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2011 Buyers' GUIDE



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Gaming Google with Bad Customer Service

I was fairly amazed to read in the New York Times (www.nytimes.com; a story titled “A Bully Finds a Pulpit on the Web”) about how a retailer of glasses with very high rankings on Google seemed to thrive on providing extremely aggressive, even hostile, service. The site, DecorMyEyes.com has an owner who goes by an alias Tony Russo (his real name is Vitaly Borker) and threatens customers by calling them names like “bitch” and does things like sending them pictures of their homes as an intimidation tactic. The story explained that the more horrible the customer service level, the more complaints were generated on high-ranking sites such as RipoffReport.com, which increased the ranking of the site.

Basically, a negative viral loop was set up where customers were drawn into using the site because of high rankings, creating more chances of having poor service issues and, subsequently, more links were created to the site.

From a consumer standpoint, this is a nightmare but, from the perspective of the retailer, it encourages them to give worse service – or at least that is what the owner of the company believed.

This is a great investigative piece by the reporter, David Segal. One area of the article that threw me, though, was when he wrote that Google knew of the problems with this e-tailer, because Google Shopping includes about 300 comments and most of them are livid and include words like “Robbery!” My initial thought is Google doesn’t necessarily “know” anything unless there is a programmer somewhere who is instructed to look for these words and factor them into search results and rankings.

It turns out that Google read the story and says it was horrified that it could be partially responsible for perpetuating the negative viral loop. To the company’s credit, it goes through a variety of potential solutions, including:

- Block the particular offender.

That would be easy and might solve the immediate problem for that specific business, but it wouldn’t solve the larger issue. Our first reaction in search quality is to look for ways to solve problems algorithmically.

- Use sentiment analysis to identify negative remarks and turn negative comments into negative votes.

While this proposal initially sounds promising, it turns out to be based on a misconception. First off, the terrible merchant in the story wasn’t really ranking because of links from customer

complaint websites. In fact, many consumer community sites, such as Get Satisfaction, added a simple attribute called `rel=nofollow` to their links. The `rel=nofollow` attribute is a general mechanism that allows websites to tell search engines not to give weight to specific links. It’s perfect when you want to link to a site without endorsing it.

Google has a world-class sentiment analysis system (Large-Scale Sentiment Analysis for News and Blogs). But, if we demoted Web pages that have negative comments against them, you might not be able to find information about many elected officials, not to mention a lot of important, but controversial, concepts. So far, we have not found an effective way to significantly improve search using sentiment analysis.

- Yet another option is to expose user reviews and ratings for various merchants alongside their results. Though still on the table, this would not demote poor quality merchants in our results and could still lead users to their websites.

Instead, the company developed a special algorithm – let’s call it a “Poor CRM rank,” which it says this merchant, along with a few hundred others, fits into. The blog post further explains that people are gaming Google 24/7 and, subsequently, details of the solution can’t be revealed.

I always get a bit nervous when the world’s leading search engine makes rapid changes to its algorithms based on poor behavior of a few. I just hope there are no unintended consequences. I am fairly certain a new category of company will sprout up as a result of this news – one that can be hired to destroy the search engine rank of a competitor by plastering the Web with fictitious and negative feedback.

Then again, it seems like perfect search engine results are like success... More of a journey than a destination. **CIS**

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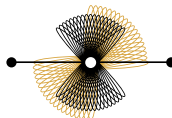
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Erik Linask, *Group Editorial Director, TMC*



Make Social Media Work for You, Identify the Alpha Males in Your Community

Customer data is the most valuable resource businesses have at their disposal, yet many have failed to effectively leverage it to increase revenues, mainly because they haven't yet discovered how to consolidate all the information – which they have already collected – into a coherent set of actionable intelligence.

As Miguel Carrero, director of Worldwide Actionable Customer Intelligence, HP Enterprise Services, notes, “All the subscriber information you have is meaningless if you don't do anything about it.”

Carrero specifically addressed the telco space, but the theory that businesses can extract and refine more information from the data they have collected holds for most businesses, which is what actionable customer intelligence is all about.

The obvious place to start is by looking at products and services already being purchased and used by customers, but that is only the beginning. The greater opportunity – and the one that is more difficult to effectively define – is the impact of social media.

While social media is now a globally recognized and accepted communications medium (there's a reason Time magazine named Mark Zuckerberg its person of the year), it has also become another valuable information source for collecting customer data, but one that is uncontrollable and often difficult to manage by businesses, simply because of its very nature.

For instance, unsatisfied customers are very likely to tweet or post Facebook updates describing their negative experiences and, depending on their connections (i.e., friends, followers, etc.), those comments can quickly turn viral. In fact, even before calling on customer care resources, today's social customers are more likely to post their comments online.

Social media has created an environment for such comments to be potentially damaging but, the flip side is the same comments are often also available to businesses as action items and to define customer sentiment and response to their products and services. It means they are able to react appropriately, if they are able to collect the data in a meaningful way.

“There are ways to look at all the unstructured data in the world of social media as a very realistic source of information on customer opinion – and it can be brutal at times,” notes Carrera. “But, the good news is they can see what customers are thinking, information to which they previously did not have access.”

What businesses must learn is that social media, for all its value as a source of information, can very effectively be leveraged as a bidirectional medium. They should not only learn to use social media to monitor customer perception, but to also use it to influence customer opinion. Certainly, reacting to social media commentary can be an effective means of letting customers know their needs are being recognized

and addressed. Smart businesses, though, will also deploy the tools and staff to proactively leverage social media to inform their customers and to induce higher satisfaction rates.

One approach is to inundate the world with information, but the simple fact is it's hard for businesses to influence everyone. Rather, it can be much easier and more effective to focus on the alpha males, if you will – the influencers within a customer base – and allow them to do the rest.

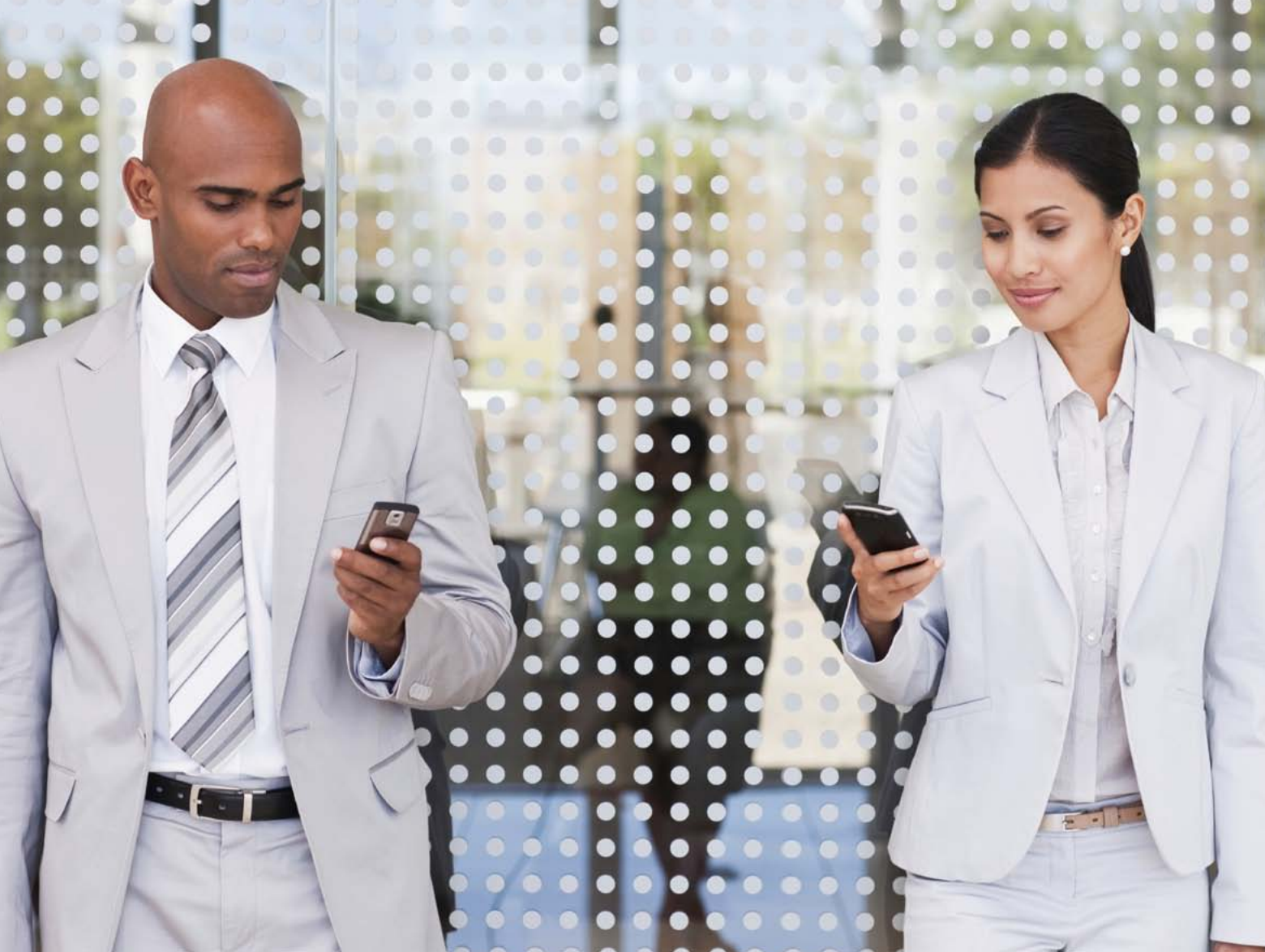
In other words, businesses should seek to identify their most influential customers, ensure they are made aware of the latest products and service enhancements, and let them spread the word virally. Not only is it easier for businesses, but the opinions of peers and family members are likely to have a greater impact on outliers and potential new customers.

There are countless vendors that have begun to develop social media tools that will allow businesses to leverage this global phenomenon as a revenue generating resource. Still, it is still a relatively immature market, and one which most businesses are still struggling to fully understand. Those that invest the resources in not only the appropriate technology, but in understanding how to turn social media in to a full-blown business tool, will have an advantage over their more slowly reacting competition.

The simple fact is the evolution of communications and, in particular, its mobile and social nature, has created a thirst for instant gratification, which has, in turn, driven the need for businesses to engage their customers in real time. Social media is a critical component of that activity.

