TMC®

CUSTOMER INTER@CTION Solutions®

September 2005 • Vol. 24/No. 3
www.cismag.com

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

Convergys:

A Global Full-Service Solutions Provider

An Exclusive Interview With
Convergys' John C. (Jack) Freker

Also In This Issue:

- CRM: Providing A Unified View Of Your Customers
- The Boardroom Report With The Opus Group
- Headset Technologies & Roundup
- Technology Highlights Looks At IEX TotalView WFM

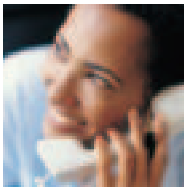
October 24-27, 2005
Los Angeles Convention Center
TMC
INTERNET
TELEPHONY®
CONFERENCE & EXPO
www.itexpo.com

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

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

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

west®



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

Introducing...

THE BOARDROOM REPORT™

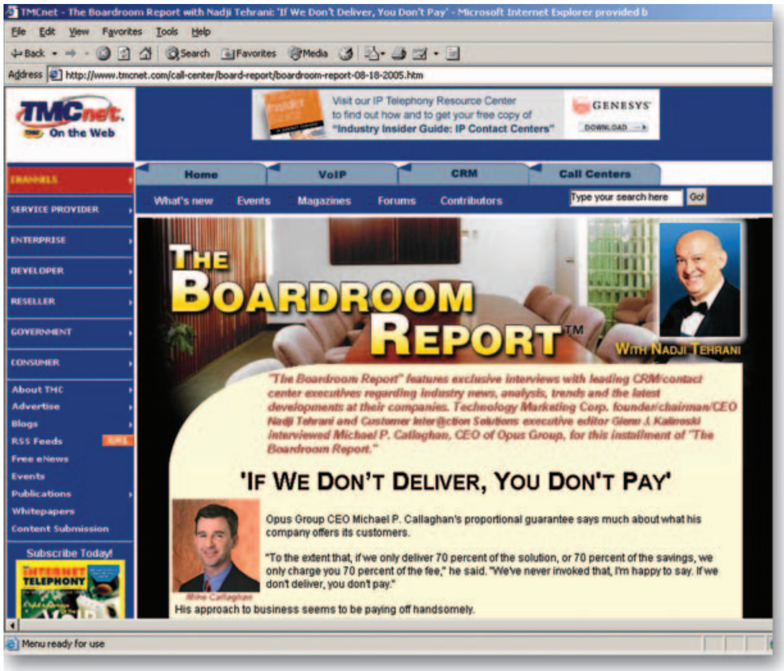
The CRM, Customer Interaction And Call Center Industry's View From The Top

Customer Inter@ction Solutions introduces the industry's first in-depth and exclusive CEO-to-CEO series to bring you the inside report, the untold stories and best-kept secrets of our industry's greatest visionaries.

As you read this editorial, I am sure you will agree with me that the information that comes from the interviews with the best minds of the CRM/contact center industry is truly invaluable and priceless.

In 2006, *Customer Inter@ction Solutions®* magazine will be celebrating **25 years** of pioneering and editorial excellence while establishing the foundation for what is now the multibillion-dollar customer interaction, contact center and CRM industry.

The nearly quarter of a century of intimate contact and working together with industry leaders has helped me get a clear vision of what the true needs are and where the industry is going. This unique and exclusive opportunity has been instrumental in laying the foundation of our great industry.



TMCnet - The Boardroom Report with Nadji Tehrani: 'If We Don't Deliver, You Don't Pay' - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided b

Address: http://www.tmcnet.com/call-center/board-report/boardroom-report-08-18-2005.htm

Visit our IP Telephony Resource Center to find out how and to get your free copy of "Industry Insider Guide: IP Contact Centers"

"The Boardroom Report" features exclusive interviews with leading CRM/contact center executives regarding industry news, analysis, trends and the latest developments at their companies. Technology Marketing Corp. founder/chairman/CEO Nadji Tehrani and Customer Inter@ction Solutions executive editor Glenn J. Kalinoski interviewed Michael P. Callaghan, CEO of Opus Group, for this installment of "The Boardroom Report."

'IF WE DON'T DELIVER, YOU DON'T PAY'

Opus Group CEO Michael P. Callaghan's proportional guarantee says much about what his company offers its customers.

"To the extent that, if we only deliver 70 percent of the solution, or 70 percent of the savings, we only charge you 70 percent of the fee," he said. "We've never invoked that, I'm happy to say. If we don't deliver, you don't pay."

Mike Callaghan

His approach to business seems to be paying off handsomely.

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Back Search Favorites Media
TMCnet. On the Web
GENESYS
DOWNLOAD
Home
VoIP
CRM
Call Centers
What's new
Events
Magazines
Forums
Contributors
Type your search here
Go!
CHANNELS
SERVICE PROVIDER
ENTERPRISE
DEVELOPER
RESELLER
GOVERNMENT
CONSUMER
About TMC
Advertise
Blogs
RSS Feeds
Free eNews
Events
Publications
Whitepapers
Content Submission
Subscribe Today!
INTERNET TELEPHONY
THE BOARDROOM REPORT™
WITH NADJI TEHRANI
Menu ready for use

Our long-established and cherished relationships with industry leaders have uniquely qualified us to call upon our exclusive contacts, CEO to CEO, to get the true facts and figures about the state of our industry from the boardroom vantage point.

Our Paramount Responsibility

As **THE** leading and preeminent industry publication since 1982, it is our paramount responsibility to recognize our industry leaders and share their immense wisdom and vision with our valued readers both online (TMCnet.com) as well as in the pages of *Customer Inter@ction Solutions®* magazine.

"Everybody must move fast and on a broad basis or be swept away."

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

Incoming noise reduction technology so revolutionary Plantronics would rather you didn't hear about it

Digital) Clear) Efficient)

www.gnnetcom.com

The new GN 8210 amplifier shown with a GN 2100 headset.

Introducing the first telephone amplifier to offer incoming noise reduction.

Let's face it, people talk on the phone in some pretty noisy places. Airports, traffic jams, crowded offices—the background noise can easily drown out a caller's voice and reduce agent productivity. That's why GN Netcom developed the GN 8210, a telephone amplifier that digitally reduces incoming background noise. Combine that with any GN Netcom noise-canceling headset, and you've got the only system to offer crystal-clear sound on both the incoming and outgoing signal.

Hear a demonstration at
www.gnnetcom.com/8210demo/ccm
or call us at **866-272-0805**.

GN Netcom

The Source For Infinite Wisdom And Clear Vision

Never before in my publishing career have I had the pleasure of working regularly and learning so much invaluable wisdom from our industry's greatest CEOs from small and large companies.

> **"Too much effort is spent today on becoming bigger and too little effort is spent on becoming better."**

Infinite Wisdom Displayed!

To prove the point, I would like to share with you a few excerpts from an interview we recently conducted with Thomas Nies, President and CEO of Cincinnati-based Cincom Systems, Inc.

Cincom Systems, Inc. (news - alert) has shown a spectacular growth in areas such as hosting and high-tech software services.

Put The Power Of VoIP In Your Contact Center…

Join us in Los Angeles and let us learn from each other! **Attend the INTERNET TELEPHONY Conference & EXPO, the world's largest VoIP event, which returns to Los Angeles in October.**

TMC's leading VoIP conference returns to Los Angeles at the Los Angeles Convention Center from October 24-27, 2005.

Dynamic Keynoters!

This year's event is highlighted by keynote speeches by **Carly Fiorina**, former CEO of Hewlett-Packard and an instrumental figure in AT&T's spin-off of Lucent Technologies in the late 1990s; and **Michael Powell**, former chairman of the FCC.

Other keynote speakers include top executives from an outstanding list of companies: **Yahoo!**, **AOL**, **Skype**, **Microsoft**, **Cisco Systems**, **Nortel**, **Lucent Technologies**, **NEC**, **Inter-Tel**, **Toshiba**, **Siemens**, **Juniper Networks**, **Vonexus**, **Aculab**, **Interactive Intelligence**, **Deloitte & Touche**, **xG Technology** and **Digium**.

Comprehensive Conference Program

Like all TMC events, the guaranteed conference program is also the most outstanding you'll find at any VoIP event. The IP Contact Center Summit track returns to educate call center executives how to best transition your business to IP contact centers. Presenting companies include: Aspect Communications, MCI, EADS Telecom, SIVOX, Interactive Intelligence, Telephony@Work, CosmoCom, NICE Systems, Nuance Communications, Avaya, Genesys, Nortel, Nuasis and 3Com.

Other important tracks for contact center executives include Enterprise/Government Solutions; Conferencing & Collaboration Summit; Large Enterprise VoIP Deployment Workshop; Mobility Summit; and TMC University's IP-PBX Certification courses.

Every paid conference registration at the event is guaranteed. If you do not feel the sessions you attended made you better equipped to tackle your VoIP project, stop by the registration at the show and we'll issue you a free pass to come back to any TMC event.

This year's show also features many valuable special attractions which are free to all attendees. These include:

FREE Learning Centers on the Exhibit Floor. These commercial-free zones allow attendees to see demos and ask questions without the usual sales pressure of an exhibit booth. There are learning centers covering SIP Interoperability, WiFi Telephony, Open Source and Triple Play.

FREE Panel Discussions. Always among the most popular sessions at the conference, these general sessions present the perspectives and opinions of VoIP manufacturers in a moderated panel format. In Los Angeles, both sessions are of particular interest to contact center executives choosing solutions:

- The Future of IP Telephony session offers insight into which VoIP solutions will stand the test of time. Sample questions the panel will address are: Will hosted solutions outpace premise-based? and What new mobility options will VoIP spawn?
- The Battle for the Enterprise/SMB session will pit manufacturers serving these markets against each other, offering them the opportunity to explain why their solution is better than those of their competitors. Choosing the correct IP-PBX for your call center is no small challenge. In some instances, strong legacy support will be critical. In others, standards compliance will be crucial. In other situations, branch office support at a low cost or centralized management features will be important to consider. Will the new IP-PBX work well with your current infrastructure? Do you need to rip it out and rebuild? What about support, security and service? This panel will strive to answer important questions from the audience and give you a unique perspective on what items to consider before selecting a solution that is right for your call center.

More than 200 exhibitors are expected to participate in the EXPO over three days. I invite you to visit http://www.itexpo.com for complete details about the event. You can also quickly and easily register on the Web site.

I hope to welcome you in L.A.

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

Insight = happy customers

He was just interrupted at dinner

This man's wireless company had been trying to contact him for weeks. He was one of their key customers and they were calling to offer him the best rates in the market. Enter Concerto Software: our contact center technology optimizes service initiatives with features that give your best customers more options – like enabling this man to specify where, when and how it would be convenient for him to be contacted. He did. His provider called him at the specified time, just as he was finishing his meal. The result? A little dinnertime dialog that gave him a renewed sense of loyalty to the company who clearly appreciates his business.

Concerto Software brings 30 years of insight into proactive service initiatives that keep your best customers happy. After all, isn't that what customer contact is all about?

CONCERTO SOFTWARE

CONTACT CENTER SOLUTIONS

Learn how we can help
you find customers
and keep them happy.
www.concerto.com

“The organizations of the future that will be most successful ... will also be able to transform their emphasis on information; innovation, interaction and integration.”

Here are the informative excerpts:
“Our customers ask:

- How do I get more customers?
- How do I improve my customer relationships?
- How do we interact better?
- How do I gain competitive advantage through marketing my products and services through the various means available to me?”

On Differentiation

“Here is how we differentiate ourselves: simplification of the business through innovation. We want to innovate all kinds of new technologies to simplify interaction within the company and externally to partners, allies, customers and suppliers; all designed to bring down costs and to increase exposure and opportunities to satisfy customers.”

“We believe in simplification through innovation.”

Challenges Faced By Our Company

“Our ability to grow our knowledge or capability or skill, our capacity to grow on an incremental basis. But the challenge is the information available on the nature of the competition, all of this is growing on an exponential basis. Every year, even though we become stronger, the gaps between the competition, the challenges and what we are able to do increase.”

“We are increasingly less informed of all information available. Every year we become more uniformed. That gap between what the challenges are today and what we are capable of doing increases for every company, and we are no exception.”

“In the world of extreme competition: **Everybody must move fast and on a broad basis or be swept away. “**

Topple Rate

“A point at which companies lose their leadership position in their industry. Measuring how rapidly a company moves from the top 20 percent of their industry and out of it in a five-year period. The topple rate in 1974 was about 7-8 percent. But today that rate is about 33 percent. Even well established leadership companies can be swept away very, very fast now. This is good news for upstart companies and bad news for entrenched competitors since they can’t move as quickly to move their product line. I expect in another few years, the topple rate will be as high as 50 percent. Rich companies must be able to defend their markets and grow their markets.”

“Too much effort is spent today on becoming bigger and too little effort is spent on becoming better.”

Practical Solution?

“Companies need to think more about the transformation of their business — moving from what they’re currently doing to transform themselves to become something radically different in the future, not only to better protect the markets they’re in and compete where they are but also to seek out and grow new markets.”

“The organizations of the future that will be most successful ... will also be able to transform their emphasis on information; innovation, interaction and integration.”

“India and China are not interested in moving their nations forward on the back of low-cost labor (it is a temporary advantage). They are improving their businesses — unless we use simplification, innovation, integration and the best technology, we can’t compete at all. If we don’t do it, we are dead in the water.”

“Our goal for every $1 invested with us in our software systems: customers will achieve a return on their investment of at least $10.”

Hopefully, these far-reaching and inspirational comments will lead you to visit TMCnet.com regularly and read *Customer Inter@ction Solutions®* magazine and the future Boardroom Reports at http://www.tmcnet.com/boardroom/.

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

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

Announcing Our Newly Redesigned Web Site:

I urge you to visit TMCnet.com, which is the **world’s No. 1 communications and technology Web site.*** No other Web site covers quality information on CRM, contact centers and teleservices, as well as VoIP, like TMCnet.com. This claim has been verified by WebTrends and by being No. 1 in 35 relevant search terms on Google. Last, but not least, TMCnet.com has been ranked in the top one percent among all Web sites worldwide based on traffic.* Indeed, we are very proud and humbled!

**Sources: Alexa.com ranking and WebTrends*

The Boardroom Report is Available Weekly Online at www.TMCnet.com/boardroom/ and monthly in Customer Inter@ction Solutions® Magazine.

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

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

Are you thinking
how profitable it could be to get
personal with each of your customers?

We're doing it millions
of times a day.

Outsourcing. Software Solutions. Consulting.

We're turning customer interaction into customer satisfaction worldwide. Whether through our own contact centers or yours, our experience in customer care operations improves customer experience and sales, and reduces complaints and costs. In fact, for one major corporation, we increased customer loyalty by 50%. To see what we can do for you, contact us.

1-800-344-3000 or visit convergys.com

CONVERGYS
Out*thinking*. Out*doing*.

©2005 Convergys Corporation. The Convergys logo and Out*thinking*. Out*doing*. are trademarks of Convergys Corporation.

TMC
CUSTOMER INTER@CTION Solutions®
September 2005

In This Issue

44

Customer Inter@ction Solutions conducts an exclusive interview with John C. (Jack) Freker, president of the Customer Management Group at Convergys Corporation.

20&22

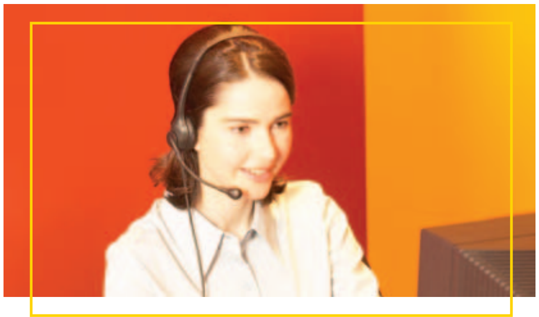
In the Executive Spotlight this month are TELUS Communications Inc.'s Joe Natale, President of TELUS Business Solutions; and Lou Boudreau, CTO of Verint Systems Contact Center Solutions.

18

The Boardroom Report With Nadji Tehrani and Opus Group CEO Michael Callaghan.

48

Apptera tells you how to stop putting Band-Aids on your inbound call center.



70

Do you have "blue people" or "green people" in your call center? Select International tells you how to find out.

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

When choosing a HOSTED CRM PROVIDER,

BUSINESS IMPACT COUNTS.

	Deployment	Adoption	Support	Business Impact	Vendor	Overall*
Siebel CRM OnDemand	●	◕	●	◕	◕	**4.4**
Salesforce.com	●	◔	●	◑	◑	3.6

Source: Nucleus Research, May 2005

**Ratings: High=5 to Low=0*

Simply put, results are everything. That's why in a recent independent analysis, customers rated Siebel CRM OnDemand #1 in the all-important category of business impact. Not to mention #1 overall. But with 11 years of CRM expertise working with 3.2 million live users from the world's most customer-driven companies, that shouldn't really come as a surprise.

SIEBEL®

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE CUSTOMER™

Call **1-866-906-7878** or visit us at **www.crmondemand.com** to see how our top-rated expertise will impact your business.

©2005 Siebel Systems, Inc. All rights reserved. Siebel, the Siebel logo, Siebel CRM OnDemand, and " IT'S ALL ABOUT THE CUSTOMER" are trademarks of Siebel Systems, Inc. and may be registered in certain jurisdictions. Other marks belong to their respective owners.

TMC CUSTOMER INTER@CTION Solutions®
September 2005 Volume 24/ Number 3

Contents

DEPARTMENTS

2 Publisher's Outlook
By Nadji Tehrani, Founder, Chairman & CEO, Technology Marketing Corp.

8 In This Issue

14 High Priority!
By Rich Tehrani, Group Editor-in-Chief, Technology Marketing Corp.

18 The Boardroom Report
Nadji Tehrani interviews Mike Callaghan, CEO of Opus Group

20 Executive Spotlights
Executive Spotlight talks with Lou Boudreau, CTO of Verint System Contact Center Solutions; and TELUS Communications Inc.'s Joe Natale, President of TELUS Business Solutions.

24 Recommended Vendors List

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

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

74 The Integrated Marketplace™

75 Identification Statement

75 Advertising Index

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

INNOVATIVE IDEAS FROM THE MULTIMEDIA CONTACT CENTER EXPERTS:

A SPECIAL EDITORIAL SERIES SPONSORED BY INTERACTIVE INTELLIGENCE

39 Optimizing Agents In An E-Services Environment: As Online Services Gain Momentum, Agents Play A More Critical Role Than Ever
By Peggy Gritt, Interactive Intelligence

41 Customer Service, Buffet-Style
By David R. Butcher, Assistant Editor, Customer Inter@ction Solutions

SPECIAL FOCUS

44 Convergys: From Outsource Provider To Global Full-Service Outsourced Solutions Provider
By Glenn J. Kalinoski, Executive Editor, Customer Inter@ction Solutions
Convergys President Jack Freker has a clear message for those in the call center industry who believe off-shoring will solve every problem.

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

48 Optimizing The Inbound Phone Channel To Better Reach Your Customers
By Dave Holsinger, Apptera
Chances are your company views customer interactions with your inbound phone channel as a matter of reducing pain, rather than increasing gain. Inbound call centers can be expensive to maintain, and automation is often applied as a "Band-Aid" to keep certain crucial transactions under control, including call routing and basic customer information requests.

66

52 Integration: The Recipe For Success
By Jonathan Tang, Salesnet
Many companies are striving for a 360-degree view of their customers, a critical capability if an organization is going to effectively manage these relationships and achieve its goals. The problem is that this view is not easily achieved because, in most cases, it is fragmented across multiple applications and databases from different departments within the organization.

54 Celebrating Customer Service Week
By David R. Butcher, Assistant Editor, Customer Inter@ction Solutions
Customer Service Week was officially recognized by the United States Congress as a nation-wide celebration in 1992. It is held each year during the first week in October, taking place this year Oct. 3-7.

INNOVATIVE IDEAS FROM THE NEXT-GEN CONTACT CENTER EXPERTS:

A SPECIAL EDITORIAL SERIES SPONSORED BY TELEPHONY@WORK

56 IP Contact Center Technology: Eliminating The Risks (Part VIII)
By Eli Borodow, Telephony@Work, Mike Betzer, Siebel Systems and Kevin Hayden, TELUS Communications Inc.

58 Customer Loyalty: An Unscientific Experiment
By Tracey E. Schelmetic, Editorial Director, Customer Inter@ction Solutions

OUTSOURCING TELESERVICES

60 Keeping Pace With Corporate Strategies: Taking Your Customer Care Global
By Amy S. Abrams, Telerx
As a customer care professional, you're not only charged with delivering best-in-class service domestically, you're now responsible for globalizing your customer care operation. Where do you begin?

INNOVATIVE IDEAS FROM THE TELESERVICES EXPERTS:

A SPECIAL EDITORIAL SERIES SPONSORED BY WEST CORPORATION

64 Hosted Virtual ACD: Get More From Your Contact Center Without A Large Technology Investment
By West Corporation

Go To Ad Index

SUCCESS? *Why,* it's *just* a WISH away.

If you think you can succeed with any old contact center solution, you're in for a very big surprise. You need Aspect. Our integrated suite of next-generation applications lets you meet everyone's demands.

ASPECT®

Aspect®Uniphi Suite is the complete converged contact center—with a full set of vital applications you can centrally manage. Plus, Uniphi Suite is platform-independent, built on open standards, and extensible. Making it easier than ever to control your resources, and delight your customers. So stop wishing and start succeeding. Get your ***FREE WHITE PAPER "EFFICIENCY IS NOT ENOUGH" BY CALLING 1-888-412-7728 OR VISITING WWW.ASPECT.COM/GO/SUCCESS***

Aspect and the Aspect logo are trademarks and/or service marks of Aspect Communications Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. ©2005 Aspect Communications Corporation All rights reserved

Contents

65 Hosted Delivery, The "Car Leasing" Of The Technology World
By Tracey E. Schelmetic, Editorial Director, Customer Inter@ction Solutions

CONTACT CENTER TECHNOLOGY

66 Speaking Softly In Your Ear: The Annual Headset Roundup
By David R. Butcher, Assistant Editor, Customer Inter@ction Solutions
Headsets, like other considered "trivialities" in the call center and enterprise business, are so very important but so often overlooked in their importance. Sifting through the available options to find the headsets that best fit your company is a difficult but necessary matter.

MANAGEMENT SCOPE

70 Profile For Success: What Makes A Good Call Center Agent?
By Luke McNally, Select International's Contact Center Division
For everyone in call center management who regularly has the opportunity to walk the floor and scan the rows of faces, you have no doubt pondered the questions at the heart of employee retention: Why do certain call center agents excel in this environment while others fail?

SPEECH-WORLD

72 Speech-World News & Definitions

TMCNET.COM ONLINE EXCLUSIVES

German Efficiency In Workforce Management

By Tracey E. Schelmetic, Editorial Director, Customer Inter@ction Solutions
German call center software company InVision Software has announced that it will shortly introduce its Multi-Activity Scheduling solution. It's a workforce management solution designed specifically to allow multiskill contact centers to drive efficiency improvements using less time and effort. Read the full article at http://tmcnet.com/165.1

E-Commerce, Messaging And Customer Assistance: Customer Messaging Is Not Your Father's Voice Mailbox!

By Art Rosenberg, *The Unified-View*
Business communications cover three flavors of person-to-person contacts — intra-enterprise, inter-enterprise and, most sensitive for enterprise revenues, customer contacts. In all three areas, the telephone and the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) have been the traditional common denominator for "real-time" contacts using natural, conversational speech to transact all forms of business between people. Read the full article at http://tmcnet.com/166.1

VoIP: The Most Logical Parenting Tool To Monitor Children

By Rich Tehrani, TMCnet Technology Analysis Columnist
Motorola chairman Edward Zander recently announced that Motorola will release a new cell phone allowing parents to monitor children's whereabouts as well as offering filtering software. I got to thinking that this makes a good deal of sense for parents who want kids to have the security and safety features of a cell phone but on the other hand feel that the child is given too much freedom at too early an age and needs to be checked up on from time to time. Read the full article at http://tmcnet.com/169.1

Career Path Track Keeps Call Center Employees

By David Sims, TMCnet CRM Alert Columnist
It's a truism that high turnover is a call center's biggest headache: reach a paw into the river of statistics and smack out as many as you please — there are entire companies and a cottage industry devoted solely to lowering call center turnover. Consultants advertise their expertise in helping pick the sort of agent who'll stay around longer. Read the full article at http://tmcnet.com/167.1

The Concerto/Aspect Entity's Decision To Retain The Aspect Name

By Tracey E. Schelmetic, Editorial Director, Customer Interaction Solutions
I frequently run into call center managers and supervisors who treat their Aspect ACDs as a kind of religion. Read the full article at http://tmcnet.com/168.1

CUSTOMER INTER@CTION Solutions®

Executive Group Publisher
Nadji Tehrani (ntehrani@tmcnet.com)

Group Publisher
Richard Tehrani (rtehrani@tmcnet.com)

Editorial
203-852-6800 (cispress@tmcnet.com)
Editorial Director, Tracey E. Schelmetic
Executive Editor, Glenn J. Kalinoski
Assistant Editor, David R. Butcher

TMC™ Labs
203-852-6800 (tmclabs@tmcnet.com)
Executive Technology Editor/CTO/VP, Tom Keating

Art
203-852-6800 (cisart@tmcnet.com)
Senior Art Director, Lisa D. Morris
Art Director, Alan Urkawich

Executive Officers:
Nadji Tehrani, *Chairman and CEO*
Richard Tehrani, *President*

To Subscribe, Call: 203-852-6800

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

Circulation Director, Shirley Russo (srusso@tmcnet.com)

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

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

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

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

Advertising Sales: 203-852-6800

Kevin J. Noonan, ext. 124 (knoonan@tmcnet.com)
Executive Director, Business Development

Allan Brown, ext. 278 (abrown@tmcnet.com)
Midwestern, Texas Regional Manager

Karl Sundstrom, ext. 119 (ksundstrom@tmcnet.com)
Western, International Regional Manager

Exhibit Sales: 203-852-6800

Dave Rodriguez, ext. 146 (drodriguez@tmcnet.com)
Vice President of Publications and Conferences

Online Advertising & Newsletter Sponsorship

Dave Rodriguez, ext. 146 (drodriguez@tmcnet.com)
Vice President of Publications and Conferences

Kevin J. Noonan, ext. 124 (knoonan@tmcnet.com)
Executive Director, Business Development

Karl A. Sundstrom, ext. 119 (ksundstrom@tmcnet.com)
Global Accounts Manager

Editorial Offices are located at
One Technology Plaza, Norwalk, CT 06854 U.S.A.
Customer Service: for all customer service matters,
call 203-852-6800.

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

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

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

A Technology Marketing Publication

One Technology Plaza,
Norwalk, CT 06854 U.S.A.
Fax#: 203-853-2845
Sales Dept. Fax#: 203-838-4070

Go To Ad Index

With Monet AnyWhere,™ this is your window of opportunity.

Introducing all the tools you need to manage almost any number of agents. At any call center. AnyWhere in the world.

Monet AnyWhere delivers all the agent scheduling advantages that Monet offers. Scheduling by agent performance and experience. Customized shifts and seasonal schedules. Scenario testing. And for the first time, Monet AnyWhere makes it possible to manage all your call centers, all over the world, in real time.

If that's not a big enough window of opportunity, Monet AnyWhere also adds agent analytics and web-based reporting and charting. Capabilities easily integrated with your existing data gathering systems. Just as Monet easily integrates with your existing ACDs. So you can count on the rapid ROI call centers all over the world have already realized.

Monet AnyWhere gives you everything you need to operate offshore, homeshore and anywhere in between. Visit **www.monetanywhere.com** to learn more. Or, call 310-207-6800 and we'll create an online call center management demonstration customized for your global enterprise.

TMC LABS Innovation Award 2003

Seal of TMC Approval 2004

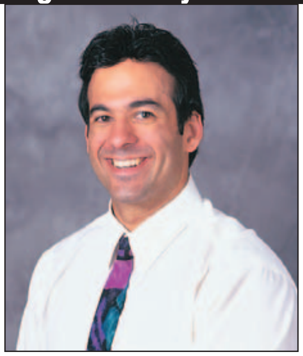
Product of the Year Customer Inter@ction Solutions 2003

Product of the Year Customer Inter@ction Solutions 2004

Monet

The Art of Workforce Optimization™

Dealer and VAR inquiries welcome. Monet is a copyrighted software program. Left Bank Solutions, Inc. offers a complete suite of world-class Workforce Management, Quality Assurance, and Performance Management solutions. © 2005 Left Bank Solutions, Inc. All rights reserved. Left Bank Solutions, Monet, Monet Anywhere and The Art of Workforce Optimization are registered trademarks.



