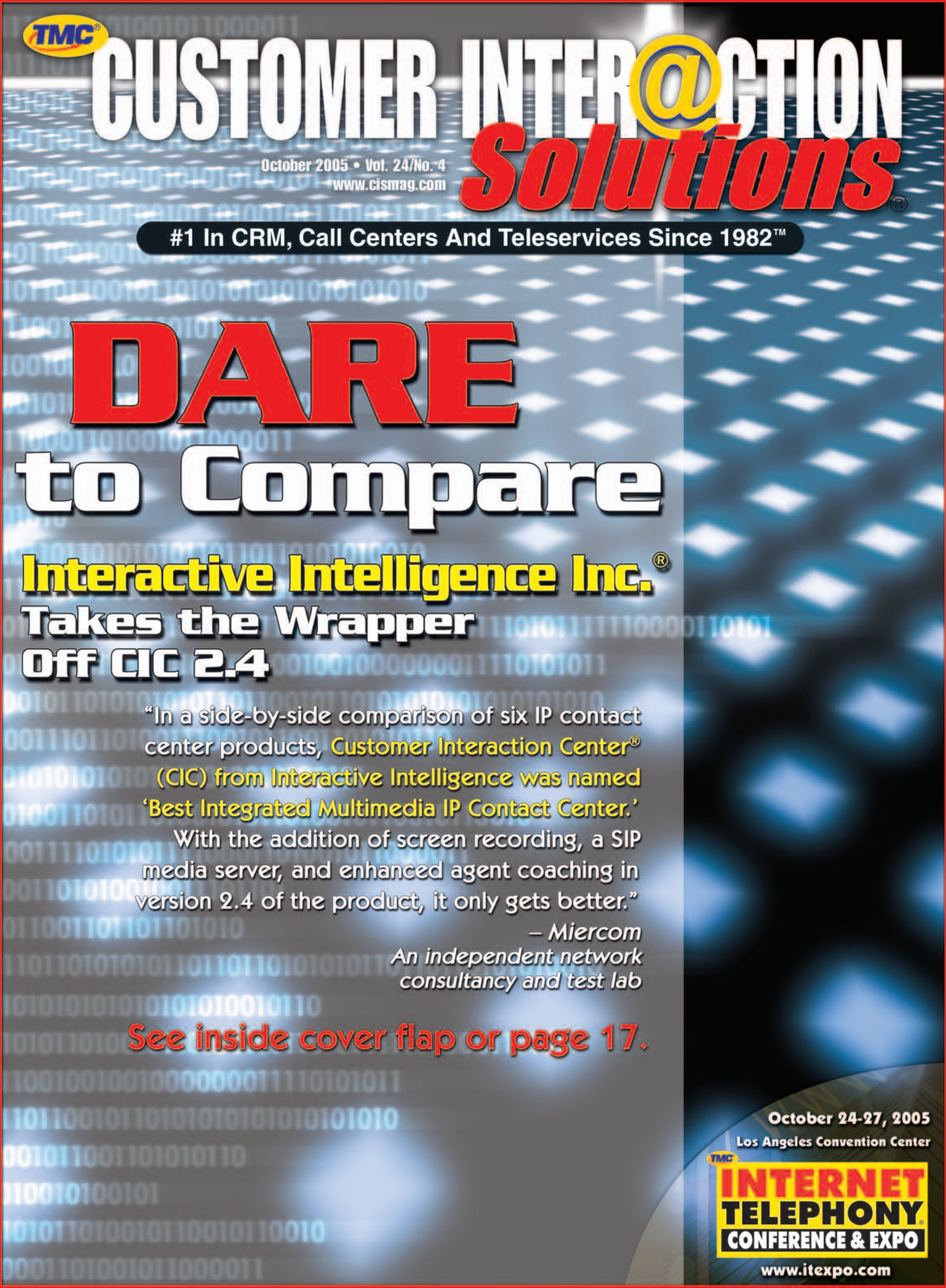

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See inside cover flap or page 17.

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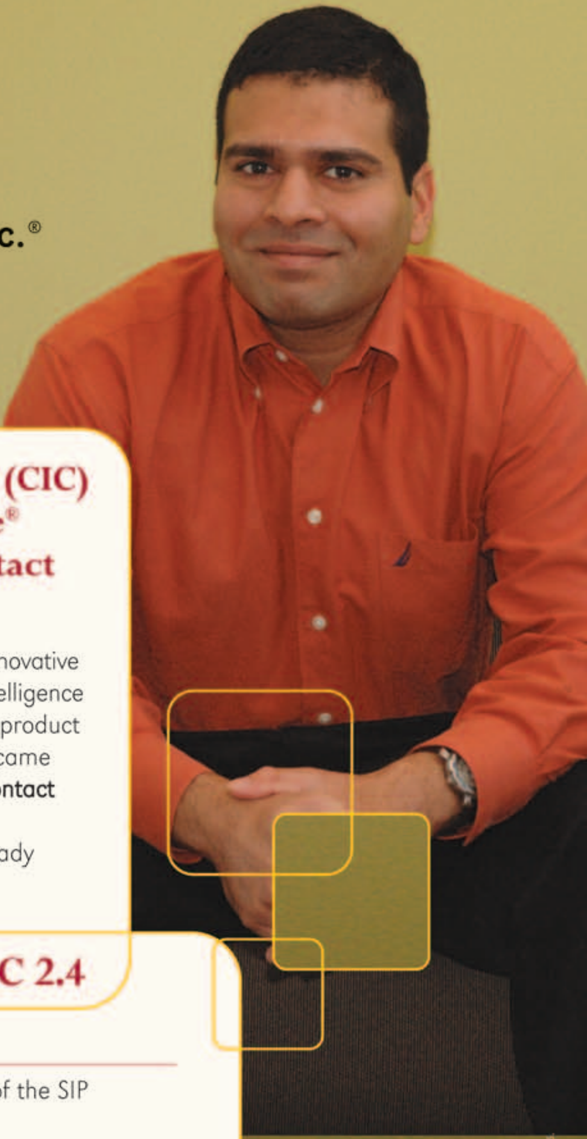

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- **Online Marketing Comes Of Age**
- **Mobile CRM**
- **TMC Labs Innovation Awards, Part I**
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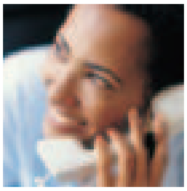

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By: Nadji Tehrani,
Founder, Chairman & CEO, Editor-in-Chief,
Technology Marketing Corporation

Online Marketing Comes Of Age!

Opportunities & Pitfalls

How To Make The Most Of It

A Word To The Wise... Don't Put All Of Your Eggs In The Same Basket — Use Integrated Marketing!

Online Marketing

Like anything else in life, there is a right way and a wrong way. In this editorial we try to give you some guidelines based on proven experience.

The Overview

Every so often, marketing reinvents itself. I love marketing because it changes all the time and keeps you on your toes. A French philosopher once said, "The more things change, the more they stay the same." However, when it comes to marketing, that is only fifty percent true. Namely, the method of marketing changes but the marketing principles stay the same. I feel that because of the ever-changing nature of marketing, there will always be a great challenge in figuring out what the formula for success today versus yesterday is.

Companies exist for two and only two reasons; namely, marketing and innovation. Without these, no company would get anywhere.

Putting all of the above together, it becomes clear that marketing is often like shooting at a moving target, that's why it is the most challenging and most complex part of any corporation. Ironically, to make matters worse, very few, if any, companies pay enough attention to this vital art and science.

Marketing Blunders Continue

As I travel around the country visiting companies, and by virtue of my recently introduced "Boardroom Report," which may be viewed at http://www.tmcnet.com/call-center/board-report/ (please refer to my September 2005 editorial for a description of the Boardroom Report), I continuously find that a certain amount of blunders continues in many companies.

Here are a few examples:

a. Some companies hire a complete marketing staff, but they give

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Many are making the mistake of stopping everything else and putting all of their marketing eggs in the online basket.

them no budget to market anything! I hope this makes sense to somebody!

b. Other companies want to get by with PR only. In other words, they give only lip service to marketing by trying to get something for nothing. Obviously, that kind of marketing will never succeed and the companies that believe in that philosophy will flounder until they lose their competitive advantage.

c. Other companies commit even greater sins by spending millions of dollars developing a product or group of products, and then they say there is no money left for marketing! To me, this is completely backward! Many companies successfully do it the other way around. They don't have much of a product, but they market the hell out of it and, as unlikely as it may seem, those are the companies that come up with the biggest market share!

Case In Point

Not long ago, I visited a company that offers one of the best, if not the best, speech product for our industry. We met with the CEO and asked about his company and his marketing plans. The answer was something like this: "We have invested 35 years in building this product line and we have no money to market it." I will never understand this kind of logic. This company will also flounder until someone else comes along with an inferior product and markets the hell out of it and eats his lunch.

Companies Exist For Two Reasons

Having said all of the above, it seems to me like many companies somehow prefer to ignore marketing. These companies fail to realize that companies exist for two and only two reasons; namely, marketing and innovation. Without these, no company would get anywhere.

Thinking Out Of The Box

Today, the Internet, print and television and other media are loaded with a tremendous amount of different messages. About the only way a company can get its message through to its audience is by thinking out of the box. That is the only way to survive.

I feel that companies would be well-advised to eliminate all of the above problems before they even think of online or any other kind of marketing.

Online Marketing Comes Of Age

Everyone knows that the latest evolution in marketing focuses on online marketing. Every time a new marketing concept comes along, people say, "This is the answer to all marketing needs. We are going to cancel everything else and jump on the online bandwagon!"

Back in 1982, when we launched *Telemarketing*® magazine in a pioneering act to lay the foundation for what is now the multibillion-dollar contact center/CRM and call center industry, most people said the same thing about telemarketing. I heard people dropping direct mail or print advertising in favor of telemarketing. This was not the right thing to do because no one buys anything from a company they have never heard of. When the marketers came to their senses in the early 1980s, they learned that in order to get the best results from telemarketing, they must combine it with direct mail, trade show marketing and personal visits (for high-value products) in order to get maximum results. In other words, we learned back then that the only way to market effectively is through integrated marketing. Stated differently, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Today, integrated marketing is also the only way to go. One cannot cancel all other marketing plans in favor of online marketing only.

There's no disputing the fact that a well-designed print ad will stand out in a publication just as a well-designed online ad will be noticed on a Web site. And standing out in a crowd ensures that your brand is recognized and your marketing message conveyed.

Some Guidelines For Online Marketing And Beyond

More and more companies today are leaning toward online marketing. Many are making the mistake of stopping everything else and putting all of

Online Marketing

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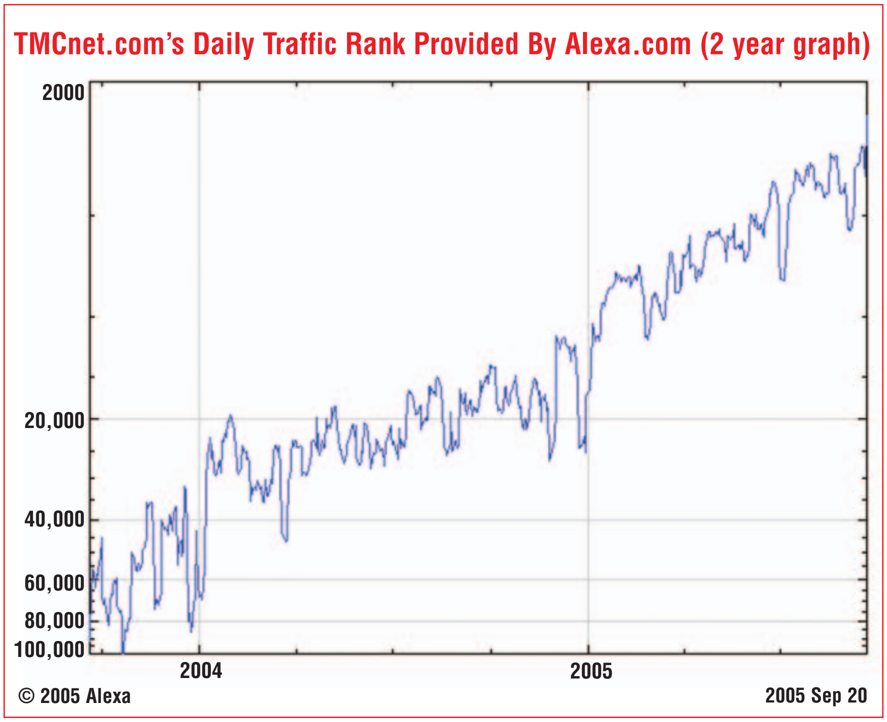
Figure 1



TMCnet.com's Daily Traffic Rank Provided By Alexa.com (2 year graph)

Alexa.com, an Amazon Company is a third party verification of Web site traffic that ranks Web sites by number to indicate the proximity to being the most visited Web site on the Internet. Alexa computes traffic rankings by analyzing the Web usage of millions of Alexa Toolbar users. The information is sorted, sifted, anonymized, counted, and computed, until finally, it is posted as the traffic rankings shown in the Alexa service. For more information, visit http://www.alexa.com. Source: 9/8/05 Alexa is an Amazon.com Company. Neither Alexa.com nor Amazon.com endorse, or are affiliated with, TMCnet.com in any

their marketing eggs in the online basket. This is, in my opinion, completely unwise because other forms of marketing such as print, trade shows, exhibition, etc. create the perception of stability, dedication, longevity, awareness and commitment of the company, not to mention brand recognition and marketing through education, which are vital in the marketing process. As stated above, no one buys anything significant from a company they have never heard of.

Here are some guidelines for online marketing and beyond:

1. When thinking of doing online marketing, don't forget other forms of marketing.
2. Check the reputation of the company behind the Web site on which you would like to do your online marketing.
3. More importantly, check the Alexa (http://www.alexa.com) ranking of the Web site on which you plan to advertise. This step is by far **the most important part of selecting a suitable online marketing vehicle that has proper Web traffic.** Alexa.com is a division of Amazon.com, and specializes in auditing Web traffic of ALL Web sites regardless of the type of Web site. (See Figure 1.)
   When looking at Alexa.com rankings, it is vital to remember that the lower the ranking number, the greater the Web site traffic in terms of bringing the necessary eyeballs to that Web site. In other words, you do not want to choose Web sites that have higher ranking numbers than 4,000 on Alexa.com. As an example, the Alexa ranking of TMCnet.com is approximately 3,000, plus or minus. As such, TMCnet.com is ranked by Alexa.com as being in the top 3,000 Web sites in the world! Web sites with much higher numbers simply do not have the traffic, and it could lead to a waste of your marketing dollars.
4. Compare the Alexa ranking charts directly with competing Web sites by super-imposing all of the competing Web sites along with your preferred Web site on which you would like to advertise. This will give you an idea of the suitability of your chosen Web site. Once again, these charts are vitally important to help you judiciously select and eliminate the sites with extremely poor traffic.
5. Check the quality of the content. Quality editorial matter brings quality readers, and quality readers become quality sales leads for your products and services.
6. Investigate the WebTrends® rankings of your chosen site versus

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competition.

7. Check the relevant term ranking on the leading search engine sites before you select your final Web site for your marketing purposes. For example, TMCnet.com ranks as number one in over 40 relevant terms on Google. We are not aware of any other site in the telecom industry that even comes close. If your chosen site cannot match this type of prominence, it simply does not deserve your advertisement.
8. **ALWAYS** remember that on Alexa.com, the lower the number, the better the traffic.
9. Look at your chosen site's value proposition. How does it compare your value proposition with competing sites?
10. Investigate the "**Renewal Rate**" of other online advertisers on your chosen Web site. **If the "Renewal Rate" is less than 90 percent, don't waste your money advertising on that Web site.** As a point of reference, the marketing channel renewal rate on TMCnet.com is 99 percent.
11. Does your chosen Web site offer **guaranteed lead generation**? If not, forget it.
12. Remember that only outstanding content delivers quality sales leads. Therefore, place maximum emphasis on the integrity and longevity and reputation of your chosen Web site.

Remember the top three rules of marketing and advertising, which are benefits, benefits and benefits. If your marketing message does not have a powerful, benefit-driven message, don't expect any results.

Marketing Through Education — The Only Way To Go

It has been proven that the only way to market high-technology products is through education. There is simply no other way. One of the best ways to address this is to come up with unique and innovative editorial/marketing strategies to get your message across convincingly.

Remember Marketing Basics

As stated in previous editorials over the last 24 years, the key to successful marketing must include the following, at a minimum:

a. Think out of the box **and think integrated marketing.**
b. Be innovative.
c. **Remember the top three rules of marketing and advertising, which are benefits, benefits and benefits. If your marketing message does not have a powerful, benefit-driven message, don't expect any results.**
d. Positioning. Nothing is more important than all of the above, plus positioning.
e. And…differentiation.
f. Last, but not least, please note that, **without question, an integrated print, online and trade show campaign is much more effective than focusing on only one or the other exclusively.**

The combination of positioning and differentiation is what gives your customers a reason to buy your product as opposed to your competitor's product.

To be successful, you need to follow the above guidelines to avoid wasteful spending and costly mistakes and, above all, don't put all of your eggs in the same basket. Online can be extremely rewarding if you follow the above guidelines. That is, integrated marketing should be the foundation of your marketing program to include online, print, trade shows, etc. to bring appropriate brand-recognition and marketing through education in order to help you maximize your marketing ROI.

As always, I welcome your comments. Please e-mail them to me at ntehrani@tmcnet.com. **CIS**

Sincerely yours,
Nadji Tehrani
Founder, Chairman & CEO, Editor-in-Chief

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**Sources: Alexa.com ranking and WebTrends*

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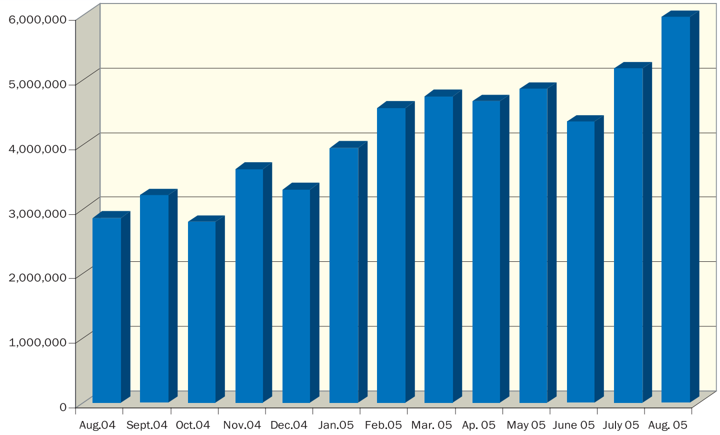

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ContactCenterWorld.com	156,935
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Source: 2 Alexa.com ranks Web sites by traffic. The number indicates a site's proximity to being the number one most visited Web site. Date: 9/23/05 Alexa is an Amazon.com Company. Neither Alexa.com nor Amazon.com endorse, or are affiliated with, TMCnet.com in any way.

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7-1/2 Questions With Sage Software's CRM Guru

By David Sims, TMCnet CRM Alert Columnist

Elvin Monteleone, the senior vice president of Sage Software responsible for its mid-market CRM, takes some time out to answer some questions. Read the full article at http://tmcnet.com/180.1

Hopelessly Devoted: A Customer Communications Renaissance

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

Communications between customer-facing companies and their customers in the best possible manner — in efficiency, accuracy, speed, flexibility and response opportunity — is at the very core of what technology providers in the customer service and communications industry must aim for. Read the full article at http://tmcnet.com/181.1

Siemens And Genesys Integrate Solutions

By Tracey E. Schelmetic, Editorial Director, Customer Inter@ction Solutions

Siemens Communications and Genesys Telecommunications Laboratories recently announced a new integration of the two companies' technologies — using open next-generation session initiation protocol (SIP) standards — with the goal of bringing a single, centralized platform of contact center and communication solutions to larger enterprises. Read the full article at http://tmcnet.com/182.1

Across The Great Small Biz Digital Divide

By David Sims, TMCnet CRM Alert Columnist

The "Broadband Access Survey," conducted by Survey.com and commissioned by Hughes Network Systems, surveyed 250 small businesses. It found that of those that do not use broadband, about two in five, or 43 percent say that it is not available to them. For more information, visit http://tmcnet.com/183.1

West Implements New Jacada Contact Center Agent Portal

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

Jacada Ltd., a provider of contact center productivity solutions, announced that outsourced communications solutions provider West Corporation has implemented Jacada Fusion Agent Portal, the company's new solution for optimizing workflow processes across business systems within a contact center. Read the full article at http://tmcnet.com/184.1

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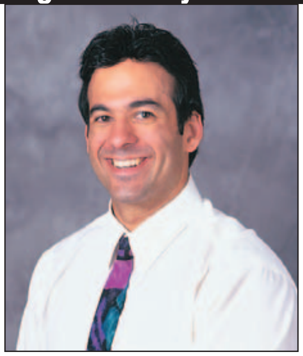

By: Rich Tehrani,
Group Publisher, Group Editor-in-Chief,
Technology Marketing Corporation

Oracle Buys Siebel: What It Means To The Customer

I was initially against the merger of the two software behemoths Oracle and Siebel, and as soon as I heard about the transaction, I noted how it would be disadvantageous for customers. I even briefly wrote about the circulating acquisition rumor in the May 2005 issue of this magazine (http://tmcnet.com/185.1). Since then, I have had time for reflection on the matter, and I have read a significant amount of insightful comments from analysts and a number of other experts. It would seem almost everyone *but me* thinks the transaction is consumer-friendly; as in, positive for customers. One particular article I recently read offered opinions from a selection of current Siebel and Oracle customers, all of whom are happily satisfied that the job of integrating the two companies' software is now in Oracle's hands rather than the customers'.

In fact, forcing Oracle (Quote - news - alert) to handle the integration seems the primary reason for why this acquisition is good. It may be the only reason — at least the only good one for consumers. Market research firms will tell us that SAP is the market share leader in CRM, though it isn't the mindshare leader; that title belongs to Siebel. Now that Siebel (Quote - news - alert) assets are controlled by Oracle, the latter has a better chance to compete against SAP. However, who is looking out for the CRM market?

Siebel was the flagship company in the space and, without this company, we are left with Salesforce.com. Although this company is a great organization to carry the CRM torch, it isn't as large as Siebel and it doesn't sell software...it sells service.

Siebel has made its living selling software — it was the "Microsoft of CRM." It carried the torch...it was the bellwether. And now it's gone.

Siebel, on the other hand, has made its living selling software — it was the "Microsoft of CRM." It carried the torch...it was the bellwether. And now it's gone. Sure, it will be part of Oracle along with dozens of other companies, initiatives, markets and profit centers...yet how much attention does CRM get in such an environment?

Certainly not enough, I think.

It would be one thing if Siebel was to remain a wholly owned subsidiary, but this rarely happens. Therein lays the wrinkle in my argument.

If Oracle is busy integrating Siebel into its portfolio of products, which is a massive undertaking by any means, does this leave room for more competition rather than less? Was I too hasty? After all, Oracle has a bewildering array of products to support, and on top of that, it sells its own CRM software and is busy integrating PeopleSoft and JD Edwards applications into its portfolio of products.

One can only imagine how complex this undertaking will in fact be, as Siebel itself is undertaking a massive operation in integrating its hosted and software offerings into a single code base, which means also having to deal

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their idea

[We didn’t come up with the same conclusions.]

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with a slew of vertical applications such as insurance and healthcare.

I have always thought that the best solution to CRM integration with other applications was to set up open-standards software, upon which all vendors would agree, to allow transactions to be shared among different packages such as billing and shipping. This never really happened; it is perhaps too utopian an idea to ever be done effectively.

This concept, however, is what Salesforce.com recently introduced. Its AppExchange is an on-demand application marketplace that allows customers to quickly purchase pre-integrated applications such as human resources or other specialized functions.

So, while Oracle and SAP want to be your single software vendor, Salesforce.com will allow best-of-breed solutions to be built from an assortment of applications available on an online marketplace.

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The Saleforce.com model is closest to my imagined ideal world.

The question, then, is this: Will this model be able to scale to meet the needs of the largest organizations in the world? We *are* talking about integration that defies understanding, and companies have spent an aggregate of tens of billions of dollars in the past decade alone to integrate disparate applications. It is difficult to believe this whole complex problem can be encapsulated and solved so easily.

I digress, noting again the Oracle and Siebel transaction. Salesforce.com's Marc Benioff has already inferred that customers will be left out in the cold by this deal. He further went on to say that none of these really large software deals ever work.

Amazingly, the Department of Justice (DOJ) gave Oracle a tough time before the JD Edwards acquisition was allowed to go through. Will it be Benioff's words that allow this deal to happen? And, even more, is this what Benioff really wants?

I conclude that this transaction is potentially positive for current customers of both Oracle and Siebel, at least for the short term. For new customers, however, it is bad news. There will be less competition and, further, there is a void — a huge gaping hole, in fact, where Siebel once stood. Who will fill this void, if anyone? It is a problematic prediction, but filling that hole will require someone with some massive shoes, as it were. Will it be version 3.0 of Microsoft CRM that allows the Redmond giant to rise to the challenge? After all, the third version of every Microsoft product seems to be the version that people most like. Will this be true in customer relationship management, as well?

The next six months will be quite an adventure in the CRM market, and we are poised to see much excitement. I hope that in the end the CRM market as a whole benefits from all of this inevitable action-filled excitement, hoping, too, that we have a more vibrant environment with more choices and more competition than ever seen before. Part of me knows I will likely be disappointed. That same part of me also realizes that a first reaction to something is typically the correct reaction. **CIS**

Sincerely yours, Rich Tehrani
Group Publisher, Group Editor-in-Chief
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THE BOARDROOM REPORT™
WITH NADJI TEHRANI

FrontRange Solutions Leads The Pack In Total Enterprise Solutions

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"The Boardroom Report" provides the CRM, customer interaction and call center industry's view from the top, featuring the sector's first in-depth, exclusive CEO-to-CEO interviews with leading executives regarding industry news, analysis, trends and the latest developments at their companies. As the industry's leading publication since 1982, it is our responsibility to recognize leaders with the best minds in the industry and share their vision and wisdom with our valued readers. Technology Marketing Corp. founder/chairman/CEO Nadji Tehrani will interview the CEOs and Customer Inter@ction Solutions executive editor Glenn J. Kalinoski will edit the interviews.

Michael McCloskey, CEO of FrontRange Solutions (http://www.frontrange.com), was interviewed for this installment of "The Boardroom Report."

The Growth Story

FrontRange Solutions' growth rate over a sustained period of time clearly speaks for itself.

"FrontRange has grown every single quarter for the last seven quarters [in terms of] revenue and profits," CEO Michael McCloskey said. "It's by far the most exciting time in the company's history.

"My guess is we will grow in the 40 to 50 percent range this year over last year. We have a lot of new products coming to the market [and] we have a very sustainable product line."

The Company

Founded in 1989, FrontRange Solutions develops software and services focused on solutions tailored to the mid-market. It boasts more than one million users.

"We target the small to medium enterprise … and we do it with enterprise-class products, but in a way that is very inexpensive [with a] lower cost to deploy and with the application functionality that large enterprises have."

When asked about the success, McCloskey shifted gears and said he views his company as something of an untold story.

