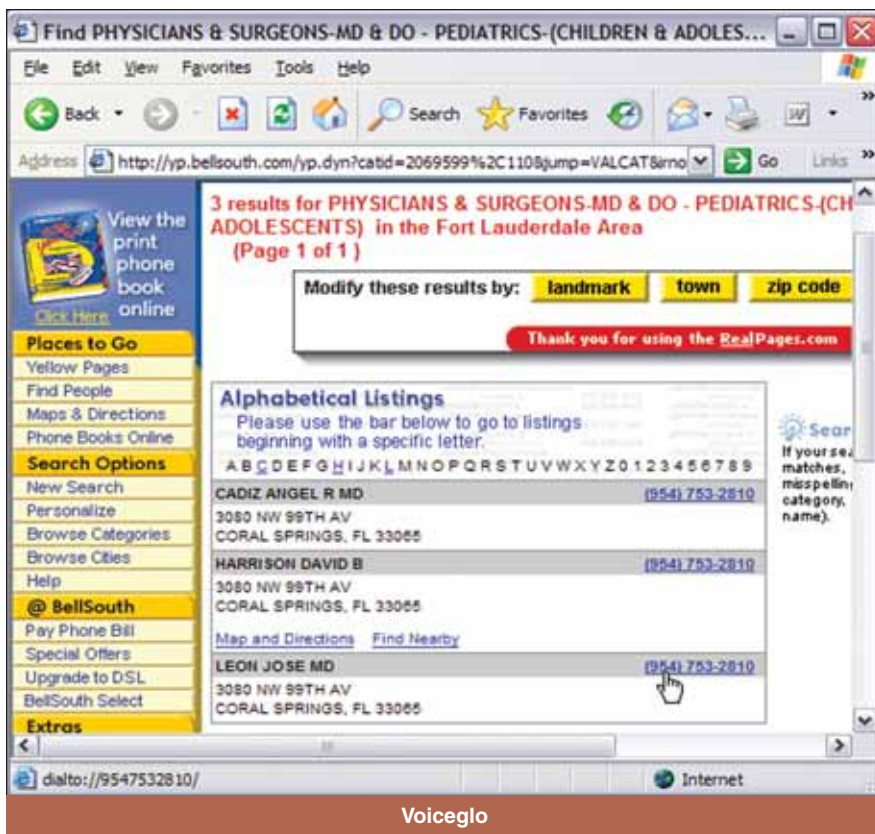
TotalView® Workforce Management from IEX streamlines processes and automates tasks. The result — a more productive, data-driven operation with more time to manage your contact center's performance. Call 1.800.433.7692, or visit **[www.iex.com](http://www.iex.com)** to discover how many ways TotalView can improve the way your contact center works.

**Get what you want.**

It all connects with  
**IEX**  
A TEKELEC COMPANY

© 2005 IEX Corporation. All rights reserved.





## New Voiceglo Option Allows Users To Make Internet Calls In A Click

Voiceglo, a communications and networking company, has announced the enhancement of its Web- and PC-based applications, GloPhone and GloConnect, with a new feature called Click-to-Call.

Click-to-Call allows users to dial any number they see on a Web site, in one easy step, using Voiceglo's browser-based telephone service. This convenient feature turns any phone number listed on a Web site into an active link, allowing GloPhone and GloConnect users to simply place their cursor over the desired phone number, click their mouse and make a phone call to the listed party. The Click-to-Call application dials the number within seconds, and users can participate in a phone conversation directly from their computer. With GloPhone and GloConnect, the new Click-to-Call option works with any published U.S. or Canadian telephone number on the Internet. (Soon, Click-to-Call to international destinations will be added.) All calls between GloPhone and GloConnect users are free worldwide. <http://www.voiceglo.com>

## Zultys Announces VoIP Software Interface For Mac, Linux

Zultys Technologies, a designer and manufacturer of products that converge telecommunications and data communications for businesses, has announced the availability of MXIE to run on Macintosh and Linux. Available now, MXIE (Media Exchange Interface for End Users) is a computer telephony application used with Zultys' VoIP solutions.

MXIE is a desktop application, used in conjunction with the MX250 IP PBX, and contributes to providing converged features and functions that can go beyond basic telephony.

The MXIE application allows a person to log in as a user, an operator or an agent in an ACD group; the user may log in to one or more of these roles simultaneously. When the user receives an incoming call, MXIE clearly displays whether the call is personal or for the group, allowing the person to greet the caller appropriately.

MXIE also provides an address book, allowing users to create customized buddy and distribution lists. Users can control any SIP phone to make and receive calls.

announcing the name change as part of a broader strategy for offering clients location-independent solutions. The new name, which incorporates elements of both companies' previous names, draws on the heritage of both business-outsourcing companies.

"eTelecare Global Solutions will continue to deliver the economic returns that were associated with both eTelecare and Phase 2," Senior VP of Worldwide Sales and Marketing Susan Knox said. <http://www.etelecare.com>

## iVoice Joins 3Com Voice Solution Providers Program As 'Reseller Approved' Solution

iVoice, Inc., a provider of speech recognition technology, has announced it has joined the 3Com Voice Solution Providers Program (VSPP). 3Com is a provider of converged voice and data networking solutions for enterprises. Under the terms of the program agreement, iVoice was named a "reseller-approved" participant. As part of the 3Com Exercise Choice initiative, the VSPP defines three levels of interoperability testing with 3Com convergence applications products and services so customers may gain confidence in proven solutions tested by 3Com and 3Com-authorized resellers.

<http://www.ivoice.com>  
<http://www.3com.com>

## AT&T Selects InPhonic For Its New Mobility Solutions

InPhonic, Inc., an online seller of wireless services and devices, has announced a two-year agreement with AT&T to provide a subscriber management system to support AT&T's launch of wireless voice and data services to enterprise customers. InPhonic will deliver the systems platform for procurement, activation, billing and customer care, as well as self-service platforms based on Web and speech recognition technology. InPhonic's mobile data platform will also provide support for over-the-air activation, mobile Web and advanced wireless messaging.

<http://www.att.com>  
<http://www.inphonic.com>

## Contactual, NEC Announce Product Licensing Agreement

Contactual (formerly White Pajama), a provider of on-demand contact center solutions, and NEC Business Solutions (NEC) in Australia have announced that NEC will be hosting, selling and managing a hosted contact center, dubbed Agent99, licensed from Contactual.

The reach and distribution of both companies' technologies will be greatly expanded through this relationship, according to Contactual's founder and CEO, Mansour Salame.

This announcement is the culmination of sev-



eral months of market-entry planning and intra-company engineering development in Australia and Silicon Valley. Both companies seem to be optimistic about the growing worldwide demand for hosted contact centers.

With a dedicated product site and a fully supported sales and marketing effort already underway, a handful of NEC customers in Australia are already using Agent 99. The production platform is now being built ready for an Australian launch in April this year.

<http://www.contactual.com>

<http://www.nec.com.au>

### Orb Data Joins FrontRange Channel Network, Will Integrate FrontRange With IBM

FrontRange Solutions, a provider of business software and solutions, has fortified its global channel network for its new IT Service Management (ITSM) suite of software products by signing UK-based Orb Data to its expanding international community of reseller Partners. Orb Data, a specialist provider of systems and service management solutions, plans to integrate FrontRange's ITSM suite with IBM's Tivoli enterprise management range of products.

<http://www.frontrange.com>

<http://www.orb-data.com>

### APEX Eliminates Licensing Fees For ASR Module

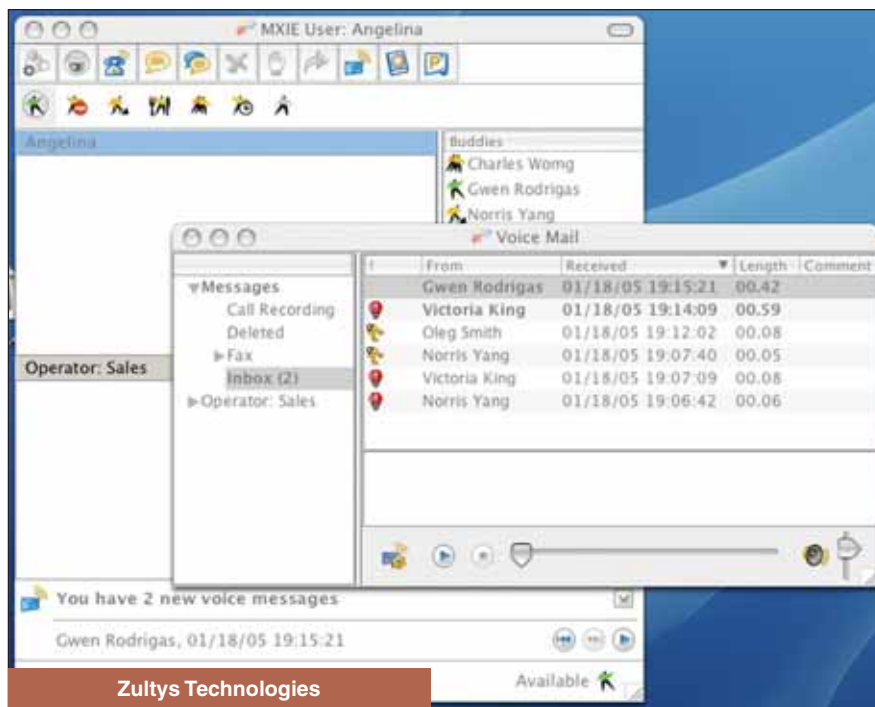
APEX Voice Communications, a supplier of multiservices platforms for enhanced services and real-time billing solutions, has announced it will no longer charge licensing fees for its Automated Speech Recognition (ASR) module on OmniVox AES, its latest multiservices platform for enhanced services. With built-in natural language capabilities and a number of ASR-specific command features, the ASR module allows customers to develop a greater variety of voice-driven wireline and wireless services more quickly and efficiently using the integrated OmniView Service Creation Environment.

"This is not an offer which is good only for a limited time or for one-time purchases, but rather a long-term strategic decision by APEX to continue assisting its worldwide customers in different ways," Elhum Vahdat, executive vice president of APEX Voice Communications, said.

<http://www.apexvoice.com>

### Vocent Appoints New President, CEO

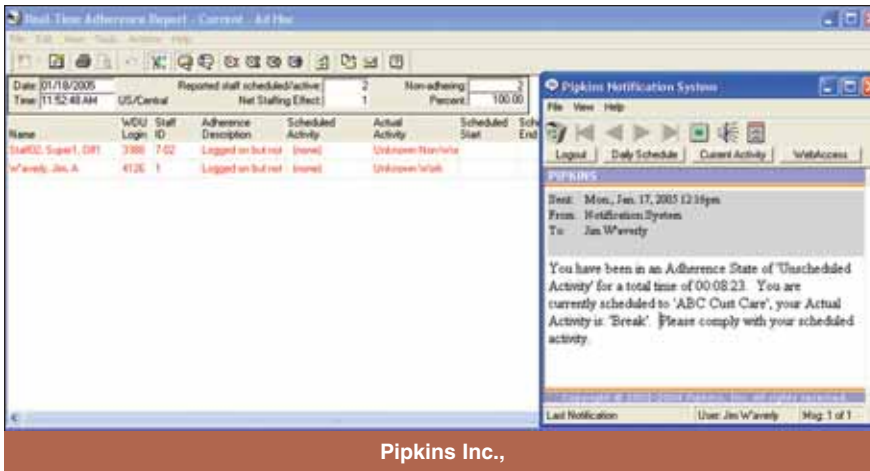
Vocent Solutions, Inc., a provider of voice security solutions, has announced that Jeffrey A. Scheel has joined the company as president and CEO. Scheel will leverage his 18 years spent in enterprise software and systems to further enhance Vocent's delivery of voice security solutions. Prior to joining Vocent, Scheel was VP & GM for CRM Products at Siebel Systems, Inc., where he led product management and market-



## The art of the deal.

Schedule an online demo with your call center management team and get one FREE Supervisor upgrade with purchase, a \$1,250 value. Call Mark Surico at 310-207-6800 x 471 to get workforce management that's more cost effective today, more capable tomorrow.

The Art of Workforce Optimization™



This software is a desktop application custom built to support Mac OSX, Red Hat and SuSE Linux, as well as Windows 2003 and XP.

<http://www.zultys.com>

## Workforce & Employee Management

### Pipkins Adds New Pop-Up Message Tools To Workforce Management

Pipkins Inc., a supplier of workforce management software and services for call centers, has added new pop-up alert capabilities to its Vantage Point workforce

management software to assist call center supervisors in ensuring that agents adhere to their assigned work schedules. The enhancements to Pipkins' optional Agent Notification and Real-Time Adherence modules provide additional tools to aid in maintaining service levels.

The system's Agent Notification module can now be used to send pop-up messages to agents' computer screens when they are out of compliance for a certain period of time, as determined by the supervisor. This feature can be used to notify agents when they are logged into the wrong queue, not logged on at all, and in other situations that can affect overall operations. This

ing for Siebel's core sales, service, call center, help desk, customer order management and partner relationship management product lines. While there, he also led industry analyst relations for the company.

<http://www.vocent.com>

### Apptera Appoints New CEO

Apptera, a provider of packaged speech applications, has announced the appointment of **Marketta Silvera** as the company's new CEO. Silvera brings more than 25 years' of leadership and technology experience to Apptera, where she will provide the corporate vision for new enterprise solutions and head the execution of the company's business growth strategy. She will also serve as a member of the board of directors of Apptera. Silvera replaces Lorraine Hariton, who was the company's chief executive for the past 18 months.

<http://www.apptera.com>

### Sonata, Microsoft Announce Strategic Alliance To Benefit ISVs, Enterprise Customers

Sonata Software Ltd., an IT consulting and software services company, and Microsoft Corp. have announced the forging of a strategic alliance between the two companies, to bring significant business benefits to independent software vendors (ISVs), large enterprises and midmarket organizations. Under the alliance, Sonata will deliver solutions and services based on Microsoft technologies and products. The benefiting purposes: to help ISVs accelerate delivery of products to market and to reduce R&D spending; to help large enterprises migrate applications from mainframe and midrange systems to Microsoft Windows Server 2003 and the Windows Server System, to reduce operational and maintenance costs and to take advantage of current market applications and skills; and to enable midmarket companies to improve business management and customer interaction through enterprise systems using Microsoft Business Solutions-Axapta and Microsoft Business Solutions CRM, delivered quickly and with minimal risk.

Under this alliance, Sonata has also established a Microsoft Competency Center (MCC) to deliver customized solutions based on Microsoft Axapta and Microsoft CRM. Coupled with Sonata's extensive midmarket ERP and CRM implementation expertise, the MCC offers advanced solution frameworks for the CPG and ISV verticals, to help customers reduce the cost, time and risk involved in such implementations.

<http://www.sonata-software.com>

<http://www.microsoft.com>

### Intel, ZTE To Jointly Deliver Broadband Wireless Using WIMAX

Intel Corporation, a manufacturer of computer, networking and communications prod-

Subscribe FREE online at [www.cismag.com](http://www.cismag.com)

To receive  
free information  
from our  
premium advertisers,  
please visit  
[freeinfo.tmcnet.com](http://freeinfo.tmcnet.com)

expands the pop-up alerts previously available in this module, to issue schedule changes, overtime requests and general business messages, without any interruption to call handling.

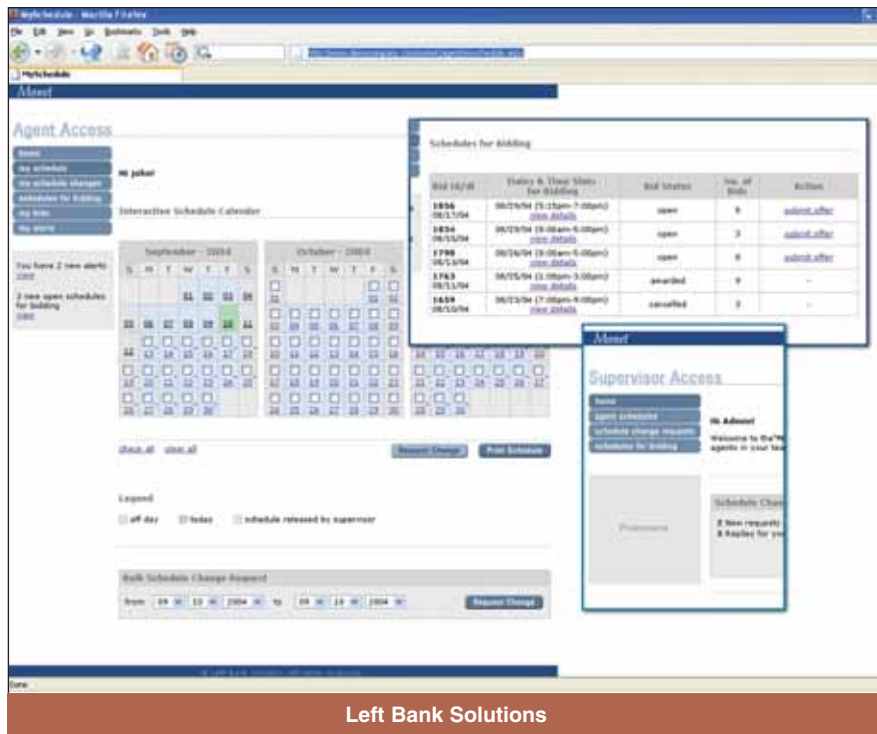
In addition, organizations that utilize Vantage Point's Real-Time Adherence module can now configure that module to automatically generate pop-up alerts to agents who are doing an unscheduled activity, scheduled but not logged in, or logged in but not scheduled.

The two modules have been integrated to allow these messages to be sent without supervisor intervention. In both cases, users also have the option to notify the agent's supervisor or another individual about the non-adhering activity.

<http://www.pipkins.com>

## Left Bank Aims Workforce Management System At Large Contact Centers

Left Bank Solutions, a provider of workforce optimization solutions for small and medium-sized contact centers, has announced the release of its newest version of Monet Workforce Management System with the addition of multisite and multiple-time zone features in order to cater to the needs of large contact centers. Further, these functions are now offered to large centers at a fraction of the cost of alternative solutions.



"Accordingly, we have tailored Monet to be the best of both worlds — it is easy to implement and extremely cost-effective for small centers while being able to operate across multiple sites and time zones in large operations," Charles Ciarlo, Left Bank Solutions president and CEO, said.

The Monet site set-up and maintenance screen offers unlimited sites. Each site has a code and description and is assigned a specific time zone. Also, call center managers can assign multiple or unlimited sites within a particular workgroup.

Monet includes several other elements: skills-based scheduling and routing; Monet AnyWhere, a Web-based workforce management agent and supervisor interface; and matching service levels to call type.

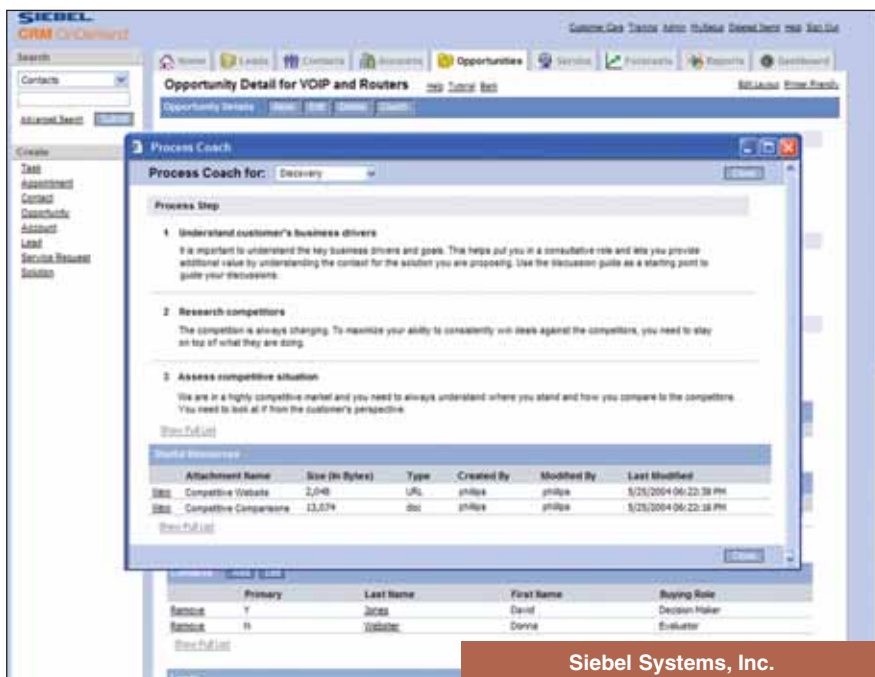
"These enhancements allow us to service the large center market while continuing to offer the finest price/performance product in the industry," Ciarlo continued.

<http://www.leftbanksolutions.com>

## Services

### Siebel Announces CRM OnDemand Upgrade

Siebel Systems, Inc., a provider of business applications software, has announced Siebel CRM OnDemand Release 6. This upgrade introduces a prebuilt industry-specific solutions that can provide organizations with cost and time savings opportunities, advanced sales effectiveness capabilities such as prebuilt sales workflow, and a seven-fold expansion of Siebel CRM OnDemand's analytic capabilities to deliver



Siebel Systems, Inc.



powerful insight. Release 6 doubles the level of functionality available to better acquire, retain and serve customers.

With this release, Siebel CRM OnDemand is now available in four pre-built industry-specific editions: CRM OnDemand Financial Services Edition — Wealth Management/Insurance Edition; CRM OnDemand High Tech Edition; CRM OnDemand Life Sciences Edition — Medical Edition; and CRM OnDemand Automotive Edition.  
<http://www.siebel.com/crm>

## Telstra Launches Service Provider Solutions In U.S. Market

Telstra Incorporated, a provider of advanced communications services to multinational corporations, has announced its new Service Provider Solutions offerings. Telstra's Service Provider Solutions offer customizable data communications services to carriers, service providers, resellers and system integrators in the U.S. market.

"The key benefit for service providers is the ability to use our network on a 'pay as you grow' basis," Telstra Director of Channel Development Arthur Weissman said. "This minimizes capital risk and operational costs by eliminating the need to build out a network."

Service providers can begin selling services and can possibly realize revenues and profits immediately on their global data services. Telstra will provide customized service level agreements for these services

and global technical support, 24x7, with in-country support at major destinations in the Asia-Pacific region.

<http://www.telstra-usa.com>

## Telephone Systems & Software

### 3Com Offers Solutions Set With Telephony, Data, Wireless, PoE For SMBs

3Com Corporation, a provider of converged voice and data networking solutions for enterprises of all sizes, has expanded its small and medium business (SMB) product portfolio with a new standards-based Power over Ethernet (PoE)-enabled wireless access point. Available now, the 3Com OfficeConnect Wireless 108Mbps 11g PoE Access Point makes 3Com able to deliver all necessary components enabling complete voice-data-wireless LAN convergence for small businesses.

<http://www.3com.com>

## Peripherals & Hardware

### Gefen Releases Dual Link DVI Products For High Definition Video

Gefen, a provider of consumer electronics and audio/video connectivity solutions, has released two new dual link DVI products to work with high definition video transmitted through dual link DVI, which uses all 24 pins of the connector to send video at resolutions up to 3840 x 2400 at 60Hz.

ucts, and ZTE Corporation, a telecommunications equipment provider, have announced plans to jointly deliver global broadband wireless solutions using WiMAX technology. Intel and ZTE will cooperate to develop and promote standards and specifications for 802.16-based networks. The companies will also work jointly with regulatory agencies in key global markets for securing adequate radio spectrum for broadband services based on WiMAX technology.

<http://www.intel.com>

<http://www.zte.com.cn>

### Citrix Offers 3 Promotional Offers For A Limited Time

Citrix Systems, Inc., a provider of access infrastructure solutions, has announced three limited-time promotional offers for Citrix customers. These promotions can help companies take advantage of the new access capabilities offered by Citrix Access Gateway, Citrix GoToAssist and Citrix GoToMeeting. The offers give customers the opportunity to build out their Citrix access infrastructure to enhance business efficiencies and access strategies with significant cost savings.

The Access Gateway sales promotion extends from February 1 to June 30, 2005.

The GoToAssist promotion is effective through March 31, 2005.

The GoToMeeting promotion is available to customers who register before June 30, 2005.

<http://www.citrix.com>

### ASI Europe Launches Reseller Program For Its CRM Software

Software vendor ASI Europe has launched a UK reseller program to promote its iMIS CRM software. ASI iMIS is a suite of integrated, scalable and customizable modules designed to help not-for-profit businesses organize back-office systems and to communicate with members. The vendor has two training routes for partners: an implementation and product support route for consulting firms and Web development teams; and the sales and marketing route for software resellers and system integrators.

<http://www.advsol.com>

## ATTENTION VENDORS!

Send your **News and Product Releases** via e-mail to [cispress@tmcnet.com](mailto:cispress@tmcnet.com).

Whenever possible, please include high-resolution (minimum 266 dpi) color graphics (.BMP, .EPS, .TIF, or .JPG).



3Com Corporation

The DVI-DL Switcher allows users to connect two sources to a display equipped with only one input. Users select which source to view manually or with a remote control. The switch between sources occurs instantly, offering immediate access to the source.

The DVI-2000 HD uses a sender and receiver system to send dual link DVI video up to 1640 feet (500 meters) over fiber optic cables. The sender unit connects to the source and the receiver unit to the extended display. Sender and receiver are linked by multimode fiber optic cables designed to prevent signal degradation at long distances.

Both the 2x1 DVI-DL Switcher and the DVI-2000 HD are engineered to deliver high definition video that is HDCP (high bandwidth digital content protection) compliant. Both will be available online or through a Gefen reseller.