Many of the leading minds in social media will convene in Miami, February 2-4, 2011, at Social CRM Expo, providing business leaders an opportunity to understand exactly how this global phenomenon will impact their businesses and how they can best use it to their advantage. Sessions will focus not only on the tools available, but strategies for collecting data, interacting with customers, and monetizing investments in social media.

Regardless of your specific line of business, Social CRM Expo is a must-attend event if you intend on keeping pace in today's business climate (and speaking of climate, there aren't many better places to be in February than South Beach). For more information, visit www.scrmxpo.com. I hope to see you in Miami. **CIS**



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Buying Decisions 2011: On-Premises or Hosted

The next fiscal year begins soon for many organizations, and they are figuring out how, in today's challenging economic climate, to best provide customer-retaining/attracting quality service while decreasing costs and improving the bottom line via their contact centers.

That means examining investments in the right contact center solutions that will help them deliver the results they are seeking. Arguably, what has become one of the most critical factors in selecting the products needed – almost as much as the products' features and suppliers themselves – is how they are delivered: via traditional on-premises licenses or the hosted/cloud model, software-as-a-service (SaaS) either by the OEMs or third parties. The delivery method chosen can affect these solutions' functionality, value, adaptability, upgradability, cost, support, security and the amount IT resources and staff training needed and how they are provided. Each means has its benefits and challenges.

To help firms select the best delivery methods for contact center products, Customer Interaction Solutions interviewed representatives from two leading suppliers: Roe Jones, product manager, Interactive Intelligence (www.inin.com) a leading contact center solutions supplier and Paul Lang, senior vice president, product management and marketing, LiveOps (www.liveops.com) which provides hosted contact center and home-agent services.

CIS: Compare the benefits and the challenges of hosted and on-premises solutions.

RJ: Benefits of hosted solutions include: lower up-front capital expenditure and “pay-as-you-go” pricing model; easy to provision multiple sites and remote agents; reduced IT maintenance and management costs; faster application deployment and access to upgrades; and flexible scalability to quickly adjust capacity as business needs change.

The challenges of hosted solutions include lack of control over applications, and security and reliability concerns. Benefits and challenges of premises-based solutions tend to mirror the flip-side of hosted benefits and challenges. Specifically, premises-based benefits tend to be maximum control over applications and fewer concerns about reliability and security.

It's important to note, however, that, over the last couple of years, hosted solution vendors have made great strides in these areas. For instance, Interactive Intelligence has addressed these



concerns by offering a unique local control VoIP delivery model that enables customers to keep all voice traffic on their networks and record and store all recordings behind their firewalls. Interactive Intelligence also offers scalable server virtualization architecture that provides dedicated servers for increased reliability, security and control. Of course, Interactive Intelligence always recommends that buyers conduct a thorough audit of a vendor's hosted facility (both the infrastructure and policies) to ensure maximum security and redundancy.

PL: When considering the benefits that a cloud computing-based contact center model brings, it's no wonder Gartner predicts that at least 75 percent of customer contact centers will use a form of SaaS in their operations by 2013.

There are several primary benefits gained in extending capabilities from on-premises contact centers to cloud computing. These include:

- Greater scalability to easily and quickly manage peaks and valleys in call volume;
- Lower agent attrition and a larger and more diverse talent pool;
- Simplified IT requirements;



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- Greater visibility and control to ensure efficient operations and agent effectiveness; and
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In addition, hosted solutions are continually innovating in the market, are always current and giving customers the choice to move ahead at their own pace.

Shifting from an on-premises to hosted contact center solution requires some learning as far as best practices and processes go, as business managers must get accustomed to an entirely new format. For example, no longer is there a need to run a “data closet” to make sure the lights are on, or coordinate a team of IT experts to make a simple routing change.

The real challenge in shifting to a cloud computing-based contact center model comes in learning new ways to manage, encourage and train your teams, especially

CIS: For what contact center functions and for what size contact centers and organizations are hosted solutions ideal? Which ones should consider having their solutions deployed in-house?

RJ: Hosted solutions make the most sense for customers with any of the following requirements: fast deployment schedule; minimal capital expenditure; and flexible purchasing model that accommodate spikes in interaction volume (e.g., businesses that are seasonal or event-driven, such as retailers and ticketing companies). It also makes sense for cost-effective disaster recovery (DR) and business continuity (premises-based buyers can also deploy a DR-only hosted solution); and for multi-location and teleworker support. Organizations that have very strict regulatory and compliance requirements may find premises-based solutions more desirable.

In some cases, hosted solutions will not meet the needs of organizations that require highly customized applications.

“Hosted solutions make the most sense for customers with any of the following requirements: fast deployment schedule; minimal capital expenditure; and flexible purchasing model that accommodate spikes in interaction volume...Though hosted vendors are rapidly adding sophisticated applications to their offerings, some may still not exist via this delivery model. For instance, business process automation will be difficult, if not impossible, to find in a hosted model.”

– Roe Jones, Interactive Intelligence

with home-based remote agents. No longer able to walk the halls to measure their “perception” of progress, business managers need to adopt new ways to maintain and heighten the level of oversight for remote agents virtually. As such, managers will need new checks and balances to remotely train, oversee and monitor agents. In addition, to maintain high levels of customer service, you will need to use different types of key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor the agents and to provide them with an incentive to perform their best. Finally, when working with remote agents, it’s imperative to proactively set up security processes to maintain a secure IT environment that protects customer and company data.

Just with any move to a new platform you do need to consider security, integration with existing applications, the maturity and unification of feature sets and the deployment flexibility to support gradual innovation. Not all on-demand technologies are the same, so you do need to do your homework.

Though hosted vendors are rapidly adding sophisticated applications to their offerings, some may still not exist via this delivery model. For instance, business process automation will be difficult, if not impossible, to find in a hosted model. In addition, the degree of customization and complexity would likely make this type of application more ideal for a premises-based deployment.

In terms of size, many industry analysts report that larger hosted deployments are already beginning to outpace SMB deployments, with the trend expected to continue. This is understandable, given that hosted vendors are addressing the reliability and security concerns that are most prevalent among very large organizations. In addition, while cost is a main hosted driver among SMBs, for larger organizations, the breadth and depth of applications is a key driver. Many hosted vendors now offer very sophisticated applications for both the contact center and enterprise.



PL: All functions that make up a contact center solution are and can be hosted or, more specifically, cloud-based. This includes the meeting and greeting performed in the IVR system, selecting and routing calls/contact to the right agent with skills- or performance-based routing with or without a screen-pop, real-time monitoring, call recording, and evaluation of calls and call records.

CIS: What technology applications are best suited for hosting and which ones should be premises-installed and why?

RJ: Today, virtually all contact center applications can be delivered as hosted solutions. These include CRM, sales force automation, help desk/tech support, and the traditional contact center features such as IVR, ACD, screen-pop, monitoring/recording and reporting.

One consideration for hosting, however, is the degree of application customization and complexity required. Some hosted vendors offer very limited customization options. In addition, should the customer want to eventually migrate from a hosted to a premises-based solution, many vendor solutions will require a complete re-write of applications – a daunting task when these have been highly customized. Interactive Intelligence recommends that buyers ask if a hosted-to-premises migration is even possible and, if so, what potential application re-writes will be required. If the hosted vendor also offers premises-based solutions, and if it also functions as the ISV, odds are good that this migration is possible with no impact on applications, regardless of customization or complexity.

PL: In the contact center, with Web-based technology as the foundation, all applications can be deployed as on-demand platforms from the cloud. Whether it is call routing with self and/or assisted service, recording and reporting through to in-depth analytics, there are no real limitations to hosting. Bandwidth is ubiquitous, scale and security concerns have been addressed, and cloud-based applications have all of the necessary applications and tools to get the job done with a powerful simplicity of use.

CIS: Outline the advantages and downsides of OEM-hosted versus third-party-hosted solutions.

RJ: The advantages of OEM-hosted over third-party solutions are greater flexibility (e.g., bug fixes, new features, migration to premises-based solutions); lower costs by eliminating a third party; and simplified vendor sourcing and management, again, by eliminating a third party. A potential downside of using an OEM-hosted solution might be lack of vendor experience in hosting applications. However, this will vary significantly, so a thorough evaluation of a vendor's hosting track record is recommended – particularly access to hosted customer references.

PL: With third-party hosted solutions, “technology innovation” is almost an obsolete term; the pace of innovation is the same as on-premises solutions – namely, slow. Due to multiple code bases, the technology is always behind the pace compared to other solutions in the industry. There is also feature over-bloat and implementation that occurs at a slower rate, generally taking six or more months. Each deployment requires expensive process, verification, and audits, with changes often needed for hardware and foundation software (OS and database) and heavy IT staff is required for costly implementation and maintenance.

SaaS/cloud-based solutions are always current with the latest and greatest updates being rolled out frequently. There is a single code base that enables seamless upgrades. Implementation can be possible in just days, resulting in faster time to market while business users can make updates directly. With a SaaS provider, 99.99 percent is the price of admission and multicarrier redundancy is inherent. In most cases, including LiveOps, SaaS provider are PCI Level 1 and HIPAA compliant with SAS 70 certified data centers and 1024-bit RSA encrypted DB.


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Buying Decisions 2011: Buying BPO Successfully

Deciding whether or not to contract out (e.g., outsource acquiring, qualifying, selling, surveying, serving, supporting and/or collecting from your customers) and, if so, to which firm(s), is one of the most critical decisions you can make. That is because the contractor, which is becoming popularly known as a business process outsourcer or BPO, will be representing you, on your behalf.

The BPOs' teams: agents, supervisors, IT (including business continuity/disaster recovery and security), hiring and training personnel – as well as their account and site managers that relay concerns and issues – can together make or break your customer relationships. Where BPOs can locate your program can make a big difference in cost, implementation and management, and in customer satisfaction and retention. Therefore you need to be sure on your choice to outsource – why, where, to whom – and be ready to work with the BPO firm to make outsourcing a success.

To find out how to make BPO arrangements a success, Customer Interaction Solutions recently interviewed Christine Timmins Barry, senior vice president, customer management, Convergys (www.convergys.com) and Michael Clarkin, vice president, marketing, Sykes (www.sykes.com) – two of best known global BPO firms.