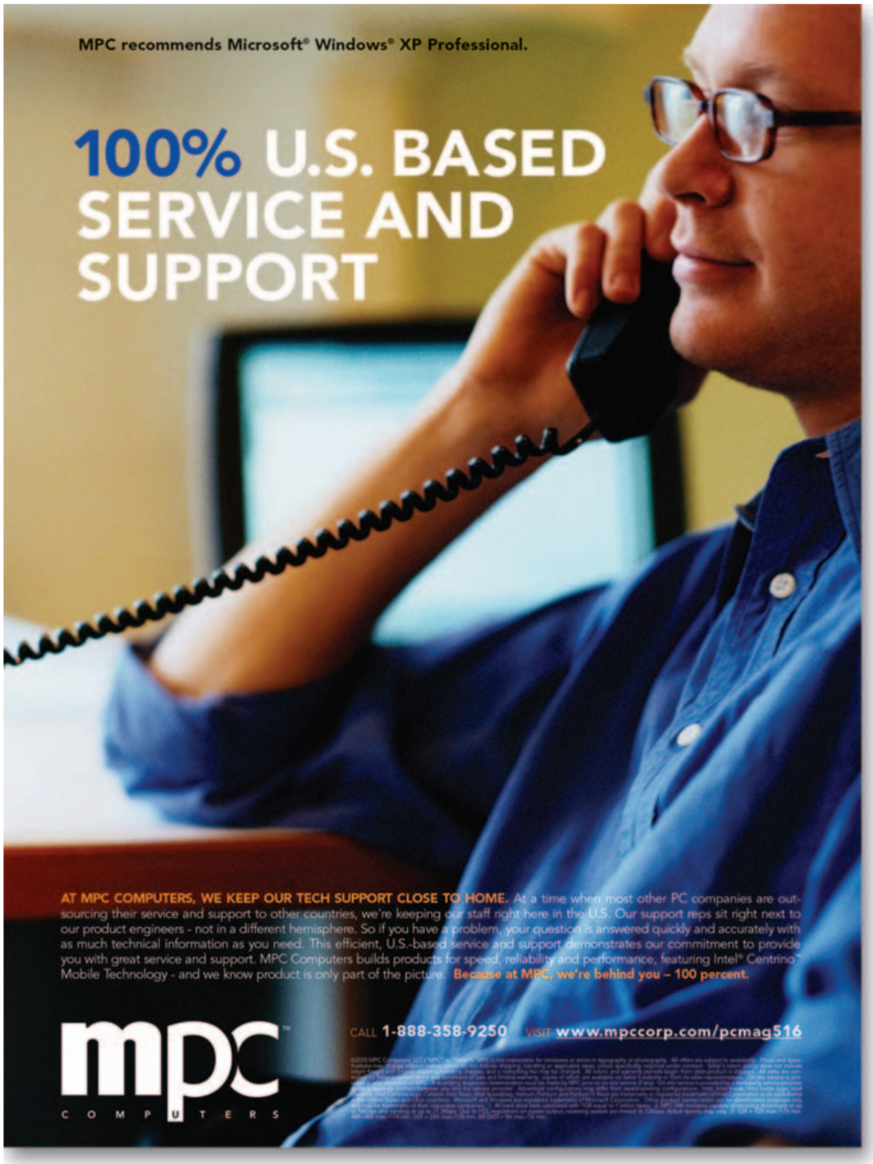
By: Rich Tehrani,
Group Publisher, Group Editor-in-Chief,
Technology Marketing Corporation

Offshored To Death

Will offshoring be the death of some American companies? Perhaps not, but what if intelligent competitors playing on the inherent patriotism of the American public were to begin using anti-offshore outsourcing sentiment as a way to take customers away from those companies that do outsource their support departments to other countries such as India?

Dell is one of the more famous case examples of a company using offshore outsourcing. Anyone who reads the business news has heard stories about the many Dell customers who are unhappy with the level of service they are receiving from the Texas-based PC giant.

Figure 1.



MPC recommends Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional.

100% U.S. BASED SERVICE AND SUPPORT

AT MPC COMPUTERS, WE KEEP OUR TECH SUPPORT CLOSE TO HOME. At a time when most other PC companies are outsourcing their service and support to other countries, we're keeping our staff right here in the U.S. Our support reps sit right next to our product engineers - not in a different hemisphere. So if you have a problem, your question is answered quickly and accurately with as much technical information as you need. This efficient, U.S.-based service and support demonstrates our commitment to provide you with great service and support. MPC Computers builds products for speed, reliability and performance, featuring Intel® Centrino™ Mobile Technology - and we know product is only part of the picture. Because at MPC, we're behind you – 100 percent.

CALL 1-888-358-9250 VISIT www.mpccorp.com/pcmag516

This environment has presented a perfect opportunity for companies like **MPC Computers** (http://www.mpccorp.com) to start advertising campaigns targeted at people who are sick and tired of dealing with offshore help desks. A new ad from the company has the following headline: **100% U.S. Based Service And Support** (see Figure 1.)

I don't think I had ever heard of this company before I saw this ad. Whenever I hear of a new company, I go to **Alexa** (http://www.alexa.com), a company that tracks Web traffic of all Web sites. Alexa ranks the sites based on their overall popularity in terms of traffic.

Here is where the competitors rank:

As of 8/21/05

Company	Rank (lower is better)
IBM	240
Dell	64
HP	129
Gateway	1,946
Apple	67

MPC Computers ranks in the top 74,246 sites in the world.

To put this in perspective using another Alexa metric (http://tmcnet.com/163.1), you can ascertain that Gateway Computers gets

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

Things To Do Today:
Drive process enhancements
Create customer-centric culture
Help shape future
Get used to being called 'guru'

Because your **business** is on the line

Turn your contact center into an enterprise profit center. With Verint's new ULTRA Analytics Suite.

Contact center? How about customer intelligence center? Or process improvement center? Or, simply, *profit center.* The point is, Verint's ULTRA Analytics™ Suite takes QM, PM and WFO to an entirely new level — delivering benefits to all ends of the enterprise. How can you drive revenue through product and service enhancements? How can you drive profitability through process enhancements? How can you shape the future by creating a true customer-centric culture? ULTRA Analytics' powerful root cause analysis gives you the new-found power to understand *"why"* so you can figure out *"how."* So go ahead and take your seat at the table — you've earned it. **To find out more and get our new white paper, "The Power of Why," call 1-800-4-VERINT or go to www.verint.com/why. Because every time the phone rings, it's your business on the line.**

VERINT
POWERING ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE®

©2005 Verint Systems Inc. All rights reserved.

56 times the traffic of MPC. Not very impressive for MPC Computers, but its traffic (http://tmcnet.com/164.1) is getting better. Perhaps these ads will help it grow faster.

I have seen numerous surveys that show customers value saving money more than supporting fellow U.S. workers.

This is the first ad I have ever seen like this, so I contacted the company and asked a laundry list of questions that were answered by Ross Ely, Vice President of Corporate Marketing for MPC Computers. I started by asking what the response has been to this unusual ad campaign. Ely said, "We have been very pleased with the reception to our '100 percent U.S.-based Service And Support' ad campaign. Just as you suggest, we find many PC users are frustrated with the poor service they receive through our competitors' offshore call centers. We conceived this campaign to tap into this dissatisfaction and inform these users that there is a better solution."

I also asked how his company can compete with the other, much larger, computer companies in the market. I was thinking (but didn't put it in my question) about all the PC vendors that were once around in the 1980s and are now gone. I remember those good old days when I personally assembled all of TMC's PCs from components purchased from JDR Microdevices. At a certain point, the economies of scale of the larger companies allowed them to price their finished computers quite close to what it would cost to assemble the computer yourself. Once that happened, the competition in the market really dried up. This is what Ross had to say on the subject:

"MPC Computers is one of the top 10 companies in the U.S. PC market, and we compete every day against the 'big boys' you mention: Dell (quote - news - alert), HP (quote -news - alert), Gateway (quote -news - alert), Apple (quote -news - alert), IBM (quote -news - alert) and others. We focus on the specific market segments of government, education and midsized businesses, and target all of our marketing to address these segments. Our primary differentiation from the big boys is in service and support; we strive to outperform our competitors in areas like the quality and responsiveness of our tech support reps. Our biggest challenges in competing with the big guys are economies of scale (pricing) and brand awareness."

I have seen numerous surveys that show customers value saving money more than supporting fellow U.S. workers. I asked how the company has dealt with the issue of price-sensitivity versus supporting American workers. Ross' answer:

"Our overall perception is that customers care a lot about service and choose vendors they can count on in the long run. However, they are also very sensitive to price. Our goal is to get them to think longer-term and consider service attributes in addition to price when making their purchase decisions."

Notice what is happening here. The perception in the market is that offshore service, at least in the computer market, is the same as having bad service. By pushing the fact that service is 100 percent American-based, it is perceived to be better. Rather than having to make customers choose between supporting American workers or keeping prices low, the value proposition has shifted to pay a bit more and get better service.

I asked how the ad campaign is working, and if other companies can take advantage of the "service and support in America" idea to gain market share and increase their businesses. Ross' response:

"This advertising is one of many vehicles we are using to communicate our value proposition. While we have been pleased with the results of the advertising (as measured in calls and Web hits), we need to use many other types of marketing to generate awareness and leads. I would advise others that 'Made In The U.S.' advertising themes can create a positive atmosphere around their brands, but that complete, integrated marketing programs are also necessary to gain the maximum return from their marketing investments."

I didn't expect that integrated marketing line. Nadji Tehrani has been preaching integrated marketing in his columns for months, if not years, and it seems that others agree that this concept works well.

Getting back to the American service and support debate: at the moment, service and support in a variety of other countries are considered to be far inferior to those in the U.S. You have two options. You can offshore your service, but if you do, make sure the quality is second to none, because as soon as a customer hears an accent he or she may be turned off. Sure, I know what you're thinking: America is a melting pot. What's wrong with accents?

I cite the following as a single example of what I'm getting at. Studies have shown that many people in the South don't like to be called by people who have Brooklyn or other New York accents — they much prefer to deal with someone with a Southern accent. Believe me, Mumbai isn't an improvement over Brooklyn when your customers call from Mississippi. (By the way, I would love to have someone send me an MP3 of a support conversation between someone from the Deep South and someone from India. If it isn't worthy of Jay Leno, I don't know what is.)

The second item is to keep your service and support in the U.S. and advertise that fact. Market it everywhere. Make a banner that says "100 percent USA Support" and plaster it everywhere you can: on your Web site, on the t-shirts you print, on the pens you give out at shows, and on your business cards. Plaster it in your lobby and all over your building. In addition to making U.S. customers happy, you will make your U.S. workers feel happier about themselves, and they will likely be more motivated and productive. **CIS**

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

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

SER wants to streamline your world.

(but we'll start with your contact center)

Stop by SER Booth #515 at ICCM 2005 in Las Vegas to see our outbound call management and agent performance optimization solutions in action! You could win an Apple Mini iPod!

SER can help your contact center take flight.

Our CPS E^2™ contact center solution combines the power of patented predictive dialing, real-time call record management, and sophisticated call blending to help you optimize right party contacts, maximize list penetration, and increase agent productivity.

And, to efficiently measure agent performance, SERTAINTY™ eliminates manual monitoring and keeps your agents in check by analyzing every call for script adherence, achievement of Key Performance Indicators, and overall call quality.

If a first-class contact center is your final destination, SER is standing by to help you get there.

SER

VISIT WWW.SER.COM/CONTACTCENTER OR CALL 800-274-5676

© Copyright 2005 SER Solutions, Inc. All Rights Reserved. SER is a registered trademark and CPS E^2 and SERTAINTY are trademarks of SER Solutions, Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

THE BOARDROOM REPORT™

WITH NADJI TEHRANI

Opus Group's Mike Callaghan On Performance Management: "If We Don't Deliver, You Don't Pay"

"The Boardroom Report" features exclusive interviews with leading CRM/contact center executives regarding industry news, analysis, trends and the latest developments at their companies. Technology Marketing Corp. founder/chairman/CEO Nadji Tehrani and Customer Inter@ction Solutions executive editor Glenn J. Kalinoski interviewed Michael P. Callaghan, CEO of Opus Group, for this installment of "The Boardroom Report."

Opus Group (news - alert) CEO Michael P. Callaghan's proportional guarantee says much about what his company offers its customers.

"To the extent that, if we only deliver 70 percent of the solution, or 70 percent of the savings, we only charge you 70 percent of the fee," he said. "We've never invoked that, I'm happy to say. If we don't deliver, you don't pay."

His approach to business seems to be paying off quite handsomely.

The Chicago-based provider of integrated operational performance management technology and services was founded in 2002. It took three and a half months for the company to get its first client. Since then, it has been a story of triple-digit growth every year for the privately held company. Opus Group has 50 clients, including some in the Fortune 50, and 80 employees, including 15 in Chicago.

"The call center world is a major conduit for us," he said.

Vertical markets served by his firm include insurance, financial services, healthcare and telecom.

He said performance management is becoming a ubiquitous term and that "everybody" is using it.

His definition of the term: a combination of analytics and better information coupled with process optimization.

"If you go out to the market… they see it more as a software solution," he said. "The organizations come to the table and say, 'I can't improve performance on the front line because my frontline managers have to look at 30 reports in order to be able to execute.' The problem is they can't move quickly enough, they can't integrate that data and they make changes in the business every day and they're constantly chasing their tails because they don't have the ability to see data."

Callaghan approaches the challenge from a services perspective.

"The bigger part of the problem is, once you get that information, what do you do with it?" he asked. "Are you sure that the information that you're integrating and incorporating is linked directly to your processes and to the types of improvements that you want to see in the organization?

"In delivering the product solution and process optimization in markets where we operate, we end up with an ROI-based solution in hard dollars where we can go into a client and say, 'Not only are we going to address this infrastructure problem with data and information, but [also] we're going to be able to take that data and information, show your managers how to use it on a day-to-day basis and deliver you X number of dollars in value over the next four or five months. And, incidentally, if we don't do that, don't pay us. We'll guarantee it.'"

Callaghan defined his company's challenge as educating the marketplace regarding the fact that it's not just about a product. "There's this assumption out there that if you get better information, there's a guarantee that that's going to deliver value. When you think about managers who might have only 15 or 20 minutes a day to review reports and data before the fire drills start, they had better be darn sure they know every number they're looking at, they can decipher it, they can respond to it and move quickly. Giving them a new tool set with entirely new numbers doesn't

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

really solve the problem, even if those numbers are better than the old ones.

"We think we're solving a business problem, not delivering a product."

Callaghan asserted that as the CRM market continues to unravel, that will provide more opportunities for companies in the performance management market. "We're not saying to clients, 'You need to go out and make another capital expenditure,'" he said. "Use the systems that are there. Use the data that's there."

A criticism he offered regarding the contact center industry is that it has allowed itself to get pulled along "in whatever direction somebody decides it needs to go" during the past 10 or 15 years. "We've done a horrible job as an industry of saying, 'This is what companies X, Y and Z do [and] this is what companies A, B and C do,'" he said.

He added that in the offshoring area, the industry is "probably back to more of an even keel" and that during the 2000-2001 timeframe, "everybody" was doing it. His conclusion: there is no shortage of unhappy customers as a result of offshoring and that firms are "repatriating a ton of jobs" that he numbered in the tens of thousands.

"What we forgot is that business process outsourcing is critical to staying competitive, but at the end of the day, every business has a DNA, and it has something that makes it different from everybody else," he said. "You've got to have that differentiating factor in the way you service your customer. If you offshore it, you lose it."

A continuing "repatriation" will occur, according to Callaghan, who said that offshoring costs are set to increase between 30 and 40 percent during the next two years. "Three years ago, 25 or 30 percent of the deals we were involved in, the client was contemplating outsourcing and [it] came into play somehow," he said. "Today, it's less than 10 percent." **CIS**

For more information regarding Opus Group, see http://www.theopusgroup.com.

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

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

Transformation is good. Very good.

A grain of sand becomes a pearl. A caterpillar turns into a butterfly. And now, TeleTech, the leading global provider of customer management and business process outsourcing is unbundling innovative, market-leading CRM solutions to help you transform your business or enterprise.

Reach the 45 million Americans who speak a language other than English at home with TeleTech In Culture™ marketing solutions. Over-the-phone interpretation services are available in 150 languages, helping you make the most of your multicultural campaigns and customer relationships.

TeleTech has the experience and the technology to help you transform customer management to meet your business goals. For over two decades, we've focused on redefining customer management to help companies worldwide find innovative ways to leverage customer interaction and information to enhance brand value.

Visit us at ICCM or online at **www.teletech.com** and learn how change can be very good indeed.

TeleTech.

TRY IT NOW! OPI Demonstration Line 1.877.497.4877
Sales & Partner Inquiries 1.877.242.6419

Executive Spotlight

Joe Natale
President
TELUS Business Solutions

The Executive Spotlight speaks with TELUS Communications Inc.'s Joe Natale, President of TELUS Business Solutions.

CIS: What is TELUS' mission and market position, particularly as they relate to contact centers?

JN: TELUS' (news - alert) strategic intent is to unleash the power of the Internet to deliver the best solutions to Canadians at home, in the workplace and on the move, and I am proud to say that our team is working with customers across Canada to achieve this objective.

TELUS is the largest telecommunications company in Western Canada and the second largest in the country, with $7.9 billion of annual revenue, 4.7 million network access lines and 4.1 million wireless customers. TELUS provides customers with a full range of telecommunications products and services, including hosted contact center services, using next-generation Internet-based technologies.

TELUS' core mission has always been to empower our business customers to achieve their business objectives effectively and cost-efficiently. That mission, as it relates to contact centers, is to empower our customers, regardless of size, to deliver world-class customer service to their customers. Our commitment to the contact center market couldn't be stronger and is evidenced by the sizable capital investments we've made over the last year to roll out hosted contact center services in Canada on a nationwide basis.

CIS: Why did TELUS decide to offer hosted contact center services through the CallCentreAnywhere solution?

JN: Our decision to invest heavily in hosted contact center infrastructure by offering CallCentreAnywhere was driven by the business challenges that our customers asked us to help them solve. Deploying contact centers with premise-based equipment is generally very expensive, complex and time-consuming, requiring a diversity of skills for effective technology management. That's particularly true of multichannel solutions that encompass customer service on the phone, fax and the Internet. Add quality monitoring and management technologies to the mix and many customers simply want an easier way. In fact, many of our customers told us that they would prefer to leverage TELUS' own call center experience, our technology management capabilities and our IP network to gain access to the technologies they need. We listened and are pleased to offer CallCentreAnywhere to meet their needs.

At TELUS, we have always believed investments which bring enhanced value to our customers are critical to our long-term success. CallCentreAnywhere offers tremendous value, both to those companies that prefer to outsource their technology management and to companies who couldn't previously cost-justify access to world-class technology.

Early feedback from our customers convinced us that we were really on to something, and today that excitement has spread throughout our company. In fact, telecom industry analysts have told us that up to one-third of the call center market will be hosted within the next few years. Based on the reception our offering has received so far, we think that there has to be a lot of truth to that assessment. We've already had some strong initial success with customers like Canada Post through their innovative "fetch™" program, which we recently won a CRM Excellence award for [from *Customer Inter@ction Solutions* magazine], and the Canadian Red Cross as well as multiple market segments, including government, retail, financial, travel and tourism, to name a few.

CIS: What differentiated value does your CallCentreAnywhere service offer to businesses?

JN: TELUS offers many tangible benefits to call center customers that are not easily found in one place elsewhere. Elimination of up-front expenses is certainly one of them. A company's decision to outsource its technology needs to TELUS enables it to eliminate all up-front capital expenditures, as well as traditional development and testing costs, integration expenses and other up-front costs that are typically required when deploying traditional premise-based technologies. The elimination of these up-front expenses can obviously be very meaningful for organizations with constrained budgets.

The elimination of development and integration risks is another key advantage. With CallCentreAnywhere, deployment risk rests squarely with TELUS as the service provider since clients avoid having to own or install anything on their premises. Beyond our traditional communications technologies, our business customers can leverage our application-development teams in the areas of speech and advanced Web technologies design to obtain a fully integrated end-to-end solution. Since we can also implement voice and data networking services, our business customers reduce their risk significantly when resolution to a problem is required. TELUS takes comprehensive responsibility for the provisioning, delivery and ongoing maintenance of the entire solution.

Budget predictability and ongoing reductions in operational expenses is

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

clearly another benefit of CallCentreAnywhere. TELUS has tremendous economies of scale that we leverage to drive down technology costs for our customers.

Real-time disaster-recovery capabilities, such as those required by the Canadian Red Cross, is another attribute of our "built-for purpose," scaleable, hosted services technology. Our business customers are assured that their mission-critical business systems are being supported to our highest standards.

Of course, yet another important benefit is the elimination of traditional time-to-market barriers, since all required resources will have already been preinstalled in the TELUS network. A related benefit is that we can quickly and cost-effectively address unanticipated capacity requirements to help our business customers meet unanticipated or seasonal shifts in their end-customer demand.

Finally, TELUS also offers our customers an important intangible benefit, the benefit of our experience as one of the largest corporate users of contact center technology in the world. Our business customers are able to leverage world-class advice on best practices from us on an ongoing basis — to ensure that they (the customers) get maximum value from the technology we deliver.

CIS: What drove the decision to leverage Telephony@Work technology for TELUS' hosted contact center offering?

JN: Before selecting Telephony@Work, TELUS conducted an exhaustive review of the marketplace in our search to find an IP-based solution that met our customer needs. In the end we concluded that Telephony@Work offered the only multitenant platform that could satisfy both our customer needs and our IP network requirements in terms of scalability, reliability and network security. In addition, Telephony@Work (news - alert) was the only solution we reviewed that enabled us to gain economies of scale by sharing resources across business customers without impacting on the security of data or the degree of control available for each business customer. The ability to release control through to the subscriber level provides economies of scale, which enables TELUS to pass the savings on to the customer. As a result, we are positioned to be extremely competitive in the Canadian marketplace, while offering customers what they want: complete control of their own business processes. This cost-effective management approach also lets us plan for rapid market-share acquisition and cost-effective growth, a plan which we are busily executing. **CIS**

100% of companies who purchase ASD Softswitch customer contact software keep it, profit from it and never outgrow it.

What do they know that you don't?

ASD Softswitch is a fully integrated software suite that enhances telephone hardware and provides digital recording, IVR, ACD, call monitoring, VOIP, and other advanced features that complement existing enterprise solutions or replace them.

SCS
Strategic Contact Solutions

2358 Hassell Road, Ste. A • Hoffman Estates, IL 60195 • www.strategicinc.com • 1-800-727-4155- toll free • 1-847-843-4134

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

Executive Spotlight

Lou Boudreau
CTO
Verint Systems
Contact Center Solutions

Executive Spotlight recently spoke with Lou Boudreau, CTO of Verint Systems Contact Center Solutions (http://www.verint.com). Verint provides analytic software-based solutions for the security and business intelligence markets.

CIS: How do you feel about the apparent new trend of combining contact center solutions vendors into forming large "super companies"? Do you think it's a bonus or a drawback for customers?

LB: Consolidation is inevitable in markets that have been established for some time. We have not found that our enterprise customers are more inclined to do business with "super companies" that are looking to offer a wide variety of solutions. Our customers are demanding the freedom to choose best-of-breed solutions that meet their business requirements, with the comfort of knowing that they will interoperate with our market-leading ULTRA suite.

To address this requirement, we recently announced ULTRA IntelliConnect, a comprehensive set of prebuilt integrations to a wide range of best-of-breed vendor solutions such as CRM, customer surveys, workforce management, knowledge management, performance management and business intelligence. ULTRA IntelliConnect enables customers to take advantage of best-of-breed solutions while leveraging their existing investments in contact center technology. The result is differentiated technology while reducing the total cost of ownership (TCO) for their customer-centric technology solutions.

ULTRA IntelliConnect integrates data for more powerful analytics through a 360-degree view of agents, contact centers and the enterprise, and powers more effective scorecards and reports, richer data mining and more effective call content categorization. ULTRA IntelliConnect reduces administration and improves operational workflow across contact center and enterprise applications. IntelliConnect is designed to ensure that ULTRA will grow with customers as their contact centers and enterprise technology evolves.

We believe that this "open-standards, best-of-breed integrations" approach gives our customers the best possible solutions to meet their important business requirements. This freedom of choice protects customers from being locked into a single vendor with reduced functionality with the potential for increasing maintenance costs over time.

CIS: The contact center industry has, as of late, been emphasizing that it's not only data and analytics that are needed, but real-time data and analytics. Does Verint have the ability to meet this need for real-time statistics?

LB: Yes, we do. Earlier this year Verint announced ULTRA Analytics, our latest generation of actionable intelligence solutions for the contact center market. ULTRA Analytics, powered by Verint's IntelliFind and IntelliMiner solutions, combines speech and data analysis to help enterprises identify, understand and resolve issues that impact the effectiveness of their customer-focused operations.

ULTRA Analytics provides immediate and actionable intelligence on such critical issues as why agents are underperforming, why customers are dissatisfied or why enterprise processes are ineffective. Armed with this intelligence, ULTRA Analytics enables managers to take action to improve workforce performance, enhance the effectiveness of upsell and cross-sell initiatives and reduce customer defection and churn.

Unlike most other solutions in the market today, ULTRA Analytics' powerful root cause analysis helps enterprises understand why customers are calling and take immediate and effective action to better address their needs.

CIS: How is Verint serving the burgeoning SMB (small to medium-sized business) market? Are recording and analytics solutions cost-effective for these small organizations?

LB: In 2003 Verint (news - alert) launched ULTRA Express, a quality management and liability recording suite designed specifically for the 120-seat-and-below call center. ULTRA Express provides easy-to-use but robust solutions for smaller centers that operate in competitive markets where quality is an important differentiator or where sales verification, compliance or regulatory pressures demand a comprehensive recording solution. Key to ULTRA Express is the ability for rapid deployment on industry-standard servers, thus lowering costs — both initial and ongoing. ULTRA Express has been well received, and has proven to be a cost-effective solution for this growing segment of the market.

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

CIS: How can companies better protect themselves in this era of compliance issues (do-not-call, information disclosure, data security, etc.)?

LB: Solutions like Verint's ULTRA Transaction Management help companies address the challenges of compliance and liability management by enabling them to record, store and readily access all of their customer interactions — even for outsourced and offshore contact center locations.

ULTRA captures, stores and analyzes customer interactions and makes them instantly available to key personnel across the enterprise. ULTRA provides a robust search tool for rapid access to any recorded contact, no matter how old. ULTRA tags customer interactions with contact-related information to enable users to access customer calls within seconds, helping to improve customer service and reduce call handling time.

By enabling customers to record and readily access interactions from all of their locations across the globe, ULTRA helps them comply with government and industry regulations and more efficiently manage compliance processes. Further, ULTRA offers a secure solution, built on industry standards enabling customers to safeguard sensitive customer data.

CIS: What kinds of new or updated products and services will we be seeing from Verint in the near future?

LB: Verint is focused on discovering new ways for our customers to obtain actionable intelligence from their recorded customer interactions, and to extend these valuable insights across the enterprise. As the first vendor to bring speech analytics solutions to the market, we will continue to innovate in this area and to deliver actionable intelligence solutions that enable our customers to reduce costs, increase efficiencies and enhance customer loyalty and satisfaction. Additionally, we will continue to help our contact center customers better align their processes and programs with enterprise initiatives, and to deliver intelligence throughout the enterprise to key stakeholders who can learn from and improve everything that touches the customer. **CIS**

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

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

IT'S TIME!

APPLY TODAY!

PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
CUSTOMER INTER@CTION Solutions®
2005

The 2005 *Customer Inter@ction Solutions*® Product of the Year award application is now online.

Is your product the BEST? The BRIGHTEST? MOST INNOVATIVE? GROUND-BREAKING? Was it brought to market in 2005? Then you must apply for the 2005 Product of the Year Award. A *Customer Inter@ction Solutions*® Product of the Year award can do wonders for your product's exposure, positioning your company as an industry leader.

Customer Inter@ction Solutions®:
#1 in CRM, Call Centers & Teleservices Since 1982™

Go to www.tmcnet.com/poty/ for the application.

Early Bird Deadline is October 3, 2005—Save $100. Final Application Deadline is December 3, 2005.

© 2005 Technology Marketing Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

Seal Of
TMC
2005
APPROVAL

2005 Recommended Vendor List

The TMC Seal Of Approval

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

CRM/Contact Center Software/Hardware

Amae Software

Aspect Communications Corp.

Concerto Software

Davacord (formerly VoiceLogger)

GN Netcom

IEX Corporation

Interactive Intelligence

Jacada

Left Bank Solutions

Mercom

NICE Systems

Sennheiser Electronic Corp.

SER Solutions Inc.

Siebel Systems

SIVOX

Spectrum Corporation

Stratasoft, Inc.

Strategic Contact Solutions, Inc.