<http://www.gefen.com>



Gefen

## OPERATION

# Barbados

**Looking for a prime location for your  
Call Center Operations? Look into Barbados.**

- Low Operating Cost
- Attractive Incentives
- Low Employee Turnover
- English-speaking Workforce
- Broadband Telecommunications
- Cash Grants for Training
- Modern Low-cost Facilities
- Social & Economic Stability
- Qualified Professionals With Technical and Management Skills

### *Barbados Means Business*

Worldwide: **1-800-841-7860**

New York 212-867-6420 Miami 305-442-2269

Canada 416-214-9919 UK 0207-580-6077

Barbados 246-427-5350

Visit online: **[www.bidc.com](http://www.bidc.com)**



**BARBADOS INVESTMENT  
& DEVELOPMENT CORP.**

## CRM

### Best Software Upgrades CRM Solution

**Best Software**, a provider of business management products and services for small and midsize businesses, has announced the launch of ACCPAC CRM v5.7, an upgrade to its customer relationship management software. The new version includes enhancements for improving integration with other business applications, and it provides mobile users with increased flexibility and functionality. Also among this version's new features: a sophisticated Web Services interface; a new global document library; "stand alone" product, quote and order entry capabilities; and improved Microsoft Outlook integration. The new Web services interface that ACCPAC CRM 5.7 offers is a significant upgrade to its Web Services API, which allows businesses to create integrations with both Web-deployed and LAN-based business management applications. Specific elements of ACCPAC CRM can be called by other applications utilizing this new Web Services capability and related standards.

The new, centralized document library in version 5.7 allows sharing of corporate documents with all users of the system, to make easier the securing, sharing and maintaining of items such as internal corporate presentations, templates, etc. with all ACCPAC CRM users.

The new "stand alone" product, quote and order entry capabilities (built-in) are for organizations that have not implemented an integrated order management and inventory control system with their CRM system.

<http://www.bestsoftware.com>

### appStrategy Announces v1.5 Of appRadius For Microsoft CRM

appStrategy, Inc., a provider of .NET-connected software tools and solutions for customer relationship management (CRM), has announced the worldwide availability of a rapid application development (RAD) system that allows Microsoft CRM partners and customers to extend the capabilities of Microsoft CRM. appRadius is a robust system that delivers

advanced features for midmarket and enterprise customers.

"As Microsoft CRM continues to grow in popularity, our partners are releasing complementary tools and solutions that further drive adoption," said David Thatcher, general manager of CRM at Microsoft Business Solutions. "appRadius for Microsoft CRM builds on the foundation of Microsoft CRM to give Visual Studio .NET developers a powerful option for customizations and for developing vertical market CRM solutions."

Version 1.5 of appRadius for Microsoft CRM includes an XML-based system configuration engine and data source drivers that support Microsoft CRM's FetchXML, SQL and legacy formats. The system also includes advanced controls including grids, advanced query controls, charting/graphing and navigation controls. Several wizards are included to automate the development process. The system supports Microsoft Visual Studio .NET and Microsoft CRM 1.2.

<http://www.appstrategy.com>  
<http://www.microsoft.com>

### Oracle | PeopleSoft Launches Intellisync-Powered Mobile Sales Product

Intellisync Corp., a developer and marketer of wireless software for the worldwide mobile communications industry, announced that Oracle | PeopleSoft has launched an Intellisync-powered mobile sales product in the EnterpriseOne line. PeopleSoft EnterpriseOne 8.11 Mobile Sales is designed to extend Oracle | PeopleSoft data to users of laptop and tablet PCs. Mobile Sales is the second Intellisync-based product in the

EnterpriseOne line. PeopleSoft EnterpriseOne 8.11 PIM Sync provides server-to-server synchronization of contacts, calendar entries and tasks between EnterpriseOne 8.11 and Microsoft Exchange or Lotus Domino groupware. PeopleSoft EnterpriseOne Mobile Sales powered by Intellisync integrates with the Sales Force Automation and Sales Order Entry modules of the EnterpriseOne CRM family, enabling salespeople to place orders and to access contacts, leads, opportunities, forecasts and tasks while away from the office.

<http://www.intellisync.com>

<http://www.oracle.com/peoplesoft>

## On-Demand

### Parature Announces Professional And Enterprise Support Software Editions

Parature, a provider of on-demand customer support software, has announced the immediate availability of the Professional and Enterprise Support Software Editions. Best-suited for a support team of one to four representatives, the Professional Edition provides support teams with Parature's customizable support portal, a robust knowledge base, ticketing system, download capabilities, reporting functionalities, a contact management tool and an activity scheduler that are all integrated into one solution.

"In addition to these easy-to-use features, we have automated the deployment process so that clients can effortlessly set up their own solution and be up and running in a matter of minutes at no additional cost," said Carolyn Abram, vice president of services.

Best-suited for a support team of five or more representatives, the Enterprise Edition combines the features of the Professional Edition with the additional tools necessary to address the multiple facets of supporting a large end user base. Additional integrated and easy-to-use features include an asset management system, real-time chat and monitoring applications, survey tool, product catalog and online discussion boards.

Prospective clients have the ability to test the software for 30 days free.

<http://www.parature.com>





## NetSuite Offers New ERP Modules

NetSuite, Inc., a provider of integrated business application software for small and mid-sized businesses, has announced a pair of new advanced enterprise resource planning (ERP) modules, both designed to deliver financial application software via the Internet. The new modules include NetSuite Revenue Recognition Module and NetSuite Advanced Financials Module. The new modules provide back-office functionality to mid-sized customers, and they also aid in corporate regulatory compliance laws when combined with NetSuite. NetSuite ties ERP, CRM and e-commerce together in a single, hosted application so mid-sized businesses need not waste time and money integrating disparate applications. With NetSuite's architecture as a single data repository, the compliance issues raised by fragmented data stored in multiple systems is addressed.

NetSuite is also delivered as an on-demand Web-based service, eliminating the ongoing cost of maintaining and upgrading the application.

NetSuite's Revenue Recognition Module is intended to ease accounting and reporting with flexibility, as well as to increase integrity and confidence with GAAP Compliance. NetSuite's Advanced Financials Module is intended to bring robust and more sophisticated financial features to mid-sized businesses. This module offers numerous features and functions, including the following: allocations, multicurrency, budgeting, advanced billing and accounts payable and sales tax payments via electronic funds transfer (EFT).

<http://www.netsuite.com>

## Salesforce.com Announces Microsoft Office System Sforce Developer Program

Salesforce.com, a provider of on-demand customer relationship management (CRM), recently announced the creation of the sforce Developer Program for Microsoft Office. Through this program, millions of developers building on Microsoft Office 2000 or newer versions will have access to free tools and resources to help them create solutions that integrate key sales, marketing and support informa-

Account	Posting Period	Is Recognized	Date Executed	Journal	Amount
4002 Service Revenue	Oct 2004	Yes	11/4/2004	04-0114	685.80
4002 Service Revenue	Nov 2004	Yes	12/5/2004	04-0115	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Dec 2004	Yes	1/3/2005	04-0116	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Jan 2005	Yes	2/6/2005	04-0117	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Feb 2005	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Mar 2005	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Apr 2005	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	May 2005	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Jun 2005	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Jul 2005	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Aug 2005	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Sep 2005	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Oct 2005	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Nov 2005	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Dec 2005	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Jan 2006	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Feb 2006	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Mar 2006	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Apr 2006	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	May 2006	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Jun 2006	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Jul 2006	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Aug 2006	No		- None -	1040.74
4002 Service Revenue	Sep 2006	No		- None -	1040.73
4002 Service Revenue	Oct 2006	No		- None -	377.19

tion directly into the Microsoft Office System productivity applications, including Microsoft Office Outlook, Microsoft Office Excel and Microsoft Office Word. Together, these solutions allow Salesforce.com's approximately 214,000 subscribers and 13,300 customers worldwide to extend how they share and manage information, combining the success of on-demand with the productivity of Office. The new Microsoft Office System integrations are accomplished through sforce, salesforce.com's client/service integration platform. Today, a variety of systems and platforms, including enterprise applications, desktop solutions, mobile devices and IP phone systems, integrate with salesforce.com and Supportforce.com via the sforce Web service API, making key business information available to users from all of their favorite applications and tools.

The sforce Developer Program for the

Microsoft Office System includes the sforce Toolkit for Office, designed to make it easy for developers to access the sforce API directly from within those products, simplifying the creation of new integrations and Office-based solutions; Office Directory in On-Demand Marketplace, which was launched last year, is being extended to include a new category for Office solutions, allowing developers and ISVs to easily reach salesforce.com's customer base; and Sforce Developer Community, which now includes dedicated message boards for developers creating Office solutions, as well as popular open source projects demonstrating how integrations can be used, including the sforce Connector for Excel.

<http://www.salesforce.com>

For information and subscriptions, visit <http://www.TMCnet.com> or call 203-852-6800.



**BY** Todd Beck, AchieveGlobal

# WANT LOYAL CUSTOMERS? DON'T STOP AT SATISFACTION

Basic service delivery isn't enough to differentiate an organization in today's competitive marketplace. Understanding which service qualities customers value, and leading employees toward incorporating these qualities into their daily interactions, can propel an organization beyond customer satisfaction to the type of loyalty that can drive business growth.

Over the years, business leaders' focus on improving customer service has produced a host of messages, well-worn phrases such as "anything for the customer" and "the customer is always right."

Certainly, failure to meet a customer's expectations of a service experience can prove quite costly.

Countless research studies throughout the past few decades have quantified the costs of losing a customer due to a poor service experience. Consider this statistic: Effective organizations spend only 10 percent of their operating budget on problems related to poor service. However, organizations that have not learned to deal successfully with service issues can spend as much as 40 percent of their operating budget on those issues. Meanwhile, it costs an average of five times more to win a new customer than it does to retain an existing one.

### Core Service Isn't Enough

As customers become increasingly savvy, products more commoditized and choices more abundant, companies are finding that simply meeting customer expectations (i.e., creating customer satisfaction) doesn't automatically translate into repeat business. Indeed, among customers who switch to a competitor, up to 80 percent report being satisfied before making the move. It's when customers feel loyal to an

organization that they behave in ways that help grow the business.

For example, when entering a service transaction, customers already expect to have their business needs — the practical reason for their call — satisfied. If a customer service representative at a financial services firm answers a customer's call promptly and successfully addresses a credit card billing issue, that interaction does little to inspire loyalty. The customer called the contact center expecting the billing issue to be resolved. Meeting that expectation won't guarantee the customer will choose to continue using that credit card in the future.

Instead, organizations must earn loyalty by creating positive defining moments that both demonstrate value and exceed the customer's expectations. A defining moment refers to any point in the service transaction at which a customer judges the service that was provided. When the representative answers a call, greets the customer, offers a solution and closes the call, each segment is a defining moment. Although some defining moments carry more importance than others, each affects customer impressions and either strengthens or weakens customer loyalty.

In order to be positive and memorable, every interaction must include some human elements. Successful service providers learn

to assess each customer's service expectations and adjust their approach according to that person's predispositions. Some customers like simplistic chitchat, while others prefer business transactions with only limited personal interaction. While finding the balance is not easy, it is essential for creating the positive defining moments that inspire

customer loyalty.

For example, if the representative from the financial services firm solves the credit card billing issue but also adopts a pleasant demeanor, behaves professionally and takes the time to detail a different set of options

**Organizational leaders must understand that simply satisfying customers won't differentiate their company from the rest of the marketplace.**

that would avoid the problem in the future, that interaction exceeds the customer's expectations, makes an impression and increases the likelihood that the customer will continue doing business with the company.

### What Customers Want

With all of the lip service paid to customer loyalty in today's marketplace, one would think that organizations understand the value of a loyal customer base. Why, then, do so few provide the kind of customer service that generates loyalty? The challenge lies in human nature and in the ability of service providers to develop the right attitudes and supporting behaviors.

To deliver service performance that inspires customer loyalty, organizations must first understand what customers really want from a service transaction. Research has shown that, regardless of industry, product, age, gender or location in the world, consumers want the following four qualities:

1) **Seamlessness.** A service provider must have the ability to manage service factors that are behind the scenes and invisible to the customer, sparing customers the need to deal with multiple organizational layers or complicated procedures.

For example, when customers call a financial services company with questions about their credit card statement, they don't want to be transferred from department to department, or to repeat basic information for every new voice on the other end of the phone. They expect the initial service provider to coordinate everything for them.

2) **Trustworthiness.** Customers wish to feel they are in capable hands and that commitments will be kept. They want and expect things to be correct the first time. Should something go amiss, they expect a quick and thorough recovery.

In the case of the financial services company, the credit card customer wants assurance that the new options offered by the service representative are available as promised and will be reflected on next month's bill.

3) **Attentiveness.** Customers want to be recognized quickly, politely and with

respect. Although this may seem a basic tenet of customer service, attentive service — the quality valued most highly by some

customers — tends to be the point at which many organizations fall short. We know from our own experience that if someone





## New Rules For Better Customer Relationships

By Alan Trefler, Pegasystems

Customer self-service Web applications built without regard for other contact channels have placed many companies in the position of showing customers internal inconsistencies and inefficiencies. One service channel often doesn't synch with the other, and neither takes full advantage of data in back-room systems.

Companies trying to improve customer relationships through Web-based self-service and other channels should consider business rules management technology as a means to resolving their technical issues. Newer technology such as Web services can help integrate numerous applications to give business managers control of customer-facing information technology (IT). That control enables companies to respond nimbly to changing market demands. A layer of smart business rules can coordinate a customer self-service Web application with call center customer relationship management (CRM) applications and enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems to present a coherent face to customers and business partners. These abilities make business rules an intriguing possibility for improving customer service systems on the Web and within the enterprise.

### What Are Business Rules?

Business rules are the practices, processes and procedures that define how a company does business. In many ways, rules are the essence of an organization and define its true value proposition. They could be best practices, procedures, policies, or even physical limitations. For example, a typical business rule is "our company will accept a product return and will refund the purchase price within seven days of the purchase."

Process rules are business rules in action. Process rules or policies define how businesses execute rules, and in which order. For example, a business rule might be that customers have the ability to interact directly through the Web application to update a systemwide shipping address. A smart business practice rule might be something a little more complex: "If a customer is a valuable customer or engaged in an order fulfillment process using the Web application, then leverage the more expensive interactive address change; otherwise leverage the batch transaction." This rule can be reused by the call center, ERP, order-processing fulfillment, shipping and other applications. All these systems have to do is call the address change process made available by

the smart integration software and the appropriate back-office transaction is executed.

Advanced environments can delegate these practices, policies and decisions to business owners outside of IT. These environments enable the change, validation and deployment of these rules to enterprise systems in Internet time, not IT time.

### Why Current Systems Need Help

The bloodletting in call centers, CRM and Web-based customer self-service has shown that a CTO can't simply install a piece of software and expect it to start improving things; Web applications, call center automation, etc., will grow smart enough to improve a business' value proposition only when they work in concert by accessing business rules backed by intelligence, in order to make nuanced decisions.

The first step in this process is to examine the business processes that govern internal and external interactions and to codify best practices. Best practices are the collective knowledge of a company's best managers. Manageable business rules can add this collective intelligence to business process management (BPM) so that the Web self-service system, along with CRM, ERP and supply chain automation,

tells a story about being ignored by a customer service representative, listeners often respond with their own "horror stories," each worse than the one before.

4) **Resourcefulness.** Providers who take a fast, flexible approach to the service interaction appeal to customers' desires for resourceful service. If needed, customers also expect prompt and creative problem solving in the service recovery.

For example, the credit card customer wants the service provider to be able to suggest other options that would alleviate the billing issue. If the solution offered isn't reflected on the next billing statement, that customer expects the provider to fix the problem quickly and without complication.

### Securing Internal Buy-In

Once an organization understands what customers expect from a service transaction, the next step is to ensure employees both understand and commit to service improvement goals. To generate employee acceptance and to ensure that frontline service delivery reflects the qualities customers value most, organizations should consider the following actions:

**Communicate.** Impart a vision of customer service to your employees that includes clear and understandable long-term goals. Once employees know the direction the organization plans to take, they are more likely to get behind the effort.

**Empower.** Allow employees to exercise the flexibility and judgment that customers expect. Employees need to be able to answer a customer's questions and to make basic decisions.

**Guide.** Hold supervisors and managers responsible for modeling the skills you expect to see in frontline service personnel.

**Show value.** Employees who understand the payoff are more likely to support the organization's service improvement goals. Help employees see how creating a positive customer experience benefits them, their customers and the organization.

**Equip.** Provide the resources your staff requires to succeed, including coaching and training.

**Evaluate and compensate.** Establish qualitative evaluation factors, in addition to more objective metrics; then adjust compensation to encourage behaviors that create positive

experiences for customers.

**Build for the future.** Recruit and hire employees whose principles and priorities match those of the organization.

### A Few Final Thoughts

To foster a loyal customer base, organizational leaders must understand that simply satisfying customers won't differentiate their company from the rest of the marketplace. Instead, leaders must commit to delivering the type of customer service that exceeds expectations and inspires customers to con-

tinue doing business with the organization.

Companies that instill the right customer service attitudes and behaviors into both their workplace culture and daily practices will be well positioned to improve customer loyalty, to drive business growth and, ultimately, to achieve and maintain a leadership position in the marketplace.

*Todd Beck is senior product manager, service portfolio, for AchieveGlobal (<http://www.achieveglo.com>), international provider of skills training and con-*

*sulting services in customer service, sales performance and leadership. A former call center supervisor and trainer with Continental Airlines, Beck received an MBA in marketing from Brigham Young University.*

If you are interested in purchasing reprints of this article (in either print or HTML format), please visit Reprint Management Services online at <http://www.reprintbuyer.com> or contact a representative via e-mail at [reprints@tmcnet.com](mailto:reprints@tmcnet.com) or by phone at 800-290-5460.

For information and subscriptions, visit <http://www.TMCnet.com> or call 203-852-6800.



amounts to more than simply another way to connect existing processes.

Organizations need to reach beyond "simple" BPM and extract their policies as rules that will allow for smarter process automation and for a new level of control over the business processes themselves. Recent rollouts of the Web self-service, ERP or CRM system may have made it easier to look at the data in the system; but when are these systems smart enough to go beyond guiding users through complicated tasks? When can they fully automate complex workflows between systems, enabling users to change them, if necessary, mid-stream?

Simple BPM systems are built to report the status of current processes and nothing more. Such systems will stretch only so far to accommodate rules without changing the Cobol or the ERP data model involved. Automating and resolving work with a smart rules-based BPM system can eliminate up to 80 percent of the manual steps in existing CRM, ERP and supply chain management (SCM) or billing systems. This would allow managers not only to identify problems but also to change workflows mid-stream to accommodate changing market forces.

Integrating rules into a company's Web systems, as well into its IT architecture, makes all the systems smarter and more responsive. Rules-driven smart systems analyze facts in real time, understand if more information is needed, and drive processes consistent with management's direction. Web services technologies, such as simple object access protocol (SOAP), are creating integrated portals and browser-based control that give a rules architecture consistency across an enterprise. A browser-based interface that places management outside of IT creates centralized management and distributed access to the rules of a business. This extends best practices and common processes beyond the self-service application, throughout the coordinated enterprise.

### Customer Service In Internet Time

In the zero-training environment of the Web, it is critical to guide the interactions of people and company processes. A rules-oriented approach gives this guidance on the Web and everywhere else. Best practices embedded into a single, separate-rules layer extending across all channels, rather than in an individual application or database, enable a business to

change dynamically and consistently based on the nature of the specific request, providing customers and staff with direction at the right time, all the time.

As previously mentioned, an enterprise might use Web services to extend address change transactions, depending on the circumstances. There are two methods for changing addresses: nightly batch operations and interactive transactions with an ERP system. Each has different throughput and cost. General address changes can probably be handled batch, but if a top-tier customer needs to make an immediate high-margin transaction using the new address, the company wants that transaction executed immediately. Here the business logic determines which method to use and when it must be coded in both applications. Rules would give the systems the intelligence to pick one process over another. The company could expose both of these transactions across departments using Web services to tie together its call center and customer self-service Web applications. A flexible rules engine will layer the business logic above the UDDI (universal description, discovery and integration) level, and afford business users the agility to

change the engine's rules in Internet time.

Business rules and process management technologies enable the application to leverage new transactions, policies and best practices as they become available, without having to initiate a development cycle. Adding a decision rule for when to use a new transaction puts best practices to work immediately without the application knowing anything has changed.

Combining rich process, integration and business rules engines can enable the agile business to build Web-based customer self-service systems that support fluid business practices and high-quality customer interactions. With the increased agility provided to the business users and the better efficiency awarded to IT organizations, enterprises can start reaping value on investment, as well as on their customer service, SCM and ERP applications' forecasted ROI.

*Alan Trefler is founder and CEO of Pegasystems Inc., in Cambridge, Massachusetts ([www.pegasystems.com](http://www.pegasystems.com)). He can be reached at [alan.trefler@pegasystems.com](mailto:alan.trefler@pegasystems.com) or 617-374-9600.*

For information and subscriptions, visit <http://www.TMCnet.com> or call 203-852-6800.



**BY** Syed Hasan, ResponseTek Networks

Years after most major corporations have implemented traditional customer relationship management (CRM) systems, those organizations are still losing up to 30 percent of customers annually, according to some sources. Thus there is legitimate debate about whether or not the truly customer-driven organization has arrived.

# PAY ATTENTION TO CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

After all, how many organizations really understand their customers' experiences? Do they know what delights and disappoints them? Who is referring them to others? Who is not? Is there anyone within an organization that can answer these questions?

In fact, the answer is mostly "no." Many organizations that consider themselves to be customer-centric are simply measuring the wrong things. Customer centricity is not a measure of the number of call centers or agents they have on staff — it is a measure of the quality of the customer's experience.

Part of the problem is that CRM takes a corporate view of customers, focusing on the history of a customer: "Who are our customers, what do they buy, and what should we offer?" Meanwhile, it ignores what's important to the customer (the customer's experience): "What do we want, what did we get, and what should we get?"

Not only does the company need to determine how customers view it, but that information also needs to be available immediately. The manner in which a company deals with its customers' experiences is a good predictor of its future financial performance. Because of this, companies should access, review and analyze customer experience information as frequently as they do their financial information.

## Customer Experience Drivers

Lack of customer insight and understanding: As noted, customer churn rates can reach as high as 30 percent. Replacing an entire customer base every three to five years would be an expensive task when you factor in the high cost of sales in addition to product development/manufacturing costs. Many companies focus on customer acquisition by investing in ad campaigns and CRM systems, and then spending millions on rebates, incentive discounts, loyalty programs and customer service organizations to keep them. Companies need to know why customers are buying from them or why they are choosing the competition. CRM systems, for instance, are very good at tracking customer data, such as when customers purchase items or what method they used. However, CRM systems do not capture a customer's experience during this time. Companies need to know what satisfied the customer and if there was any dissatisfaction during the purchasing process. And if so, how will these issues affect future purchases?

**No connection between customer expectations and management.** Companies often focus on improving customer retention through marketing incentives, loyalty programs and customer service. Many times these programs are extremely inefficient investments if the brand experience is not being delivered

properly. Therefore, key stakeholders across an organization need transparency. They need to be able to see, feel and measure the areas of disappointment and to communicate the areas of delight back into their organization. Of course, it's not enough to simply get that information.

There must be strong lines of accountability to ensure the problems get fixed. The problems must be presented in a way that is both measurable and actionable. It has never been so important that managers at every level — right up to board level — see what customers are saying, every day, about the company, and that

**The sole purpose of any business is to fulfill the expectations of its customers. It is critical that companies establish an ongoing two-way communication with their customers to encourage further feedback.**



# Customer Relationship Management

## CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

they be certain everything is being done to get the experience as good as is possible. Where gaps are opening up, where problems are not being resolved, when a customer leaves — they need to be visible, along with the action being taken, to resolve the problem.

**No customer communication strategy.** Companies spend millions on managing their sales efficiencies but very little on managing the quality of a customer's experience of their product or service. In such competitive environments, it is critical to manage ongoing customer expectations as they are changing every day. However, process management on its own is not enough; it is important to keep in mind who the customers are, and to establish and maintain an open dialog. Therefore, feedback loops must be established to ensure the customer is kept in the picture. The ideal is to build on previous approaches, but with a real focus on the experiences of customers and how those experiences affect their behaviors. Companies need to let their customers know they are listening. Often, companies request comments of customers, only to not respond to the customers after collecting the information. By responding and letting the customer know his or her issue is being resolved, the customer will feel a connection with the company and, in turn, be more satisfied. The sole purpose of any business is to fulfill the expectations of its customers. It is critical that companies establish an ongoing two-way communication with their customers to encourage further feedback.

Given these customer experience management (CEM) drivers, here are seven pillars that can provide organizations with that competitive advantage:

- **Enable customers to communicate with you at the time of their experience.** Let your customers provide feedback easily when they are most likely to; i.e., at the time of pain or delight, by providing a convenient (to them) and wide range of channels, whether that is via point-of-sale, a wireless device, the Web, a kiosk, etc.

