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# IT EXP



## 2011 Preview



### Also In This Issue:

- Leasing The Contact Center Vehicle
- Watching (and Preventing) The Hidden Crimes
- The Agentless Shift





**Lisa.**

**Not so big on piña coladas or getting caught in the rain.**

But she is married, has two kids under ten, three shoe store credit cards, vacations in Florida twice a year, and LOVES Christian music artists.

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Rich Tehrani, *CEO, TMC*



## Marketing Goes Almost Painfully Local

One of the most memorable business stories I have heard was when a consultant friend of mine flew to a large customer to quote on a substantial project. He was traveling with his business partner and happened upon a shuttle bus to the rental car company with his competitor and a partner. None of these consultants had ever met, but my friend and his partner had the luck to keep quiet as he overheard the other two people on the shuttle bus finalizing their pitch and setting the price for the project. My friend priced his proposal under the competition and got the project. Now, that's the sort of thing you want to overhear.

### Pay attention, you might just overhear something

I couldn't stop thinking about this story as I saw news item after news item fall into place for this month's column. You see, just like on the shuttle bus, if you pay attention, you can pick up valuable insight into the future of the marketing, sales, CRM and customer interactions.

### The art of the deal sites

Perhaps no other recent trend has shaken up the tech markets like the rise of daily deal sites like Groupon, a company whose growth rate at 2,241 percent caused the Wall Street Journal to call it the fastest growing company in the history of humanity.

Deal sites are here to stay and everyone, and I mean everyone, is jumping on the bandwagon, from Google to Glenn Beck.

What this tells us is you have to be an absolute savant to keep track of all the marketing opportunities out there, and in order to maximize ROI you should be ahead of these trends or you may find yourself playing catch up with the competition. Ask yourself if your management is the kind to forward you an angry email from Groupon wondering why your biggest competitor used their service first. Depending on your answer, you should act accordingly.

### Amazon and Google weren't local enough?

The buzz in the local space is beyond deafening. Even if you cover your ears, you feel like the news will find a way through your nostrils to directly inject itself into your grey matter. Just yesterday in fact, Amazon quietly launched its own deal site, allowing customers who are already used to getting deals from the largest e-tailer to get more local oriented deals – likely from the brick and mortar establishments once relegated to using newspapers and such for their mass marketing needs.

Let's be honest – if you don't have human-supercomputers working for you, how on earth will you keep track of all the social/local deal sites and opportunities out there? A logical answer is with some sort

of aggregator. Well, guess what – Google just picked up Dealmap, a startup providing users with access to data from hundreds of group-buying sites. You get the feeling there is a strong trend here?

### Foursquare isn't playing around

You think the new flow has stopped? Then you should know that social check-in site Foursquare, which some equate to a GPS-enabled Twitter, is retooling its service to give merchants access to promoting themselves to the millions of users it has. By sharing location-based information with merchants, it aims to allow them to increase engagement with customers to hopefully persuade them to frequent their stores and part with some of their hard-earned cash. As you may have guessed, they expect to monetize their service with paying merchants.

### Mobility is the future and your channel marketing choices infinite

If you follow the trend lines and the investments, you'll see the world of commerce is expanding to handle smarter and ubiquitous cell phones and brick and mortar shops once excluded from the tech revolution are now able to cash in on the latest technologies and channels to get a piece of the dotcom 2.0 dream. As always, not every player will be a winner and moreover, some deal sites will be better suited to some products and geographic areas and to specific types of customers. The challenge then becomes how to market to and engage with and manage so many new potential customers, channels and do it on a budget, which makes your CXOs happy.

I leave you with one thought and it's that you should pay attention to your own management and the rapidly-growing space of new marketing channels. You should be experimenting, analyzing and paying attention because even if your company is comfortable doing things the old way, sooner or later your management is bound to receive a deal offer from another company in your space, causing them to second guess your marketing initiatives. And from my perspective this is not the sort of news you ever want to overhear. **CIS**

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Erik Linask, *Group Editorial Director, TMC*



## The Power of Mobile Apps as a Customer Feedback Tool

**N**ever has the nature of interactions between customers and vendors been so easy, yet so complicated, thanks to the rise of social media. I've written previously about the need for companies to monitor social networks, like Facebook, Twitter, and now Google+, and how they can mine those social media interactions to improve their businesses.

The mobile revolution, however, in addition to making the major social networks more relevant to customer service, has also introduced a new level of complexity to the equation, thanks to the growing number of targeted apps available to consumers. Market-specific apps make it easy, on the one hand, for customers to rate and comment on their experiences and, on the other, for other potential customers to make purchasing decisions based on such feedback.

This can be a tremendous benefit for businesses, assuming positive feedback, but knowing it is impossible to satisfy every customer all the time, it can also deter new customers.

Take, for instance, the restaurant business. There may not be a more feedback-centric business market, as friends, colleagues, family members, and even complete strangers rely heavily on personal reviews when making their dining decisions.

At our recent editorial open house in San Jose, the TMC team had a chance to hear about two apps created specifically for the purpose of allowing diners to provide instant feedback on their dining experiences – Bizzy and Nosh.

These two are prime examples of how the mobile app market is empowering customers – and the new breed of complexity and customer feedback challenges businesses must face.