Our Greatest Challenge

"Our greatest challenge is to get more notoriety and to get more recognition in the enterprise solutions marketplace. If we could get people to recognize who we are, then I think we could prove ourselves and prove the values we offer as a company. We're not quite as well known from a marketing point of view as many other larger companies."

Case studies and examples of customer satisfaction are part of educating the marketplace for FrontRange.

"The key for us is creating awareness through different media types — through print [and] … Web marketing."

Core Competency

When asked to define his firm's greatest core competency, McCloskey stated that he believes being able to identify high-growth areas is FrontRange's forte. Huge call centers do not represent the company's sweet spot. The target market includes facilities with between 25 and 75 seats.

"We have CRM, service management and voice products, and we're good at identifying problems in companies and then devising solutions around those problems. When people are buying these solutions, I think they are buying them for branches or divisions of large enterprises. That's one area that's done extremely well for us.

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> Huge call centers do not represent the company's sweet spot. The target market includes facilities with between 25 and 75 seats.

"[This includes] the small to medium enterprise companies … [that] need to have some contact center functionality — a call center — or they need to be able to provide exceptional customer service. The problem is they don't have a huge amount of money or huge IT organizations. That's why we can [offer] a product like ours that is very inexpensive relative to the competition but also has a tremendous amount of functionality that you can run right off your server, so you don't have to add additional equipment or do anything else."

The IP Contact Center Product

The company's IPCC (IP Contact Center) product includes features such as real-time and historical reporting; an agent dashboard; advanced skills-based routing; a Web-based application builder; and a virtual agent.

"We're just working with two very large companies that should go live with [the virtual agent] this week. We are definitely seeing people take a look at and deploy the virtual agent. The cost savings that you get through that kind of technology is really fantastic."

Providing Products Down Market

When asked about the most exciting opportunity for the firm, McCloskey said it is the chance to offer FrontRange products "down market."

"The thing that's prevented a lot of companies from being successful is the complexity and the cost of these solutions. We may still see consolidation in terms of vendors in the future. But I believe the real impact will come from advancements in the actual technology.

> "We target the small to medium enterprise … and we do it with enterprise-class products, but in a way that is very inexpensive [with a] lower cost to deploy and with the application functionality that large enterprises have."

"We've taken IVR (define - news - alert), ACD (define - news -alert), PBX (define - news -alert), skills-based routing, voice recording, quality management and written that [into the] software. We're going to have these huge, legacy hardware platforms out there and try to tie them together, and that really creates a big problem for the customer. The industry is in a transitional period and solutions like ours are going to be the future of the industry."

Reaching The Home Agent

McCloskey also believes FrontRange will be able to reach the home agent market with its hosted solution.

"We have not as aggressively yet targeted that market because … it's a relatively young product and we want to spend a quarter or two making sure that we just get it all proven and where it's operating very well. The home agent market is growing very rapidly and we're extremely interested in taking some forays in there. We will begin to launch some activity into the home agent market probably around January [2006]."

> "The home agent market is growing very rapidly and we're extremely interested in taking some forays in there. We will begin to launch some activity into the home agent market probably around January [2006]."

For more information regarding FrontRange Solutions, visit http://www.frontrange.com.
CIS

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CEO Spotlight

David Gould
Chairman of the Board and CEO
Witness Systems

This month, CEO Spotlight speaks with David Gould, Chairman of the Board and CEO of Roswell, Georgia-based Witness Systems (http://www.witness.com), a provider of performance optimization software.

CIS: How's the Blue Pumpkin integration coming along?

DG: The combination has been very successful. We retained our key people, have been able to extend relationships with key partners, garnered very favorable feedback from our customers, and have delivered strong financial results. Most importantly, we've leveraged the combination to bring to market the first integrated workforce optimization solution.

At the time of the acquisition, we discussed our new workforce optimization platform as a transformational event in the market. In September we launched Impact 360 — the first software package to combine actionable learning and performance management with the anchor segments of quality monitoring and workforce management. And it is indeed redefining the market. Today we're the only supplier capable of offering customers a powerful and comprehensive workforce optimization solution. Coupling this game-changing capability with our historical strength is proving to be a compelling arrangement.

CIS: What strengths do you think this acquisition will bring to Witness Systems?

DG: There are four primary areas that contribute to the strengths of the acquisition. The people who have joined Witness Systems are the first strength. Their talent in the workforce management industry is a significant advantage for our customers and partners. Their skills and knowledge are a key reason why there are limited responses available to our competition.

The second strength is attributed to the customer base, which ensures a continuous stream of feedback regarding our direction. Combined with our people, we have a tremendous amount of capability to bring to the table.

Third, we have the ability to offer our partners a broader solution to market, which makes it easier for them to invest in our relationship.

And finally, we added the leading application in this market segment, with significant technological advantages over the other legacy suppliers.

By leveraging these strengths, we are leading a transformation of this market. Our new Impact 360 combines the best from both organizations. It redefines the market landscape for workforce optimization technology by enabling global organizations to deploy a holistic and streamlined framework, accompanied by a feature-rich solution set with more speed and confidence than any combination of point systems in the market today. Organizations now have an end-to-end workforce optimization solution that removes the barriers between siloed customer service functions, so businesses can capture, analyze and act on cross-functional information concerning workforce performance, customer interactions and customer service processes.

According to research conducted by Datamonitor, workforce optimization is a global market projected to reach $1 billion in 2006. It is reinventing how traditional technologies should be paired, and redefining the alignment of strategy, people, processes and technology with the common goal of building loyalty. Managing the balance of an enterprise's objectives is difficult enough, yet it is complicated further by the fact that it takes many different and often siloed technologies within the enterprise to service the customer. Now, through the combined offering, customers can optimize people, processes and technology along the complete workforce continuum — from workforce management forecasting, scheduling and customer interaction recording to performance management and e-learning.

CIS: Witness Systems seems to be tailoring solutions to the small to medium-sized business (SMB) market. Is this becoming a lucrative part of the call center business?

DG: The bulk of our business, historically and today, comes from the large-enterprise market. However, with the emergence of VoIP(define - news - alert) and the ability to offer more streamlined, cost-effective packages, we see a tremendous opportunity in the midmarket. The SMB market is the fastest-growing segment. In fact, small and medium-sized businesses have the largest number of call centers in North America. According to Datamonitor, there are more than 25,000 call centers in the 31-100 seat call center segment. We've done well over the past few quar-

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ters establishing channels and tailoring solutions for this emerging market. The combination with Blue Pumpkin helps here, as the application truly addresses the needs of both smaller and enterprise-class customers. We view this market as a natural complement to our traditional Global 3000 business.

CIS: There seems to be a recent trend of targeting contact center solutions directly to the vertical markets. Is Witness Systems exploring solutions for these markets, such as utilities, financial services and healthcare?

DG: Witness Systems (news - alert) has quite a few customers in the utilities, financial services and healthcare markets, including Alabama Power, Wells Fargo, LloydsTSB Asset Finance Division and Tenet Healthcare. These industries fall into our top 10 verticals based on analysis of our customer base and the way that we evaluate opportunities. Financial services are particularly strong, as the market is often an early adopter of workforce optimization solutions. Business issues such as deregulation, privacy regulations and increased competition are drivers for workforce optimization solutions in the utilities and healthcare sectors, so those are key areas of opportunity for contact center solutions. Other top verticals include insurance, communications/media, business services, manufacturing and retail.

CIS: What sort of developments are we likely to see in Witness Systems' future?

DG: Witness Systems will continue to extend and develop its workforce optimization platform to include deeper and broader solution capabilities that optimize the customer service value chain for our global customers. As you're seeing with the release of Impact 360, we'll be delivering substantial enhanced capabilities derived from our new packages. Our customers and partners see an even greater value proposition working with a single vendor that can provide significant economic, customer support and solution integration benefits. Witness Systems will stay in the forefront of new optimization technology for emerging growth markets such as IP telephony, measuring customer service and actionable learning. We've always been regarded as the technology and thought leader for our market. We take this responsibility seriously and intend to continue to raise the bar. **CIS**

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Executive Spotlight

Ralph Breslauer
Executive Vice President,
Sales and Marketing
Aspect Software

The Executive Spotlight speaks with Ralph Breslauer, Executive Vice President, Sales and Marketing, for Aspect Software.

CIS: First of all, congratulations on the Aspect 20-year anniversary. What kind of edge, if any, do you think a company that has been around for so long has over the many new companies in this arena?

RB: Thank you. Aspect Communications (news - alert) has a lot to be proud of; it has achieved much during the last two decades. Interestingly, as the newly-formed Aspect Software, we have more than 30 years of experience in the contact center. I do believe that a company like ours, with a significant history, has an advantage over companies that are less experienced. We are deeply rooted in this business. We have seen the industry evolve over time and are actually responsible for many of its milestones over the years. It is this kind of understanding that gives us the insight to know what customers require and where the gaps are, so we can fill them. In addition, a company like ours that is comprised of many industry founders and technology inventors is uniquely positioned to offer a level of expertise that is unmatched in the space.

CIS: What is going to be the biggest challenge in merging the two product lines: that of Concerto and that of Aspect?

RB: Our top priority is to ensure that customers have the best solutions to meet their needs today and to continue innovating so that we can provide a non-disruptive path to the future as their business needs dictate. This means we do not need to merge all products, but rather we must develop a product roadmap that works for customers now, while enhancing their existing products and positioning them for the next step when they are ready. For example, we will continue to evolve and support the products that our customers rely on to run their businesses every day, and at the same time, we will continue to integrate inbound with outbound functionality, integrate our performance optimization offerings with our other core products, and provide an evolutionary path to IP to help customers better execute their customer contact strategies. Through several acquisitions, we have successfully integrated people, products and processes, and we are leveraging that experience to ensure the transition to Aspect Software is as seamless as possible.

CIS: What do you think Concerto did better than Aspect Communications and vice versa?

RB: I think that Aspect was very good at selling its products to large enterprise accounts as evidenced by its blue-chip customer list in North America and Europe, while Concerto was very good at expanding into new geographies like those in Asia-Pacific, where the company has seen triple-digit growth over the last several years. Overall, however, I think that both companies had specific, unique strengths that complemented each other. That's part of what made the combination so compelling. In merging, we have created the largest company solely focused on the contact center industry with tremendous strength in predictive dialing, unified contact center systems, automatic call distributors (ACD) (define - news - alert), workforce management applications and performance analytics. The newly-formed Aspect Software offers a rich portfolio of innovative voice and voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) (define - news - alert) products to help our customers achieve their customer service, collections and sales objectives.

CIS: A combination of Concerto's outbound expertise with Aspect's mastery of inbound technologies should make the new entity the company to beat in the call center space. Do you aspire to be the biggest and the best?

RB: We absolutely aspire to be the best, and if we do that, there is a high likelihood the rest will follow. We believe that with the insight, focus, expertise and resources we have, Aspect Software is certainly positioned to be the contact center solutions provider of choice. Our products give customers the kind of flexibility they need in today's changing business environment, the kind of reliability they can build their business on, and the range of choice and functionality they need to maintain a competitive advantage. Customers want more functionality and less complexity, and Aspect Software is delivering.

CIS: Can you speak for a moment from your perspective as an industry leader on the acquisition of Siebel by Oracle? Do you think such an entity, if allowed to merge, will change the landscape of the call center/CRM industry?

RB: I believe this is a very significant transaction and will clearly impact the CRM industry. Not only is the size of the deal huge, but the number of customers affected is significant. Oracle has a tremendous opportunity to solidify the No.1 position in enterprise applications with an enviable customer base and product portfolio. One area that I think will be very interesting is that Siebel drove a lot of revenue for competitors of Oracle, like IBM, for example. This will create both an opportunity and a challenge for Oracle, given that customers do not want to be forced by vendors to change platforms if they are comfortable. Hence, Oracle is going to have to continue to make customers comfortable with the idea that they will be open to other databases, while also trying to sell their own into their new customer base. Like many acquisitions, the difference between huge success and dismal failure will be in the execution. While we feel it will have less of an impact on the call center industry, we are paying close attention. There are always lessons to be learned, and we know we can benefit from the experiences of others. One thing is for sure, there will be very few boring moments in our industry. Keep watching this space. **CIS**

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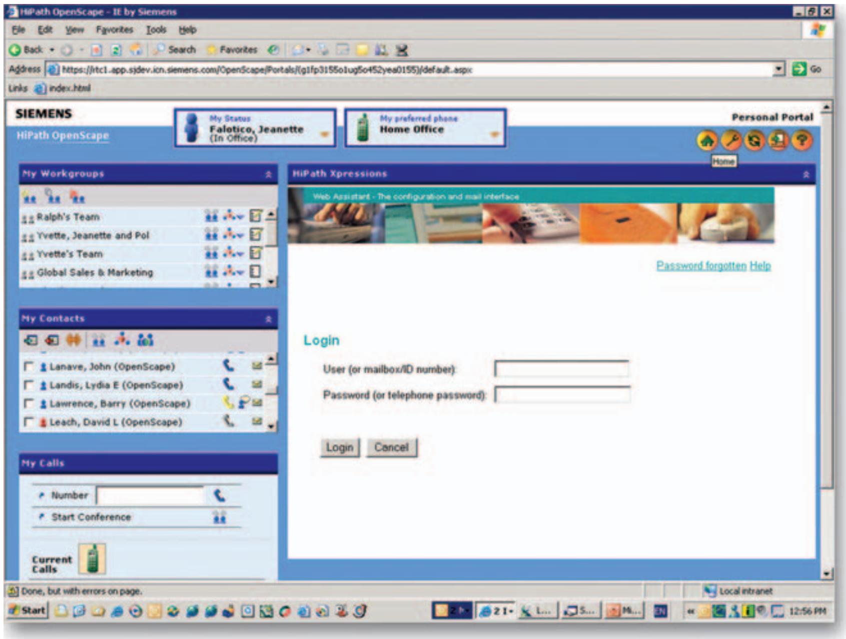
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File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Back Search Favorites
Address https://rtc1.app.sjdev.icn.siemens.com/OpenScape/Portals/(g1fp3155o1ug5o452yea0155)/default.aspx
Go
Links index.html
SIEMENS
HiPath OpenScape
My Status
Falotico, Jeanette
(In Office)
My preferred phone
Home Office
Personal Portal
Home
My Workgroups
Ralph's Team
Yvette, Jeanette and Pol
Yvette's Team
Global Sales & Marketing
My Contacts
Lanave, John (OpenScape)
Landis, Lydia E (OpenScape)
Lawrence, Barry (OpenScape)
Leach, David L (OpenScape)
My Calls
Number
Start Conference
Current Calls
HiPath Xpressions
Web Assistant - The configuration and mail interface
Password forgotten Help
Login
User (or mailbox/ID number):
Password (or telephone password):
Login
Cancel
Done, but with errors on page.
Local intranet
Start
12:56 PM

Siemens Communications, Inc.'s (news - alert) HiPath Xpressions system supports the needs of small to large enterprise customers, single-site and multisite, offering messaging convergence that further enables a distributed or mobile workforce to better communicate. The real-time solution offers necessary mobility and support, streamlined system administration and a flexible storage methodology — as a whole, a unified messaging system that gives back control of business communications to the company.

According to the company's research, 66 percent of enterprise employees will travel in 2006. The company also reports that there are 24 million "teleworkers" in the U.S., while 47 percent of corporations support teleworking.

As such, and with global enterprises in mind, the HiPath Xpressions system is designed to offer enhanced mobility features such as user-defined call routing and efficient rules-based filtering of the inbox (for simpler telephone access), as well as multilingual support; these enhanced features can enable global mobile users to more effectively communicate with customers, coworkers and suppliers, or anyone with whom the user requires immediate contact.

Still at the core of the capabilities offered in Siemen's recently released HiPath Xpressions version 4 system, standard features include the following: myXpressions, a message-filtering folder allowing workers to prioritize message groups and have more important messages forwarded to cell phones or other regularly used remote numbers; the Web-based dashboard to support both voice messaging and more advanced unified messaging features, enabling users to manage messaging preferences without telephone prompts; and PhoneMail Long Distance Networking (LDN) to enable directory synchronization and dial-by-name between the PhoneMail system and the HiPath Xpressions solution, helping enterprises protect existing messaging infrastructure investments.

As well, the solution integrates unified messaging into various e-mail environments: Microsoft Exchange, Lotus Domino, Novell Groupwise (Groupware) or IMAP 4. Support is provided for single-source, dual-source or combined message storage options, giving enterprises multiple strategies to help in minimizing the risk of lost messages while, at the same time, also maintaining control of data storage limits. IT organizations can therefore decide which implementation approach is best for their network topology. Combining multiple HiPath Xpressions systems per Microsoft Exchange site or Lotus Domino Domain offers enhanced scalability by providing direct, system-to-system networking for increased capacity within larger enterprises.

The company's recent release of HiPath Xpressions version 4 further enables employees — particularly those on the go — to more efficiently retrieve and generally manage e-mail, voice and fax correspondence via a PC or telephone. The new portfolio provides enterprises with more deployment options, having been enhanced to interoperate on numerous enterprise infrastructures, including traditional PBXs and IP-PBXs — whether across Siemens or non-Siemens network infrastructures.

The solution is supported by open, session initiation protocol (SIP)-standard network environments, so distrib-

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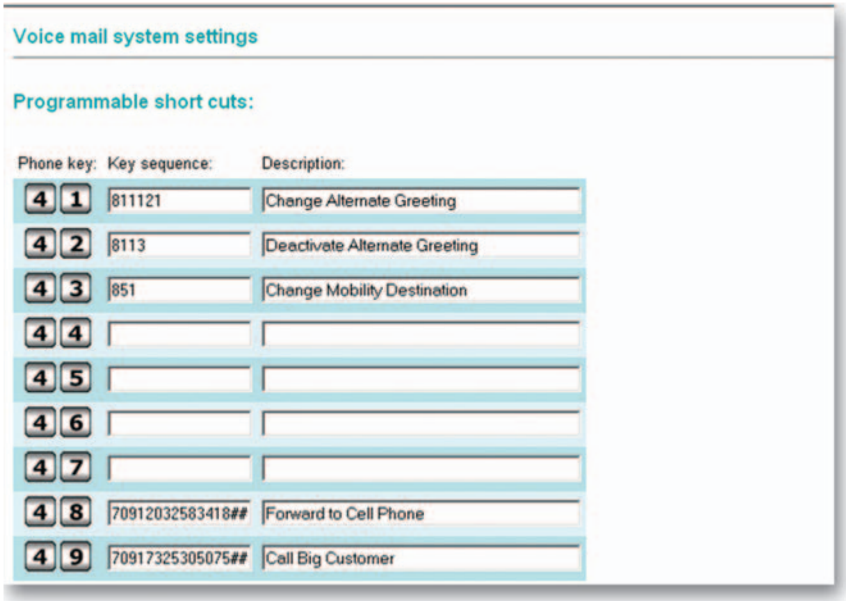

Voice mail system settings

Programmable short cuts:

Phone key:	Key sequence:	Description:
4 1	811121	Change Alternate Greeting
4 2	8113	Deactivate Alternate Greeting
4 3	851	Change Mobility Destination
4 4		
4 5		
4 6		
4 7		
4 8	70912032583418##	Forward to Cell Phone
4 9	70917325305075##	Call Big Customer

uted clients can be anywhere the IT infrastructure is. Because SIP (define - news - alert) is an open standard that enables the connection of any SIP-compliant end point or application, closed proprietary systems are eliminated; this arms users with the flexibility to deploy the most effective technology for their business. SIP, of course, is also inherently multimedia capable.

The solution's new speech recognition command module and other mobility features are designed in consideration of remote workers' and mobile workers' message-managing challenges. Of note, the addition of the speech recognition module assists in giving mobile workers more access, via voice commands, to often-used messaging and organizational tools: hands-free message playback, calendar updating, meeting-date acceptance, contact-list management and message forwarding. To provide multilingual support, 13 telephony user interface (TUI) languages and six text-to-speech languages have been enhanced and included.

Siemens HiPath Xpressions version 4 provides further real-time message management features which include improved playback controls, programming shortcuts and abbreviated prompts; the latter is aimed at experienced users. Additionally, a feature called Trusted Number Access enables the user to login to the system via his or her cell phone or other frequently used remote number, eliminating the need to enter a mailbox number or passcode. The Playback On-the-Fly TUI feature allows for fast access to not-yet-read voice messages — without any additional user action.

By simplifying information access, enhancing user productivity and streamlining system administration, Siemens' real-time solution is a unified messaging system that can enhance mobility and communications, reduce operational costs and put companies in total control of their business communications. **CIS**

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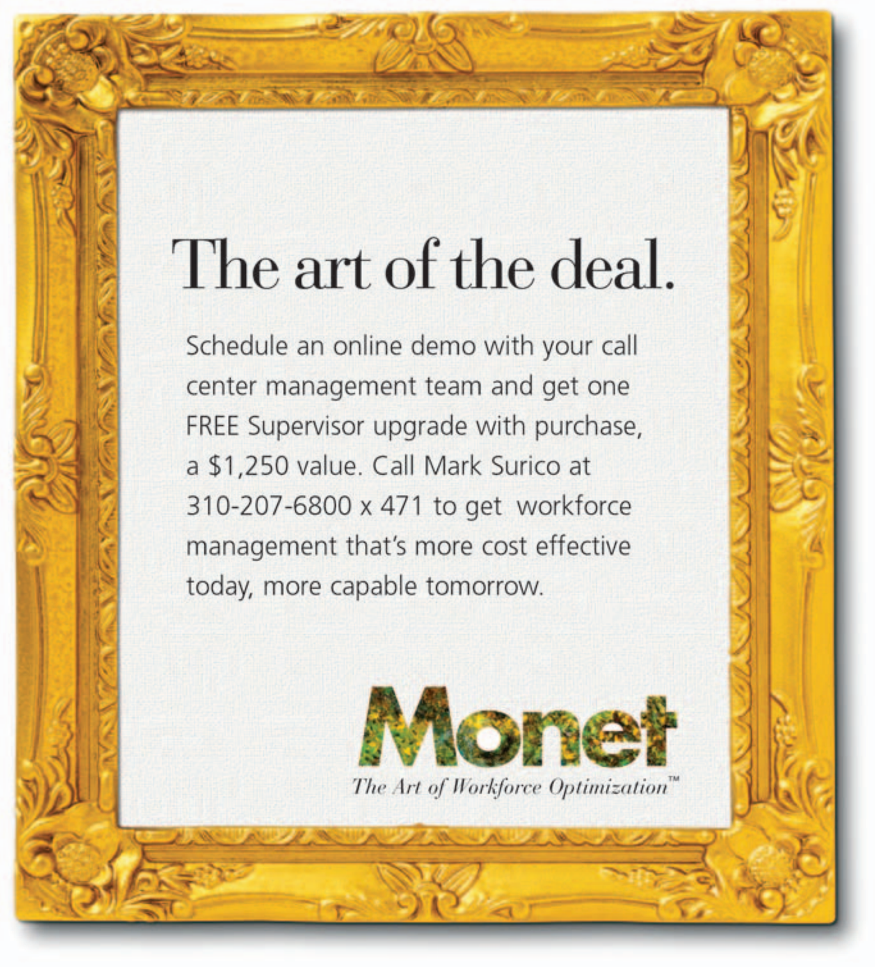

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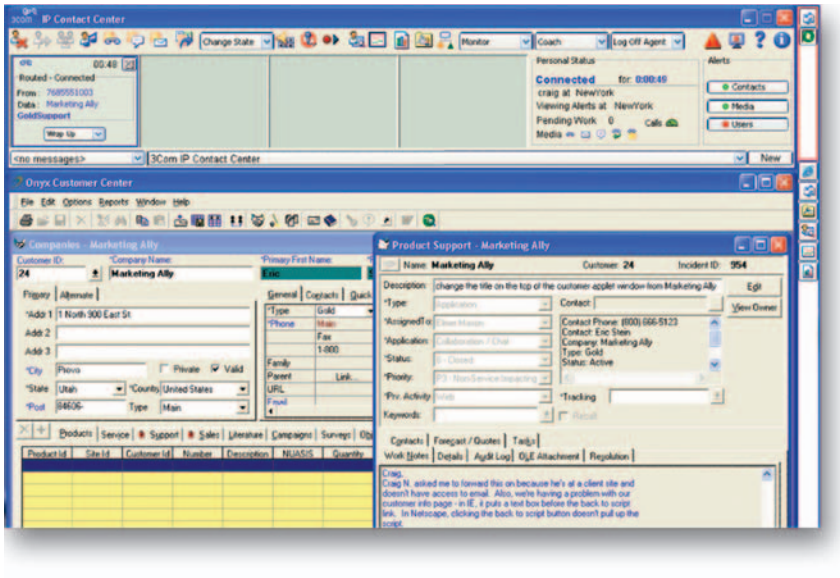
By Glenn J. Kalinoski, Executive Editor, Customer Inter@ction Solutions

3Com Expands Convergence Applications Suite, Offers New VoIP Applications

3Com Corporation (quote - news - alert) recently made two announcements in the contact center space. First, the company announced the expansion of its Convergence Applications Suite with the introduction of the new 3Com Internet Protocol Contact Center module. The 3Com IP Contact Center module routes customer contacts (phone, e-mail, Web and fax) to agents anywhere on the enterprise network. 3Com will license the 3Com IP Contact Center product from **Nuasis Corporation**. (quote - news - alert)



The 3Com IP Contact Center module is an IP-based application geared toward medium and large enterprise customers. The module consolidates multiple contact center systems such as legacy ACDs, IVRs and computer-telephony integration components on a single software platform; it is open architecture- and standards-based, leveraging Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) to provide the flexibility, interoperability and ease-of-use needed in a converged environment.

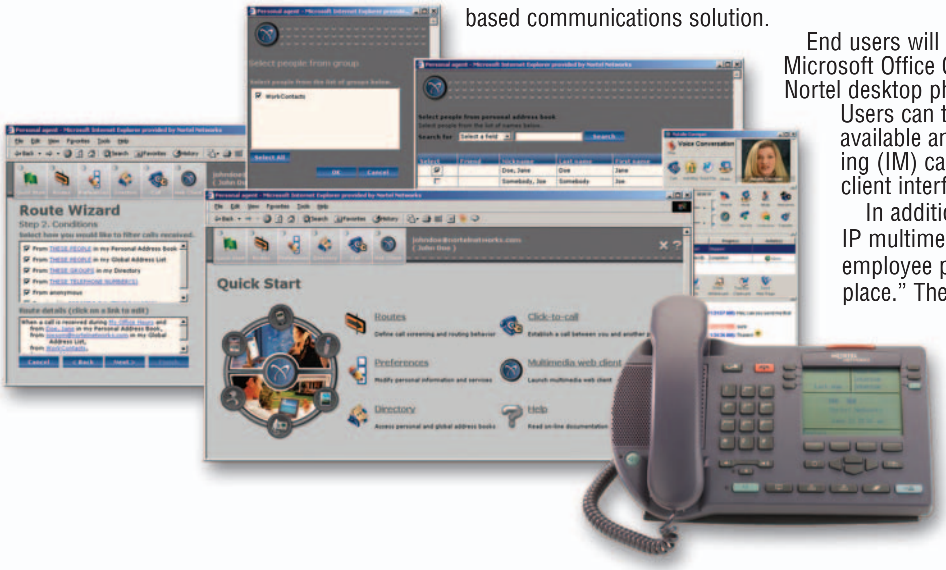
In other news, 3Com introduced a new set of VoIP applications for large enterprises designed to allow remote users to gain secure access to a company's converged communication network. The new 3Com IP Telecommuting module is open and standards-based, leveraging SIP to provide improved flexibility, interoperability and ease-of-use.