Telephony@Work

Verint Systems

Witness Systems

Teleservices Outsourcing

West Corporation

InfoCision Management Corporation

Teleperformance-Mexico

Advanced Data-Comm, Inc.

List and Sales Lead Databases

info**USA**

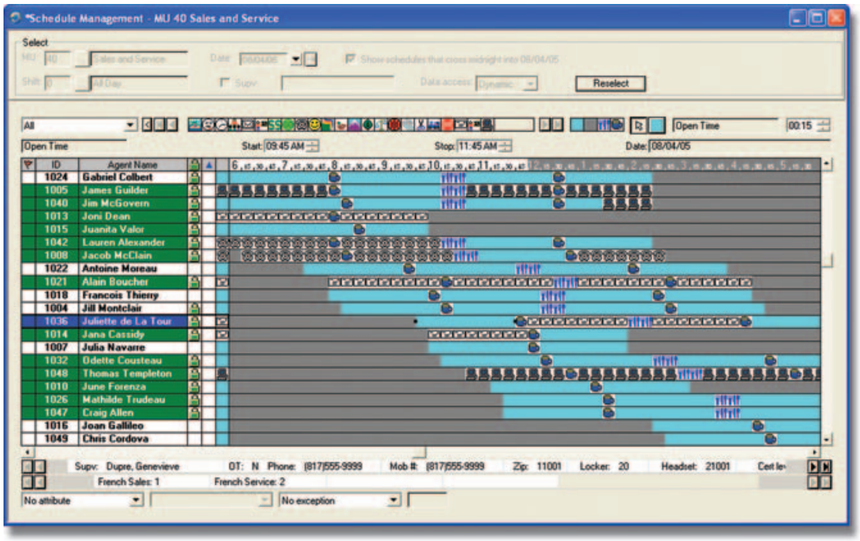
For information about how to get on the Recommended Vendor list, see http://www.tmcnet.com/mediakit/cis04/soa.htm

Seal Of
TMC
2005
APPROVAL

2005
CUSTOMER INTER@CTION Solutions®
EDITORS' CHOICE

IEX TotalView True To Its Name

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



*Schedule Management - MU 40 Sales and Service

Select

All

Open Time

Start: 09:45 AM

Stop: 11:45 AM

Date: 08/04/05

Open Time 00:15

ID	Agent Name
1024	Gabriel Colbert
1005	James Guilder
1040	Jim McGovern
1013	Joni Dean
1015	Juanita Valor
1042	Lauren Alexander
1008	Jacob McClain
1022	Antoine Moreau
1021	Alain Boucher
1018	Francois Thierry
1004	Jill Montclair
1036	Juliette de La Tour
1014	Jana Cassidy
1007	Julia Navarre
1032	Odette Cousteau
1048	Thomas Templeton
1010	June Forenza
1026	Mathilde Trudeau
1047	Craig Allen
1016	Joan Gallileo
1049	Chris Cordova

Supv: Dupre, Genevieve OT: N Phone: (817)555-9999 Mob #: (817)555-9999 Zip: 11001 Locker: 20 Headset: 21001 Cert le

French Sales: 1 French Service: 2

No attribute

No exception

Have patience with my verbosity and allow me to preface this month's Technology Highlight. IEX's (news - alert) TotalView Workforce Management (WFM) software, which actually gives a total view (so it's not only a clever product name), provides a centralized platform for total visibility and optimization of contact centers. *Customer Interaction Solutions* has been knowledgeable of IEX and its product(s) for quite some time. Why does this fact matter? Since last year's regeneration of this monthly feature, I've intended to focus on IEX's WFM product early on. But, and here's the thing, it is incredibly comprehensive — emphasis on "incredibly." There is SO much to it, all adding up to deliver the highest-quality customer service.

TotalView Overview

As mentioned previously, IEX TotalView Workforce Management software provides a centralized platform for optimizing the performance of the contact center. It is designed to assist contact centers in forecasting and planning more accurately and scheduling more effectively. The software supplies real-time information to allow better management of an agent's performance and the center's overall operation. WFM integrates data seamlessly across the enterprise and automates many time-consuming and labor-intensive processes.

TotalView Central

TotalView Central encompasses the core features of TotalView, providing a solid foundation for effective workforce management in the contact center. The Central foundation includes automated forecasting, planning, scheduling (preference, bidding and management), change manager tools, an administrator, performance manager and the capability to plan and schedule for multiple-site call centers. Each of these tools within TotalView Central aims to enhance a call center's overall achievement of quick and meaningful results.

TotalView Advanced Features

Building upon TotalView Central's solid foundation, TotalView's advanced features deliver further performance for contact centers needing solutions to their advanced operational challenges associated with managing multiple agent skills, agent adherence and self-service capabilities, multiple customer contact media and enterprise-level data sharing and integration.

Myriad advanced features include those for each of the following functions: multimedia contact management; multiskill; WebStation; WebStation *Plus*; Adherence Suite; SmartSync Suite; and vacation and holiday planning.

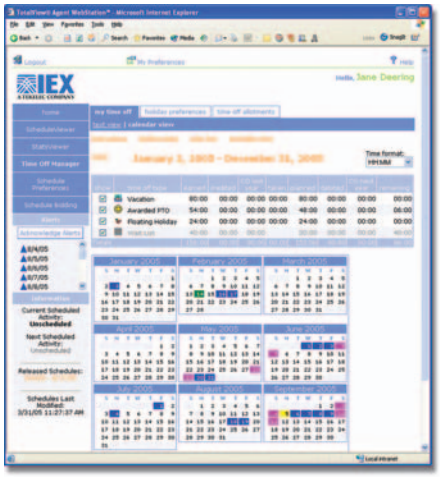
TotalView's multimedia planning and scheduling aims to simplify the task of managing multiple customer contact channels, enabling companies' operations to both provide consistent service and optimize use of resources across channels. The TotalView Multimedia feature offers flexible service levels, channel-appropriate forecasting, multimedia service delivery, active backlog management and multimedia skills scheduling.

The TotalView Multiskill feature is a comprehensive solution that provides total visibility into staffing requirements, allowing for production of the best schedules possible for multiskill operations. The TotalView Multiskill process uses built-in simulation technology to create effective agent schedules by simulating ACD (define - news - alert) and network-level routing rules. The feature, with its set of management tools, also allows for analyzing how changes in contact arrival patterns, agent skills or routing rules will affect staffing requirements.

TotalView's Adherence Suite provides real-time and historical adherence features for supervisors to easily monitor and analyze agent activity:

- The TotalView Real-Time Adherence feature compares an agent's scheduled activity to current activity, using real-time data streams from ACDs and media routers to provide up-to-the-moment agent state information. The

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index


TotalView® Agent WebStation™ - Microsoft Internet Explorer
Logout
My Preferences
Help
IEX
A TEKELEC COMPANY
Hello, Jane Deering
Home
Time Off Manager
Schedule Preferences
Schedule Bidding
Alerts
Acknowledge Alerts
my time off
holiday preferences
time off allotments
calendar view
January 1, 2005 – December 31, 2005
Time format:
HH:MM
Vacation
Awarded PTO
Floating Holiday
January 2005
February 2005
March 2005
April 2005
May 2005
June 2005
July 2005
August 2005
September 2005
Current Scheduled Activity:
Unscheduled
Next Scheduled Activity:
Unscheduled
Released Schedules:
Schedules Last Modified:
3/31/05 11:27:37 AM
Local intranet

acquired information enables supervisors to make sure agents keep to their schedules throughout the day. Real-Time Adherence features include the following: automatic refresh; supervisor information; schedule access; user-defined colors and thresholds; multiple sorting options; and multisite support.

• The TotalView Historical Adherence feature provides comprehensive historical reports of agent schedule adherence, allowing supervisors and managers to view and document the performance of individual agents or agent groups. Reports show scheduled agent activities alongside actual agent activities. A summary of scheduled time, available time, and times and percentages in adherence is also included.

SmartSync Suite provides an open solution for easier data exchange between TotalView WFM and other systems. SmartSync Suite encompasses two powerful solutions, SmartSync Central and SmartSync Exchange.

• SmartSync Central provides standardized interfaces to more than 25 ACDs and other contact-routing systems for the collection of historical and real-time information on queues and agents. Further, it collects information from multiple sources for the same agent.

• SmartSync Exchange extends SmartSync Central's benefits to other contact center applications and systems. Providing full data synchronization between systems, SmartSync Exchange simplifies the process of consolidating information within the center.

The TotalView Vacation and Holiday Planner feature reduces administration efforts associated with agents' time-off requests and, therefore, ensures the contact center is properly staffed. The feature includes the following: flexible time-off categories; configurable rules; time-off requests; vacation viewer; automated bidding; and wait listing.

WebStation gives agents and supervisors Web-browser access for viewing schedules, monitoring performance and automating common contact center tasks. (See below for enhancements in v3.9.)

WebStation *Plus* adds advanced workflow automation features to the core WebStation product. (See below for enhancements in v3.9.)

Recent Release

TotalView Workforce Management system was recently updated in version 3.9, offering skill block scheduling features designed to make easier the management of multichannel contact types and other back-office work. The new version also aims to heighten agent empowerment with new time-off management and schedule preference capabilities.

The key advancement to IEX's latest version, according to IEX's product marketing manager Jose Martinez, is the Skill Block Scheduling feature, which automatically designates optimal time slots for agents to devote to a particular skill, whether it is outbound calling, e-mail, Web chat or other customer contact channel types. As well, centers can also manage offline tasks such as filing, fulfillment and other types of work. During these designated periods, the agent is only considered open to handle a defined subset of contact types; as a result, the center can manage multimedia and offline contact types much more effectively. The new Skill Block Scheduling features aim to ensure that every person in the center is aware of what he or she is supposed to be doing — management, supervisor and agent, purposefully providing better efficiency, as well as a more satisfied workforce because of job variety.

The Time Off Manager allows agents to manage sick time, vacation, personal days and other schedule entitlements via any standard Web browser within the WebStation *Plus* module. This automates the process of managing, tracking, notifying and approving paid time-off. This feature also provides a "wait list" capability for agents' desired days off.

Using the standard edition of TotalView WebStation, agents can view their schedules. In addition to that, with TotalView v3.9 agents are also given more influence over their start/stop times, days off, lunch time and break times; they can even view the status of their requests. New WebStation *Plus* agent preferences allow agents to indicate and input the desired characteristics of their work schedule. Preferences can be entered based on scheduling intervals defined by managers.

The WebStation feature now allows companies to specify whether they want agents to logon using either their ACD or TotalView identification information. So, if a company employs agents who work from their homes or from somewhere other than the company's primary call center sites, TotalView gives the company the option of enabling agents to view their schedules online without having to login to the company's call routing system.

WebStation *Plus* has further been enhanced to deliver ranking information to agents prior to schedule bids, so agents don't have to rank all schedules — only the number equal to their ranking. Agent schedule preferences can now be entered based on default information, date range or group. The number of scheduled activities that can be added to the daily work rules has been increased from eight to 20, and forecasts and schedules can now be created and managed for an 18-month period into the future.

All aforementioned features and abilities of TotalView Workforce Management are merely key features and abilities. Visit the company's Web site to learn more about IEX WFM, as well as for reference of a fairly comprehensive document aid for potential buyers evaluating workforce management systems: http://www.iex.com/docs/wfm_eval.doc

. **CIS**

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

Customer Inter@ction NEWS

CRM

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

iNation Launches CRM Solution

iNation, (news - alert) which designs and implements workplace applications, has announced the launch of NationBuilder, a new CRM tool that is a Web-based application for automating and optimizing daily business tasks.

NationBuilder's menu enables users to accomplish various tasks, including the following: e-mail with protected history; global address book with import/export features; flexible scheduling calendar; real-time tasks and events; template-driven and customized campaigns; and key performance indicators (KPIs).

NationBuilder is expected to provide value to financial advisors and independent brokers. It is available for $95 per month with a complimentary 30-day trial along with a preferred partners program and multiple purchase discounts.

http://www.ination.com

Knova Software, Control-F1 Partner

Knova Software, (news - alert) a provider of service resolution management applications, has announced a partnership with integrated support automation company **Control-F1** (news - alert). The partnership will offer support desk applications to optimize self-service efficiency, cut costs and boost customer satisfaction.

By leveraging Control-F1's capabilities, Knova will be able to do the following: create a rich context by retrieving diagnostic and telemetry information directly from the customer's computer; deliver the right automated scripts to run on the customer's computer as part of the resolution; and offer desktop sharing, allowing agents to interact with customers to resolve issues.

http://www.control-f1.com

http://www.knova.com

Salesnet Enhances Enterprise Product

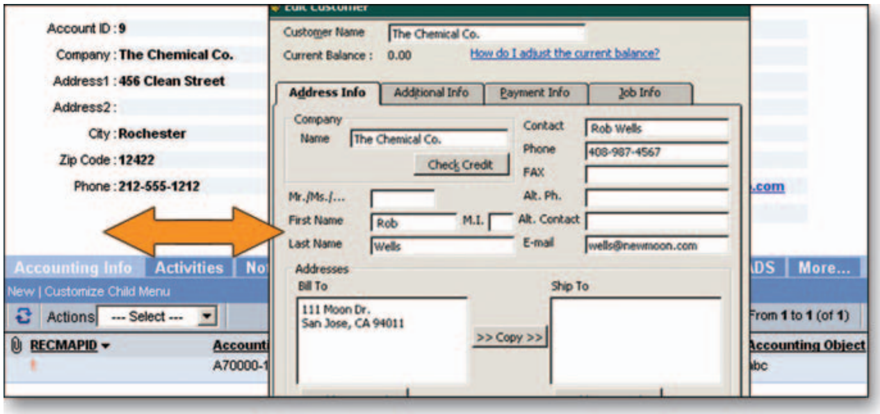
CRM software provider **Salesnet** (news - alert) has announced an upgrade to its enterprise product offering by introducing more than 50 product enhancements.

The product additions serve as a precursor to Salesnet's upcoming 25th Anniversary Edition, which is anticipated for a winter release and will include more than 250 features that broaden Salesnet's CRM footprint into campaign management, lead management, product catalogs, order management and more.

In this current release, Salesnet is introducing more than 50 feature product enhancements to its flagship on-demand CRM solution, with each enhancement geared toward its enterprise customers. The release is designed to simplify configurations and provide additional flexibility to the Salesnet solution.

Salesnet also announced the latest-version launch of its OEM private labeling product, Salesnet OEM v.2, which includes several enhancements that enable partners to more easily brand the solution and gain immediate ownership of their customer relationships.

http://www.salesnet.com



Account ID : 9
Company : The Chemical Co.
Address1 : 456 Clean Street
Address2 :
City : Rochester
Zip Code : 12422
Phone : 212-555-1212

Customer Name: The Chemical Co.
Current Balance : 0.00
Company Name: The Chemical Co.
Contact: Rob Wells
Phone: 408-987-4567
FAX:
Alt. Ph.:
Mr./Ms./...:
First Name: Rob
M.I.:
Alt. Contact:
Last Name: Wells
E-mail: wells@newmoon.com
Addresses
Bill To: 111 Moon Dr.
San Jose, CA 94011
Ship To:

From 1 to 1 (of 1)
A70000-1
abc

Soffront, Intuit Integrate

Soffront Software Inc., (news - alert) a provider of enterprise and hosted CRM solutions targeted at the midmarket, has announced the availability of integration between Soffront CRM and **Intuit**'s QuickBooks financial software. The move is intended to improve the lead-to-cash process and reduce paperwork and processing delays, as well as to provide information about customers' credit histories, invoices and payment information to Soffront CRM users.

http://www.soffront.com

http://www.intuit.com

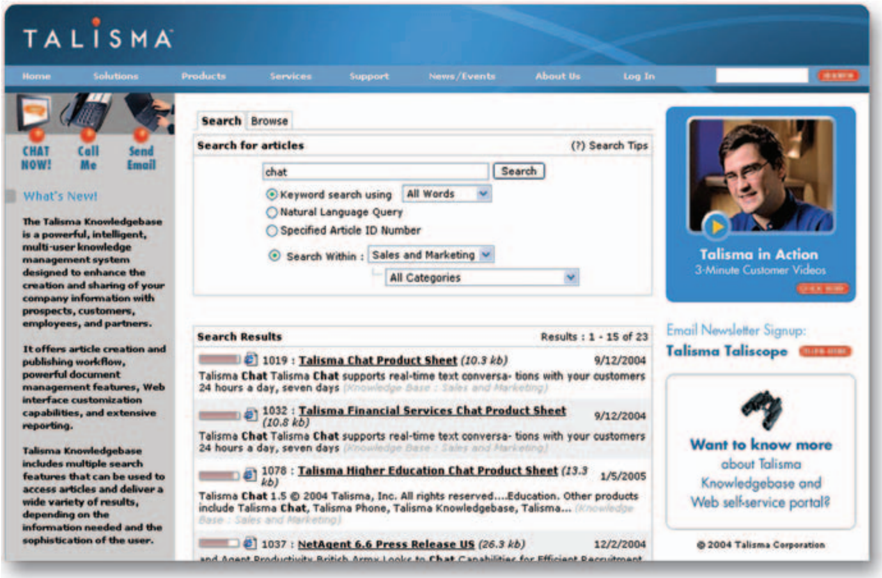
Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

Talisma KnowledgeBase 5.0 Receives KCS Verification

CRM solutions provider Talisma (news - alert) has announced that Talisma KnowledgeBase 5.0 has been recognized as “Knowledge-Centered Support Verified” by the Consortium for Service Innovation.

The Consortium for Service Innovation, a not-for-profit alliance of service and support organizations, developed the KCS Verified program to distinguish knowledge management vendors whose products meet the practical requirements outlined in the KCS Verified Criteria. Supported by the Help Desk Institute, KCS is an emerging best practice for knowledge management in service and support organizations.

http://www.talisma.com
http://www.serviceinnovation.org



The Talisma Knowledgebase is a powerful, intelligent, multi-user knowledge management system designed to enhance the creation and sharing of your company information with prospects, customers, employees, and partners.

It offers article creation and publishing workflow, powerful document management features, Web interface customization capabilities, and extensive reporting.

Talisma Knowledgebase includes multiple search features that can be used to access articles and deliver a wide variety of results, depending on the information needed and the sophistication of the user.

Search for articles

chat

● Keyword search using All Words
○ Natural Language Query
○ Specified Article ID Number

● Search Within : Sales and Marketing
All Categories

Search Results Results : 1 - 15 of 23

1019 : **Talisma Chat Product Sheet** *(10.3 kb)* 9/12/2004
Talisma **Chat** Talisma **Chat** supports real-time text conversa- tions with your customers 24 hours a day, seven days *(Knowledge Base : Sales and Marketing)*

1032 : **Talisma Financial Services Chat Product Sheet** *(10.8 kb)* 9/12/2004
Talisma **Chat** Talisma **Chat** supports real-time text conversa- tions with your customers 24 hours a day, seven days *(Knowledge Base : Sales and Marketing)*

1078 : **Talisma Higher Education Chat Product Sheet** *(13.3 kb)* 1/5/2005
Talisma **Chat** 1.5 © 2004 Talisma, Inc. All rights reserved....Education. Other products include Talisma **Chat**, Talisma Phone, Talisma Knowledgebase, Talisma... *(Knowledge Base : Sales and Marketing)*

1037 : **NetAgent 6.6 Press Release US** *(26.3 kb)* 12/2/2004
and Agent Productivity British Army Looks to **Chat** Capabilities for Efficient Recruitment

© 2004 Talisma Corporation

Please tell the vendors you saw it in CUSTOMER INTER@CTION Solutions™ magazine

SugarCRM’s Sugar Suite v3.5 In Beta

SugarCRM Inc., (news - alert) a provider of open-source CRM applications, has released the beta version of Sugar Suite 3.5 with new features aimed at simplifying the use of third-party add-on modules and strengthening the program’s functionality and personalization capabilities. Enhancements in version 3.5 include the Sugar Module Loader, a new plug-and-play installation utility for third-party add-on module, cross-module reporting, HTML e-mail support, simplified upgrade of customizations, improved Microsoft Outlook integration and new user-interface skins. In addition, more than 80 accessory modules have been created. They include language translation packs and document management systems.

Sugar Suite is a full-featured CRM solution and is available as on-premise, hosted or appliance-based software, all versions offering a full range of CRM functionality.

http://www.sugarcrm.com

The art of the deal.

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

Monet
The Art of Workforce Optimization™

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

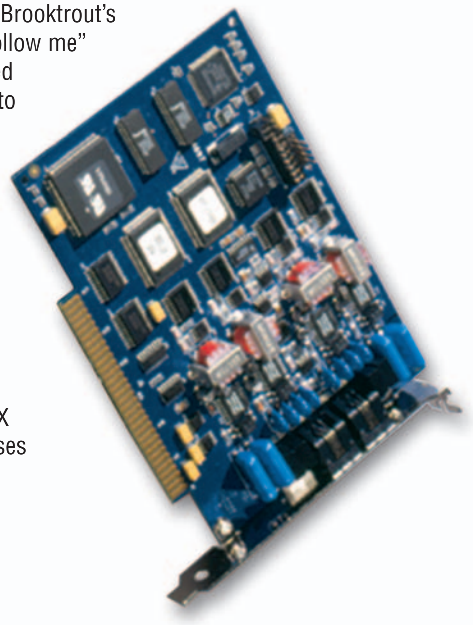
Brooktrout, Esnatech, Iwatsu Offer Messaging Solution For SMBs

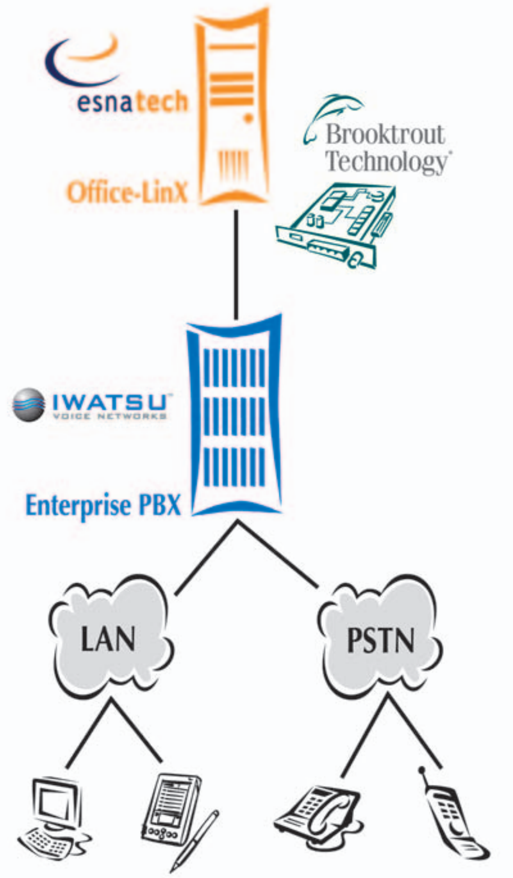
Brooktrout Technology (news - alert), **Esnatech** (news - alert) and **Iwatsu** (news - alert) together have announced a speech-enabled unified messaging solution for small to medium-sized businesses (SMBs).

The solution, which utilizes Iwatsu's Enterprise-CS IP-PBX, Esna's Telephony Office-LinX and Brooktrout's speech platform, combines "find me, follow me" functionality with speech-enabled unified messaging that allows mobile workers to access their voice, e-mail and fax messages from multiple devices, including desk phones, cell phones, PDAs and Web browsers. The goal is to help improve the efficiency and productivity of a company's distributed workforce and enable responses to customer queries in minutes as opposed to hours.

Esnatech's new Telephony Office-LinX Small Business Edition targets businesses with between five and 50 employees.

http://www.brooktrout.com
http://www.esna.com
http://www.iwatsu.com





InVision Launches Subsidiary In The Netherlands

Workforce management software provider **InVision Software** (news - alert) has launched a fully owned subsidiary, InVision Software B.V., in Utrecht, the Netherlands, as the workforce management specialist augments its market presence in the BeNeLux region.

InVision's BeNeLux customers had been served by the German headquarters.

http://www.invisiononline.com

FrontRange Introduces IP Contact Center 5.0

FrontRange Solutions USA Inc., (news - alert) a provider of service management, CRM and voice applications, has announced the availability of IP Contact Center (IPCC) 5.0.

The new version of FrontRange's VoIP software suite features integration with other FrontRange product families, including the company's HEAT, GoldMine Corporate Edition and the new IT Service Management (ITSM) modules.

FrontRange IPCC 5.0 is designed to enable users to train staff more effectively with features such as the Quality Management optional module with which a supervisor can record calls with server-based recording and call rating.

http://www.frontrange.com

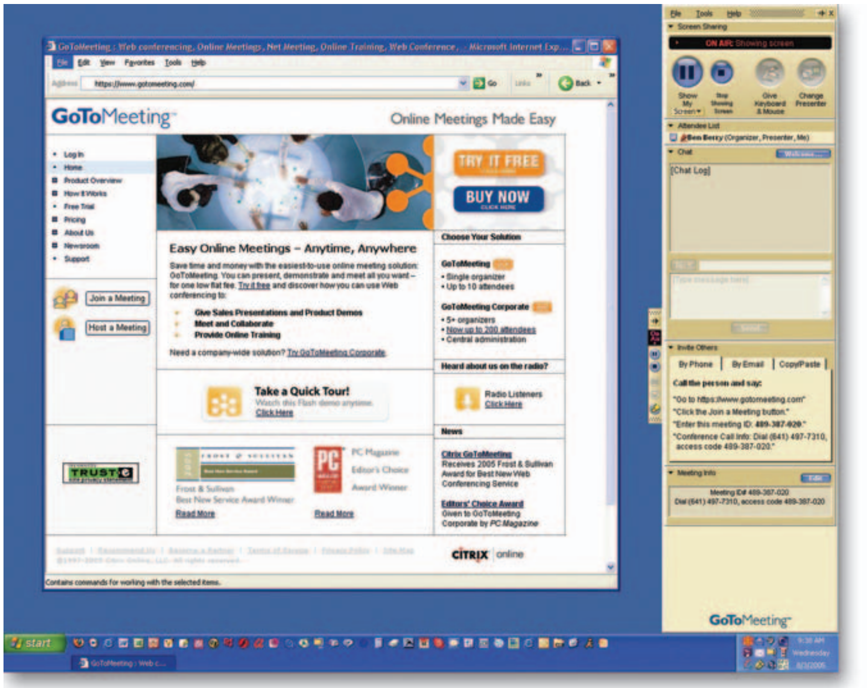
Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

Citrix Unveils GoToMeeting 2.0

Recording and playback, application sharing and drawing tools are among the new features available in **Citrix** (news - alert) GoToMeeting version 2.0. The online meeting and collaboration solution offers flat-fee pricing. Citrix GoToMeeting 2.0 provides tools for conducting online meetings, training sessions and group presentations. Enhancements include the following: desktop recording and playback; annotation tools; specific application sharing; attendance reporting; developer's tool kit; and Lotus Notes integration.

Citrix GoToMeeting 2.0 is available in two versions: Citrix GoToMeeting is for individuals and small businesses that require a single-user account and up to 10 meeting attendees; and Citrix GoToMeeting Corporate is for larger businesses that need reporting and administrative functionality, a minimum of five user accounts and up to 200 attendees per meeting through an optional event-license feature.

http://www.citrix.com



Macromedia Provides Solution For Online Events

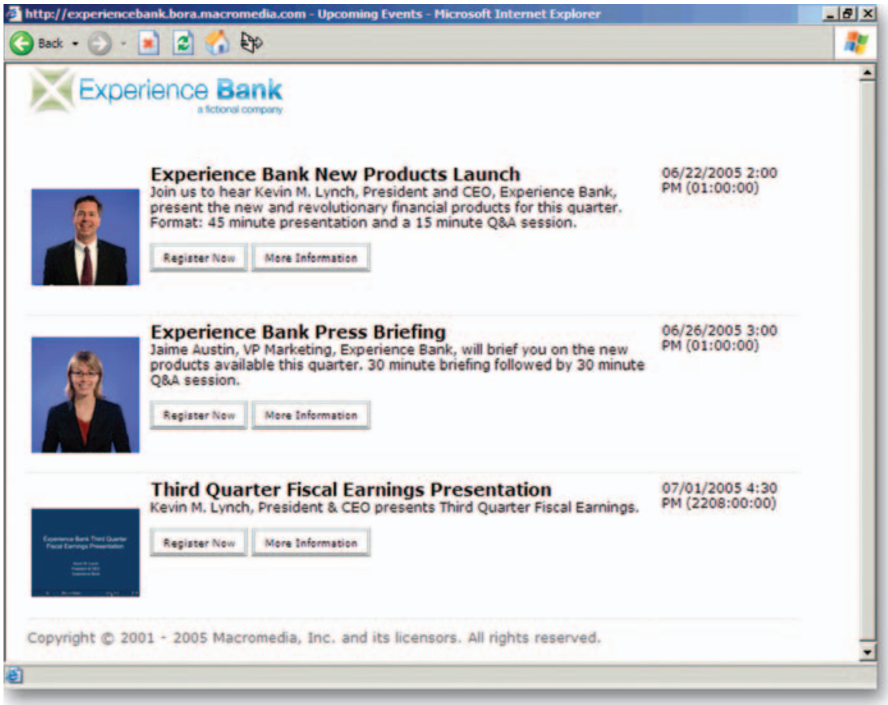
Online-communications software provider **Macromedia, Inc.** (news - alert) has announced the availability of an all-inclusive Web event solution, providing customers with the opportunity to create, host and manage a Web seminar while eliminating travel and external event expenses.