CIS: What contact center functions and programs are best suited for outsourcing? Which ones should remain in-house?

CTB: When it comes to considering what functions and programs a company could outsource, a good way to think about outsourcing is $1 + 1 = 3$. The sum of two partners, the company and outsourcer, far outweighs the parts. Companies who partner with top BPOs not only gain access to the functions and programs, but also these three key areas, often looked at in reverse order during the decision-making process:

1. Intellectual property

Many companies overlook this asset, but it's important to tap into the knowledge of the executives and management of the outsourcing partner who have deep industry and operational knowledge. These resources are available and can be utilized at any stage of the process.

2. Market entry



A partner who has already navigated a new market and established the right labor and technology can quickly accommodate a company's request to enter new markets.

3. Human capital

This is the place most companies start, but should be the logical conclusion to any outsourcing consideration. Access to a solid labor market with a balance of onshore, offshore and home agents provides quick and ready access to the right labor force now and in the future.

When looking specifically at functions that are candidates to remain in-house or partially outsourced, a few include:

- Functions that must be physically located within an internal site, and where an on-site outsourced solution is not feasible for security or other reasons;
- Segments of work where contractual obligations preclude outsourcing to a third party;
- Blended solutions where the outsourcer has a portion of the work while retaining a portion in-house, giving a company the ability to gain expertise, technology, benchmarking and cost



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Leveraging the expertise of a strong BPO from concept to deployment is the best approach for any business. It puts the company in a position to focus on its core strengths while leveraging the outsourcers' best practices, experience, technology and manpower to help build customer satisfaction and loyalty, drive sales and, ultimately, build brand awareness and market share for the company.

The most important thing a company should do is take advantage of $1 + 1 = 3!$ Once the decision has been made to look for a BPO, allow the outsource provider to bring some innovation and input to the RFP process. One of the primary reasons to outsource is to gain access to expertise from a provider whose sole focus is taking care of customers. An RFP that is too prescriptive will limit the ability of the BPO to offer a big picture look at the pain points of the business and bring innovative approaches, new technology and solutions to the process.

Business functions that can be successfully outsourced share three common characteristics:

1. A well defined processes or workflow

Without this, a successful transference of a business process to a provider with a lower cost structure stands little chance of succeeding. If the processes are well defined and the skills well understood, then hiring, training and operating is very transferable to another provider, even if the work is sophisticated.

2. Any work that is not "core competence"

Core competence is about skill, not strategic importance. Even if a particular function or program is highly strategic, if the company doesn't possess the depth of expertise and experience at it, finding an expert outsourcing partner is a good strategy.

3. Any task that has proven to be difficult in terms of hiring and retaining staff

"Once the decision has been made to look for a BPO, allow the outsource provider to bring some innovation and input to the RFP process. One of the primary reasons to outsource is to gain access to expertise from a provider whose sole focus is taking care of customers."

– Christine Timmins Barry, Convergys

When looking for a BPO, does the outsourcer have a reliable and redundant network with a consistent operating model from site-to-site and geography-to-geography? This is important in ensuring a consistent level of service and the ability to shift work in the event of an unforeseen operational/business issue or natural disaster.

Once a decision has been made and a partnership has been established, build agreements that naturally drive both parties toward the same goals and objectives. Set forth strategic objectives and target goals, allowing the outsourcer the flexibility to build innovative thoughts and creative solution alternatives into the day-to-day operation. Establish a communication plan and regular meeting schedule between the two teams and contingency plans to handle unexpected situations, like volume spikes and business interruptions. Develop goals and metrics that truly measure what's important and what is key to success.

MC: Rather than focus initially on specific functions and programs, it's wise to take an honest and objective look at the company as a whole. Is it prepared from an operational and cultural perspective to set up an external operation as an extension of its own in-house team? Once these hurdles have been overcome, it's safe to begin identifying functions and programs to be outsourced.

For example, in technology companies, customer tech support is often an entry-level engineering job, and most engineers would rather get promoted to something more strategic, such as a QA or designer job. However, for an outsourcer, those tech support jobs can be very high-end – a position that to which reps aspire and are likely to maintain for a long time. If the external provider can hire and retain better than you can for a given role, that role is a good candidate to be outsourced.

CIS: What BPO programs are best handled onshore, by formal contact centers or home-based agents, and which ones are ideally suited for offshore?

CTB: There is no pat answer to this question. More times than not, however, companies find that a customized balanced approach is what they need to determine where to put work, incorporating onshore, offshore and home agent sites as part of a comprehensive BPO solution with a built-in business continuity and disaster preparedness plan.

The best place to start is to analyze and understand the current customer base/customer profile and determine if the call types require regional knowledge to be effective and look at sourcing to the appropriate skill set. Next, specific



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program requirements must be evaluated to determine if an offshore solution is viable.

- Does the program require certification/licensing that can only be obtained onshore?
- Is there an extreme political sensitivity to migrate the work offshore? An example here may be a regulated utility with close ties to the local community.
- Does the operation have a government component that precludes work from being performed outside of the country (e.g., a healthcare payer supporting Medicare programs)?

While most contact center functions can be handled in any setting, certain geographies and agent populations may be better suited for specific types of customer interactions. For example:

- India has a large labor force of engineering and technical graduates making it a prime spot for technical support programs.

Certainly, the focus is a balanced footprint, but size of operation is also a consideration in making an offshore decision. A company must determine if potential cost savings generated by placing work offshore are large enough to outweigh the travel expense and support required to establish an offshore operation.

MC: You can look at processes and programs and use them to determine the appropriateness of outsourcing. Yet making a decision regarding on/offshore depends largely on the readiness and preparedness of the company to embrace the idea that an external party is part of the company as opposed to a competitor.

The criteria for deciding whether to choose onshore or offshore can have several factors to consider:

Does the company have a global “cosmopolitan” view that allows it to embrace the distance and cultural differences between the company and the offshore center?

The most important factor to consider is how much communication, management, and new processes need to be put

“You can look at processes and programs and use them to determine the appropriateness of outsourcing. Yet making a decision regarding on/offshore depends largely on the readiness and preparedness of the company to embrace the idea that an external party is part of the company as opposed to a competitor.”

– Michael Clarkin, Sykes

- The Philippines has a strong Western culture and can easily relate to U.S. customers, making it a good location for most customer service programs and companies looking to boost satisfaction and build loyalty and brand.
- Latin America has a strong affinity for U.S.-based customers, similar to the Philippines, with the added component of providing bilingual (Spanish/English) support to customer service operations.
- Home agent-based programs are a flexible option for most blended solutions allowing quicker access to agents for very specific skills requirements (e.g., medical, technical), faster ramp time to accommodate seasonal call volumes and increased schedule flexibility for programs with fluctuating call volumes

Some of the more general areas that drive offshore versus onshore decisions are based on decisions made around operations with extensive seasonal components where large increases in agent support and incoming call volume are required for short periods of time. This type of work is best suited in a geography that has ample labor supply to accommodate rapid hiring and skills required to handle a higher level of customer service.

in place to be able to treat an offshore location like you would one that is closer in distance, time and culture. For a business process that is new, evolving, being developed or reengineered, sometimes having that team down the hall or across town is valuable, so that you can have your staff there if needed.

Be careful of the assumption that onshore gives a better customer experience than offshore.

The data comparing on- and offshore contact centers’ comparable customer satisfaction scores usually come out equal, or offshore better. Call/contact center jobs are more appealing to candidates in most offshore locations than they are domestically, which means a higher education level and available, interested talent. For those locations, these are jobs where an employee can exercise both education and language skills, get global job experience, and work in a field with more prestige than it might have in small-town USA.

Home-based agents work great for a couple of different applications.

For processes that require a unique skill or profession, but the candidates for those positions might not be so interested in the call center work environment, at-home widens the can-

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didate pool. Think about licensed insurance agents, certified nurses, CPAs or lawyers. It is also great as part of blended solution, so if there is consistent base of customer demand or calls, but peaks due to seasons, events or other external factors, at-home agents are an easy-to-train, flexible workforce, since so many of them work part-time and don't have the burden of having to drive to work

CIS: If an organization is considering sharing the same functions it handles in-house with a BPO firm (i.e., spreading the load, after-hours, or seasonal), what are the best means of ensuring that the BPO performs at least as well as the in-house center?

CTB: Developing a strong partnership and plan with the selected BPO with frequent communication, knowledge-sharing and best practices that feed process improvements back into the operation is important to the success of any outsourcing arrangement. Key components of any shared operation include:

they are served by a live agent, IVR, Web, e-mail or any other contact method.

Continued and frequent communication and calibration between the two teams is critical to the success of any BPO partnership.

MC: Is the company prepared to invest in developing a third party's capability to behave like an internal organization? This includes both training staff and delegating a level of trust by creating a layer of management infrastructure that's different from the in-house operation.

Successfully transferring operations to an outsourcer requires well documented processes that lend themselves to smooth adoption by your external team. Any vendor who provides good value will help you do so.

The two key factors that ensure comparable performance are:

1. Invest in training and certification of staff

“The ability to analyze, redesign and improve processes for how your customers are treated is a differentiator among outsourcing providers. Lots of companies can mimic your processes, but are they helping to improve them and behaving as a true strategic partner to your business?”

– Michael Clarkin, Sykes

- Establishment of clear and reasonable expectations by first benchmarking current in-house levels of performance, then combining the view of the two operations and setting new vendor levels accordingly. If a benchmark cannot be established, set levels after the first 90 days of operation.
- Well documented training, methods and procedures that incorporate the in-house center's key learnings and tribal knowledge of tenured employees and the BPO's best operational procedures and practices ensures consistency between the two groups.
- Development of a robust knowledgebase tool that is used by internal and outsourced operations to ensure currency, consistency and accuracy of information.
- Strong knowledge transfer process that fosters easy on boarding of managers, supervisors, trainers, and quality evaluators, who will be supporting the ongoing program operation.
- Development of a clear volume allocation strategy and corresponding operational plan.
- Include channel integration in both operations to ensure customers receive the same information, regardless of whether

Outsourced operations often underperform because the in-house skill was retained in tribal knowledge doesn't transfer well. Make sure all of the tribal information gets into formal training, and then verify that the outsourced team has practiced and truly learned how to perform each and every task – not just the common tasks, but also the exceptions.