- **Waiting for periodic, centralized reports and analysis is no longer an option.** Customer feedback should be collected in a meaningful and structured way for easy analysis. Collect

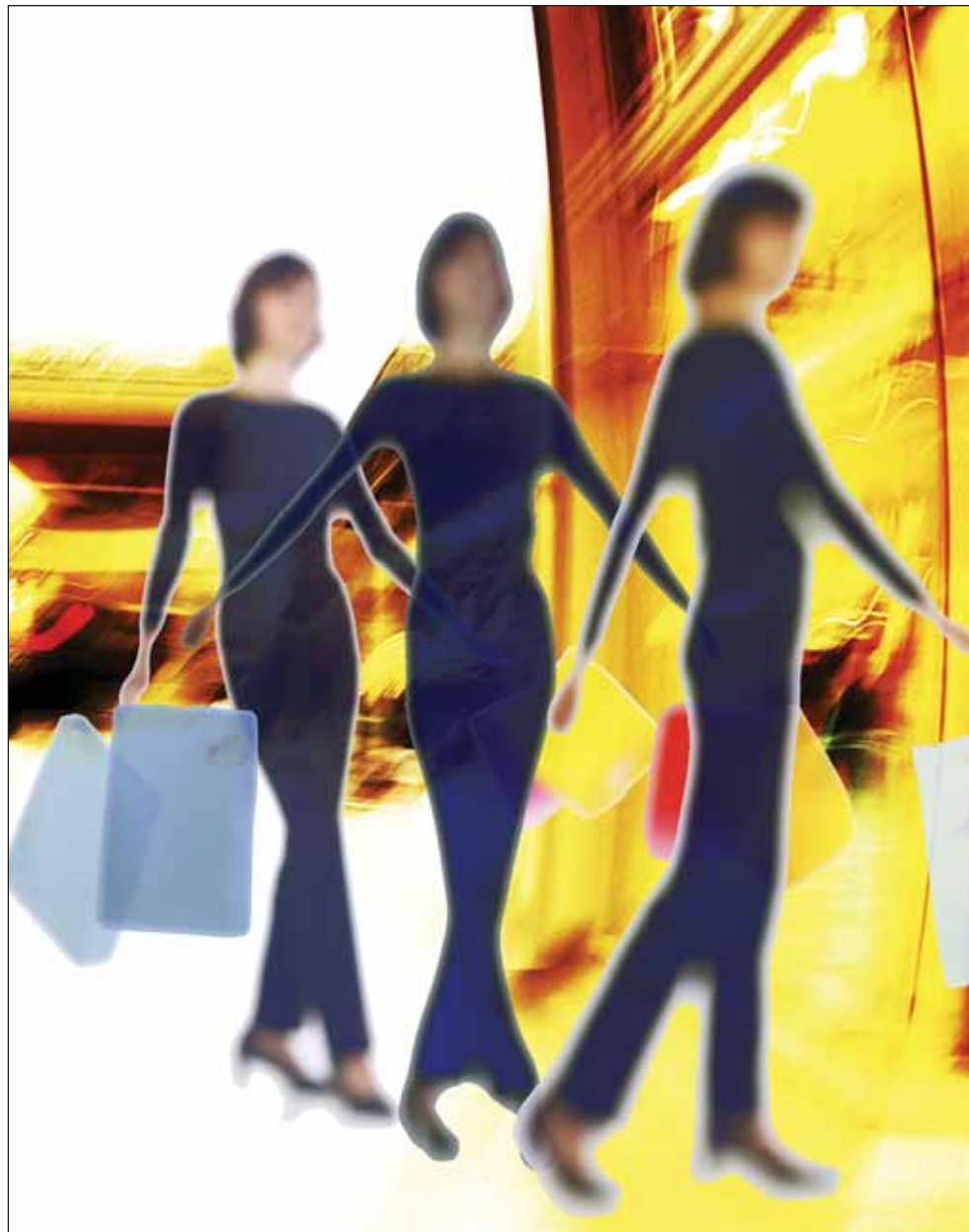
both qualitative and quantitative customer feedback so that it is measurable; then ensure this information is available in a way that is relevant and timely for every level in the business.

- **Distribute the right information to the right people at the right time.** Route customer experience information immediately to the accountable level of business or individual. Management, product teams, marketing and operations should have easy and transparent access to the customer experience. Ensure that front line employees have information regarding the consistency and quality of service delivery.

- **Quality improvements must be driven top-down and bottom-up.** To eliminate risk of

defection, empower employees with timely and relevant information, as well as with the tools to immediately respond to customers. Remember, knowing who is doing what to improve the customer experience is key to driving change. So monitor this. Then use the voice of the customer to align employees on the need for action.

- **Seek continuous improvements in small steps — across the entire organization.** Show customers what you are doing to improve. Provide both structured information and efficient tools to rapidly resolve issues and to communicate to customers. The key to customer loyalty is that customers generally feel when you listen and act on their needs. Move away from the black box of customer



service. Remember: You don't always need masses of statistics to drive decision improvement, so remain focused.

- **Share learning from front-line issues across your organization — every day.** Enable employees to share learning with others as it happens. Increase the pace and frequency at which employees know about recurring issues to promote real-time customer-driven learning.

- **Gain insight on trends based on actual customer experiences.** Use periodic and real-time insight tools to drive strategic decision making so you know what customers really want. Monitor the quality and consistency of service delivery so you know what they really attained. Ensure insight data are linked to action and workflow tools.

### Potential Gains From Seven Pillars

Too often, the successes of initiatives such as CRM are measured only against short-term goals (such as productivity, or revenue metrics; e.g., cross-sell rates). While these short-term goals are certainly valuable, today's enterprises need to shift focus to a long-term strategy that allows measurement and management of customers in a sustainable and profitable relationship

### The Bottom Line

Nobody said that creating customer-driven organizations would be easy. But if you follow these seven pillars of CEM, your organization will realize a virtually untapped competitive advantage that will positively contribute to higher customer satisfaction, an improved retention rate and huge cost savings and sales gains. To increase your chance of success, seek customer experience solutions that can help you achieve these seven pillars.

Syed Hasan is CEO of ResponseTek Networks (<http://www.responsetek.com>), a provider of customer experience management (CEM) systems.

If you are interested in purchasing reprints of this article (in either print or HTML format), please visit Reprint Management Services online at <http://www.reprintbuyer.com> or contact a representative via e-mail at [reprints@tmcnet.com](mailto:reprints@tmcnet.com) or by phone at 800-290-5460.

For information and subscriptions, visit <http://www.TMCnet.com> or call 203-852-6800.

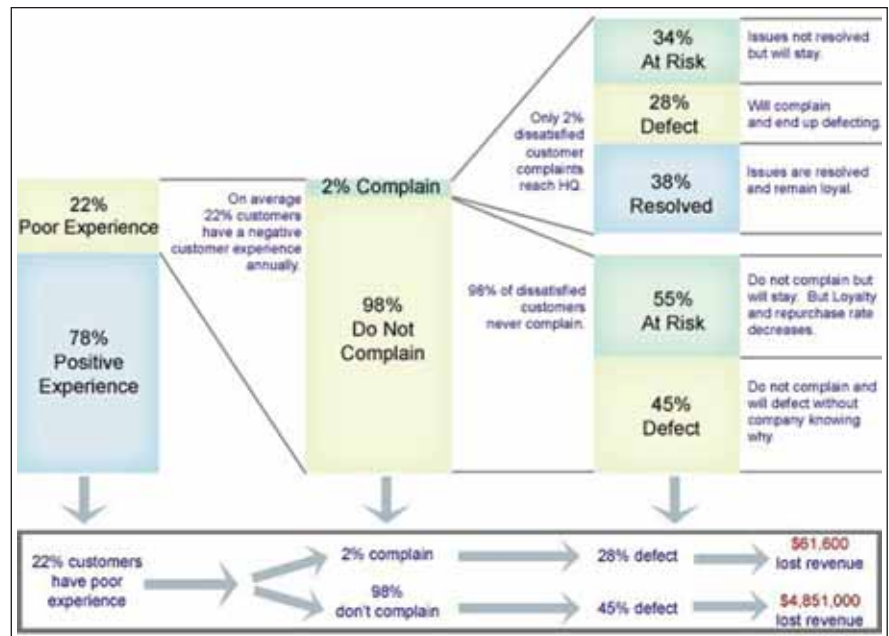


Figure 1 shows a sample company's costs of a negative customer experience, a sample company with \$50 million in annual sales. Let's assume the sample company has a customer defection rate of 10 percent, which is lower than the end of a normal range of 10 percent to 20 percent for most companies. As a result, the sample company can lose revenue anywhere from \$61,600 to \$4,851,000 in a year. Additionally, the sample company will not know why most customers are defecting and, therefore, can't take action to prevent further defections.

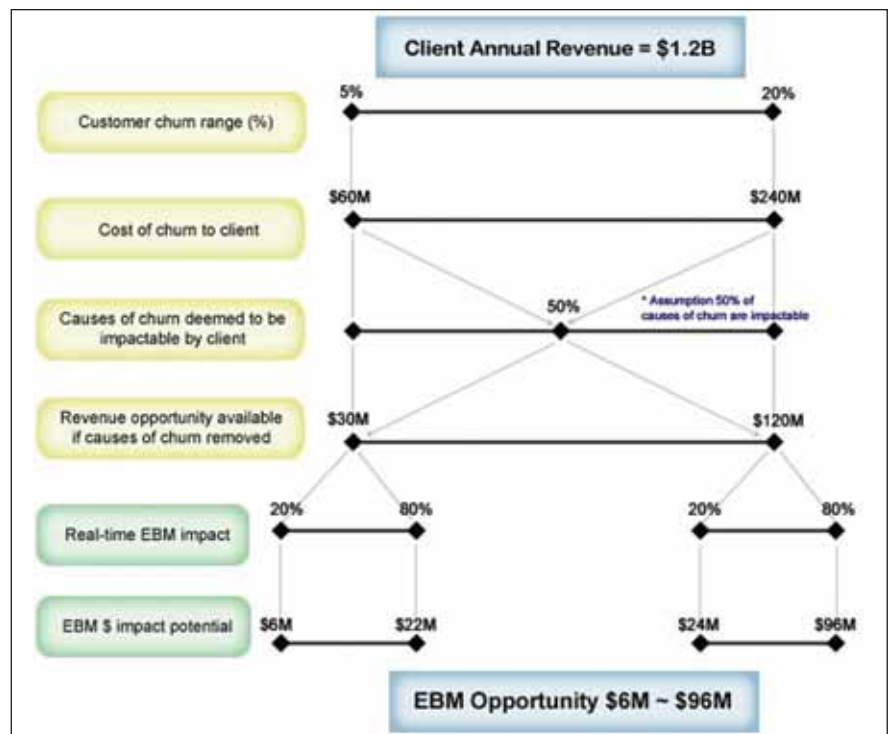


Figure 2 is an example of the potential impact CEM can have on revenue. The calculations are based on an organization with \$1.2 billion annual revenue. By adopting CEM, and with minimal resource allocation from the organization, potential savings range from \$6 million to \$96 million. Let's assume the causes of customer turnover are impactable by a conservative 50 percent, because we know there are some external factors that cannot be controlled. No matter what an organization's annual revenue or churn rates are, the potential CEM impact on revenue is phenomenal and easily attainable.

If This Is How Your Contact Center Rep Feels,  
Think About Your Customer.

# Help Is Here.



We call it *The Perfect Interaction*. Spend a few minutes watching the Jacada Fusion demonstration, and you'll see how you can make dramatic improvements in CSR productivity and the customer experience. It's quick, simple, and yields results that contact center managers could only dream about . . . until now.



*Call today for a free demo CD  
and white paper.*

800-773-9574  
[www.perfectinteraction.com](http://www.perfectinteraction.com)





**BY** Roger Lee, etalk

# SIX SIGMA AWARENESS — LET'S REJUVENATE

Every year many people make resolutions to change themselves in some way they perceive would be for the better. For example, I've resolved to reduce the amount of coffee I drink from a full pot to a single cup per day because I believe drinking a lot of coffee is probably bad for me. Likewise, we've all heard friends, relatives or others talk about wanting to quit smoking, or wanting to go on a diet or go back to school — all with the common denominator of intent to improve some situation or aspect of their personal lives. In spite of the best intentions

and fervent plans to change habits, change is difficult for most of us to manage. When it comes to executing change, it often takes much more effort and motivation than we anticipated, and the pain of working at change becomes a major hurdle — often at the expense of the desired goal. But when we stick to our plan and execute the change, we often embrace the results of our labor and with exuberant pride: "I did it!"

Most people tend not to think about plans for change in terms of managing a process, but those plans will get derailed when they don't take a process approach. For instance, they often relate problems to the people involved, or they tend to look at isolated events and not at the "big picture" or context of those events. They often fail to recognize how all steps of a process work together, or they neglect to review the processes before and after.

Six Sigma is a disciplined, problem-solving methodology that uses statistical analysis in conjunction with the skill sets to understand the big picture and to break down that big picture into smaller chunks. Sigma is a performance indicator that describes the capability of a product, service, process and/or input of

consistently meeting current and future defined requirements or expectations. It would be helpful to briefly review the history of Six Sigma and the jargon used before looking at how this methodology has been applied to the service/transactional environment.

### The Genesis Of Six Sigma

For those of you who understand the history of total quality management, feel free to skip this section.

This is a timeline of the people and events that played critical roles in the evolution of Six Sigma:

- Frederick W. Taylor in the 1890s and early 1900s;
- Taylor's systematic study of the use of time and motion by workers prefigured Walter Shewhart's application of statistical methods to the control of manufacturing quality in the 1920s;
- World War II;
- The application of mathematics to problems of production and quality control helped decrease failure rate and customer standards;
- Business managers and executives became interested in continuing quality control programs after the war;
- W.E. Deming and Joseph Juran took quality control to Japan in 1953, and the 1960s saw a surge in the growth of quality in Japan; and

- In the 1980s, the NBC White Paper "If Japan Can...Why Can't We?" spurred an increased interest in quality and total quality management.

Six Sigma actually began at Motorola in the mid-1980s. Motorola discovered that products with high first-pass yield (the amount of product that made it through

defect free) seldom failed in use. They focused on creating strategies to reduce defects in all of their products. By adopting and applying the Malcolm Baldrige criteria, Motorola won this prestigious national quality award in 1988. Motorola joined forces with companies such as [IBM](#) ([quote](#) -

**Six Sigma is not only for manufacturing; service organizations, including financial, telecom and health-care, have discovered that Six Sigma brings a process focus to their operations**

[news - alert](#)), ABB (Asea, Brown, Boveri), Texas Instruments ([quote - news - alert](#)), AlliedSignal and Kodak ([quote - news - alert](#)) to found "Six Sigma Research Institute."

In the late 1990s, GE Capital ([quote - news - alert](#)) CEO Jack Welch successfully led the application of Six Sigma techniques to a non-manufacturing environment. The methodology remains popular partly due to the publicity regarding Jack Welch's commitment to, and success with, achieving Six Sigma capability.

In a nutshell, the reasons companies benefit from implementing Six Sigma include the following:

- Improvements can be tracked;
- Decisions are made based on tangible data, not merely "gut feelings;"
- Cross-functional team involvement;
- The focus is on process; and
- It creates an avenue for customer concerns to be heard and acted upon.

### The Six Sigma Methodology – Five-Step Problem Solving Model

One of the more common models used in process improvement is the DMAIC model (see Figure 1). The DMAIC model stands for "define, measure, analyze, improve and control." Within every step, there is a variety of tools used to ensure you are working toward the best improvement recommendation(s). Generally, after the completion of each step, the information is reviewed with the sponsor of the project.

### Application Of Six Sigma In A Service/Transactional Environment

Six Sigma is not only for manufacturing; service organizations, including financial, telecom and healthcare, have discovered that Six Sigma brings a process focus to their operations (e.g., improved customer service processes, improved customer-problem resolution, and improved internal support processes). Within these organizations, call centers play a significant role in gathering, aggregating and analyzing voice-of-the-customer data that are crucial to customer-centric organizations. Understanding voice-of-the-business and voice-of-the-shareholder data is important for organizations, as well,

Subscribe FREE online at [www.clsmag.com](http://www.clsmag.com)

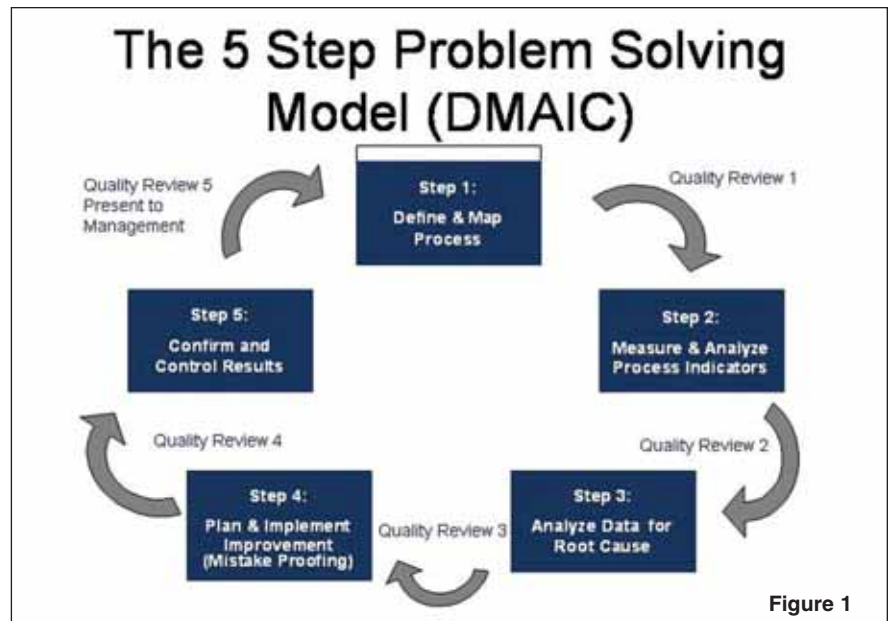


Figure 1

because they have a fiduciary responsibility to their shareholders. Below are examples of where to apply Six Sigma within a contact center environment:

**Customer complaints.** Provides a means to understand why customers are complaining, and identifies internal processes that are causing customer dissatisfaction;

**Employee dissatisfaction.** Customer service representatives will often express frustration that they cannot do their job because someone else doesn't do theirs;

**Help desk.** Determines why so many calls are being placed with the internal help desk, and identifies types of calls;

**Human resources.** Defines the new hire

stock	sym	high	low	close	chg	vol
5.25	5.12	5.16	+0.01	5.12	5.16	+0.01
1.81	1.66	1.71	-0.09	1.66	1.71	-0.09
0.38	0.35	0.35	-0.03	0.35	0.35	-0.03
2.30	2.18	2.26	+0.05	2.18	2.26	+0.05
7.12	6.89	6.99	-0.06	6.89	6.99	-0.06
						19751
						458
						456
						34954
						5251

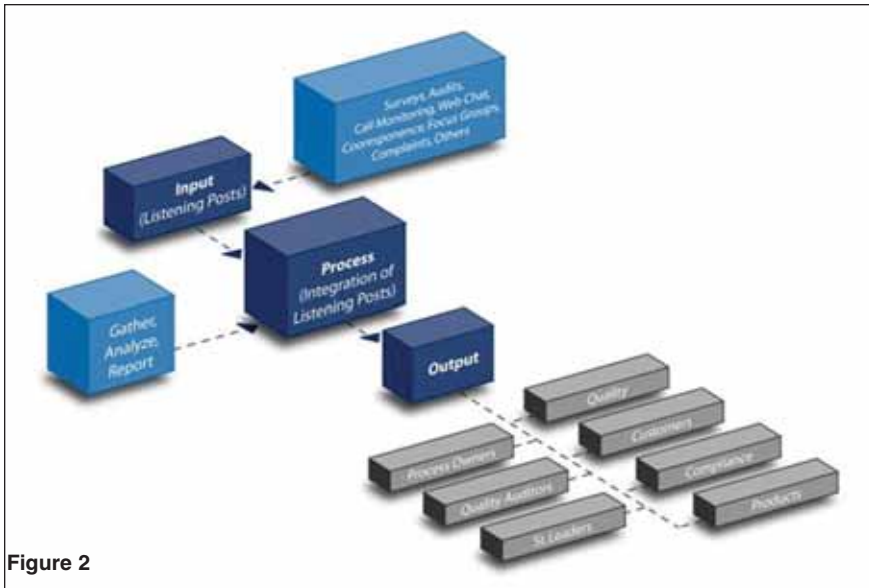


Figure 2

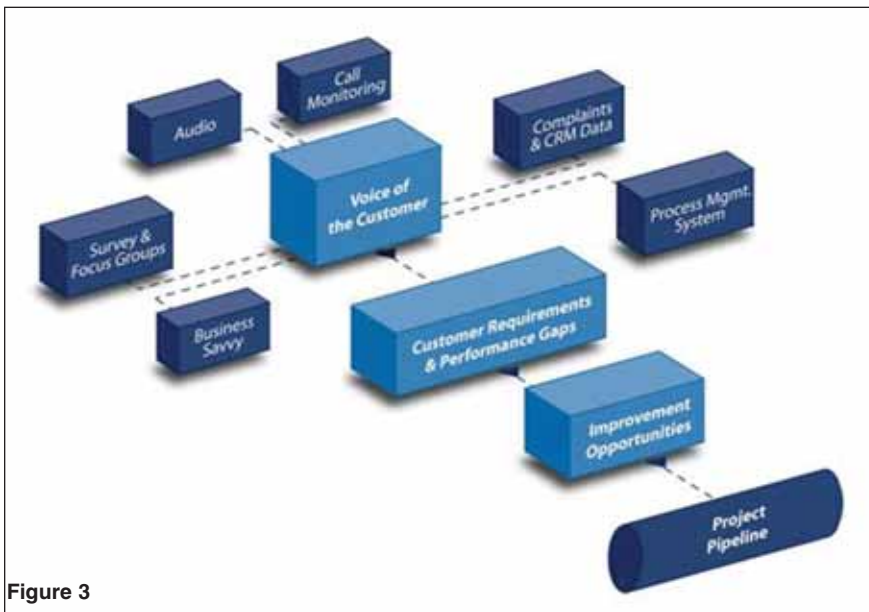


Figure 3

process by looking at such factors as the length of time it takes to hire a new employee;

**Technology.** Compels review of systems and processes that are in place and how efficient they are in helping CSRs perform their jobs consistently; and

**Call monitoring.** Are the data collected from this forum used to help improve call center processes?

### Voice Of The Customer And Voice Of The Business

Call monitoring is one of many listening posts used to gather voice of the customer

and voice of the business (see Figure 1). Collecting the appropriate data through the agent evaluation process will help identify strengths and opportunities for improvement. Having an effective quality monitoring process in place is equally as important. The information collected must be analyzed and reported to various levels of management. The appropriate scorecards and metrics must be in place to effectively drive actions and accountability throughout the organization. Below are examples of metrics used within a contact center:

- Quality objectives;
- Call quality (evaluation score);

- First call resolution;
- Errors and rework (accuracy — data entry);
- Efficiency objectives;
- Adherence to schedule;
- Cost performance;
- Cost per call;
- Strategic impact;
- Customer satisfaction scores;
- Customer feedback;
- Employee satisfaction;
- Turnover;
- Percent quality monitored;
- Percent call back;
- Percent sales conversion;
- Average interviews per hire; and
- Percent first call resolution.

Once an organization has defined and collected the appropriate data, this business intelligence can be used to identify process improvement projects that will ultimately be used to develop a project pipeline (see Figure 3). These projects are prioritized, and resources are allocated.

It is important to mention that Six Sigma is a tool to help measure the improvements we make to business processes. Everyone in the company is responsible for quality, not just the quality department. The old adage, "Rome was not built in a day," applies to implementing Six Sigma within your organization. It takes time, patience and fortitude to see the results of your labor. Equally important is the element of change. Communicating change is a part of implementing Six Sigma. Remember: People need time to "un-change" their behaviors before changing to the new ways.

As director of consulting services for etalk Corporation (<http://www.etal.com>), Roger Lee oversees services that assist etalk customers in maximizing their contact center investments by optimizing their solutions and services to meet their needs. He has more than 15 years' combined experience in finance, call center operations, information management systems, restaurant operations, payroll services and quality.

If you are interested in purchasing reprints of this article (in either print or HTML format), please visit Reprint Management Services online at <http://www.reprintbuyer.com> or contact a representative via e-mail at [reprints@tmcnet.com](mailto:reprints@tmcnet.com) or by phone at 800-290-5460.

For information and subscriptions, visit <http://www.TMCnet.com> or call 203-852-6800.



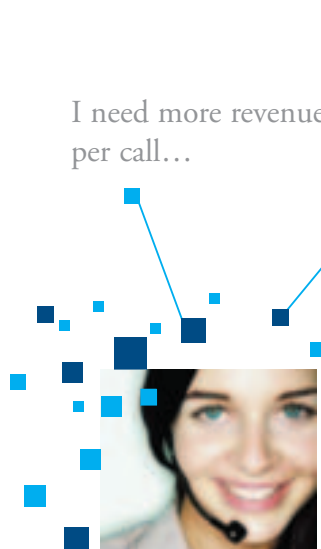
Subscribe FREE online at [www.cismag.com](http://www.cismag.com)



I need an outsourcer who really knows my business...

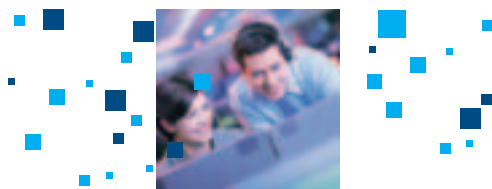
I need more revenue per call...

I need to win back customers...



**You need a competitive advantage.**

**Hassle-Free Contact Center Services. Done Right. On Time.**



**Build stronger customer relationships.  
Lower your call center costs.**

Whether the program you're about to launch requires 10 seats or 1,000 seats, Center Partners is the right choice for multi-channel customer care that builds greater loyalty and profitability.

Our innovative programs—like Beta BOOST™, KnowWings™, Quick Start™, e-Porter™ and Smart Upsell™—can help you generate more value in every customer interaction.

Call 1-800-519-3532 now.  
Ask for a competitive advantage.



A WPP Company

This is the twelfth year *Customer Interaction Solutions®* has brought you the winners of its MVP (Marketing Via Phone) Quality Awards. In the ensuing years since we introduced the awards in 1993, we have been impressed by the growing sophistication of the quality measures that have been introduced to the contact

center by the leading-edge companies that apply for our MVP Quality Award.

Over the years, we have seen new technologies adopted and the standards for a quality

interaction refined and improved.

Each of the

following companies has demonstrated, through its MVP Quality Awards application, a true commitment to high ethical standards, stringent policies and challenging goals. Each of the award recipients is

involved in a quality process that stretches from its human resource development to its implementation of technology to improve quality to taking a leadership role in promoting a positive public image of teleservices, and more. The following brief extracts from the extensive award-winning applications will give you a glimpse into what the companies provided as their standards for quality.

On a 16-point essay, entrants described a specific teleservices program and its results, and explained their overall policies and procedures, including human resources, technologies, customer services, ergonomics and public image that are used to establish, sustain and measure the program's quality. Judging the applicants was an arduous task, and the scores were not given lightly. Judging involved assigning a numerical point value from 1 to 10 for each of the 16 evaluation points.

Through the winners' essays, we learned that there are countless individuals within these organizations whose combined efforts and teamwork have contributed to elevating their companies' marketing via phone practices to the forefront of the industry. To all of the winners, congratulations.



#### **GOLD AWARD WINNERS**

**APAC Customer Services, Inc.**  
Integrated (Outbound and Inbound),  
B-to-B  
<http://www.apaccustomerservices.com>

**Q:** What elements make it easy to do business with your firm (800 lines, warranties, guarantees, free delivery, etc.)?

**A:** Benchmarking — With [the client], APAC participates in once-a-month benchmarking meetings with all other of the client's service vendors. This meeting is an open review and roundtable discussion of best practices in call handling. The client has repeatedly noted APAC's leadership on these calls and that our teams provide more improvement recommendations than other vendors.