Macromedia Breeze supports data exchange with a company's marketing and CRM system, enabling the import of prospect contact information, registration and attendance tracking, and the export of results to CRM systems for sales follow-up.

The solution includes an online seminar room within Macromedia Breeze for up to 2,500 participants, event management and tracking capabilities and event consulting services for marketing professionals.

Anyone with an Internet-connected PC can instantly join any Breeze event. Breeze is deployed using Macromedia Flash Player and is installed on more than 98 percent of browsers worldwide. No special downloads are needed.

http://www.macromedia.com


http://experiencebank.bora.macromedia.com - Upcoming Events - Microsoft Internet Explorer
Back
Experience Bank
a fictional company

Experience Bank New Products Launch
Join us to hear Kevin M. Lynch, President and CEO, Experience Bank, present the new and revolutionary financial products for this quarter. Format: 45 minute presentation and a 15 minute Q&A session.
06/22/2005 2:00 PM (01:00:00)
Register Now | More Information

Experience Bank Press Briefing
Jaime Austin, VP Marketing, Experience Bank, will brief you on the new products available this quarter. 30 minute briefing followed by 30 minute Q&A session.
06/26/2005 3:00 PM (01:00:00)
Register Now | More Information

Third Quarter Fiscal Earnings Presentation
Kevin M. Lynch, President & CEO presents Third Quarter Fiscal Earnings.
07/01/2005 4:30 PM (2208:00:00)
Register Now | More Information

Copyright © 2001 - 2005 Macromedia, Inc. and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

Web-Based Customer Service

NetSuite Announces v10.6

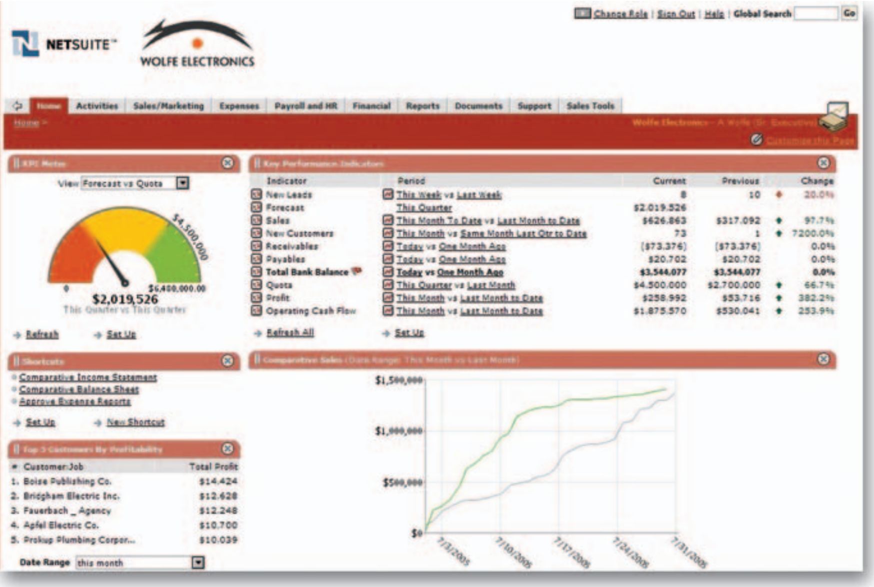
Business management software provider **NetSuite, Inc.** (news - alert) has announced version 10.6 of its flagship product.

The new release enables users to perform complex business functions that change data without regenerating the browser page, to extend NetSuite with any application and to integrate with widely used applications such as Microsoft Office and Google Maps.

The product targets small to medium-sized businesses (SMBs).

NetSuite provides companies with the ability to manage all key business operations in a single, integrated system, which includes CRM, order fulfillment, inventory, finance and product assembly, e-commerce and Web site management, as well as employee productivity. Because NetSuite is delivered as an online service, there is no requirement of hardware, up-front license fee or complex setups.

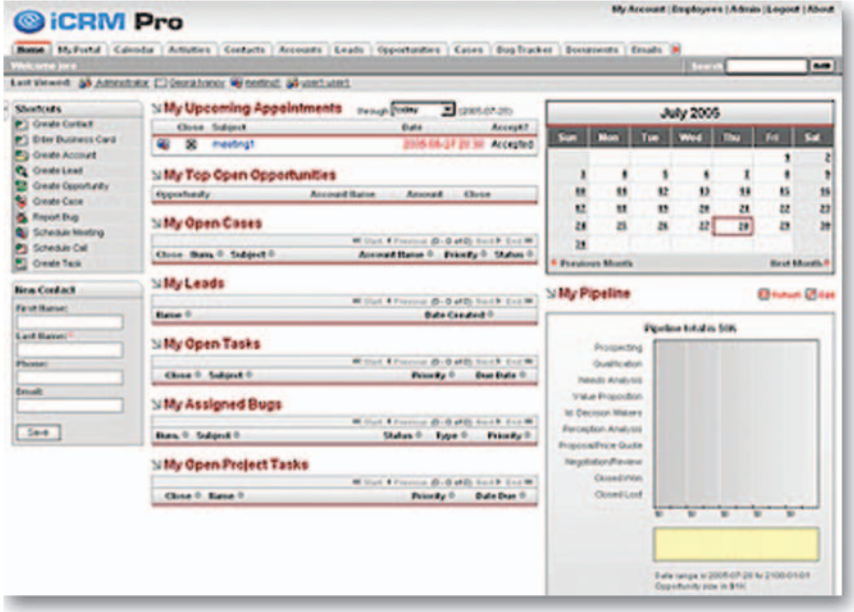
http://www.netsuite.com


Change Role | Sign Out | Help | Global Search Go
NETSUITE
WOLFE ELECTRONICS
Home
Activities
Sales/Marketing
Expenses
Payroll and HR
Financial
Reports
Documents
Support
Sales Tools
KPI Meter
View Forecast vs Quota
$4,500,000
0
$6,400,000.00
$2,019,526
This Quarter vs This Quarter
Refresh
Set Up
Key Performance Indicators
Refresh All
Set Up
Shortcuts
Comparative Income Statement
Comparative Balance Sheet
Approve Expense Reports
Set Up
New Shortcut
Top 5 Customers By Profitability
Date Range this month
Comparative Sales
$1,500,000
$1,000,000
$500,000
$0
7/3/2005
7/10/2005
7/17/2005
7/24/2005
7/31/2005

Indicator	Period	Current	Previous	Change
New Leads	This Week vs Last Week	8	10	20.0%
Forecast	This Quarter	$2,019,526		
Sales	This Month To Date vs Last Month to Date	$626,863	$317,092	97.7%
New Customers	This Month vs Same Month Last Qtr to Date	73	1	7200.0%
Receivables	Today vs One Month Ago	($73,376)	($73,376)	0.0%
Payables	Today vs One Month Ago	$20,702	$20,702	0.0%
Total Bank Balance	**Today vs One Month Ago**	**$3,544,077**	**$3,544,077**	**0.0%**
Quota	This Quarter vs Last Month	$4,500,000	$2,700,000	66.7%
Profit	This Month vs Last Month to Date	$258,992	$53,716	382.2%
Operating Cash Flow	This Month vs Last Month to Date	$1,875,570	$530,041	253.9%

Customer:Job	Total Profit
1. Boise Publishing Co.	$14,424
2. Bridgham Electric Inc.	$12,628
3. Fauerbach _ Agency	$12,248
4. Apfel Electric Co.	$10,700
5. Prokup Plumbing Corpor...	$10,039

On-Demand Solutions


iCRM Pro
My Account | Employees | Admin | Logout | About
Home
My Portal
Calendar
Activities
Contacts
Accounts
Leads
Opportunities
Cases
Bug Tracker
Documents
Emails
Last Viewed:
Shortcuts
Create Contact
Enter Business Card
Create Account
Create Lead
Create Opportunity
Create Case
Report Bug
Schedule Meeting
Schedule Call
Create Task
New Contact
First Name:
Last Name:
Phone:
Email:
Save
My Upcoming Appointments
Close
Subject
Date
Accept?
meeting1
Accepted
My Top Open Opportunities
Opportunity
Account Name
Amount
Close
My Open Cases
My Leads
My Open Tasks
My Assigned Bugs
My Open Project Tasks
July 2005
Sun
Mon
Tue
Wed
Thu
Fri
Sat
My Pipeline
Prospecting
Qualification
Needs Analysis
Value Proposition
Id. Decision Makers
Perception Analysis
Proposal/Price Quote
Negotiation/Review
Closed Won
Closed Lost

Aplus.Net Offers CRM Hosting

Web hosting and design firm **Aplus.Net** (news - alert) has announced the launch and immediate availability of iCRM Pro, a CRM solution for small businesses that require a sales tool as well as hosting.

iCRM Pro features online tools for managing relations for both existing and prospective customers. The company promises businesses a shorter sales cycle, improved customer interaction and technical support, as well as fewer administrative and IT costs.

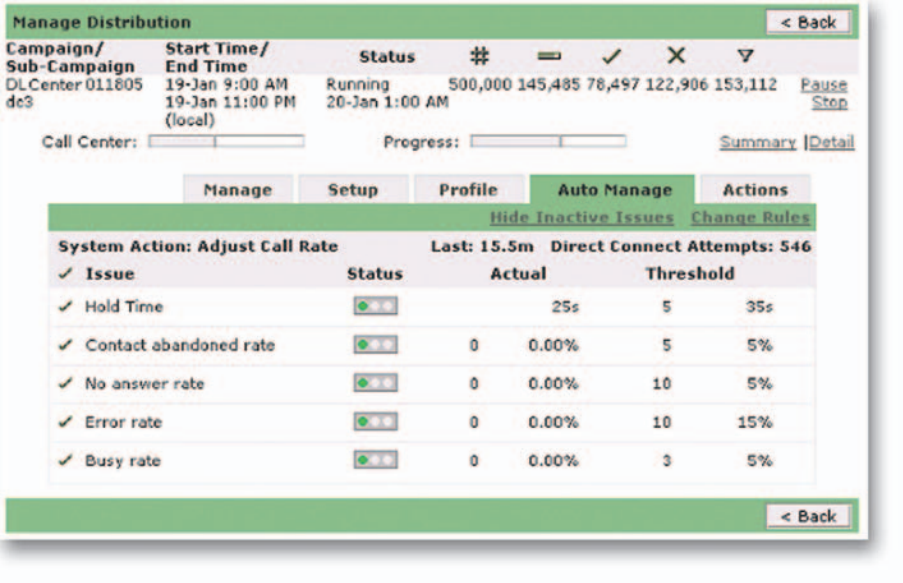
Customers using the iCRM Pro service will receive their own copy of the open-source **SugarCRM** (news - alert) product. Aplus.Net handles the installation and maintenance of the software, hosting the application in its data center.

http://www.aplus.net
http://www.sugarcrm.com

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

SoundBite Incorporates Call Flow Functionality Into Platform

SoundBite Communications, (news - alert) a provider of interactive voice message (IVM) applications, has announced the incorporation of AutoManage call-flow technology into its hosted, on-demand interactive voice messaging platform.



Manage Distribution
< Back

Campaign/ Sub-Campaign	Start Time/ End Time	Status	#	▭	✓	✕	▽	
DLCenter 011805 dc3	19-Jan 9:00 AM 19-Jan 11:00 PM (local)	Running 20-Jan 1:00 AM	500,000	145,485	78,497	122,906	153,112	Pause Stop

Call Center:
Progress:
Summary |Detail
Manage
Setup
Profile
Auto Manage
Actions
Hide Inactive Issues
Change Rules

System Action: Adjust Call Rate Last: 15.5m Direct Connect Attempts: 546

✓ Issue	Status	Actual		Threshold	
✓ Hold Time	● ○ ○		25s	5	35s
✓ Contact abandoned rate	● ○ ○	0	0.00%	5	5%
✓ No answer rate	● ○ ○	0	0.00%	10	5%
✓ Error rate	● ○ ○	0	0.00%	10	15%
✓ Busy rate	● ○ ○	0	0.00%	3	5%

The AutoManage functionality monitors call connection rates, ring and hold times and other campaign call-flow parameters without requiring automatic call distributor (ACD) integration. It also automatically adjusts outbound call rates to optimize agent productivity, minimize hold times and increase campaign results.

The AutoManage feature controls how calls flow during a campaign according to additional predefined parameters. With the AutoManage functionality, SoundBite's IVM platform can automatically adjust to specific conditions in real time, without interrupting a campaign.

AutoManage call flow is exclusive to SoundBite's OnDemand Customer Communications platform, which is an ASP-based, Web-hosted solution that allows companies to instantly deliver interactive voice messages to their customers, empowering them to respond immediately. The platform provides "pay-as-you-go" use; unlimited personalized calling capability; automated, real-time access and management of campaigns; the ability to directly connect with an agent; and automated self processing.

http://www.soundbite.com

Still using old fashioned, outdated Do Not Call Compliance technology?
Contact Center Compliance can help you get with the times.
• Real Time Compliance
• Safe Harbor Protection
• Existing Business Relationship support
• Daily Wireless Portability Updates
CONTACT CENTER COMPLIANCE
The intelligent, modern solution.
CONTACT CENTER COMPLIANCE WWW.DNC.COM
www.DNC.com
866-DNC-List (866-362-5478)

Soffront Offers Concurrent (Floating) User Licenses To On-Demand CRM Customers

Soffront Software Inc., (news - alert) a provider of enterprise and hosted CRM software for the midmarket, has announced its offering of concurrent (floating) user licenses to its on-demand (hosted) customers, reducing the monthly cost for most customers.

Scenarios in which concurrent user licensing is beneficial include support centers that operate on more than one shift, international operations with facilities in different countries (and time zones) and companies with significant numbers of occasional system users.

Until Soffront offered concurrent licensing, users either needed their own license, which increased costs, or had to share licenses, preventing the ability to track, monitor and schedule activities individually.

http://www.soffront.com

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

Brix Networks Announces Customer Care Solution For Residential VoIP Service Providers

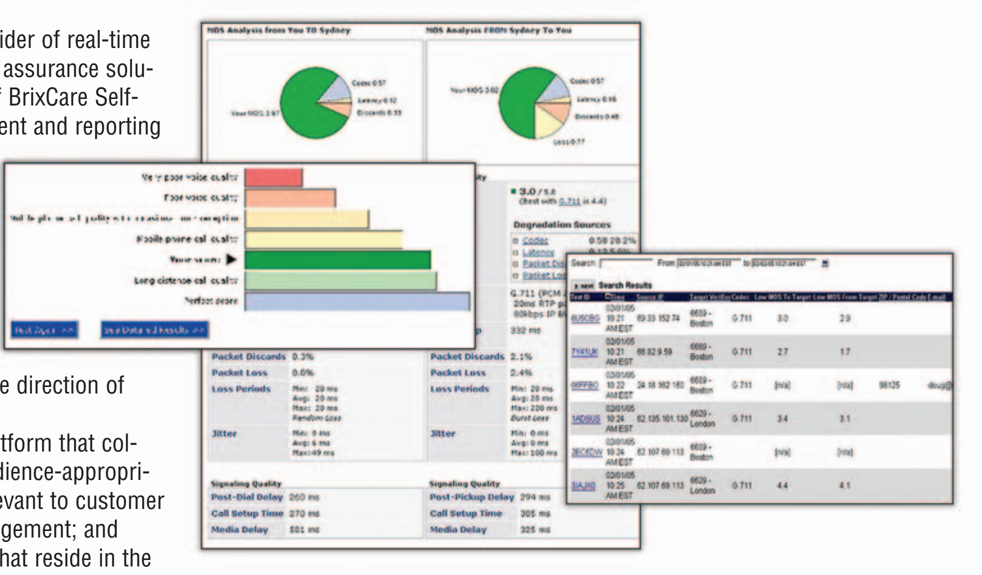
Brix Networks, (news - alert) a provider of real-time performance management and service assurance solutions, has announced the availability of BrixCare Self-Service, a new VoIP quality measurement and reporting application that is designed to help service providers cut subscriber acquisition and support costs.

BrixCare Self-Service consists of three primary components:

On-demand VoIP Agent, a digitally signed, lightweight Java applet that is downloaded to a subscriber's PC, either in self-service mode or at the direction of a customer service representative;

Central Management Software, a platform that collects information and presents it in audience-appropriate formats that are actionable and relevant to customer service reps, NOC engineers and management; and

Brix Verifiers, hardware appliances that reside in the provider's network for terminating test calls and measuring VoIP call quality.



BrixCare Self-Service can be used as both a pre- and post-sign-up application. The applications measure several signaling quality metrics, including the time for each call-setup phase and complete call-setup time, and also provides delivery of quality diagnostic metrics, such as latency, packet loss and jitter.

http://www.brixnet.com

Customer Experience Management

QAS Releases QuickAddress Pro Web 5.0

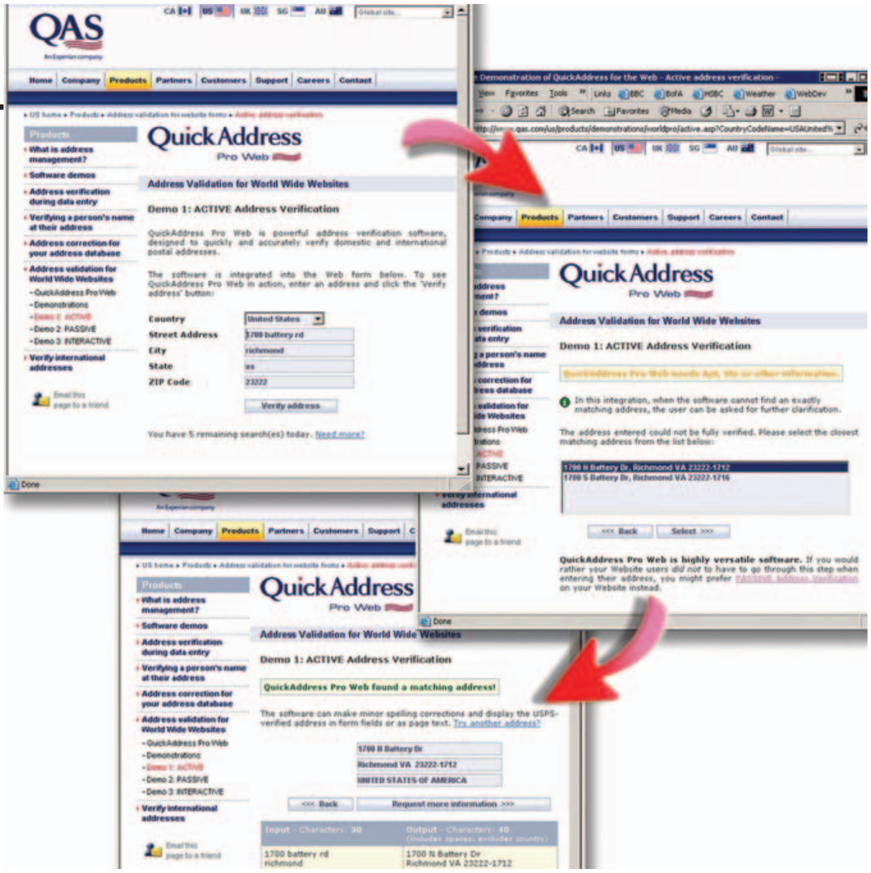
QAS, (news - alert) a provider of address data quality software, has announced the release of QuickAddress Pro Web 5.0, which validates addresses against official U.S. Postal Service and 17 worldwide postal authority records during entry over Internet, browser-based and thin-client applications.

Along with automating the entry of valid addresses, the latest version is designed to be more scalable and compatible with a wider array of programming standards.

QuickAddress Web 5.0 enables customers to validate their own addresses while ordering from a company Web site.

The latest version of QuickAddress Pro Web incorporates "drop-down" ranges of valid addresses that are provided after a few keystrokes. Also, QuickAddress Pro Web 5.0 extends the QuickAddress validation functionality to intranet and extranet environments.

http://www.qas.com



Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

KANA Announces Midmarket SRM Express, IQ For External Content Search, Enterico Partnership

Service resolution management solutions provider **KANA Software, Inc.** (news - alert) has announced its new solution set for the midmarket as well as a new partnership with **Enterico**, (news - alert) an IBM value-added solution reseller division of Continental Resources Inc.

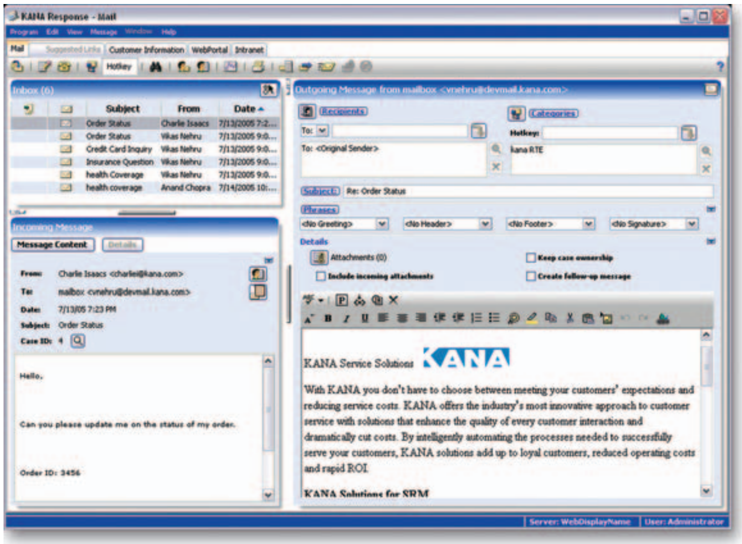
KANA's new SRM Express Suite of solutions is designed to offer midmarket companies the ability to improve customer service and satisfaction rates while reducing costs.

The company has also announced the availability of KANA IQ External Content Search (ECS), an additional option for customers using the company's KANA IQ solution for enterprise knowledge management and customer service optimization.

KANA IQ ECS allows customer service agents to discover and create new content by automatically "crawling" through content stores, identifying content and making it easily searchable. The solution leverages retrieval methods such as category search, parametric search and taxonomy search to find key information. This results in faster and more accurate resolution of customer inquiries while reducing contact center costs.

Through its channel partner program, KANA leverages its partners for their industry experience and expertise. Companies of this size traditionally have between five and 50 agents focused on handling e-mail and online service requests. More than half of consumers (54.3 percent) use e-mail to contact customer service, with 6.3 percent doing it at least once per week, according to Forrester Research, Inc.

http://www.kana.com
http://www.enterico.com


KANA Response - Mail
Program Edit View Message Window Help
Mail
Suggested Links
Customer Information
WebPortal
Intranet
Hotkey
Recipients
Categories
Phrases
Details
Message Content
Details
Server: WebDisplayName
User: Administrator

Inbox (6)

Subject	From	Date
Order Status	Charlie Isaacs	7/13/2005 7:2...
Order Status	Vikas Nehru	7/13/2005 9:0...
Credit Card Inquiry	Vikas Nehru	7/13/2005 9:0...
Insurance Question	Vikas Nehru	7/13/2005 9:0...
health Coverage	Vikas Nehru	7/13/2005 9:0...
health coverage	Anand Chopra	7/14/2005 10:...

Incoming Message

From: Charlie Isaacs <charlie@kana.com>
To: mailbox <vnehru@devmail.kana.com>
Date: 7/13/05 7:23 PM
Subject: Order Status
Case ID: 4

Hello,

Can you please update me on the status of my order.

Order ID: 3456

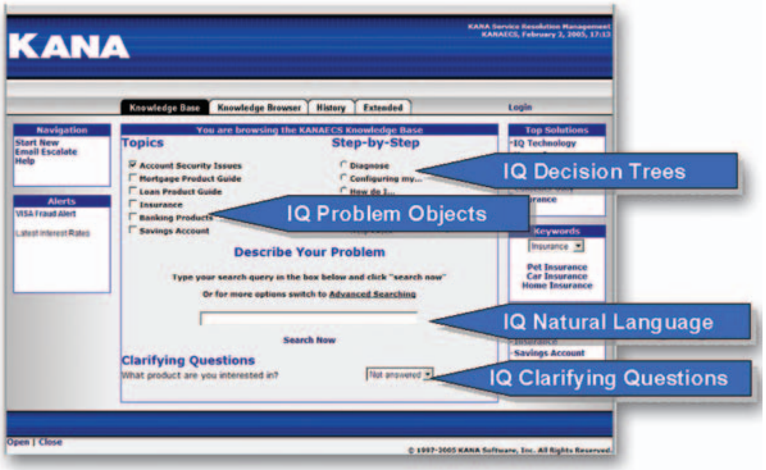
Outgoing Message from mailbox <vnehru@devmail.kana.com>

To: <Original Sender>
Hotkey: kana RTE
Subject: Re: Order Status
<No Greeting> <No Header> <No Footer> <No Signature>
Attachments (0)
☐ Include incoming attachments
☐ Keep case ownership
☐ Create follow-up message

KANA Service Solutions KANA

With KANA you don't have to choose between meeting your customers' expectations and reducing service costs. KANA offers the industry's most innovative approach to customer service with solutions that enhance the quality of every customer interaction and dramatically cut costs. By intelligently automating the processes needed to successfully serve your customers, KANA solutions add up to loyal customers, reduced operating costs and rapid ROI.

KANA Solutions for SRM


KANA
KANA Service Resolution Management
KANAECS, February 2, 2005, 17:13
Knowledge Base
Knowledge Browser
History
Extended
Login
Navigation
Start New
Email Escalate
Help
Alerts
VISA Fraud Alert
Latest Interest Rates
Top Solutions
IQ Technology
Keywords
Insurance
Pet Insurance
Car Insurance
Home Insurance
Savings Account
Search Now
Open | Close
IQ Decision Trees
IQ Problem Objects
IQ Natural Language
IQ Clarifying Questions

You are browsing the KANAECS Knowledge Base

Topics
☑ Account Security Issues
☐ Mortgage Product Guide
☐ Loan Product Guide
☐ Insurance
☐ Banking Products
☐ Savings Account

Step-by-Step
○ Diagnose
○ Configuring my...
○ How do I...

Describe Your Problem

Type your search query in the box below and click "search now"

Or for more options switch to Advanced Searching

Clarifying Questions
What product are you interested in? Not answered

© 1997-2005 KANA Software, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Amae Software Offering Performance Console

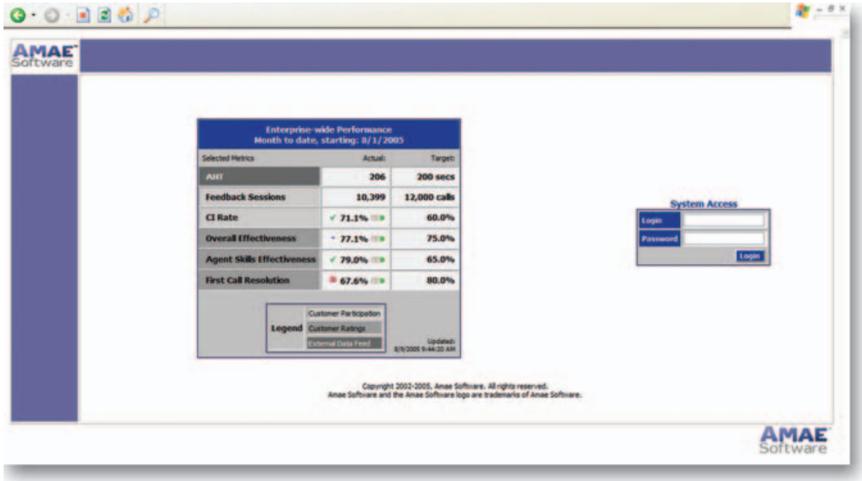
Amae Software, (news - alert) a provider of performance and customer experience management software, has announced the deployment of the Amae CI Suite Performance Console.

The component of the Amae CI Suite is configured to display management metrics regarding companywide customer experience results and productivity analytics.

Results and performance relative to goals are graphically displayed in real time on the Amae CI Suite launch page. No user license is required for accessing the Amae CI Suite launch page.