The 3Com IP Telecommuting module aims to enhance the mobility of employees by enabling the use of corporate IP telephony applications, such as IP conferencing, IP messaging, IP contact center and other communication services, from almost any location outside the LAN. This application also enables enterprises to deploy home agents outside of, but fully connected to, corporate contact centers.

http://www.3com.com
http://www.nuasis.com

Nortel Expands Microsoft Relationship, Debuts IP Multimedia Solutions

Nortel (quote - news - alert) has announced the expansion of its relationship with **Microsoft** through integrated technology solutions designed to help simplify the way businesses communicate worldwide. This latest initiative between the two companies was forged to provide collaborative real-time capabilities for businesses via integration of Microsoft Office Communicator 2005 and Office Live Communication Server with Nortel's open, SIP-based communications solution.



End users will be able to exploit the PC-based Microsoft Office Communicator client in concert with a Nortel desktop phone for business communications. Users can then determine when colleagues are available and employ an integrated instant messaging (IM) capability, all from the Communicator client interface.

In addition, Nortel introduced new and enhanced IP multimedia solutions designed to improve employee productivity across the "virtual workplace." These new solutions include, but are not limited to: Nortel IP Phone 1100 Series; Nortel WLAN Handset 2212; Multimedia Communications Server (MCS) 5100 Release 3.5; CallPilot Release 4.0 Unified Messaging suite; and Com-munications Server 1000 Release 4.5.

http://www.nortel.com
http://www.microsoft.com

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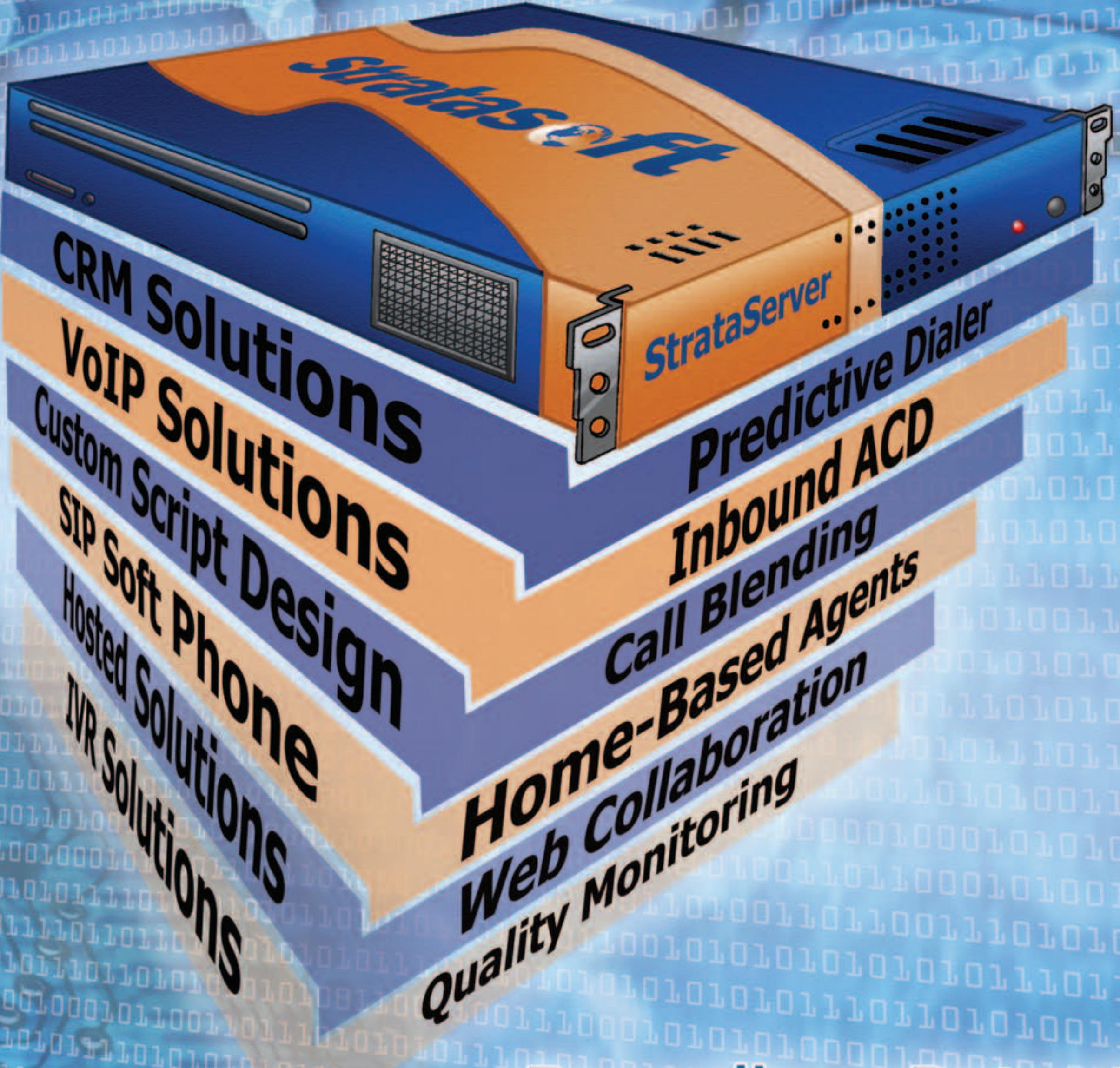
A single contact center platform offering...


Stratasoft
StrataServer
CRM Solutions
VoIP Solutions
Custom Script Design
SIP Soft Phone
Hosted Solutions
IVR Solutions
Predictive Dialer
Inbound ACD
Call Blending
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Stratasoft

AVTEX, Telstar Communications Join Forces

In a move that merges two providers in the call center and IP telephony realm, **AVTEX, Inc.** (news - alert) of Minneapolis has announced its acquisition of the contact center business of **Telstar Communications, Inc.** (news - alert) The combined companies will operate as AVTEX, Inc., based in Minneapolis. According to AVTEX President Robert Denman, "This combination will bring many new resources and solutions to our customers and provide exciting growth opportunities for our employees."

AVTEX, Inc. has been a provider of telecommunications solutions since 1971. The company is an application and systems integration provider that designs, develops, deploys and supports messaging, contact center and IP telephony solutions. Telstar Communications is an **Interactive Intelligence** (news - alert) Platinum Elite Partner with its main focus in the design, implementation and ongoing support of VoIP telephony systems, contact centers and messaging solutions. AVTEX has a staff of software developers, systems engineers, network engineers, system design consultants, project managers, customer support and field technicians who are trained, certified and specialized in mission-critical applications.

http://www.avtex.com
http://www.inin.com

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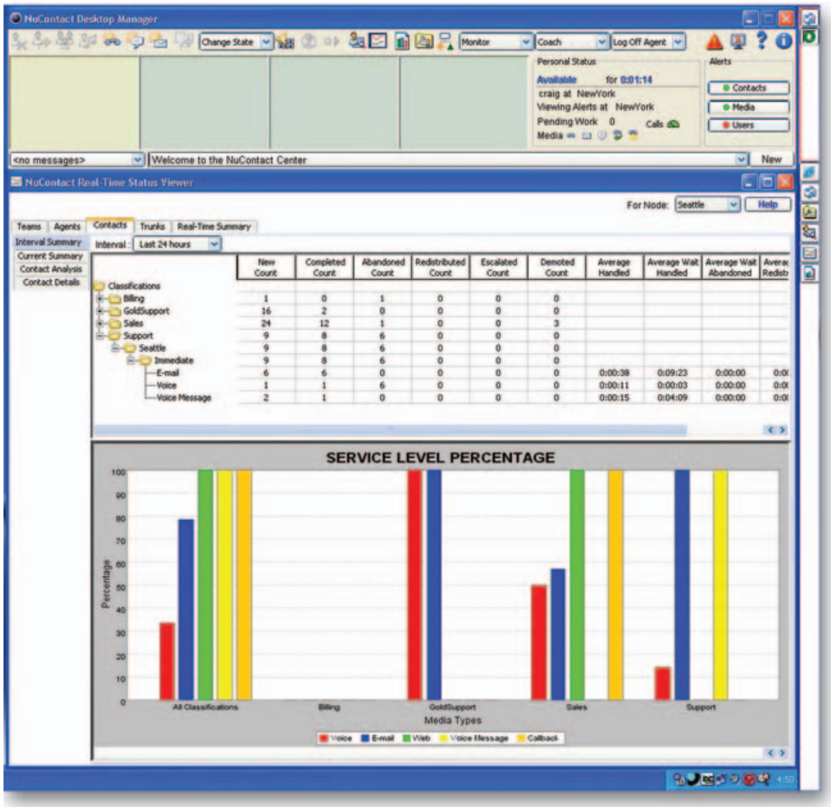
Whenever possible, please include high-resolution (minimum 300 dpi) color graphics (.BMP, .EPS, .TIF, or .JPG).


NuContact Desktop Manager
Change State
Monitor
Coach
Log Off Agent
Alerts
Contacts
Media
Users
New
NuContact Real-Time Status Viewer
Help
Teams
Agents
Contacts
Trunks
Real-Time Summary
Interval Summary
Current Summary
Contact Analysis
Contact Details
SERVICE LEVEL PERCENTAGE
100
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80
70
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40
30
20
10
0
Percentage
All Classifications
Billing
GoldSupport
Sales
Support
Media Types
Voice
E-mail
Web
Voice Message
Callback
4:50

Personal Status
Available for 0:01:14
craig at NewYork
Viewing Alerts at NewYork
Pending Work 0 Calls
Media

<no messages>
Welcome to the NuContact Center

For Node: Seattle
Interval : Last 24 hours

	New Count	Completed Count	Abandoned Count	Redistributed Count	Escalated Count	Demoted Count	Average Handled	Average Wait Handled	Average Wait Abandoned	Averag Redist
Classifications										
Billing	1	0	1	0	0	0				
GoldSupport	16	2	0	0	0	0				
Sales	24	12	1	0	0	3				
Support	9	8	6	0	0	0				
Seattle	9	8	6	0	0	0				
Immediate	9	8	6	0	0	0				
E-mail	6	6	0	0	0	0	0:00:38	0:09:23	0:00:00	0:0
Voice	1	1	6	0	0	0	0:00:11	0:00:03	0:00:00	0:0
Voice Message	2	1	0	0	0	0	0:00:15	0:04:09	0:00:00	0:0

Nuasis Integrates With Aspect eWorkforce Management

IP contact center company **Nuasis Corporation** (news - alert) announced the integration of its software-only, IP-based contact center system with **Aspect** (news - alert) eWorkforce Management software.

This workforce management integration is consistent with Nuasis' product strategy of leveraging its standards-based architecture that includes SIP, XML and SOAP to support integration to core call center and enterprise software applications.

The NuContact Center is a single, distributed system that integrates three customer service models in the contact center: self-service, deferred assistance and immediate assistance. It routes and queues customer contacts across multiple geographically dispersed service centers taking advantage of VoIP technology. It also leverages investments in the existing enterprise network.

http://www.nuasis.com
http://www.aspect.com

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OnviSource Acquires Davacord

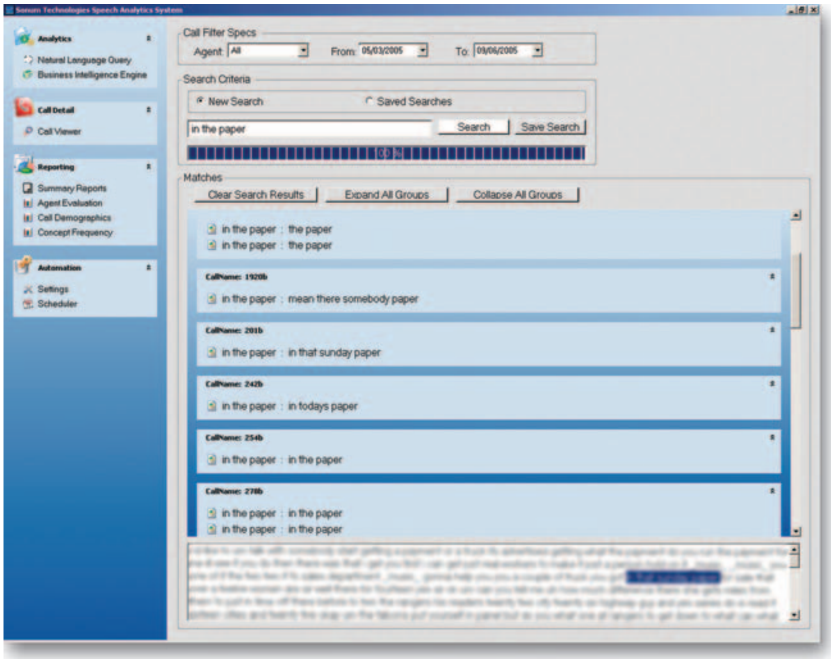
OnviSource (news - alert) has announced its acquisition of **Davacord, Inc.** (news - alert) (formerly **VoiceLogger, Inc.**) in an all-cash transaction.

Davacord provides converged contact center recording and quality monitoring solutions for call centers. The company's products are used by more than 700 customers in North America, Europe and Asia Pacific, including many Fortune 500 firms.

OnviSource is the parent of a group of companies offering contact centers a suite of integrated system and software applications, hosted application services, telecom access services and business outsourcing services in sales, marketing and business operations. The acquisition of Davacord is meant to position OnviSource as a company that can deliver a full line of integrated contact center software products and advanced technologies that offer productivity and compliance tools, operations support capabilities, inbound and outbound call handling as well as revenue-bearing vertical applications.

http://www.davacord.com
http://www.onvisource.com

Sonum Technologies Announces Beta Release Of Two New Product Lines



Agent: All
From: 05/03/2005
To: 09/06/2005

● New Search ○ Saved Searches

in the paper

in the paper : the paper
in the paper : the paper

CallName: 1920b
in the paper : mean there somebody paper

CallName: 201b
in the paper : in that sunday paper

CallName: 242b
in the paper : in todays paper

CallName: 254b
in the paper : in the paper

CallName: 270b
in the paper : in the paper
in the paper : in the paper

Sonum Technologies, Inc. (news - alert) announced the beta release of two new product lines. Machine Translation gives users the ability to have foreign text automatically translated into English. The product is targeted at both the intelligence community and multinational corporations that need corporate communications translated for their interests outside the English-speaking world.

The other product is Call Analytics, which also targets the intelligence community, but is focused on the contact center industry. Call Analytics mines recorded telephone conversations for actionable intelligence regarding such things as agent performance and competitive activity.

Both solutions use Sonum Technologies' Natural Language Processor, which comprehends human language, allowing businesses and government to automate the way they identify, retrieve and analyze information while reducing dependence on human resources.

http://www.sonumtech.com

Verint Acquires Opus Group For $12 Million

Verint Systems Inc., (news - alert) a provider of analytic software-based solutions for communications interception, networked video security and business intelligence, announced the acquisition of privately held **Opus Group**, (news - alert) which provides performance analytics solutions for contact centers and back-office operations.

Verint Systems has acquired Opus via the purchase of certain assets and liabilities of **Opus Group LLC** for $12 million cash at closing and additional earn-out payments during two years based on certain profitability targets.

Opus is headquartered in Hinsdale, Illinois.

Opus helps process-intensive enterprises improve performance and reduce the cost of their operations by analyzing data collected from across the enterprise and identifying areas for improvement.

http://www.verint.com
http://www.opusgroupconsulting.com

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IEX Forms Partnerships With Keynomics LLC, Symmetrics

IEX Corporation, (news - alert) a **Tekelec** company, has recently announced two strategic relationships. First is an alliance with **Keynomics LLC** (news - alert) in which IEX will offer its customers Talk, Type, Listen, Keynomics' contact center agent productivity training program that was designed to enhance agent computer keyboarding and transcription skills.

The offering is being provided as a Web-based hosted program accessed via the WebStation Plus module available with the IEX TotalView Workforce Management system. The training program was designed to improve contact center productivity, quality and ergonomics regarding how agents interface simultaneously with the caller and each agent's computer.

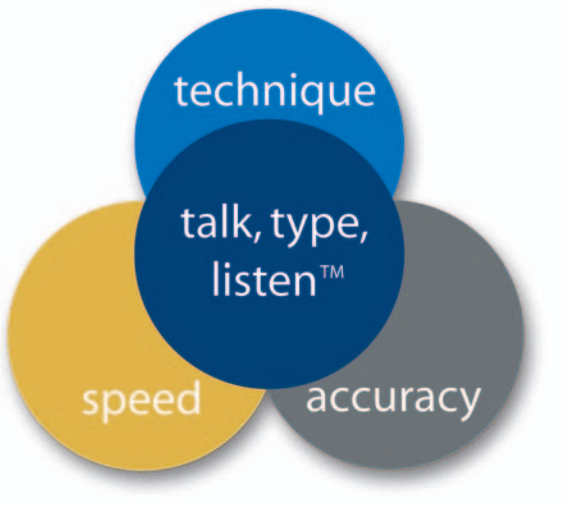
A benchmarking study is conducted to assess each agent's skill before starting the program. As the agent moves through the online training modules, the system detects his or her strengths and weaknesses. Based on the performance information automatically gathered by the system, ongoing progress reports are distributed to managers.

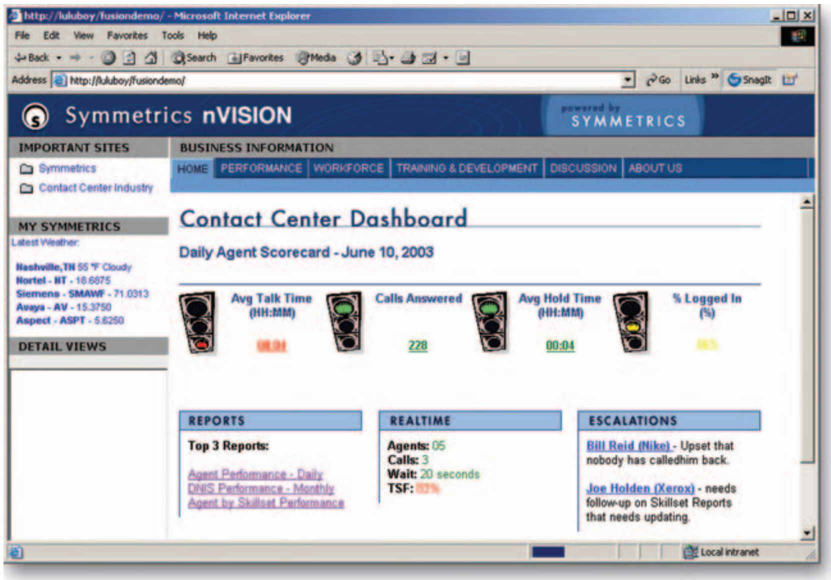
Talk, Type, Listen can be deployed to thousands of agents simultaneously without software installation.

Second is a partnership with **Symmetrics Business Intelligence Solutions Inc.** (news - alert) in which IEX will resell Symmetrics' custom reporting services. This extends the reporting and analysis capabilities of the IEX TotalView Workforce Management system. Customers will be able to create workforce management reports tailored to their center's specific needs.

The TotalView Workforce Management system is designed to improve the scheduling and agent management processes in both single-site and multisite environments. The system's features include skills-based and multimedia scheduling, real-time and historical adherence, intraday and performance management, enterprise reporting and data exchange, vacation and holiday planning as well as short- and long-term resource planning.

http://www.iex.com
http://www.keynomics.com
http://www.symmetrics.net


technique
talk, type, listen™
speed
accuracy


http://luluboy/fusiondemo/ - Microsoft Internet Explorer
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Back Search Favorites Media
Address http://luluboy/fusiondemo/
Go Links SnagIt
Symmetrics nVISION
powered by SYMMETRICS
IMPORTANT SITES
Symmetrics
Contact Center Industry
BUSINESS INFORMATION
HOME PERFORMANCE WORKFORCE TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION ABOUT US
MY SYMMETRICS
DETAIL VIEWS
Local intranet

Contact Center Dashboard

Daily Agent Scorecard - June 10, 2003

Latest Weather:
Nashville,TN 55 °F Cloudy
Nortel - NT - 18.6875
Siemens - SMAWF - 71.0313
Avaya - AV - 15.3750
Aspect - ASPT - 5.6250

Avg Talk Time (HH:MM)
Calls Answered: 228
Avg Hold Time (HH:MM): 00:04
% Logged In (%)

REPORTS
Top 3 Reports:
Agent Performance - Daily
DNIS Performance - Monthly
Agent by Skillset Performance

REALTIME
Agents: 05
Calls: 3
Wait: 20 seconds
TSF:

ESCALATIONS
Bill Reid (Nike) - Upset that nobody has calledhim back.
Joe Holden (Xerox) - needs follow-up on Skillset Reports that needs updating.

NICE To Acquire Australian Distributor Hannamax Hi-Tech Pty Ltd.

NICE Systems, (news - alert) a provider of advanced solutions that enable organizations to extract insight from interactions, announced the signing of a definitive agreement to acquire the assets of **Hannamax Hi-Tech Pty Ltd**, the company's largest distributor in Australia and New Zealand, for $1.8 million in a one-time cash installment plus a future earn-out based on performance.

Hannamax has worked with NICE Systems since 1993. NICE will add about 17 employees from Hannamax. The company believes the acquisition will not significantly impact its financials.

http://www.nice.com

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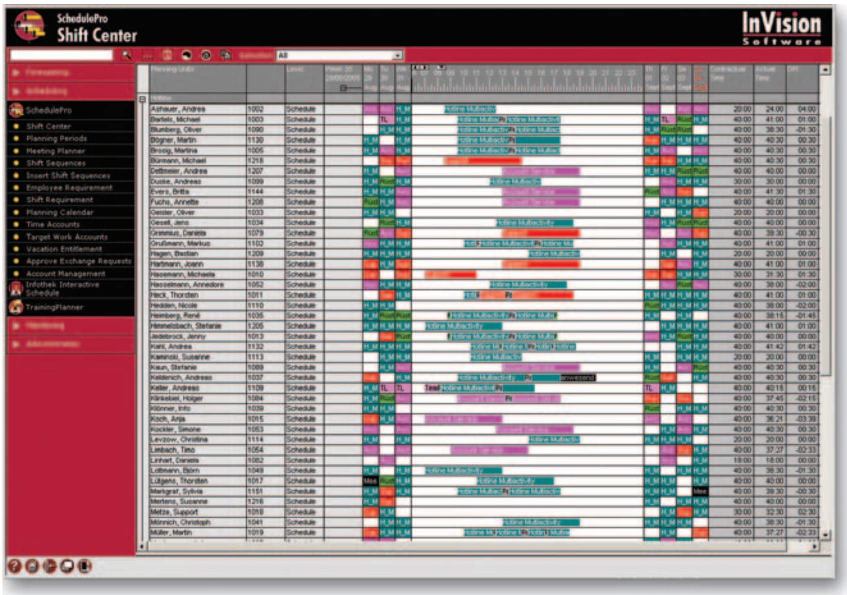
InVision Offering Multi-Activity Scheduling Solution

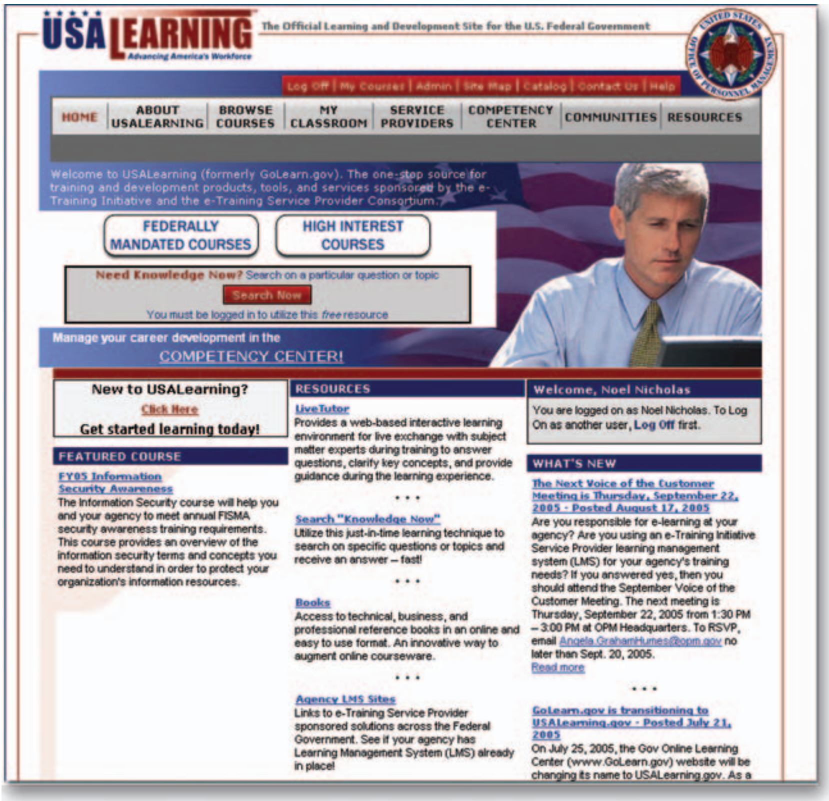
InVision Software (news - alert) is providing what it describes as a new approach to workforce management with its Multi-Activity Scheduling solution.

The solution optimizes staffing requirements by using "advanced patent-pending optimization techniques." MAS was created to help ensure that multiskill efficiencies are realized by generating schedules based on individual skills. Employees benefit from additional job variety, which can be difficult to achieve without skills-based scheduling. MAS is designed to keep multiskilled employees occupied for greater periods of each shift, helping to increase productivity and other key performance indicators.

InVision also offers interactive scheduling, a feature which allows employees to make choices regarding shifts. This ability has proven to be a substantial influence on motivation and retention. Employees can make requests for shifts based on business requirements.

http://www.invisionsoft.com


SchedulePro
Shift Center
InVision Software
All
SchedulePro
Shift Center
Planning Periods
Meeting Planner
Shift Sequences
Insert Shift Sequences
Employee Requirement
Shift Requirement
Planning Calendar
Time Accounts
Target Work Accounts
Vacation Entitlement
Approve Exchange Requests
Account Management
Infothek Interactive Schedule
TrainingPlanner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WHAT'S NEW

The Next Voice of the Customer Meeting is Thursday, September 22, 2005 - Posted August 17, 2005
Are you responsible for e-learning at your agency? Are you using an e-Training Initiative Service Provider learning management system (LMS) for your agency's training needs? If you answered yes, then you should attend the September Voice of the Customer Meeting. The next meeting is Thursday, September 22, 2005 from 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM at OPM Headquarters. To RSVP, email Angela.GrahamHumes@opm.gov no later than Sept. 20, 2005.
Read more

• • •

GoLearn.gov is transitioning to USALearning.gov - Posted July 21, 2005
On July 25, 2005, the Gov Online Learning Center (www.GoLearn.gov) website will be changing its name to USALearning.gov. As a

GeoLearning Completes Rebranding Of USALearning

GeoLearning, Inc., (news - alert) which provides managed learning services and hosted learning technology, announced the completion and launch of **USALearning.gov**, the federal government's employee training site.