Both Bizzy and Nosh are designed to quickly and easily allow customers to rate their dining experiences – from overall experience to specific menu items – even making it easy to post pictures of menu items. Likewise, the apps make that feedback available to other

users. For instance, when you're in Austin, Texas, next month for ITEXPO West, you may find yourself looking for a suitable place to dine with clients. With apps such as these, finding a facility, based upon location, cuisine, and reviews, makes the process significantly simpler – both in determining where to eat and which venues to avoid.

For businesses, what it means is, not only do they now have sort through comments on the “big three” social networks, but they should also develop strategies for monitoring smaller, targeted micro-social networks, such as Bizzy and Nosh for the restaurant industry.

As applications such as these continue to be developed and as their adoption grows in countless industries – many will, undoubtedly fall by the wayside, but others will grow in popularity – businesses willing to dedicate efforts towards monitoring them will find themselves in possession of a valuable data set, perhaps even more important than Facebook updates and tweets.

Users of these targeted apps are going to be more focused and potentially more objective in their feedback, with the likelihood of fewer impulse posts. Rather, users that have downloaded market-specific apps are going to provide more valuable feedback, and are also more likely to have a stronger impact among other users of the same apps.

Likewise, businesses that follow and monitor these apps will have a better sense of which products are successful... and which aren't. With Bizzy and Nosh, for example, it can be easy to determine which menu items should be highlighted and which should be replaced, as well as identifying candidates

for new selections based on trend data.

Particularly for small, local business, which rely on social feedback and commentary, mobile apps can become an asset, if they are willing to commit the resources to collecting and mining that data – as well as communicating with customers that have provided feedback. One of the greatest traits of social media is that it is a two-way medium, allowing businesses to react to commentary on an individual basis.

Targeted social apps aren't going to become as big as Facebook or Twitter – they can't, by their nature – but they offer an opportunity for entrepreneurial minds to leverage the growing desire for consumers to share their thoughts and experiences, and to grow their businesses by leveraging the information their customers willingly offer.

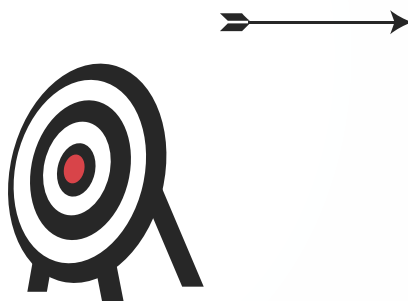
As such apps gain momentum, businesses must not only acknowledge them, but they must also recognize them as an extension of their advertising channels. Advertising comes at a cost. In this case, the cost comes in the form of dedicating the time and effort required to collect and analyze the feedback that is publicly available.

For more on Bizzy and Nosh, check out these videos from our San Jose trip:

- Interview with Bizzy founder and president, Gadi Shamia: <http://tmcnet.com/59035.1>
- Firespotter Labs' CEO and founder Craig Walker's demo of Nosh for Rich Tehrani: (<http://tmcnet.com/59034.1>)
- Interview with Firespotter's head of business development Falon Fatami: <http://tmcnet.com/59036.1> **CIS**



# *Selling the **right** product to the **wrong** customer?*



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## ITEXPO West 2011 Preview

Some of the hottest issues facing contact centers include handling the rapidly-becoming-vital social channel, managing and working with cloud/hosted-based applications and with home-based agents. It is a new world out there, with customers who can influence others and raise issues and opportunities worldwide at the speed of light, with applications running, updated and supported on servers offsite and with hiring and managing team members who are out of sight but definitely not out of mind.

Insights on these matters and more, along with the opportunity to meet knowledgeable speakers and suppliers and industry colleagues, are best found at ITEXPO West 2011 (<http://www.tmcnet.com/voip/conference/west-11/>) which is coming to Austin, Texas Sept. 13-15.

ITEXPO West's venue, the Austin Convention Center, is arguably one of the most accessible and convenient in the U.S. Every major U.S. airline provides nonstop flights to Austin from virtually every key American city. And the airport is just 15 minutes away from the conference facility. The Austin Convention Center has state-of-the-art communications capabilities. TMC has arranged for all participants to enjoy free, fast Wi-Fi connections throughout the center's massive network, capable of serving 5,800 simultaneous users. There are plenty of places to stay that close by; more than 6,000 downtown hotel rooms are within walking distance to the convention center.

### Conference Highlights

On the conference side, the Social CRM Expo, launched successfully last year at ITEXPO West in Los Angeles, Calif. has returned. The sessions include:

- The Contact Center: The Key to Social Media Success
- How Social Media is Changing Customer Behavior
- Socialize Your Contact Center for Greater Customer Engagement
- Securing Social Media for Compliant Collaboration







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- Creating Community, Creating Customers for Life
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- Does Your Business Have a Social Media Strategy?

There is Call Center track that features these sessions:

- The Cloud Evolution in Contact Centers
- Harnessing the Customer Service Experience with a Multi-Channel Approach
- Hearing the Voice of the Customer
- What's Really Driving the Hosted Customer Care Trend?

ITEXPO West has a special session on home-based agents. Every aspect of enabling and managing them will be explored and attendee participation will be actively encouraged; this is the opportunity to ask the unasked questions about this increasingly important model.

The conference has other tracks, on business collaboration, enterprise security and on meeting the communications needs of small-mid-sized businesses. These are in-depth sessions that are ideal for attendees that need to be immersed in these topics.

There are also several collocated conferences. These are 4GWE Conference, Business Video Expo, ChannelVision Expo, Cloud Communications Expo, M2M Evolution Expo, MSPWorld, Regulatory 2.0, SIP Tutorial 2.0, StartupCamp 4, Super WiFi Summit and Voice Interconnect and Peering Conference.