# **12<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MVP QUALITY AWARD WINNERS**





# Unmatched.

WHEN IT'S TIME TO CHOOSE a company to handle your teleservice needs, you can't compare InfoCision to other call center providers. With more than 23 years experience, we do more than just make calls.

Our professional, experienced Communicators will deliver superior customer care, efficient customer contact and consistent revenue to offset the cost of customer service.

## *The InfoCision difference:*

- *Inbound customer care*
- *Outbound B-to-B solutions*
- *Domestic call centers*
- *Per-minute pricing*
- *Personal account team*

**InfoCision**  
THE highest quality call center company in the world!®

***For more information, call 1-866-372-5959 or visit [www.infocision.com](http://www.infocision.com)***

\*InfoCision is the only teleservice company to win the MVP Quality Award (presented by Customer Interaction Solutions magazine) all 12 years since its inception.





## Center Partners

Inbound, B-to-C

<http://www.centerpartners.com>

**Q:** Specifically state your policies on quality and your company's philosophy/motto with regards to quality.

**A:** Center Partners employs three Japanese business practices to implement the improvements identified through its quality-driven management system, called Nichijo Kanri ("daily control"), Kaizen ("continuous improvement") and Hoshin Kanri ("policy control"). We use these methods to implement the smaller improvements that add value, as well as the breakthrough improvements that fundamentally shift business practices.

Our long-term vision, through our QDMS (quality-driven management system), is to be widely recognized as the world leader in quality contact center management practices. While we believe that QDMS is further proof that Center Partners' services

are done right, we hope it illustrates our commitment to continually do things better, as well.

## Convergys

Integrated (Outbound and Inbound), B-to-B and B-to-C

<http://www.convergys.com>

**Q:** Describe all efforts to promote the quality image of teleservices to the public.

**A:** An excellent example of this is Convergys' support of educational initiatives around the world. Recognizing that education today will provide students with limitless opportunities tomorrow, Convergys supports a wide range of initiatives that promote accessibility, sustainability and self-sufficiency. The following are samples of our work: PACE Center for Girls; National Underground Railroad Freedom Center; The Ananya Trust (in the Philippines), SAS (SA AKLAT SISIKAT, in the Philippines); Convergys Academic Achievement Recognition Program; and the Educational Matching Gifts Program.

## GC Services Limited Partnership

Integrated (Outbound and Inbound), B-to-B and B-to-C

<http://www.gcserv.com>

**Q:** Describe all efforts made to make your work environment more stress-free and ergonomically correct.

**A:** We encourage all employees to participate in making their work environment

more effective and efficient. For some of our more stressful programs, we have built some downtime into our agents' schedules, which allows them to be off the phone and participate in a non-phone-related activity. Such activities include creating contests, decorating the center, creating development materials, assisting in training classes, mentoring other agents and helping management with miscellaneous projects.

## Hamilton Contact Center Services

Outbound, B-to-B

<http://www.hamilton.net>

**Q:** Describe all efforts made to make your work environment more stress-free and ergonomically correct.

**A:** Utilizing a management approach made famous by management guru W. Edward Demming, we believe that mistakes should not facilitate blame; rather they should facilitate improved processes. Essentially, we have built a culture around Point 8 of Demming's famed 14-point management philosophy: Drive out fear and build trust so everyone can do a better job. By focusing on what caused a breakdown in the system instead of focusing on the individual who incurred the mistake, employees are able to work better after a mistake and without any fear of recrimination. This environment reduced employee stress while ultimately increasing agent productivity.



# Field Proven Hands-Free Voice Engine for Multi-Point VoIP Conferencing and Collaboration



**SPIRIT DSP**  
Embedded Voice Experience  
[www.spiritDSP.com/voip](http://www.spiritDSP.com/voip)



# Want to Boost Your Business-to-Business Profits by Up to 95%?

Visit us at  
[www.accdirect.com](http://www.accdirect.com)  
to download a copy  
of our *B2B Sales  
Success Stories!*

**Building customer loyalty is the key.** CRM experts say that increasing customer retention a mere 5% can increase profit margins by 25%–95%.\* At Access Direct, we're experts at cultivating profitable B2B customer relationships for Fortune 500 clients with contact-based sales and marketing campaigns, including win-back, up-sell, cross-sell and more. Our highly collaborative, high volume, high quality and high return solutions are designed specifically to maximize the customer experience.

It's all part of our *Solid Solutions for Success*—strong, reliable programs that achieve measurable results and build loyalty for the long term. Call us at 1-800-892-8276 to learn how Access Direct can help acquire, grow and retain your business-to-business customer base.



\* Source: Bain & Co., 2003.

**ACCESS DIRECT**  
SOLID SOLUTIONS FOR SUCCESS



**InfoCision Management Corp.**  
Outbound, B-to-C  
<http://www.infocision.com>

*Q: Describe all efforts to promote the quality image of teleservices to the public.*

A: This year, InfoCision Chairman of the Board Gary Taylor donated \$1.5 million to the University of Akron for the creation of the Taylor Institute of Direct Marketing. Created to elevate the direct marketing industry and to provide students entering the field with valuable skills, the Institute offers an e-marketing and advertising major and two minor programs in database marketing and direct interactive marketing. The Taylor Institute is the only program in the country that offers a facility, faculty and curriculum dedicated to direct marketing. Taylor has pledged an additional \$1 million to develop a graduate program and to expand the facilities.

**Precision Response Corp.**  
Inbound, B-to-C  
<http://www.prcnet.com>

*Q: What is special or unique about your staff that contributes to quality?*

A: PRC has developed several Manager Initial Training Programs for our front-line supervisors and middle management levels. Each program provides learning opportunities for the development of management and leadership skills for those individuals externally hired or internally promoted to the position. These courses are customized to address the skills appropriate to the positions of Team Manager, Operations Manager, Account Manager, QA Supervisor, QA Representative and Trainer.

**Synergy Solutions, Inc.**  
Integrated (Outbound and Inbound), B-to-C  
<http://www.callsynergy.com>

*Q: How do you measure customer satisfaction?*

A: We have found that the best way to measure customer satisfaction is through

customer retention. Synergy is proud to have significant tenure with many of our clients, and we continue to work with several of our original clients. Client referrals also serve as a testimony to customer satisfaction. Whether it is a client giving us a referral upon request when a prospective customer asks for one, or even more important, when clients move to areas of new employment and proactively recommend that their new company partner with Synergy Solutions based on our history of quality.



**SILVER AWARD WINNERS**

**Access Direct**  
Outbound, B-to-C  
<http://www.accdir.com>

*Q: Explain how quality has evolved in your contact center, how it is sustained and how it is measured.*

A: The VIA Cup is a companywide award presented monthly to the outstanding call center each month. VIA stands for Vision In Action, recognizing superior achievement in an overall effort of quality, production, hours and citizenship; most improved, value-added efforts, above and beyond dedication and worth ethic, and simply demonstrating the best of the Access Direct family. Each month, the management staff from each center composes a VIA Cup nomination and submits it to the executive staff for review. The award ceremony is done by surprise and takes the center team by storm; handing out candy, a drawing for gift certificates, the trophy presentation, balloons, and congratulations all around.

**Alta Resources**  
Integrated (Outbound and Inbound), B-to-C  
<http://www.altaresources.com>

*Q: Describe all efforts to promote the quality image of teleservices to the public.*

A: Each December, Alta Resources hosts "Christmas Jingles," two nights when area senior citizens are invited to come in to our facilities and make phone calls to friends and loved ones throughout the country. They can talk to as many people as they'd

like, for as long as they'd like, at no charge. This has come to be an Alta tradition, and each year our employees look forward to volunteering for this special event and experiencing the joy that comes from helping others.

**Colwell & Salmon Communications, Inc.**  
Outbound, B-to-B  
<http://www.colwell-salmon.com>

*Q: What is special or unique about your staff that contributes to quality?*

A: Because we offer flexible work hours to our telephone marketing staff, we employ telephone representatives who have a variety of backgrounds, including entrepreneurs or start-up small business owners, utilizing the flexible hours to supplement their own income; retired professionals who need to challenge themselves but do not want full-time hours for personal and social security reasons; college students who need supplemental income yet the flexibility to schedule work hours around their classes; and stay-at-home moms who want supplemental income but also want to be at home when their kids get off the bus.

**Cross Country Automotive Services**  
Inbound, B-to-C  
<http://www.crosscountry-auto.com>

*Q: What is special or unique about your staff that contributes to quality?*

A: In 2004, Cross Country developed the Process Excellence Department. The Process Excellence Department is a dedicated team of people whose sole responsibility is to initiate, facilitate and drive continuous process improvement through the use of Six Sigma, statistical process control and other structured methodologies. With the help of this internal group, each department or functional area continues to monitor performance of the various procedures, and each uses a consistent methodology for root cause analysis to make improvements to the procedure through changes to people, processes and technology.

**ePerformax Contact Centers**  
Outbound, B-to-B  
<http://www.eperformax.com>

*Q: What do you do to demonstrate your commitment to staff quality, i.e., training motivational techniques, etc.*





Vin Gupta, Founder and CEO – infoUSA®

# Unlimited Sales Leads & Mailing Lists

**for only \$250 per month\*  
with SalesGenie™**

**12 different databases with all the sales leads and mailing lists you need!**

*Guaranteed way to find new prospects and grow your sales.  
Beat the slow economy by using our unlimited sales leads and mailing lists.*

## Business Sales Leads

- 13 Million U.S. Businesses
- 2.6 Million Brand New Businesses
- 11.4 Million Executives & Professionals
- 600,000 Manufacturers
- 218,000 Big Businesses
- 5 Million Small Business Owners

## Residential Sales Leads

- 200 Million People
- 57 Million Homeowners
- 18 Million New Movers
- 3.7 Million New Homeowners
- 2.6 Million Bankruptcies
- 12.5 Million Households with Children

## Contact Management and Mapping Applications So You Can:

- Easily Plan and Track Sales Prospects
- Manage New Customer Development
- Develop Marketing Campaigns
- See Prospects on a Map
- Schedule Follow-up Calls
- Store Notes
- Print Labels
- Export Data

## How Does it Work?

You get an account. You can select your criteria, sort, preview, select and download your sales leads & mailing labels within seconds. You can get sales leads and mailing lists for any geographical area.

**For a FREE one-day trial, call Rob Martin at  
1-866-323-7193 or visit [SalesGenie.com](http://SalesGenie.com)**



5711 S. 86th Circle  
Omaha, NE 68127

Phone: (866) 323-7193  
Fax: (402) 596-8996  
Internet: [SalesGenie.com](http://SalesGenie.com)  
E-mail: [SalesGenie@infoUSA.com](mailto:SalesGenie@infoUSA.com)

# Unlimited Business Credit Reports

**Only \$75  
per Month\***

**Get unlimited online reports on over 14 million U.S. and Canadian businesses.**

## Ideal for:

- Low-risk credit decisions
- Business verification, supplier & vendor qualification
- Commercial skip-tracing
- Pre-qualifying sales leads
- Profiling your customers
- Finding small businesses

**For a FREE One-Day Trial**

**Call Troy Peterson**

**1-866-323-7195**

*or visit*

**Credit.net**

*BusinessCredit***USA**  
a division of infoUSA®

5711 S. 86th Circle  
Omaha, NE 68127



A: We respect and embrace the idea that treating our team as a "family" will build greater loyalty in the Philippine culture than providing individual rewards or more money. That doesn't mean we don't have individual rewards — we do. But we're also committed to building the concept of family and have developed a position we call the "Happiness Manager," whose primary goal is to look for opportunities to make this the place our employees want to be.

**eTelecare Global Solutions**  
(a merger of eTelecare International and the former Phase 2 Solutions)

**Outbound, B-to-C**

<http://www.etelecare.com>

Q: Specifically state your policies on quality and your company's philosophy/motto with regards to quality.

A: eTelecare Global Solutions recruits only the best people through a rigorous six-step screening process that hires less than five percent of all applicants. Our new employees receive extensive instruction on call center skills (including American culture and idioms for Filipino agents), sales techniques and customer service before they train on client programs. As a result, our employees are dedicated, thoughtful problem solvers, capable of handling even the most complex programs or demanding customers.

**Excell Services**  
(formerly OSC, which acquired Excell Agent Services in January 2005)

**Inbound, B-to-C**

<http://www.osc.com>

Q: Describe all efforts made to make your work environment more stress-free and ergonomically correct.

A: Agent workstations are designed to allow the appropriate amount of workspace for the task that is being performed. During the formal training process, each employee receives training on exercises that can be

done, while seated, to help to relieve stress and tension. In addition, every Friday, Excell Services makes available to its employees the services of a massage therapist and a reflexologist.

**Hispanic Teleservices Corp.**  
**Integrated (Outbound and Inbound), B-to-C**

<http://www.htc.to>

Q: What do you do to demonstrate your commitment to staff quality, i.e., training motivational techniques, etc.?

A: For agents who pursue the career path to coach, supervisor or manager, it is HTC University that teaches them the tools they need through "Coach-the-Coach" and "Train-the-Trainer" modules. These courses specialize in campaign-specific skills, such as the most productive ways to give feedback, goal-setting and time management.

**Unicall International, Inc.**  
**Integrated (Outbound and Inbound), B-to-B**

<http://www.unicallinc.com>

Q: Describe all efforts made to make your work environment more stress-free and ergonomically correct.

A: Each agent at Unicall goes through a well-developed training program and progresses through a set training curriculum. The more competency and skills an agent can obtain, the less stress is associated with various tasks. The more comfortable and secure the agents are with their work responsibilities, the better they feel, therefore there is less perceived stress. This behavior attributed directly to a work environment that is engineered to reduce stress.

**BRONZE AWARD WINNERS**



**The Connection**  
**Inbound, B-to-C**

<http://www.the-connection.com>

Q: What implementation tactics and strategies were used to accomplish the goal [for the customer detailed in the questionnaire]?

A: Agents assigned to this client program were extensively trained prior to answering any calls. The Connection ramped up to 150 agents in 60 days and increased that to 260

agents within six months. The Connection successfully used mock calls as part of the certification process before agents were allowed to take live calls on the floor. In addition, The Connection used online quizzes and tests to monitor agents.

**NOVO I**  
(formerly Protocol Communications)  
**Outbound, B-to-C**

<http://www.novo1.com>

Q: Explain how quality has evolved in your contact center, how it is sustained and how it is measured.

A: Early on, we concluded that growth alone, including new call centers, expensive technology, numerous workstations and thousands of employees, is not the key to teleservices success and long-term client relationships. Quality is. Due to expansion and the narrowing of NOVO 1's focus to exclusively high-tech outbound sales and lead generation, our company has grown by as much as 500 percent during the past four years. However, annual growth has been decelerated to between 50 percent and 100 percent to ensure that quality remains fully within our control and can be improved and made consistent at our initiative. Uncontrolled growth can often usurp management's control.

**Vision-X Inc.**  
**Outbound, B-to-B**

<http://www.vxi.com>

Q: What do you do for customers that gives them the impression of quality and high ethical standards?

A: Vision-X's compliance department is consulted frequently to ensure that all legal and ethical standards are adhered to for each program. Any issues raised by the compliance department are immediately escalated to our clients. Clients are given unrestricted Web access to digital recordings for each customer contact on their campaign, and unlimited unescorted monitoring via a toll-free number.

If you are interested in purchasing reprints of this article (in either print or HTML format), please visit Reprint Management Services online at <http://www.reprintbuyer.com> or contact a representative via e-mail at [reprints@tmc-net.com](mailto:reprints@tmc-net.com) or by phone at 800-290-5460.



For information and subscriptions, visit <http://www.TMCnet.com> or call 203-852-6800.



## Concentrate on the essential

### **CC 500 Series Call Center Headsets**

Sennheiser has been developing and manufacturing professional communications equipment to the highest standards of technology, engineering and design for more than 50 years. Our Call Center Technology has been specifically developed to these same award-winning standards to make communication with customers all over the world the best it can be. Sennheiser headsets let your call center maximize its full potential. Get Sennheiser – clearly the best choice.



Call Toll Free: 1-877-SENNHEISER (1-877-736-6434)

Sennheiser Communications • One Enterprise Drive • Old Lyme, CT 06371 • Tel: 860-434-9190 • Fax: 860-434-1759 • [www.sennheisercommunications.com](http://www.sennheisercommunications.com)



# INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FROM THE TELESERVICES EXPERTS



## Personal Preference: Live Agent Or Virtual Agent?

If you're like me, the answer is, "It depends." If you're a customer service organization, the trick is in understanding when your customers are likely to want to speak with a human, and when they're more than happy to interact with a virtual agent. Regardless of what technology vendors will tell you, there are certain things self-service technologies can do, and can do well, and there are certain things self-service technologies simply cannot do.

Speech technology will never be able to calm an angry or belligerent customer, save the business of an unsatisfied, defecting customer or make a potential new customer feel good about himself or herself, leading to that person's loyal business. Speech and self-service technologies are a long way from being able to optimally handle a confused customer or skillfully upsell and cross-sell an existing one.

On the flip side, many customers like their simpler, more straightforward transactions to be as painless and quick as possible. If a customer wants only to find out if check number 537 was presented to his electric company, it's safe to assume that he wants it done fast, and would prefer to accomplish the task without the necessity of making opening and closing "polite human interaction chit-chat" with an agent. Self-service technologies don't get offended if you don't say "hello" and "goodbye." They don't mind if you yell at the dog to quit chasing squirrels in the back yard while they're directing you ("they" being the virtual agents, not the squirrels) to press one if you'd like to hear options in Spanish. Hanging up on a live agent immediately after she tells you the check was presented last Tuesday may not be against the law, but it will surely earn you an unpleasant tag on your record in the company's CRM database.

As we all know, no two people are the same in their preferences, so the optimal solution is to ensure both resources are available, live agents and self-service options, in the correct balance, and allow customers to decide which option they

would prefer, and when. It's not unusual that an agent-assisted call can easily be

completed via self-service, or that frequently a self-service call must escalate to a live-agent to preserve the customer relationship.

Understanding when to do what can only be done by those who know your call center intimately.

*Tracey E. Schelmetic, Editorial Director  
Customer Interaction Solutions*

## Reduce Cost Per Order Without Sacrificing Service With "Interactive Agent"

It is only natural that companies of all sizes constantly seek out new ways to reduce customer acquisition and customer service costs. For many, automation seems like the easy answer. Replacing agents does reduce labor costs, but simply swapping agents for an automated system could have dire consequences if not done properly. After all, if your customers cease to be happy with your service, then you'll have much bigger problems than high costs.

Three of the most common problems companies face when implementing an automated solution are:

- An increase in hang-ups by callers who prefer to speak to a live person or are confused by the system;
- A loss in service quality as measured by conversion rates, average ticket size or customer satisfaction; and
- An inability to make rapid scripting changes to account for new offers or last-minute media buys.

Because of these challenges and the inherent complexities of keeping up with the rapid changes in speech technology, many companies are electing to outsource their automated systems. A growing number of Fortune 1000 companies are choosing West Corporation's *Interactive Agent*.

"Interactive Agent is a powerful solution that builds upon West's two decades of outsourced customer service experience," said Rod Kempkes, EVP. "Interactive Agent will help your company drive sales, reduce costs and provide high-quality service. While it can process transactions on its own, many companies make the strategic decision to use Interactive Agent in conjunction with live agents."

### Key Advantages

Interactive Agent is the smart choice for an automated solution because it enables:

**Reduced costs** Depending on the specifics of the application, Interactive Agent can cost

50 percent to 75 percent less per minute than a live agent-only solution. When given the choice, as many as half of callers making credit card purchases may complete the transaction with Interactive Agent.

**Can be blended with live agents.** One of the most powerful uses of Interactive Agent occurs when it is combined with live agents. Though many different kinds of calls can be handled in an automated environment, it is still important to cater to customers who still prefer to speak to a live person. Giving the caller a choice ensures higher satisfaction among all customers, even as comfort levels with automated services continue to increase.

**Conversion rates and upsells.** Combining live agents with Interactive Agent can result in comparable conversation rates. These results are due to Interactive Agent's process and scripting features. Because West has its own voice talent and recording studios in house, quality voice recording is ensured.

### The Right Tool For The Right Job

Interactive Agent is a powerful tool. But its real power derives not from its technology, rather in knowing when to use it. Interactive Agent may not be the right choice for very complicated information exchanges, such as technical support, or when a knowledgeable sales agent is required to close a sale — such as for a high-ticket item. In those cases, it still makes sense for callers to reach live agents directly.

But for the vast majority of information exchanges, direct response orders or other simple transactions, Interactive Agent may reduce costs while maintaining service quality. And with West's industry-leading call capacity of over 130,000 ports, Interactive Agent ensures that callers get through the first time, every time.

*For more information, please contact  
West Corporation at (800) 841-9000, or  
visit <http://www.west.com>.*



# SPEECH- WORLD™

## Conference

Conference & EXPO • Conference & EXPO • Conference

May 24 - 26, 2005 • Dallas, Texas USA  
Westin Park Central Hotel

Co-Located With:

*IP* Contact Center  
Summit™



TMC  
**Global Call Center  
Outsourcing Summit™**  
The Only Conference for Teleservices Outsourcing Executives



Diamond Sponsor

**CISCO SYSTEMS**



Platinum Sponsor



Gold Sponsors



SPAN LINK



**eicon.**  
networks

**INTER-TEL**



**GOLD SYSTEMS**

**LumenVox**  
Speech Understood

Silver Sponsors



**VocaLabs**  
VOCAL LABORATORIES INC.

**NUASIS**

**Alliance Systems™**



Hosted By:

TMC  
**CUSTOMER INTER@CTION  
Solutions™**

TMC  
**INTERNET  
TELEPHONY™**

[www.speech-world.com](http://www.speech-world.com) • [www.ip-contactcenter.com](http://www.ip-contactcenter.com) • [www.tmcnet.com/gccos](http://www.tmcnet.com/gccos)



BY Jason Hekl, InQuira

# BEYOND SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING — INCREASING POST-CLICK CONVERSION RATES WITH INTELLIGENT SEARCH

Every marketer who stays current with marketing tactics knows that SEM (search engine marketing) has very quickly become a critical part of the marketing mix. According to a MarketingSherpa survey of over 3,000 marketers, SEM accounts for 15 percent of total budgeted marketing expenditures, a percentage that has increased from virtually nothing a few years ago. Market dynamics ensure that SEM will continue to expand in coming years. Nearly

60 percent of consumers believe advertising has little relevance to them

(Yankelovich, 2004), and a new report from the Stanford Institute for the Quantitative Study of Society reported that Internet users spend 50 percent more time online than they do watching television. SEM enables marketers to reach advertising-resistant online shoppers by targeting marketing messages to only those customers who have expressed interest in a keyword phrase of mutual significance. Marketers have embraced SEM because it represents one of the best mechanisms for reaching a targeted audience in a manner that is easily measurable, efficient and low in cost.

## Problem: SEM Is Not A Silver Bullet

Appealing though it may be, SEM is not a panacea for demand generation problems. Accepted best practices to increase click-

through rates and post-click conversion rates recommend that marketers create one-to-one-to-one relationships between keywords, ads and landing pages. In other words, if the marketer bids on the keyword "Roth IRA," the marketer should feature "Roth IRA" in both the ad and the landing page. In practice, few marketers have the time or resources to create individual ads and landing pages for every keyword a company tracks. Customer abandonment rates increase when the expected keyword is not included in the ad or landing page copy. Even when marketers follow best practice guidelines, two percent to three percent click-through rates and six percent to eight percent post-click conversion rates are considered exceptional. A campaign is performing well if you get one or two conversions (newsletter subscriptions, download registrations, completed sales, etc.) from every 1,000 ad impressions. Compared with traditional mass media advertising, SEM is arguably more effective and much lower in cost. However, considering the interactive potential of the Internet medium, and that most visitors initiated a search on a term relevant to the marketer's product or service, you could argue that the click-through and conversion numbers are disappointing. The reason: There is leakage in the SEM process. Potential customers, for unknown reasons, are not converting.

**SEM enables marketers to reach advertising-resistant online shoppers by targeting marketing messages to only those customers who have expressed interest in a keyword phrase of mutual significance.**

Those leaks are getting more costly all the time. Spending on paid searches will top \$3.9 billion in 2004, according to eMarketer, and is expected to grow to \$6.7 billion by 2009. Though still relatively inexpensive compared with other marketing tactics, the days when the average cost per click (CPC) was only pennies

are long gone. MarketingSherpa estimates that the average CPC for complex b-to-b products and services ranges from \$1.67 to \$1.92. As more companies compete for top listings, average CPC for all categories will trend higher. The key to long-term SEM success, then, is to focus on the one variable



over which the marketer has the most control — the post-click conversion rate.

### Consumers Control Online Transactions

According to a report from MarketingSherpa.com, fears of adware and spyware prompt 38 percent of U.S. consumers to wipe cookies from their computers at least once per week, limiting the measurement of cookies-based post-click conversion tracking. A May 2004 study by BURST Media found that only 23 percent of survey respondents were amenable to providing non-personally identifiable information on a Web site to deliver more relevant ads. Consumers prefer to remain anonymous when online. The message is clear: Companies cannot dictate an online sales process; consumers are in control. Effective marketing recognizes this central truth, and it endeavors to influence customer behavior to accelerate a customer's movement through a personal buying process (hopefully to purchase your product or service). Tactics that essentially push a product or service, or outline features and benefits, or hope customers will respond, are proving increasingly ineffective. A more successful technique is to engage the customer in a dialog to understand his or her needs and then to deliver the product or service that most effectively satisfies those needs.