USALearning features an enhanced course catalog, the addition of GeoLearning Analytics for measuring training effectiveness and expanded reporting capabilities for agency-focused and government-wide reports.

Designed, hosted and maintained by GeoLearning for the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, USALearning is powered by the GeoMaestro learning management platform. More than 1.8 million federal government employees can access USALearning.

GeoLearning's platform and training services are used by more than 40 federal agencies through the OPM/GoLearn program.

http://www.geolearning.com

Workforce Optimization

Sage Software Adds To ACT!, Forms Partnership With Small-Business Development Centers

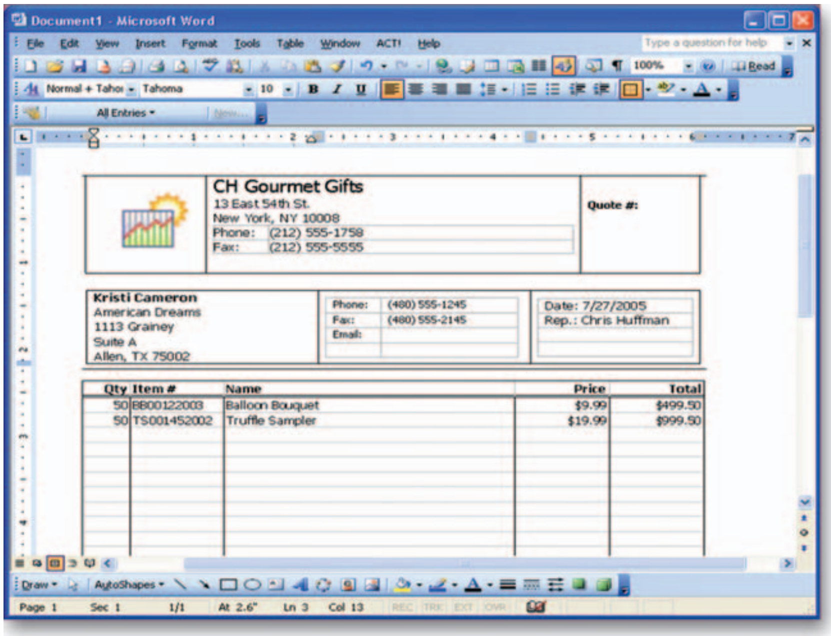
Sage Software (news - alert) recently announced more than 40 new ACT! add-on solutions compatible with the new ACT! by Sage 2006 and ACT! by Sage Premium for Workgroups 2006 contact and customer management solutions. The new add-on products were created to offer communications, sales, marketing, mapping, help desk, synchronization, administrative and productivity features. ACT! is used worldwide by more than 2.5 million users and more than 30,000 corporate accounts. Sage Software also announced the availability of ACT! 2006 for one to 10 networked users and ACT! Premium for Workgroups 2006 for sales teams and corporate workgroups.

In other news, Sage also announced a partnership with the **Association of Small Business Development Centers**. The partnership aligns Sage certified consultants with SBDCs nationwide to offer start-ups and growing businesses the management tools, training and support services that aid efficient business operations. The partnership also makes free 30-day trial CDs of Sage Software products available for nearly 1,000 regional SBDCs providing assistance to more than 1.3 million small-business entrepreneurs annually.

http://www.asbdc-us.org.

http://www.sagesoftware.com

http://www.act.com


Document1 - Microsoft Word
File Edit View Insert Format Tools Table Window ACT! Help
Type a question for help
100%
Read
Normal + Tahoma
Tahoma
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All Entries
New...
Draw
AutoShapes
Page 1 Sec 1 1/1 At 2.6" Ln 3 Col 13 REC TRK EXT OVR

CH Gourmet Gifts
13 East 54th St.
New York, NY 10008
Phone: (212) 555-1758
Fax: (212) 555-5555

Quote #:

Kristi Cameron
American Dreams
1113 Grainey
Suite A
Allen, TX 75002

Phone: (480) 555-1245
Fax: (480) 555-2145
Email:

Date: 7/27/2005
Rep.: Chris Huffman

Qty	Item #	Name	Price	Total
50	BB00122003	Balloon Bouquet	$9.99	$499.50
50	TS001452002	Truffle Sampler	$19.99	$999.50

Services

O'Currance Teleservices Names New President

O'Currance Teleservices, (news - alert) a provider of inbound telemarketing products and services, recently named **Blake T. Rigby** as president of the Salt Lake City, Utah-based company.

Despite his new position, Rigby is not new to the company; he has been associated with O'Currance since 2003. Previously, he was the chief financial officer for the company.

O'Currance Teleservices was founded in 1994. The company has played a notable part in the development of Web-based virtual offices and remote telesales agents. It offers a variety of services, including telemarketing, telesales and call center operations.

http://www.ocurrance.com

Convergys Names New President, COO

Convergys Corporation, (news - alert) a provider of customer care, human resources and billing services, has announced that **David F. Dougherty**, executive vice president of Convergys' Global Information Management Group, has been named president and Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Convergys. In his new role, Dougherty is responsible for the company's Customer Care and Information Management businesses. Dougherty, a 15-year veteran of the company, continues to report to Convergys Chairman and Chief Executive Officer **James F. Orr**. It was announced that **Jack Freker**, president of the Customer Management Group, has left Convergys to pursue other interests.

http://www.convergys.com

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SalesForce Expands Customer Service Platform With Genesys

Genesys Telecommunications Laboratories, (news - alert) an **Alcatel** company, has announced an expansion of its contract with **SalesForce**, (news - alert) an Australian outsourced contact center company, to provide contact center software and services to support an additional 1,000 agents across its call centers in Australia.

The centers provide outsourced sales, after-sales and customer service solutions to clients in the telecommunications and financial services sectors.

Following the merger of SalesForce and contact center provider **Salmat** (news - alert) earlier in the year, SalesForce will work with Salmat to replace currently installed call center solutions with Genesys software. Genesys will provide software that enables SalesForce to roll out multimedia, IVR/speech capabilities as well as inbound call management across its call centers.

http://www.genesyslab.com
http://www.salesforce.com.au
http://www.salmat.com.au

ClientLogic Opens Panama Site, Expands In Mexico

ClientLogic, (news - alert) a business process outsourcing provider in the contact center and fulfillment industry, announced an increase regarding its presence in Latin America with the addition of a new customer care site in Panama and the expansion of an existing site in Mexico. This move will bolster its bilingual and near-shore English services to North American clients. ClientLogic is extending its bilingual capabilities to both improve service to the English-speaking population in North America and offer better service to the growing Hispanic population.

http://www.clientlogic.com

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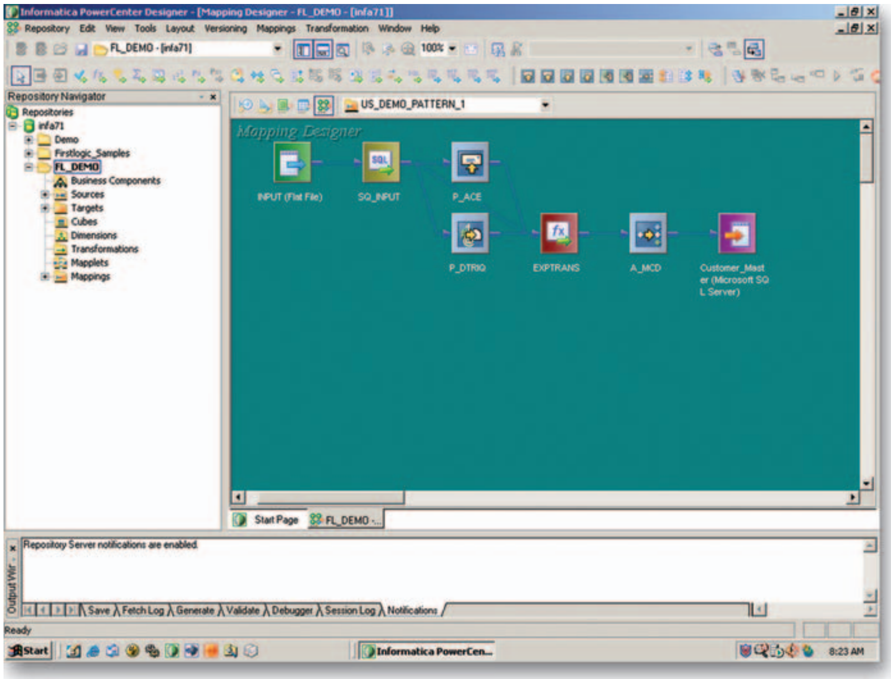
Pitney Bowes To Acquire Firstlogic

Pitney Bowes Inc. (news - alert) has signed a definitive agreement to acquire all of the remaining outstanding shares of **Firstlogic** for about $50.3 million, excluding cash and debt on the balance sheet. Pitney Bowes currently has 10 percent equity ownership of the privately held company. Firstlogic develops and markets software and services designed to improve operations in data quality, mailing efficiency and postal automation.

Upon completion of this transaction, Firstlogic will become a wholly owned subsidiary of Pitney Bowes within Document Messaging Technologies. Subject to regulatory approval and completion of other customary conditions, the transaction is expected to close during the third quarter.

http://www.pb.com
http://www.firstlogic.com


Informatica PowerCenter Designer - [Mapping Designer - FL_DEMO - [infa71]]
Repository
Edit
View
Tools
Layout
Versioning
Mappings
Transformation
Window
Help
FL_DEMO - [infa71]
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Repository Navigator
Repositories
infa71
Demo
Firstlogic_Samples
FL_DEMO
Business Components
Sources
Targets
Cubes
Dimensions
Transformations
Mapplets
Mappings
US_DEMO_PATTERN_1
Mapping Designer
INPUT (Flat File)
SQ_INPUT
P_ACE
P_DTRIQ
EXPTRANS
A_MCD
Customer_Master (Microsoft SQL Server)
Start Page
FL_DEMO -...
Output Wir...
Save
Fetch Log
Generate
Validate
Debugger
Session Log
Notifications
Ready
Start
Informatica PowerCen...
8:23 AM

Repository Server notifications are enabled.

BMC Software Acquires KMXperts

BMC Software, Inc., (news - alert) which provides enterprise management solutions, has acquired **KMXperts**, a provider of knowledge management solutions for IT service and customer support centers.

KMXperts, a privately held company headquartered in American Fork, Utah, has about 50 customers with a channel sales focus. KMXperts solutions cut the time required to resolve incidents and answer customer questions by providing service desk personnel with quick access to the collective knowledge of the IT service organization. KMXperts also helps decrease the number of issues that must be handled by service desk staff via its Web-based self-service options, allowing employees or customers to find solutions by using natural language search.

http://www.bmc.com

Sales Performance International, OneSource Partner

OneSource Information Services, a **Donnelley Group** company of ***info*USA** (news - alert) and a provider of business information solutions, has announced a partnership with **Sales Performance International**. (news - alert) SPI has integrated OneSource's Business Browser with its Solution Selling methodology and related sales training. Sales professionals can drive more revenue and increase win rates with better precall planning, prospecting, account planning and territory management.

http://www.spisales.com
http://www.infoUSA.com

QAS Offers QuickAddress Names

QAS (news - alert) recently announced the debut of its QuickAddress Names, a solution that was designed to augment the company's suite of address management products by validating consumer names along with addresses at the point of data entry.

QuickAddress Names uses Experian data compiled from thousands of sources, including the U.S. Postal Service, telephone directory records, real-estate transactions, surveys and other public and proprietary sources.

To use QuickAddress Names, users type in a few address elements, such as a ZIP code, the first few letters of a street address and a street number, after which QuickAddress Names provides drop-down lists of potential address and name combinations. Rather than typing in the full customer record, users simply highlight and select the validated, correctly formatted record. The drop-down lists can help companies save time and keystrokes and better enable users to avoid typos and other inaccuracies.

http://www.qas.com

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Oracle To Buy Siebel

Oracle Corporation (quote - news - alert) has announced that it has agreed to buy **Siebel Systems, Inc.** (quote - news - alert) for $10.66 per share. The offer is valued at approximately $5.85 billion, or $3.61 billion net of Siebel's cash on hand of $2.24 billion. Said Oracle CEO **Larry Ellison**, "In a single step, Oracle becomes the number one CRM applications company in the world. Siebel's 4,000 applications customers and 3,400,000 CRM users strengthen our number one position in applications in North America and move us closer to the number one position in applications globally."

The board of directors of Siebel Systems has voted in favor of the transaction, and **Tom Siebel** has agreed to vote his shares in favor of the acquisition. Siebel stockholders will convene in a special meeting to vote on the acquisition. Oracle stockholder approval is not required. While the transaction and the timing are subject to regulatory approvals, the deal is expected to close in early 2006.

http://www.siebel.com
http://www.oracle.com

Surado Announces Release Of Surado CRM 5.0

Surado Solutions, (news - alert) a provider of CRM solutions for small to medium-sized enterprises, has announced the release of Surado CRM 5.0. Surado CRM 5.0, according to the company, includes several improvements, from an updated and more simplified user interface to the addition of new functionality, including Interactive Workflow and integration with **Microsoft** (quote - news - alert) Project Management.

Interactive Workflow functionality was designed to help streamline and simplify processes, reduce training time, improve customer service and increase business flexibility. By using a graphic representation of an organization's workflow, users can be guided on a "best practices" path to accomplish tasks.

Surado CRM 5.0's new "key" features include: enhanced user interface; interactive workflow process manager; built-in project manager; CRM dashboard; enhanced sales automation; increased back-office integration; added security; enhanced support rules; advanced quoting module; template merge capability with MS Word and MS Excel; customized reporting; upgraded data mining; enhanced e-mail integration; new calendar views; contact and account record alert; and an upgraded search engine with ability to create, save and run queries.

http://www.suradocrm.com

Sendia Enables Wireless Salesforce.com

Sendia Corporation, (news - alert) a wireless business application platform company, recently announced the release of WorkSpace CRM 3.0 for **salesforce.com**, which, according to Sendia, features a host of new features and upgrades, including support for salesforce.com's Customforce and other advanced capabilities such as filtered views, increased data capacity and customizable lists. Designed for salesforce.com mobile users, WorkSpace CRM 3.0 replaces Sendia's Wireless Salesforce Automation (SFA) 2.3 and is compatible with popular wireless handheld devices such as Research In Motion's (RIM) BlackBerry Wireless Handhelds and Palm's Treo series.

"WorkSpace CRM 3.0 gives salesforce.com customers the unprecedented power to mobilize their custom objects in an easy point-and-click environment," said Alex Klyce, president of Sendia. "With our new configurable filtered views and vastly increased storage capacity, the right data is readily available on the device, making WorkSpace 3.0 a must-have for any salesforce.com user working outside of the office."

http://www.sendia.com

palmOne
Treo
WorkSpace CRM Home
Opportunity
Task
Event
Lead
Reports
Invoice
Purchase Order
Open
Logout
BLACKBERRY
WorkSpace CRM for salesforce.com
Case
Recent Items:
Pocket PC
Submit

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Salesboom.com Releases Next Generation Hosted CRM, CLM Solutions

Salesboom.com, (news - alert) a provider of hosted CRM, SFA, ERP and CLM solutions, announced the release of Salesboom.com v6.0. It's the latest release in Salesboom's history of hosted CRM software updates. Salesboom v6.0 offers numerous new features.

The new Salesboom.com v6.0 release has also allowed Salesboom to introduce new features that fine-tune its ERP offering, including inventory management systems. Integrating the ERP features with customer lifecycle management is also part of the Salesboom CRM system.

Salesboom has also released a new customer self-service portal, helping provide organizations with a tool to better manage customer expectations. The portal was created with the goal of cutting the costs of handling customer cases.

http://www.salesboom.com

SugarCRM Expands CRM Portfolio With Sugar Enterprise Edition

SugarCRM Inc. (news - alert) announced the availability of Sugar Enterprise Edition, an addition to its suite of commercial open-source CRM products that extend the reach of the SugarCRM platform into a wider range of business environments.

Sugar Enterprise supports both Oracle 9i and MySQL.

Sugar Enterprise also simplifies the installation and management of third-party add-on modules with a new module loader that is being simultaneously released in Version 3.5 of SugarCRM's Open Source and Professional editions. This new module framework allows users to add or remove third-party modules without programming and keeps the add-ons separate from the base application code, allowing core updates to be made without affecting accessory modules.

SugarCRM community software developers have created more than 80 Sugar Suite accessory modules, ranging from language translation packs to document and knowledge management systems, timesheets, database backups and Java synchronization.

The annual license fee of $449 per user includes 12 months of application updates, installation assistance, trouble ticketing, global weekday phone/e-mail-based technical support and full production support, including patch and fix distributions. Sugar Professional Edition costs $239 per user per year.

http://www.sugarcrm.com

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IBM Offerings Selected By Avaya, IBM Partners Donate RDCs To Apache

Avaya (quote - news - alert) has selected **IBM** (quote - news - alert) WebSphere Voice Server and IBM WebSphere Application Server as the initial speech and middleware platforms for Avaya Voice Portal, Avaya's new Web services-based speech self-service platform.

The solution, which is the result of an expanded alliance between the two companies, is meant to combine IBM's proficiency in middleware and speech technology and Avaya's position in self-service, contact centers and IP telephony.

IBM WebSphere Application Server is the foundation of IBM's speech architecture. IBM WebSphere Voice Server provides integration into a Java-based enterprise application framework.

In other IBM news, three of the company's partners, **Audium**, **Fluency** (news - alert) and **Openstream**, h(news - alert) ave donated RDCs to the **Apache Software Foundation**, (news - alert) a community for open-source software development. RDCs allow developers to plug standard pieces of speech code into their own code to help speed the development of speech applications for new uses.

In addition, IBM said it will offer WebSphere Voice Toolkit components to Audium for inclusion in the next version of Audium Studio, which is powered by Eclipse. Audium's customers can enjoy expanded functionality from the use of a common tooling platform. Audium Studio is a voice application environment combining the standards of Voice XML with packaged services for IVR applications.

http://www.ibm.com
http://www.avaya.com
http://www.audiumcorp.com
http://www.fluencyvoice.com
http://www.openstream.com
http://www.apache.org

Fonix Speech Group Solutions Offered By i-mate, Fonix Releases VoiceDial 2.1

The Fonix Speech Group,(news - alert) an operating division of **Fonix Corporation**, has announced an agreement with i-mate, a company specializing in Microsoft Windows Mobile device solutions and supportive applications, wherein i-mate will offer Fonix speech-activated dialing solutions, Fonix VoiceDial and Fonix VoiceCentral as downloadable software packages and as bundled software packages to corporate accounts. Fonix receives unit royalty fees from i-mate for each download or bundled package sold. Fonix VoiceCentral is an interactive, hands-free software application for Windows Mobile Pocket PC devices that allow users to dial contacts and access personal information management tools or other programs such as Media Player with voice commands.

In other company news, Fonix Speech Group has also announced the release of Fonix VoiceDial 2.1, a speech interface software solution for mobile phones that is compatible with Bluetooth headset technology.

VoiceDial 2.1 features a new voice command and provides improved contact management, as it now searches large contact databases more efficiently and better manages names with special characters. Original design manufacturers and original equipment manufacturers can license VoiceDial for a per-unit royalty fee. End users can download the software at http://www.handango.com.

http://www.fonix.com
http://www.imate.com

Apropos Technology, Maxxar Form Strategic Relationship

Apropos Technology (news - alert) has announced that **Maxxar**, (news - alert) a business unit of **Open Solutions Inc.** (news - alert) and a provider of IVR solutions, joined the Apropos Technology Alliance Partner program.

The relationship combines Maxxar's expertise in speech-enabled interactive information solutions with Apropos' multichannel communications management solutions.

Maxxar's Total Natural Transaction system provides a set of interactive self-service delivery features used by financial services organizations, including natural language speech recognition, speech-enabled lending, text-to-speech and touch-tone IVR.

The combined offering targets customers transitioning from automated to agent-assisted interactions. Apropos' multichannel support also expands Maxxar's ability to deliver online communications support to its banking and credit union customers.

As Maxxar maintains relationships with leading core data processors in the financial services field, this partnership also expands Apropos' integration with these providers.

http://www.apropos.com
http://www.maxxar.com
http://www.opensolutions.com

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SPIRIT DSP Powers Macromedia Flash For Multi-point Voice Conferencing

SPIRIT DSP, (news - alert) a provider of embedded voice communication software products and solutions, announced that its voice products are integrated into Macromedia Breeze 5. Macromedia Breeze delivers online conferencing and collaborative Web communications.

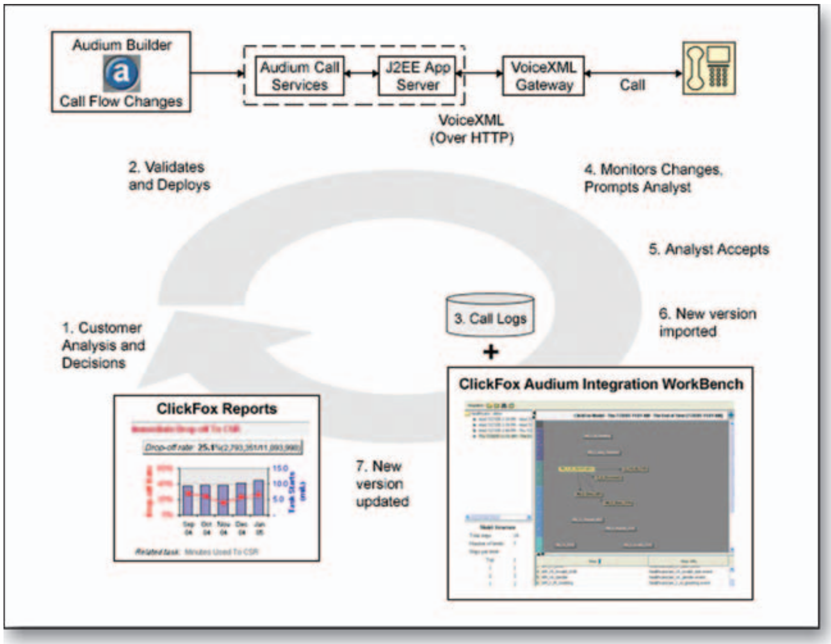
SPIRIT delivers integrated voice products, services and solutions designed specifically to produce superior voice quality in any IP network on any platform.

SPIRIT counts among its clients Agere, Atmel, Flextronics, Ericsson, Furuno, Hyundai, JRC, Kyocera, LG, Macromedia, Marconi, NEC, Nortel Networks, Oracle, Panasonic, Philips, Polycom, Samsung, Siemens, Texas Instruments and Toshiba, among more than 150 other communication OEMs and software vendors.

http://www.spiritdsp.com

Audium, ClickFox Partner To Offer IVR Solution

Audium, (news - alert) a provider of VoiceXML application development and management tools, and **ClickFox**, (news - alert) a software company that delivers patent-pending technology that analyzes human behavior in self-service environments, have announced the availability of an integrated solution to provide Audium customers with an end-to-end, behavior-centric, IVR design environment with continuous improvement capability.


Audium Builder
Call Flow Changes
Audium Call Services
J2EE App Server
VoiceXML Gateway
Call
VoiceXML (Over HTTP)
2. Validates and Deploys
4. Monitors Changes, Prompts Analyst
5. Analyst Accepts
3. Call Logs
+
6. New version imported
1. Customer Analysis and Decisions
ClickFox Reports
Drop-off rate: 25.1%
7. New version updated
ClickFox Audium Integration WorkBench

ClickFox's software shows customers step-by-step navigation through DTMF and speech-enabled IVR systems, allowing line-of-business owners to differentiate between successful and unsuccessful experiences. ClickFox translates customer interactions into an intuitive, interactive, visual map of user behavior.

ClickFox's software takes advantage of Audium's native logging functionality to build a more complete picture of customer interactions, and by integrating with Audium's application creation environment, allows users to immediately see the impact of changes to the call flow.

http://www.audiumcorp.com
http://www.clickfox.com

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Teleperformance Mexico Group is the specialist in the U.S. Hispanic market of SR. teleperformance (Euronext: FR 0000051807 www.teleperformance.com), with operations in 38 countries is the world's #2 provider of outsourced CRM and contact center services.

Mobile CRM Blends Sales And Service Roles For Greater Competitive Advantage

By Darc Dencker-Rasmussen
SAP AG

In a world where margins are shrinking and enterprises of every size are streamlining their organizations, the need to build profitability and grow revenue has never been greater. Customer satisfaction, visibility to customers' needs and the ability to respond to them in near real-time becomes a critical competitive driver. With more satisfied customers, an organization can better grow margins while lowering the cost of service and improving cross-selling and upselling opportunities. But today's economic realities are putting pressure on companies to maximize their existing workforce, making it difficult to hire new workers in sales and service organizations. With this in mind, companies are looking for new ways to remodel their organizations for productivity gains — particularly by blurring the lines between sales and service roles. By extending the use of customer relationship management (CRM) applications to the edge of the enterprise via mobile devices, organizations can creatively expand their workforce to deliver outstanding customer satisfaction, achieve financial performance objectives and considerably boost competitive advantage.

New Options For Customer Service

The results of a recent study of 1,300 global corporations reveal that the top-three perceived benefits in implementing a mobile enterprise solution are customer satisfaction, employee productivity and operational excellence. New mobile CRM applications on devices such as Blackberries, smart phones, PDAs and tablet PCs can blend employees' roles as much as they blend communications and services — giving companies new options for improving customer satisfaction, productivity and financial performance.

Traditionally, the service organization catered to the vital after-sales needs of a customer, including deliveries, installations, upgrades, repairs and other activities that often require deep knowledge of a company's product. Companies with an outside sales force are looking for ways to keep the sales pipeline fluid — capturing new leads and converting them into well-qualified opportunities they can close quickly and efficiently based on good customer information.

Mobile CRM can transform the service technician into a real-time lead generator as well as a sales person for appropriate products such as consumables, product add-ons and peripherals, as well as services such as service extensions and extended warranties. How often does a company have the opportunity to interact directly with its customer? In many industries, the service call is often the only contact for months and sometimes years; it is a moment of truth that should be leveraged accordingly. The service technician has the opportunity to identify a customer who might be going into a buy cycle for a replacement or who is considering another purchase; it is here that the opportunity is presented to capture the perfect lead. Often the service technician is viewed more as a trusted advisor than a sales person and will, therefore, get better access to lead information about purchase considera-

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tions, often discussing the pros, cons and alternatives.

Capturing this information and converting it into a well-qualified lead, on which a fully fledged sales person can follow up, yields the highest and most reliable lead-to-sales conversion rates. The key is the ability to capture all that information on the spot in an easy, natural and efficient manner, then relaying it in real time to the sales organization.

Mobile Cross-Selling And Upselling

Here is where mobile technologies can help. In addition to capturing leads to pass on to a sales organization, the service technician is ideally suited to sell appropriate products and services such as consumables, product add-ons and peripherals. In many industries, it is the consumables, spare parts, peripherals and add-on services that yield the highest margins. What better opportunity than during a service visit to help the customer understand why your products are better suited to his or her equipment and/or needs, and have the ability to take orders on the spot, providing convenience and leveraging the moment of truth.