To set the tone, ITEXPO West will have keynote sessions on Tuesday Sept.13 and Wednesday Sept.14. They will be led off by the ITEXPO West Opening Address Tuesday morning.

The exhibit floor will have a wide range of leading-edge suppliers; there is always a buzz of "what's new" on ITEXPO show floors. They cover a wide range of solutions including business communications systems, communication security, conferencing, media gateways, multichannel contact routing/switching and VoIP hardware and software. The hall will be open all three days for convenient access and interactions.

### Networking Opportunities

Networking is a vital part of attending any conference. ITEXPO West is exceptional for that. There will be a grand opening reception Tuesday evening from 5:30pm-7:30pm. Other events include continental breakfasts Wednesday and Thursday, a luncheon Wednesday at 12 noon for paid attendees only, followed by a network reception at 4pm.

And as always, ITEXPO West will feature its popular end-of-show draw. Check back on the site for more details.

See you in Austin! **CIS**

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## The Agentless Shift

**T**oday – and going forward – customers go to the web for self-service including automated chat, e-mail, SMS and mobile apps and then if need be, they call. And when they do dial, they are interacting through DTMF and increasingly, speech rec software.

Moreover customers like, and now expect, outbound e-mail, SMS or voicemail notifications of issues like credit card fraud, flight delays, order arrivals and repair completions. These tools avoid them from making calls to live agents on these matters.

“We are seeing a transformation of service from customers who increasingly demand self-service and who quite frankly don’t want to talk to a live agent,” explains Lynne Levy, senior business process product manager at Aspect ([www.aspect.com](http://www.aspect.com)). “They want to figure what the problem is, and troubleshoot it themselves, quickly, at any time from anywhere or any device. They expect companies to ‘anticipate the information I need to know before I know it and get me that information’.”

### Self-Service into Agentless Service

Yes, customers still prefer to be assisted by people. Yet the individuals on the other end do not have to be contact center agents.

Self-service is now morphing into “agentless service” which encompasses not just automated voice and text-based self service but also peer service/support via social media, subject matter expert and SME assistance and automated notifications. Agentless services cost a fraction of those handled by dedicated live agents while enabling live help from other individuals; when deployed right, they improve the customer experience.

Enabling the agentless movement has been improving self-service technology and implementations that focus on customer satisfaction and retention, not just on cost cutting as in the past. Firms and suppliers are finally recognizing that the former and the latter combined lead to higher profits. Websites are becoming easier to navigate, mobile-enabled and online security issues are being addressed. Social media and unified communications readily enable customers to connect with SMEs.

“As systems have become more open and software-centric, the ability to flexibly customize these self-service applications has significantly increased their business value,” explains Tim Passios, director of solutions marketing at Interactive Intelligence ([www.inin.com](http://www.inin.com)).

For those reasons, these agentless methods are growing in demand and popularity. Siemens Enterprise Communications ([www.siemens-enterprise.com](http://www.siemens-enterprise.com)) has seen a 20 percent increase in web and 15 percent in IVR applications. It is also seeing many RFIs and RFPs for automated outbound notifications.

“The cost of doing repetitious, mundane and usual transactions by voice is getting too expensive to accommodate,” explains Don Greco, Siemens’ director of solution management. “Couple that with the comfort that most people have with interacting with web, e-mail and social media and it becomes clear that when the security issues of dealing in an online world are solved, the growth will be exponential. That, and the more providers alleviate the frustration that customers have had interacting with agentless channels deployed with best practices guidance, agentless growth and convenience will finally be realized.”

### The Agentless Preferences

There is an increasing range of agentless interactions that customers prefer over agent-assisted, if these applications are well-implemented. The reasons include speed (no queues), understandability and in the case of the web self-service, easily seen and reviewed and accessible information.

A study for Nuance ([www.nuance.com](http://www.nuance.com)) by Forrester Consulting revealed that in five out of ten posed scenarios, consumers preferred inbound automated voice customer service systems over live agent interactions. These included prescription refills, checking flight status and account balances, store information requests and shipment tracking.

In January 2011, Frost & Sullivan ([www.frost.com](http://www.frost.com)) performed benchmarking in several industries among them, airlines, banking, insurance and telecom and found that, in three of four industries, customer satisfaction was higher with web self-service than with live agents. On the flip side, customer satisfaction was the lowest with IVR in two of four industries.

“We are seeing that if a company gives a better experience in automated or agentless format customers will prefer that over speaking with a live agent,” says Ashwin Iyer, global program director, contact centers.

Other analysis indicates that customers are not ready to give up on live agents, at least not yet.

Avaya ([www.avaya.com](http://www.avaya.com)) issued the Avaya Contact Center Consumer Preference Study, indicated that overall consumers’ strongest preference were for live agents over web and voice self service, explains Jorge Blanco, vice president of marketing of the Contact Center Division at Avaya. There are exceptions such as billing reminders and collections automation.

“Generally a well designed self service application that is convenient, responsive, accurate and personalized is just as valuable to an end customer versus conducting the same transaction with a live agent,” says Blanco.

### Developing Agentless Channels

Self-service applications, both voice and text-based are improving and becoming more versatile. The results higher success rates and lowered costs.

Automated voice applications have become more conversational while menus have become simpler and grammar has improved. These systems – and owners/users – are learning from customers.