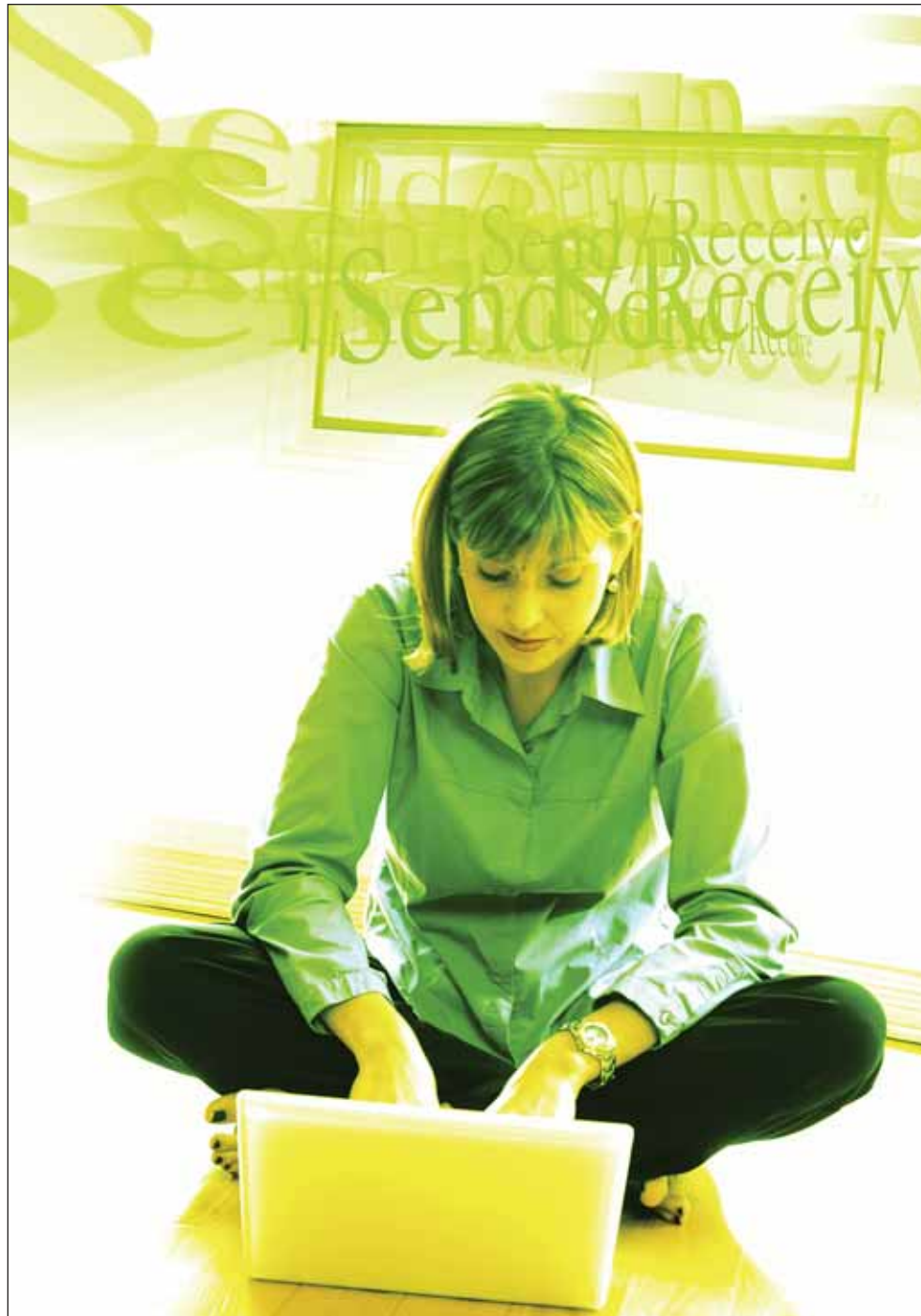
### Use Landing Pages To Influence A Customer's Personal Buying Process

In an SEM environment, the marketer has a tremendous opportunity to influence buyer behavior through interactions on the landing page, even when the customer is completely unknown (save for the referring search phrase). Most specialized landing pages come in one of two flavors — either they are targeted to an immediate purchase transaction, or they feature multiple offers. Marketers have no way of knowing where their potential customers are in their personal buying process when they click through a paid search ad. The only clue is the selected keyword. Many landing pages, then, are biased toward the final stage in a customer's buying process — the transaction.

Of every 100 click-throughs on paid search ads, perhaps six to eight will convert. Maybe 15 to 20 landed there in error and are not a good fit for your product or service. What about the other 70 to 80 people who searched on a relevant keyword phrase and clicked through to your landing page? Certainly some of those consumers are valuable to you. Why did those customers not raise their hands and express interest? What can you do to salvage those potential customers who clicked through your ad but did not convert?

### A Retail Sales Analogy: "How Can I Help You?"

Marketers can find the answers by looking at traditional retail marketing tactics. A consumer sees an advertisement in a local newspaper (akin to a paid search ad) for a product and drives to the local mall. The consumer steps inside the store and looks at the display (analogous to a specialized landing page), then turns to leave. A salesperson intercepts the customer before he or she heads for the door and asks the customer a



simple question: "May I help you?"

The problem with search marketing is that there is no one there to help the online consumer who looks at the offer and "heads for the door." Or is there?

What works well in the offline world, but which marketers struggle with in the online world, is engaging the customer in a dialog to determine which products or services best suit his or her needs. In the retail example, the sales associate might determine that the sale item may not have been appropriate for the consumer, but based on an understanding of the customer's situation and need, the associate is able to provide information, guidance and advice regarding an alternative product or service. The key to this dynamic is the customer interaction. The advertisement was enough to get the customer to the store, but the display (offer) on its own failed to generate the desired transaction. The dialog with the salesperson determined if that prospect would convert from potential customer to actual customer. Marketers can replicate this proven customer interaction behavior on their Web sites through an accepted consumer medium — search.

Customers are already prepared, as Internet search has become such a critical part of our online lives: to "Google" someone or something is now accepted lexicon. Jupiter Research estimates that 50 percent of search users have learned to type in three or more keywords per search to ensure a relevant results set, yet 75 percent of marketers concentrate their SEM programs on one to two keywords (MarketingSherpa.com). Consumers are ready to engage in a dialog via understood and accepted search behaviors, but marketers have been slow to capitalize.

### Making The Search Experience Interactive

The keys to generating greater value from a SEM program are to make the search marketing experience interactive and to personalize the landing page experience with information that specifically answers the needs of each unique visitor. There are some guidelines that marketers can follow to achieve superior results:

- Leverage accepted search behavior to engage the customer in a dialog.

- Design landing pages that encourage an on-going dialog through intelligent search.

- Use intelligent search technology with powerful natural language processing capabilities to process customers' searches for their semantic meaning or intent.

- Increase landing page conversion rates by presenting relevant information dynamically generated from an understanding of the searchers' intent.

- Personalize the marketing message, and tune offers to the customers' current stage in the buying process.

- Prominently feature the search functionality, and demonstrate through the information returned to the customer that the customers' needs are understood.

Making the landing page experience interactive for the customer requires an automated mechanism for communicating with the customer and comprehending his or her specific needs and personal buying process. Intelligent search provides marketers with that mechanism, but it is important to understand how intelligent search differs from traditional keyword search. Because intelligent search technology understands a customer's search request for its intent, and because intelligent search technology indexes enterprise content (including HTML pages, marketing offers, or any information source) for its semantic meaning, the marketer who uses intelligent search technology can use search results to match the customer's intent with the information that meets that customer's specific needs.

For example, a customer who searches on hybrid cars could have any of several intents: interest in reading about new hybrid technology; interest in buying a car that is environmentally friendly; or perhaps to save money on gas. If you type that search request into Google, the top SEM placement belongs to a Toyota ad that promotes "Prices on Toyotas." Click through and the visitor lands on the Toyota home page, which features how the Toyota Tacoma won

the 2005 Motor Trend Truck of the Year. There is no information on the landing page about hybrid cars. The customer clicks on the "Vehicles" navigation button, sees there is no entry for *hybrid* and abandons the site. Toyota just lost an opportunity to interact with a potential customer.

**The problem with search marketing is that there is no one there to help the online consumer who looks at the offer and "heads for the door." Or is there?**

Contrast that experience with a search experience on Honda's Web site. Type *hybrid cars* into the search box and the Web site returns a response page that does not look like your typical list of search results. First, the intelligent search engine understood hybrid cars to mean the Accord Hybrid, Civic Hybrid and Honda

Insight. Rather than return a list of hyperlinks to pages with the term "hybrid cars" in the copy, Honda's intelligent search engine returns a personalized response page with details on each hybrid model. The search engine understood the search request for its intent, and it returned the information most valuable to the customer. Pro-minently featured on the page is an enlarged search box, encouraging the customer to ask a more detailed question. Type in *best hybrid mpg* and the intelligent search engine returns a dynamically generated table listing the city and highway mileage of the Civic Hybrid and Insight. By understanding the intent of the question, the intelligent search engine is able to return a much more personalized and relevant results page to the customer, effectively personalizing the Web experience for that customer. Understanding the intent also allows for a personalized page that incorporates anticipated needs, and the links to fulfill those needs. Interest in hybrid cars and a best hybrid mpg may suggest concerns with fuel costs, so the personalized results page includes a link to a fuel savings calculator. Here Honda has created an automated interaction with the customer, one based on an understanding of the customer's unique needs, and the information that customer requires to move forward in his or her particular buying process.



### Combining Internet Keyword Search With Web Site Intelligent Search For Effective SEM

Internet keyword search and Web site intelligent search exist independently of one another. The former delivers customers to your company Web site, and the latter helps to accelerate each customer's individual buying process. Marrying the two is a logical development for marketers committed to increasing the post-click conversion rates for their SEM programs.

There are numerous possibilities for the savvy marketer to leverage intelligent search to drive higher returns from search marketing programs. You can incorporate intelligent search components into static landing pages, for example, by featuring an elongated search box with an "Ask" button to encourage another question. You can dynamically populate portions of the landing page with intent-specific content by passing the words from the original search request directly into the intelligent search engine to generate a personalized response — effectively turning the keyword search into an intelligent search. A third possibility, and this may be most appropriate for companies that have heavily invested in SEM and track hundreds or thousands of keywords, is to configure your landing pages to be completely dynamic — essentially passing the customer's keyword search directly into the intelligent search engine to generate completely personalized responses.

As more marketers embrace SEM, average CPC for all categories will trend higher, forcing marketers to be more sophisticated in how they generate value from their programs. Focus on the one SEM variable over which marketers have the most control, which is the design and function of the specialized landing page. Recognize that marketers do not control online sales processes. The customer's buying process dictates when the customer will be ready to transact. Approach the search marketing experience from the customer's perspective. Make the search experience interactive, and engage with the customer. Determine needs and understand the buying process. Personalize marketing messaging and offers to the unique needs and the buying stage of each customer. Achieve the dialog that will drive

higher conversion rates by integrating intelligent search technologies into the SEM process.

*Jason Hehl is Director of Marketing at InQuira, a provider of intelligent search solutions for improving the quality of customer interactions through company Web sites and contact centers. He may be contacted at [jhehl@inquira.com](mailto:jhehl@inquira.com).*

If you are interested in purchasing reprints of this article (in either print or HTML format), please visit Reprint Management Services online at <http://www.reprintbuyer.com> or contact a representative via e-mail at [reprints@tmcnet.com](mailto:reprints@tmcnet.com) or by phone at 800-290-5460.

For information and subscriptions, visit <http://www.TMCnet.com> or call 203-852-6800.



## Real-Time Visual Management System



- Manage Your Team With:
- Real-Time, Historical & Integrated Values
- Streaming Video Content
- Instant & Scheduled Messages
- Desktop Statistics and Messaging
- Alerts & Alarms thru Web or Email
- Anywhere, Anytime, On-Time Information



**SPECTRUM**  
CORPORATION

800-392-5050  
[www.specorp.com](http://www.specorp.com)

©Copyright 2004 Spectrum Corporation



**BY** Paul Leamon, IEX Corp.

# 12 SECRETS TO FINDING THE RIGHT WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The contact center is the frontline of an organization. Customers turn to it to resolve issues and, consequently, to form opinions about the company based on their experience. Those experiences directly impact the bottom line.

For many, workforce management is often their first line of defense. These systems offer dramatic operational improvements — raising service quality while reducing costs.

Although justifying the need for an automated workforce management system is simple, making an optimal purchasing decision can be tough. Seemingly small differences in the functionality of different products can have a major impact on the relative success of the contact center operation.

The following outlines a structured decision-making process; one that's designed to help contact centers ensure the workforce management system they choose will meet all their requirements today and long into the future.

## **Establish An Evaluation Team**

Establish a cross-departmental evaluation team that includes a representative from each department likely impacted by the technology. This includes contact center management, forecasting and scheduling staff, as well as IT, training and human resources. Having an evaluation team in place ensures decisions are carefully weighed and measured while building consensus among the group.

## **Define Expected Results**

Once the evaluation team is in place, the group should clearly define what it expects to achieve.

The center may expect to reduce personnel costs, improve service delivery or gain the ability to plan and manage a complex environment. Once expectations are set, examine current business processes to see if changes are required. Knowing what the center wants up-front will help gain buy-in from internal stakeholders and will define measurable goals.

## **Develop Evaluation Questions**

In order to meet the group's expectations, build a list of vendor evaluation questions. The new product should streamline tasks within each user group and provide a pathway for adding new features and functions as departments grow. Questions should focus on how the system performs different functions, such as skills-based scheduling. Again, seemingly small differences in functionality can make a huge difference.

## **Get A Live Demonstration**

It is not enough to simply see a PowerPoint presentation. The team will want to spend at least four hours going over the actual product to assess how it meets the center's operational requirements. Once the team has seen live demonstrations, the next logical step is to submit a request for proposal (RFP). (See Sidebar B)

## **Check References**

The vendor should supply a list of customer references with its RFP response. Ideally, these references will have the same size of operation, ACD and contact types. In addition to relying on the customer references supplied by the vendor, it may be prudent to call customer references they didn't provide.

**Deploying a workforce management system presents an ideal opportunity to promote positive change. So start looking for new ideas.**

### Evaluate All Costs

The cost of a workforce management system is more than only hardware and software. It's important to understand all the initial costs and ongoing expenses. There may be additional staff costs associated, ACD upgrades required and much more (See Sidebar C). Keeping these things in mind will ensure the organization has budgeted for everything and is fully prepared for implementation.

### Budget Considerations:

How much is the system hardware/software/implementation?

What staffing resources are required to use and support the system?

How much will the initial training and consulting cost?

What ongoing training, consulting, maintenance and upgrade expenses are associated?

Will it require IT infrastructure, connectivity or additional network bandwidth?

Are ACD upgrades or add-ons needed?

Does it require interfaces to quality monitoring, payroll, e-learning or other systems?

### Build The Business Case

Management will naturally expect a strong business case before approving a workforce management budget. To build a strong business case, justify the investment in hard returns — direct, tangible savings — and soft returns — added values such as increased customer loyalty and employee satisfaction.

Most workforce management systems will pay for themselves in six to nine months. Reduced staff hours, lower overtime expenses and fewer overstaffed periods are only a few of the hard savings.

### Ensure Smooth Implementation

Before the organization moves into the implementation phase, make sure there is a communication liaison. This person should identify the stakeholders and ensure they are involved in the process. Stakeholders usually include contact center management, the forecasting and scheduling team, the IT department and human resources. The workforce management vendor should also be heavily involved in the communication process. Keeping stakeholders informed will ensure the project's long-term success.

One of the most important stakeholders is the IT department. It's important to understand all of the IT requirements needed to support the workforce management system. Without the appropriate network for data communication, even the best workforce management system is useless. As part of the project, the IT team may need to acquire and install, prior to installation, some or all necessary hardware and software to support the system.

### Build A Realistic Timeline

Building a realistic implementation schedule can be a challenging feat. The project

manager must calculate lead-time for procurement, data collection, training, process changes, validation testing, cutover and phased implementation. As a rule of thumb, 6 to 12 weeks is realistic for most organizations.

### Design The Training Program

An onsite training course, using the center's data, is recommended. Agents will need an overview of the system to help them understand how it will impact them. More specifically, they will need to know how to access schedules, how to request changes and how to make trades. Supervisors will



### RFP Components (Source: The Call Center School)

- A complete description of the operation, as well as the top issues it must address;
- Feature questions and technical specifications;
- Training, consulting and support services;
- Implementation process;
- Cost; and
- References.

When submitting an RFP, be sure to allow enough response time. As a rule of thumb, three to four weeks is usually sufficient. Here's a suggested timeline: **Week 1**, deadline for the vendor to submit questions about the RFP in writing. **Week 2**, deadline for center to answer the vendor's questions, **Week 3 or 4**, (depending on the complexity) deadline for the vendor to complete and submit the RFP. This structure will allow enough time for an information exchange between the center and the vendor to ensure all RFP responses are thorough and accurate.

### Hard Return Example: 100-Agent Center (Source: The Call Center School)

More Efficient Scheduling	
2% savings (2 staff) @ 28,800/year	\$57,600
12% overtime reduction from \$466,000	\$55,920
1,242 time without pay hours @ 13.85/hr	\$17,200
Automation of WFM Tasks	
3275 hours to 2588 hours @\$24.50/hr	\$16,831
Reduction in Network Costs	
Shorter delays/800 cost savings	\$12,239
<b>TOTAL YEARLY SAVINGS</b>	<b>\$159,790</b>

need to know how to enter exception codes and use real-time tools. IT will need training on system backup and support. Contact center management will need to understand system capabilities: the types of analysis and reports that can be obtained, what support the workforce management team needs for success, and the operational changes that might be beneficial. Upper management must determine their information needs and be taught how to get it.

Training shouldn't simply end after everyone understands the basics of using the system; it will continue as new features are introduced, as employee turnover occurs and to ensure optimal system usage.

### Re-evaluate Current Processes

Deploying a workforce management system presents an ideal opportunity to pro-

mote positive change. So start looking for new ideas. Don't simply accept the status quo. Identify the changes that can be made right away, and then set some long-term goals for the others. It's okay to use existing processes to do initial system testing. But automating a bad process may only make it faster, not better. Use the system to test ideas and see how they work.

However, be careful not to try too many changes at once, or it will be difficult to tell what's working and what's not.

### Foster Ongoing Improvement

Once the workforce management system is in place, be a champion for excellence. Strive for a culture of continuous improvement by setting goals and measuring them. Compare those results to industry benchmarks. Do an annual review of results,

either with the vendor or with another industry expert. This will help the center justify "improvement" monies in each year's budget.

Don't be satisfied with the initial payback and success. Use the "what if" analysis capabilities to investigate how added product features and functions can further enhance operational efficiency. Seek better ways to use the existing infrastructure to fine-tune current practices.

### Conclusion

Workforce management technology offers tangible and easy-to-track benefits. Conducting a thorough evaluation of the systems on the market will ensure the center finds one that aligns with its operational requirements. Once that's done, it's easy to construct a sound business case. In most cases, payback comes within 12 months. Proper planning will ensure implementation goes smoothly. During this time, it's important to consider what operational processes can be improved. Align the contact center's goals with those of the enterprise at-large, and don't simply settle for the initial success. Foster an environment of continuous improvement. Never be satisfied with the status quo.

*Paul Leamon guides the product direction for TotalView, the workforce management system offered by IEX Corporation. During his 15 years at IEX, he has consistently and successfully translated customer feedback into real-world solutions. Leamon is an inventor and co-inventor on several noteworthy workforce management patents that have been granted or are pending. Inquiries can be directed to paul.leamon@iex.com.*

*Maggie Klenke, a founding member of The Call Center School, also contributed to this report. She can be reached at maggie.klenke@thecallcenterschool.com.*

If you are interested in purchasing reprints of this article (in either print or HTML format), please visit Reprint Management Services online at <http://www.reprintbuyer.com> or contact a representative via e-mail at [reprints@tmcnet.com](mailto:reprints@tmcnet.com) or by phone at 800-290-5460.

For information and subscriptions, visit <http://www.TMCnet.com> or call 203-852-6800.





# Caller ID++

## Know your caller before you answer.

With databases of 250 million consumers and 14 million businesses you know more information on a caller than just a name and phone number. That means you can begin a real database marketing program.

- 1 Enable call centers to display key information on agents' screens before the call is answered.
- 2 Shorten data collection time by an average of 30 seconds per call or a savings of \$.45 per call.
- 3 Increase accuracy and eliminate data entry errors.
- 4 Allow agents to spend more time serving customers and closing sales.
- 5 Make it simple to implement, with no equipment to buy or hardware to set up.

### PEOPLE PROFILE

**(925) 960-2368**

**David T. Slater**

635 Glade Fork Road  
Crab Orchard, KY 40419-9738  
Home Value: \$145,000

### BUSINESS PROFILE

**(402) 571-1535**

**Artisan Woods**

3377 N 88th Plaza  
Omaha, NE 68134-4751

Number of Employees: 1-4

Type of Business: CABINETS-  
MANUFACTURERS

Sales Volume: Less Than 500,000

Credit Rating Score: 92 (A) Excellent

### USES & APPLICATIONS

- **Customer Relationship Management:** Your CRM system will be vastly improved through prospect profiling and improved customer relationships.
- **Call Routing:** Direct the call to where it can best be served.
- **Sales Order Entry:** Reduce data collection time, freeing up your staff for better service and quicker order processing.
- **Marketing Enhancements:** Add the enriched demographics to adjust your current campaign and create future ones.
- **Customer Profiling:** Benefit your existing portfolio with more targeted marketing and personalized service.

To get started, call Amit Khanna at **888-316-0237** or  
email: [license@infoUSA.com](mailto:license@infoUSA.com) for a brief presentation on the service.



Website: [www.license.infoUSA.com](http://www.license.infoUSA.com)  
5711 S. 86th Circle  
Omaha, NE 68127

# INNOVATIVE IDEAS FROM THE NEXT-GEN CONTACT CENTER

## IP Contact Center Technology: What You Need To Know (Part I)

### Multisite Contact Center Technology Centralization: Eliminating The Risks

#### Introducing The IP Contact Center

The core value of [voice-over-IP](#) (“VoIP”) ([define](#) - [news](#) - [alert](#)) technology lies in its inherent ability to convert voice communications into data packets and transmit those packets on the same data networks that carry multimedia Web communications and customer-related data. As a result, IP contact center technology enables communications to be routed from anywhere to anywhere — to agents who can work from any location on a global network.

#### Why You Should Care

These attributes, in combination with traditional [ACD](#) ([define](#) - [news](#) - [alert](#)) discipline, offer multisite organizations the ability to unify all their locations with a new “geographically agnostic” approach to skills-based routing; one that delivers compelling transaction-processing efficiency benefits. Companies can fully leverage a global pool of agents and connect each customer with the particular agent best qualified to manage his or her specific transaction in the shortest amount of time, regardless of where that agent is physically located. This provides dramatic productivity gains and increases the quality of customer service delivery (and therefore customer satisfaction).

IP contact center technology also enables companies to fully integrate all communications channels on a single global network. This allows companies to deploy “multimedia” agents at diverse locations. It also empowers universal

queuing, allowing companies to provide consistent customer treatment across the phone, fax and Internet.

#### Dramatic Cost Reductions

The benefits are even more compelling from a cost-reduction perspective. As any contact center IT manager (or CFO) can tell you, there are tremendous inefficiencies associated with the “traditional” approach of deploying and maintaining diverse contact center systems at every location. These inefficiencies include duplication of systems and licenses at each site, shortages of software licenses at some locations while the needed resources sit idle at other locations, and the duplication of local staff required to maintain each set of systems at every location. IP contact center technology eliminates these inefficiencies by empowering companies to centralize technology resources and leverage them across a global network, thereby dramatically reducing technology costs across all locations. It can also effectively reduce transport costs.

#### So What’s The Catch?

Given such dramatic benefits, it would be natural to wonder why market adoption, though already strong and accelerating, has not been universal across all multisite organizations. Risk is one big reason. Consider that mainstream business publications, analysts and academic research consistently report that 60 percent to 70 percent of IP contact center deployments never

achieve their stated objectives, albeit for entirely predictable technology reasons.

So what do those who have successfully realized the promise and potential of IP-based technology know that so many business consumers don’t? Those are the kinds of issues that we’ll be focusing on every month in this column. This month, we’ll be focusing on three of the most obvious “showstoppers” that would prevent most multisite IP contact center initiatives from getting off the ground.

#### The First Showstopper: Scalability

The first obvious showstopper for larger organizations: whether or not a proposed centralized infrastructure solution can scale to service all corporate sites. Achieving maximum economies of scale requires a solution that enables all sites to share common hardware, software licenses and phone lines. The problem: traditional enterprise solutions can’t scale sufficiently to support large-scale multisite operations. Newer network-based technologies, however, can easily scale to meet this critical objective.

A word of warning: while many vendors claim to be network-based, what they generally mean is that their technology is distributed across multiple servers that perform specific tasks. True network-based software architectures eliminate traditional scalability limitations by actually spawning task-specific system processes that can be spread across an unlimited number of servers — redefining scalability as a flexible barrier limited only by the physical back-end processing resources of the network. In that sense, the network really becomes the computer — because system processes actually communicate with each other over the network to form the application. Need to scale? Plug in another server. No limits.

#### The Second Showstopper: Reliability

Companies are understandably reluctant to put all their eggs in one basket. So if a company is going to centralize

technology, it must be very sure that the centralized system can't "go down" or it will bring global operations to a grinding halt.

The answer, again, lies in newer designed-for-purpose, network-based system architectures, wherein all system processes can run in parallel on multiple servers at the same time. This means that communications will always stay alive even if individual servers fail. In fact, because the method of parallel processing is network-based, it can even take place across multiple data centers

to provide carrier-grade, real-time disaster recovery.

### The Third Showstopper: Loss Of Local Autonomy

Centralizing technology to gain economies of scale requires all locations to share common hardware, software licenses and phone lines. As a result, proposals focusing on technology centralization from a data-segmentation perspective always tend to alarm local managers, who will naturally be afraid that local concerns will not be effective-

ly addressed on a shared platform. This objection generally gives rise to the core "political" obstacle because most local managers won't want to give up control of their mission-critical systems to an external IT department. The good news is that they won't have to. Newer "multitenant" technology approaches recognize the need for segmented, decentralized control over shared centralized resources. In plain English, with some (but not all) multitenant IP contact center approaches, local managers can have more control over their "virtual" infrastructure than they had with their old premise-based systems.

This approach to "sharing" technology is what enables service providers such as Siebel ("Contact OnDemand"), MCI ([quote - news - alert](#)) and TELUS to offer hosted contact center services to companies and government agencies of all sizes (at price points that were unimaginable only a few years ago), while entirely eliminating the traditional barrier of capital investment.

Now multitenant IP contact center technology can also empower companies to become in-house service providers for their own sites and divisions.

### Stay Tuned

Next month, we'll explore exactly how local autonomy can be maintained and enhanced on shared, centralized infrastructure — and we'll also explore how local "on-demand" technology modification can dramatically increase productivity and per-seat revenue.