2. Delegate the same authority and permission

If the in-house staff have the latitude to waive a fee, grant a reprieve on payment, or simply handle a complaint without escalating, the same authority must be part of the outsourced process. Customers are very sensitive to those differences, and will complain quickly if a rep isn't empowered to solve. They will assume that the rep isn't trusted enough to handle, and the rep will assume the same and behave less an advocate of the customer, and more a victim of the policy or process.

The ability to analyze, redesign and improve processes for how your customers are treated is a differentiator among outsourcing providers. Lots of companies can mimic your processes, but are they helping to improve them and behaving as a true strategic partner to your business?



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The Value of Blending eServices and the Contact Center

Today's consumers have the Internet and smart mobile devices at their fingertips. If businesses want to attract these modern-day customers, they have to be able to offer the types of electronic "non-voice" services and interaction channels that appeal to tech-driven lifestyles.

In the contact center, particularly, successfully meeting the demand for such eServices comes down to effectively managing electronic channels and the routing, monitoring and reporting processes behind them. First, though, decision makers must determine the right eServices channels to deploy and when to deploy them. They must staff agents accordingly. In blending eServices into their contact center operation, decision makers should understand the dynamics of eServices themselves, if they hope to fully realize their value.

customer service and buying needs met. They want total services availability and responsiveness any time of day, from wherever they are, using the electronic channel of their choice.

The evolving definition of eServices

Current definitions of eServices vary but, in a contact center context, eServices suites generally include: email response management, Web chat, collaborative Web browsing, SMS and multimodal communication, and a knowledge base for self-service.

Social media has made an impact on eServices, too, especially with its ability to reach the global masses online. To build brand recognition and customer loyalty through social networks, many businesses are adopting software in their contact centers to route, queue and report social media events.

Fax as an eServices channel? Fax response management is nearly forgotten in eServices circles, although it shouldn't be, since many contact center software platforms route fax interactions via email format. While the goal of eServices is to

In the contact center, particularly, successfully meeting the demand for such eServices comes down to effectively managing electronic channels and the routing, monitoring and reporting processes behind them.

Why eServices matter

The initial reasoning behind e-commerce and, ultimately, eServices, was convenience for consumers and lessening the live interaction volumes for service agents. That reasoning still applies.

In the era of Web 2.0, however, business has become a culture of the Amazon.com shopper, the Netflix enthusiast, the avid Facebook user. It's being able to get virtually anything online — in an instant. Empowered with laptops and smart phones, consumers have a whole new set of expectations for how they want their

provide a timely response to customers, the bottom line with fax and email is they're non real-time interactions, and can be handled during off-peak periods, unlike voice or chat.

eServices best practices

Considering how much technologies and competitive pressures vary from one contact center to the next, eServices are far from a one-size-fits-all solution. Yet, even as diverse as contact center operations can be, following a few common best practices can make most any eServices launch successful.

Choose only those channels your customers demand. A company's industry most often determines which interaction channels customers prefer (as does simply asking customers). For example, at National Pen Company and FORUM Credit Union, chat was the most requested channel for services and inquiries, while at MCAP, Canada's largest independent mortgage and equipment financing firm, it was email, due to the correspondence required for mortgage and loan processes. For all three companies, social media was not in the initial eServices mix, although it's now squarely on the radar.

Handle eServices with care. Gone are the days when eServices could be considered a measurable differentiator. For instant, virtually every company MCAP competes with processes email and fax — the price of entry to the market. Therefore, the issue becomes: Is your contact center handling channels such as email and fax as consistently and efficiently as voice calls and maintaining satisfactory service levels? By all means, deploy the channels your customers demand, but monitor, record and adjust each channel as you move forward to optimize its value.

Hire from within. The agents best equipped to handle new channels are likely already employed in your contact center. In fact, most eServices agents started as voice agents and know your business. Moreover, eServices positions are often seen as a perk and go to senior agents who've earned the assignments.

Dedicate agents to channels. Written channels require a different mindset than handling calls. Many agents at National Pen, FORUM Credit Union and MCAP found it difficult to switch from voice to a written channel, especially when chat and email interaction volumes were heavy. Dedicate agents for each specific channel, however, and the agents, your business and your customers all benefit.

Don't be shy about integrated all-in-one solutions. Best of breed eServices solutions are best of breed for a reason. They also usually come from multiple vendors for multiple eServices channels. As FORUM Credit Union discovered, an integrated all-in-one solution provides the essential functionality it requires for chat and Web services. A bigger benefit is the same all-in-one suite also provides integrated monitoring and reporting for continuous eServices improvement — all from one vendor.

Treat your eServices channels like voice. The key to blending eServices into your contact center is to treat non-voice channels just like your voice channel when routing by skills, monitoring, recording and reporting. Do so, and service will remain

consistent, regardless of the channel, something many eServices customers look for in judging their service experience.

Always seek advice first. As one decision maker at National Pen noted, "In my experience, email and chat are more difficult to deploy than inbound/outbound voice channels, given the complexity of measuring agent performance, forecasting and staffing, and getting a handle on KPIs." Don't be afraid to engage experienced consultants or industry analysts to help you plan your eServices strategy.

If you don't have a strategy for eServices in your contact center — especially as new generations of consumers turn to smart mobile devices to conduct business — you're already behind.

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Every Minute Counts

Are you getting the most out of your web-generated leads?

As more and more people adopt the Internet as a standard method of communication, organizations are seeing Web-generated leads double or even triple. That's good news. The problem arises when companies lack the capacity or strategy to effectively respond to increasing online lead intake.

The passage of time poses a real problem in the sales world. A couple quick ticks of the clock can mean the difference between acquiring a new customer or losing it to a competitor. This time crunch is further amplified on the Web, where users expect even greater immediacy. While it may not be uncommon for organizations to wait days to respond to Web-generated leads, it is certainly detrimental to their ability to qualify and convert those leads.

Observing the challenges faced by organizations ill-equipped for online lead overflow, InfoCision recently developed a packaged solution to help companies quickly and effectively respond to Web-generated leads. We learned a few key lessons while producing this service. These are things every organization should keep in mind when developing a progressive strategy to handle web-generated leads.

Speed makes a difference: Step on the gas

This may seem obvious to anyone who's ever worked in sales. But, for some reason, Web-generated leads just aren't given the same weight as leads that come via phone or referral. This can be a critical oversight. These days, a lot of people use the Internet to make initial contact with an organization. This is

their first impression of the organization, and the speed of your response can make all the difference.

I'm not talking hours; I'm talking minutes – maybe even seconds. By waiting a day or more to contact a Web-generated lead, you essentially negate your chances of ever qualifying or converting it. A recent Insidesales.com/MIT Lead Response Management Study (which focused on the question: "When should companies call Web-generated leads for optimal contact and qualification ratios?") unearthed these eye-opening findings:

- The odds of contacting a lead if called in 5 minutes versus 30 minutes drop 100 times.
- The odds of qualifying a lead if called in 5 minutes versus 30 minutes drop 21 times.

Companies can't afford to snooze on Web-generated leads. While you're waiting to initiate contact, your lead is drifting over to your competitors' websites and giving them the chance to beat you to the punch. If you have the opportunity to make first contact, it's imperative you take it. With Web-generated leads, speed carries an incredible advantage. Step on the gas.



By Rob Sine,
*Director of New Business Development
InfoCision Management Corporation*

First contact counts: Put knowledgeable people on the line

Despite the importance of a quick call (which I can't emphasize enough), speed is not the only difference maker. As always, people matter. Even if you contact a lead instantly, it will only be effective if the right person makes the call. By "right" person, I mean someone who is knowledgeable about the specific program/service/product in which the individual has expressed interest (which should be a standard question on any Web information request form), and the organization overall. Even if the person making the call is just the first contact and not the final destination, he should be able to answer initial ques-

tions and reinforce the lead's interest in the organization and the product or service.

That means you need to make sure your lead responders – whether in-house or outsourced – are familiar with questions prospects are likely to ask, as well as information about specific programs or services. If possible, you should integrate a system to ensure Web-generated leads are swiftly routed to individuals with the greatest knowledge of the program, product or service of interest. Obviously, sales representatives are not always going to have the ability to make these initial calls; nor, necessarily, should they. Contacting and qualifying duties can eat up a lot of time. That's time sales reps could better spend attending to qualified leads. Having knowledgeable people to make immediate contact and potentially qualify leads beforehand can allow your sales staff to focus solely on conversions.

also can use your collected data to identify: (1) who your Web-generated leads are (what they are interested in, how they differ from other leads); and (2) what questions they have or what offers appeal to them. In the long run, quality monitoring, reporting and analysis can play a key role in helping you optimize your lead-response strategy.

Opportunity knocks: Get ahead of the game

It's always a good idea, when implementing new services or capabilities, to make them as future-proof as possible. Think multi-channel. Explore the potential of your online lead response system – how can it integrate with other initiatives or campaigns, like direct mail, email, even personalized URLs? Think about how you want to expand your acquisition efforts in the future, and how that will influence the communication needs of your potential customers. Devise your strategy accordingly.

Having knowledgeable people to make immediate contact and potentially qualify leads beforehand can allow your sales staff to focus solely on conversions.

Data is golden: Equip yourself to adapt and adjust

When setting up a Web-generated lead response system, there is a great opportunity to incorporate a means of collecting and analyzing data to help streamline future lead-response interactions. Unfortunately, due to complexity and cost, many organizations fail to take this step – or they view it as an afterthought. The result is loss of an incredibly valuable asset: data. Collected data can be immediately beneficial, helping you create customized callback strategies for leads you can't reach on the first attempt. Using “best time to call” information or intelligence from previous interactions, you can produce personalized follow-up plans to increase efficiency and make every dial count.

Ideally, you also want to have a system that lets you conveniently monitor your online lead intake in real time. This way, you can make sure your Web-generated lead response strategy is always working effectively and efficiently, and, if not, you can make adjustments on the fly (like bringing in additional people at times of recognized high volume). You

The quantity of online leads you receive will only rise as more people integrate the Web as an everyday communication tool. If you are already experiencing a steady volume of Web-generated inquiries, don't expect those numbers to diminish any time soon. Be ready to respond, and respond quickly. By having an effective strategy for contacting Web-generated leads with speed and efficiency, you can convert more leads and prepare yourself for a channel that will see more and more traffic moving into the future. Take the opportunity to get ahead of the game now while you still can.