Interactive Digital ([www.vuicloud.com](http://www.vuicloud.com)), Adaptive Audio solution permits easier and customer-friendly IVR/speech dialogues. This patented software monitors caller responses throughout the calls and allows the IVRs to automatically adjust and customize prompt playback speeds to suit each individual customer.





One production client saved over 25 seconds per call and improved call automation rates by close to two percent, reports CEO Daniel O'Sullivan.

To avoid customer frustration with speech recognition, SpeechCycle ([www.speechcycle.com](http://www.speechcycle.com)) is employing machine intelligence that automatically analyzes customer interaction data and adapts to factors such as demographics, environment, time of day and caller profiles. This technology, integrated into its LevelOne Agents speech app, promises to raise completion rates to 95 percent-plus from 80-85 percent-plus, reports Roberto Pieraccini, the firm's CTO.

Chat is one hot area going automated and now multimodal. Next IT's ([www.nextit.com](http://www.nextit.com)) ActiveAgents automated chat uses what it calls "human emulation software" to accurately understand and interpret natural language questions and deliver exact results. It recently united that technology with SMS/text for Gonzaga University, which collaborated in creating the application. The college's mascot, Spike, now answers questions about campus life through the Next IT solution via the web or wireless.

One emerging game-changer is mobile apps. They enable customers to quickly reach out to companies' customer service/support portals via their smartphones. Firms have caught onto their popularity and are rapidly creating new and/or improving existing applications.

"Customers take much less time accessing companies with mobile apps than making calls, which cost them minutes," explains Iyer. "Most importantly they have strong customer acceptance, which means they will use this self-service interface."

The chat developments and mobile apps point to a shift in inbound self-service channels.

"With self-service, the impression for automated voice is that it just doesn't really work," explains Ryan Joe, research analyst with Ovum ([www.ovum.com](http://www.ovum.com)). "It is very limited with what you can do and it does not work all the time with restricted menus and recognition rates. In contrast, text-based automated solutions are much better because the interface is different and easier and more usable as the users see the all menus at once."

Does automated voice have a future? The answer is a qualified yes.

"As companies develop tools like speech-to-web – including talking e-mail and social media – and as speech applications become more conversational, then we will really see significant upticks again in voice self-service," observes Levy.

### Live Assistance Without Live Agents?

As capable as the agentless self-service methods have become, there is now a stronger need to seamlessly connect customers, with their interaction records, to live agents so they avoid annoyingly repeating themselves to agents. Most studies indicate that this ability is one of, if not the most sought-after feature of these systems by consumers. This connectivity is fortunately beginning to happen.

Does this mean that live agents will be handling the interactions? Customers who underwent self-service are often frustrated and impatient and expect highly trained and experienced individuals when they contact organizations. Yet can contact

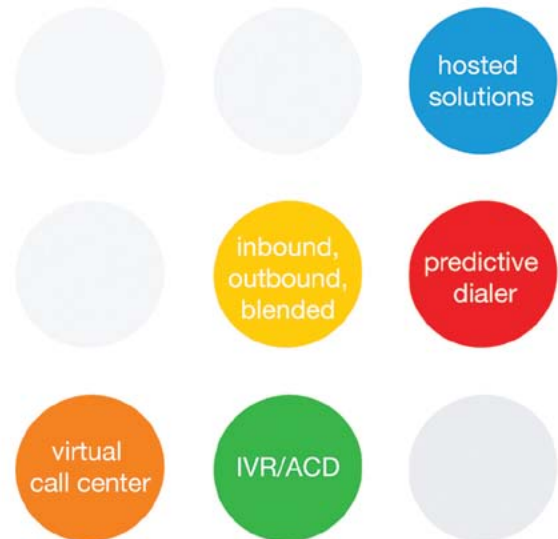
center agents who typically have a few weeks of training and rely on knowledgebases truly meet their needs?

The alternative is the SME portion of agentless service. Their business, professional and/or technical educations and backgrounds equip them to resolve complex issues, including coming up with out-of-the-knowledgebase solutions.

SMEs are already getting involved with customer service issues. Eric Tamblyn, vice president of product marketing at Alcatel Lucent (Genesys) ([www.genesyslabs.com](http://www.genesyslabs.com)) reports that they are answering customers' concerns directly on social media sites without going through contact center or marketing intermediaries. He sees a need for measures to ensure consistency and for live agents acting as service advisors to coordinate resources, like SMEs.

The agent-as-intermediary model could work with agentless methods, like long-proven answering services or virtual receptionists, just as long as they help, not hinder customer access to expert assistance. Customers would still prefer to reach experts directly.

"What enterprises need to understand is that to win and keep consumers' business they are going to have to give them direct access to those experts," says Aspect's Levy. "The consumers are insisting on it, the solutions are there and companies have to respond." **CIS**



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## Three Call Center Rules to Break, Bend and Ignore

Many of today's contact centers have finally shifted from a pure focus on cost reduction to one of increasing customer satisfaction. But despite customer satisfaction taking a front row seat, reducing operational costs is never too far removed from the big picture.

Businesses want to enhance the customer experience without giving back the gains made in operational efficiencies; for many customers, having their issue handled efficiently – by a knowledgeable agent and in a single call – is a big part of what keeps them satisfied.

Most agree that agent performance is vital to the overall customer experience. The key is figuring out how to improve agent performance and productivity without sacrificing other efficiency metrics.