All of this is particularly applicable in the field of sophisticated machinery, such as medical devices, film-developing equipment and printing and copying equipment, as well as plant equipment. It also applies to service technicians for consumer durables — such as the washing machine or dryer. The service technician has the opportunity to identify a replacement lead, someone who needs or wants to replace his or her old machine — critical in an industry that depends on repurchase rates as a key to success. Furnace repairmen, cable providers or any other service technicians who service consumers in their homes have a similar opportunity to open the door to new sales opportunities. Using a mobile handheld device, a cable provider can cross-sell a customer on high-speed Internet after installing cable, and quickly initiate and complete the sales cycle on-the-fly, right in the customer's living room. Without mobile CRM, the lead might be lost or possibly followed up days or weeks later, when the consumer's interest has waned. Mobile CRM can afford enormous competitive advantages by helping service teams gather relevant and timely information in the heart of the action and give the sales force the opportunity to do something about it before the competition does.

These moments of truth can also be leveraged to build better, more competitive products while building enormous brand loyalty. Take the example of sonogram (medical ultrasound equipment) service technicians, well-versed in the operation of sophisticated machinery. These technicians have a unique opportunity to gain insight and recommend improvements to their employer based on daily interactions with sonographers, doctors and others offering feedback on the equipment. Without mobile CRM capabilities, this valuable feedback might only be stored in the technician's head or, in the best-case scenario, jotted down on a piece of scrap paper.

Traditionally, there has been no formal way to capture this information, but mobile CRM applications enable service personnel to capture information on the spot and relay it to a knowledge warehouse in real time, at which time it can be utilized by product development teams to enhance future products.

With this information, it would even be possible to identify which doctors, for example, had recommended certain product enhancements, and when these features are added into the next model, those doctors could be notified that their input had been incorporated into the design. While the same suggestion may have come from hundreds of doctors, each one would feel that his or her idea had been the impetus for the product design. The satisfaction and pride associated with this sense of connection to the new product would spur an instant viral marketing wave, and doctors would tell others in their professional sphere about this new product. In markets where word of mouth will often make or break a product, this kind of customer intimacy is a supremely effective competitive weapon.

Capturing, tracking and delivering the intelligent data is the role of the mobile CRM system. In this case, mobile CRM drives product innovation and turns the sales technician into a conduit for greater customer intimacy, market insight, long-term customer loyalty and a lethal competitive advantage.

Creating Sales And Marketing Champions

For beverage and similar companies, with thousands of delivery distributors, mobile CRM can transform delivery personnel into sales and marketing champions. For example, a delivery driver for a major beverage manufacturer is responsible for all touch points in a store: stocking the storeroom and floor shelves, providing signage, interacting with the store owner or manager, etc. Using mobile CRM, this service-oriented individual becomes a new front-line salesman for the company by easily taking orders on the spot, gathering feedback on the performance of particular product lines, cross-selling new products and promoting new offers and marketing collateral — all of which require minimal action or follow-up by the retailer. By expanding the delivery service team's previous focus of solely delivering and arranging goods to also include spontaneous customer service enhancements, mobile CRM empowers these front-line representatives to generate new sales opportunities and increase customer satisfaction. In an industry where margin pressures are enormous, this approach effectively wipes out the need for a separate sales force driving around parallel to the delivery vehicles, a concept that easily ports to many other industries.

All of these examples demonstrate how mobile CRM can expand the capacity of a workforce and afford greater competitive advantage without added HR costs. Not only are service teams taking on new roles using mobile technology, but with mobile CRM, sales are being made before the competition even knows there is an opportunity.

TCO Down, ROI Up?

But what does mobile CRM mean for the organization in terms of cost and resources? The answer: very little. New mobile technologies, such as RIM's Blackberry, will plug into existing infrastructure, making it as easy to link a Blackberry to the network as it is to connect a desktop. Mobile devices can become simple extensions of an existing business ecosystem and could actually lower total cost of ownership (TCO) while increasing return on investment (ROI).

Any capital investment required to empower the service team with mobile CRM is quickly alleviated by returns generated by the new product- and revenue-generating opportunities. For instance, mobile technology provides an on-the-spot decision-making ability by leveraging all available information about a customer and his or her history to order the right part, check availability, assess symptoms and solve the problem in real-time.

With mobile CRM, sales are being made before the competition even knows there is an opportunity.

This valuable business intelligence ensures the most personalized service during a face-to-face customer interaction, therefore helping to improve sales opportunities. Mobile CRM also puts the service technician in a new position to relay timely customer information to the organization to improve sales leads, enhance new and relevant customer profiles and impact the product development cycle. A new level of customer intimacy created by mobile CRM applications puts the company in a better position to understand customer needs and react to them immediately — further strengthening competitive advantage.

Although there are good signs of an economic recovery, companies large and small are always looking for creative ways to maximize existing resources. Mobile CRM provides a cost-effective and useful way to expand employee roles, driving greater productivity with minimal additional investment. By arming the front-line service team with tools to engender customer satisfaction and uncover new opportunities, mobile CRM enables a company to control costs, drive revenues and ultimately gain competitive advantage for long-term success. **CIS**

Darc Dencker-Rasmussen is vice president of CRM business for SAP AG (news - alert).

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- 12% - 24% -- Reduction in Average Handling Time (AHT)
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IP Contact Center Technology: Eliminating The Risks (Part IX)

Over the last eight months we've focused on what inbound contact centers need to know before selecting an IP-based contact center solution. This month we'll be focusing on outbound technologies, specifically predictive dialing, in the context of IP-based solutions.

The Blended Contact Center

Leveraging idle agents on inbound projects to work on targeted dialing campaigns increases productivity and maximizes efficiency. A blended contact center enables agents to be switched seamlessly between inbound and outbound call campaigns and Web communications; maximizing the efficient use of all available agent resources.

In a blended environment, predictive outbound calls are triggered automatically when inbound call volumes fall below pre-set thresholds; and outbound campaigns are slowed or halted when inbound call volumes rise above pre-set thresholds.

A fully blended predictive dialing solution must be integrated-by-design for efficient call blending with the company's inbound technologies. Deploying a blended contact center can be easy or difficult depending on whether the overall solution is integrated-by-design or patched together after-the-fact. Some inbound technology vendors have aggregated their technology suites via corporate acquisitions and their solutions will often be no more integrated than if you were to buy the inbound and outbound technology solutions from different vendors. Other inbound technology vendors will OEM and re-brand third-party predictive dialers — which can lead to tremendous operational difficulties both from a reporting perspective and when outbound and inbound functions of the organization are performed with the same pool of agents.

Predictive Dialing Considerations

In order to minimize agent idle time in between calls on an outbound campaign, predictive dialers "predict" when the next agent on a campaign will become available based on average call lengths for agents in the active dialing campaign, and then proactively initiate calls to maximize agent efficiency.

To better accomplish this objective, predictive dialers also predict how many outbound calls must be made in order to reach a live person; factoring in up-to-date statistical data from the dialer on the percentage of successful live connections versus the percentage of no answers, busy signals and answering machines/voice mail — all of which must typically be filtered out by the dialer. These statistical patterns dynamically drive the dialer's "pacing algorithm," which in turn determines the volume of outbound calls that should be made to address anticipated agent availability.

The problem with pacing algorithms, of course, is that their predictions simply represent educated guesses based on up-to-date historical data, and those guesses will be more or less accurate based on the size and validity of the statistical sample that drives the pacing algorithm.

In predictive dialing there is a delicate balance and a core tension between minimizing dropped call rates and maximizing agent talk time. If the pacing algorithm is too aggressive, live prospects will receive calls without an agent available on the other end. At that point, the call would likely be "dropped" (hung up on by the dialer) or abandoned (hung up on by the prospect) because the dialer had guessed wrong and no agent was actually available to be connected to the prospect. On the other hand, if the pacing algorithm is too conservative, agents will spend more time idle and waiting for calls as the dialer seeks out live prospects. The key to maximizing efficiency and best resolving this tension is to scale the dialer to maximum levels in order to provide the pacing algorithm with the most statistically valid data based on the largest possible statistical sample.

The Scalability Challenge

The challenge for many larger organizations is that traditional dialer solutions often don't scale beyond 300 voice channels. Since multiple calls are generally made to find live prospects, the number of seats that can be supported by these systems in the real world is generally much less than that. As a result, most large organizations must run multiple dialers, often in the same locations, to meet their high-volume needs.

The problem is that traditional dialers do not allow multiple dialing nodes to work together and share data for maximum efficiency. While many technology vendors can aggregate administration and reports across dialer nodes, they typically cannot enable multiple dialer nodes to feed common data to a shared pacing algorithm; i.e., one that can be shared across diverse dialer nodes. As a result, each of the dialer nodes must make its own "predictions" based on the subset of the statistical data specific to the individual dialer node.

In other words, traditional dialers will not allow multiple nodes to be unified in order to run on a common statistical sample. As a result, all dialer nodes are unable to make predictions on the aggregate sampling of all the nodes, and each dialer is an island that is limited to making predictions on the basis of only its own limited data sample.

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The Benefits Of A Network-Based Software Architecture

Given the prediction efficiencies of leveraging the largest possible statistical sample, the goal of larger organizations running predictive dialers at scale is to have a single decision-making matrix control all dialing nodes, with each dialing node delivering its results to that matrix in real-time so that dialing decisions can be made taking all data from all dialing nodes into account. That is the benefit of a network-based software architecture in the context of predictive dialing. Companies that run dialing campaigns at scale on multiple stand-alone dialers can realize tremendous efficiency and productivity gains by migrating to network-based dialer solutions.

Aggregating Sites

Given the above noted limitations, “traditional” predictive dialers also obviously can’t allow multiple centers to be unified with a shared pacing algorithm based on a shared statistical sample. Here the goal is to aggregate the data from all sites in real-time to provide a unified statistical sample that can drive dialer decisions at all sites if they are calling into a common area.

With solutions that are designed to extend outbound dialing capabilities to remote centers, even agents working from home are empowered with the same capabilities as local agents in the contact center in which the infrastructure is deployed.

Companies should consider multitenant solutions where some centers will require stand-alone campaigns, autonomous data security and local control over their own campaigns. Economies of scale driven by shared licenses, hardware and phone lines is another benefit of this multisite deployment approach. Prudent technology buyers should also avoid vendors that support multidialer integration but add tremendous cost to the linkage between those different dialers. Such linkages are a no-cost capability in next-generation solutions that are designed for purpose.

Working Most Efficiently Within Legally Mandated Limits

Since predictive dialing has increasingly been the subject of both federal and state legislation in the U.S., contact centers need to ensure that the solutions they deploy comply with those legal mandates. Beyond compliance with do-not-call list regulations, companies are challenged to stay within mandated dropped call rates. The challenge arises from the fact that predictive dialers must stop “predicting” and revert to a one-to-one available agent-to-call ratio once the legally prescribed limit has been exceeded. The need for accuracy in predictions has therefore become increasingly important, since efficiency decreases dramatically once the prescribed dropped call rate has been exceeded.

Call Progress Detection

Call progress detection is another key to effective predictive dialing. The quality of the call progress detection can vary greatly from one vendor to another. Call progress detection algorithms identify answering machines/voice mail, busy signals, no answers, pagers, out-of-service tones, etc. and distinguish them from live voices on the other end of the call. Since effective filtering is a key determinant of agent productivity, ensuring that your call progress detection algorithm is of high quality must always be of paramount importance. Some solutions, particularly some newer IP-based solutions, offer immature call progress detection algorithms and, in some cases, cannot filter out all types of call progress events (such that you might filter out busy signals but not answering machines and/or voice mail systems, etc.). This not only can dramatically impair efficiency, it also limits your options on how to deal with call progress detection events.

Another key to maximizing ROI is to make sure your dialer allows you to define different default actions for different types of call progress detection events, for each individual campaign. For example, if the dialer detects an answering machine or voice mail, for some campaigns you wouldn’t want to send the call to a live agent but would choose instead to leave a pre-recorded message on that person’s answering machine or voice mail. In other circumstances you might want a live person to leave a customized message. In another campaign, you might choose to abandon the call and have the dialer try again after a specified time interval. Never sacrifice the ability to define the dialer’s reaction to call progress detection events on a campaign-by-campaign basis.

Manageability

Many dialers don't offer unified administration. As a result, separate modules are often required for provisioning, managing, monitoring and analyzing campaigns; with many more interfaces and points of integration required for an inbound/outbound blended environment. For most blended contact centers, a diversity of functional trade-offs are also required because calls are handed off between systems instead of being handled by the same system — which in many cases also has a negative impact on reporting. A mature predictive dialer shouldn't require a database administrator for list management, delays to process call tables or direct manipulation within the database.

Conclusion

Predictive dialing offers organizations compelling efficiencies in managing outbound call campaigns. Next-generation solutions can increase that efficiency and deliver compelling ROI by enabling diverse dialing nodes to share common sampling data and a common pacing algorithm; even when those dialing nodes are resident in different locations. Of course, the accuracy of call progress detection and the manageability of the technology solutions are also important considerations.

As with other aspects of a comprehensive IP contact center strategy, prudent technology buyers need to go beyond kicking the tires and take a good look under the hood of any proposed solution. Understanding the differences between vendor software architectures provides the most reliable approach for ensuring that your near- and long-term needs will be met most effectively.

If you've missed any of our first eight columns on IP contact center technology, simply e-mail us and we'll be happy to send copies to you.

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The Benefits Of Blended Agents

In an era when some call centers report annual turnover rates among agents of 100 percent or more, companies are having to think more carefully about retention. The aggregate costs of replacing an agent by scouting, testing, hiring and training a replacement are staggering — the estimated numbers run from $6,000 at the low end to $10,000 and beyond at the high end. If your organization has 500 call center agents and your turnover is 100 percent per year, you are easily spending half a million dollars or more each year on turnover alone. For a large call center, shaving only a few percentage points off turnover rates can add up to considerable savings.

In the days when call center jobs were commodities, agents would leave for the company across the street for an additional 25 cents per hour. The trick is to make sure agents perceive that working for your call center is not merely a necessary evil that generates a much-needed paycheck. Most call center organizations are catching on, adding perks such as child care, attractive break rooms, regular appreciation lunches, exercise facilities, quality cafeterias, flexible scheduling, periodic visits by massage therapists and a host of other appealing services.

But it's got to be more than window dressing.

It's no secret that turnover among outbound agents soars above that of inbound agents. Outbound is hard work. It takes persistence, an optimistic attitude and a very thick skin to be a good outbound agent. Some agents thrive in the position. Others burn out very quickly, taking hang-ups and rudeness personally. But let's face it: someone has to do outbound work. It's still big business in the U.S.

Technologies that allow the blending of outbound and inbound within the same agent group can cure a lot of what's behind the turnover in the call center. Though many companies have claimed for years that they blend outbound and inbound within the same agent pools, the process was cumbersome and limiting. Data silos, differing inbound and outbound applications and a patchwork of phone hardware made it more of a nightmare than coping with agent turnover.

Using IP telephony, this "disconnect" between inbound and outbound can be solved. Inbound agents can be switched to outbound during slow times, and outbound agents can be drafted to inbound work during call spikes. All customer information stays in the same place. Convenience and better customer service aside, a blended schedule generally makes for a happier agent. Conventional wisdom says that part of the cause of high turnover is boredom. Variances in agent duties during the day keep agents more stimulated: not only performing both inbound and outbound, but handling chat and e-mail, as well. Agents are more likely to perceive their jobs as careers rather than paychecks, and view themselves as professionals rather than "butts in chairs."

But don't give up on the perks, either. A cappuccino and a chocolate biscotti at 3:00 pm can go a long way toward improving attitudes, as well. **CIS**

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

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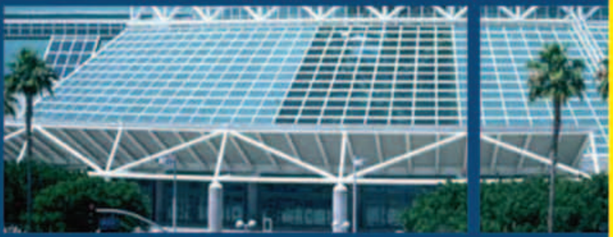

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Applying Inbound Techniques To Outbound In Workforce Management

Many outbound call center managers have always had a powerful workforce management tool that inbound managers have never had: control over call volume. Think of that control as a giant knob on a radio. When a person wanted to adjust the volume due to staffing issues, that person merely needed to “reach for the knob.” In fact, in some outbound operations, the whole of outbound contact center workforce management (WFM) could be summed up as follows: Turn the knob up or turn the knob down.

The strong temptation to reach for that knob — and the effectiveness of doing so — is now being tempered by new business priorities. The cost containment movement born in the early years of this decade has not gone away. Over the past five years, virtually every aspect of the contact center — inbound and outbound — has been under serious scrutiny. These centers have had to answer hard questions about whether companies should own a center at all or turn to outsourcers.

The trend toward virtually sharing campaign lists and skills-based routing in the outbound center is leading to greater awareness of the potential for improved multisite and multiskill blended environments. In these environments, agents handle and supervisors manage both inbound and outbound calls within and between sites.

Applying Proven Techniques

To maintain operational and profitable excellence in the face of increased competition and outsourcing, outbound managers should consider the proven WFM strategies that inbound centers find indispensable. Many of the principles that improve effectiveness and efficiency in the inbound center are already directly applicable to the outbound center. Until recently, however, there were few formalized implementations of outbound WFM. Most have been quietly implemented by outbound managers who adapted conventional inbound WFM software to their own particular circumstances.

By Nathan Stearns
IEX Corp.

Applying WFM in the outbound center requires embracing many of the same scientific and value-focused principles that have guided the success of inbound WFM. But the gains are far from academic.

By migrating from a fixed scheduling practice to sophisticated forecasting, planning and scheduling processes, organizations can boost the return on personnel investment. This boost is delivered through improved planning, effective scheduling and skill matching. Taking a disciplined, proactive

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approach to outbound WFM ensures better capacity usage, schedule adherence and agent utilization. Using this technology, agents won't sit idle due to a foreseeable lack of dialer targets or overstaffing. And they won't be overworked due to resource constraints.

The more advanced outbound WFM systems can capitalize on the emergence of unified dialers and outbound center virtualization. Distributing calls to the next available agent across multiple sites ensures time zone "hot spots," or site-specific staffing issues, get the attention needed using whatever agent capacity is at hand.

A greater understanding of call trending and performance history will aid the center in working with clients such as marketing and accounts receivable groups to ensure calling lists are managed to a high standard of performance. This interdepartmental interaction raises an interesting question: Which outbound environments will see the greatest benefit from advanced WFM processes?

Collection Focused

The outbound centers that probably have the least need for advanced WFM practices are collections-focused organizations. These centers have clear revenue potential on every call and are often staffed by dedicated specialists, and agent utilization is typically high due to a steady and predictable stream of calling lists. These centers are also not subject to do-not-call constraints and other regulations. Even so, many are ill-equipped to deal with unexpected variances in call volumes or to staff down to the half-hour precision level afforded by a complete WFM solution.

Sales And Marketing

The sales and marketing centers that often have a complex array of campaigns running simultaneously are somewhat less well structured. They are frequently assembled on an ad-hoc basis and are short-lived. Because of these overlapping and oft-changing goals, outbound centers must manage competition for agent resources just as an inbound center must. But unlike inbound centers, many sales and marketing outbound centers attempt to manage without the benefit of advanced WFM. Without sophisticated WFM that supports skills-based forecasting, planning, scheduling and change management, the customer may not be getting the best service possible.

Customer Retention

Retention-focused campaigns may be the quickest win for outbound WFM. Typically, these churn-avoidance or blue-chip customer recognition campaigns are run in fits and starts, sometimes with an unclear understanding of performance. By adopting advanced WFM practices for blended environments, retention campaigns can be deployed to operate in inbound/outbound contact centers. This helps make the best use of idle time when the flow of calls decreases on the inbound side. Suddenly, these "nice-to-have" campaigns, bolstering customer value, become a feasible and practical part of the center's mandate.

Taking It To The Next Level

Many outbound centers are moving to virtual dialers, where a campaign list is shared between multiple dialers and agent pools. In these multisite environments, managers need to understand how key inbound WFM concepts, such as schedule adherence, can benefit the outbound world.

The Missing Link In Customer Contact Solutions

By Bill Hunt, Stroudwater Contact Point

An increasing number of companies are realizing the true value of customer contact. Since you are reading this magazine, you probably already recognize the one fundamental fact that seems to be lost on so many companies: as far as the customer is concerned, the individual on the phone in your contact center is your whole company. That customer is not seeing your building. He is talking to an individual whose words, tone, knowledge and attitude will directly determine how he or she views your company.

Today's contact center systems provide detailed reports on everything that happens to a call. Systems like the Concerto Spectrum ACD can provide everything anyone could possibly want to know about a call, right up to the time it is delivered to an agent. But ACDs, whether from Aspect, Avaya, Concerto or another company, will not tell you what actually happened during the call. Call recording systems can provide you with recordings of what was said as well as analytics and search capabilities. But these systems alone cannot provide a complete picture of the transaction, nor can they manage what happens as the conversation is taking place.

The software that is used by the contact center agent is a critical part of the success of the call. Many companies expect their agents to be able to navigate among several different applications just to handle one call. Think about what happens when you are on the phone in your office. If you are like most people, you will take the opportunity to try to catch up on reading your e-mail. But many times, you find yourself in a situation in which an e-mail catches your attention and subsequently you have no idea what the person on the phone just said. The process of reading the e-mail distracted you from your call.

In your call center, is the software the agents are using distracting them so they cannot LISTEN to the caller? Are your agents writing down the caller's name, account number or other information on a piece of paper because they aren't on the right screen to record it, or because they will need the information at a later time for a screen not yet displayed by the software?

Contact center agent software needs to be different from the other software you use every day. Most software is designed to be used in a one-on-one environment — user and computer with the user focused on the computer. In a contact center, you want your agents to be focused on the CALLER and the caller's needs. The software must provide the agents with the information they need when they need it. It must be fast, simple and reliable. It must guide the agent through the call with appropriate prompts and reminders.

Remember that there are only two reasons why a person calls into a contact center: to give information or to get information. There is nothing else. The software must facilitate the giving and getting of information in the simplest, most efficient way possible. The software must also let you see what systems the agent is accessing and why, and identify factors that are making their jobs more difficult. It is only then that you begin to understand where to focus improvements and training. **CIS**

Bill Hunt is president and chief technology officer of Stroudwater Contact Point (http://www.stroudwater.com).

Schedule adherence is also critical to ensuring a smooth transition to longer and more diverse operating hours, which are needed to accommodate ever-increasing outbound regulations.

Schedule adherence is often de-emphasized because of the call volume "knob" outbound managers can employ. The real power of schedule adherence comes from the ability to create concrete call targets for each day — down to the 15-minute operating interval. Centers can build schedules to fulfill targeted requirements, and then hold the agents and supervisors accountable for contributing to the success of the campaign by adhering to the schedule and plan, even a plan that spans multiple sites.

Accuracy

Schedule adherence is also critical to ensuring a smooth transition to longer and more diverse operating hours, which are needed to accommodate ever-increasing outbound regulations. Not long ago, it was typical to see outbound centers working limited operating hours. However, in order to increase revenue generation and better comply with federal and state regulations, outbound centers have expanded hours and days of operation while creating targeted dialing campaigns. This has the effect of creating volume curves resembling traditional inbound call patterns of peaks and valleys. Although providing increased accuracy for planning, these more detailed plans and schedules require advanced WFM process to successfully manage.

Effectiveness And Efficiency

Schedule efficiency metrics work hand-in-glove with schedule adherence. If a center is going to expand and diversify its hours, schedule efficiency measurements track whether the center is realizing the best return on investment (ROI) for each new operating period, based not only on observed call volumes but on occupancy and close rates as well. It can also identify places where the organization is overly reliant on unplanned time off or overtime staffing to meet the erratic campaign needs.

Although the outbound center's focus is often strictly on the ratio of closed sales or dollars collected, the advanced reporting and agent self-analysis tools provided by WFM solutions can bring a more complete view of performance, both to managers and to agents. For the first time, agents will be able to see the entire slate of criteria used to measure performance; and better WFM systems provide a balanced scorecard that gauges agents, not only on close rates, but on schedule adherence and overall call throughput.

The monitoring tools provided to managers will give them unprecedented control over their own operations. No longer will they have to sit by while agents do nothing because of insufficient calls in a particular dialer queue. Management choices expand beyond the "call volume knob" to include proactive, profit-protecting and revenue-generating activities.

Managing The Transition

Just as it is in the inbound center, successfully adopting workforce management is about more than technology, advanced planning techniques and performance measures (such as adherence). Before moving to WFM-based practices in the outbound contact center, companies must be prepared to clearly articulate their strategy to employees.

It is no secret that many contact center veterans have shifted from inbound centers to outbound operations, the goal being to elude the scrutiny workforce management brings to bear on their activities. Any extension or reorientation of an outbound center's hours and staffing patterns — as a result of the ability to schedule with greater flexibility and precision — could be a tricky internal sell to an outbound staff accustomed to predictability and consistency. Maintaining both morale and proper levels of training and supervision are just as important as bolstering efficiency. Without a clear transition plan that includes creating and communicating benefits to employees, the adoption of advanced WFM techniques can turn into a significant problem.

Support Corporate Goals

Many outbound contact centers have operated without clearly articulated or functioning WFM processes for years. But the motivation to get more serious and more scientific about behavior and activity on the dialer side of the house is clear. WFM affords greater accountability and flexibility to managers who, until now, have had little visibility and little basis on which to make informed choices about operations. Greater control leads not only to greater accountability, but to processes of constant improvement which only further highlight the pivotal role the outbound center plays in supporting corporate goals and profits. Retire the call volume knob in favor of solutions that matter. **CIS**

Nathan Stearns is the director of training and consulting services for IEX Corporation, (news - alert) a provider of contact center workforce management and optimization technology. Inquiries can be sent to nathan.stearns@iex.com.

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The Teleservices Industry Steps Up For The Gulf Coast

The mighty teleservices industry often takes a beating in the mainstream press. What few people in the general public ever realize is the enormity of the contributions this magnanimous industry regularly offers in times of crisis and need. We saw this generosity in the days, weeks and months following September 11th, and now we're seeing it again in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. We thought we'd share with *Customer Inter@ction Solutions* readers some stories of teleservices organizations and the relief efforts being offered.

By Tracey E. Schelmetic
Editorial Director, Customer Inter@ction Solutions

The American Teleservices Association

The American Teleservices Association (ATA) (news - alert) has been encouraging all of its members and the teleservices industry to donate money and/or time to the disaster relief efforts. The ATA has raised money for the disaster relief effort by making it convenient for members to contribute to the fundraising efforts by placing a button on the ATA Web site that links to the American Red Cross donation page.

Thus far, the ATA effort has raised thousands of dollars through individual employee contributions as well as large company contributions with many companies matching their employees' donations.