Rob Sine is Director of New Business Development at InfoCision Management Corporation. Reach him at Robert.Sine@InfoCision.com. In business since 1982, InfoCision is the second-largest privately held teleservices company and a leading provider of direct marketing solutions for Fortune 100 companies, non-profit organizations and small businesses. Learn more about R3, InfoCision's turnkey, multichannel solution for responding to web-generated leads at www.RapidResponseRouting.com



Buying Decisions 2011: Frost and Sullivan's Dawson on WFM/WFO Solutions

The literal heart of the contact center is its people, namely the contact center agents as they enable the customer relationships and in doing so obtain the maximum value from these individuals and organizations.

Therefore, managing agents and optimizing agent performance, including scheduling, quality management (QM) and analyzing interactions are keys to contact center and by extension corporate success. Deploying workforce management (WFM), focused on scheduling, and workforce optimization (WFO) – which encompasses WFM plus recording, QM and analytics solutions – helps make these outcomes happen. But, it is critical for organizations to buy the right WFM/WFO products for their particular needs.

Keith Dawson is principal analyst, Information and Communication Technologies

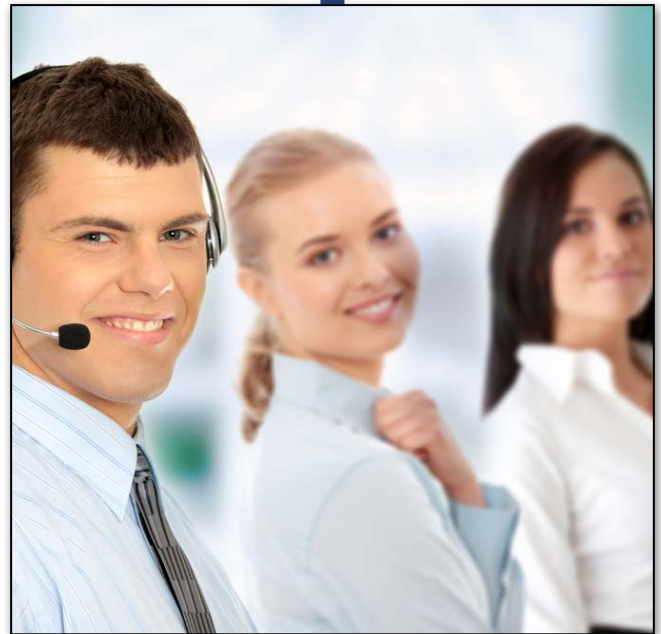
Frost and Sullivan (www.frost.com). He is also the author of several books including the now-classic Call Center Handbook. Customer Interaction Solutions recently interviewed Keith on buying WFM/WFO solutions.

CIS: What the top three elements that contact centers should look for when assessing WFM/WFO solutions and suppliers?

KD: Since the core technologies in WFO have been around for so long (and are very well understood), they are effectively commoditized – in other words, there aren't that many feature/function differences to be found among various WFM software systems. With that in mind, there are a couple of things contact centers should look at.

First, vendors are often distinguishing themselves based on their services offerings. This can be very important to contact centers, especially as the WFM tools merge into broad-based WFO suites. Making sure that a vendor offers a true collaboration and partnership with the centers is a big plus, rather than just dropping off the software and leaving you alone until the next upgrade cycle.

Second, I think it's important that WFM be considered in conjunction with the rest of the optimization environment. WFM used to be purchased as a solo product but, increasingly,



it's tied closely to the call recording, the switching fabric, the quality system and various pieces of analytics software. It's important to make sure your vendor either provides a roadmap for tying all those pieces together internally, or has a strong multi-vendor ecosystem established to allow you to integrate existing and future optimization tools together.

Third, WFM may be mature and well-understood, but it still has to evolve to cope with the increasing complexity of the contact center environment. Contact centers looking at new WFM deployments should press their potential vendors on how their tools are going to cope with multi-site, multi-skill, multi-channel situations and ask hard questions about whether their WFM can grow with them as their centers grow in complexity.

CIS: When selecting WFO tools, should a center go for best-of-breed or all-in-one suites? In what types of uses/situations does each work best?

KD: There are benefits on both sides of that argument. Niche providers of WFM have generally kept pace with the suite vendors on a feature basis; they have also generally recognized the need to create "virtual suites" or ecosystems of connected vendors that ensure that if you purchase a niche vendor's WFM

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you're not cut off from integrating that WFM with someone else's call recording or QM. But, there is no getting away from the fact that the majority of deployments of WFM are solidly in the hands of the suite vendors.

I don't really see the decision of suite versus niche vendor as one where there's a strong situational use case behind the decision. Instead, it has a lot more to do with who the incumbent vendors are; the experience level of the internal contact center operations managers; and, sometimes, price. It also matters what other systems are being replaced at the same time – if you're putting in new QM at the same time, you're more likely to look to a suite vendor for some sort of overall package.

One thing to note is that WFM tends to be one of the more "sticky" applications – people in centers who learn on one system very often like to retain their experiences with that system, and often take it with them when they leave to go to new jobs. There's comparatively less replacement of one WFM with another than there is, say, in call recording.

CIS: Hosted/SaaS WFO is emerging as a third choice. Compare this with best-of-breed and suites. For which needs is this method most suitable? Not as suitable?

KD: Yes, hosting has become an important deployment method for some contact center infrastructure segments, especially routing and CRM. But, the area of workforce optimization has lagged in this respect. Some vendors are testing the waters with systems that move call recording, analytics and workforce management into the cloud.

A clear majority of respondents are not presently using hosting in any form as a way of deploying their technology infrastructures. The most popular reason for choosing hosting is the beneficial cost structure it delivers: no capital investment and a pay-as-you-go approach to expenses.

It may make sense, at first, to hybridize the technology environment, keeping some core systems on-premises, but

adding new modules through SaaS. We are not yet at the point where (for the entire package of optimization tools) those criteria stack up neatly and equally between the on-premises/hosted deployment modes. Yet, we are at the point where centers should be considering hosting in some scenarios based on price, flexibility needed, and the need to provision for dispersed agents.

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21. Key Systems
22. Multichannel Contact Center
23. Network Integration
24. Network Mgmt./Monitoring
25. PBXs
26. PC-PBX Hardware
27. PC-PBX Software
28. Reconditioned Phone Systems
29. Routers
30. Soft Switch
31. VoIP Gateways
32. Wireless Phone Systems

Computers

33. Computer Chassis
34. Desktop Computers
35. Fault-Tolerant
36. Industrial-Grade
37. Modems
38. Monitors/Accessories/Supplies
39. Motherboards/Single-board Computers
40. Network Computers
41. PCs
42. PDAs

Conferencing

43. Conferences and Expositions
44. Audio Conferencing
45. Video Conferencing

CTI

48. CTI Distributors
49. CTI Software
50. CTI Testing Tools

Dialing Equipment

56. Auto-Dialers
57. Predictive Dialers
58. Preview Dialers

Direct Marketing/Response Products/Services

59. Ad Agency Services
60. Design Studio Services
61. Fulfillment
62. Fulfillment Software
63. Lead Tracking
64. Mailing House Services
65. Mail Room Equipment & Supplies
66. Market Research Company
67. Printing Services
68. Real-time Marketing Software
69. ZIP+4 Software

E-mail

72. E-mail ACD
73. E-mail Management Software
74. E-mail Management ASP

Fax

77. Fax Application Software
78. Fax Boards
79. Fax Broadcasting Products
80. Fax Broadcasting Services
81. Fax Machines
82. Fax Mail
83. Fax Hardware (Servers)
84. Fax On-Demand
85. Fax Tool Kits

Financial Services

87. Check and Credit Card Processing & Verification
88. Corporate Financing
89. Credit Card Merchant Accounts
90. Prepaid Calling Cards

Headsets

92. Headsets
93. Headset Repair & Accessories

Help Desk/Tech Support

94. Help Desk ASP
95. Help Desk Software

Human Resources

96. Employment Testing
97. Motivation Products & Services
98. Recruiting
99. Temporary Help

Internet Products & Services

101. Instant Messaging
102. Internet & WWW Marketing Svcs.
103. Internet Service Provider
104. Internet Telephony Products/Svcs.

105. Portals/Search Engines
106. Text Chat Software
107. Web Call Center Software
108. Web Callback Products
109. Web Collaboration/Shared Browsing
110. Web Design/Hosting
111. Web Self-Service Solutions

List Products/Services

117. Database Marketing/Services
118. Direct Mail Lists
119. List Management Software
120. Online Databases
121. Telemarketing Calling Lists
122. Telephone Number Look-Up Services

Long-Distance

124. Common Carrier
125. Directory Assistance
126. Long-Distance Reseller
127. Toll-Free (800/888)

Outsourcing/Teleservices Agencies

130. Inbound Teleservices
131. Interactive 800/900 Service
132. Multilingual Teleservices
133. Outbound Teleservices
134. Third-Party Verification Services
135. Web-based Outsourcing Services

Power Protection

137. Power Control/Conditioning
138. UPS (Unint. Power Supply)

Training

154. Audio Cassettes
155. Books/Workbooks
156. Interactive/Computer Training
157. TSR/Management Training Svcs.
158. Video Training

Voice Messaging Products

160. Integrated Voice Messaging
161. Voice Mail

Voice Products

162. Voice Application Generator
163. Voice Application Software
164. Data/Voice Line Equipment
165. Voice Hardware
166. IVR Products
167. Text-to-Speech Conversion
168. Voice Tool Kits
169. Voice Board Products
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www.tmcnet.com
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408-654-0930
www.8x8.com
Products/Services: 7,20,21,104,175



Aastra (M,C)
800-468-3266
www.aastrausa.com
Products/Services: 7,20,22,107,166

Acqueon Technologies Inc. (C)
609-945-3139
www.acqueon.com
Products/Services: 7,22,49,57,166
Other: Logger, Inbuilt PBX, List & Campaign Manager

Active Voice, LLC
206-441-4700
www.activevoice.com
Products/Services: 77,159,160,161,166