Knowlagent recently held a webinar with Ventana Research to dig into the customer experience and better understand the typical day for call center agents. To access the webinar online, go to <http://bit.ly/jDK2ly>.

### Where your agents spend their time

An agent's workday is typically broken into three major categories: handle time, wait time and shrinkage. The controllable shrinkage is mainly comprised of the off-phone activities – training, coaching, communications and team meetings – that help improve agent performance. Research shows that a significant portion of an agent's workday – between 12-15 percent – is spent completing these off-phone activities.

Initial findings from a new Ventana Research study indicate that these breaks usually occur in two minute intervals, which is barely enough time for agents to catch their breath, let alone complete any meaningful activity.

Thousands of two-minute breaks are bad for the agent and bad for business. Unproductive wait time costs the industry an estimated \$30 billion per year – a cost that is ultimately passed on to consumers.

With the technology available to contact centers in the past, these inefficiencies were simply a fact of life. But times have changed. Here are three call center rules to break, bend and ignore:

### Rule #1: Idle time is unproductive.

Bend it. Not anymore. Now idle time can be turned into productive time. Technology exists to take activities such as training, coaching and communications and push them to agents during idle time, creating Active Wait Time. These small increments of time can be collected across all agents and aggregated into 10-15 minutes for a few agents to complete these activities. Active Wait Time typically occupies 25 percent or less of an agent's total wait time, so it does leave some downtime, but it enables you to make a significant percentage productive. This creates impressive returns for your business and your customers.

### Rule #2: High shrinkage is a fact of life.

Break it. This is no longer the case. Though businesses must invest a lot in their agents to ensure a quality level of service, agent improvement activities can now be completed during idle time. If call volume spikes while agents are participating in an assigned activity, the activity is interrupted and bookmarked so that they can return to taking calls. Just moving a few hours of shrinkage per agent, per month to Active Wait translates into measurable productivity gains.

### Rule #3: Idle time improves agent satisfaction.

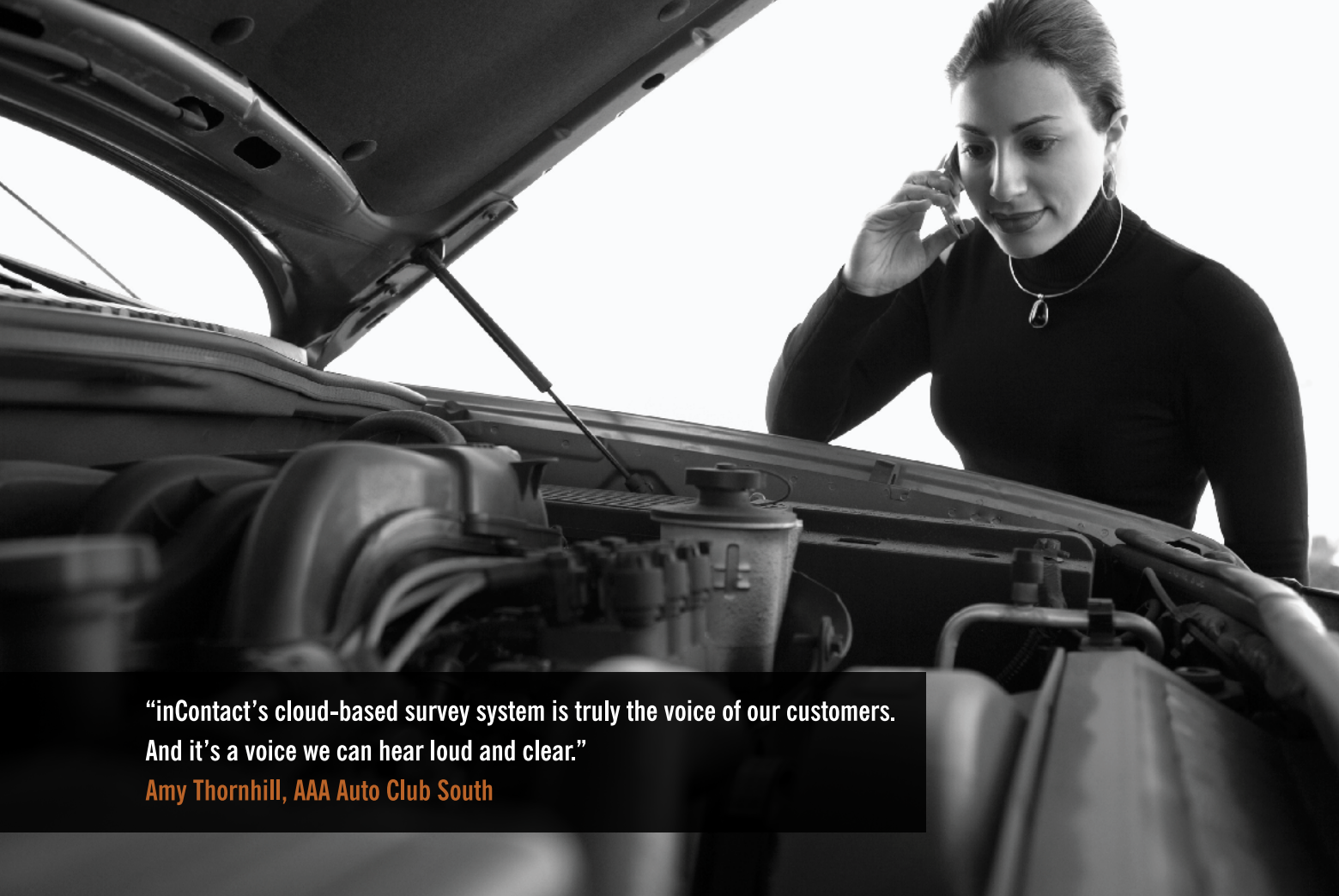
Ignore it. A two minute break is not really a break. Even 5,760 two minute breaks is not a real break. By aggregating idle time, agents receive a longer 10-15 minute break to complete meaningful activities to enhance their performance, and they keep plenty of time to recover between calls. A 10-15 minute break – even if it is to read a knowledge base review – is much more of a “break” than two minutes between phone calls.