In the meantime, feel free to e-mail us for more information on multisite technology centralization, at [info@telephonyatwork.com](mailto:info@telephonyatwork.com) or (in Canada) at [kevin.hayden@telus.com](mailto:kevin.hayden@telus.com).

*Eli Borodow is the CEO of Telephony@Work, the leading provider of adaptive, multitenant IP contact center technology for service providers and contact centers. Kevin Hayden is the Director of Integrated Contact Centre Solutions at TELUS Communications Inc., a tier-1 telecommunications carrier in Canada and a Canadian provider of hosted contact center services.*

## Overcoming "We've Always Done It This Way" Syndrome

Throughout time, technological advancements have had to find a way to cure "we've always done it this way" syndrome. Mr. Biro, inventor of the ball point pen, faced a staunch set of detractors unwilling to give up their beloved inkwells and fountain pens. Fax machines were a newfangled nightmare for corporate executives fond of the telex machine. Secretaries and office workers the world over grumbled over the shiny new PCs on their desktops, bargaining with their employers to keep their familiar IBM Selectrics. In my estimation, the only individuals who were happy about the rise of the telegraph killing the Pony Express were the ponies.

The telecommunications industry has been particularly vulnerable to the malaise called "But I don't WANT to learn a new way." There is nothing more personal than the way in which we communicate with others. A new propulsion systems for spacecraft? A better method for car assembly lines? "Who cares...it doesn't affect me personally. But don't even think about taking my land line away."

"We've Always Done It This Way Syndrome" goes a long way in explaining the fits-and-starts adoption and growth of IP telephony in business. Many corporate executives still aren't exactly sure what is, and don't really want to know for fear it'll change "things." Ignorance is bliss, etc. And if I don't know about it, then I'm not obliged to purchase it, for it's foolish to spend money on something I don't understand, right? Human nature has ever been the "brakes" of technological advancement.

When an unwillingness to learn about, let alone adopt, new technologies begins holding businesses back, it's time for education. It's time to learn the what, why, how and where of new methods. IP telephony in the contact center is one such technology. Companies are standing on a precipice, and the deadline is fast approaching when they must make the decision to go forward or dissolve into rust.

*Tracey Schelmetic*  
 Editorial Director  
 Customer Interaction Solutions® magazine





### **Voice2Form Goes Live With Telephone Self-Service Solutions From NetByTel**

Voice2Form, LLC., which uses a patented voice recognition system to help people fill out forms for a variety of commercial and governmental agencies, recently announced that it has gone live with the first application developed and managed by NetByTel, a provider of telephone self-service solutions. Voice2Form's technology has multilanguage capability. Ken Barash, Voice2Form CEO, stated, "NetByTel's self-service solutions support our unique VoiceForm technology, a voice recognition system for interactively gathering information to generate a document, form or application, such as mortgage and loan requests, applying for credit cards or a driver's license, even opening a brokerage account or leasing property." Clients have the ability to create a voice-to-text repository of information that can be stored and updated as needed, eliminating the need for redundant input of information. Voice2Form's VoiceForm system was awarded a U.S. Patent on May 18, 2004. The system was launched last July for use within the mortgage industry but has since been expanded to other commercial and governmental applications.

<http://www.voice2form.com> and

<http://www.netbytel.com>

### **Definition Du Jour**

#### **Dialog Manager**

The dialog manager is a component of the W3C Speech Interface Framework. It prompts the user for input, interprets the input received and then follows the instructions in a dialog script specified using VoiceXML. As a result of the particular voice input by the user, the dialog manager may open the needed applications, download another dialog script from the Web or provide the information to be presented to the speaker/user. Essentially, the dialog manager is the "go-between" between the speaker/user and the back-end processes.

### **SimpleCast 3 Cent Voice Broadcast**

SimpleTelecom has announced the public availability of SimpleCast, a solution designed to deliver "no-hassle" three cent voice broadcast calls to telemarketers, non-profits, political campaigns and schools. SimpleCast voice broadcasting requires no minimum commitment and allows customers to start broadcasting very quickly. "SimpleCast answers the needs of voice broadcasters to deliver high-quality voice messages at a market-beating price without the barriers of unreliable service providers, unreachable commitments and unfair price structures," said Sarah Patnode, SimpleCast senior vice president. SimpleCast is suited for voice broadcasters of any size that do not operate their own hardware or lack sufficient capacity in their own infrastructure. No investment in hardware or software is required to use the service. Advanced features such as machine/live detection with separate prompts and automated scheduling are included at no extra cost. Voice broadcasters can get started with SimpleCast by visiting [www.simpletelecom.com/simplecast](http://www.simpletelecom.com/simplecast).

<http://www.simpletelecom.com>

“ Under all speech that is good for anything there lies a silence that is better. Silence is deep as Eternity; speech is shallow as Time. ”

- Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881)

TMC

# INTERNET TELEPHONY CONFERENCE & EXPO

*The VoIP Authority Since 1998*

***The World's Largest VoIP/IP  
Telephony Marketplace***

- Service Providers
- Resellers/Developers/OEMs
- Enterprise/Government

# Witness The Evolution Of IP Telephony VOIP 2.0

**October 24-27, 2005 • Los Angeles Convention Center**



**Platinum Sponsors:**

**NORTEL**  
NETWORKS™

**viola**  
networks

**aculab**

**Gold Sponsors:**

**QUINTUM**  
TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

**work**  
TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

**VONEXUS**  
TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

# ITEXPO.COM

# ITEXPO.COM



## From Early Adopters To Mass Market

Speech technologies and solutions have created excitement in the telecommunications market for many years now, but they have not yet reached the mass market. The novelty and complexity of speech solutions

# Advanced, Packaged Applications To Bring Speech Capabilities To The Mass Market

By Elka Popova, Frost & Sullivan

have so far required a substantial amount of professional expertise and investment in design, tuning and integration services in order for such solutions to be successfully developed and implemented. The early deployments took months or years, from the initial commitment to the final deployment and integration with existing infrastructure. The inability of vendors and channel partners to standardize, modularize and package products and to reduce the implementation costs have, therefore, limited the penetration of speech technologies to larger enterprises with substantial telecommunications needs and budgets.

The speech technology and solution market is now entering a new stage. It is gradually transitioning from the early adopter stage to the more rapid growth stage, when speech solutions are beginning to penetrate the mass market. As speech solutions are becoming both more sophisticated and more affordable, they are attracting a larger, more diversified customer audience.

The more widespread adoption of speech solutions is being driven by a number of factors, including improvement of quality, increased reliability and declined cost of the underlying speech technologies. Customers feel more comfortable deploying the new technologies as they learn about partners and competitors realizing cost savings and driving revenues through speech solutions. Finally, increased vendor and channel partner expertise and improved understanding of customer needs have resulted in the development of packaged, off-the-shelf applications that save time to market and reduce the total cost of deployment.

## Packaged Applications Offer A New Value Proposition

"Packaged applications" is the buzz word (rather, buzz phrase) of the industry today. Vendors, solution providers and integrators seem to have discovered the key to market success and are rushing to develop off-the-shelf, plug-and-play solutions. The term "packaged applications" is fairly general and ambiguous, and it could mean different things to different people. Most typically, however, these are more generic, prepackaged solutions that are less expensive and faster and easier to implement than complex solutions developed for a single customer.

Therefore, vendors can more rapidly recognize revenues, whereas customers can more rapidly introduce new features and capabilities to clients or employees.

Packaged applications typically solve common and less complicated tasks. Auto attendants and corporate dialers are examples of products that require little customization but can

be marketed to a wide and diverse customer audience – virtually any business can benefit from such applications. Messaging products can also be offered prepackaged and ready for implementation with more

**"Packaged applications" is the buzz word (rather, buzz phrase) of the industry today.**



advanced features available upon customer request. Other examples of simple speech applications that can be prepackaged include password/PIN reset and address change, typical utility and financial service organization functions that currently involve a client interaction with a customer service agent.

One common characteristic of most packaged applications is that they address the needs of multiple customers across multiple vertical markets. In most cases, packaged applications are the so-called plug-and-play type. Therefore, they require little, if any, design, tuning or integration services. When they are also integrated with off-the-shelf hardware, they are very economical and easy to deploy.

Packaged applications are likely to help vendors both expand their customer reach and penetrate a more diverse customer audience. Small and medium-sized businesses, in particular, will now be able to deploy some speech applications that they could not afford earlier. The growth of packaged applications is likely to have a slightly negative impact on average revenues per customer, especially on the service portion. Packaged applications will,

however, most certainly help vendors both increase customer awareness and encourage a larger number of people to test speech solutions. Therefore, packaged applications will drive a larger number of deployments and, eventually, revenues.

### **Packaged Applications Will Drive Competition**

We believe that the success of speech solutions continues to be dependent upon the entrepreneurial spirit of market participants and their ability to create, market and promote advanced speech applications. The entrepreneurial spirit of companies such as [Nuance](#) and [SpeechWorks](#) (now part of [ScanSoft](#)) helped the market grow from the lab stage to early adoption. The two leading core technology vendors educated the market about the benefits of speech, and they invested a tremendous amount of time, effort and money in developing viable technologies and in helping customers implement solutions to meet their specific needs. Now solution vendors need to take this effort further and continue innovating and developing solutions that offer a greater value to customers.

Packaged applications are becoming an important strategic differentiator for speech technology and solution vendors. Both major core technology vendors, such as Nuance and ScanSoft, and leading solution providers, such as [Avaya](#) and [Nortel](#), are focusing on the development and deployment of some packaged applications that would help them gain a competitive advantage with small and medium-sized businesses. Core technology vendors are finding out that core technologies are quickly becoming commoditized and that margins are shrinking. Packaged applications will help them to diversify revenue streams and to gain better control of the end users as they move up the value chain. Solution vendors, on the other hand, are finding out that cost considerations continue to represent a major barrier to speech adoption; therefore, they are seeking to develop solutions that help customers realize cost savings on hardware, software and implementation.

Large and established vendors are being challenged by some innovative start-up companies with a strong focus on speech-enabled solutions. Most of these companies have developed a competitive edge in cer-



tain vertical markets or specific horizontal applications. **Phonetic Systems**, **iVoice** and the former **LocusDialog** (now part of ScanSoft), for example, have focused mostly on speech-enabled auto-attendants and corporate dialers. Phonetic Systems has also gained a substantial amount of recognition in the carrier directory assistance market and is now diversifying into some self-service applications, such as password reset. **AVST**, a new formation that includes the **CallXpress** group of **Captaris** and the former **Sound Advantage**, focuses on unified messaging solutions with speech-enabled auto-attendant capabilities. **NeoSpeech** offers a differentiating outdialing application called VoiceNotify. There are numerous other small vendors that focus on niche application markets.

Packaged applications are likely to foster competition among existing vendors and to encourage the market entry of some new ones. They will most likely give an edge to smaller vendors that choose to focus on niche opportunities. Some of these small vendors may grow to become serious contenders for market share leadership in some application markets, and others may be later acquired by larger competitors.

### **AVST: Success With Speech Solutions Requires An Entrepreneurial Spirit**

Applied Voice and Speech Technologies (AVST) is a perfect example of a company pushing the envelope in creating advanced speech-enabled solutions for the messaging market.

AVST is still not well known in the telecommunications market because it has existed under this name for only about two quarters. AVST was created when Sound Advantage purchased the CallXpress division of Captaris. The merger of the two entities was premised on the vision of combining the advantages of CallXpress, a unified messaging solution, and the Seneca speech application platform. Currently, AVST markets a range of messaging products and capabilities utilizing the various capabilities of the CallXpress and Seneca platforms.

CallXpress is one of the five high-profile unified messaging products in the North American market, together with products offered by Avaya, Nortel, **Cisco** and **Siemens**. As the only independent unified messaging vendor (not a PBX vendor, as well), AVST offers an open, economical solution that integrates with virtually any telephone system in the market. The CallXpress scales up to 144 ports per systems and supports as many as 10,000 users in a single Windows 2000/2003 server platform.

CallXpress offers a number of differentiating features and capabilities. Users can organize and save all types of messages in folders for future reference; can select the voice message they want to hear first without listening to them all sequentially; and can enable their database to read or fax information to callers on demand, 24x7, without user assistance.

CallXpress administrators can manage numerous systems through one unified view; can perform changes across multiple systems simultaneously; can use the Microsoft Exchange Directory to change user records for voice, fax and e-mail messaging, rather than making three separate entries; can automatically synchronize user and server data via the Internet; and can activate advanced messaging functionality, such as text-to-speech or desktop message management, on a user-by-user basis.

CallXpress' features, as well as its cost and integration advantages, have enabled it to garner a substantial market share in the unified messaging market.

Now the CallXpress is bundled with the Seneca platform that adds speech-enabled auto-attendant and call routing capabilities to the messaging application. CallXpress allows users to use a single interface to respond to messages via a real-time phone call, a telephone, an e-mail or fax message,

or through a combination of messages. For example, users can send a voice message as a .wav file, attach a voice message to a fax or an e-mail, or route e-mail or fax messages to a nearby fax machine.

Furthermore, CallXpress allows users to instruct the program to search for them at up to nine phone numbers, including

paggers, mobile phones and SMS-enabled devices. The Seneca platform enables users to screen a caller before deciding to take the call or reject it; to create an Address Book; to use a simple voice command to place calls to members of their contact list; to make a return call by simply saying "call back;" to dial a telephone number by pronouncing the digits; to log into the system using only speech commands; and to have

calls routed directly to the user at his or her Virtual Extension number.

AVST is well positioned to leverage its sophisticated messaging and auto-attendant solution to gain further penetration in the unified communications market. As a modular, plug-and-play product that integrates with multiple telephone systems, CallXpress can be targeted to a diverse customer audience via a variety of direct and indirect channels. It can be deployed as a very simple unified messaging solution by more cost-conscious customers, but it can also provide a large array of advanced features that can enhance the productivity and efficiency of busy, mobile professionals.

CallXpress is easy to install and can be marketed by a variety of channel partners that do not need to develop any specific implementation or integration skills. AVST has secured the support of some channel partners, such as Verizon and Norstan, and an OEM arrangement with Ericsson that will help it grow faster and compete more successfully with the larger unified messaging solution vendors.

Some of these small vendors may grow to become serious contenders for market share leadership in some application markets, and others may be later acquired by larger competitors.

## Conclusions

As the speech technology and solution market grows, it is likely to become increasingly diversified and competitive. Multiple vendors of varying size and business focus are likely to introduce competing products and try to gain market share. Packaged applications currently represent a significant opportunity for vendors to develop a competitive edge.

In the unified communications space, as well as in the speech solutions market in general, smaller speech providers are in the company of large vendors with a significant amount of reputation for offering advanced and reliable telecommunications solutions. Well-diversified vendors such as Avaya and Nortel have substantial marketing and sales resources at their disposal, and they can rapidly and relatively easily develop new solutions in-house or

acquire new skills and expertise via mergers and acquisitions.

Smaller vendors, however, are those that will shake the boat. By pushing the envelope in developing advanced solutions and capabilities, they challenge the incumbent vendors to also innovate and offer greater value to customers. These companies also have an impact on pricing, distribution models and customer expectations. Smaller vendors are much more likely to focus on delivering packaged, plug-and-play applications that allow them to target the typically under-served small and medium-sized business segment and to leverage extensive and diverse distribution channels.

As the market evolves further, packaged applications are likely to become a major differentiator and to determine vendors' competitive abilities. Nimble and entrepreneurial companies can strive to intro-

duce such solutions faster than the incumbent vendors and to gain market share away from them. Such companies are likely to pose a significant threat to established vendors and are likely to grow as demand for advanced, packaged, speech-enabled solutions grows.

*Elka Popova is an industry analyst in Frost & Sullivan's telecommunication services group. Popova's area of specialty is Voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) and other next-generation packet voice services.*

If you are interested in purchasing reprints of this article (in either print or HTML format), please visit Reprint Management Services online at <http://www.reprintbuyer.com> or contact a representative via e-mail at [reprints@tmcnet.com](mailto:reprints@tmcnet.com) or by phone at 800-290-5460.



For information and subscriptions, visit <http://www.TMCnet.com> or call 203-852-6800.

## A SINGLE CONTACT CENTER PLATFORM OFFERING...



## ...BOUNDLESS POTENTIAL!!

Since 1995, Stratasoft has developed essential contact center software for today's most demanding companies in over 24,000 seats worldwide. Contact Stratasoft today to learn more about our unified contact center solutions.

**Stratasoft**

[www.stratasoft.com](http://www.stratasoft.com) Sales: 800-390-1157 [info@stratasoft.com](mailto:info@stratasoft.com) 6401  
Southwest Freeway Houston, TX 77074



Finding cost efficiencies in the call center seems to be following Moore's law: that is, as more and more call centers implement various call center technologies, it becomes more and more difficult to "squeeze" cost savings on each phone call. Fortunately, there is one nascent technology that has yet to be fully adopted in the call center — speech technology. Speech technology performance and accuracy is drastically better now than it once was, as integration is much easier and developer tools are much easier to use. The ROI on speech technology deployment is often very quick because repetitive or automatic inquiries and tasks can be offloaded from an agent to a speech recognition system.

*Customer Interaction Solutions®* magazine knows that speech technology will be a key differentiator or cost savings method for call centers. We have been covering call center technology for over two decades and have therefore seen the progression from primitive predictive dialers and recording systems, to full CTI integration, to IP-PBXs with remote VoIP call center agents. You would be hard pressed to not find all aforementioned technologies in a good call center. And so, soon it will also be the norm, rather than the exception, that the best call centers have speech technology implemented.

With new products and whole new categories of products in the contact center space, it is tough for our readers to keep up with the latest and greatest products and services. That is why *Customer Interaction Solutions®* launched the Speech Technology Excellence Award: so we can judge the "best of the best" in speech technology and pass our findings on to our readers.

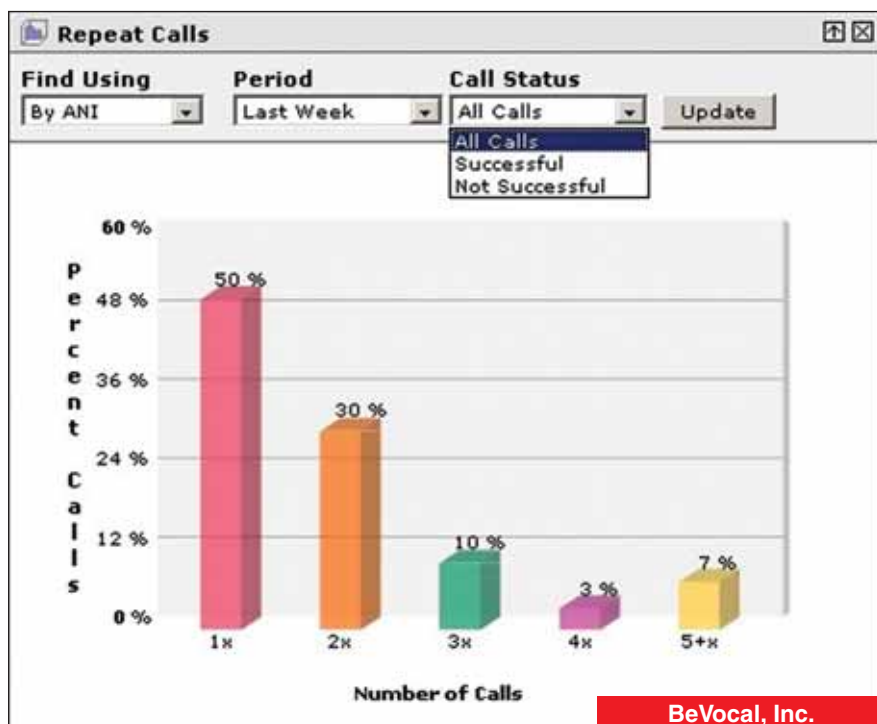
Congratulations to the winners.

— The editors, *Customer Interaction Solutions®* magazine

## SPEECH TECHNOLOGY



## EXCELLENCE AWARD™



### BeVocal, Inc.

<http://www.bevocal.com>

### BeVocal VoCare Customer Care Call Automation Suite

Comprised of more than 25 customizable applications, BeVocal's VoCare end-to-end call automation solutions are capable of handling all stages of customer care — from name/address capture and service provisioning, to account maintenance and bill payment.

The company's call automation solutions help enterprise call centers to answer, automate and route customer care calls for less money, while significantly improving customer service levels; they are intended to eliminate the expense, time wasted and headache associated with traditional call automation deployments. Core customer care application modules are reusable and are easily customizable, thus bringing the following effects: high automation rates,

out-of-the-gate caller satisfaction and quick time-to-market; tools that enable rapid analysis of applications' 20-30 key performance metrics; and an architecture that allows improvements to be made quickly, seamlessly and cost effectively — improvement can be easily leveraged by all applications.

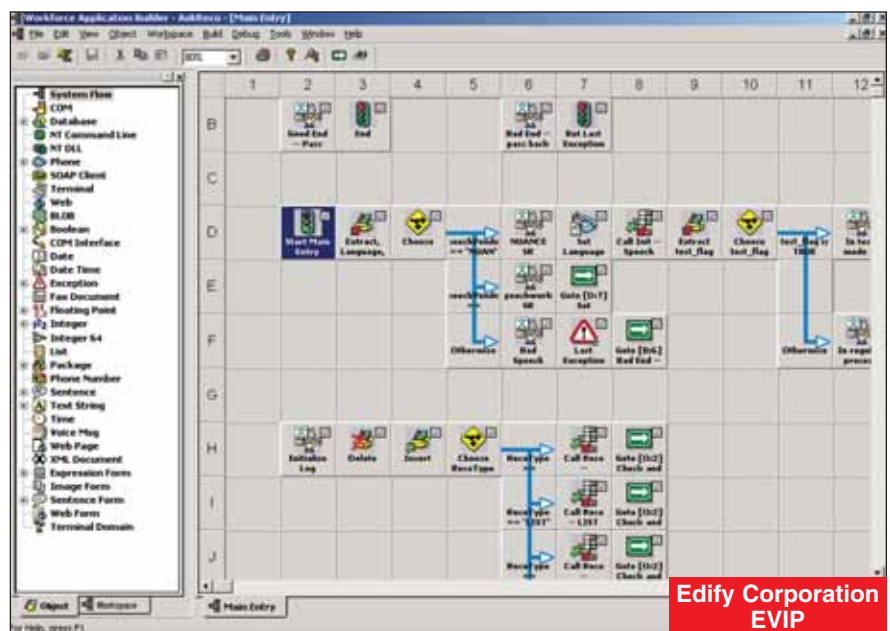
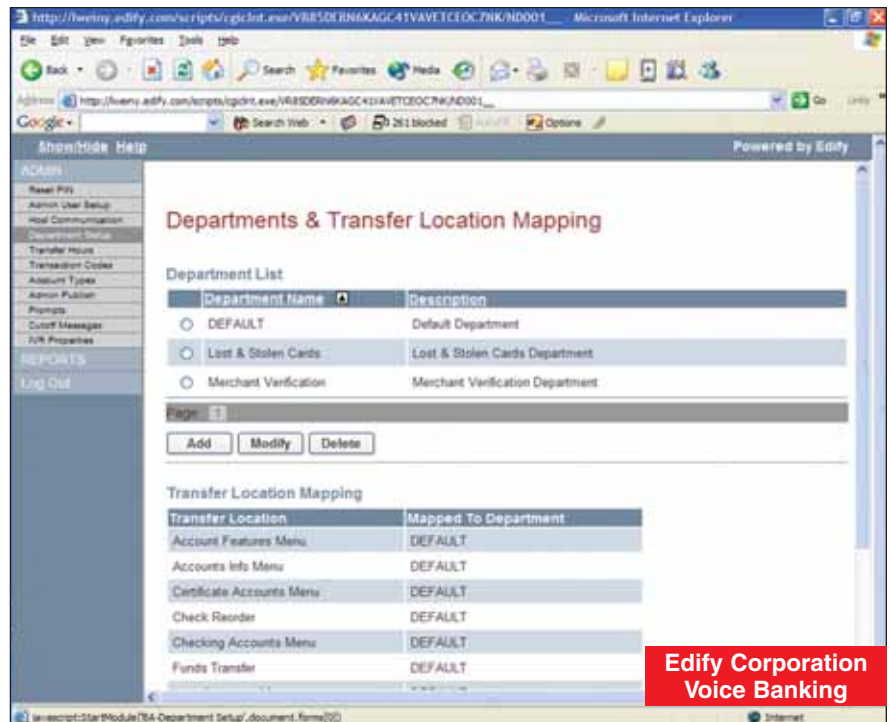
**Edify Corporation**  
<http://www.edify.com>  
**Edify Voice Banking**

Edify Voice Banking is a fully licensed, comprehensive software application that enables banking establishments to automate customer interactions and provide access to financial information through speech-enabled self-service. Based on industry standards, the application can eliminate enterprise customer concerns over application functionality and compatibility issues. With Edify Voice Banking, customers calling into the system can verbally identify themselves, their account and their requests without having to traverse a complex touch-tone menu.

Edify Voice Banking is comprehensive, with 16 separate modules of functionality, and is therefore able to entirely replace existing touch-tone IVR applications. The application includes all business logic, error-handling, grammar structures and data access sequences for each module. The application also includes packaged prompts and effective default personas. Licensed application support means investment protection, and it provides the ability to upgrade from release to release.

**Edify Corporation**  
<http://www.edify.com>  
**Edify Voice Interaction Platform (EVIP) 9.0**

By combining automation technologies — such as speech recognition, speaker verification, text-to-speech, fax and touch-tone capabilities — with a powerful application development environment and natural language capabilities, Edify Voice Interaction Platform (EVIP) 9.0 completely automates transactions that for-



merly required live agent assistance. The platform allows for information access across an organization and beyond, enabling companies to increase call accuracy and to accommodate higher call volumes globally, while still delivering more personalized and intelligent customer interactions.

**IBM**  
<http://www.ibm.com/pervasive>  
**WebSphere Voice Server**

IBM WebSphere Voice Server for Multiplatforms Version 5.1 is an advanced ASR/TTS engine with support for Media Resource Control Protocol (MRCP). IBM's product is easier to manage and quicker in resolving problems, with end-to-



end administration offered by the integrated administration and systems management features of WebSphere Application Server (WAS). It is more scalable and more flexible, and it can integrate to existing IT infrastructures because of the load balancing network dispatcher of WAS.