ADTRAN, Inc. (M)
256-963-8000
www.adtran.com
Products/Services: 20,29,31,144,159

AIM Technology (M)
415-692-5580
www.aimtechnology.com
Products/Services: 116,136
Other: Contact Center Analytics

AireSpring (S)
818-786-8990
www.airespring.com
Products/Services: 103,124,126,127
Other: SIP Trunking

Allegiance, Inc. (C)
801-617-8034
www.allegiance.com
Products/Services: 51,52
Other: Voice of the Customer (VOC) and Enterprise Feedback Management (EFM) solutions

Alteva (S)
877-258-3722
www.altevatel.com
Products/Services: 20,44,45,104,159
Other: Hosted Unified Communications solutions, Hosted VoIP solutions

Altitude Software (C)
877-474-4499
www.altitude.com
Products/Services: 7,22,49,57,143

American Teleservices Association (S)
317-816-9336
www.ataconnect.org
Products/Services: 9
Other: Industry Networking, Regulatory Compliance, Auditor Certification, Education



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Angel (S)
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www.angel.com
Products/Services: 7,49,147,166,163

AnswerNet Network (S)
800-411-5777
www.answernet.com
Products/Services: 61,130,132,133,134

APEX Voice Communications (M)
818-379-8400
www.apexvoice.com
Products/Services: 45,159,166,162
Other: SIP Application Servers

Aplicor Inc. (M,S)
561-347-0300 x1110
www.aplicor.com
Products/Services: 52,53,86,94,142

Arbinet (S)
917-320-2000
www.arbinet.com
Products/Services: 31,103,140,146,164

Assurant Solutions (S,C)
856-988-9417
Products/Services: 7,29,49,51,136
Other: analytic routing

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arlc.com
Products/Services: 46,151
Other: Mystery Shopping & Remote Call Monitoring

AuraPortal (C)
781-569-5940
www.auraportal.com
Products/Services: 53,95,136,149,174

Avidian Technologies (C)
800-399-8980
www.avidian.com
Products/Services: 47,53,86,142
Other: Contact Management



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www.batblue.com
Products/Services: 40,46,71,103,144

BenchmarkPortal (S)
800-214-8929 x7031
www.benchmarkportal.com
Products/Services: 171
Other: Call Center Certification, Call Center Training, Call Center Consulting

Berkshire Search Partners (S)
908-850-6560
www.berkshiresp.com
Products/Services: 46,96,98

Better Plan (M)
877-533-5177
www.wfmwizard.com
Products/Services: 171,174

BillSoft Services, Inc. (M,C)
800-525-8175 x125
billsoftservices.com
Products/Services: 173,46
Other: Telecommunication Tax Solutions

BillSoft, Inc. (M)
800-525-8175 x125
www.billsoft.com
Products/Services: 46
Other: Telecommunication Tax Solutions

Braxtel Communications (C)
781-665-1997 x2333
braxtel.com
Products/Services: 7,57,166,170,175

Braxtel, Inc. (M,C)
800-589-2477
braxtel.com
Products/Services: 7,56,107,166,175

Brekeke Software, Inc. (C)
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www.brekeke.com
Products/Services: 20,30,44,104,107

BULLSEYE TELECOM (S)
877-773-3277
www.bullseyetelecom.com
Products/Services: 30,71,103,104,146

Business Mobility Systems (M)
866-854-7487
www.businessmobilitysystems.com
Products/Services: 32,159
Other: Unified Communications



CallCenterJobs.com (S)
888-353-7529
www.callcenterjobs.com/clickthru.cfm?LID=6397
Products/Services: 46,96,98,99,145

CallCopy (C)
888-922-5526
www.callcopy.com
Products/Services: 123,136,146,171
Other: Call Recording

Celergy Networks, Inc. (V,S)
760-268-1913
www.celergy.com
Products/Services: 20,23,25,26,29

Centrifuge Systems (C)
571-830-1390
www.centrifugesystems.com
Products/Services: 51,136,153

Centurion, Inc. (M)
727-431-5300 x208
www.centonline.com
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Chrysalis Software, Inc. (C)
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www.ciceroinc.com
Products/Services: 149

Cincom (M)
513-612-2300
www.cincom.com/synchrony
Products/Services: 53,95
Other: Unified Agent Desktop

Cisco Systems
408-902-3530
www.cisco.com/go/cc
Products/Services: 7,20,22,57,166

CobbleSoft International Ltd. (C)
615-346-9241
www.cobblesoft.com
Products/Services: 173,53,95,111,114

Concord Technologies (S)
305-947-2224
concordfax.com
Products/Services: 77,82,85,104,159

Consona CRM (C)
317-249-1700
crm.consona.com
Products/Services: 47,53,106,111,114

Contactual (M,S)
650-292-8611
www.contactual.com
Products/Services: 7,22,107
Other: Hosted Contact Center Solutions

Copia International, Ltd (C)
800-689-8898
www.copia.com
Products/Services: 73,77,79,82,163



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732-302-0222 x6608
www.csfcorp.com
Products/Services: 17,105,111,116,131
Other: Toll Free Provisioning and Routing Software

Customer Services Audit Ltd. (S,C)
+64 9 376 2806
www.customerservicesaudit.com
Products/Services: 13,173,46,136,148
Other: Contact Center Self Assessment Tool

Cyara Solutions (S,C)
415-946-8861
www.cyarasolutions.com
Products/Services: 14,152

CyberTech North America (M)
800-717-1808
www.cybertech-na.com
Products/Services: 173,51,123,136,175



Data Foundry (S)
888-839-2794
www.datafoundry.com
Products/Services: 103

Datatech SmartSoft (C)
888-227-7221
www.smartsoftusa.com
Products/Services: 62,65,69,107,119

DemandVoice, LLC (S)
877-307-7177 x1
www.demandvoice.com
Products/Services: 71,87,166,163
Other: VoiceXML Hosting

Dialexia Communications Inc.
514-693-8500 x214
www.dialexia.com
Products/Services: 18,20,30,44,159

Digisoft (M)
888-866-2538 x300
www.digisoft.com
Products/Services: 49,53,57,143,150

dvsAnalytics, Inc. (M)
480-538-2020 x7744
www.dvsanalytics.com
Products/Services: 173,51,136,175,174
Other: Screen Recording



eGain Communications (M,V)
650-230-7500
www.egain.com
Products/Services: 82,107,155,156,157

Elliptical Mobile Solutions
480-924-0547
www.ellipticalmedia.com
Products/Services: 13,23,40,71,140
Other: Data Center

Elsinore Technologies (M)
919-532-0022
www.elsitech.com
Products/Services: 73,95,114,140

Encore Networks (M)
703-318-4366 x4366
www.encorenetworks.com
Products/Services: 23,29,71,140,144

Endeavor Telecom
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www.endeavortelecom.com
Other: CPE Installations, Inside Wiring, Trouble Tickets, Site Surveys

ePath Learning, Inc. (S)
908-722-6622
www.ePathLearning.com
Products/Services: 173,107,156
Other: Online training portal

ePerformax Contact Centers & BPO (S)
402-498-5622
www.eperformax.com
Products/Services: 130,131,133,134

eZuce Inc. (M)
978-296-1005
www.ezuce.com
Products/Services: 7,19,45,101,159



Five9, Inc. (M)
925-201-2000
www.Five9.com
Products/Services: 7,57,142,166,170
Other: Virtual Call Center

Freeside Internet Services, Inc.
415-462-1624
www.freeside.biz
Products/Services: 11,12,104

FrontRange Solutions, Inc. (M)
800-776-7889
www.frontrange.com
Products/Services: 49,53,95,107,150



GC Services
713-777-4441
www.gcserv.com
Products/Services: 16,130,132,133,134

GetABBY (S,C)
412-227-6594
getabby.com
Products/Services: 107,111,147,166,163

Global Crossing (S)
973-937-0431
www.globalcrossing.com

GLOBALINX (M)
585-321-2600
Other: VoIP Provider

GM Voices (S)
770-752-4500
www.gmvoices.com
Other: Voice Prompt Recording

GMT Corp. (C)
770-416-6000
www.gmt.com
Products/Services: 76,136,171,174

GN US Inc. (M)
603-598-1100
www.jabra.com
Products/Services: 93,92



HigherGround Inc.
818-456-1600
www.higherground.com
Products/Services: 12,123,136,151
Other: Liability Recording, Agent Evaluation

Homisco, Inc. (M,C)
866-583-7193 x2320
homisco.com
Products/Services: 7,11,12,166,175

Hoover's, Inc. (S)
512-374-4605
www.hoovers.com
Products/Services: 70,117,118,120,121



Incendonet, Inc. (M,C)
760-944-7698 x1004
www.incendonet.com
Products/Services: 1,166,167,163,170

inContact, Inc. (UCN)
801-320-3200
www.inContact.com
Products/Services: 7,8,49,166,171
Other: Hiring, eLearning, Feedback/ Surveys, Connectivity

Influent Inc. (S)
800-856-6768 x2701
www.influentinc.com
Products/Services: 46,130,132,133,135
Other: Business Process Outsourcing

InfoCision Management Corp. (S)
866-670-4IMC
www.infocision.com
Products/Services: 55,61,64,130,133

Information Access Technology (M)
800-574-8801 x203
www.iatsmartdial.com
Products/Services: 19,49,57,58,166

Ingate Systems (M)
603-883-6569
www.ingate.com
Products/Services: 140,144
Other: SIP trunking, SIP, Unified Communications, remote connectivity, Enterprise SBC

InsideSales.com (S,C)
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www.inin.com
Products/Services: 7,20,22,57,160

Interior Concepts (M)

800-678-5550
www.interiorconcepts.com/
call-center-furniture
Products/Services: 128
Other: Furniture/Site Design

InVision Software AG (M)

630-780-1060
www.invisionwfm.com
Products/Services: 171

IPitomy Communications (M,C)

941-306-2200 x2233
www.ipitomy.com
Products/Services: 7,20,31,104,115

iQ NetSolutions (M,C)

209-245-5500 x1315
www.iqnetsolutions.com
Products/Services: 49,149
Other: Attendant Console Software

IQ Services (S)

612-243-6700
www.iq-services.com
Products/Services: 14,50,104,151,152

IVR Technology Group (S)

800-715-9990
www.ivrtechgroup.com
Products/Services: 19,52,56,131,135



JoiBiz (V,S)