However, the ATA put forth not only money, but also time: the association was asked by the American Red Cross to help push for call center volunteers at its Indianapolis call center. The ATA contacted members in Indiana to volunteer.

Thousands of ATA members' employees around the Gulf Coast have loaded trucks and vans with basic supplies which were driven into the area to support the relief effort.

Many ATA member groups heeded the call.

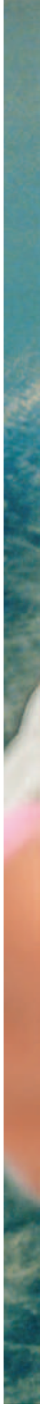
Synergy Solutions

Synergy Solutions (news - alert) has what it calls "Synovation Teams" throughout the company. At each of Synergy's five call center locations, as well as at its corporate headquarters, there is a cross-departmental group of volunteers who meet bimonthly to focus on expanding the company mission. One of the biggest priorities of the Synovation Team is the development of creative initiatives to give back to the communities in which it resides, through a variety of local and national fund-raising efforts.

In Hurricane Katrina's wake, the Synovation Team brought in a catered Cajun lunch to set the mood; it then rolled out the plan. Promotions ranged from using color-coded Mardi Gras beads based on the amount donated, to prize bidding based on accumulated bead value. Other promotions included "dress-down" days, silent auctions, bake sales, raffles and a system wherein agents purchased tickets for extra breaks, with supervisors taking calls for them during those times. One center even rolled out a "walking taco" promotion, taking to the streets in the nearby town and asking people to make donations.

Also, both the corporate headquarters and the Phoenix call center organized a collection for the local Salvation Army to provide clothes, toys and toiletries for displaced victims living in the Phoenix shelter. Synergy has further registered with job location sites for victims so qualified applicants can be offered employment in any of the company's call centers.

The Synovation Team daily tracked the progress by site and posted progress charts throughout the company to keep everyone involved. All funds collected will be donated to the American Red Cross through the American Teleservices Association so they can be combined with the efforts of others throughout the



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teleservices industry. Everyone at Synergy is proudly wearing beads in an effort to help those who are less fortunate.

The Heritage Company

The Heritage Company (news - alert) maintains corporate headquarters as well as a half dozen satellite centers throughout the state of Arkansas. The company reports that, because many of its 1,500 employees have family and friends who were affected by Katrina, there was a strong outpouring of emotion concerning the need to help its extended family as well as many of its clients in the Gulf States.

The company states, "Within 24 hours, our employees staged a donation site for Katrina Relief in a suburb of Little Rock that to date has generated six 20-foot truckloads of water, supplies and clothing to the Salvation Army relief efforts. The site continues to be open 24 hours a day — including the weekend — and has been staffed by volunteers from our employee base. While the first loads were shipped to New Orleans directly, our contributions are now going to help the families that have been relocated to centers right here in Arkansas. A corporate truck sits proudly outside our headquarters with 'Katrina Relief' spray-painted across its side in a creative graffiti style.

"In one community center where 70 families have set up a temporary home, our Conway facility has provided food, water and supplies. Hundreds of evacuees have set up in the State Fairgrounds, and a number of employees went over the weekend and volunteered their time to barbecue a huge picnic sponsored by our company.

"As part of our involvement with Special Olympics in the Gulf States, we have launched a campaign around the nation to help them offset their losses so that they do not have to cut their programs and activities for the Special Olympians in their community. While the ongoing relief efforts need to stay focused on food, housing and medical care, it is essential to continue life as normal as possible, which is why these efforts have been undertaken. Any contributions for these special programs sent in by *Customer Inter@ction Solutions* readers will be matched as well.

"The state public television stations launched a telethon in which our employees volunteered to process all inbound calls and our company provided our facilities at no charge. The overall campaign brought in another $48,000 for the cause.

"All proceeds that are being sent in from all employees — as well as those from the generosity of our clients — will be matched by Heritage, and the grand total will be forwarded to the Salvation Army. We have continued to focus on how blessed we are and how unfortunate this catastrophe has been for so many…so these efforts represent a little that we can do to help in creating a better future for New Orleans and the Gulf States."

TeleTech Holdings, Inc.

Have you ever watched a major telethon and wondered about the nightmare of coordination and the epic scale of operations behind the process? Well, wonder no more. Just ask TeleTech.

Englewood, Colo.-based TeleTech Holdings, Inc., (news - alert) which provides customer management and transaction-based BPO services on an outsourced basis, was proud to be part of a coalition of national businesses to support the American Red Cross efforts to aid the victims of Hurricane Katrina. TeleTech provided infrastructure, phone support and employees to take donations from callers during the Red Cross telethon that occurred on Friday, Sept. 2nd on NBC.

Teleservices agencies are strong candidates to help carry relief efforts: no organizations have more telecommunications infrastructure in place, and the companies have "ready-trained" volunteers in the form of their existing call center agents.

TeleTech offered employees the opportunity to volunteer to take calls during the telethon, and also committed to match its employees' time in a cash donation to the Red Cross. The Red Cross anticipated more than half a million calls from donors to make pledges during the telethon. As a result, several hundred TeleTech employees joined other call center volunteers nationally to handle the volume.

"On behalf of our employees worldwide, we want to express our sincere sympathy to those impacted by this tragedy," said Ken Tuchman, chairman and CEO of TeleTech. "We are extremely proud to be able to play this role in supporting the American Red Cross and the victims of Hurricane Katrina along the Gulf Coast. We are very grateful to our employees…taking calls as well as working behind the scenes in support of this effort. It is highly rewarding to be able to repurpose our global infrastructure, technology and applications to aid others during a crisis."

Five existing TeleTech customer management operations were used, including Birmingham, AL; Deland, FL; Enfield, CT; Kalispell, MT; and Moundsville, WV. The company mobilized its headquarters in Englewood with special workstations to take calls and pledges for the American Red Cross.

InfoCision Management Corp.

Akron, Ohio-based InfoCision Management Corp. (news - alert) perhaps has an advantage over other teleservices agencies — many of its clients are nonprofit charities, which gives the company something of an expert edge in a time of need.

Said Steve Brubaker, InfoCision's Senior VP of Corporate Affairs, "InfoCision Management never misses the chance to help others in need. Some people say it's amazing how much our employees want to extend a hand, a prayer or their hard-earned money. It's not amazing to me because I know the people. It's one of the reasons InfoCision is successful — a caring staff."

Brubaker indicated that it's hard to accept the reality of the aftermath of the hurricane. "Nobody wants to believe the images of devastation, homelessness and even death that we've seen the last few weeks are real, but they are," he said.

"Everyone wants to do something. Attitudes like that start at the top but filter to every call center and every department in our company. As scores of our nearly 3,100 employees started asking how they can help victims of Hurricane Katrina, InfoCision Chairman of the Board Gary Taylor immediately offered a three-to-one match on top of every gift offered by a staff member. A $25 commitment was suggested, but any amount that an employee felt was appropriate was accepted with gratitude. Our accounting staff produced payroll deduction forms for people who wanted to spread out their donation. Proceeds benefit The Salvation Army or American Red Cross, whichever the employee chooses," Brubaker said.

He continued, "I'm proud that our employees cared enough to make InfoCision's total pledge $300,000. I'm also proud of every other group — churches, schools, private businesses and others — who did their part. Some donations are larger than InfoCision's and some are not, but we wanted to do what we could to help our neighbors to the south as they try to rebuild their homes and their lives."

Brubaker concluded, "If people could hear the stories that we hear as people call to offer financial gifts for individuals in such dire need, everyone would understand why our industry is so vitally important to the economy, the clients that are served and groups of all sizes that have a need." **CIS**

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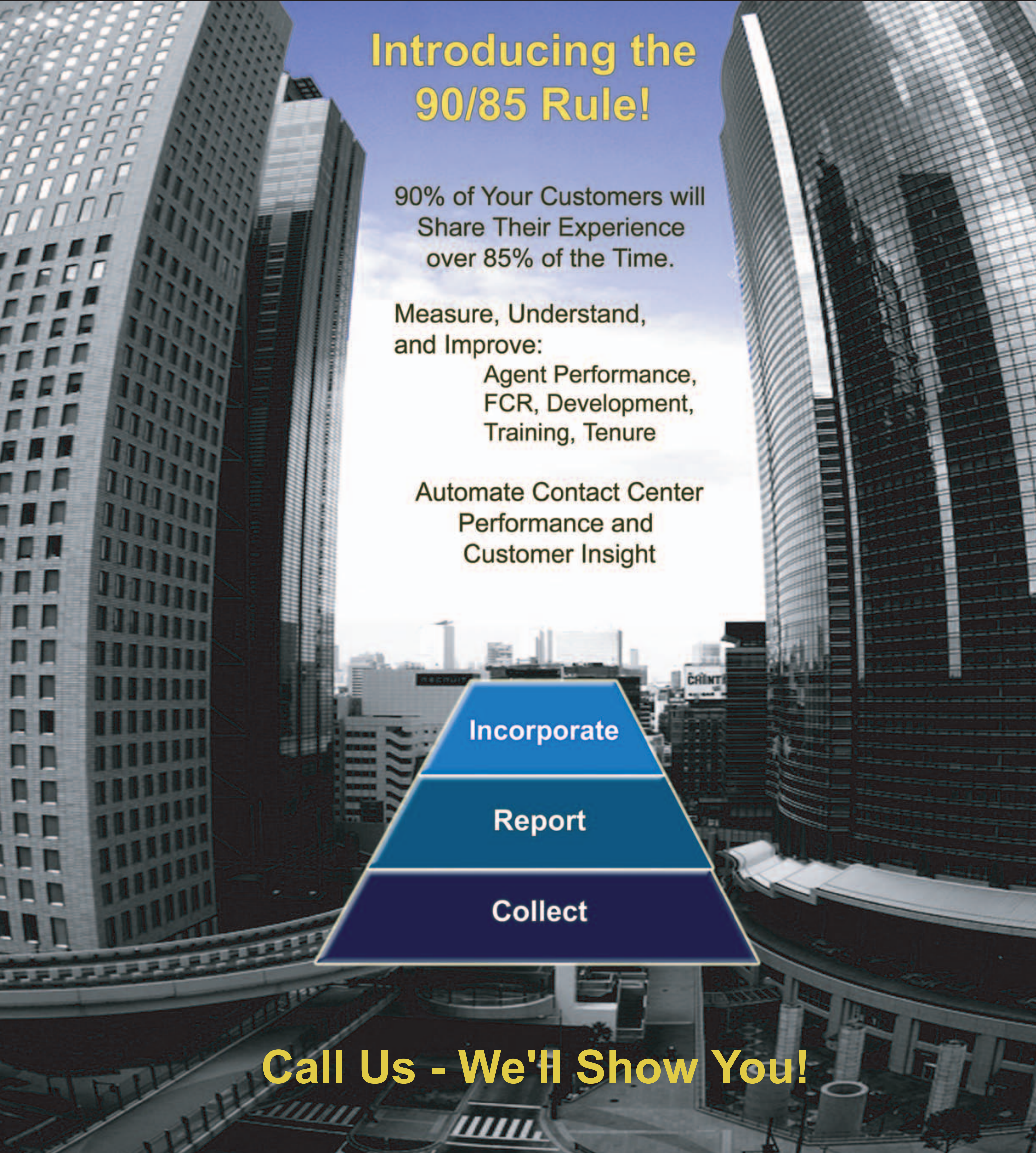

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Who's Who In Teleservices

CUSTOMER INTER@CTION SOLUTIONS'
Who's Who
2005
TELESERVICES AGENCIES™

Once again, the editors of *Customer Inter@ction Solutions* have compiled what is one of our top five most popular and requested resources: the annual Teleservices Agencies Who's Who listing. To make this a highly valuable tool, we've kept it as simple as possible, to present a large array of companies, many of whose services can be custom fitted to suit your outsourcing needs to a tee.

We invite you to peruse these companies' Web sites and read about their professional services, both domestic and abroad. In an economic climate such as this, there is only one rule for certain: You can't afford to put your customer service into the hands of amateurs.

That said, we are happy to present the listing.

KEY:

A. Inbound
B. Outbound
C. Multilingual Services
D. Interactive (IVR)
E. E-mail capabilities
F. Text chat

24-7 INtouch
Toronto, Ontario
Canada
e-mail: marketing@24-7intouch.com
Web: http://www.24-7intouch.com
Services: A, C, D, E, F

ACCPAC International, Inc.
Web: http://www.accpacmessaging.com
Services: A, B, D, E

ACI Telecentrics Inc.
e-mail: info@acitel.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

ACP Interactive, LLC
Web: http://www.acpinteractive.com
Services: A, B, C, D

ACS
Web: http://www.acs-inc.com
Services: A, C, D, E, F

Advanced Data-Comm, Inc.
Web: http://www.advanced-data.com
Services: A, B, D, E

AFFINA – The Customer Relationship Company
e-mail: services@affina.com
Web: http://www.affina.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Alpine Access
Golden, CO
e-mail: sales@alpineaccess.com
Web: http://www.alpineaccess.com
Services: A, C, E, F

Alta Resources
Neenah, WI
e-mail: abarth@altaresources.com
Web: http://www.altaresources.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

AnswerNet Network
e-mail: gary@answernet.com
Web: http://www.answernet.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F,

APAC Customer Services, Inc
Deerfield, IL
Web:
http://www.apaccustomerservices.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

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Apex America
Córdoba, Argentina
e-mail: cjuri@apexamerica.com
Web: http://www.apexamerica.com
Services: A, B, C, D

ARO Virtual Contact Center
Web: http://www.callcenteroptions.com
Services: A, B, C, E

The Beryl Companies
Web: http://www.beryl.net
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Business Solutions Inc.
Enid, OK
e-mail: info@okbsc.com
Web: http://www.okbsc.com
Services: A, B

CallNet Call Center Services, Inc.
Web: http://www.callnetservices.com
Services: A

CanTalk Canada Inc.
Web: http://www.cantalk.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E

CAPTA
México
Contact: Odin Martínez
e-mail: omartinez@captanet.com
Web: http://www.captanet.com
Services: A, B, D

Center Partners, Inc.
Web: http://www.centerpartners.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Cerida
Web: http://www.cerida.com
Services: A, B, E, F

Charlton
Web: http://www.tcgcorp.net
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

The Connection Outsourced Call Center
Web: http://www.the-connection.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Convergys
Cincinnati, Ohio
Web: http://www.convergys.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Customer Focus Services
Web:
http://www.customerfocusservices.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E

CustomerLink, LLC
Web: http://www.customer-link.com
Services: A, B, C, E

enGenic Corp.
Web: http://www.engenic.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

e-Services Group International
Houston, TX /
Montego Bay, Jamaica
Web: http://www.e-servicesgroup.com
Services: A, B, C, E, F

Excell Agent Services, L.L.C.
e-mail: sales@excellagent.com
Web: http://www.excellagent.com
Services: A

Fonexia Contact Centers
Suva, Fiji
e-mail: info@fonexia.com
Web: http://www.fonexia.com
Services: A, B, D, E, F

Foundation Marketing Group
e-mail: info@foundationmarketing.com
Web:
http://www.foundationmarketing.com
Services: A, B, E, F

The Frantz Group
Web: http://www.thefrantzgroup.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Full Perspective Video Services, Inc.
Web: http://www.fpvid.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E

GC Services Limited Partnership
Web: http://www.gcserv.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Global Response
Margate, FL
Contact: Wendy Shooster
e-mail: wendys@globalresponse.com
Web: http://www.globalresponse.com
Services: A,B,C,D,E,F

Hamilton Contact Center Services
e-mail: marketing@hamiltontm.com
Web: http://www.hamiltontm.com
Services: A, B, D, E, F

Harte-Hanks, Inc.
e-mail: contactus@harte-hanks.com
Web: http://www.harte-hanks.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Help Desk NOW Inc.
Web: http://www.helpdesknow.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

The Heritage Company, Inc.
Web:
http://www.theheritagecompany.com
Services: A, B, E

Hispanic Teleservices Corporation
Contact: Kit Cooper
e-mail: kit.cooper@htc.to
Web: http://www.htc.to
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

IDS Infotech Limited
Mohali, India
Contact: Rajnish Mehta
e-mail: rajnish@idsil.com
Web: http://www.idsil.com
Services: A, B, D, E, F

Influent Inc.
Web: http://www.influentinc.com
Services: A, B, C, D

InfoCision Management Corporation
Contact: Steve Boyazis
e-mail: Steve.boyazis@infocision.com
Web: http://www.infocision.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

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InfoVox Ltd.
Bogotá/Cali, Colombia
Contact: Jaime Daza
e-mail: jdazar@infovox.com.co
Web: http://www.infovox.com.co
Services: A, B, E, F

Innovative Marketing Strategies, Inc.
Contact: Maree Hickey
e-mail: mhickey@ims-ca.com
Web: http://www.ims-ca.com
Services: A, B

Integra Telecom
Contact: John M. O'Halloran
e-mail: john.oh@integratelecom.com
Web: http://www.integratelecom.com
Services: A, B, E

IntelliCare
Web: http://www.intellicare.com
Services: A, B, C

InTouch Solutions
Web: http://www.its-smartcalls.com
Services: B, D

IVR Technology Group
Web: http://www.ivrtechgroup.com
Services: D, E

KorenIT
Montreal QC
Canada
e-mail: contactcenter@korenit.com
Web: http://www.korenit.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Link To Success, Inc.
e-mail: link@spacestar.net
Web: http://www.roimark.com/link
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

LiveBridge
Contact: Chris DeLambo
e-mail: cdelambo@livebridge.com
Web: http://www.livebridge.com
Services: A, B

LiveOps, Inc.
Palo Alto, CA
Contact: Clif Critchlow
e-mail: clif@liveops.com
Web: http://www.liveops.com
Services: A,B,C,D

MicahTek Inc.
Web: http://www.micahtek.com
Services: A

MphasiS BPO
Contact: John Bugh
e-mail: john.bugh@mphasis.com
Web: http://www.mphasis.com
Services: A, B, C, E, F

Nextgen Care Technologies
Surat Gujarat
India
Contact: Harshal Joshi
e-mail: harshal@nextgencare.com
Web: http://www.nextgencare.com
Services: A, B, E, F

OKS-Ameridial Worldwide
Web: http://www.oksameridial.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

OSC Teleservices
Web: http://www.oscteleservices.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Outsourcing, S.A.
Bogotá, Colombia
Contact: Ricardo Durán
e-mail: rduran@outsourcing.com.co
Web: http://www.outsourcing.com.co
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

PentaServ
New Delhi, India
Contact: Nalin Malhotra
e-mail: nalin@pentaserv.com
Web: http://www.pentaserv.com
Services: A, B, D, E

Perfexa Solutions
Web: http://www.perfexa.com
Services: A, B, E, F

Performance Telemarketing, Inc.
Web: http://www.performancetm.com
Services: A, B, C, D

PharmaCare Specialty Pharmacy
Web: http://www.pharmacare.com
Services: A, B, C, D

Phonologies (India) Private Limited
Web: http://www.phonologies.com
Services: A, B, D, E

Qinteraction
Web: http://www.qinteraction.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Quoquam,Inc
e-mail: info@quoquam.com
Web: http://www.quoquam.com
Services A, B, C, D

RSA Solutions, Inc.
Web: http://www.rsa-net.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

S&D Marketing
Web: http://www.sdmarketing.com
Services : A, B, C, D, E, F

Selway Group, Inc.
Web: http://www.selwaygroup.com
Services: A, C, D, E, F

Sento
Salt Lake City, UT
Contact: John Sweeney
e-mail: john_sweeney@sento.com
Web: http://www.sento.com
Services: A, C, D, E, F

Servit Consultanta SRL
Bucharest, Romania
e-mail: contact@romsourcing.com
Web: http://www.romsourcing.com
Services: B, C, E, F

Signius
Web: http://www.signius.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

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Who's Who
2005
TELESERVICES AGENCIES™

SITEL Corporation
Web: http://www.sitel.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Soradi Communications
Republic of Mauritius
Contact: Manish Rajwani
e-mail: harman@intnet.mu
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Sound Telecom
Web: http://www.sound-tele.com, http://www.solaxis.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

The Survey Center
Web: http://www.thesurveycenter.com
Services: B, E

Sykes Enterprises, Inc.
Web: http://www.sykes.com
Services: A, C, D, E, F

Synergy Solutions, Inc.
Contact: Lori Fentem
e-mail: llfentem@callsynergy.com
Web: http://www.synergysolutionsinc.com
Services: A, B, C, D

Talk2Rep Call Centers
e-mail: sales@talk2rep.com
Web: http://www.talk2rep.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

TechTeam Global
Southfield, MI
Contact: Jim Hoen
e-mail: jhoen@techteam.com
Web: http://www.techteam.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Telacquire Marketing Group Inc.
e-mail: info@telacquire.com
Web: http://www.telacquire.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Tele Logix Communications (Pvt.) Ltd.
Karachi, Pakistan
Contact: Imran
e-mail: imran@telelogix.biz
Web: http://www.telelogix.biz
Services: A, B, C

TelePartners
Web: http://www.telepartners.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

The Telephone Centre
Web: http://www.telectr.com
Services: A, B, C, E

TeleRep
Web: http://www.telerep.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Telerx
Contact: Ron Abel
e-mail: solutions@telerx.com
Web: http://www.telerx.com
Services: A, C, D, E, F

TeleSpectrum, Inc.
Berywn, PA
Contact: Scott L. Karlin
e-mail: skarlin@telespectrum.com
Web: http://www.telespectrum.com
Services: A, B, D

TeleTech Holdings, Inc.
Contact: Julie Lucas
e-mail: info@teletech.com
Web: http://www.teletech.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Telvista
Web: http://www.telvista.com
Services: A, C, D, E, F

TMONE
North Liberty, IA
Contact: Ethan Davis
e-mail: edavis@tmone.com
Web: http://www.tmone.com
Services: A,B, D,E,

TMP Direct
Mount Olive, NJ
Contact: Brian Schultz
e-mail: brian.schultz@tmp.com
Web: http://www.tmpwdirect.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Touchstone Communications
Web: http://www.touchstonebpo.com
Services: A, B

TransData
Lahore, Pakistan
Web: http://www.transdata.biz
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Unicall International, Inc.
Contact: Benjamin C. Harris
e-mail: bharris1118@neo.rr.com
Web: http://www.unicallinc.com
Services: A, B, D, E, F

Virtual-Agent Services
Schaumburg, IL
Contact: Laurie Emery
e-mail: sales@vagent.com
Web: http://www.vagent.com
Services: A, C, D, E

Visions Marketing Services, Inc.
Web: http://www.wecloseloans.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E

Viteos Technologies Limited
Web: http://www.viteos.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

West Corp.
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Web: http://www.west.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

Wipro BPO (a division of Wipro Ltd.)
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Web: http://www.wipro.com
Services: A, B, C, D, E, F

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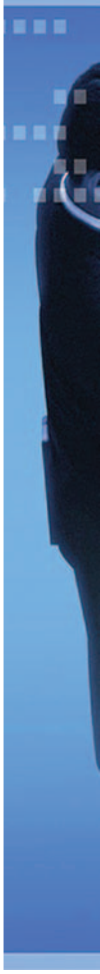

Does Your Contact Center Have A Business Continuity Plan?

Imagine for a moment that you get a call in the middle of the night. There's been a fire at your building and the entire data center is destroyed. There's no question that this will have a significant impact on the functioning of your business, but planning ahead and developing an overall business continuity plan can help reduce that impact. Recent events have highlighted the fact that every business should have plans in place to guide people through the chaos, towards recovery.

In today's world we are increasingly dependent on rapidly changing technology. Planning ahead for potential disruptions can make the difference between whether your business quickly gets back on track, or as in some cases, whether it even endures. This is particularly the case in situations where your business or contact center has recently grown rapidly and new servers, applications or telephony equipment, along with backups and data, could be lost.

However, whether or not your business has a contact center, there is an increasing focus on business continuity and disaster recovery efforts in businesses today, with and without contact centers. The high cost of downtime plus the loss of valuable information and equipment mean that many businesses don't survive a major catastrophe. Business continuity planning can help reduce those costs, and may be what keeps your business in existence.

What Is Business Continuity?

The terms "business continuity" and "disaster recovery" are often used interchangeably, since both terms refer to efforts a business makes to protect against the impact of a disruption. It is important to first understand the subtle differences between business continuity and disaster recovery, however, before discussing why this has become so important.

Business continuity refers to the planning and processes an organization puts in place to mitigate risk, prevent disaster and protect operations. It includes development of a disaster recovery plan. Business continuity planning occurs well before disaster strikes with the intent to reduce any impact if and when it does. Disaster recovery refers to the plans and activities to be engaged if a disaster occurs which move an organization toward recovery.

Business continuity planning involves many different activities that typically follow a general path. Most business continuity planning activities start with a risk assessment and business impact analysis, which then proceed to documentation of the disaster recovery plan. Finally, the plan is tested and employees are trained on their roles, responsibilities and procedures if an unexpected event with the potential to impact business occurs. It is also critical to review and update every business continuity plan at least once a year to update contacts and other pertinent information.

By Catherine McNair
Avaya

A risk assessment and a business impact analysis are initial information-gathering tools designed to understand where there is exposure to risk and the impact to revenue generation. A risk assessment may look at the entire business and its processes, including the physical environment and the technologies supporting it, to identify all possible areas of exposure. Examples may be obvious, such as a weather-related event, or somewhat more obscure, such as discovering there is no backup to critical data stored on a particular server.

A business impact analysis reviews the business operations and the criticality of each with the goal of identifying where a business would be most affected if a failure were to occur. A business impact analysis specifically helps identify three important items for business operations: the recovery point objective (RPO), recovery time objective (RTO) and recovery scope objective (RSO).

The recovery point objective identifies from what point data can be recovered; essentially, the longest potential period since a backup was done. For instance, if customer data are backed up nightly, but only rotated off-site every other day, the RPO is approximately 48 hours because it may be necessary to recover from the point of the last off-site backup.

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Summit
Business
Communication
Global

Recovery time objective is a measurement of how soon a business task or process must be operational following a disaster. For instance, if your contact center operates with service level agreements that require agents to respond to a request in two hours or less, your RTO for the contact center is two hours.

Recovery scope objective refers to what data, applications, processes or other critical business functions must be recovered and the priority for each in the recovery process. The contact center may have the highest priority to ensure a continued stream of incoming revenue or customer service. The applications and technology associated with the critical functions the agents perform will be included in the RSO.

Once the data gathering is completed, documenting a disaster recovery plan begins. Often, part of this process is fortifying the business to mitigate risk, such as upgrading or adding to the technical infrastructure. Disaster recovery plan development is followed by either a full-scale test of the plan or a tabletop exercise and making appropriate adjustments. Employees are then trained: several may have specific tasks to support recovery efforts, while some will need to understand only who to call or what will happen in the event of a disaster.

Why Is Business Continuity So Important To A Contact Center?

A contact center must use multiple systems and technologies to operate and compete in today's global economy. Businesses today are heavily dependent on systems that enable functions to be done in a short amount of time and over vast distances. A few of these critical systems are the telephony equipment and telephones, the customer database, applications accessed each time a contact with a customer is made, and more. The following is an overview of how the increasing dependence on technology heightens the need to create and maintain business continuity plans.