Interoperable with a range of applications through the use of a standards-based speech architecture, WebSphere Voice Server also offers multiple IVR platform support through the use of MRCP. Single development, as well as deployment for both voice and data applications, has strengthened and quickened the application development. Because of common business logic for visual and voice apps, integration has become easier. Speech applications may be taken to the Web through common development tools and skills. Multiple platforms are supported through Linux, with diverse language support.

#### Intervoice, Inc.

<http://www.intervoice.com>

#### Omnia Voice Express Packaged Applications Suite

The 10 flexible Omnia Voice Express packaged speech applications from Intervoice, Inc. enable small to large enterprises and carriers to transform critical business processes into conversations. The applications connect people and information, while reducing upfront development costs, deployment timeframes and application development complexities. The process-based applications suite supports both SALT and VoiceXML. Omnia Voice Express applications can be used as application templates, turnkey solutions, applications as a service (ASP), configurable

applications or developer applications.

Enterprises can select an Omnia Voice Express application of their choice and configure it to their needs via tools supporting both .NET and J2EE environments. Powered by Microsoft SQL Server, these applications can provide enterprises with valuable operational and business insight. Detailed call logs and out-of-box reports help managers analyze system usage, efficiency and performance. These applications feature a modular construction that allows developers to add or remove functionality without reworking the entire system.

#### LumenVox

<http://www.lumenvox.com>

#### LV Speech Tuner

The LV Speech Tuner is a completely integrated maintenance tool that allows end users, value-added resellers and speech

recognition professionals to tune and test their own applications. With this GUI-based tool, companies developing speech applications on multiple ASR engines can bring speech application tuning in-house and avoid professional service fees.

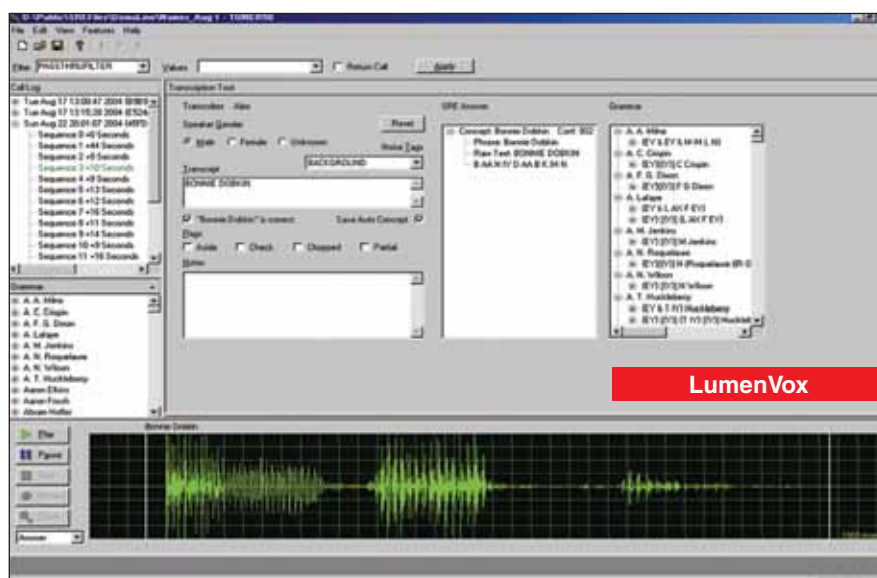
#### Nexidia

<http://www.nexidia.com>

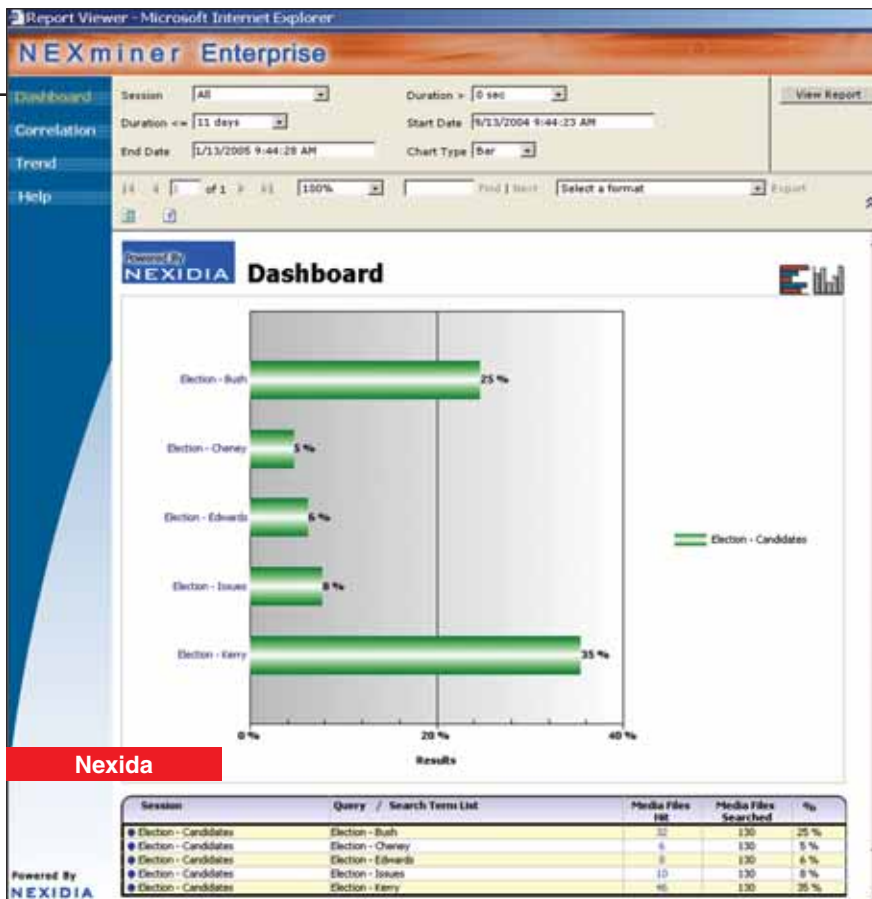
#### NEXminer Enterprise

Nexidia's technology offers a consistent and efficient means for extracting information previously locked away in audio files by transforming audio data into actionable intelligence. Nexidia's NEXminer solution is engineered to meet the demanding needs of government agencies and commercial organizations, such as contact centers, financial services and other regulated industries that require mission-critical performance.

The technology fully leverages the actual phonemes that define human speech, delivering a fast and accurate solution for compliance, discovery and knowledge management applications. NEXminer's phonetic engine allows the user to search on proper names, places, industry terms and jargon, without extensive training and cumbersome dictionaries. With the ability to index files at a rate of 20 times real time, as well as to search/analyze audio files at 100,000 times real time, NEXminer Enterprise is, indeed, fast, accurate and scalable.







### NICE Systems

<http://www.nice.com>

### NICE Perform

NICE Perform, targeted at enterprises, is designed to capture multimedia interactions and the information relating to them from all relevant sources. Perform analyzes the captured content using audio analysis technology; analyzes CTI raw data to understand the customer experience; examines customer responses (using post-call surveys); analyzes contact center agents' overall performance using quality monitoring forms; extracts information from agent screens; and uses coaching applications to train call center agents on an ongoing basis.

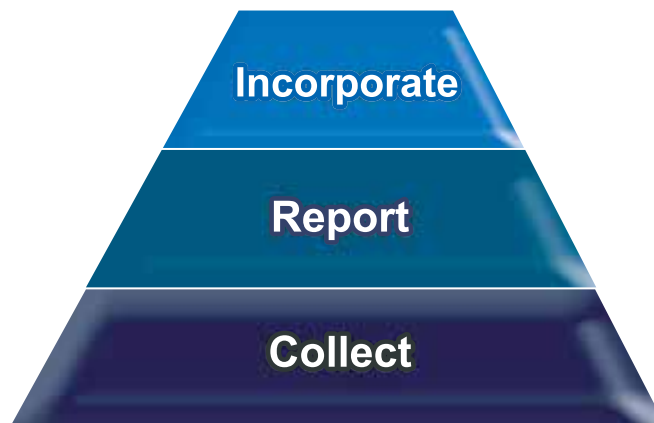
NICE Perform also presents the analyzed results in the most efficient and attractive manner to allow quick and efficient decision making by means of state-of-the-art graphic user interfaces, advanced

Do you know what your customers **think?**

want?

feel?

experience?



**AMAE**™  
Software

The creator of **Customer Experience Management** Technology and Solutions

(877) 843 1600  
[www.AmaeSoftware.com](http://www.AmaeSoftware.com)



**NICE Systems**

visualization tools, the ability to drill down and playback recorded interactions, and advanced reporting tools. Its audio analytics consist of its distinctive features: word spotting, emotion detection and talk-over analysis.

#### **Nuance Communications, Inc.**

<http://www.nuance.com>

#### **Nuance Call Steering 1.0**

Nuance Call Steering, powered by the company's Say Anything and AccuRoute technologies, enables callers to interact with an automated speech solution that lets them speak naturally and then quickly routes them to the correct destination. It eliminates the need for multiple phone numbers and touch-tone mazes that confuse customers and cost companies millions of dollars a year to maintain. The application is a robust, packaged VoiceXML application that can be rapidly deployed, and comes with application management tools and reporting, mission-critical support and a seamless upgrade path.

#### **SER Solutions, Inc.**

<http://www.ser.com>

#### **SERTAINTY Automated Quality Assurance Solution**

Working in conjunction with third-party call recording systems, SERTAINTY

combines advanced speech recognition technology with user-defined business rules to deliver fully automated quality assurance. SERTAINTY enables contact centers to listen to 100 percent of calls and to analyze and score every customer interaction. Rather than listen to an entire call, or monitor only a small fraction of all the calls made in the con-

tact center, SERTAINTY performs accurate, automated evaluations of all customer interactions; scores each call against a set of KPIs; and only flags calls that actually need to be reviewed by a supervisor.

SERTAINTY enables quality issues in the contact center to be quickly pinpointed, by identifying agents who deviate from the script, use inappropriate language or do not achieve KPIs. Knowledge of where and what the issues are enables contact centers to effectively measure, coach and reward agents.

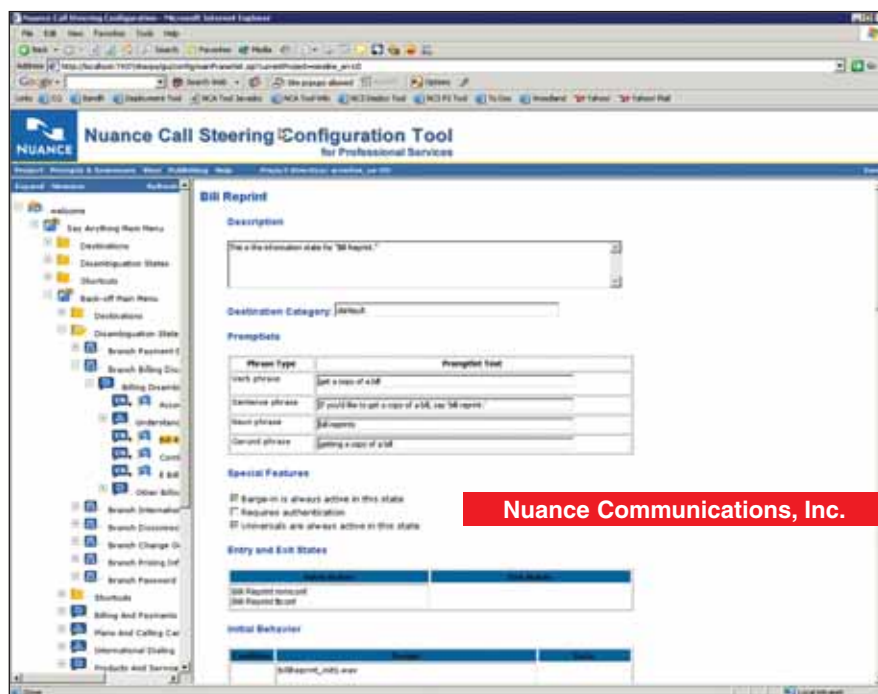
SERTAINTY also enables users to mine previously archived audio files to reveal valuable information or trends and pinpoint customer issues or additional revenue opportunities.

#### **Syntellect**

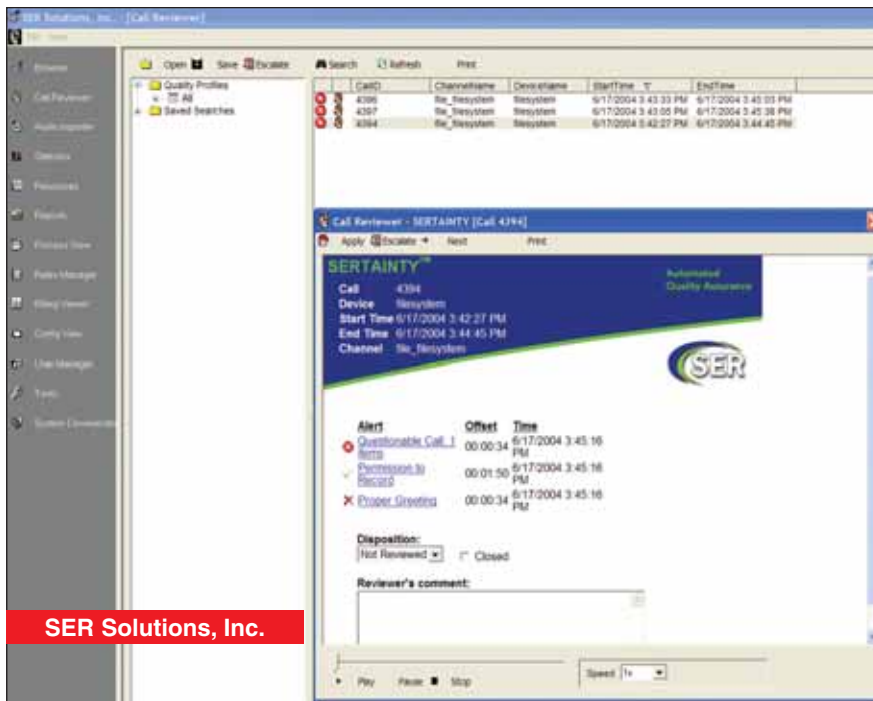
<http://www.syntellect.com>

#### **Continuum**

Continuum is a comprehensive array of solutions — from packaged, off-the-shelf products to modular tools and custom applications — designed to increase customer satisfaction and return on investment while decreasing customer service costs and business risk for both live and self-service applications.



**Nuance Communications, Inc.**



SER Solutions, Inc.

Continuum delivers a "future-proof, state-of-the-art" product suite on an open platform, supporting speech recognition from Nuance (8.5, Verifier 3.5, Vocalizer for Text-to-Speech) to provide recognition accuracy, scalability and robustness. Continuum's use of client/server architecture complements and further extends the flexibility and scalability of these technologies.

Continuum includes a suite of best-in-class development tools to create VoiceXML 2.0-compliant or Java applications, as well as published APIs for access/integration with other interfaces/existing solutions; consolidation, load balancing and multisite linking; unified reporting; and complete disaster recovery.

To accomplish a user-centered, branded Voice User Interface on the services side, Syntellect developed a speech services delivery process wherein context definition, requirements definition, persona definition, conversational dialog design and design stage usability are included in the bundle as standard.

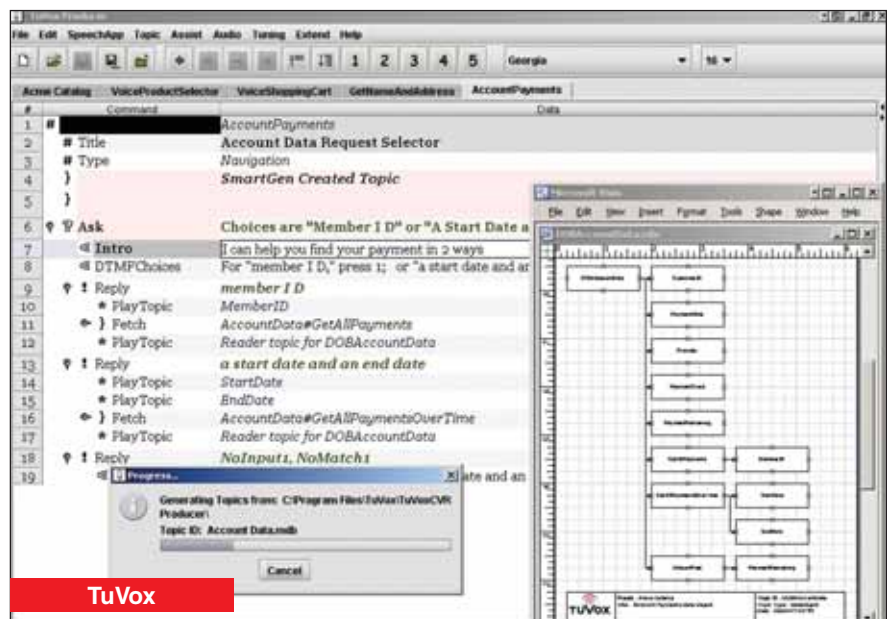
English, Spanish, French and a full complement of other languages are supported.

#### TuVox

<http://www.tuvox.com>

#### TuVox Enterprise Software

TuVox's integrated approach can minimize work across the complete lifecycle of speech applications, while reducing the need for specialized skills. This integrated approach is delivered through the company's CVR (Conversational Voice Response) system.



TuVox

Built completely on open standards, TuVox's Enterprise Software automates any type of call, including natural language call routing, self-service transactions, information requests and product support.

One notable feature of this solution is its dynamic natural language call routing, which uses an open-ended conversational approach to quickly identify what callers want and routes them to the appropriate destinations within seconds, thus providing improved caller experience.

A second distinctive feature is the seamless integration between the speech application and agents' desktops (bi-directional capability). In the event that a call is directed to an agent, the call transcript and all relevant information provided by the caller to the speech application is transferred to the agent desktop, eliminating the need for callers to repeat information already captured by the speech application.

#### VoiceGenie Technologies Inc.

<http://www.voicegenie.com>

#### NeXusPoint 6.4

VoiceGenie's NeXusPoint is a VoiceXML 2.0-certified high-performance platform that delivers a flexible, reliable and scalable infrastructure for developing and deploying DTMF (touch-tone) or speech-enabled applications. With a feature-rich and robust architecture, NeXusPoint facili-



tates speech application deployment for any type or size of business, whether deployed for simple touch-tone IVR services for customer self-service, or for improving internal operations with automated attendants, or for hosting sophisticated voice services for high-impact revenue enhancements.

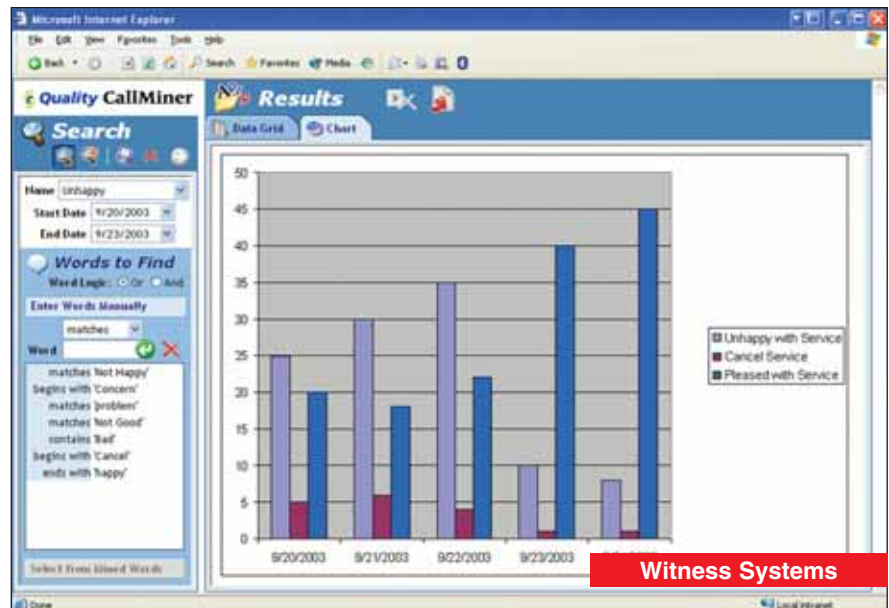
Supporting open standards at every level, NeXusPoint offers a wide selection of best-of-breed ASR, TTS, speech applications and development tools, providing customers with improved flexibility and choice. With NeXusPoint, customers are not burdened with proprietary "vendor lock-in" at any layer of their deployment — now or in the future.

#### **Witness Systems**

<http://www.witness.com>

#### **eQuality CallMiner**

Witness' eQuality CallMiner combines speech recognition technology, statistical



methods and data mining techniques to create searchable databases of agent/customer

voice interactions in the contact center. The software searches and interprets interactions by identifying predefined key words, or combinations of words/phrases, and converting the audio calls into text and statistics about what was said and the context around the conversations. eQuality CallMiner uses sophisticated algorithms to classify the transcripts, weighing and cross-referencing the words and alternatives recognized to produce an optimized assessment of the conversation.

The solution's search rules can track specific words or spot those used in combination. CallMiner can produce reports of most commonly used words, and it allows contact center management and executives to conduct user-defined queries and analysis of agent/customer contacts. Users can drill-down into calls for further detail.

In addition to extracting key information from customer interactions and automating the mining of those contacts, eQuality CallMiner enables users to quantify specific areas of interest; it also automatically highlights contacts that may not meet regulatory and compliance guidelines; and it alerts users when predefined scores and thresholds are met.

For information and subscriptions, visit <http://www.TMCnet.com> or call 203-852-6800.



Subscribe FREE online at [www.cismag.com](http://www.cismag.com)



# Subscribe Free to

## of the World's Leading Communications Magazines!

on Voice over IP,  
VoIP Development,  
SIP, WiMAX, CRM,  
Call Centers,  
WiFi Telephony,  
Speech Technologies and More...

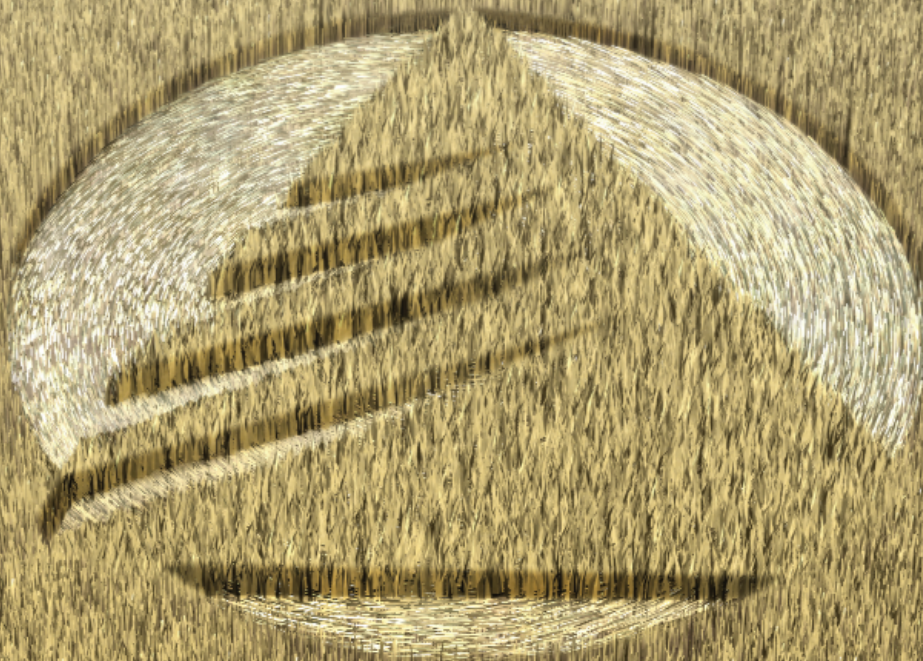
Digital Delivery Worldwide  
Direct to Your Email Box!



Go To: [subscribe.tmcnet.com](http://subscribe.tmcnet.com) and SUBSCRIBE TODAY!



# The Sign of Intelligent CRM



Compliance issues can crop up overnight. But they're not alien to us.  
Outsource your call center activities to the intelligent choice – Advanced Data-Comm.

## Do-Not-Call?

We've all heard the horror stories. Just one illegal call could cost you \$10,000 or more. But the secret to avoiding these exorbitant fines and complying with federal and state laws isn't a mystery – simply outsource to Advanced Data-Comm.

## Do-Not-Worry!

Advanced Data-Comm has a thorough understanding of federal and state calling laws – and we're ready to step in and make sure you don't inadvertently break them.

## Get Results!

Get back to the business of running your business – without worries of accidentally violating calling laws. Advanced Data-Comm will prevent compliance problems from “cropping-up” – so you can relax again!

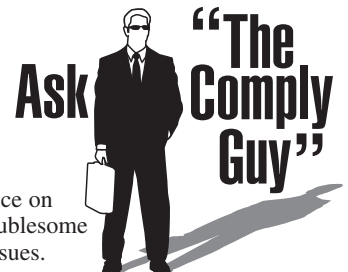


**ADVANCED DATA-COMM**  
INCORPORATED

Peace Of Mind Customer Care™

800-582-9501 or (563) 582-9501 301 Data Court, Dubuque, Iowa 52003

© 2004 Advanced Data-Comm, Dubuque, Iowa



Get **FREE** advice on  
your most troublesome  
compliance issues.

Log on now at:  
[www.advanced-data.com/complyguy](http://www.advanced-data.com/complyguy)





Salesforce.com  
Winter '05 Edition

Salesforce.com

2005  
CUSTOMER INTERACTION  
SOLUTIONS  
EDITORS' CHOICE

The Landmark @ One Market  
Ste. 300  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
Ph: 415-901-7000; Fax: 415-901-7040  
Web: <http://www.salesforce.com>  
Price: \$1,500 per year per agent. Free trial is available.

# TMC Labs Review

*Editor's note: For the purpose of differentiating the company and the product, Salesforce.com uses a capital letter to begin the name of the company, and a lower-case spelling for the product, salesforce.com.*

Hosted CRM solutions aim to reduce the complexity of running CRM software. The on-demand CRM market has, as of late, acquired several competitors, but Salesforce.com is still considered the market leader with 195,000 subscribers in a combination of small, medium and large enterprises. Salesforce.com told us: "We are

democratizing CRM. Anybody can use our system at any time, and it doesn't matter what the complexity is. It can be used by a small company with complex needs or a large company with simple needs, or vice versa. Everyone is going to be running on the same system."