770-504-5641 x8425
www.JoiBiz.com
Products/Services: 1,19,20,25,57

JoiPhone

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www.JoiBiz.com
Products/Services: 46,124,125,127



KnoahSoft (C)

702-990-3022
www.knoahsoft.com
Products/Services: 107,123,136,166,175

Knowledge Wave International, Inc (S,C)

503-624-1503 x722
www.knowledge-wave.com
Products/Services: 51,53
Other: customer satisfaction and loyalty, agent engagement

Kunnect (S)

877-586-6328
www.kunnect.com
Products/Services: 7,56,57,107,150

KURANT DIRECT INC. (S)

212-866-0770
kurantdirect.com
Products/Services: 46,143,157
Other: Audits, Performance Improvement, Outsourcing Management,



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605-978-2105
www.mostresponsive.com
Products/Services: 66,71,94,130,133



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www.contactcenter.limra.com
Products/Services: 96,156,157

LiveVox, Inc. (S)

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www.livevox.com
Products/Services: 7,4,31,57,166
Other: Cloud contact center platform (ACD, IVR, Dialer, CRM, and Call Recording)

Loquendo (C)

+39 011 291 3473
www.loquendo.com
Products/Services: 166,167,170



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www.diallogic.ro
Products/Services: 7,49,57,166,175

Mills Marketing & TeleServices, LLC (S)

402-707-5654
millsmarketingteleservices.com
Products/Services: 110,126,130,133,135



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888-288-5470
www.multitech.com
Products/Services: 29,31,37,83,104



NCO Group, Inc (S)

800-220-2274 x2139
www.ncogroup.com
Products/Services: 16,130,132,133,134

NEC Corporation of America (S)

214-262-6384
www.necam.com
Products/Services: 47,149,159
Other: Unified Communications for Business

Neolane, Inc. (C)

617-467-6760
www.neolane.com
Products/Services: 47,53,73,76,142
Other: Enterprise Marketing Software Solution

NetSuite (C)

650-627-1000
www.netsuite.com
Products/Services: 11,52,53,76,142
Other: Accounting, Ecommerce

Network Direct, Inc. (S)

818-908-4000 x4680
www.networkdirectinc.com
Products/Services: 46,130,132,133,151

Neutral Tandem (S)

866-388-7251
www.neutraltandem.com
Products/Services: 103,144

Nexidia Inc. (C)

972-770-2540
www.nexidia.com
Products/Services: 51,136
Other: Speech Analytics Solutions

NobelBiz (S)

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www.nobelbiz.com
Products/Services: 124



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Noble Systems Corporation (C)
888-866-2538 x300
www.noblesys.com
Products/Services: 7,173,57,166,171

Nuxiba Technologies (M)
877-696-8942
www.nuxiba.com
Products/Services: 7,57,107,150,175



o1 Communications (S)
888-444-1111
www.o1.com
Other: Wholesale VoIP Services - Voice Origination & Termination

OAISYS (M)
480-496-9040
www.oaisys.com
Products/Services: 173,123,136,175,171
Other: Call Recording and Contact Center Management

OKS-Ameridial Worldwide (S)
800-445-7128 x260
www.ameridial.com
Products/Services: 117,130,133,134,135

One-to-One Service.com (S,C)
217-903-4458
www.1to1service.com
Products/Services: 47,72,74,73,111

OneCall Manage (C)
845-679-3338
onecallmanage.com
Products/Services: 97,114
Other: Wireless Expense Management

OpenSpan, Inc. (M,C)
678-527-5417
www.openspan.com
Products/Services: 173,136,171,174
Other: Agent Process Monitoring, Analysis and Automation

Optelian (M)
770-690-9575
www.optelian.com
Products/Services: 24,75
Other: Optical Network Systems

Orion Communications, Inc. (M)
877-812-7251 X105
www.predictive-dialer.org
Products/Services: 56,57,150,151,175
Other: Inbound Voip Software

OutStart (C)
617-897-6800
www.outstart.com
Products/Services: 95,114



PacketExchange
888-446-9462
www.packetexchange.net
Products/Services: 103

Panviva (S,C)
781-716-9003
www.panviva.com
Products/Services: 46,95,114,156,171

Parature (C)
877-467-2728
www.parature.com
Products/Services: 22,95

Partnerpedia (S)
408-779-6542
www.partnerpedia.com
Products/Services: 52,102,109,142
Other: Enterprise App Store

PhaseWare, Inc. (C)
866-616-6629
www.phaseware.com
Products/Services: 47,53,95,111,114

Phybridge Inc. (M)
905-901-3633 x104
www.phybridge.com/
Products/Services: 31,149
Other: risk-free, quick and easy IP Telephony Deployment

Plantronics (M)
800-544-4660
www.plantronics.com
Products/Services: 91,93,92,104

Presence Technology (M,C)
800-847-3309 x3000
www.presenceco.com
Products/Services: 13,16,27,57,104

Primas (S,C)
714-901-2721
www.primas.net
Products/Services: 49,129,136,149,166

Profitec Billing Services, Inc (M,S)
203-679-7010
www.profitecinc.com
Products/Services: 11,12
Other: support software

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USA
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Pronexus Inc. (M)
877-766-3987
www.pronexus.com
Products/Services: 85,147,159,166,168

PSS (V,S)
800-506-7119
www.psshhelp.com
Products/Services: 31,49,149,166,163



QuadManage (M,C)
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www.quadmanage.com
Products/Services: 11,12,23,24,31



REDCOM (M)
585-924-6500
www.redcom.com
Products/Services: 18,20,25,30,31

Respondez
517-588-3118
www.respondez.com
Products/Services: 130,132,133,135

RightAnswers (C)
732-396-9010
www.rightanswers.com
Products/Services: 111,114

RingCube Technologies, Inc. (M)
866-323-4278
www.ringcube.com/
Products/Services: 95,107
Other: workspace virtualization



Sage Software (S,C)
800-643-6400
www.sagecrm.com
Products/Services: 47,53,76,87,142
Other: Cloud-based Connected Services including email campaign and list building

Salesboom.com (M)
877-276-7253
www.salesboom.com
Products/Services: 52,63,94,111,142

SATMAP (M,C)
201-888-5407
www.satmaptrg.com
Products/Services: 47,53

Satori Software, Inc. (S,C)
206-357-2900
www.satorisoftware.com
Products/Services: 47,54,65,119
Other: Point-of-Entry Address Validation Software

Sennheiser Communications (M)
860-434-9190 x152
www.sennheisercommunications.com
Products/Services: 92

serVonic GmbH (C)
+49 8142 4799 x12
www.servonic.com
Products/Services: 49,77,84,159,161

Siemens (M,S)
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www.siemens-enterprise.com
Products/Services: 20,22,31,159,166

Siemens Enterprise Communications (M)
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Products/Services: 7,8,20,22,57

Snowfly Performance Incentives (S,C)
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www.snowfly.com
Products/Services: 61,97,136,139,171

SoundBite Communications (S)
781-897-2500
www.soundbite.com
Products/Services: 22,150,160,166,163
Other: AVM, mass Text Messaging, Outbound IVR

SpeechCycle
646-826-2300
www.speechcycle.com
Products/Services: 52,130,166,163,170

SPIRIT (C)
408-540-6033
www.spiritdsp.com
Products/Services: 27,31,32,44,45

Star2Star Communications (M,S)
941-234-0001 x109
www.star2star.com
Products/Services: 20,104

StarTek
303-262-4416
www.startek.com
Products/Services: 22,130,132,134,135
Other: Care, Tech Support, Sales, Email/Chat, BPO, Activation & Provisioning Management

Stratasoft, Inc. (S,C)
832-446-4501
www.stratasoft.com
Products/Services: 7,49,56,57,58

Strategic Contact, Inc. (S)
503-579-8560
www.strategiccontact.com
Products/Services: 46

Stream Global Services (S)
781-304-1800 x1841
www.stream.com
Products/Services: 52,94,130,132,133
Other: Customer Care Business Process Outsource (BPO) Provider

SupportSave Solutions, Inc. (S)
323-417-0700
www.SupportSave.com
Products/Services: 13,96,130,133,135

Swyft Technology (C)
904-854-6700 x6000
www.getswyft.com
Products/Services: 51,52,86,107,143

Synergy Solutions, Inc.
602-296-1600
www.synergysolutionsinc.com
Products/Services: 130,132,133,134

Syntellect (C)
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TeamSupport.com (S,C)

800-596-2820 x806
teamsupport.com
Products/Services: 52,53,94,95,114
Other: customer support software,
customer service software,
help desk software

Technology for Business Corp. (M,C)

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www.tfbcc.com
Products/Services: 7,1,22,49,166
Other: Custom and Packaged CTI/
IVR Software

Tel-Assist

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Products/Services: 130,135
Other: 1st Level Help Desk Service,
Email Response

Telacquire Marketing Group Inc. (S)

604-677-7780
www.telacquire.com
Products/Services: 118,121,130,133,134

Telcentris (S,C)

866-612-8647
www.telcentris.com
Products/Services: 20,103,104,126,127
Other: SIP Trunks

Tele Resources, Inc. (S)

888-698-8787 x114
www.telresources.net
Products/Services: 46,55,117,133
Other: Lead Generation

Telecorp Products, Inc. (C)

248-960-1000 x6627
www.telecorpproducts.com
Products/Services: 7,5,107,136
Other: Quality monitoring,
Real-time Recording

TeleDirect International, Inc. (M)

888-866-2538 x300
www.TDlinc.com
Products/Services: 53,57,142,150
Other: Customer campaign management
Software & Services

Teleformix, LLC (S,C)

630-285-6507
echo.teleformix.com
Products/Services: 136,156,157,163
Other: Voice and Screen Recording

TELEHOUSE America (S)

718-355-2500
www.telehouse.com
Products/Services: 13,103,144

Telekenex (S)

415-287-1208
www.telekenex.com
Products/Services: 20,103,115,127,164
Other: Hosted VoIP

TelePacific Communications (S)

800-399-4925
www.telepacific.com
Products/Services: 25,32,71,103,144

Teleperformance USA (S)

801-257-6001
www.teleperformanceusa.com
Products/Services: 53,130,132,133,135

Telerox (S)