Users can login from the Performance Console and drill down to the drivers of performance and customer experience for change.

http://www.amaesoftware.com


AMAE Software
System Access
Login
Password
Login
AMAE Software

Enterprise-wide Performance
Month to date, starting: 8/1/2005

Selected Metrics	Actual:	Target:
AHT	206	200 secs
Feedback Sessions	10,399	12,000 calls
CI Rate	✓ 71.1%	60.0%
Overall Effectiveness	77.1%	75.0%
Agent Skills Effectiveness	✓ 79.0%	65.0%
First Call Resolution	● 67.6%	80.0%

Legend: Customer Participation / Customer Ratings / External Data Feed

Updated: 8/9/2005 9:44:20 AM

Copyright 2002-2005, Amae Software. All rights reserved.
Amae Software and the Amae Software logo are trademarks of Amae Software.

Customer Experience Management

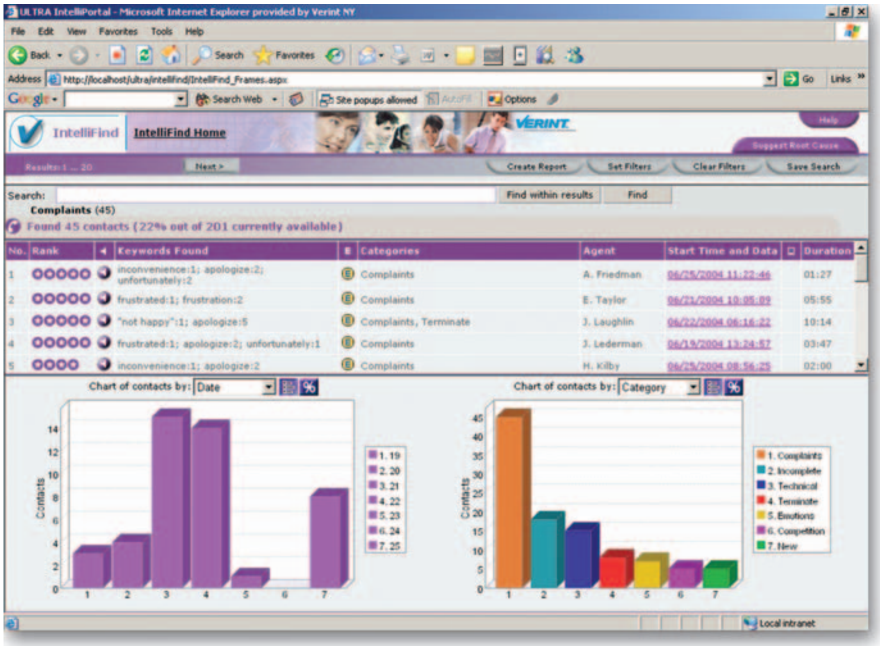
Verint Announces ULTRA IntelliConnect Offerings

Verint Systems Inc.,(news - alert) a provider of analytic software-based solutions for communications interception, networked video security and business intelligence, announced the availability of ULTRA IntelliConnect, a new set of open standards-based integration offerings for its ULTRA solution.

ULTRA IntelliConnect delivers prebuilt integrations to vendor solutions such as CRM, customer surveys, workforce management, knowledge management, performance management and business intelligence. ULTRA IntelliConnect integrates data with the intent to deliver more powerful analytics through a 360-degree view of agents, contact centers and the enterprise. It aims to power more effective scorecards and reports, richer data mining and more effective call content categorization, all to reduce administration and improve operational workflow across contact center and enterprise applications.

In other news, Verint, in cooperation with **Stroudwater Contact Point** (news - alert) , **Concerto Software** (news - alert) and ***Customer Inter@ction Solutions*** magazine, is hosting two free educational, half-day seminars on how to transform contact centers into strategic profit centers through performance optimization. The two days of seminars are September 22, in Prouts Neck, ME; and September 23, in Sturbridge, MA. Speakers include Stroudwater President and CEO Bill Hunt; Concerto VP Performance Optimization Bob Kelly; Stroudwater Director, Organizational Systems Development, Elizabeth Reuthe; and Verint Director of Business Analytics Daniel Ziv. TMC's Group Editor-in-Chief Rich Tehrani will be addressing the crowd with a special welcome. Both days will begin with breakfast. Registration online is required.

http://www.verint.com
http://www.stroudwater.com
http://www.concerto.com


ULTRA IntelliPortal - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by Verint NY
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Back Search Favorites
Address http://localhost/ultra/intellifind/IntelliFind_Frames.aspx
Go Links
Search Web Site popups allowed AutoFill Options
IntelliFind
IntelliFind Home
VERINT
Help
Suggest Root Cause
Results:1 ... 20
Next >
Create Report
Set Filters
Clear Filters
Save Search
Find within results
Find
Local intranet

Search:
Complaints (45)
Found 45 contacts (22% out of 201 currently available)

No.	Rank	◂	Keywords Found	E	Categories	Agent	Start Time and Data	☐	Duration
1	○○○○○	●	inconvenience:1; apologize:2; unfortunately:2	E	Complaints	A. Friedman	06/25/2004 11:22:46		01:27
2	○○○○○	●	frustrated:1; frustration:2	E	Complaints	E. Taylor	06/21/2004 10:05:09		05:55
3	○○○○○	●	"not happy":1; apologize:5	E	Complaints, Terminate	J. Laughlin	06/22/2004 06:16:22		10:14
4	○○○○○	●	frustrated:1; apologize:2; unfortunately:1	E	Complaints	J. Lederman	06/19/2004 13:24:57		03:47
5	○○○○	●	inconvenience:1; apologize:2	E	Complaints	H. Kilby	06/25/2004 08:56:25		02:00

Chart of contacts by: Date
Chart of contacts by: Category

Contacts
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
14
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1. 19
2. 20
3. 21
4. 22
5. 23
6. 24
7. 25
Contacts
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1. Complaints
2. Incomplete
3. Technical
4. Terminate
5. Emotions
6. Competition
7. New

Services

Convergys Completes Deloitte Deal

Convergys Corporation (news - alert) , a provider of customer care, human resources and billing services, announced the acquisition completion of the Finance and Accounting Business Process Outsourcing business of **Deloitte Consulting Outsourcing LLC** (news - alert) , a subsidiary of **Deloitte Consulting LLP**.

Deloitte Consulting Outsourcing's F&A BPO business provides finance and accounting outsourcing services to clients in industries such as communications, retail and professional services. It offers business processing and technology services supporting clients from "procurement to payment," including financial reporting, reconciliations, budgeting and treasury management functions.

http://www.convergys.com
http://www.deloitte.com

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

INFONXX, ScanSoft, Soleo Partner

INFONXX, (news - alert) a provider of directory assistance and enhanced information services, has partnered with both speech and imaging solutions provider **ScanSoft** (news - alert) and systems-integration company **Soleo Communications** (news - alert) to create and deliver speech technologies.

ScanSoft is providing its solution to allow customers use of speech recognition power to receive directory information from the largest of databases. The technology provides INFONXX with the foundation to deliver additional value-producing features. By coordinating the development of the network and messaging gateways, features, implementation and integration of applications through INFONXX's VoIP network architecture, Soleo is connecting customizable services to the customer through INFONXX and the carrier.

INFONXX's speech-enabled recognition technology broadens the options to carriers and corporations looking to better their callers' needs. Through the solution, all listings in the directory data are available. Callers can also be connected to an operator at any time.

Carriers and corporations can connect to INFONXX's VoIP backbone architecture through multiple networking technologies, including the public switched telephone system, virtual private networks or VoIP.

http://www.infonxx.com
http://www.scansoft.com
http://www.soleocommunications.com

Loquendo Offers VoxNauta 7.0

Speech technology company **Loquendo** (news - alert) has announced the availability of its new, optimized voice platform solution, VoxNauta 7.0. The product is designed to provide the optimal exploitation of Loquendo TTS, Loquendo ASR and Loquendo Speaker Verification technologies.

The renewed architecture of Loquendo's software-only voice platform is the result of a redesign that incorporates customer feedback and the latest functionalities released with Loquendo vocal technologies.

The new architecture aims to offer an optimal dynamic allocation of Loquendo vocal technologies and provide increased reactivity in terms of barge-in and dialog management.

http://www.loquendo.com

ATTENTION VENDORS!

Send your **News** and **Product Releases** via e-mail to **cispress@tmcnet.com.**
Whenever possible, please include high-resolution (minimum 266 dpi) color graphics (.BMP, .EPS, .TIF, or .JPG).

their idea

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

our endless possibilities

INTERACTIVE INTELLIGENCE®
Deliberately Innovative

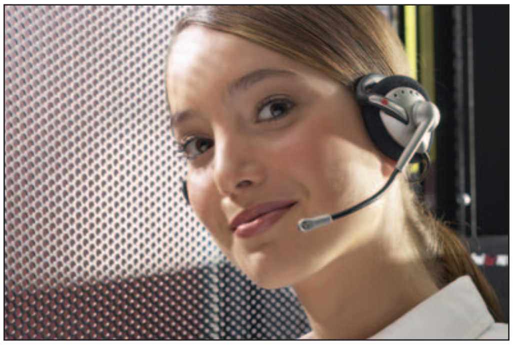
"Thinking outside the box" is so cliché. And so outdated. After all, no two businesses have ever been alike, and never will be. It's the same thing for interacting with customers...which is why we unwrapped the box years ago. **Complete yet flexible software solutions for the Contact Center and IP Telephony enterprise, backed by a decade of innovation and experience.**

It's what we do.

For more information, visit our website. | www.inin.com | 317.872.3000

Optimizing Agents In An E-Services Environment

As Online Services Gain Momentum, Agents Play A More Critical Role Than Ever



> "E-mail volumes are expected to reach 82.3 billion per day by the end of 2007." *–The Radicati Group*

The analysts at Radicati Group didn't say how many of those e-mail messages are expected to be business related, but there's a good chance a few billion of them will flow in and out of contact centers, along with Web chats, call-back requests, escalations to live agents, FAQ auto responses and other online transactions as more and more consumers cozy up to their computers to contact and interact with businesses.

For as popular as e-services have become, and for as much as automation can easily off-load tasks such as FAQs and customer inquiries, historically reserved for agents, the fact is today's consumer nation still wants the telephone and fax machine to coexist with Web and e-mail contact options. That means the helpful agent on the other end of a phone call must now also be able to type responses in a Web chat and author e-mail answering those which the customers send in. Moreover, supporting online and automated services in a multichannel contact center requires the right collaborative software and knowledge management tools — as well as business and *process* planning that doesn't just include agents, but highlights them, their skills and the overall role they play in an e-services environment.

E-services can absolutely have a strong and powerful impact on most contact centers, but the effective use of a combined e-services agent model is the most likely success scenario for the foreseeable future. Call it the need for human interaction, or simply the theory that no person will ever be fully replaced by technology. If your contact center wants to be competitive in the e-services arena, remember that agents are still your most valuable asset.

Doing What The Dotcoms Didn't

Although they had the right idea in targeting a growing online market, most dotcoms lacked the business plans, marketing savvy and customer service know-how to sustain their initial momentum. The bigger problem, though, was that many dotcom startups somehow forgot about phones (and fax machines) still being viable customer interaction channels, and they never thought twice about a call center and factors such as knowledge management tools.

Turn your attention to traditional brick-and-mortar businesses and contact centers. Now with a much better grasp of online services and the customer experience, they've planned e-services strategies that align with their business and customer service initiatives as a whole. The successful ones have also enhanced Web capabilities or launched new ones to offer Web chats, call-back requests and escalations, in many cases supplementing other services like IVR and speech-enabled applications. They've also implemented e-mail and knowledge management systems to handle customer inquiries and automatically respond to FAQs, and tied everything together with CRM and interaction tracking systems.

Unfortunately, while many contact centers have maintained a focus on an agent's role within a combined multichannel/e-services environment, many others have miscalculated where their agents actually fit in.

Multichannel Gatekeepers

In Forrester Research's September 2003 report, "Contact Center Investments Require Internal Modifications to Generate Savings," analysts predicted that automated customer self-service options could reduce a contact center's operation costs up to 90 percent and could increase revenues anywhere from two percent to 18 percent *per transaction* — good news. Many contact centers that have implemented self-service automation as part of their e-services offerings are indeed seeing better numbers in earnings statements.

Still, self-service automation is only one component of the e-services environment. And e-services are only one component of the overall multichannel approach to customer service. That is, full-service contact centers using a multichannel communications platform must still queue and route phone calls and faxes along with e-mail and Web contacts. More than ever, they also need agents who are skilled — and equally equipped — to handle each interaction type. Therefore, adding collaborative software and knowledge management tools to an agent's arsenal becomes more crucial in optimizing your agent workforce as multichannel gatekeepers.

Agent Optimization: Completing The E-Services/Multichannel Loop

Think of "disconnected" as the operative word here. Even when contact centers integrate e-services on the customer end, they don't always connect the dots at the agent end. Some agents are tasked with e-mail, some handle Web chats, others are relegated to the telephone and Web call-back requests, or

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

maybe agents are simply segmented into workgroups to manage each specific type of interaction. Depending on a contact center's operational framework and process flows, such agent arrangements might well be effective.

But agents who work across channels to handle all media types — non-real-time as well as real-time — are better suited to provide service continuity and upsell or cross-sell to a customer; for instance, one who sends an e-mail (non-real-time) and then calls afterward with a follow-up question (real-time). Also, with collaborative software and knowledge management tools at their fingertips, such as pre-authored response statements for Web chats and e-mail, agents can speed interaction times rather significantly. Doing so multiplies a contact center's opportunities to handle more interactions and, in turn, generate more revenue.

In fact, thousands of contact centers have already fit e-services into the multichannel agent equation — and are thriving because of it. Yet because thousands of other contact centers are still trying to find the balance between phone calls, self-service automation and positioning agents to manage e-services interactions such as Web chats and call-back requests, they still have some homework to do. Translated, they need to complete the multichannel loop and put agents on center stage to offer consistent, personalized customer service across all media channels.

Succeeding At E-Services

Let's look at some of the most common issues that keep a contact center from fully utilizing agents in e-services situations — along with the multichannel processes and collaborative software and knowledge management tools that can take online options and customer service to world-class levels.

"Island" technologies and agent tools. Many contact centers simply aren't able to optimize agent talent in an e-services environment because the technology they use forces them to segregate e-mail agents from Web site agents from phone service agents. Many agents also aren't equipped to manage escalated interactions or tie interactions to customer data for search and retrieval later. Even if agents do cross over and learn multiple systems, their tools are often separate and leave no way to measure agent performance across all media types.

Fortunately, pre-integrated solutions such as the Interactive Intelligence Customer Interaction Center (CIC) and its e-FAQ knowledge management application eliminate the multi-system island approach with a single, multichannel platform and application suite. CIC also integrates to today's most popular e-mail and CRM systems and consolidates agent tools for call control, Web contact management and e-mail, as well as knowledge management, in a single desktop interface for agents and supervisors alike.

Better yet, both CIC's multimedia queuing and its skills-based routing allow a contact center to process all media types, elevating agent productivity by assigning multiple interaction types simultaneously to leverage an agent's skills per media type. And remember the pre-authored response statements for Web chats and e-mail? CIC additionally allows agents to simply point-and-click to offer rapid suggested responses for non-phone interactions.

Inconsistent service levels across media types. Whereas multichannel options to call, send a fax, initiate a Web chat or get a FAQ auto response can endear customers to your contact center, they can't reasonably expect to know where or how their interaction or inquiry was routed internally if agents don't have the collaboration tools they need to handle multiple media types.

For example, a customer requesting a Web chat wouldn't expect to receive a call-back if an agent can't participate in chats. And if the agent can't pick up the chat or transfer the customer to an agent who can, that customer might easily get the impression he or she shouldn't expect a response on any media type chosen. So the customer gives up on trying to contact you, subsequently never returning. The same thing goes for agent workgroups assigned to a particular media type. Again, say a customer sends an e-mail and calls to follow up. An e-mail workgroup might or might not process the e-mail at the same time another agent is processing the customer's follow-up phone call regarding the e-mail. The result is a disconnection in service — and a customer experience that is far from satisfying.

For streamlined, consistent service, agents should have desktop access to tools for each media channel, along with the ability to hold, transfer, escalate and even re-queue all media types whenever necessary (all of which is offered in the Customer Interaction Center software).

No tracking for multiple interaction types from a single customer. Compounding the problem of the same customer leveraging multiple media types for interaction is a lack of interaction tracking; or, more specifically, tracking a customer's various interactions across channels back to their contact history, account information, CRM record, etc. Go back to the customer who sends an e-mail and then calls regarding the inquiry he or she sent; agents across a contact center can't search for that customer's e-mail, retrieve it and resolve the problem appropriately while the customer is on the phone. Instead, the customer must start over and duplicate inputs or repeat details of the inquiry to a different agent.

The best solution, therefore, is one such as CIC's pre-integrated Interaction Tracker application to track customer/agent interaction histories back to all media types, as well as to a customer's CRM record for instant retrieval and shorter resolution times. CIC's screen recording feature for non-phone interactions also allows transaction-oriented e-services centers to record and retrieve all interaction types linked to a customer's account information.

Insufficient supervisory monitoring, agent measurement and quality scoring. Along with tracking all interaction types, the

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

ability to monitor more than only phone calls is critical in an e-services environment. For agents, that means being able to process e-mail messages and still view and track other interaction types from that same customer. Supervisors also must be able to see all customer interactions — regardless of media type or the agent processing them — and must have the proper tools to score agents on quality and compliance. By scoring how an agent interacts on a Web chat as well as on a phone call, supervisors can more accurately measure each agent's performance and assign media types that optimize that agent's skill set.

The Final Word

The Web-based and automated self-service options that make up e-services have introduced a whole new dynamic for contact centers, allowing them to more effectively attract and retain customers and raise revenues. However, with all of the multichannel contact options on which customers insist, e-services require an even greater level of agent involvement across all channels to give customers the personalized service they deserve. By combining collaborative software and knowledge management tools with the proper planning and a continued focus on "one customer, one agent view," contact centers can successfully extend e-services to their customer base and prosper even more financially as a result.

Peggy Gritt is Senior Director, Product Marketing, for Interactive Intelligence Inc., a global developer of software for contact centers and the enterprise since 1994. Interactive Intelligence has offered its Customer Interaction Center (CIC) application suite since 1997 and its e-FAQ solution for e-services automation since 1999, and today remains an innovator of e-services applications. Contact Interactive Intelligence at 317-872-3000 voice and fax, or visit http://www.inin.com for more on the company's complete suite of IP contact center and self-service solutions.

Customer Service, Buffet-Style

We all prefer choices. We don't want to be backed in to having to do one thing over the other if we can choose to have it one of several ways; or better yet, more than one way chosen from several. We all have different tastes and preferences. Some people like potato chips with their sandwich, while others prefer French fries or onion rings. Some even prefer a mix of fries and rings. When we go to a diner, we want to pick which side order we get. That's also why buffets are so popular. We can pick from amongst a selection. We have a choice.

That's also the way in which customer service should be offered: via the customer's choice.

Some customers like their customer service dealings to take place over the phone, while others prefer communications via fax, e-mail or Web chat. Some people enjoy self-service over speaking directly with an agent. Multichannel services are becoming more prevalent in organizations' customer service offerings, as well as in contact center solution providers' products. This is for the customer's sake, for without the customer, what have you? This is especially the case for contact centers; who else will the contact centers be *contacting*?

When providing a multichannel environment for e-services or customer service, the approach must be process-centric, allowing to seamlessly automate and enable the customer service processes. The multiple service channels/media types must also offer a unified view for agents and agent groups, adding up to an organized and more satisfying overall customer experience. Internal collaboration is essential. Otherwise, the customer may have to repeat already-given information when switching to an agent handling a different channel. If agents in a center are separated by way of which channel they handle, the e-mail agent must know what information the customer gave to the phone agent, etc. With this come customer-data tracking, recording and retrieval. When a customer calls or e-mails an inquiry, the agent — *any* agent — must be able to immediately pull up any past interactions the customer has had with previous agents.

As the accompanying article offers as example, "today's consumer nation still wants the telephone and fax machine to coexist with Web and e-mail contact options." That means the on-the-interaction agent needs to be able to multitask his or her talents and tools. The agent must be able to handle Web chat, e-mail, fax and phone — perhaps not all at once on one customer contact, but often one channel immediately after the other and so on. Blending and balancing agents across channels offers numerous positive potentialities, including optimal agent usage, which can raise productivity, resulting in better-quality service for customers; and freeing agents from the wearied boredom relative to handling a single channel, thus raising agents' job satisfaction and resulting in lower workforce turnover.

Offering customers the option — the *choice* — of several channels for assistance, and doing so in a blended and unified way via optimized processes and agents, can surely provide better customer experiences. Of course, taking your customer service to the multichannel environment in such a manner is *your* choice.

Now, let us move on to the buffet.

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

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

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

M1 Global

Presenter

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.

Register Today!
http://www.tmcnet.com/webinar/m1global/

Sponsored By: TMC INTERNET TELEPHONY www.itmag.com M1 Global www.m1global.com CustomerLinx www.customerlinx.com Powered by interwise

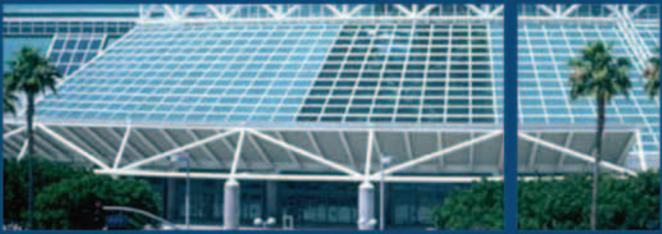
TMC

INTERNET TELEPHONY CONFERENCE & EXPO

The VoIP Authority Since 1998

NEW VENUE!

Los Angeles Convention Center



VoIP 2.0 Witness the Telecom Revolution

October 24-27, 2005 • Los Angeles Convention Center • www.itexpo.com

Networking

Conferences

Tracks for

Service Providers:

- Service Provider Summit **New!**
- VoIP Peering Summit
- IMS Summit **New!**
- IPTV Summit **New!**
- WiFi Telephony Summit
- Conferencing & Collaboration Summit **New!**
- Mobility Summit **New!**
- Consumer VoIP Marketing Summit **New!**

Tracks for

Enterprises, Government, SMBs:

- Large Enterprise VoIP Deployment Workshop
- Enterprise/Government Solutions
- WiFi Telephony Summit
- IP Contact Center Summit
- Conferencing & Collaboration Summit **New!**
- Mobility Summit **New!**

Tracks for

Developers:

- IP Telephony Development
- SIP Workshop
- Open Source Summit
- WiFi Telephony Summit

Plus: ·VONEXUS· *Presents*

Reseller Solutions Day!

Keynote Speakers Include:

Michael Powell,
Former Chairman of the FCC

Carly Fiorina,
Former CEO of Hewlett-Packard

Niklas Zennström
CEO & Founder of Skype

Brad Garlinghouse
Vice President of Yahoo!

Tom Burger,
President, CEO & Director, NEC

Additional Keynote Addresses By: Nortel, Juniper Networks, Aculab, Lucent Technologies, Deloitte & Touche LLP, Inter-Tel, Toshiba, Vonexus, Siemens, Cisco, Microsoft, Interactive Intelligence and Digium

Diamond Sponsor: NEC

Platinum Sponsors: INTER-TEL ·VONEXUS· NORTEL POLYCOM TOSHIBA aculab Lucent Technologies

A Conference Program So Thorough and Valuable That It's Guaranteed!

Convergys: From Outsource Provider To Global Full-Service Outsourced Solutions Provider

Customer Inter@ction Solutions recently interviewed John C. (Jack) Freker, president of the Customer Management Group at Convergys Corporation.

John C. (Jack) Freker

Jack Freker has a clear message for those in the call center industry who believe offshoring will solve every problem.

"We don't think [offshore] is the panacea," he said. "It's part of the balanced solution that we bring to our clients. We believe that every solution should include a high degree of technology and disruptive process fix to help either cut costs or improve the quality of the solution. We think it's important to have a full mix of solutions — onshore, offshore and a technology solution."

The $2.5 billion company has worked to change its business model "from just an outsource provider of North American seats ... to a global full-service provider of ... outsource solutions, consulting and professional services around the contact center space, software support [and] speech recognition," he said. "Largely, what we're focusing on these days is helping people gain more information from the customer interaction centers in creating knowledge centers out of them that allow them to help fix upstream broken processes.

"It's not just a 'lift and shift' where we're going to take your process and just run it more productively. We're going to take speech recognition and help send 20 percent of the calls to an automated solution because they never should have been with a rep anyway. A percentage of those calls need to go to the onshore, whether it's the United States, Canada or other nearshore markets, for subject matter expertise. Maybe it's the business clients versus a consumer client."

The bottom line: the offshore element needs to fit within the entire mix.

"We don't think it will be 100 percent of calls," he said.

And for those who still think offshoring is a panacea, Freker warns that startups are slower in other locations than those in the U.S. "It takes a couple of months to three months to get to the same point in a ramp in terms of quality," he said. "The accuracy, the efficiency is typically there."

Quality, however, is a different matter.

"The quality tends to relate more to understandability of the calls versus the ability to resolve the calls," he said.

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

The company, which has seven call centers in India and five in the Philippines, has clients in more than 60 countries speaking 30 languages, though Convergys primarily serves English-speaking customers. The company has more than 70 call centers and handles almost two million contacts per day (handled by the Customer Management Group), not including those coming in via speech recognition or e-mail.

Freker added that providing an opportunity for advancement is crucial to offshore success. "We're strong believers, offshore, to build the right culture and the right perception of career development," he said. "Agents and the managers should be able to look to the highest ranking people offshore as people from their native country."

"They get a lot of help from the U.S. — people doing assignments, maybe a month or two, [but] they tend to be lower-level people helping just get projects up. But the person who has led India for the last five years was an Indian native. The person who leads our Philippines operation is a Filipino native. It's not a dead-end road for a junior team leader who may want to aspire to be a VP. He doesn't have to be an American to succeed in the organization."

Freker also had some criticism for "those companies that aren't doing it the right way," as "they are damaging the reputation and damaging the results overall that come out of the offshore market."

And what is the right way of handling the offshore sector of the industry? Freker said his firm "just [does] a better job of readiness" than anyone else in the industry. "We interview more selectively than anyone," he said. "In terms of our take rate, it's the lowest percentage of anyone that I know of, and a lot of numbers are shared and a lot of recruiters ... are used by a number of providers over there. There's a handful of large recruiters that help bring the candidates to the call centers and we are known as the most selective. Over half of the people who don't make the cut with Convergys are hired very quickly [by] many of the other competitors."

Freker described a minimum three weeks of assimilation and "a very sophisticated" proprietary accent training program.

"No one hits the phones without going through the full training from soup to nuts," he said. "We try to mitigate the biggest issue and that's the understandability issue when they hit the phones. When they're finally ready to hit training for the software, for the product, for the services, we have bridges over to the States built that many other — particularly the Indian companies — don't have built.

"We have our own people from Convergys, who are subject matter experts on the ground, who are helping virtually get these projects up. We can bring subject matter experts over to help ... deliver training, develop course curriculum or help when the agents hit the floor after training with a smooth transition into a ready state."

All of this, Freker said, translates into low turnover. "It makes the people faster [and] better," he said. "You get better quality people. There are a number of companies ... trying to take shortcuts that put people [in place] who aren't ready either for language skills or who aren't trained properly, and so you get what you pay for and that puts a damper on the perception of the entire offshore market."

Becoming involved in the offshoring sector, according to Freker, meant "evolving from a North American infrastructure to a global scale" infrastructure. "We have one of the largest implementations of offshore call centers," he said. "We have 10,000 people in India." Four years ago, the company had no employees in India.

"We have over 5,000 people in the Philippines," said Freker. Two years ago, the company had no presence in the Philippines.

"We took the learning from India and scaled it quickly in the Philippines," he said. Challenges for the firm include ensuring that clients have a ubiquitous experience around the globe. "If their call is handled ... anywhere, they [must] get the same experience and the same kind of resolution and the same kind of customer delight," he said.

There are also various support challenges involved in the endeavor.

"We have some very complex and sophisticated technology needs that go along with that, [including] being able to deliver the calls to the right place at the right time to the right skilled agents," he said. "And ... being able to ensure that you're able to track the quality and make improvements in quality in real time."

Freker added that IP contact center technologies have "allowed us to scale very quickly offshore to the 10,000 mark in India.

"There are some calls that are good calls. There are people who want to buy something or want to buy more of something else. They're trying to resolve a fix on a computer."

He then described other calls coming in "that are really reflective of a number of broken processes within our client companies, and we're helping them categorize those and understand what the drivers are and helping them increase the satisfaction of their customers and fix those problems upstream."

A targeted group of verticals are served. The largest include the communications, financial services, cable, technology and consumer sectors. The government and healthcare businesses have been expanded, and all of the care and sales calls for the U.S. Postal Service are handled by Convergys.

When asked of to-be-pursued vertical markets, Freker mentioned healthcare. "As we age, we're going to see more spending here [and] more new solutions that occur in the space, so this is very much right in the bull's eye of our targeted industries," he said.