TMC Labs had the opportunity to take a look at the company's recently launched Winter '05 edition. Most of us know hosted CRM has faced criticism that its applications are difficult for customers to customize. Salesforce.com heard these cries and launched a customization application called Customforce.com. This tool allows users to extend salesforce.com's applications without any programming. Customforce.com is available to salesforce.com customers at no additional charge. Customers can modify user interfaces, workflows, tabs and fields to suit their personal preferences; adding tabs and hiding tabs were remarkably easy to do, considering we have seen competing packages that make it extremely difficult to perform these tasks. Additionally, Salesforce.com recently introduced Supportforce.com, an on-demand customer service and support application perfectly suited for help desk environments.

We asked Salesforce.com about some of their differentiators, and they told us that their key differentiator is the architecture: "Our founders looked at a couple of options. We could have set up individual databases on separate hardware for each customer, but you'd quickly run out of co-location real estate. We didn't want to be supporting 1,000 or 2,000 servers. Some of the competition have done that. Instead, our architecture is one system, one database — our intellectual property is all in this architecture with the database and metadata. Everybody is on the same system, whether it's a huge company or a mom-and-pop shop." They also informed us that they utilize very high-end Sun boxes, along with clustering technology for the database, and that the processing is performed on a single server. Amazingly, Salesforce.com doesn't use multiple servers for offloading the host processing, yet their hosted CRM service is still very scalable with exceptionally fast performance, which we saw for ourselves when we tested the system.

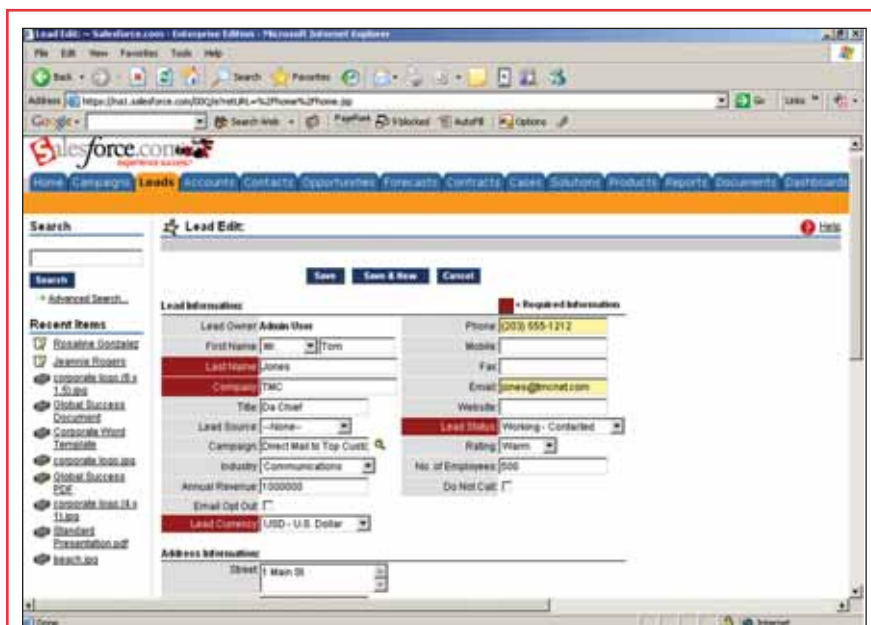


Figure 1: salesforce.com interface, with leads tab screen displayed.



We asked Salesforce.com to describe some of the driving factors for hosted CRM, and why customers would want to use their system. Their response: "One of the major reasons for the failure of CRM systems is that they were too expensive. No one was using them. They took a couple of years to implement, and were a philosophical change from being individual producers. When a vendor came in and said, 'You are doing it THIS way! You have to work with our system,' there was a rejection. The users' rejection was the result of a few different factors — the software didn't work; it wasn't easy to use; users couldn't take it on the road; it didn't work with their mobile devices; and the people who championed it in the first place were CIOs, on 18-month tenures, who were no longer with the company."

## Features

salesforce.com has some nifty VoIP integration with Cisco IP phones. For example, you can get screen-pops on your Cisco IP phone, and you can view the actual salesforce.com application within the Cisco IP phone's browser. When you end the call, salesforce.com will automatically log the incoming call to the record.

Navigating the salesforce.com Web interface to add leads (Figure 1) and contacts was very easy to do, as the company seems to have spent a lot of time optimizing the layout of the interface. Customizing salesforce.com was a quick process. Adding custom tabs was very easy, and capturing data from external sources, such as a Web site lead-capture form, was also very simple to do.

One important item of note is that salesforce.com has its own framework for its reporting engine rather than use third-party reporting solutions such as Crystal Reports; this results in a powerful, real-time dashboard (Figure 2) for viewing important stats from within the browser without having to export to Crystal Reports.

The dashboard offers a quick glance at some charts. You can easily customize it to display the information you want to see. These charts have complete drill-down capability: If you click on one of the dashboard charts, you can drill down and run the reporting engine to generate a real-time

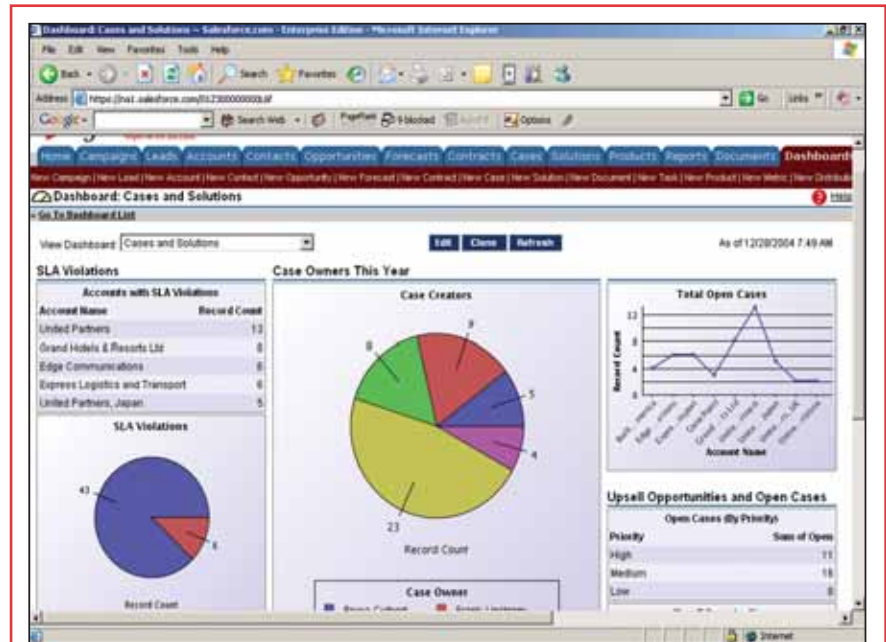


Figure 2: salesforce.com dashboard for displaying real-time stats.

report, which also has complete drill-down to view individual accounts or opportunities. If you want to do some customized reporting, you can use the Office Edition option to pull information into an Excel pivot table. Pivot tables are popular with many companies, as is creating reports and customized charts in Excel, so we certainly liked this option.

An interesting feature is salesforce.com's ability to monitor adoption while still keeping the subscriber's actual data confidential. salesforce.com can monitor logons, and it can keep track of which features its subscribers are using — information that helps the company improve the product and educate its customers.

Customer Success Managers (CSMs) are another of salesforce.com's differentiators. These CSMs can monitor a subscriber's adoption rate, and if it drops below a threshold, the CSMs will immediately contact the subscriber to say, "We noticed your adoption rate is only 79 percent. How can we help?"

Another example of the product's adoption monitoring: If a subscriber is not using a particular feature, salesforce.com's CSMs can check up on the customer and tell him or her, "We see that you're using the majority of our features, but you should really consider using the forecasting feature." With automatic adoption monitoring and proac-

tive CSMs, Salesforce.com says it helps drive its adoption rate, which the company claims is 95 percent.

salesforce.com has a translation engine in the system that can convert everything in the interface (except the actual data) to the language of your choice, making it a powerful solution for global corporations. The Winter '05 release also adds forecasting (Figure 3), as well as a pricebook feature, which Salesforce.com told us many competitive CRM on-demand solutions do not have. Similarly, the product also features an asset-tracking capability. Another useful feature is its ability to display an Outlook calendar within the salesforce.com interface via its Outlook synchronization product.

## Room For Improvement

There is no native support for linking two accounts or records with a "relationship type," which then provides users with the ability to simply click on the relationship link to bring up the "linked" record. For example, suppose Acme Corp. has a public relations firm called PR Masters, Inc. It would be nice to have a relationship tab that allows users to view linked records, then bring up those linked records by simply clicking on them. We should point out that you can simply add a note or use a field to state the relationship, but we like the idea of

a relationship link to make the whole process easier.

## Conclusion

We were impressed with the new features of the Winter '05 release, its innovative dashboard feature and its overall scalable architecture, as well as its ease of use. Even with competitors nipping at the heels of Salesforce.com, salesforce.com is still considered the de facto standard when it comes to online on-demand CRM.

### RATINGS (0-5)

Installation: 5

Documentation: N/A

Features: 4.5

GUI: 4.75

Overall: A

For information and subscriptions, visit <http://www.TMCnet.com> or call 203-852-6800.

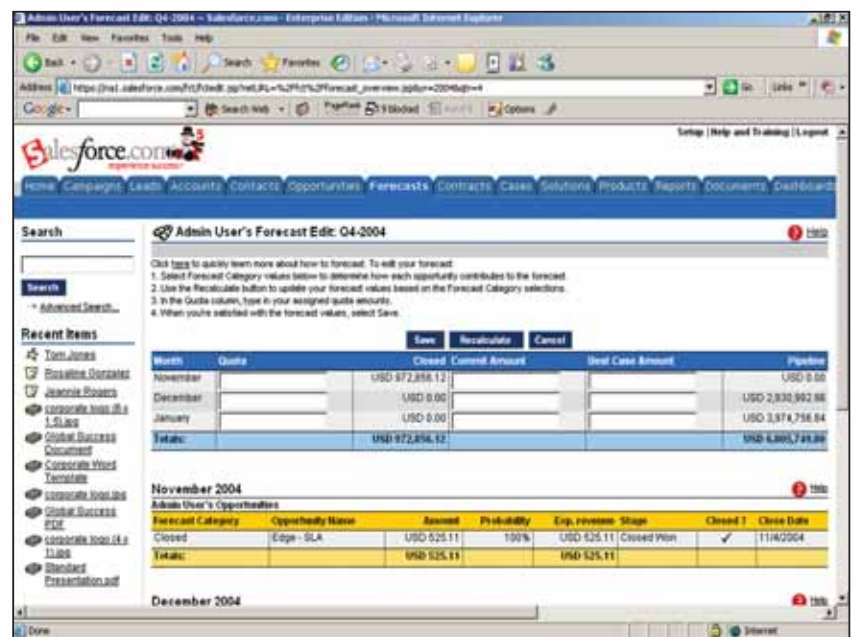


Figure 3: salesforce.com's new forecasting feature.



# 2005 CONFERENCE CALENDAR



May  
24-26, 2005  
Dallas, Texas

[www.speech-world.com](http://www.speech-world.com)



February  
22 - 25, 2005  
Miami, Florida  
[www.itexpo.com](http://www.itexpo.com)



August  
2 - 3, 2005  
San Francisco, California  
[www.voipdeveloper.com](http://www.voipdeveloper.com)



October  
24 - 27, 2005  
Los Angeles, California  
[www.itexpo.com](http://www.itexpo.com)

For information on any TMC conference, contact Dave Rodriguez:  
203-852-6800, ext. 146 or [drodriguez@tmcnet.com](mailto:drodriguez@tmcnet.com)



# SCORE 2005

## Symposium for Customer Operations and Relationship Exposition

### SCORE CONFERENCE 2005

April 18-21

Seaport Hotel  
BOSTON



### SPECIAL OFFER!

Free Web Survey for  
First 100 Attendees to Register!

Boston is America's newest "City of Champions," home to pro baseball and football's 2004 titleholders. In 2005, Boston will play host to hundreds of all-stars from **your league** - customer service, support, contact centers, sales, marketing and human resources decision makers from America's top companies will attend the SCORE 2005 Conference.

This is the industry's pre-eminent event for loyalty management strategy and customer contact operations.

### Learn the secrets of building a Loyalty Management Strategy from leading best-in-class companies

- Intensive four-day conference dedicated to creating and sustaining a customer loyalty management strategy
- Workshops on developing a loyalty management strategy, which includes customers and employees
- Industry leaders will present stimulating new concepts for increasing customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, customer retention, implementing performance-based compensation -- and how all are linked to increasing revenues and profits
- Skill-building sessions will promote excellence in contact center, field service, help desk, customer service, customer relationship management, technical support operations, as well as employee training in customer relationship management
- Compelling case studies from chief customer officers and service executives from leading companies
- Learn how service can be the highest margin contributor to the bottom line
- Establish your organization as a respected thought leader and network with executives from all areas of customer contact and service

To register, call toll-free at (877) 624-0659 or visit [www.omegascoreboard.com](http://www.omegascoreboard.com)

#### REGISTRATION FEE: \$1,995

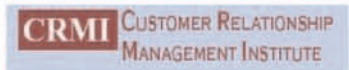
##### Discounts:

- Associations: AFSMI, ICSA, SSPA, SOCAP, ASP, ContactCenterWorld.com, SOCAP, ASQC, CCNG, ICMI, CRMxchange (limit one, \$100 per attendee)
- CRMI Member, 1 year (\$295 per year) (\$100 per attendee)
- CRMI Membership, Multi-Year (\$885 for 3 years) (\$100 per attendee)
- Team Discount for 2 or more attending from same company (\$100 per attendee)

##### Produced by:



and



##### Media Sponsors:





## DATABASE

## Know Thy Customer!

**220 Million Consumers** - Identify age, income, home value, buying behavior, geography, and more.

**14 Million Businesses** - Identify geography, sales volume, business type, contact name, credit rating, and more.

**Customer Analyzer & Prospect Builder** - Analyze your current customers & find prospects that match.



**Call Mark Schwartz:**  
**(402) 596-8933**

## LISTS

**Market your products and services to Technology Professionals with buying authority!**

• OPT-IN EMAIL LISTS

• POSTAL/TELEMARKETING LISTS •

**REACH KEY CONTACTS INCLUDING:**

• IT and MIS Managers • Communications and Internet professionals • Call Center, CRM, Help Desk and Tech Support Managers • Corporate Executives in Technology companies •



**Contact:**  
**L.I.S.T. INCORPORATED**  
**www.l-i-s-t.com (516) 358-LIST (5478)**

## DIGITAL RECORDING

**New FTC regulations got you down?**

Data-Tel's FTC Compliance IVR package is the solution!

**xSELLerator 6.0**

Predictive Dialer Scheduling  
**Outbound** Recording  
Call Blending **Inbound**  
ACD **Web-Bound** IVR  
Skills-Based Routing Scripting

Learn how to maximize your contact rates - Call today!



**DATA-TEL**  
INFO SOLUTIONS

**www.datatel-info.com | 888.926.1131**



## TELESERVICES AGENCIES — OUTSOURCING

**The InfoCision Difference**

- Increased ROI
- Domestic call centers
- Split testing at reduced rates
- Per-minute pricing
- Personal account team

**Inbound Customer Care**  
**Outbound B-to-B Solutions**

**1-866-897-2980**

www.infocision.com

**InfoCision**  
TELEPHONE MARKETING EXPERTS



## TRAINING

Complete DVD-based Video Training Library

On-site Instructor-led Training Workshops

Houndville Business Animations

Complete eLearning System

Keynote Presentations

**TELEPHONE DOCTOR**  
CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING

**www.telephonedoctor.com**

**800.882.9911**

## EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

**Professional Telesales/Customer Service Management Searches**

- Search consultants to most of the top ten service agencies in the U.S. and over 50 of the Fortune 500 companies. Small companies, too.
- All custom searches using a 25,000 resume file plus extensive proactive calling.
- Dedicated telesales/customer service searches since 1981... the first and the best!

**R.L. Bencin & Associates**

8553 Timber Trail  
Brecksville, OH 44141  
440-526-6726

Resumes welcomed!  
E-mail: [rlbencin@netzero.net](mailto:rlbencin@netzero.net)  
Web site: [www.rlbencin.com](http://www.rlbencin.com)

To receive free information from our premium advertisers, please visit  
**[freeinfo.tmcnet.com](http://freeinfo.tmcnet.com)**

To Subscribe to  
**CUSTOMER INTER@CTION**  
**SOLUTIONS® Magazine FREE**  
Look us up on the Web at  
**[www.cismag.com](http://www.cismag.com)**

# Objective And In-Depth.



How  
Refreshing!



**We Test The Products  
So You Don't Have To.**  
<http://www.tmcclabs.com>

**To Advertise in *Customer  
Inter@ction Solutions*<sup>®</sup>  
Please Contact Your Account  
Representative Today at  
203-852-6800, ext. 139  
or [sthompson@tmcnet.com](mailto:sthompson@tmcnet.com)**

**CUSTOMER INTER@CTION Solutions<sup>®</sup>** magazine (ISSN: 1533-3078) is published monthly by Technology Marketing Corporation, One Technology Plaza, Norwalk, CT 06854 U.S.A. and is mailed approximately the 1st of each month. Periodicals postage paid at Norwalk, Connecticut and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to: **CUSTOMER INTER@CTION Solutions<sup>®</sup>**, Technology Marketing Corporation, P.O. Box 21642, St. Paul, MN 55121 U.S.A.

To subscribe, call toll-free: 800-243-6002. If busy, call 203-852-6800 or write to the circulation director at [srusso@tmcnet.com](mailto:srusso@tmcnet.com). Subscription rates (published monthly): Free for qualified subscribers in the U.S.A. only. For non-qualified U.S.A. subscribers, \$49. All Canadian subscribers, \$49. All Foreign (air mail), \$85. All orders are payable in advance in U.S. dollars drawn against a U.S.

Advertiser/ Web Address	Page Number	Advertiser/ Web Address	Page Number	Advertiser/ Web Address	Page Number
Access Direc. <a href="http://www.accdir.com">http://www.accdir.com</a>	51	infoUSA <a href="http://www.license.infousa.com">http://www.license.infousa.com</a>	17, 53, 65	PRIDCO (Puerto Rico Industrial Development Co.) <a href="http://www.pridco.com">http://www.pridco.com</a>	13
Advanced Data-Comm <a href="http://www.advanced-data.com">http://www.advanced-data.com</a>	81	InfoCision Management Corp. <a href="http://www.infocision.com">http://www.infocision.com</a>	49	Sennheiser Communications <a href="http://www.sennheiser.com">http://www.sennheiser.com</a>	55
Amae Software <a href="http://www.amaesoftware.com">http://www.amaesoftware.com</a>	77	INTERNET TELEPHONY Conference & Expo <a href="http://www.itexpo.com">http://www.itexpo.com</a>	69	Spectrum Corp. <a href="http://www.specorp.com">http://www.specorp.com</a>	61
Aspect Communications Corp. <a href="http://www.aspect.com">http://www.aspect.com</a>	9	Jacada <a href="http://www.jacada.com">http://www.jacada.com</a>	43	Speech-World Conference & Expo <a href="http://www.speech-world.com">http://www.speech-world.com</a>	57
Barbados Investment & Development Corp. (BIDC) <a href="http://www.bidc.com">http://www.bidc.com</a>	33	Left Bank Solutions Inc. <a href="http://www.leftbanksolutions.com">http://www.leftbanksolutions.com</a>	11, 29	SPIRIT <a href="http://www.spiritdsp.com">http://www.spiritdsp.com</a>	50
Center Partners, Inc. <a href="http://www.centerpartners.com">http://www.centerpartners.com</a>	47	Mercom <a href="http://www.mercom.com">http://www.mercom.com</a>	19	Stratasoft <a href="http://www.stratasoft.com">http://www.stratasoft.com</a>	73
Concerto Software <a href="http://www.concerto.com">http://www.concerto.com</a>	4, 5	Omega Management Group Corp. <a href="http://www.omegascorboard.com">http://www.omegascorboard.com</a>	85	Telephony@Work <a href="http://www.telephonyatwork.com">http://www.telephonyatwork.com</a>	cover 4
GN Netcom, Inc. <a href="http://www.gnnetcom.com">http://www.gnnetcom.com</a>	3	Plantronics, Inc. <a href="http://www.plantronics.com">http://www.plantronics.com</a>	15	West Corp. <a href="http://www.west.com">http://www.west.com</a>	cover 2, 1
IEX Corp. <a href="http://www.iex.com">http://www.iex.com</a>	27	Precision Response Corp. <a href="http://www.prcnet.com">http://www.prcnet.com</a>	cover 3	Witness Systems <a href="http://www.witness.com">http://www.witness.com</a>	21, 23, 24, 25

By  
Tracey E.  
Schelmetic,  
Editorial Director,  
Customer  
Inter@ction  
Solutions®



# A Fairy Story For A Cold February Night

Once upon a time, in a faraway land called Monopolopolis, there were three nobles. The first, Prince Cable, roamed his land on his proud steed, dropping huge bills on his peasant populace. When they complained, he laughed and said, "Fine! Go get your premium television from someone else then!" Prince Cable's constituents were miserable, for they had nowhere else to go, particularly those who were addicted to reruns of "Law & Order" and who started to shake when they went too many nights without Jack McCoy and Lenny Briscoe. "Get your flirtini fix from somewhere else!" jeered Prince Cable to "Sex and the City" fans.

The second prince, Prince Copper Wire (known as Landline to his close friends), sent an endless array of carrier pigeons to his serfs, each month presenting them with larger and larger bills, while lessening their quality of service. Prince Copper Wire was carefree and happy; the people needed his services and could get them from him only, and besides...Prince Copper Wire had great hair.

The third noble, Princess Wireless, kept her peasants locked in small cages. When they tried to get out, she laughed and said, "No, you signed a very long contract with me, and you're mine forever!" When they did manage to escape their cages, they couldn't go anywhere else, for fear of losing their phone numbers or having poor wireless coverage. And when their phones broke or needed repair, old customers found that the shiny apple Princess Wireless offered to new customers turned quite poisonous in the hands of existing customers.

As the years passed, the Earl of Satellite Television moved to town, along with the Baron Voice Over IP and the Duke of

Wireless Number Portability. Not far away, the Countess of Prepaid Phone Cards built a castle. (Her twin brother, who lived in a manor house next door, was Sir Pay-As-You-Go Cellular.) But still, the Princes Cable and Copper Wire and Princess Wireless pretended that nothing had changed in Monopolopolis. They continued to mistreat their peasants, raising prices higher and higher, and caring little for giving anything of quality back to their constituents.

But their peasants began to abandon them and join forces with different nobles. Their income began to trail off. "It's not our fault," they complained bitterly. "The FCC has it in for us. The stock market is flat. Unemployment is too high. The moon is misaligned. Our tuxes didn't come back from the cleaners."

Even as their serfs began to abandon them in droves, the nobles cut services to their constituents even further, hoping to recoup their losses. Though the miller and his family wished to go live with the Baron Voice Over IP, Prince Landline kept them waiting outside his castle portcullis for half an hour, ultimately making the miller more determined to pack up his family and depart. When the town weaver dropped her cell phone into a dye vat and ruined it, Princess Wireless demanded 350 gold pieces for a new phone, though the weaver had paid only 49.99 gold pieces for it when she'd first signed up. The weaver took her phone number to the service of a nicer noble.

The population of Monopolopolis is declining to this day; the cottages are emptying, the streets are becoming quieter, and the peasants smile as they leave town. But the Princes Cable and Copper Wire, and the Princess Wireless, plus their new comrade-in-complaints, Prince FM Radio, still sit in their quiet halls, convinced their people need them.

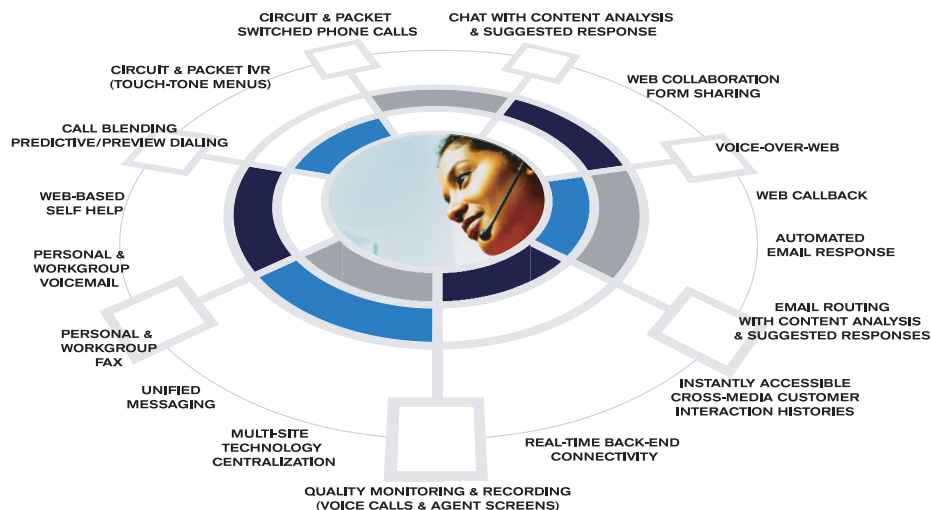
The End



# How Do You Increase Contact Center Revenues AND Slash Operating Costs?



## ADAPT. In Real-Time. ON DEMAND.



Most vendors require lots of time and money to program, integrate, implement and maintain multimedia contact centers or share technology across geography. They also can't implement changes without costs, risks and delays. And by the time "upgrades" are delivered, your needs may have changed. Telephony@Work technology leverages traditional needs-analysis questions yet allows your managers to define (or redefine) their answers via browser menus - in real-time and at no cost. This enables them to provision or modify any business process on-the-fly in order to increase efficiency on any communications channel - phone, fax or Internet - for any group, anywhere in the world. As you might expect, increased revenues are the natural result of being able to "fix" broken or strained business processes on demand.

**Comprehensive Inbound & Outbound Technologies: Integrated-By-Design™**

**TELEPHONY@work**

CALL CENTER & E-CONTACT TECHNOLOGY MADE EASY