Emerging technologies. When contact centers were merely call centers, the main concern was making sure the phone system and lines were up and working. Today, companies must ensure the health of not only the phone lines, but also e-mail and voice mail, Web servers, databases, contact center management applications, voice recording equipment, telephony servers, customer interaction applications, Blackberry servers, and more.

Global workplace. Our economy, our workplace and our customers are global. If a contact center is disrupted due to a regional disaster, the customers in that area may be sympathetic because they know the conditions under which it is operating. Customers across the globe may not know about a regional disaster, however, and may call a competitor instead.

Many companies have more than one location, and those locations are geographically diverse. The business continuity implications of this are two-fold. First, it means that a single location may not present a point of failure — if something happens to interrupt business at one location, the other location, if properly prepared, can take over operations temporarily. The other location, however, must be far enough away to ensure that it will not be affected by the same interruption. Second, it means that planning to protect business operations is more complex because the planning has to encompass all locations. The benefits of maintaining more than one, or several, locations far outweigh the costs, however.

Reliability. It is much harder to maintain reliability with today's technology. Technology advances rapidly as a result of competition and customer demand. Many developers no longer have the luxury of spending years creating a product that is bug-free before it comes to market. Contact center managers have many choices in emerging technologies and gadgets to increase efficiency, but inherent in the newest of these is a potential disruption because of an unforeseen problem, use, or lack of capacity.

Security. Hacking and other security-related disruptions are increasing concerns as well. Security threats come in many forms, and when your applications are open to the public on the Internet, your business is open to a significant risk. Some businesses hire security auditors, analysts or other professionals to assist them in protecting assets. These professionals spend a significant amount of time and effort protecting against potential threats, and must constantly strive to stay one step ahead and safeguard mission-critical applications.

911 regulations. People will always be the most important asset, and their protection comes in the form of safety and emergency response procedures that prevent loss of human life. Lately, E911 calling is getting a great deal of attention due to new IP-based communications that may not efficiently provision emergency calls and response.

Businesses in large buildings or campuses and businesses using IP telephony must take measures to ensure that a person calling 911 can be located by emergency services — the main thrust of E911 requirements. In large buildings or on campuses using IP telephony, this may not be automatically apparent depending on which vendor's system is installed. In addition, the mobility of users enabled by IP telephony means that a caller could be physically located almost anywhere. Hence, 911 calling must be tested, with appropriate procedures related to 911 calls put in place and included with disaster recovery documentation.

Industry regulations. Over the past several years, broad publicity surrounding several adverse events has resulted in a number of industries creating regulations that require the following: that client information be secured, that data backup procedures are instituted so information can be produced at any time, that security protection to prevent intrusions and disruptions be implemented, and that companies develop business continuity/disaster recovery plans. Depending on the industry, regulations such as HIPAA, Sabanes-Oxley or others may be important considerations in such plans.

Service level agreements. Service level agreements (SLAs) are becoming more common and more demanding. Your customers must also protect their business, revenue and assets, and one way to do so is to set up an SLA with a vendor to provide some assurance that they can count on your business to be available, or there will be financial penalties. Penalties for not fulfilling an SLA must always be considered as a potential cost of downtime when developing business continuity plans.

Increased demand on worker's time. Not too many people today have the luxury of a single job responsibility. With multiple responsibilities cast over time that is increasingly stretched to the limit, the most pressing needs are dealt with first, while other efforts go to the back burner. Planning for a "might happen" becomes a low priority. In addition, with so many people pressed for time, it is easier to make mistakes — either by creating an incomplete business continuity plan or by creating the disaster itself. Some estimates indicate that about one-third of network outages are a result of human error.

Dependence on many vendors. The number of vendors a business depends on has increased in past years as well. Not only do businesses have SLAs which require a certain level of service, those businesses in turn must make requirements of their own vendors as well. If a disaster happens at your business, you need to know how much you can depend on your vendors in recovery efforts.

Penalties for not fulfilling an SLA must always be considered as a potential cost of downtime when developing business continuity plans.

Evaluate Your Business And Contact Center

At this point, the question is: "How prepared is your business?" With some of these ideas in mind, how your business or technical infrastructure has changed could increase the need to develop or review business continuity plans. Often, the best time to plan is when the infrastructure is being changed or upgraded. It is most cost-effective to build in protective measures as you go, rather than build on to an existing infrastructure after it is in place.

Even if the technology is secure, in the absence of written plans, that technology can't be used to its best ability. It won't do anyone any good if the equipment and capability are there, but no one knows what to do with them.

While business continuity planning may seem like a daunting task and the time better spent on more current critical needs, the day after a disaster should never be a starting point to reflect on what should have been done. Plan now to protect what has been so carefully built to produce revenue and provide needed services to your customers. **CIS**

Catherine McNair is a Senior Business Continuity Consultant with Avaya's Business Continuity Practice, (quote -news -alert) which offers consulting in business continuity and disaster recovery. She assists organizations with all areas of business continuity planning, prepares articles on business continuity and speaks on the subject at conferences and other engagements. Contact her at cmcnair@avaya.com for more information.

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Free Webinar

Going Beyond "Monolithic and Safe" to Succeed with VoIP

The Art & Science of Dragon Slaying...
an IT Chief and Contact Center
Manager's Guide for a VoIP Strategy
that Delivers Tangible, Definitive Results.

October 13, 2005 • 1:30 pm ET

INTERACTIVE INTELLIGENCE
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Presenter

Dr. Don Brown, President and CEO,
Interactive Intelligence

Presenter

Art Schoeller, Senior Analyst,
The Yankee Group

Presenter

Rich Tehrani, President,
Technology Marketing Corp.

The "Dragons" have been around almost since Bell's first telecom words were spoken in 1876. These dragons continue to unduly burden customers with lagging technology, high support costs, un-interoperable product offerings, and a story of futures that sounds almost fairy tale-like. In this no-cost webinar, learn from three industry experts: Rich Tehrani, Art Schoeller and Dr. Donald Brown.

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- Three "S" factors: Security, Scalability, and Standards
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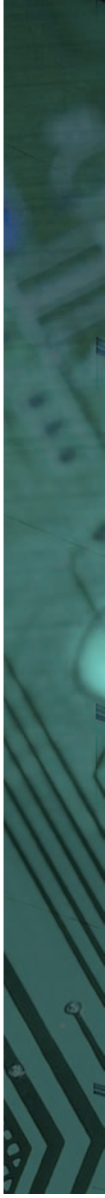

Cultivating Data Security: What's Real, What's Tail-Chasing

By Tracey E. Schelmetic
Editorial Director, Customer Inter@ction Solutions

It's been hard not to see evidence of the increasing tide of criminal data thefts lately. This year alone, CitiFinancial's data breach was announced in June, LexisNexis in April, and both Bank of America and ChoicePoint in February. These are only the highlights…there were many more, including banks, catalog companies and universities. Most organizations would like to avoid seeing their names in *The Wall Street Journal* under similar circumstances, but most of them are doing little more than crossing their fingers and hoping.

The problem is this: data security breaches can happen in many ways, so it's hard to know which tower to man the strongest. The ChoicePoint data breach occurred when criminals posing as legitimate customers asked to purchase, and were sold, the personal data of 145,000 people. (There was not, in this case, any hacking involved.)

Congress Wakes Up — Then Hits Snooze Button

The string of data breaches has drawn strong responses from both parties in Congress, though thus far there is little evidence that the many bills that have been drawn up are progressing to where they need to be: laws. As of the writing of this article, there were 22 bills in Congress dealing either directly or indirectly with identity theft. (One of these includes a rather odd bill, S.884, which was introduced to "conduct a study evaluating whether there are correlations between the commission of methamphetamine crimes and identify theft crimes.") Other bills that have been introduced address identity theft and anti-phishing, Social Security number protection and customer notification of data breaches.

Part of the problem with data security legislation is in knowing where to start. Bruce Schneier, internationally renowned security technologist and author who has been described by *The Economist* as a "security guru," said legislators' efforts should focus on making companies accountable for data theft. "Make companies liable for leaking identity information," said Schneier. "Make companies liable for the effects of fraudulent transactions; that is, if a bank or credit card company accepts a fraudulent transaction in my name that is not made by me, they should be liable for the losses that incur because of that mistake."

When I asked Schneier whether it's possible that Congress is always two steps behind both technology and its potential abuses because the legislators do not understand the technologies well enough to get a grip on how to protect consumers, Schneier told me that it doesn't matter, and he laid the blame at a different door. "It has nothing to do with being savvy enough," he said. "Legislators and judges have staffers who understand technology. It's simply that there is too strong a lobby — it directly affects legislators and pays for litigators that affect judges — preventing any real solutions."

California, The Early-Warning Beacon

At the state level, California's SB 1386 is the only state data theft disclosure bill in existence. It mandates that companies which maintain databases of private information on consumers MUST notify those customers if their data are lost, hacked or exposed in any way. It's taken as conventional wisdom that, were it not for this California law, U.S. consumers would be none the wiser to the data breaches at ChoicePoint, LexisNexis, Acxiom, Bank of America and other companies, until those mysterious designer clothing purchases and tickets to Tahiti started showing up on their credit cards.

The problem is, during the damage-control proceedings initiated by these companies, they inadvertently did more damage to themselves. By telling customers, "Look, we won't sell your Social Security numbers, drivers' license numbers and income details to anyone anymore," consumers didn't say, "Great!" They said, "Where did you get off sell-

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ing that information in the first place?" The ugly reality is that few people were actually aware how much of their deeply personal information is bought and sold daily in Corporate America. Now that they know, they're becoming increasingly angry. The phrase "legislative backlash" continues to take place in discussions regarding what's on the horizon for data brokers or any company maintaining personal customer data in its system.

In March of this year, U.S. Senator. Charles E. Schumer (D-NY) released a statement hard on the heels of the disclosure that DSW, an Ohio-based shoe retailer, is currently undergoing an investigation into credit card fraud. Said Schumer, "ChoicePoint has become a rallying point for consumer advocates in the Congress to do something substantial about the weak national laws to protect Americans' privacy. These new incidents of identity theft through stolen credit card information at DSW, and through account fraud at LexisNexis, should force Congress to act soon to bolster our pitiful privacy protections for consumers." Among some of his top agenda items, Schumer counts protecting consumers from predatory loan offers and putting reigns on some of the excessive fees and interest rates many credit card companies regularly levy on consumers.

Additionally, Sen. Diane Feinstein (D-CA) has put forth several bills that cover the prevention of identity theft.

First, there is the Notification of Risk to Personal Data Act (S. 115), a federal bill modeled on the California law, which defines sensitive information as a Social Security number, driver's license number, state identification number, bank account number or credit card number. This law would require "a business or government entity to notify an individual when it appears that a hacker has obtained unencrypted personal data; levy fines by the FTC of $5,000 per violation or up to $25,000 per day while the violation persists; and allow California's privacy law to remain in effect, but preempt conflicting state laws." The bill was introduced to Congress in January, read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

The second of Feinstein's bills, presented with cosponsors, is the Social Security Number Misuse Prevention Act (S. 29), which would "regulate the use of Social Security numbers by government agencies and private companies by prohibiting the sale or display of Social Security numbers to the general public, and by requiring Social Security numbers to be taken off of public records published on the Internet." S.29, like S.115, was presented in January, read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. The bill was cosponsored by Sens. Judd Gregg (R-NH), Bill Nelson (D-NE), Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and John Sununu (R-NH).

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Finally, there is the Privacy Act (S. 116), which would mandate the consent of any individual before any company can sell or market a consumer's personal information.

Also fluttering around Congress since March 2005 are the Information Protection and Security Act (H.R. 1080), a bill that would "regulate information brokers and protect individual rights with regards to personally identifiable information," and the Social Security Numbers Protection Act (H.R. 1078), designed to "strengthen the authority of the Federal Government to protect individuals from certain acts and practices in the sale and purchase of Social Security numbers and Social Security account numbers, and for other purposes." Both of these acts are cosponsored by Nelson and Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA).

The Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing on April 13, 2005, titled "Securing Electronic Personal Data: Striking a Balance Between Privacy and Commercial and Governmental Use," and included on the panel representatives from the Federal Trade Commission, the FBI, the Secret Service, the National Association of Attorneys General, ChoicePoint, LexisNexis, Acxiom Corp., the Center for Democracy and Technology, and PrivacyToday.com.

During the course of this hearing, Leahy stated, "Our hearing today is not about shutting down these data brokers or abandoning their services. It is about shedding a little sunshine on current practices and weaknesses, and establishing a sound legal framework to ensure that privacy, security and civil liberties will not be pushed aside in this new and evolving age." The Vermont senator went on to say that companies such as LexisNexis and ChoicePoint "play a legitimate and valuable role in the information economy. Their data services facilitate important commercial transactions, improve hiring decisions, deter fraud, assist law enforcement and enhance homeland security. But as with

A Discussion With Vin Gupta, Chairman And CEO Of infoUSA

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

Customer Inter@ction Solutions recently spoke with *info*USA CEO Vin Gupta. infoUSA (news - alert) is a leading compiler of several proprietary databases that capture detailed information on a majority of businesses and consumer households in the United States and Canada. The company employs more than 900 full-time people to compile and update the databases from thousands of public sources such as yellow pages, white pages, newspapers, incorporation records, real estate deed transfers and various other sources.

CIS: Your most recent product release seems to be your infoGenie product, which appears unique among other companies. Can you explain briefly what it does and why companies need it?

VG: SalesGenie is a tremendous sales-prospecting tool for small businesses at a flat price. They can access our 12 databases to find virtually any prospect they need and, with a flat price of $250 per month, they can get unlimited sales leads, unlimited mailing labels and access to any database at any time. This is a very novel approach in the list industry. Nobody has ever done it before.

CIS: I know that *info*USA/SalesGenie is very proud of the fact that its data tends to be extremely up-to-date and well ordered, and I've heard your customers express satisfaction in the quality of your data. What are some of the company's methods for attaining this quality? What do you do that others don't?

VG: Our database is the best because we invest $50 million per year. We have 900 people who are dedicated full time to making sure that our database is the most accurate and up to date in the industry. Also, compilation and updating of the database is our primary business. We are not in the credit business or any other business where selling the database is a sideline.

CIS: Please tell us what you see in the near future, i.e., the next couple of years, for outbound telemarketing. Certainly it's not dead, but it must be different after all of the FTC legislation. How do you perceive it's different?

VG: Outbound telemarketing is not dead. With the legislation, the people who are receptive to it will be getting the calls. Also, for businesses, there is no limitation. Businesses can still call other businesses in promoting their products and services. **CIS**

The ugly reality is that few people were actually aware how much of their deeply personal information is bought and sold daily in Corporate America. Now that they know, they're becoming increasingly angry.

any other significant beneficial industry, the information industry is subject to mistakes, abuse and unintended consequences that can flourish absent transparency, oversight and proper boundaries."

Sen. Russ Feingold (D-WI) focused his talk on the uses the U.S. government is making of such information and how it may impact U.S. civil liberties. (The Federal Government is a large customer of private data dossiers.) During Feingold's Committee address, he discussed his Data Mining Reporting Act, "which would require all federal agencies to report to Congress on data mining programs used to find a pattern indicating terrorist or other criminal activity and how these programs implicate the civil liberties and privacy of all Americans. The bill does not end funding for any program, does not determine the rules for use of the technology or threaten any ongoing investigation that uses data mining technology. But it would allow Congress to conduct a thorough review of the costs and benefits of the practice of data mining and make considered judgments about which programs should go forward and which should not."

It's not hard to see "too many cooks spoiling the enchiladas" syndrome here. Many of the bills in both houses of Congress are simultaneously overlapping and conflicting. It would be helpful if the issues were addressed by a united front, with a single bill to cover all bases.

From The Consumer Side

According to the FTC, there are four steps that should be taken when one becomes a victim of identify theft:

- Contact the fraud departments of any one of the three major credit bureaus (visit http://tmcnet.com/171.1 for more information) to place a fraud alert on your credit file. The fraud alert requests creditors to contact you before opening any new accounts or making any changes to your existing accounts. As soon as the credit bureau confirms your fraud alert, the other two credit bureaus will be automatically notified to place fraud alerts. Once the alert is placed, you may order a free copy of your credit report from all three major credit bureaus.
- Close the accounts that you know or believe have been tampered with or opened fraudulently. Use the I.D. Theft Affidavit (http://tmcnet.com/172.1) when disputing new unauthorized accounts.
- File a police report. Get a copy of the report to submit to your creditors and others that may require proof of the crime.
- Visit http://mcnet.com/170.1 to file a formal complaint with the FTC. The FTC maintains a database of identity theft cases used by law enforcement agencies for investigations. Filing a complaint also helps the FTC learn more about identity theft and the problems victims are having so that the agency can better assist you.

At The Enterprise Level

If you're an enterprise that collects large amounts of customer data, you have a double-whammy situation to worry about: your personal information, and the information your company keeps, which is vulnerable to theft and abuse. I asked Schneier to identify a customer-data-holding company's most important process to put in place. He indicated that, hands down, security monitoring is the most important.

"There's no other way to deal with unknown threats, dedicated attackers or employee error," said Schneier. "If you don't know what's happening on your network, you don't have a chance of stopping the bad guys."

Second to that, according to Schneier, are training and education of all company employees to understand what data theft is, what its repercussions are, and how to spot the warning signs that the company's infrastructure may be being breached. Next, understand what NOT to do.

I asked Schneier what are the biggest mistakes thus far made, particularly by the companies whose data losses have been prominent and infamous. First, he identified the fact that these companies assumed covering up the breaches, or the extent of them, was a good idea. Second, he said another part of the problem is that these companies assumed that just because they were spending some money on security, they were safe.

In the introduction to the second edition of his book, "Secrets And Lies," Schneier states that the problem a lot of companies have today is that they've become very complex. "Simply put, complexity is the worst enemy of security. As systems get more complex, they necessarily get less secure." (Visit his Web site at http://www.schneier.com for more information.)

The idea here is that no company is completely safe, nor will any company ever be. Even if your security procedures are cutting edge, expert approved and fully operational, there's always the disgruntled employee who downloads 5,000 Social Security numbers and bank account numbers before he quits his job and subsidizes his unemployment with the fruits of his labor: selling this valuable information to I.D. theft perpetrators. To address this, I asked Schneier if anything could ever be done by companies to protect against this type of employee-perpetrated data leak.

His response was not comforting. In a word: "No." **CIS**

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TMC Labs Innovation Awards 2005: Part I

The purpose of the TMC Labs Innovation Awards is not simply to recognize good products, but rather to distinguish certain products that have helped to carve out a new market niche or start a trend. This award is also about products that are a cut above those of their competitors due to unique and innovative features. This is our sixth annual installment of the TMC Labs Innovation Awards for *Customer Inter@ction Solutions*.

This year we noticed a trend of converged solutions. For example, instead of simply a traditional workforce management (WFM) solution, we discovered that many WFM applications were built to perform not only traditional scheduling but also to integrate other types of workflow into their scheduling. We saw trouble ticket management software integrated into the workflow, so agents are scheduled to perform trouble ticket resolution in addition to answering inbound calls.

Another convergence trend we saw was hosted contact center solutions that blend CRM, VoIP/telephony and advanced skills-based routing all in one unified application. We had a few winners in this genre because we feel this is unique and innovative and a trend we are likely to see more of in the foreseeable future.

TMC Labs researched each of the applications and eventually arrived at our winners' list, which consists of 26 unique and innovative companies. The winners will be published in two parts in order to accommodate our in-depth write-ups of the winning solutions. Part II will be presented in the November 2005 issue of this magazine.

Tom Keating
Chief Technology Officer, TMC;
Executive Technology Editor, TMC Labs

Editor's note: The following TMC Labs Innovation Award winners will be highlighted in Part II in the November issue of *Customer Inter@ction Solutions*.

COMPANY	PRODUCT NAME
Mitel	Mitel 6100 Contact Center Solutions
NetSuite	NetSuite
Nexidia	Nexidia Enterprise Speech Intelligence 5.0
Nortel	Web-Centric Self Service
RightNow Technologies	RightNow Voice
salesforce.com, inc.	Multiforce
Sendia Corporation	WorkSpace CRM (formerly Wireless SFA) for salesforce.com
SER Solutions, Inc.	CPS Enterprise Edition (CPS E2T)
Telephony@Work	CallCenter@nywhere
TeleTech Holdings, Inc.	TeleTech On Demand
UniPress Software	FootPrints
WebEx Communications	WebEx Sales Center
Witness Systems	Witness Systems' back-office performance management solution

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"I attended the INTERNET TELEPHONY Conference & EXPO in Miami to improve my knowledge of enterprise IP PBX solutions and to find new applications that could meet our business requirements. I believe that it was the most informative conference that I have attended on IP telephony to date. The sessions were thorough, understandable, and unbiased. There were opportunities to meet both with vendors and with other enterprises planning a switch to IP telephony. All in all, it was a very valuable conference for me."

– Pierre Simard, Ottawa, Ontario Canada

Aspect Communications Corp. (now Aspect Software)

Aspect eWorkforce Management v6.3

http://www.aspect.com

One cannot think of the call center market without considering Aspect. The company has been a market leader in the call center space for more than 20 years, and counts more than two-thirds of the Fortune 50 as customers. The latest version of Aspect (news - alert) eWorkforce Management (eWFM), v6.3, has a host of enhancements available, including features that automate schedule bidding and processing, customized performance optimization options, and a new module that lets businesses integrate outsourced and in-house workforce statistics.

eWFM has typical workforce management features such as optimizing scheduling efficiency and automating the selection and assignment of workforce schedules, vacations, holidays and other events. The solution also maximizes agent empowerment and retention by providing flexible scheduling that weighs both the organization's and the agent's needs. eWFM features powerful forecasting, scheduling and tracking, as well as optional packages that can fine-tune agent performance, empower agents and supervisors, and simplify the management of multisite contact center workforces.

eWFM fully integrates with Aspect's flagship Uniphi Suite, and includes significant new capabilities that drive workforce productivity. For instance, it includes increased agent input to scheduling, increased data and customization for analytics and the integration of outsourced and in-house staffing. The Empower module has added functionality to improve overall contact center productivity and to give agents more control over their work schedule by making bidding for schedules and vacations easier and by reducing the processing time involved. The enhanced version of Aspect Performance Optimization (APO) lets customers gather and integrate data from external applications, such as CRM and quality monitoring, so they may undertake more comprehensive analyses of their businesses and take informed action. One final enhancement in the new version that is unique is its new Encompass module, which lets businesses tie together intraday statistics from their outsourced resources with data from their in-house resources for a comprehensive picture of contact center activity.

"In the past, allocating vacations and floating holidays was a labor-intensive process, with each agent filling out bid forms and requests being processed manually," said Joseph Beery, senior vice president and CIO of America West Airlines. "Using Aspect eWorkforce Management v6.3, we reduced the amount of time it takes to process annual vacation requests from 480 man hours to just 20 — this is outstanding. We've rolled out the new solution to 1,200 agents across two sites, and we like that our employees can manage their own vacations."

AT&T

AT&T BusinessDirect eBill

http://www.att.com

Let's face it, nobody enjoys examining their phone bills to ensure accuracy. But if you think you've got it bad, just imagine that you are the telecom manager in charge of 10 disparate call center sites with millions of calls each month. How does a company make sure it isn't getting shafted by the phone company, or that there aren't fraudulent charges on the bills? Well, AT&T (news - alert) BusinessDirect eBill gives customers the ability to view their AT&T invoice details, analyze billing data by creating standard or custom reports, make inquiries and request billing adjustments online, see payment history, and pay bills online. When a customer disputes a charge online, it is automatically removed from the balance until the dispute is resolved. Disputing individual calls online is much easier than explaining the details of each disputed charge call-by-call with a phone company representative.

With eBill, customers are able to assign charges by location, branch, department, or other operating unit. Customers can also restrict access to various portions of the bill. The reporting and analysis tools allow customers to save hours each month, and help provide audit trails both financially and for Sarbanes-Oxley compliance.

eBill offers a 13-month history online, plus the option of "turning off" paper billing. Customers receive their bill electronically about five business days faster than paper. eBill is available for AT&T voice and data services.

AT&T claims that eBill is the only industry tool that offers online dispute capabilities; all others require a form that must be processed manually behind the scenes. The company also claims that eBill is the only portal that provides payment options via Financial EDI, credit/debit card, bank draft, online auto-pay, or click-to-pay.

In addition, access to eBill is integrated into AT&T BusinessDirect, the company's customer Web portal. Many competitors require multiple portals for different online tools. While AT&T actively promotes that customers receive their bills via eBill, those customers are not charged extra if they wish to receive paper or CD-ROM bills. AT&T informed us that it offers discounts to customers who select online billing and/or payment in the low-end market strata.

The reporting and analysis tools in eBill are very advanced, and are designed to save customers time in analyzing monthly bills. Many large customers must do organizational chargebacks each month for billing; eBill is able to consolidate multiple disparate bills and services for a customer, and allow for analysis within a specific bill/service, or across all as one entity. For example, a customer with a thousand locations, utilizing AT&T voice, data, IP, MIS and DSL services in varying combinations, can not only analyze one location or service, but the entire range of locations and services at the same time.

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AttachmateWRQ

Verastream

http://www.attachmate.com

One major problem experienced by nearly all organizations is disparate database systems making it difficult to see a unified view of all company data. AttachmateWRQ's Verastream solves this problem by enabling organizations to maximize the value of their existing IT investments while providing a Web-based front-end interface to all data.

The target market for Verastream (news - alert) typically includes contact center managers and their IT directors and supporting IT staff at medium-sized and large enterprises. These buyers are tasked with integrating existing business logic and data from host applications in support of new initiatives. Verastream specifically targets call centers using real-time customer-focused applications, including Web self-service applications and packaged CRM applications that need to leverage mission-critical functionality residing within legacy applications.

Verastream host integration software enables contact centers to boost productivity by combining customer information locked away on multiple legacy screens into a single, easy-to-use Web interface. AttachmateWRQ stated, "Since the majority of customer information is stored on host systems, contact center employees often have to look through as many as 100 different screens before finding the customer data needed to answer a customer query." Using Verastream, agents are able to handle calls in seconds instead of spending minutes struggling with the complexities of the legacy applications.

Contact centers leverage Verastream to provide agents and customers with simplified access to billing status, order histories, product inventory and other customer-related information.

Verastream also enables contact centers to provide customers with direct access to information via the Web, enabling them to cut caller wait times, reduce data-entry errors and improve agent productivity. "We have seen a dramatic increase in my reps' productivity, because now they don't spend so much time looking through green screens," an AT&T rep said. "They put the phone number in, and 10 to 15 seconds later, here come the results. The new efficiency allows CSRs to focus elsewhere."

Using Verastream's designer interface, users can quickly add multiple legacy databases to a single Web screen. Using a sophisticated design tool, contact center developers without specific Web development expertise can create an object model of a host application. Navigating through the host application screens, they simply click the fields that will be used in the new application, leaving the original application intact. The resulting object model can perform any transaction supported by the host application, including screen navigation, reads and writes. Full integration for a wide variety of application program interfaces, including Java, JDBC, COM, .NET, SQL, and Microsoft BizTalk Server 2004, is available. Verastream was one of the first host integration vendors to offer an adaptable Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) approach for reusing legacy logic and data in Web applications, CRM applications or portals that enable contact centers to deliver rapid results.