Regarding home agents, Freker was asked if the home agent segment eliminated the need for the offshore component: "No, for a couple of reasons."

But he did say that the home agent potentially has a role to play in the industry.

"In terms of cost, it's somewhere between North America total cost and offshore total cost," he said. "It's not quite as high as North America because you don't have all the capital expenditures and all the assets associated with it and the heavy management. But in terms of offshore, it's not quite as economical, but there are tradeoffs. If you can maximize your quality for slightly higher costs, then some clients are going to find that very attractive. There are quality buyers, there are cost buyers, there are value buyers. It depends on what your client is looking for."

“What of the many people who are at home?” Freker was asked. If they had a desire to work a full eight-hour shift, they’d probably be doing that or are already doing it, he responded. “Many home agents today also work a day job, so they’re free at night to work the home agent shift and they may be making between $10 and $15 an hour based on productivity,” he said. “You may not be able to get them to work an entire eight-hour shift. There are others who could work more time ... but there are other things that are keeping them at home, whether it’s children or maybe there’s not a desire to work a full 40-hour shift.”

Freker added that “you would need more people if you were to staff all of your needs with home agents. You’re talking about exponentially more people to fill the demand.”

The cost of training and the return on investment both are issues involved in the home agent space. “How do you train the people on complex programs?” he asked. “If people only want to work 12 to 13 to 14 hours per week, does it pay off to spend X dollars to train them when you’re only getting Y output? It’s part of the balanced solution that the top-tier companies have to be thinking about.”

Freker didn’t pull any punches when asked to outline the industry’s greatest needs: “I don’t think, as an industry, the outsourcers are doing enough in the area of helping the clients be better in this area. I think the solutions are all too basic. I think the thinking is way too short-term. It’s too much, ‘let’s stay alive by trying to sign a short-term deal for whatever margin necessary to win that deal.’ Those who are commoditizing themselves are going to be in real trouble, are going to go out of business or be purchased. That’s a real concern because it puts a damper on the entire industry.”

He believes experience and stability at the highest levels give Convergys a clear marketplace advantage. “We’ve been around 30 years [and] the average tenure of our organization at the VP and director level is over 10 years with Convergys,” said Freker, who has been with the company for 13 years. “It allows you to make fewer mistakes. It allows you to do things better, to get things up and running faster.”

He added that the “same kind of heavier tenure” can be seen throughout the ranks of the customer care, human resources and billing services provider — into the manager and senior manager level as well as in the team [leaders] and even down to the agents. “It allows this knowledge to be shared more broadly and we don’t have new people training new people, or new people to Convergys, trying to show the Convergys way,” he said. “It is a true differentiator and it does help us create just a better product and a better service overall. I feel as though some of the companies [that] don’t have this to rely on — either the ability to have higher standards or the ability to put more resources against it ... they’re trying to compete with one arm behind their back.”

Wall Street appears to be in support of the “Convergys way,” with the stock up from $12.80 as recently as June 24th to $14.27 on August 8th.

For more information about Convergys, visit http://www.convergys.com. **CIS**

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

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

Sell More Products and Services

TMC® WEBINARS

Market Through Education with TMC’s Webinars

What are TMC Webinars?

- Complete turn-key events. TMC handles the promotion and registration, and sets up the technology.
- Hour-long, web-based topical seminars with live streaming audio and video.
- Webinars are interactive: Moderators ask and answer questions, fully engaging with attendees.

What does TMC Provide?

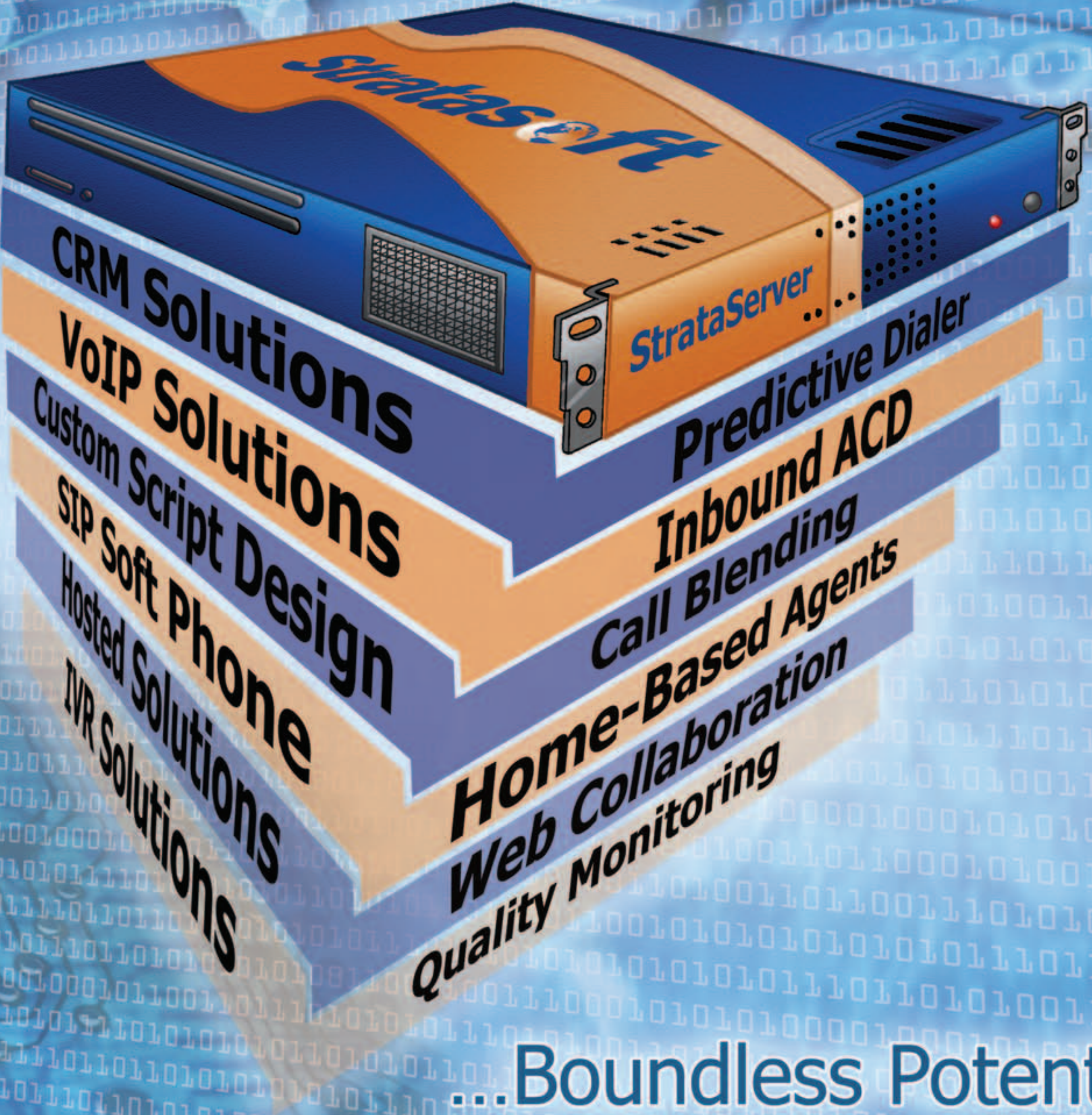
- **Pre-event marketing:** Advertisements—Web and print, customized registration page and customized E-mails.
- **During event:** A moderator from TMC, along with an industry expert and your company’s executive, will speak.
- **Post-event:** Receive all registration information and a follow-up e-mail to registrants.

TMC will provide a turn-key Webinar for your company. A partnership with TMC gives you the edge you need to create an event that will generate sales leads for your products and services.

Quality Lead Generation | Reach Key Decision Makers | Increase Product Awareness | Position Company as Leader in Field | Turn-key Marketing Program

© 2005 Technology Marketing Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

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
Home-Based Agents
Web Collaboration
Quality Monitoring

...Boundless Potential

Since 1995, Stratasoft has developed essential contact center software for today's most demanding companies in over 28,000 seats worldwide. Contact Stratasoft today to learn more about our unified contact center solutions.

800-390-1157 info@stratasoft.com www.stratasoft.com
6401 Southwest Freeway, Houston, TX 77074

Stratasoft

Optimizing The Inbound Phone Channel To Better Reach Your Customers

Chances are your company views customer interactions with your inbound phone channel as a matter of reducing pain, rather than increasing gain. Inbound call centers can be expensive to maintain, and automation is often applied as a "Band-Aid" to keep certain crucial transactions under control, including call routing and basic customer information requests. For customers, the experience is similar. Most have come to expect the usual routine of navigating a touch-tone menu tree and then waiting on hold. Frequently, this translates to a frustrating experience for high-value customers, as well as any others. But not all customers are created equal. Let's look at two sample customers from the area of retail finance. One has a mortgage, a healthy savings balance and multiple checking accounts. The other is a first-year college student with $42.19 in a basic checking account. When both customers try to reach 1-800-ABC-BANK, they'll hear identical messages. If you just realized this level of "blanket" treatment for all inbound callers represents a missed opportunity for better service and increased revenue, then you've made an important step toward understanding how CRM can work for your business and your inbound phone channel.

By Dave Holsinger
Apptera

The ability to improve the efficiency of a call based on a customer profile, or some other demographic, is a powerful business tool. CRM software vendors have been providing this capability to call center agents and Web sites for years, but such tools have only recently begun to find their way into automated call center solutions. Obviously, the ability to insert content into a call flow requires a degree of flexibility nonexistent in many legacy interactive voice response (IVR) systems. However, the emergence of open standards, such as VoiceXML, (define - news - alert) for inbound call center automation has brought a significant opportunity for personalization of the caller experience. Call flows are no longer set in stone, now easily lending themselves to dynamic customization.

A simple example from the area of retail finance is the choice of appropriate cross-sell or upsell messages for the two callers briefly described above. One is an established banking customer with several accounts and substantial income; the other is a new customer with a single checking account. Reaching these two customers with appropriate messaging could be based on retrieving a profile, for example, from an existing CRM database, or simply from a set of business rules applied to available balances and account types. To a financial institution, however, there are sales opportunities relevant to both callers. One customer is likely to purchase high-revenue investment products, while the other represents a potential long-term customer who has yet to make use of additional banking services. Even by offering the most basic services, such as a savings account with automatic transfers, the bank might earn revenue on an otherwise unprofitable customer.

Of course, these are well-known

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

premises to anyone with an understanding of basic marketing concepts. CRM has certainly created the potential to understand customers and to analyze behavior across different media to best tailor the enterprise's attempts to reach its customers with the most critical parts of its message. What remains missing in many automated solutions, however, is an integration of available data about customers as part of a holistic approach to customer contact across all available channels, especially the phone.

Surprisingly enough, messaging within a call is generally not regarded by callers as intrusive or solicitation as long as it fits with the overall context of the call; that is, as long as it pertains to products and services relevant to the caller. For example, a recent survey sponsored by a major call center hosting service revealed that companies with call center cross-sell or upsell programs showed a significant increase in caller satisfaction. The key to success here is that the targeted messaging to customers must appear to enhance the caller's level of service or service options of interest. Doing this, rather than simply inserting blatant solicitations, follows the same pattern of good service practices that might be offered by a live operator. Callers expect human operators to have a basic understanding of their relationship with the company, their previous concerns and even buying preferences. A targeted message simply brings this feeling of being understood into an automated solution, rather than creating the impression of a "hard sell" which will likely go unnoticed by most callers.

Be aware, though, that callers will respond negatively to being presented with unsolicited or irrelevant information. An untargeted message such as, "Can I interest you in signing up for a Gold Card today?" is not likely to appeal to either of our two sample callers. Each of them will have a different, but equally negative, response. The high-income caller likely already holds several credit cards, while the new, young customer may not even consider himself or herself credit worthy. Both will rightly perceive this message as an intrusion or an annoyance. Remember that, unlike a graphical medium such as the Web, it is impossible to "overhear" a promotional message in the way that one can overlook a banner ad.

Understanding callers does not necessarily mean selling or messaging; however, businesses that can anticipate user calls and the reason for those calls are best positioned to respond to the unique needs and interests of their customers. Callers always have a primary motivation for reaching out to a busi-

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

ness, yet most call centers force all incoming calls to self-screen and sort themselves into neat groupings by categories that follow the logic of the business, not of the caller. It is hardly surprising that as many as 30 percent of callers will immediately press "0" in an attempt to directly reach an agent when presented with an automated menu. Here again, maintaining a caller profile can dramatically improve the caller experience by eliminating unnecessary menu items or by preempting customer requests for information.

Take another case study from insurance call centers. Many callers will have questions about claims status, or they may want to file a claim. Those customers with existing claims will almost certainly have called at least once within a recent time frame (30-90 days). Simply tracking the frequency with which a certain caller (identified by ANI, or "caller I.D.") has been in contact, the system can match that caller against a profile, determine if there is a pending claim and present an appropriate status message. This not only reduces call center costs, decreasing average handling time for calls, for example, but again provides the customer with the feeling that he or she has been heard, understood and appropriately accommodated for his or her time investment.

This type of high-touch approach to callers reflects what has become standard for self-service on the Web. Many consumers have learned that basic inquiries, such as payment due dates or bill amounts, can best be handled through a company's Web site. The majority of customers, even Web-savvy consumers, nevertheless use the phone for certain types of interactions; specifically, those types that are more urgent or complex. Why then would a business intentionally push such callers into an automated system that will, more than likely, frustrate them, by having them experience long hold times? Of course, no enterprise wants its callers to have this experience, yet this remains the overwhelming perception of the call center by most consumers.

The key to breaking the outdated perceptions of automated phone-based service lies in bringing personalization and profiling to sophisticated, voice-automated solutions. Until recently, however, this was a difficult — and, understandably, low-priority — task for most businesses with a call center. Prior to the advent of standards-based telephony platforms, call center applications required extensive custom coding, and the focus of most businesses was on implementing technologies such as CTI screen-pops and skills-based routing, rather than on integrating sophisticated back-end systems to the automated telephony interface. Indeed, the automated portion of the call was really only a necessary evil, required to route callers and collect basic information before passing calls to a human operator.

VoiceXML, which has been deemed one of the enabling technologies for the newest round of automated voice systems, changes this by allowing speech and telephony applications to run using the same infrastructure as a company's Web site. Pages both are delivered from Web servers and use the same interfaces to back-end data. This model means that the same technologies which bring customer data to the Web can now bring that same level of personalized data to the telephone. Calls can now incorporate alerts, customize menu options and even retain preferences in the same way that a Web site would when you first login to your account. Call flows have been broken free of the model of static lists of options.

Interestingly, the phone channel has, for the most part, remained isolated from the Web more for historical reasons rather than for any conscious business decisions. Even though more than 90 percent of all customer service transactions still take place over the phone, there continues to be a perception that the phone can never serve as an effective channel for service automation. In many cases, the phone should remain a privileged channel with a reduced level of automation simply because callers expect some degree of human interaction and agent availability. However, businesses can still strive to reduce the need for human interaction by preempting the caller's original intent. And again, the key to achieving this through automation is by applying as much personalization and background knowledge to the call as available technology will allow.

Businesses can still strive to reduce the need for human interaction by preempting the caller's original intent.

Personalization is not only possible in automated call center solutions, it is now being actively deployed by forward-looking enterprises as a viable alternative to reduce costs, retain customers and generate additional revenue. The factors that have previously worked as barriers to a unified view of customers have now been removed. There is no longer anything hindering the power of today's "phone channel" as a complement to the other automated solutions used by many of today's enterprises. **CIS**

As the pioneer of v-Business, Apptera (http://www.apptera.com) helps businesses intelligently automate and personalize each customer interaction, generating a dynamic and unique experience for callers and ensuring the optimal balance of service excellence, higher revenues and cost savings. Apptera works with enterprises of all sizes to maximize their inbound phone channel to fully extract and understand the needs and interests of their customers, leveraging their profiles to create lasting loyalty and increased profitability.

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

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

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

Our professional, experienced Communicators deliver superior customer care and consistent revenue to increase your bottom line.

The InfoCision difference:

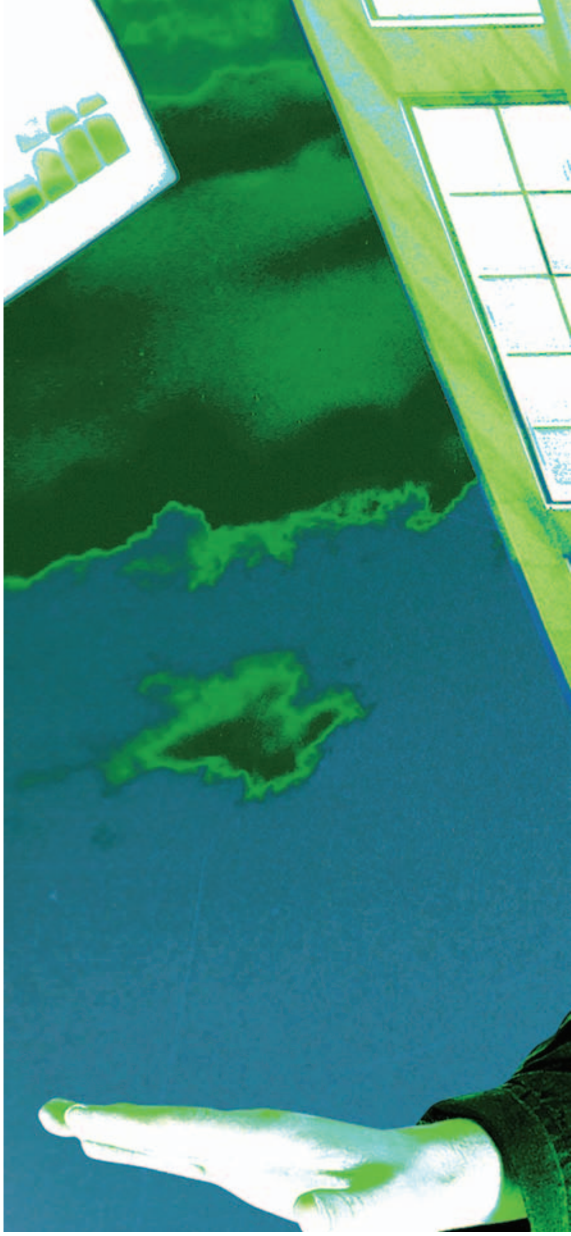
- ➲ ***Increased customer satisfaction***
- ➲ ***Higher return on investment***
- ➲ ***Domestic contact centers***
- ➲ ***Flexible pricing***

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

For more information, call 1-866-372-5959 or visit www.infocision.com

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

Integration: The Recipe For Success



Many companies are striving for a 360-degree view of their customers, a critical capability if an organization is going to effectively manage these relationships and achieve its goals. The problem is that this view is not easily achieved, because in most cases it is fragmented across multiple applications and databases from different departments within the organization (i.e., sales, marketing, customer service, etc.). In a perfect world there would be a single interface that would provide the user with this holistic customer view. In fact, some vendors claim to possess such capabilities in a suite product offering but in reality fall short on this promise, finding themselves with massive amounts of siloed customer information that ultimately impairs both their performance and that of their customers.

By Jonathan Tang
Salesnet

Now more than ever, companies are looking to have complete customer information at the tips of their fingers, in real time. This information can be anything from business challenges to order history and support incidences. Why is this information so important? Each piece presents an organization with an opportunity to better service its customers, ensure retention, upsell or cross-sell its solutions and services and, most important, the ability to ensure that each side achieves its business goals.

So where does this leave an organization looking to take control? What does it need to do in order to get this full view of its customers? The key to success is integration and finding a solution that can easily integrate with its entire IT/IS infrastructure to bring together all vital and fragmented information.

Integration: Becoming A Common Requirement

In the CRM world of the past several years, integration was not the number one priority. In many cases it was phase two or phase three of a rollout plan, with other areas taking precedence simply because the cost, complexity and time required to deploy an integrated solution was historically a major barrier. Companies also wanted to focus on more basic needs such as data collection and reporting. However, this has all changed in recent times, as the issue of integration has become more of an upfront implementation requirement.

The primary reason for this change is that the cost and time frames to implementation have dramatically decreased. With newer technologies available, companies can literally write several lines of code to have one application talking to another. On the business front, companies are finding it increasingly more difficult to retain satisfied customers. Many factors play into this struggle, chief among which is increased industry competition, as this competition gives customers an unprecedented number of solutions from which to choose. In today's world, if a customer is unhappy with the solution and the needs are not being addressed promptly because the vendor is either unaware of or unable to pinpoint the problem, a change can — and in most cases will — be made.

Customer retention is only part one of the equation. Now companies are also looking more to their current roster of customers for new revenue opportunities, aiming to upsell and cross-sell; to successfully do so, companies must have

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

all necessary customer information on hand. Integration is the only way to make this happen. With a fully integrated system, the company in question can identify and fully understand key information about that customer, including what and when the customer has made purchases (order entry), as well as when that customer had spoken with someone else within organization. For many organizations, this process is not an easy undertaking for the simple reason that different departments are using different applications that do not communicate or collaborate with one another.

Define Your Business Process

The first step a company needs to take when looking to achieve its holistic customer view is to define this business process. This means knowing the steps from suspect to prospect to, ultimately, customer, and also being aware of what happens at each point in the customer relationship. This information will dictate how the organization manages its prospects and customers. What are your customers' buying patterns? What products have they purchased from you? How often should you be in touch with your customer? Once these questions have been answered, the company then needs to look and see if its current technologies support and enable that process. Is your technology triggering follow-up reminders? Does your technology help you identify order history? To more fully align these processes with the needs of the customers, executives must do the following: review their business process, defining what the metrics that drive behavior are; then determine whether their technology can track the metrics; and eventually establish best practices from what they have learned. The combination of technology and best-practice business processes is something of which all companies should be mindful.

Best Of Breed: The Path To Successful Whole Product Solutions

With a clear understanding of the business processes, the organization then needs to identify the technology available to enable or automate the processes. The emergence in recent years of the new on-demand, or software-as-a-service (SaaS), model has answered the call by opening up a new world of opportunities for companies by making integration of their key databases and applications a snap. XML (define - news - alert) and open standards have also begun allowing companies to integrate disparate applications quickly and easily.

With this array of new options, each with its own unique benefit, more and

Celebrating Customer Service Week

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

If you lift the spirits of employees, the result should invariably be a rise in productivity and quality, as well as a drop in turnover and absenteeism. If you don't celebrate your quality employees' achievements constantly, at least celebrate them next month.

Customer Service Week was officially recognized by the United States Congress as a nationwide celebration in 1992. It is held each year during the first week in October, taking place this year Oct. 3-7. The celebration, having spread to Canada and the United Kingdom, includes thousands of participatory companies worldwide. The firms can be found in such sectors as financial, healthcare, insurance, manufacturing, retailing, hospitality, communications, not-for-profit and educational organizations, as well as government agencies, among others.

First held in 1988 by the International Customer Service Association, Customer Service Week allows companies and organizations to celebrate the accomplishments of their customer service staff as well as their customers. It is the perfect opportunity to focus on motivating, recognizing, thanking and rewarding your reps for their valuable service; to revitalize your training program; to ease your employees' stress; and, well, to have a week-long party.

For example, customer service representatives at Positive Promotions, an organization that provides employee gifts and motivational products, has celebrated with a toga-themed costume party, appreciation gifts, prize drawings, puzzles and games.

In the midst of festivities, however, companies' customers should not be forgotten. After all, there would not be a celebration of quality customer service without the customers themselves. Customer Service Week is a good time to reconfirm your dedication to customers and properly show them your appreciation. Be sure to send every customer a thank-you card and, when they're on the phone, thank them "for calling during Customer Service Week."

So go above and beyond to show appreciation of your quality customer service representatives. Bring in the massage therapists and break out the goofy hats, balloons, togas, karaoke, cake and punch, wine and spirits. Celebrating both your quality customer service staff and your customers lifts both groups' spirits. The week-long opportunity for festivities is rounding the corner: Oct. 3-7. **CIS**

---

more companies are implementing best-of-breed solutions into an existing infrastructure. Best-of-breed applications are those that address more specific needs such as sales force automation or customer support automation. This approach enables an organization to leverage both the latest solutions (from on-demand or SaaS vendors) on the market and the infrastructure already in place, thus maximizing its investments. In other words, with the best-of-breed approach there is no need to wipe out what the organization already has in place, whether it is an existing call center application or a contact management solution. This model also eliminates the need for a suite solution that not only adds costs to the bottom line, but delivers numerous features that ultimately sit on a shelf where they are of little or no use.

On-demand solutions such as for CRM present companies with an opportunity to ensure future successes. These solutions should not be looked at solely as an investment in technology, but rather a marriage between technology and a new way of doing business; a way and process that should increase efficiencies and effectiveness across the entire organization. The bottom line? Find a best-of-breed solution and integrate that to your current infrastructure!

The Final Step

When an organization has decided that it is time to get the full 360-degree view of its customer base, it has made its first step. However, what comes next is critical. First, do not take on too much at once. An organization that moves too fast may find itself with an unusable solution. An organization needs to be mindful of what it is looking to accomplish versus what the ultimate end users will experience. Is it making their lives easier or more complex? From your sales and marketing staff to your IT staff to your management, end-user adoption is the only true measurement for success. Further, each organization is different, so what worked for one might not be an exact fit for another. In many instances, each company uncovers its own unique method for leveraging a solid integration strategy.

Define your vision first. Technology is only as good as the vision one can create around it. When your vision has been identified and implemented, the organization will then have a complete view of a customer's touch points, from the initial close to ongoing support, from order management to account management. This view allows the company to correct areas of weakness and do so in a hurry, as well as leverage areas of success. **CIS**

As co-founder and president of Salesnet, (news - alert) Jonathan Tang is highly involved in many aspects of the company's daily business, as well as managing relationships with Salesnet's board of advisors, board of directors, and investors.

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

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

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

Your best connection to the U.S. Hispanic Market!

Teleperformance Mexico Group is the specialist in the U.S. Hispanic Market, having completed over 7 million hours of bilingual programs...currently with more than 2200 FTE's.

Now enhanced for you on **three shores**, each offering vendor-of the year-awarded contact center services:

On shore based in Texas, with best practices, inbound and outbound.
Teleperformance International

Near shore, bilingual contact center excellence, located in Monterrey Mexico for America's Fortune 500 companies.
Teleperformance Mexico

And your nearest **Off shore** solution, with high quality and the best value.
Teleperformance El Salvador

Teleperformance
GLOBAL TELEMARKETING & TELESERVICES SOLUTIONS

Our Offer:
- **Outsourced Contact Centers**
- **Inbound Costumer Care**
- **Outbound Sales & Service**
- **Direct Response**
- **Interpretation**
- **Tech Support**
- **IVR**
- **Voice Recognition**

for more information contact us...

Teleperformance International
6500 Int'l Parkway Suite 1500
Plano, Texas 75093
Telephone: (214) 750-3323
Cell: (214) 557-3517
Fax: (214) 750-3313
Email: jallen@tpinter.com
www.teleperformanceinter.com

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.

IP Contact Center Technology: Eliminating The Risks (Part VIII)

In today's competitive environment, customer service has become a key differentiator — and the most reliable barometer of business success. In fact, research across industries validates a *direct* connection between customer loyalty and business growth — with the loyalty leaders growing fastest in virtually every category.

Of course, *EVERY* company wants loyal customers. Very few, however, actually measure the customer satisfaction on which their business growth depends. Instead, traditional approaches to quality assurance measure customer satisfaction indirectly, by measuring "adherence" or "compliance" to company policies rather than actual customer sentiments.

This month we'll focus on the emerging discipline of Dynamic Customer Satisfaction Management (DCSM) and its implications for how customer satisfaction is both measured and delivered. One of the key innovations of DCSM is that it effectively addresses the problem of how to accurately measure customer satisfaction.

Traditional solutions don't provide reliable data on customer satisfaction, because they rely on metrics such as "how long you waited in queue," instead of whether or not you were actually satisfied with the overall quality of service you received. DCSM solves that problem by actually asking customers how they were treated. It measures customer satisfaction *directly* — with end-of-call and end-of-Web-transaction surveys which supplement traditional service-level data analysis. Prior to being routed to an agent, each customer is asked in advance to hold on at the end of his or her conversation with the agent in order to answer a satisfaction survey and qualify for some reward in exchange for doing so.

So how is this different than traditional quality assurance surveys?