There are not many 10 percent productivity opportunities left in the business world. Think about it: you are already paying for five weeks of idle time, two minutes at a time. Why not do something productive with it?

### About Knowlagent

Knowlagent ([www.knowlagent.com](http://www.knowlagent.com)) provides the only call center software that increases agent utilization by delivering shrinkage activities during idle time. Knowlagent creates active wait time through dynamically delivered sessions for common shrinkage activities between customer interactions. **CIS**





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**Adobe Systems ([www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com))** has announced its new Adobe Digital Enterprise Platform for Customer Experience Management (CEM). It includes six applications – customer communications, integrated content review, selection and enrollment, social brand engagement, unified workspace and web experience management. Adobe Digital Enterprise Platform will integrate with Flash Builder 4.5 and Flex 4.5, which now includes support for building mobile applications for Android devices, BlackBerry Playbook and iPhone and iPad.

**AMC Technology ([www.amctechnology.com](http://www.amctechnology.com))** has achieved Oracle Validated Integration of AMC Technology's Multi-Channel Integration Suite (MCIS) v5.4 with Siebel CRM v8.1. MCIS delivers Siebel CRM real-time contact center data from leading contact center communication platforms such as Aspect, Avaya and Cisco.

**Angel ([www.angel.com](http://www.angel.com))** has devised what may be the first truly multimodal app for the iPhone. The application permits enhanced customer interactions through multimodal transactions, whether customers speak, visualize or text, making communications faster, clearer and more convenient. Users can switch between different input and output methods with just a simple tap and toggle back and forth.

**Cloud9 ([www.cloud9analytics.com](http://www.cloud9analytics.com))**'s Summer 11 Release has several new features. User experience has been simplified. Sales operations personnel can now pre-configure and organize forecast and pipeline views that they then can share with groups or individual sales leaders, sales reps or sales analysts through the Cloud9 application tab in Salesforce CRM. There is an administrator console that allows application administrators to pre-configure, organize and share views of Cloud9 Pipeline Accelerator and Cloud9 Dashboards. There is persistent cache technology that extends system cache to virtual memory stored on high-speed disk drives. It also "warms up" frequently requested queries after each refresh to minimize query processing time.

**Convio ([www.convio.com](http://www.convio.com))** has entered a strategic partnership to integrate e-mail marketing from Constant Contact with Convio Common Ground CRM. The combination offers small and mid-sized charities an affordable, easy-to-use solution to reach, inspire and move people to support their cause and manage relationships. Convio will also become a member of Constant Contact's AppConnect partner program.

**The Meltwater Group ([www.meltwater.com](http://www.meltwater.com))** has come out with Meltwater Buzz Engage, a new module in the Meltwater Buzz product suite. It includes social profiles on each social author, a social inbox, a menu of social actions available,

content posts and sharing functionality, conversation analysis and social tagging, social activity measurement and analysis and an outbound communications calendar.

**Pegasystems ([www.pegacom](http://www.pegacom))** has announced the latest version of Pega BPM. It includes predictive and adaptive decisioning components, collaboration features and thin-client modeling options. It also provides business event driven interactions functionality that permits users to define and trigger time or pattern-driven changes to forms, reports or cases.

**Sage North America ([www.sagenorthamerica.com](http://www.sagenorthamerica.com))** has released SageCRM v7.1. The enhancements includes Sage E-Marketing for SageCRM, a subscription-based connected service for managing e-mail marketing campaigns, iPhone, LinkedIn and Twitter integrations, interactive dashboards and real-time Microsoft Exchange synchronization.

**SysAid Technologies ([www.sysaid.com](http://www.sysaid.com))** has come out with Customer Service Support software, CSS 3.0. It features a new user interface that enables users to access and manage data in fewer clicks, and a 35 percent improvement in overall page load time. Many of the platform's tools have been enhanced including tighter permission controls, extended online help, improved customization settings, enhancements to the report wizard and improvements to the FAQ and self-service portal. The new version includes a calendar in the self-service portal that allows end users to view the request dates and due dates of the service requests they have submitted. It also supports integration with Outlook Web Access protocol.

**Telrex ([www.telrex.com](http://www.telrex.com))** has introduced version 4.1 of CallRex Call Recording software that permits contact centers to create a Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI-DSS) - compliant call recording environment. CallRex 4.1 includes improved password storage in the database, secure client/server network communications, 256-bit file encryption with dual key controls for decryption, pause controls to prevent recording protected data and a full audit trail of all system events. There are also updates to the CallRex API. Telrex has also been acquired by Enghouse, which owns Syntellect and which recently purchased CosmoCom (see June News).