215-347-5700
www.telerox.com
Products/Services: 22,130,132

TeleSoft Systems

604-986-4116
www.telesoftsystems.ca
Products/Services: 14,46,96,98

Telesoft Technologies

+44 1258 480 880
www.telesoft-technologies.com
Products/Services: 1,23,48,166

TeleTech (S)

303-397-8958
teletech.com
Products/Services: 107,130,132,133,135

TELONLINE CORP (V,C)

954-894-6181 x2105
www.telonlinecorp.com
Products/Services: 20,48,56,149,159

Telrex (C)

425-827-6156 x2
www.telrex.com
Products/Services: 104,123,175,171,174
Other: computer monitoring software



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941-751-7725
www.teltronics.com
Products/Services: 20,24,25,47,159

Telvista (S)

800-563-9699 x1
www.telvista.com
Products/Services: 46,130,132,135,166

Telx (S)

212-480-3300
www.telx.com
Products/Services: 137,138
Other: Data Center | Colocation

The Connection Call Center (S)

800-883-5777
www.the-connection.com
Products/Services: 130,132,133,134,135

The Taylor Reach Group, Inc. (M)

416-979-8692 x200
www.thetaylorreachgroup.com
Products/Services: 13,46,134,145

Thomas L. Cardella & Associates (S)

319-730-4000
www.tlcassociates.com
Products/Services: 22,130,133,135
Other: E-mail marketing Campaigns

Tinet (S)

+39 070 46011
www.tinet.net
Products/Services: 103

Toshiba America Information Systems, Telecom Systems Division (M)

949-583-3000
www.telecom.toshiba.com
Products/Services: 7,1,6,20
Other: IVR, UM, Video, IP/digital phones/
softphones, wireless phones, text-to-speech

TouchStar Software (M)

866-338-0678
www.touchstarsoftware.com
Products/Services: 173,57,143,150,151

Tripp Lite (M)

773-869-1111
www.tripp-lite.com
Products/Services: 137,138

Trisys, Inc. (M,C)

973-360-2300 x104
trisys.com
Products/Services: 12,97,104,163,175
Other: Telecom Expense Management



Ulysses Learning

800-662-2066
www.ulysseslearning.com
Products/Services: 46,156,157
Other: Simulation-based e-Learning for
CSRs, sales reps and managers

United Power Contractors (V)

760-735-8028 x105
www.upcus.com
Products/Services: 20,44,115,140,146

USAN (M,S)

888-676-1112
www.usan.com
Products/Services: 7,20,22,57,166

UTOPY (C)

415-621-5700
www.utopy.com
Products/Services: 51,136,147,163,175

UTOPY, Inc (C)

415-621-5700
www.utopy.com
Products/Services: 51,136,147,175,174



VanillaSoft (S,C)

866-763-8826
vanillasoft.com
Products/Services: 47,52,58,142,150

Varolli (S)

206-902-3900
varolli.com
Products/Services: 52,74,104,160,166



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Vertica Systems (C)

978-600-1000
www.vertica.com
Products/Services: 54,136
Other: Analytic Database
Management Systems

Vertical Solutions, Inc.

513-891-7997 x333
www.VertSol.com
Products/Services: 52,53,95,114,171

VICIDIAL Group (S,C)

888-894-8424
www.vicidial.com
Products/Services: 7,56,57,58,150

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VirtualLogger LLC (S)

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www.virtuallogger.com
Products/Services: 173,123,134,136,175

Vocal Laboratories Inc.

(Vocalabs) (M,S)
952-941-6580
www.vocalabs.com
Other: Customer Satisfaction Measurement/
Customer Surveys; Usability Testing for IVR

Voice Stamps (S)

469-272-4688 x1
www.voicestamps.com
Products/Services: 87,90,133,134,166

Voice Teleservices (S)

207-699-2484
www.voiceteleservices.com
Products/Services: 46,121,130,133,143

VoiceSage (S)

0035312301060
www.voicesage.com
Products/Services: 19,160,166,163
Other: Outbound Interactive
Voice Messaging

VoltDelta Hosted Solutions

877-899-9950
www.voltdelta.com/ondemand
Products/Services: 7,104,107,166,163

Voxeo Corporation (S,C)

407-418-1800
www.voxeo.com
Products/Services: 51,104,159,166,170

Voyss Solutions

877-847-7544
www.voyss.com
Products/Services: 20,34,44,45,149

VPI (Voice Print International) (S,C)

800-200-5430
www.vpi-corp.com
Products/Services: 123,136,156,175,174

VXI Corporation (M)

800-742-8588 x1029
www.vxicorp.com
Products/Services: 93,92



Xceedium

703-251-4509
www.xceedium.com
Products/Services: 144

Xeesm

650-384-0057
xeesm.com
Products/Services: 47,52,53,98
Other: Social Relationship Management

XFER Communications, Inc. (V,S)

800-438-9337
www.xfer.com
Products/Services: 20,25,27,31,115

Xirrus Inc. (M)

805-262-1600
www.xirrus.com
Products/Services: 23,115,146
Other: Wireless

Xorcom (M)

866-XOR-COM1
www.xorcom.com
Products/Services: 20,26,31,104,165



Zeacom, Inc. (C)

949-261-3588
www.zeacom.com
Products/Services: 13,44,159,160,175

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www.infocision.com

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www.itexpo.com

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www.jabra.com/Avaya

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www.rlbcinc.com

Satmap 25
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Thomas L. Cardella Associates 38
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Verint Cover 3
www.verint.com

VXi 11
www.vxicorp.com

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Before Making Your Contact Center Wish List...

This is the season where individuals—and organizations such as contact centers — make their wish lists. Yet, with budgets, both household and corporate, limited there is no allowance — or tolerance — for unused or misused items. The penalties include reprimands and threats to cut back on how much is given next year.

Therefore, it is essential the items that go on these lists reflect critical and provable needs for which there are no on-hand or lower-cost substitutes. There must also be evidence that indicates these investments will be used and benefits quickly realized. The payoff is that centers that follow these practices, stand a greater chance of having more of their wishes granted.

So, how can contact centers improve the chances?

1. Take a hard look at centers' and at parent organizations' business processes and ask the question, "Can we work smarter and make fewer mistakes?" (Thanks, Convergys, for making that point some years ago.).

The reason most people who call/write to contact centers is because they have problems: product and service issues that may have been prevented if the items and services were designed and delivered better. Taking steps to ensure this will lead to fewer contacts, higher customer satisfaction and likely increased revenues from existing customers and new ones attracted by raving fans via social media. That translates to fewer seats, licenses and boxes and simpler and more affordable applications.

2. Check for and find ways of using shelfware. There is nothing like the virtual dust gathering on unused items to draw the wagging fingers of CFOs. Pay special attention to complex multi-featured solutions, such as CRM software and all-in-one-suites like workforce optimization applications.

3. Consult with the agents and supervisors who use support the products, like help desks. They will give critiques on what they use and offer suggestions how to improve them or whether the items should be recycled or trashed.

4. Take an "are these investments truly necessary" approach. Make, check and re-check the business cases for them. Treat what is being written on the list as if it is coming out of your pocket, which it is, one way or another.

5. When feasible, pilot. If not, obtain or conduct in-depth research.

6. Avoid bells and whistles and the nice-to-haves. Don't overbuy for the future. Focus on current and imminent needs. Technologies and vendors change so often that it often doesn't pay to add functionalities that may be needed in the future.

7. Consider modular or, better yet, open-source applications that permit easier add-ons when needs and budgets permit. Open source offers some insurance in case a supplier or product line goes belly-up, because you can use core (non-proprietary) applications.

8. Double-up on due diligence. Get on social networks to ask your counterparts in the other contact centers. Listen and analyze to the gripes on social media sites. Read news and feature stories (where better than on TMCnet?). If the candidate suppliers are publicly traded, delve into their reports. Check out any speculation that these companies are buying others or may be bought out themselves, which could mean enhanced investments or support for the products/services, or the end of the solutions. Ask hard questions about the benefits, usability, installation, support, product/service lifespans and the vendors' financial stability. This is and will continue to be a buyers' market. Negotiate smartly and fairly.

9. Learn how to play corporate politics to get budget allocations. Make allies in other departments — we scratch your backs, you scratch ours. Speak the corporate, not the contact center language (i.e., "higher per customer sale", "higher lifetime revenue" rather than "first call resolution"). Too often, contact centers have been relegated and treated as cost-drains as opposed to profit/goal-contributors because they don't pick up and play by the rules.

10. Check out the Buyers' Guide in this issue. Click on and call the companies listed.

Follow these simple steps and may your wishes come true.

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What Is Under Your WFM's Hood?

Other WFM Software

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- **Poor forecast accuracy** using Weighted Moving Averages

Staffing & Scheduling

- **Poor schedule efficiency** using non-optimal, heuristic scheduling
- Inaccurate Erlang or primitive simulation based staffing and service level predictions for skills-based routing

Strategic Planning

- **Third-party add-on** using different forecasting, staffing and scheduling models than the WFM software

Performance Management

- **Limited to passive reporting** with no decision support
- Real-time Adherence

Agent Workstation

- **Limited or no support** for agents to manage their activities over the internet

Software

- **Outdated client-server architecture**

ac2 Advanced Workforce Optimization Portal

- **Utmost forecast accuracy** using Expert System to fit advanced time series models optimally: Box-Jenkins ARIMA, Exponential Smoothing (Holt-Winters), Forecasting with call drivers
- Special event day forecasting
- Automated IDP, shift bid and budget forecast accuracy tracking

- **5 – 12+% agent headcount savings over other WFM to meet service level targets**
- Concurrent Optimal Scheduling of all agents' work/off days, daily start and break times together
- Provably optimal schedule efficiency
- Sophisticated Discrete Event simulation for staffing and service level predictions for skills-based routing

- **Comprehensive, integrated strategic planning using the same advanced forecasting, staffing and scheduling models**
- Sophisticated What-If analysis capabilities
- Productivity and AHT changes in new agent training/ramping
- Planning all agent and support staff groups
- Vendor SLA and capacity planning

- **Proactive performance optimization, scorecards and dashboards with advanced decision support tools**
- Real-time Adherence

- **Easy-to-use web-based workstation**
- Exception entry
- Shift swapping
- Schedule and vacation bidding
- Performance review

- **%100 web based architecture**
- Modular licensing