First, DCSM surveys aren't only used to measure satisfaction levels on a historical basis. Solutions designed with DCSM act on customer feedback in real time — to rescue relationships and customer satisfaction as soon as they're jeopardized. Here end-of-call survey information is used to dynamically and automatically alert supervisors or overlay workgroups to immediate "customer relationship emergencies." DCSM also leverages call recording technologies, but instead of (or as a supplement to) random call reviews, now *all* calls can be "buffered" in real time and dynamically stored as recordings only when customers have expressed dissatisfaction with how they've been serviced. With DCSM, supervisors or overlay workgroups charged with rescuing customer relationships can not only be alerted in real time to a dissatisfaction event, they can also immediately listen to the call that triggered the poor review and decide what actions are warranted. Once he or she has context for the complaint, the supervisor can decide if the customer should be called back immediately with an apology and perhaps a special offer or discount on his or her last transaction. Another benefit is that, where appropriate, the agent can now be disciplined within minutes of the offending behavior instead of the weeks or months later as you would expect with a traditional survey application. The benefit is that agents who expect to be disciplined immediately following prohibited behavior are statistically less likely to engage in that behavior. This approach also empowers companies to focus their limited supervisor resources on listening to those specific call recordings that customers themselves have identified as problem transactions.

Of course, as part of the DCSM post-call survey, customers can also choose to *speak* to a supervisor, in which case those callers can be transferred with skills-based routing discipline to a dedicated overlay workgroup that specializes in repairing damaged customer relationships.

With DCSM, post-call customer feedback is also leveraged to establish "satisfaction service levels" — data that can drive agent compensation and bonuses. In addition, such survey information also provides richer data than are normally available to data mining and analytics applications; thereby empowering even greater ROI and productivity gains.

> Solutions designed with DCSM act on customer feedback in real time — to rescue relationships and customer satisfaction as soon as they're jeopardized.

With this set of tools, DCSM has pushed the envelope on what can be achieved by integrating "aftermarket" solutions to customer satisfaction challenges. The most effective DCSM solutions go beyond this threshold to deliver differentiated benefits that can be achieved only when DCSM is integrated-by-design into contact center infrastructure.

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

Next-Generation DCSM

As we briefly touched upon last month in our "routing strategies roundup," Dynamic Customer Satisfaction Routing takes DCSM to the next level by leveraging survey results to drive future ACD routing decisions. The customer feedback survey will not only initiate recovery procedures for low-scoring transactions, it can also automatically and dynamically update the agent's skill-rating in the area of customer satisfaction delivery. This means that customer-driven assessments can now be dynamically incorporated into weighted routing decisions, along with the traditional skills-based routing metrics described in last month's column. Now dynamically updated customer ratings can be considered along with supervisor skills-assessments for determining routing decisions on an automated basis.

Besides agent skills, relative proficiencies in those skills, and performance in customer satisfaction delivery, another dimension can also be included in DCSM-influenced routing decisions in order to maximize efficiency and customer satisfaction.

The Third Dimension

As noted above, the first dimension represents the corporate perspective on efficiency as reflected in the traditional skills-based routing algorithm. The second dimension is the customer perspective, which can now be considered as a weighted variable within the skills-based routing algorithm. The third dimension, if you haven't guessed it already, is the agent perspective.

With DCSM-compliant solutions, agents can define how much they like working on different types of calls, and their preferences can be taken into account by the ACD on a customizable, weighted basis along with the other two dimensions. As agents who like their work perform better and are less likely to leave for other jobs, factoring agent preferences into routing decisions simply makes sense. This multidimensional routing approach can maximize efficiency, increase customer satisfaction and enhance agent retention by taking the agent, customer and supervisor perspectives into account for *every* important routing decision. The alternative is one-dimensional thinking that arguably offers little to change the status quo in customer satisfaction delivery.

Clearly, enabling multidimensional routing requires the ability to dynamically alter skills-based routing algorithms in real time. This is a core attribute of Adaptive technology — a subject that regular readers of this column will be very familiar with. (For those who have missed any of our first seven columns, simply e-mail us and we'll be happy to send you copies of any you've missed.)

Another attribute of DCSM solutions is the delivery of feedback to agents from an education perspective and to provide motivation related to achieving performance goals that drive incentive-based compensation. An effective DCSM solution will provide dynamically updated satisfaction scoring data both for the individual agent and for the group as a whole. It should also "slice and dice" the data to provide such information as average satisfaction scores for the top quartile of agents, comparisons to other groups and/or corporate targets (particularly those that drive incentive compensation), etc. Agents should also have access to personal "satisfaction history" records, searchable by date range and individual campaigns, which enable agents to check aggregate reviews and drill down into specific survey responses to see where they went wrong. They can also see whether satisfaction was recovered by the supervisor or overlay group for alarmed transactions and listen to the recovery call to learn how that recovery was achieved.

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

The Emerging DCSM Paradigm Shift

Dynamic Customer Satisfaction Management is an emerging discipline that extends and merges CRM objectives with contact center communications infrastructure. While many basic DCSM solutions have been cobbled together on a custom basis by call centers focused on maximizing customer satisfaction, until recently there has been little if any access to solutions that are integrated-by-design into an IP contact center infrastructure. In its version 8 release, Telephony@Work introduced the concept of embedded Dynamic Customer Satisfaction Management, Dynamic Customer Satisfaction Routing and Agent Preference Routing into its CallCenterAnywhere multichannel IP contact center solution. Companies such as Siebel (news - alert), TELUS (news - alert), Telstra (news - alert) and MCI (quote - news - alert)will follow suit by rolling out these capabilities into their offerings.

Dynamic Customer Satisfaction Management is attracting corporate attention because it addresses the core challenge of how to maximize customer satisfaction and accelerate business growth — with automated processes that effectively deliver on corporate objectives without adding incremental costs.

Eli Borodow is the CEO of Telephony@Work, a provider of adaptive, multitenant IP contact center technology for contact centers and service providers. He can be reached via e-mail at eborodow@telephonyatwork.com.

Mike Betzer is Vice President of Call Center and Service products at Siebel Systems, the world's leading provider of customer-facing solutions for CRM, business intelligence and customer data integration markets. He can be reached at mike.betzer@siebel.com.

Kevin Hayden is the Director of Integrated Contact Center Solutions at TELUS Communications Inc., a tier-1 telecommunications carrier in Canada and a Canadian provider of hosted contact center services. He can be reached via e-mail at kevin.hayden@telus.com.

Customer Loyalty: An Unscientific Experiment

Anyone who reads my regular columns on TMCnet knows I use a personal scale for customer service, with Geico at the top and cable companies at the bottom. The delight I've gotten in being a Geico customer for the last several years culminated in a TMCnet article praising the insurance company. (Curious readers can view it at tmcnet.com/162.1). I received so much positive e-mail over the next several months, both from other happy Geico customers and from grateful Geico employees, I had to make a special folder in Outlook in which to store all the feedback. Geico itself was so pleased with my article, representatives sent me a stuffed Geico Gecko which resides atop my computer monitor.

Every cable company I've ever had, on the flip side, makes immigration procedures in third-world countries seem efficient and pleasant. The horror stories I've experienced with cable customer service are awful and epic and could fill a book. From my experience, these companies want to take your money but have zero interest in what you — as the customer — need, want or think. I've been a customer of my particular cable company for eight months. Both the cable modem and the cable television work, but the customer I.D. number I was given never seems to exist as far as the agent is concerned every time I call. When the agent gets bored by my queries about how I don't seem to exist in their system but do, in fact, get a bill each month (which seems somewhat curious to me), he or she usually disconnects me.

Customer loyalty shouldn't be a complicated concept for companies. I realize the huge disconnect between a company like Geico and a cable company lies in that Geico customers have a choice to go elsewhere, and cable customers are more or less stuck in the grooves of a monopoly, ensuring customer loyalty through default.

Do you know what the buzz is on your company's customer service? Before you can fix your customer relationships, you should know where you currently stand.

I did an experiment.

I went into Google.com and typed in the words "Geico sucks" to see how many hits I got. There were 611 instances. Then I did the same with my cable company and got a whopping 3,960 results. Lest you think that's not fair because the companies are different sizes, I did a little math, comparing percentages of complaints to revenues. I found that with most of the cable companies, while Geico had roughly half the revenue of the big name cable companies, it had an average of only 15 percent of the complaints. Unscientific? Yes, probably; cable companies have many more customers than Geico, as an insurance company's per-customer transaction dollar value will always be higher than that of a cable provider (though not for long if broadband rates keep rising).

I don't mean to pick on only cable companies or praise only Geico. There are many companies famous for their brilliant customer service (L.L. Bean) and many more that are notorious for erratic service (almost all wireless companies). But the poorly ranked customer service companies do have a bright side to look at: there's no direction to go but up. **CIS**

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

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

A smart way to get experience (not just knowledge) into the heads of your agents.

SĪVOX RealCall™

Knowledge is wonderful. But nothing beats experience. That's the difference SIVOX RealCall™ Full Immersion Simulations offers today's call center operations. Employees learn by doing, not by watching. Whether for pre-hire screening, call center or home agent training, employee assessment, or compliance and certification preparation, the SIVOX Agent Performance Suite is proving to be the most effective set of performance tools available today.

Agents gain interactive experience with your systems and customer scenarios before they ever take that crucial, first live call—using simulations based on your best practices, not canned, generalized scripts. SIVOX RealCall™ "hears" what the trainee is saying, responds with suggestions, steers the trainee along the best practices path and tracks trainee progress throughout the session.

A better return on your people investment

Research shows that when learners are interactively involved, they learn faster and retain more information to do a better job and close more sales. SIVOX customers are experiencing these results:

- 15% - 40% -- Reduction in Agent Attrition
- 10% - 25% -- Reduction in Initial Training Time
- 12% - 24% -- Reduction in Average Handling Time (AHT)
- 25% - 40% -- Faster Performance Goals Attainment
- 25% - 50% -- Reduction in Role Play Time
- 25% - 50% -- Increase in Agent Selling Performance
- 5% - 15% -- Increase in Customer Satisfaction Scores

Contact us for a SIVOX RealCall Cost/Benefit Survey. **Call Janet Cordova at 866-263-6319, ext. 117, or email us at info@sivox.com.** As your first SIVOX experience, we'll demonstrate full ROI in under 120 days.

CRM Excellence TMC Award 2005

IP Contact Center 2005 TMC Technology Pioneer Award

Gartner "Cool Vendor – 2005"

2005 Customer Inter@ction Solutions Editors' Choice

Orlando CallCenter2005 Best of Call Center Demo and Conference

Optimizing People Performance℠

SĪVOX

Sivox Technologies, Inc. (866) 263-6319 info@sivox.com www.sivox.com

© 2005 Sivox Technologies, Inc.

Keeping Pace With Corporate Strategies: Taking Your Customer Care Global

Customer care. Your organization does it well. It has to. After all, by carefully managing customer interactions, you successfully protect and maximize the brand-building investments your company makes. Your company spends hundreds of millions of dollars building brand value, thus appealing to customers to try your products, buy them repeatedly and become loyal users. That makes customer relationships a critical means for realizing a return on brand investments, and makes your customers a valuable and tangible asset. How this asset is managed, protected and expanded is a strategically important activity.

At the same time, your company is moving to a global management structure. Like many others that have been conducting business internationally for years, your organization has probably found that operating entities in different countries throughout the world is no longer enough. Across the board, managing these businesses as a single global enterprise has become an important corporate goal to fuel growth, maximize revenue, achieve efficiencies, lower costs and drive brand equity.

As a customer care professional, that means you're not only charged with delivering best-in-class service domestically, you're now responsible for globalizing your customer care operation. Where do you begin? How do you determine if the time is right for global customer care in your organization? How do you develop a globalization road map? What are other market leaders doing?

Current Trends In Managing Globally

Leading-edge companies, in varying stages of motion, are pursuing multiple routes and combinations, influenced by product type and differentiation, corporate parentage, business structure and management philosophy. While no clear or definitive customer care globalization super-highway has been established yet, paths are being cut and there are trail signs to follow.

As part of developing our global strategy and approach, Telerx recently interviewed eight market leaders to better understand where customer care falls in the globalization continuum. These companies — representing a range of food, packaged goods and durables manufacturers — included global management leaders who embarked on this strategy 10 years ago, as well as companies just beginning their journeys.

By Amy S. Abrams
Telerx

Findings were grouped into four key areas: strategy, standardization, phasing and technology.

Strategy. In the most successful cases, strategy is driving the process, as opposed to the reverse. Overall, the companies studied are aligning their global strategies to be consistent with their organization's operating style, product/market characteristics and customer dynamics. Brands have developed and matured in different ways in different parts of the world, so globalization approaches are creating consistent best practices while allowing for local nuances. Technology is enabling the process

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

with the ultimate goal of data and reporting integration to support continued business growth and global management.

Standardization. Standardization frequently starts out as a primary goal. In many cases, however, after in-depth analysis, the need and desire for standardization has to be weighed against the need for local country customization. The ability to standardize what is critical to corporate success, such as databases and alert responses, while allowing for local market and cultural customization is an approach that is working well.

Phasing. Taking a step-wise approach and encouraging local office involvement throughout will set the tone for a cooperative "executional" environment. As an initial effort, many companies are focusing on establishing globally consistent data, reporting, macro-level trend analysis and best practices. Consolidation of customer care operations is typically the second step.

Technology. Last, while only a few years ago the need for standard global technology was driving the process, technology today is being viewed as the engine that executes well-developed business strategies. When it comes to CRM platforms, the most logical initial move seems to be narrowing many different platforms to a limited number, most frequently between two and four — with more experienced global players able to standardize to only one. Telecom can be a problematic and costly part of globalized customer care, due to inter-country switching costs within regions and other unanticipated costs. This is an area where newly developing technologies, such as VoIP, are rapidly becoming business-ready, widely available and significantly impacting levels of service and cost.

Company Profiles And Global Strategies Correlate

Telerx's findings suggest a correlation between product type, the length and depth of company global customer care experience and the global strategies that should be selected. Within consumer packaged goods, for example, durable and household/personal care companies — many of which began their customer care globalization efforts 5-10 years ago — are in a position to standardize and aggregate more aggressively than many food and beverage companies which began in the last year or two. Furthermore, companies with truly global products, where cultural differences don't influence brands and uses, can also move more aggressively without sacrificing brand strategies and customer needs.

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

Similar to companies, parts of the world are also in different stages of development. North America, especially the United States, has the most highly developed consumer culture, generating the highest contacts per unit sold and representing 60 percent to 80 percent of all global contacts based on those companies surveyed.

Western Europe, followed by Australia/New Zealand, represents the next most developed consumer culture. Combined total contacts account for 10 percent to 25 percent of worldwide volume; and contacts are growing in both geographies as these cultures continue to become more "relationship focused." Their customer care programs tend to be less well-developed than their North American counterparts.

There is a fast drop-off with the rest of the world, which accounts for approximately 10 percent of contacts. Latin America is developing rapidly today, and Asia Pacific is expected to escalate even faster in the near future based on population and business expansion statistics.

Regardless of the status of different parts of the world, all surveyed companies are focused on achieving a future desired state for customer care in the global enterprise, desires that include the following:

- Standardized data collection;
- Consistent processes and procedures — modified for local nuances — to ensure quality of service and brand building;
- Integrated and efficient front-end contact management system (whether one CRM or multiple platforms);
- Global customer-data-reporting system that provides the consolidated information necessary to manage the product line and marketing efforts at the local, regional and global levels; and
- Effective processes to share best practices for operations and service delivery around the globe.

Developing Your Globalization Road Map

The decision to globalize customer care is critically important and needs to be done in the most appropriate manner so that it aligns with and supports your organization's product line, business structure, management philosophy, key growth objectives and other enterprise-level global efforts.

So start the process now by examining your customer care business goals in the context of corporate global goals. An analysis of customer care business needs by brand and geographic variables is essential to ensure the effort and resources are directed in the most meaningful way.

Make sure your strategy fits those goals, because when it comes to globalizing customer care, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It's not as simple as taking your current North American customer care practices worldwide.

The process is complicated by the many stakeholders and divergent perspectives that must be balanced:

The customer. The customer has different needs and wants that vary country to country and region to region.

The product mix. Are your brands truly global, or are they really regional or even local? Consumables? Durables? If your products are items that are used similarly in each part of the world, globalizing customer care is easier. If you manufacture food products, it's more complicated. Even if the food items are the same around the world, the way they are used may vary within different parts of the world. As well, the same comment from a consumer or a customer service representative can have very different meanings, depending on the cultural filter applied.

The business influencers. A corporation's main objective may be to cut costs and gain a 360-degree worldwide view of the business. Yet local business owners who are already successful in their own right may not want to change the way they operate unless they see clear benefits to their own operations. So it's important to align with them and their business goals, and to make them partners from the start. Add in technology's goal of having one CRM and one database for maximum cost-effectiveness and reporting efficiency.

While no clear or definitive customer care globalization super-highway has been established yet, paths are being cut and there are trail signs to follow.

The customer care department. In the global enterprise, our charge is to: (1) strategically manage the customer asset — build brand loyalty and strengthen repurchase intent by addressing customer needs and by building relationships; (2) ensure customer response is consistent, cost-effective, high in quality, representative of best practices, and aligned with corporate identity, brand image and business goals; and (3) provide local, regional and global market intelligence to leverage global customer information, strategy development and effective risk management.

Bringing all of these perspectives together as you develop your globalization plans is the only way to ensure customer care brings maximum value to the business — and ultimately is viewed as a strategic asset. **CIS**

Amy S. Abrams is president of Telerx, a Customer Interaction Solutions magazine Top 50 Inbound Teleservices Agency. Telerx provides companies with global consultancy services, technology products and contact centers that nurture, protect and expand their customer assets. She can be reached at abrams@telerx.com.

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

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

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

The VoIP Authority Since 1998

itexpo.com
itexpo.com
itexpo.com
itexpo.com
itexpo.com
itexpo.com
itexpo.com

TMC
INTERNET
TELEPHONY®
CONFERENCE & EXPO

itexpo.com
itexpo.com
itexpo.com
itexpo.com
itexpo.com
itexpo.com
itexpo.com

Save The Date!

January 24-27, 2006
Fort Lauderdale-Broward County Convention Center
Fort Lauderdale, FL

The World's Largest VoIP Marketplace

Hosted Virtual ACD:

Get More From Your Contact Center Without A Large Technology Investment

Now companies that have their own contact centers can have the latest call routing technology, more call capacity and dramatically improved customer contact capabilities, all without paying for upgrades or relinquishing operational control. West gives companies the ability to link into their advanced technology without having to make significant infrastructure investments of their own. Using West's hosted Virtual ACD enables companies to handle more calls, route calls to any location, add interactive voice response (IVR) to their infrastructure and improve the overall efficiency of their customer contact operations.

West's Virtual ACD (define - news - alert) makes it possible to route calls to any contact center location, even to agents working from their homes. Here are a few ways in which companies can quickly benefit from using West's Virtual ACD to host existing contact center operations:

- *Transport flexibility*. Whether the solution requires traditional TDM, next-generation VoIP (define - news - alert) or a combination of both, West can support it. Using West's VoIP-enabled Virtual ACD to run a contact center allows companies to begin reaping the benefits of VoIP today, without significant up-front investments of their own. While a traditional call may be routed through several contact and data centers before reaching an offshore contact center, a call entering an IP port can be sent directly to the end point at a much lower cost.
- *Remote agent support*. West can provide companies with the technology infrastructure to run and manage their own home agent program. The Virtual ACD makes it possible to drive customer calls to agents working from home, significantly reducing their clients' office space and equipment costs.
- *Fully integrated speech applications*. With more than 130,000 ports, West's Virtual ACD can help improve call capacity and provide flexibility to manage spiky call volume. Running speech or DTMF applications through the Virtual ACD also ensures fewer missed calls and shorter wait times for customers.
- *Systems integration*. West currently supports hundreds of real-time remote host interfaces to unique back-end client and third-party systems. Whether integrating with a legacy or leading-edge technology platform, West can quickly and effectively integrate with a client's existing systems, such as CRM/knowledge base, workforce management, quality assurance monitoring, or other back-database-driven applications.
- *Operational expertise*. West's Network Operations Center (NOC) unites numerous functional and operational business units to provide the most responsive and efficient call handling service in the industry. Collocation of key functions enhances communication, facilitates broader awareness of call handling issues and expedites response times. The NOC is focused completely on ensuring overall customer satisfaction. West's quality measures and industry-leading support infrastructure form the strong foundation to provide greater value to clients and their customers.
- *Enterprise intelligent routing and reporting*. The West Hosted Virtual ACD allows intelligent call routing to the absolute best available agent within a contact center enterprise, whether residing in a client/third-party contact center or working remotely from home or a satellite facility. West manages this by leveraging its geographically redundant, high-availability platform and database infrastructure to determine routing requirements in a highly efficient manner. Based on client business rules, West makes routing decisions based on any number of business criteria including: AHT, average ticket value, upsell conversion rates and customer satisfaction survey scores, among many others. By utilizing West's Hosted Virtual ACD technology to conduct enterprise

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

west®

intelligent routing, companies can save millions of dollars per year by avoiding costly ICM technologies and infrastructure.

- ***Quality monitoring***. West offers several leading-edge reporting and quality monitoring tools to ensure that clients have everything they need to provide ongoing agent/staff training and coaching. West records 100 percent of phone calls and makes these voice files available to Hosted Virtual ACD clients through several Web-based channels in near-real-time. In addition, West provides the ability for clients to monitor both the voice and data (agent screen) elements of a phone call in real time. By providing these capabilities, West helps clients provide the most positive customer experience possible.
- ***Scalability and reliability***. Known for its highly scalable and reliable platform infrastructure, West is committed to R&D and reinvestment into its platform and human resources to remain at the leading edge of technology.

Companies looking for the most efficient and effective way to improve their customer contact operations without a huge technology investment need look no further than a hosted solution from West. For more information, please contact West Corporation at 1-800-841-9000, or visit http://www.west.com.

Hosted Delivery, The "Car Leasing" Of The Technology World

There are, when you think about it, many similarities between car leasing and buying technology on a hosted basis. People lease cars for a lot of reasons: they're not sure what their lifestyles will require in three or more years and don't want to be stuck with a purchased vehicle that doesn't suit them. Some people lease because they like having the latest and greatest cars and car options, and few people can afford to replace their automobile with a newer model every two to three years. Many people are attracted by the fact that leasing generally requires less money up front. Leasing can also lessen mechanical and maintenance headaches, as the term of the lease will almost always coincide with the period in which the warranty is the strongest (first 35,000 miles, etc.). Finally, many people choose leasing to prevent themselves from being stuck with an old car at the end of its useful life; with a choice of either junking it or trying to sell it to a non-choosy college student.

Many people choose hosted delivery of call center technologies for the same reason: hosted delivery requires less up-front investment and is much more conducive to easy technology upgrades. In terms of maintenance, that headache is removed entirely. If you have a limited or nonexistent IT budget or department, you needn't worry, as administration stays off your shoulders and rests on those of the technology provider. And with hosting, there is no "end of life" in the technology's life-cycle; in fact, there is no life-cycle. You're never stuck with a technological jalopy you need to either turn into a door-stop, send to a museum or try to pawn to a garage business.

It's important to note, however, that there is one area in which car leasing and hosted technology differ: in scaling usage up and down according to need.

Many people don't lease cars because the amount of driving they do is unpredictable and can widely vary from month to month, year to year. Leasing a car works best when you have a solid estimate of how much use the car will get while it's in your possession. If you go over your "allotment," it's likely to cost you a great deal of money.

Hosted technology, on the other hand, is perfect for companies that cannot or do not wish to predict their level of business in the future. Most consumer catalog companies do a steady stream of business throughout the year and then experience a strong spike at the holidays. They need to be able to accommodate this spike; it's the bulk of their annual business. But during the rest of the year, they're left with unused licenses that waste money. With the hosted option, these call centers can scale up or down depending on need, and nothing goes to waste.

A final notation to my analogy: whereas car leasing isn't a great choice for slobs (most dealerships don't want to get a grubby, smelly car back after two or three years), it's impossible to leave candy wrappers, broken ice scrapers, coffee stains, single gloves without mates and melted crayons inside a hosted technology solution.

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

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

Speaking Softly In Your Ear: The Annual Headset Roundup

Headsets, like other considered "trivialities" in the call center and enterprise business, are so very important but so often overlooked in their importance. Sifting through the available options to find the headsets that best fit your company is a difficult but necessary matter.

By David R. Butcher
Assistant Editor, Customer Interaction Solutions

"With significant investments being made to implement VoIP in contact centers, it's vital not to forget about the 'last three feet,'" GN Netcom (news - alert) President and CEO Hans Henrik Lund told *Customer Interaction Solutions*. "Your choice of headset *does* matter."

When it comes to this piece of equipment, though, there are so many options and factors to consider. There are wireless headsets, corded over-the-head headsets, corded over-the-ear headsets, cordless phone headsets and computer headsets. There are headsets for MP3 players, cellular phones, PC and video games, PDAs, airline pilots, musicians, astronauts and NASA mission-control engineers. For each of these uses, there are both different and similar requirements and preferences.

In the telecommunications domain, however, headsets have specific abilities required across the spectrum of small, large and home offices, and enterprises and call centers of all sizes. No longer foreign attachments or alien appendages, these headsets are required contributors to the quality of the call center and enterprise; they should allow users to communicate with others, and they should do so clearly, distinctly and comfortably.

They should offer the best that headset technology provides, and they should be made to last. They should be comfortable, versatile, compatible, cost-effective, reliable and, yes, perhaps even attractive. Above all, they should do exactly what you want for exactly the price you're willing to spend (if not more for that price).

"This is a piece of equipment your employee has to wear: it has to be comfortable, have great sound quality to hear and be heard, and in larger offices, be able to reduce conversations that may be occurring elsewhere in the office from being transmitted out to the customer," Bill Whearty, Sennheiser Communications' (news - alert) vice president of telecommunications and vice president of sales, recently noted to *Customer Interaction Solutions*.

Also consider the following: Poor productivity in the call center or enterprise isn't always a staffing problem or a system problem. The fault can lie in the staff's equipment, and headsets are a significantly contributory piece of equipment, which makes headsets not simply picayune luxuries — rather, they can be genuine cost savers.

"One of the most important aspects of any loudspeaker, earphone or headset is the accurate reproduction of sound, whether it is music or speech," Dr. Mead Killion, president and CEO of Etymotic Research, Inc., (news - alert) told *Customer Interaction Solutions* editors. "The telephone bandwidth is so narrow that much of speech is unclear and needs to be repeated, particularly if the person is trying to hear or be heard when there is background noise ... In

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

short, clear communication is paramount for both the talker and the listener."

Background noise is a major source of migraines, literally and figuratively, for those in the contact center. For agents, it's simply more straining to hear precisely and accurately each word the caller is speaking; as well, it's unprofessional for background office noise to be broadcast across the phone lines to callers. And for call center managers, when dealing with large volumes of calls, every fraction of every second is worth revenue. So when the manager's agents are straining and repeating and requesting the caller to repeat, the seconds — and consequently the dollars — add up.

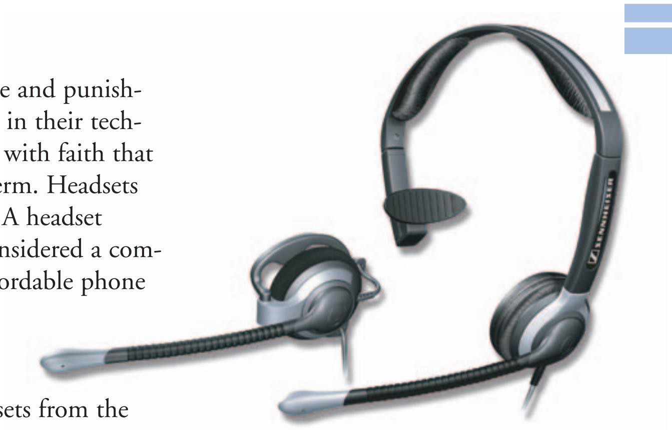
"A good noise-canceling microphone reduces the amount of ambient sound being broadcast out of an office or call center," said Whearty, "improving reliability, professionalism and, in some cases, security for the call center."

Superior noise-canceling microphones are a critical technology for ensuring quality sound and strict security when used in busy call centers. Reducing ambient noise can, in fact, save millions of dollars a year for a single customer. In short, less repetition equals better communication equals happier customers equals lower costs equals happier business.

Also, acoustic shock is a growing headset issue worldwide. Caused by a number of factors — fax bursts, loud sounds from the callers, lightning strikes, etc. — acoustic shock is often outside of the call center's control. The problem is made worse if the earphone has a "peaky frequency response," noted Killion.

"Noise safety regulations are becoming more commonplace, so make sure you choose headsets that guard wearers against sudden loud spikes of noise and have a Sound Pressure Level (SPL) below 118 dB," offered Lund.

Call center operations and businesses today expect consistent and reliable headset performance, which can often be difficult to achieve when headsets go through so much wear and tear under normal daily stress, abuse and punishment. Companies invest in their technologies and equipment with faith that the investment is long term. Headsets should be no exception. A headset should not simply be considered a commodity item once an affordable phone system is in place.