**VirtualLogger ([www.virtuallogger.com](http://www.virtuallogger.com))** has announced the launch of AddedVision, a screen capture add-on for existing call recording systems. The tool captures both desktop images during the call and screen analytics data, including chat and IM sessions, applications used, e-mail and keywords. Once the information is captured, the AddedVision system notes the audio information captured by the recording system. The system then creates a unified multimedia file which can be played with any standard media player.





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## Watching (and Preventing) the Hidden Crimes

The criminal and security threats that are the most worrisome are not the ones carried out with guns and explosives to get at bank vaults or cash drawers but hidden, over IT networks, to access databases containing customer information and to disrupt communications. There have been, as examples, high profile data breaches at well-known companies such as Citibank, direct marketer Epsilon (which has a large client list of household names) and Sony.

Contact centers are at risk to these crimes as they handle sensitive or protected data such as consumer information, financial and legal data and patient student information, reports Adam Boone, vice president of marketing and product management at Sipera. The cost of such "incidents" is high. He points to an Aberdeen Group study which found that a single breach of such protected information could easily exceed \$1 million in liability.

Dennis Usle, senior network engineer for Evolve IP, points out that contact centers should be concerned about three key IT-based or launched threats: availability, phishing and other "social engineering" attacks and insider theft. On availability, contact centers can be knocked offline by online distributed denial of service (DDOS) attacks, as well as by disasters and pandemics.

"Contact centers are the front line and interact with more external and internal

customers than any other aspect of the business," explains Usle.

### Contact Center Risks and Responses

There is some good news reports Matthew Storm, NICE director of innovation and solutions. Enterprises are aware of dangers and have been limiting the opportunities for fraud and ID theft. In most contact centers, the computers and equipment, while valuable, do not hold or store actual customer data. Also, HIPAA, PCI (Payment Card Industry), SAS70 and Sarbanes-Oxley-compliant call recording technologies, screen wipes and encrypted data coupled with call monitoring and fraud pattern analysis protect customers' data at the contact center level. Storm recommends fusing voice recordings video and captured screens with multimedia incident information from security and IT sub-systems to quickly detect any criminal activity.





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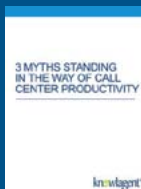


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With the aforementioned standards and their compliant tools and monitoring tools in place, contact centers are in a good position on security issues, says Storm. Even with mobile and remote contact center staff, tools on agent desktops ensure that information is limited and is provided on an as-needed basis. There are mechanisms such as remote monitoring and quick-disable to prevent fraud.

"The criminals are getting smarter, but organizations are also getting much more proactive in handling outside and inside threats," explains Storm. "Organizations are getting more aggressive with the time-to-response and generally have zero tolerance for using customer information beyond the interaction at hand."

Contact centers have been employing other measures to limit threats from inside. Among them are deploying network or "dumb" and/or storageless PCs or buying those without external drives and installing lock-fitted workstations to prevent access to computers (see "Dressing (The Contact Center) For Success" this issue).

To limit risk, contact centers need to carefully screen applicants. Contact centers have high staff attrition and a replacement rate that Craig Wilson, director of Strategic Communications Consulting, says challenges HR's capability to screen candidates for past suspect behavior.

Contact centers use security background checks and perform them periodically throughout their tenure, says Usle. These include alcohol, drug, criminal and credit and personal and professional references.

There are legal limits for employment credit checks though. For example, Oregon's Job Applicant Fairness Act prohibits employers from obtaining and considering an applicant's credit history when making hiring decisions. It has a few exceptions, such as for federally-insured banks and credit unions, public safety, where these checks are required by law and where employers can demonstrate that credit information is substantially job-related.

There are also security risks from visitors. Wilson recommends have all their interactions with agents supervised and instruct agents on what is legitimate for a person to ask to see and how to control visitor access to their desktops.

The threats from inside centers are different than those from outside, such as from hacking, reports Wilson. Agents typically have access to customer information on a record by record basis, rather than whole files, so if there is theft it is typically associated with the theft of the information in individual customer data. For instance, there is a risk of an agent using a camera-fitted cellphone to record illicitly obtained information.



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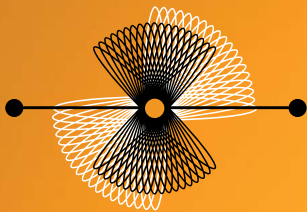
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"The risk is increased because of the number of agents in a center," explains Wilson. "There is a much greater potential to find individuals who are willing to consider smaller customer-by-customer infringements but infringements nonetheless."

To combat this he recommends that contact centers tightly engineer their interaction and transaction processes and take advantage of quality monitoring, recording and reporting tools. Doing so permits supervisors to flag any agent behaviors that are inconsistent, such as a higher ratio of transactions per contact than any of their peers.

A process-based approach can also provide for customer confirmation or feedback. If a customer calls their travel services provider to book a flight, a confirmation of that booking can be sent to the customer's e-mail independent of the agent's behavior. If system generated, an agent cannot prevent that confirmation from occurring.

"Highly structured processes make it difficult to hide non-authorized activities and provide the ability to flag them in realtime," explains Wilson. "Reporting and monitoring tools augment the ability to identify anomalies, by providing rich interfaces to data that permit drill down to the single transaction level."

Similar approaches and solutions have answered corporate concerns about security threats from home-based agents.

"The notion that home-based agents represent a greater threat to security than office-based agents is a red herring that has been around since the concept of a virtual employee was first developed," Wilson points out. "There is, to my knowledge, no case of a home-based agent violating corporate where the presence in the home was a significant factor in the contravention of company policies or regulations."