Citrix Online

Citrix GoToMeeting Corporate 2.0

http://www.citrix.com

Citrix (news - alert) is renowned for its remote- access solutions and its superb screen-sharing technology that compresses screen images, keystrokes and mouse movements so remarkably that it even performs well on dial-up Internet access. GoToMeeting Corporate is another innovative solution from Citrix. It's a collaborative meeting software solution that primarily targets SOHO/SMBs. However, Citrix told us that with the release of v2.0, larger businesses will adopt GoToMeeting as well.

Citrix GoToMeeting Corporate enables a collaborative online meeting via an extremely easy-to-use interface. It supports up to 200 attendees per meeting and its instant screen-sharing technology allows presenters to share PowerPoint slides, or any other PC application with all participants in real time.

The solution features bundled integration with popular applications such as e-mail and instant messaging. It also features true 24-bit color representation of the presenter's PC so all illustrations, graphic-intensive applications and pictures are shown to meeting attendees in their native high-color state. It also features excellent security with 128-bit end-to-end AES encryption. GoToMeeting also includes a free audio bridge, giving meeting participants immediate access to audio conferencing. GoToMeeting is bandwidth-adaptive to ensure that participants with different connections — even dial-up users — can connect to a meeting.

The Web-based Administration Center provides a central point of control and robust real-time usage reports to facilitate easy management. Detailed reports can be created to track meeting information and usage statistics. With version 2.0, Citrix added desktop recording and playback, specific application sharing, drawing tools and a Web services application programming interface, which allows third-party applications to integrate GoToMeeting into their solutions.

Citrix Online claims it has the industry's first "All You Can Meet" pricing model. The pricing structure offers an unlimited number of meetings of unrestricted length for a flat, monthly fee. Most competing online meeting services charge per-minute and per-user fees, plus overage charges, making GoToMeeting a very advantageous choice when evaluating and selecting an online meeting solution.

See the November issue of *Customer Inter@ction Solutions* for Part II of the TMC Labs Innovation Award winners.

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Concerto Software, Inc. (now Aspect Software)

Concerto EnsemblePro

http://www.concerto.com

An ensemble is defined as "a group, an orchestra, a collection, as a whole." Concerto Software's (news - alert) EnsemblePro fits that definition to a tee. EnsemblePro takes various important call center functions, such as skills-based routing, e-mail management, chat, fax, campaign and agent management, queuing and predictive dialing, and orchestrates them into one package.

The ACD capabilities of Concerto EnsemblePro answer calls as they enter the contact center and intelligently route them to available agents, based on the dialed number (DNIS), calling party identification (ANI), available agents, customer profile, service levels and defined business rules. The multilevel, skills-based routing functionality ensures that the customer is routed to the most appropriate agent. Concerto EnsemblePro also offers overflow routing, call re-routing based on queue statistics, abandoned call recuperation and multisite routing.

The predictive dialer functionality of Concerto EnsemblePro helps increase agent productivity through automated dialing and real-time access to customer information, while offering campaign and agent management capabilities that increase operating efficiency. An IVR/voice self-service feature is available, allowing customers to query their account information without agent assistance.

The multichannel capabilities for voice, e-mail, Web and fax allow customers to contact the organization via the medium of their choice. E-mail tools include auto-acknowledgement, greetings, signatures, e-mail templates and attachment capabilities and distribution lists and e-mail campaign tools.

Designed for contact centers with between 10 and 3,000 seats, Concerto EnsemblePro was one of the first products to unite inbound, outbound and blended multichannel contact (voice, e-mail, Web and fax), while also delivering robust queuing, routing, reporting and agent empowerment capabilities in a single solution.

One very innovative aspect of this solution is its workflow routing. For example, a typical help-desk agent handles calls, but also manages customer issues using a trouble ticket management application. The phone calls delivered to the agent can be routed, queued and prioritized; however, the service requests (SR) in the ticket management application are static, leaving the agent to manually select the next SR to work on. With Concerto EnsemblePro, the service request can be prioritized and blended across all the other interactions the agent can handle. For example, if a service request has a critical priority, it may be delivered before the next phone call. This level of workflow blending allows companies to ensure a certain level of customer service quality by applying their own customized business rules.

Contactual

Contactual OnDemand Contact Center

http://www.contactual.com

Contactual OnDemand Contact Center is a hosted contact center application that is VoIP-based (SIP) and 100 percent Web-provisioned and -configured. Contactual (news - alert) claims to be the first SIP- and VoIP-based hosted contact center (in early 2000); and the company also claims to be the first hosted VoIP contact center solution to integrate with major on-demand CRM applications, including those of Salesforce.com and NetSuite.

One of the most important features is that this solution is 100 percent Web-provisioned and Web-configured. Some of Contactual's competitors require going to data centers and configuring on site for new customers. Worse, some hosted competitors have to do a truck roll and configure on site the required customer hardware and Telco equipment.

Contactual is a very scalable and easy-to-use hosted contact center application; it claims four nines of reliability/uptime in 2005. Contactual cited an example of an insurance adjuster that has seasonal peaks and a need for catastrophe overflow — they were able to scale from one to 200 seats overnight.

Contactual features skills-based routing across e-mail, chat and phone. Voice recording/logging is also available. There is also co-browsing with navigation and form-fill synchronization, integrated to chat, standard phone and VoIP. E-mail management is very sophisticated and flexible, and includes virus and spam filtering, priority and skill presentation, keyword and address routing, complete logging, auto-responders and optional FAQ/knowledge base integration.

CustomerSat, Inc.

CustomerSat Enterprise

http://www.customersat.com

Does this sound familiar?

"Sue, do you have that survey report for me?"

"No, not yet, John. I still have to cross-reference the three database files, and then design a complex SQL query to pull the data, and finally output it to Excel so I can create a graphical chart."

Messaging data and creating meaningful reports is a very complex and often labor-intensive task that is often assigned to MIS personnel. The problem is MIS has database savvy but not necessarily marketing or reporting savvy, often resulting in a disconnect between what sales or marketing teams want and what MIS provides.

CustomerSat (news - alert) Enterprise is a hosted (ASP) survey solution, tailored to the needs of clients, that gathers customer and market feedback by multiple channels (e.g., online, phone, speech-enabled IVR and PDA), and then delivers real-time analytics on survey results without requiring MIS intervention. Such reports include frequency distributions, cross tabs, correlations, trend lines, significance testing, and other statistics-through-portal-accessible, interactive dashboards and "push" (e-mailed) reports, enabling managers throughout clients' organizations to pinpoint customer concerns and market

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opportunities.

CustomerSat also drives actions enterprisewide by e-mailing detailed alerts, and by using business rules to instantly open and assign cases, when customers' satisfaction and other scores fall below specified thresholds. Thus, one of the general benefits of the alerting and reporting is that it enables enterprises to save at-risk customers and renewal revenue before they are lost. CustomerSat Enterprise integrates with the clients' CRM and other corporate IT systems through secure Internet protocols to automate the deployment of both event-based (continuous) and relationship (periodic) surveys.

Powerful cross-tabbing and survey-results analysis (e.g., satisfaction by region) is built into the product. Similarly, you can drill-down from aggregate statistics to detailed survey responses that the statistics comprise. For example, in a frequency distribution bar chart for a particular rating question, clicking on a bar in the chart brings up a summary table of the respondents whose answers comprise that bar in the chart. Clicking again on any row in the table brings up the completed questionnaire and allowed descriptive fields of each customer.

CustomerSat claims to have invented the first 100 percent online, real-time survey cross-tabs generation (1997) and the first to create real-time trend lines of call center customer satisfaction online (1998). Additionally, you may have encountered their PopUp-on-Exit surveys for Web site visitors, which pop up when visitors exit the Web site. CustomerSat claims to be first to do this as well. One key benefit of this product is its enterprisewide survey invitation controls to ensure that customers are protected from too many survey requests from multiple divisions and departments within the enterprise. Unique real-time positioning charts are also provided to segment and position customers, products, call centers and sales regions based on satisfaction and loyalty.

Speech IVR integration is admirable through integration with third-party IVRs. CustomerSat Enterprise records and stores customers' verbatim comments as audio (.wav) files, which can be played back from within Enterprise, thereby enabling managers to hear comments in a customer's own words, tone of voice and spoken ratings. A speaker icon in Enterprise analytics indicates that a recorded comment or suggestion is available. If a customer states a very low rating, such as two out of 10, the unfavorable score can trigger e-mail alerts and cause a case to be instantly opened and assigned.

One final feature of note is the bounce e-mail management. According to CustomerSat, "When e-mailing invitations to surveys, our clients receive large volumes of bounce e-mail messages: out of office, mailbox full, user unknown, etc. Some of these messages are critical for updating their e-mail databases; others can be ignored. Managing them is labor-intensive and time-consuming."

CustomerSat Enterprise's automated bounce e-mail manager receives, interprets, categorizes and files these bounced e-mail invitations to help eliminate this labor-intensive task, raise productivity and improve e-mail list quality.

Five9, Inc.

Virtual Contact Center
http://www.five9.com

The hosted contact center model is becoming more popular as customers realize that IP communications not only are reliable, but also provide a single unified solution that combines CRM, telephony features and VoIP (define - news - alert), all in one affordable package. The Five9 Virtual Contact Center (VCC) exemplifies this model with its enablement of companies to build a comprehensive, feature-rich contact center — anywhere in the world — without any hardware, software or up-front capital expenditures.

Five9's (news - alert) on-demand service allows for easy setup and administration of at-home agent workforces, as well as single-site or distributed multisite centers to act as one, regardless of geographic location.

What makes VCC unique is that Five9 built it from the ground up to eliminate any third-party license fees and integration hassles, thus ensuring low costs. Any business with only a PC and a broadband connection can afford a comprehensive suite of applications, which include the following: ACD; predictive dialer; CRM; IVR; CTI; remote-agent capabilities; skills-based routing; recording; silent monitoring; real-time reporting; chat; and centralized management for multisite and offshore contact centers. All of Five9's advanced VoIP-based contact center functionality can be integrated with leading on-demand CRM solutions from Salesforce.com, Unipress and RightNow.

VCC is cost effective and very fast to deploy. According to Five9, customers can be up and running in hours, as opposed to the days or weeks they would have to wait for other solutions. Because it is an on-demand Web-based solution, companies can deploy "distributed call centers," in which agents work out of remote locations around the world, and calls and tasks are routed to them over the Internet. This also enables outsourcers to deploy call centers on their clients' behalf within the same country or internationally. Five9's combination of ACD (define - news - alert), IVR (define - news - alert), predictive dialing, call scripting and branching, call recording and skills-based routing make it one of the true innovators within the hosted contact center space.

IEX Corporation, a Tekelec company

TotalView Workforce Management System
http://www.iex.com

IEX (news - alert) has been in the call center space for many years, and the company has won numerous industry awards (including several from *Customer Inter@ction Solutions*). IEX's TotalView Workforce Management System enables contact centers to deliver consistent service with lower operating costs, as well as increased employee morale. It is designed to improve the scheduling and agent management processes in both single-site and multisite environments.

In fact, IEX claims it offered the first system to address the needs of a multisite environment, further claiming its multisite workforce management functionality as one of the company's core strengths. IEX has two other firsts to its credit: the first system to offer Web-based agent self-service applications; and the first to support skills-based routing in a multisite environment, with multiple call routing configurations.

The system's advanced features include skills-based and multimedia scheduling, real-time and historical adherence, intraday and performance management, enterprise reporting and data exchange, vacation and holiday planning as well as short- and long-term resource planning. TotalView offers these powerful features with a single-server architecture that enables easy system installation and maintenance.

TotalView has complete multichannel management, including inbound, outbound, e-mail, Web chat, fax, etc. Multichannel management is enabled with TotalView's Skill Block Scheduling feature. It allows centers to forecast when they will receive multichannel contacts and then schedule the optimal time for handling them, allowing centers to take advantage of cross-training and multisite management while determining the optimal windows of time for agents to devote to multichannel contact handling.

IEX continually invests in R&D to better improve the company's products. One such development is the SmartSync application, which serves as a single point of entry and enables improved data integrity for shared data elements across multiple platforms. This technology allows IEX to strengthen its offering through tight integration, such as a strong performance management and strategic planning.

Interwise

ECP Connect

http://www.interwise.com

There are several Web conferencing products on the market; and of those, many have integrated an audio phonebridge conference number. But how many take advantage of video, and how many of VoIP? Not too many. Interwise's ECP Connect is an exception, featuring voice, video, Web and data — all in one solution.

ECP Connect meets the complete conferencing and collaboration needs of an enterprise in a single, IP-based solution that allows individual users to conduct scheduled or ad-hoc voice-only or voice/Web/video conferences from any phone or personal computer. ECP Connect and Interwise's fixed-price/unlimited-usage business model, as well as its flexible deployment options, makes it easy for companies to replace their multiple conferencing and collaboration products with a single solution. With ECP Connect's fixed/unlimited pricing plan, there are no per-minute charges and no overage charges, so you know what you are paying for.

Interwise (news - alert) claims ECP Connect is the only conferencing solution to unite the data stream and voice stream into one IP-based solution. In addition, Interwise's software-only Multimedia Softbridge distributed media server architecture efficiently routes, bridges and manages integrated voice, data and video streams across multiple sites in real time. Further, it includes media services, session control, content distribution and an any-device access layer.

Additionally, ECP Connect is unique in how it optimizes the IP bandwidth; it is able to detect the end user's bandwidth (i.e., 56K vs. broadband or T1) and adjust the flow of voice, data and video so as not to overload the bandwidth going to and from the end user's PC. Interwise said, "ECP Connect breaks ground in being a software-only solution capable of being deployed on low-cost commodity servers. There is no need for expensive hardware (PBXs, etc.) to deploy this solution across an extended enterprise. Also, ECP Connect is the only Web-based conferencing solution capable of scaling to tens of thousands of concurrent users." TMC Labs has personally tested and used Interwise's ECP Connect for a Web-VoIP-video conference and we found it worked well with nearly 30 participants.

KANA

Resolution

http://www.kana.com

KANA (news - alert) Resolution is an enterprise software application aimed at increasing customer service agent productivity while also delivering cross-sell/upsell opportunities. KANA Resolution leverages knowledge and intelligence to automatically provide agents with the best information needed to resolve customer requests. In doing so, it provides three primary business benefits: increased customer satisfaction, reduced cost of service and increased revenue.

Resolution is business-rules-driven, and dynamic form-based scripts offer step-by-step guidance for all types of service calls. It also includes integrated knowledge management and automatically recommended knowledge articles to reduce research time and provide help to the agent. A unique feature is its ability to automatically present personalized offers, integrating cross-selling and upselling into the service interaction.

Kana Resolution also features e-mail integration and the ability to write data to back-end and CRM systems — two features that allow for rapid response delivery, system updates and case closure. Visual drag-and-drop design tools are available to enable users to quickly and easily model best-practice service processes.

KANA has integrated its two product offerings, KANA Response and KANA IQ, into KANA Resolution, providing agents with a more complete solution for knowledge-powered and agent-assisted service. Kana Response automates the process of responding to simple and repetitive inquiries so agents can concentrate on more complex questions and escalations. It automatically responds to customer e-mail, and routes inquiries to the appropriate customer service expert.

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To drive additional revenue in the contact center, KANA Resolution guides the agent through the customer service interaction, suggesting appropriate actions and providing cross- and upsell recommendations.

Resolution is built on a Web services architecture, which allows for easy integration with common enterprise application environments. KANA provides seven pre-built adapters, enabling integration with major call center applications, such as Siebel, Clarify, PeopleSoft and SAP. One final feature of note is the solution's research capabilities, which reduce diagnosis and research time by integrating knowledge management and offering multiple diagnostic and advice tools, including natural-language query, clarifying questions, scripts and expert modeling.

Knova

Knova SRM Suite

http://www.knova.com

Built on knowledge management and search technologies, Knova's (news - alert) service resolution management (SRM) applications optimize the resolution process across multiple service channels, including contact centers, self-service Web sites, help desk, e-mail and chat. Knova's SRM applications complement, integrate with, and enhance traditional CRM, contact center and help desk applications by providing knowledge management solutions that improve service delivery.

One interesting feature to note: Knova was the first to integrate forums into its solution. The company also claims to be the first to implement self-service wizards for customer self-resolution. Another unique capability is the Knova Field Service, which is a knowledge-empowered mobile support application that enables service professionals to quickly resolve customer issues on site.

One of the truly powerful aspects of Knova is its superb search engine, featuring enhanced natural-language processing and contextual proximity indexing, resulting in much more accurate search results and saved time and effort for agents. In addition, Knova offers enhanced content management with new authoring and content management features that support personalization and compliance goals.

Microsoft Corp.

Microsoft Speech Server 2004 R2

http://www.microsoft.com

Microsoft (news - alert) Speech Server (MSS) is a Web-based, speech-enabled interactive voice response (IVR) and multimodal application solutions platform designed for enterprises that want to build applications with speech capabilities. MSS is a Speech Application Language Tags (SALT)-based platform, and uses an ASP.NET-based Web server as the application server. Already supporting English, MSS R2 adds French and Spanish recognition, as well as more efficient ASR and TTS engines. Besides IVR applications, you can also develop other types of applications, such as the ability to read your e-mail using TTS. In fact, using MMS you can deploy DTMF (touch-tone) applications, speech-enabled telephony applications, and multimodal (mixed speech/ visual) applications.

The two main core components included with MSS are the Telephony Application Services (TAS) and Speech Engine Services (SES), including automatic speech recognition (ASR), text-to-speech (TTS) and prompt manager. MSS 2004 R2 can now be deployed in an all-in-one server configuration. In addition, customers can benefit from expanded telephony boards coverage and VoIP support for MSS 2004 R2 including Aculab, Brooktrout Inc., Eicon Networks and Vail Systems Inc. According to Microsoft, "Built on .NET technologies, MSS is the first product in its class to seamlessly integrate Web technologies, speech processing services and telephony capabilities into one platform that enables companies to leverage existing technology investments."

Microsoft aims to have the Microsoft Speech Platform permit speech-enabled access to applications not only from telephones and cell phones, but also from handheld devices such as PDAs, smart phones and tablet PCs. A solution like this one, which can help further enhance self-service capabilities by leveraging speech-recognition while simultaneously enabling other types of touch points, will go a long way toward enhancing customer service and customer loyalty. **CIS**

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ScanSoft, Nuance Shareholders Approve Merger

ScanSoft, Inc. (news - alert) and **Nuance Communications, Inc.** (news - alert)have announced that their respective shareholders have voted in favor of the proposed merger of Nuance with ScanSoft, and all other proposals, at their respective special meetings. Of the outstanding ScanSoft shares voted, approximately 98 percent were voted in favor of the transaction; and of the outstanding Nuance shares voted, approximately 99 percent were voted in favor of the transaction.

Upon closing the transaction, Nuance shareholders will receive 0.77 shares of ScanSoft common stock, and $2.20 of cash, for each share of Nuance common stock that they own. The transaction closed in September.

The ScanSoft and Nuance merger was forged to bring together what the company calls “the industry’s most comprehensive portfolio of speech applications, technologies and expertise, which will enable customers to effectively deploy innovative speech-based solutions.” The combined organization is expected to have the technical resources and intellectual property required to develop new and innovative speech solutions to deliver enhanced value to customers.

The company stated that, “With leading technology, a premier partner network and an organization dedicated to speech, the company will be able to compete more effectively in new and expanding markets and provide value for its most important stakeholders — its customers, partners, investors and employees.”

http://www.nuance.com, http://www.scansoft.com

Definition Du Jour

Voice Portal

A “window” into Web-based content that allows users to search for information by speaking the commands via natural language. Voice portals allow the telephone to be used as a means of accessing the Internet or intranets, rather than just the PC.

> “Is sloppiness in speech caused by ignorance or apathy? I don’t know and I don’t care.”
>
> *— William Safire (1929 -), American journalist, speechwriter, historian, novelist, lexicographer*

SpeechSwitch Receives Patent For Name Dialer

SpeechSwitch, Inc., (news - alert) a provider of speech recognition technology, recently announced that United States Patent 6,940,951 was issued on September 6, 2005, for a patent for a Speech-Enabled Automatic Telephone Dialer Name Dialer utilizing a Telephone Application Programming Interface (TAPI). SpeechSwitch previously was a wholly owned subsidiary of **iVoice, Inc.** (news - alert) prior to the spinoff from iVoice. The spinoff was completed in August 2005 as a special stock dividend distribution to iVoice shareholders.

This patent seeks to protect the use of the Name Dialer utilizing a Telephone Application Programming Interface (TAPI). The use of TAPI allows SpeechSwitch to integrate into different telephone PBX systems, eliminating the need for additional external hardware. Each phone system hardware provider provides a specific software driver that interfaces directly with the SpeechSwitch Name Dialer.

SpeechSwitch CEO Bruce Knef said, “This will be our third speech recognition patent award. These patents are centrally important to SpeechSwitch, not only to preserve our technology, but also to influence knowledge in the marketplace. This patent approval marks a substantial achievement in product development for our technical staff.”

The Name Dialer is an automatic phone dialing system that imports the necessary contact information for dialing (names and phone numbers) from almost any PIM or contact manager, including Microsoft Outlook, ACT! and Goldmine. The user simply speaks the name of the person listed in their contact list and through a TAPI, the Name Dialer sends a signal to the PBX to initiate dialing automatically.

http://www.ivoice.com

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Free Webinar

A Tale of a Contact Center Turnaround

New On-Demand, Converged Business Platform Drives Turnaround and Growth

Thursday, October 20, 2005 – 2:00 p.m. ET

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Chris Moreira, VP of Product Management, M1 Global

Presenter

Bill Hadel, VP of Sales, CustomerLinx

Presenter

Nadji Tehrani, CEO, Technology Marketing Corp.

Presenter

Rich Tehrani, President, Technology Marketing Corp.

Nadji Tehrani, TMC's Executive Group Publisher, sets the stage by outlining why contact centers need to adopt new technologies NOW, not simply to compete — but to survive.

CustomerLinx, a leading customer care outsourcer, will then describe how they were trapped in a downward spiral of aging, high-cost technologies and unhappy clients; and how — without CAPEX — they upgraded to an IP-based, process-driven platform, reduced technology operating cost by 53%, and won significant new business.

In this FREE Webinar you will learn:

- Nadji Tehrani's "action items" for contact centers to gain a competitive advantage and win against offshore providers.
- How to transition to an IP-based platform and incorporate advanced capabilities (i.e., voice self-service, collaboration, etc.) without CAPEX.
- How a process-driven interaction management platform improves control, integration, visibility and flexibility.
- How M1's platform has given CustomerLinx an edge over other customer care providers in sales opportunities.
- The unique benefits and capabilities of M1's On Demand Converged Business Platform.

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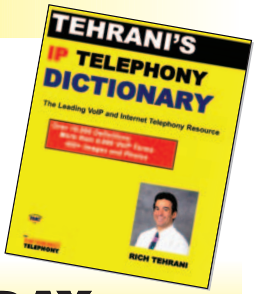

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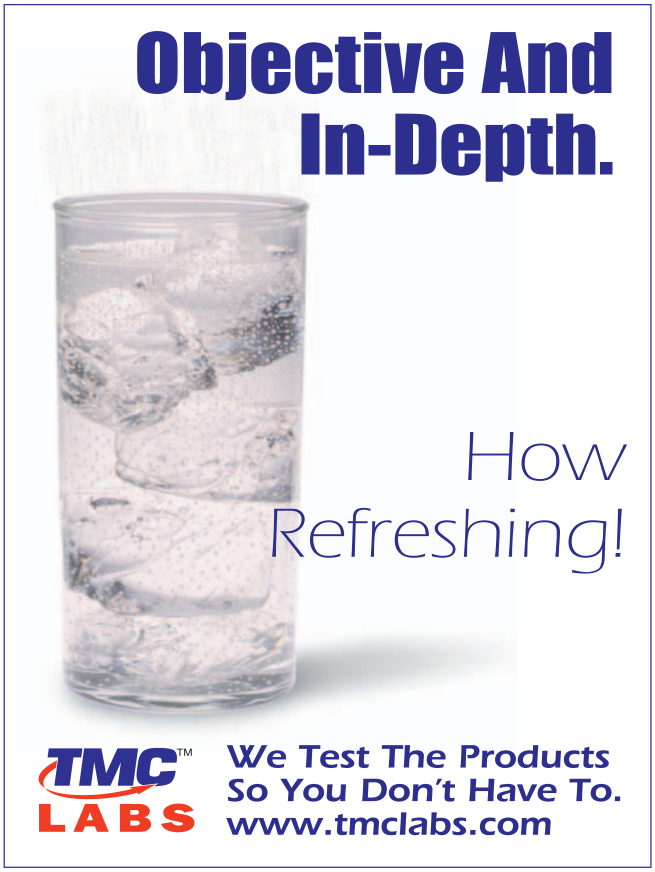
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By Tracey E. Schelmetic
Editorial Director, Customer Inter@ction Solutions

You Might Be A Spammer If...

It occurs to me that many people don't understand the difference between e-mail marketing and spam. This month's column was created as a tool to help e-mail marketers understand whether their business practices lie in the perfectly legal realm of e-business, or if they've crossed the line into e-mail of the canned, processed meat variety.

This public service announcement has been paid for by a certain incredibly angry business editor who often comes back to the office after a week's vacation to find her inbox in excess of 1,500 spam messages. She shall, of course, remain nameless.

You might be a spammer if:

- You've ever had to change the spelling of the product you sell, in order to get around e-mail filters. For example, if you sell "stox" instead of "stocks," you're a spammer.
- The product you sell purportedly raises, smoothes, enlarges, reduces, shrinks, softens, hardens and either grows or eliminates hair on any part of the human body.
- The only meaning the words "opt out" have for you is the approach you take to paying your federal income taxes.
- If it doesn't bother you in the slightest that half the individuals receiving your "weekend V1agra" spam don't have the right plumbing for it anyway.
- If the words "farmyard animals" appear in any portion of your message.
- If you have to route your "marketing opportunities" through 27 different global nodes, many in countries no one has ever heard of, to avoid detection.
- If you're a three-person company but have enough telecommunications and Internet equipment to power Norway.
- If you're forced to keep all of your company's equipment and assets, save a few paperclips and a pencil sharpener, in the Cayman Islands.
- If your ISP has quietly engaged hit men to eliminate you, and your own mother has contributed to the funds for the contract.
- If, before you go on vacation, you have to rack your brain to find a country that won't arrest you the moment you set foot in the airport.
- The word "harvest" no longer conjures up images of fall festivals, pumpkin pie, Indian corn and apples, but voracious software that combs the Internet looking for live victims.
- You've ever sent e-mail to the following addresses: aaaaaa@aol.com, aaaaab@aol.com and aaaaac@aol.com.
- Your blood ran cold when you read about the Russian Spam King who was bludgeoned to death in his own apartment in July, and the news was put in the "Celebrations" section of the local newspaper.
- If your "Men in Black" come from the Federal Trade Commission and not the CIA.
- Finally, you might be a spammer if you're convicted, put in jail, and even the serial killers won't talk to you in the exercise yard. **CIS**

Contact the author at tschelmetic@tmcnet.com.

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