"Contact centers and other businesses should look at purchasing headsets from the point of view of total cost of ownership rather than cost of acquisition," Chuck Yort, Plantronics (news - alert) VP of Office and Call Center, told *Customer Interaction Solutions*. "They need to look at the purchase as an investment, not as a mere afterthought."

Whether it is through a reselling source or a manufacturer, the supplied contact information is intended to assist with the future purchase of headsets in the telecommunications domain. We encourage readers to visit the Web sites of the following companies to learn about the latest and greatest offerings in the contact center headset market. As with any cardinal technology product you plan to buy for your contact center or enterprise, you should be prepared and option-knowledgeable before buying headsets. They should not be afterthoughts. They are not trivialities.

Said Whearty: "Headsets are a technology product, and [their] review and purchase should be undertaken with the same rigor you apply to any technology purchase."

The following organizations either manufacture or resell (where indicated) headset products. Please contact these companies' Web sites for more information.

Ahern Communications (reseller)
http://www.callcenterheadsets.com
800-451-5067

Big D Communications (reseller)
http://www.bigdcom.com
800-444-5217

CommuniTech (reseller)
http://www.communitech.com
888-795-7222

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

Danacom USA
http://www.danacomusa.com
877-736-6434
Dowumi Corp. (under the Vonia brand)
http://www.dowumi.com
866-811-7771/Vonia: 630-629-1897

eMicrophones, Inc. (reseller)
http://www.emicrophones.com
914-302-6558

Founder's Telecom (reseller)
http://www.founderstelecom.com
800-333-0020

GBH Communications (reseller)
http://www.gbh.com
800-222-5424/818-246-9900

GN Netcom (a GN Great Nordic company)
http://www.gnnetcom.com
800-826-4656

Headset Discounters (reseller)
http://www.headsetdiscounters.com
800-440-7639

Headset Innovations (reseller)
http://www.headsetinnovations.com
800-820-1744

Headset Zone (reseller)
http://www.headsetzone.com
800-533-4014

Headsets.com (reseller)
http://www.headsets.com
800-432-3738

Hello Direct (part of the GN Netcom/GN Great Nordic family)
http://www.hellodirect.com
800-435-5634

JABRA Corporation (part of the GN Netcom/GN Great Nordic family)
http://www.jabra.com
630-442-6900

Phonemaster Communications, Inc.
http://www.etelephonesystems.com
800-339-4588

Plantronics
http://www.plantronics.com
800-544-4660/831-426-5858

Pro Tech Communications, Inc.
http://www.protechcommunications.com
772-464-5100

Sencommunications, Inc. (reseller)
http://www.sencomm.com
800-654-2993

Sennheiser Communications
http://www.sennheisercommunications.us
860-434-9190

SpeechControl (reseller)
http://www.speechcontrol.com
914-302-6558

Tape-Tel Electronics (reseller)
http://www.tapetel.com
800-228-1751

VXI Corporation, Inc.
http://www.vxicorp.com
800-742-8588

Windows to Technology Ltd. (reseller)
http://www.win2tech.com
613-961-1571/800-964-8810

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

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

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

Wireless Office Telephone System DW800

Sennheiser Communications has entered the field of wireless, with an excellent system offering great flexibility and superb design. If you already enjoy the benefits of a Sennheiser Communications telecom headset, the DW800 gives you the added freedom to move around the office while on the phone. The telephone controlling interface TCI 01 completes the wireless package, conveniently enabling you to answer calls and hang up again while away from your desk.

Got Ears?
we've got you covered...

Office and Contact Center Headsets

When you have to concentrate, and attention to detail is important, Sennheiser headsets help you to stay on top of the job. Light and comfortable to wear, you are free to work without distraction. Five brand new Office headsets (SH Series), and five state-of-the-art Contact Center headsets (CC Series) bring you top-quality performance and design.

PC155

USB

PC145

The perfect gear for Gaming and Internet Telephony

Game playing and internet surfing on your PC will become a totally new, exciting experience. Noise cancelling microphones, inline volume controls and microphone mute functions are among the many benefits of Sennheiser's PC Series. Networking? Take advantage of our business and leisure headsets—your interface to Voice Over IP technology. They're exceptionally comfortable and will easily turn your internet-telephone calls into hours-long, inexpensive fun.

SH330

CC520

CC530

SENNHEISER
COMMUNICATIONS

Sennheiser Electronic Corp., 1 Enterprise Drive, Old Lyme, CT 06371 USA • Tel: 860-434-9190 • Fax: 860-434-1759 • www.sennheiserusa.com
Sennheiser Latin America: Av. Xola 613 Ph.6, Col. del Valle, 03100 Mexico City D.F.-Mexico • Telephone: 52-55-5639-0956 • Fax: 52-55-5639-9482
Canada: Tel: 514-426-3013 Fax: 514-426-3953

Profile For Success: What Makes A Good Call Center Agent?

By Luke McNally
Select International's Contact Center Division

For everyone in call center management who regularly has the opportunity to walk the floor and scan the rows of faces, you have no doubt pondered the questions at the heart of employee retention: Why do certain call center agents excel in this environment while others fail? Why are some happy and others dissatisfied? How can some people thrive when others can't keep pace?

Perhaps a bigger question is this: How can you identify an individual's potential before extending the offer?

We all know about the timeless personality models on the market, such as "Colors," based on the DISC model. Do "Blue" people (those who are analytical) perform better than "Green" people (those who are engaging with high affiliation needs)? Or do the "Yellows" thrive (those who are fun, upbeat and spontaneous)?

Personality models can typically describe an individual's dominant personality traits, which is helpful when you're trying to improve collaboration among a group of people. However, current research confirms that no single personality type dictates success among call center agents.

So what makes a good call center agent? There are many complex explanations and models to address this question. Further on, we'll present the answers compiled from many years of primary research and profiling agents in hundreds of call centers to collect more than two million data points to date. It is from these data that the unique model for identifying success profiles of effective agents was created.

The Model

Four main factors influence whether individuals will become great call center agents. As more of these factors are aligned and in play, the more likely the agent will be successful:

(1) Competencies;
(2) Motivational fit;
(3) Personality; and
(4) External factors.

These factors and every issue they cover are like a Rubik's cube: interrelated in numerous ways. But with the proper perspective, and with a framework for evaluating prospective employees, the puzzle becomes much easier to solve.

Research indicates that, while these are all important, the degree to which they affect an individual's likelihood of success varies (as shown in Figure 1).

Competencies

The most obvious of the four, the competencies factor, has the greatest impact on overall job performance. It indicates whether an agent has the skills, knowledge and ability required for the job. This includes technical knowledge of the product or services the company offers, as well as knowledge of various call center systems such as computers, telephony systems and CRM databases — all of which can be easily taught and tested for.

Competencies also reflect a person's ability to speak clearly and articulate a passion to meet and exceed customer expectations, along with the ability to develop rapport with every caller. It involves solving problems and managing difficult situations to end every call in a positive manner — even turning complaints into additional sales. And finally, but not least of all, competencies include navigating multiple software applications.

Motivational Fit

As the label suggests, this factor indicates how well the job characteristics match with the personal motivators of call center agents. This factor consists of three elements:

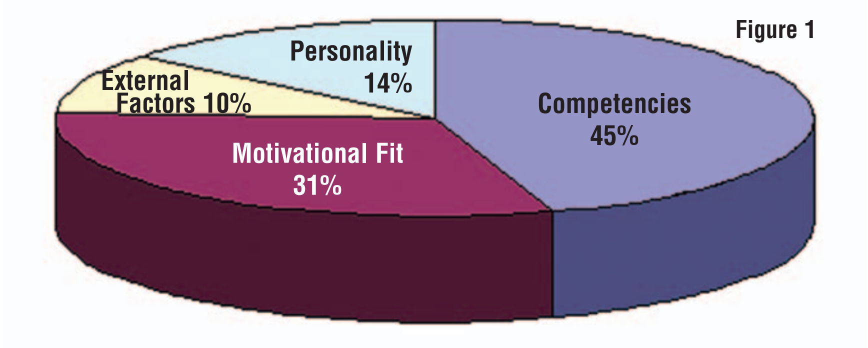
- ***Job fit***. Does the job motivate the person? Is the nature of the challenging call center work fitting (e.g., constant monitoring, demands for promptness, endless pressure to perform, confinements to space, etc.)? Environmental factors such as seating arrangements also come into play, as do ergonomic characteristics of the center, such as lighting and general noise levels.
- ***Culture fit***. Does the culture of the company and call center match the individual's priorities and interests? This includes the type of people who

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

work there, how call center management leads, company values and company commitment to employee development and training.

- *Personal interest*. Does the company offer what the person wants? For example, if a person has loved working in a fast-paced, high-energy retail environment, it's not likely he or she will enjoy working in a sedentary call center job.

Figure 1



Personality

Personality type impacts many aspects of fit and success potential, as well as how call center agents will respond to the other factors. However, as discussed earlier, there is no single personality type that will be more successful than another in a call center.

External Factors

External factors are those beyond the control of the agents and call center management. They include competitive compensation, location and transportation availability. All of these factors can strongly impact a person's willingness and ability to do the job, as well as quality and productivity levels.

How To Identify Success

This article is intended to help you create the framework for your own *Agent Success Profile*. Knowing how to identify success for your call center agents is the first step toward building an effective, efficient selection system. **CIS**

Select International Inc.'s Contact Center Division assists companies in developing, selecting and retaining a stronger workforce. The Select Assessment for Customer Service and Sales (SACS) solution helps take the guesswork out of selecting and developing great call center agents who are motivated to succeed. For more information, visit http://www.selectsacs.com.

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

Spanlink Awarded Natural Language Information Retrieval Patent

Spanlink Communications, (news - alert) a provider of customer interaction solutions that leverage VoIP technology, recently announced that the U.S. Patent Office has awarded the company a patent in the field of natural language information retrieval. The patent, “System, Method and Article of Manufacture for Concept Based Information Searching,” uses a methodology that retrieves relevant information from unstructured data sources through natural language understanding techniques, helping users access desired information more easily, quickly and with greater precision.

Spanlink has applied this technology to its Intelligent Information Products for self-service, which turn structured and unstructured data into a knowledge base that businesses can leverage to increase the speed, ease and accuracy of customer interactions.

In the next six months, Spanlink will announce enhancements to its Web self-service products and new applications that leverage the same patented technology for speech applications.

http://www.spanlink.com

Definition Du Jour

AVST (Audio Visual Speech Technologies)

A technology that allows computers to “see” a speaker and read his or her lips, allowing the computer further confidence in speech recognition when trying to discern the difference between similar-sounding words (for example, “bear” and “pear”).

Avaya Debuts Speech Self-Service Products

Business communications applications, systems and services provider **Avaya Inc.** (quote - news - alert) has announced the next generation of its IP-based speech self-service solutions.

The new Avaya Voice Portal software platform integrates within a service-oriented architecture, designed to provide a quicker and easier way to speech-enable Web services across highly distributed enterprises.

Avaya also introduced a new speech application development tool, Avaya Dialog Designer, which enables designers to speed development of speech self-service applications. Created for integration with Web services or in traditional environments, Avaya Dialog Designer supports both Avaya Voice Portal and Avaya Interactive Response.

http://www.avaya.com

Empirix, Audium Partner On VXML IVR Applications

Empirix, (news - alert) a provider of testing and monitoring solutions for next-generation networks, contact centers and Web-based applications, and packaged VoiceXML application software provider **Audium** (news - alert) have both announced a partnership designed to help enterprises develop and deploy more reliable VXML IVR applications.

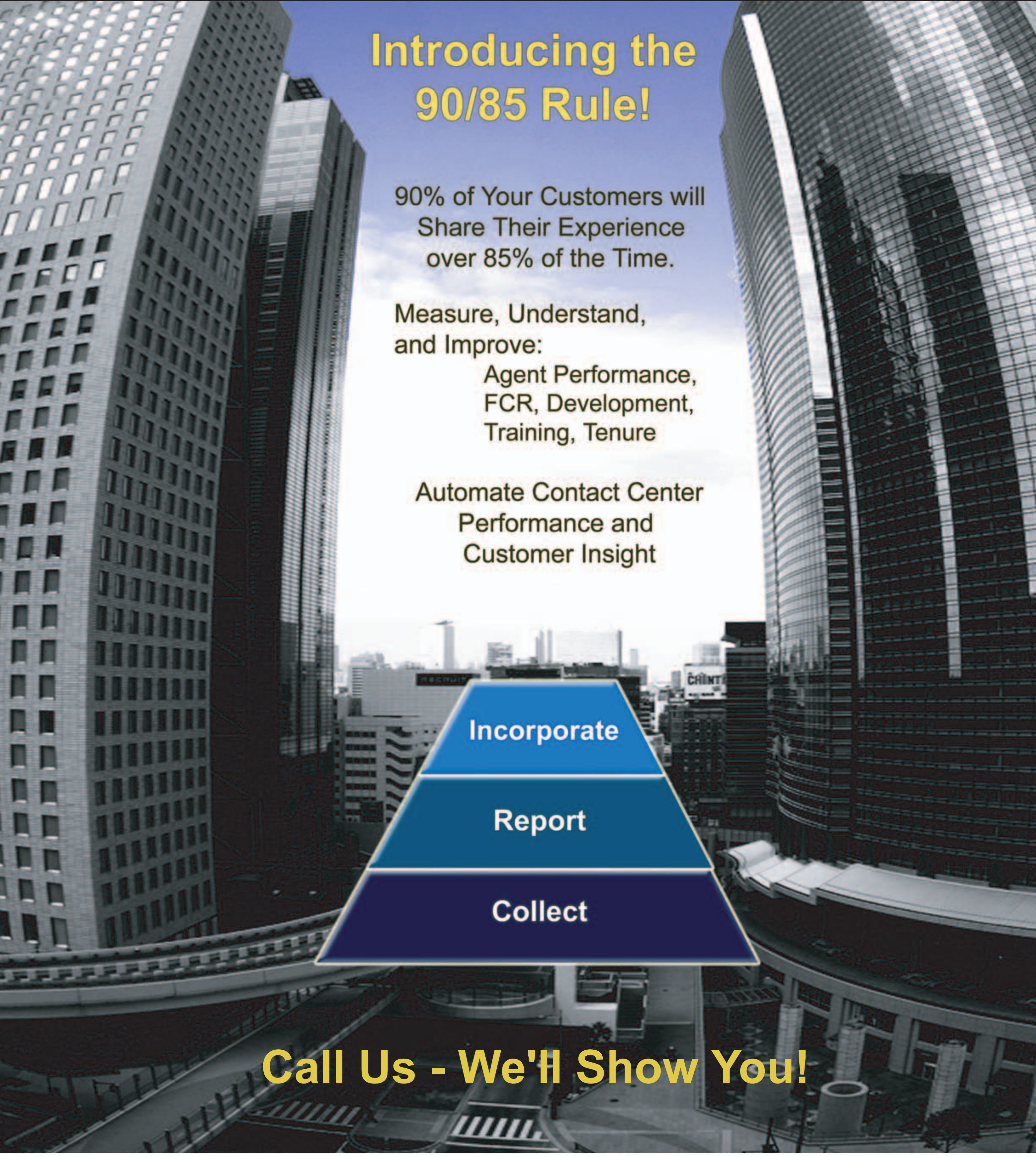
The companies are launching integrated testing and management solutions for VXML platforms and applications.

The initial deliverable of this partnership is a solution designed to ensure the quality of Cisco Customer Voice Portal applications, called Hammer Service Assurance for Cisco CVP. Similar testing and management solutions for other leading VXML platform vendors will follow.

http://www.audiumcorp.com
http://www.empirix.com

> “What a vast advantage has a speech over a written composition. Men are imposed upon by voice and gesture, and by all that is conducive to enhance the performance.”
>
> *— Jean De La Bruyère (1645–1696), French author and moralist*

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index



Introducing the 90/85 Rule!

90% of Your Customers will
Share Their Experience
over 85% of the Time.

Measure, Understand,
and Improve:
Agent Performance,
FCR, Development,
Training, Tenure

Automate Contact Center
Performance and
Customer Insight

Call Us - We'll Show You!

AMAE™
Software

+1 (650) 965 0820
www.AmaeSoftware.com

The creator of **Customer Experience Management** Technology

THE INTEGRATED MARKETPLACE

DATABASE

Know Thy Customer!

220 Million Consumers - Identify age, income, home value, buying behavior, geography, and more.

14 Million Businesses - Identify geography, sales volume, business type, contact name, credit rating, and more.

Customer Analyzer & Prospect Builder - Analyze your current customers & find prospects that match.

infoUSA® Sales Solutions

Call Mark Schwartz:
(402) 596-8933

DIGITAL RECORDING

REFURBISHED PREDICTIVE DIALER
LOWER COST

- Inbound
- Outbound
- Web-Bound
- FTC Compliant Software

What difference do YOU see?

DATA-TEL INFO SOLUTIONS

Call 888.926.1131 or visit
www.datatel-info.com

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Professional Telesales/Customer Service Management Searches

- Search consultants to most of the top ten service agencies in the U.S. and over 50 of the Fortune 500 companies. Small companies, too.
- All custom searches using a 25,000 resume file plus extensive proactive calling.
- Dedicated telesales/customer service searches since 1981… the first and the best!

R.L. Bencin & Associates

2616 Hidden Canyon Dr.
Brecksville, OH 44141
440-526-6726

Resumes welcomed!
E-mail: rlbencin@netzero.net
Web site: www.rlbencin.com

To receive free information from our premium advertisers, please visit
freeinfo.tmcnet.com

LISTS

Market your products and services to Technology Professionals with buying authority!

• OPT-IN EMAIL LISTS • POSTAL/TELEMARKETING LISTS •

REACH KEY CONTACTS INCLUDING:

• IT and MIS Managers • Communications and Internet professionals • Call Center, CRM, Help Desk and Tech Support Managers • Corporate Executives in Technology companies •

Contact:
L.I.S.T. INCORPORATED
www.l-i-s-t.com (516) 358-LIST (5478)

TELESERVICES AGENCIES — OUTSOURCING

The InfoCision Difference

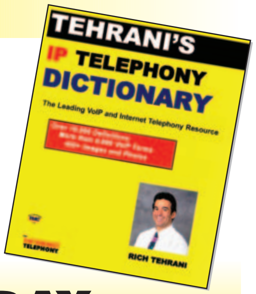
- Increased ROI
- Domestic call centers
- Split testing at reduced rates
- Per-minute pricing
- Personal account team

Inbound Customer Care
Outbound B-to-B Solutions

1-866-897-2980
www.infocision.com

InfoCision TELEPHONE MARKETING EXPERTS

Tehrani's IP Telephony Dictionary Volume 1



- Over 10,000 of the latest IP Telephony terms, definitions and acronyms
- More than 4,000 of the latest VoIP terms and acronyms
- 400+ diagrams and pictures to help explain complex terms

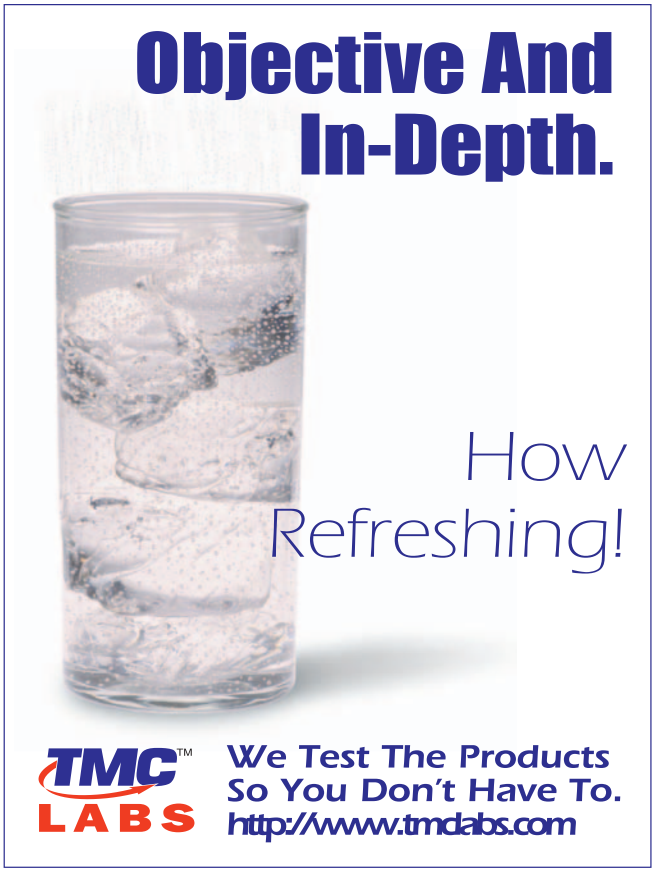
ORDER TODAY:
http://www.tmcnet.com/ it/dictionary.htm

To Subscribe to
CUSTOMER INTER@CTION SOLUTIONS® Magazine FREE
Look us up on the Web at

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

ADVERTISING INDEX

Advertiser/ Web Address	Page Number
Amae Software *http://www.amaesoftware.com*	73
Aspect Communications Corp. *http://www.aspect.com*	11
Concerto Software Inc. *http://www.concerto.com*	5
Contact Center Compliance *http://www.dnc.com*	33
Convergys *http://www.convergys.com*	7
GN Netcom, Inc. *http://www.gnnetcom.com*	3
InfoCision Management Corp. *http://www.infocision.com*	51
Interactive Intelligence *http://www.inin.com*	38
INTERNET TELEPHONY CONFERENCE & EXPO *http://www.itexpo.com*	43
Left Bank Solutions Inc. *http://www.leftbanksolutions.com*	13, 29
M1 Global *http://www.m1global.com*	42
NICE *http://www.nice.com*	cover 3
Sennheiser Communications *http://www.sennheiserusa.com*	69
SER Solutions, Inc. *http://www.ser.com*	17
Siebel Systems *http://www.siebel.com*	9
SIVOX *http://www.sivox.com*	59
Stratasoft *http://www.stratasoft.com*	47
Strategic Contact Solutions Inc. *http://www.strategicinc.com*	21
Teleperformance-Mexico (an SR. Teleperformance Co.) *http://www.merkafon.com*	55
Telephony@Work *http://www.telephonyatwork.com*	cover 4
TeleTech *http://www.teletech.com*	19
Verint Systems Inc. *http://www.verint.com*	15
West Corp. *http://www.west.com*	cover 2, 1



To Advertise in *Customer Inter@ction Solutions*® Please Contact Your Account Representative Today at 203-852-6800, ext. 139 or sthompson@tmcnet.com

CUSTOMER INTER@CTION Solutions® magazine (ISSN: 1533-3078) is published monthly by Technology Marketing Corporation, One Technology Plaza, Norwalk, CT 06854 U.S.A. and is mailed approximately the 1st of each month. Periodicals postage paid at Norwalk, Connecticut and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to: **CUSTOMER INTER@CTION Solutions**®, Technology Marketing Corporation, P.O. Box 21642, St. Paul, MN 55121 U.S.A.

To subscribe, call toll-free: 800-243-6002. If busy, call 203-852-6800 or write to the circulation director at srusso@tmcnet.com. Subscription rates (published monthly): Free for qualified subscribers in the U.S.A. only. For non-qualified U.S.A. subscribers, $49. All Canadian subscribers, $49. All Foreign (air mail), $85. All orders are payable in advance in U.S. dollars drawn against a U.S. bank. Connecticut residents add applicable sales tax.

Go To Table of Contents

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

Predictive And Real-Time Customer Analytics ... And Mrs. Johnson's Mother-In-Law

Customer analytics are all the rage these days. Exceptionally popular are predictive and real-time analytics, which allow companies to make decisions on-the-fly, rather than finding out after the fact what's going on. Why apply knowledge to *the next* call when you can apply it to *this* call?

Predictive analytics are attractive to companies. As anyone who runs a large call center knows, small improvements in metrics, when carried across the entire customer population, can lead to big savings. Why, if my checking account is out of whack by 10 cents, I generally just write it off. Even if it's not in my favor, it's not worth my time to go hunting down the arithmetic error. If it is in my favor, well ... I've just made 10 cents.

But imagine the difference 10 cents can make if applied to each customer interaction. Ten cents times 50 million customer interactions per year? That's ... [counting out on fingers] ... five million dollars per year. (I think. I'm an editor and took "Math For People Who Want To Be Writers And Other Idiots" in college.)

There are many tools to help call centers shave precious seconds and pennies off each customer interaction; and many more that help with customer retention and loyalty to minimize churn and keep customers joyous and preferably off the phone. Customer analytics can do both. They can be used to predict which customers are more likely to depart and run to the competition; which customers would be most likely to benefit from, and be interested in, new programs, products or services (see Austin Logics: http://www.austinlogistics.com); which group is most likely to default on loans; and in some cases, analytics can help curb fraud. (By identifying customers that, for example, repeatedly make up new "identities" to take advantage of "new customer" offers. (See the Aperio CI product for more information on this function: http://www.aperioci.com.)

In terms of improving metrics, some analytics programs help predict the best time to call certain customers; and some predict when customers will call, allowing you to adjust staffing levels. (See SAS solutions: http://www.sas.com.)

Many of these products allow you to do modeling and simulations. "If we introduce a new pay-as-you-go cellular service model, what will happen? Will we win customers from our competitors, will we pick up customers who have never had cell phones before, or will we cannibalize our own customer base?" Alternatively, "If we lower the prices on David Hasselhoff action figures, will we increase sales and come out ahead, or will the public's inexplicable apathy toward David Hasselhoff collectibles continue?"

As with most technologies or machines, analytics get better every year. (The only exception to this technological and mechanical progress rule is glass or screen doors that slide. Why can't anyone perfect the sliding door? Why must it always get stuck in mid-position, threatening to fall off its tracks, while you're carrying a plate of barbecued chicken and a bowl of potato salad out to the deck?) I foresee customer analytics and predictive analytics becoming so sharp that one day you'll hear a conversation like this in a call center between a new employee and a supervisor:

Bob, the New Call Center Agent: OK, Sue. What do I say to a customer who wants to open a new savings account?

Sue, the Supervisor: It doesn't matter at the moment, because Mrs. Johnson is about to call next.

Bob: Who?

Sue: Mrs. Johnson. She'll be calling to tell us that her mother-in-law fell off a Vespa in Rome last week and has to move in to recuperate, so the Johnsons need a home equity loan to build another bedroom and bath on the ground floor.

Bob: How do you know that?

Sue: Software says so.

[Phone rings]

Bob: Acme Bank, how can I help you?

Mrs. Johnson: You can help me by telling me why an 82-year-old woman would get on the back of a Vespa in Milan anyway?!

Bob, to Sue, in a whisper: It was Milan, not Rome.

Sue: Damn software. The IT department should get our money back.

Think how we could apply advanced analytics to other areas of life. If an in-depth analysis of traffic patterns in our city determines that, at any given time, 28 percent of the drivers on the road are inconsiderate idiots, then the software could determine that, based on the amount of traffic on the road and the current speed at which we're traveling, a jerk in a German car has a 92 percent chance of cutting us off — now. You can brake in advance, and prepare the hand gesture of your choice with time to spare!

Unfortunately, I'm not seeing how analytics will be able to advance the technological improvement of sliding screen doors in the near future. I wait and hope. CIS

Go To Table of Contents | Go To Ad Index

KING OF
THE JUNGLE
He's intuitive…focuses on details…adapts…takes immediate action

Little wonder that NICE Systems has the lion's share of the compliance recording, quality monitoring, coaching and speech analytics markets. NICE understands that contact centers engage in customer interactions containing layers of vital information essential for gaining insight, anticipating trends, reducing risk and taking action.

The question is how to locate, analyze and use this information.

NICE Systems has hunted down the answer and is once again setting the tone, so that you can become the king of your jungle. Its latest advanced solution, NICE Perform™, combines leading market Quality Management tools with sophisticated analytics.

NICE Perform reveals insights hidden in customer interactions, giving decision makers the power to take actions that drive performance in the contact center and the enterprise.

For further information go to www.nice.com/perform. Alternatively, email us at: info@nice.com

Insight from Interactions

NICE

CallCenter Anywhere®

Open the world to your possibilities.™

Most vendors can't extend your contact center technology resources to service remote contact center locations and, at the same time, enable your local business units to manage their own technology-driven business processes. As a result, multi-site organizations are challenged to gain economies of scale by sharing IP-based infrastructure and software licenses across sites.

Whether deployed in-house or hosted by a world-class service provider such as MCI, Siebel or TELUS, Telephony@Work's CallCenterAnywhere multimedia IP contact center solution is designed to empower resource sharing across locations – while enabling local managers to maximize productivity by optimizing their own business processes in real-time. No sacrifices.

TELEPHONY@work®
ADAPTIVE IP CONTACT CENTER TECHNOLOGY

Contact us for a free information kit | www.telephonyatwork.com | 858.410.1600 | 888.854.4224 toll-free | infokit@telephonyatwork.com

© 2005 Telephony@Work, Inc. All rights reserved.