## Authentication and Verification

Deceit has long been in the criminals' bag of tricks and they apply them in gaining access to data by misrepresenting legitimate customers. To prevent that from happening requires authenticating and verifying those contacting the organizations.

The common standard is two-factor authentication. Wikipedia defines this as requiring "the presentation of two different kinds of evidence that someone is who they say they are."

Typical automated authentication and verification procedures are almost exclusively focused on passwords or PIN numbers, explains Chuck Buffum, vice president of authentication solutions at Nuance Communications. Agent authentication typically uses specific knowledge questions such as mother's maiden name, a dog's name, or zip code, proving multiple instances of knowledge verification but not two-factor authentication.

Both methods by themselves are vulnerable and are inconvenient. Individuals can and do forget passwords, requiring cumbersome password reset procedures. Moreover there are sophisticated online programs used by criminals to "guess" passwords and PINs.

"There is significant vulnerability with specific knowledge especially among friends and family," Buffum points out. "One's offspring knows the answers to those security questions

and can easily access sensitive account information or execute valuable transactions."

Nuance recommends deploying voice prints using voice biometrics. This method is based on the unique characteristics of individuals' voices that come out clearly no matter if their speech changes on account of fatigue or excitability or if they change accents.

Customers who first call in or register are asked detailed questions to prove their identity. The system then captures the voice prints by asking them to speak a passphrase three times. Once done, they are asked to confirm; the voice biometric software then matches the recorded voice with the one just spoken. When customers next contact an organization, the system then checks the voice against the print before granting access to information or directing them to an agent.

Nuance states that this system is much more secure, reliable and faster than passwords/PINs or specific knowledge alone. It provides higher security two-factor authentication – the voice ID and the knowledge answers.

"The voice print allows you to make a single statement, a customer's account number or phone number," says Buffum. "Speech recognition defines who you claim to be through the audio and the voice is filtered through biometrics to provide the first factor of authentication. Then a knowledge question can be asked and answered. In just two interactions you have a two-factor authentication."

The one weakness with voice biometrics is that it is not, by definition, available for non-voice interactions, Avaya's Wilson points out. And they are becoming significant contributors to contact center traffic.

He recommends considering cross-channel/cross-modal verification especially for critical and high-value interactions and where confirmation is required by law. In this process, the transaction confirmation request must be addressed through a different device or channel that was used to initiate it. Wilson says that this method provides very cost-effective access control.

Let's say a customer calls their investment firm to execute a stock trade worth over \$10,000. They authenticate themselves via a password or PIN, but because the company's policy requires notification for such high amounts the system initiates an outbound e-mail to the customer to the address on file.

"The agent advises the customer on the phone call that in order to complete the transaction, they must reply to the e-mail," says Wilson. "They do not have to input any data, just reply as received." **CIS**

### The following companies participated in the preparation of this article:

**Avaya**  
[www.avaya.com](http://www.avaya.com)

**Evolve IP**  
[www.evolveip.net](http://www.evolveip.net)

**Interior Concepts**  
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# The Analytics Analysis

**A**nalytics is one of the hottest subjects in enterprises and contact centers. That is because they turn data and interactions into meaningful and actionable intelligence.

Customer Interaction Solutions magazine recently interviewed experts from a wide array of leading firms in the analytics space to get their insights and analysis of contact center issues and needs and how analytics solutions can assist centers in meeting them. They report for example that operational efficiencies, sales and cross-multichannel engagement needs are driving analytics demand. The comprehensive in-depth interviews appear online at (insert URL).

A strong indication of what analytics can provide for contact centers can be found in these highlighted answers from these professionals to the following question: What new and enhanced analytics solutions have been developed in response to contact center needs and requirements?

The replies are below as well as in the online article:

## **Calabrio ([www.calabrio.com](http://www.calabrio.com))**

Tom Goodmanson, president and CEO

We have been focusing on easier, more intuitive delivery of the information generated by our analytics products. We have created new personalized dashboards with intuitive navigation – where the user is just a click or two away from any task or application – and a consistent look and feel for all components. These factors are designed to improve user satisfaction, eliminate time wasted moving from application to application and dramatically reduce training time. Analytics can sing to operational efficiency needs, especially when paired up with a full-featured WFO solution. Together they can provide opportunities to reduce headcount, such as training agents who have been transferring calls they could not handle to other agents, which adds to call volume.

## **ClickFox ([www.clickfox.com](http://www.clickfox.com))**

Marco Pacelli, CEO

Cross-channel analysis delivers a picture of the entire, end-to-end experience to reveal where and how customers are interacting with multiple channels and where they encounter issues that drive more calls into the contact center and other channels. By delivering this insight and measuring the impact of these interactions on operations costs, customer satisfaction, churn and profitability, more organizations can finally begin to deliver personalized, efficient experiences to the right customers in the right channel at the right time. There are several companies who can perform some multi-channel analysis. ClickFox, we believe, is the only solution tracking and visualizing the paths of customers as they research, buy, interact, get support, provides feedback and more to reveal the ideal paths for the customer and the business.

## **Coordinated Systems, Inc. ([www.csiworld.com](http://www.csiworld.com))**

Rich Marcia, marketing director

Our road map for our just-released Virtual Observer 4, and in future releases, is to incorporate more aggressive quality optimization features from the agent and customer perspectives. We have completely rewritten our reporting and fine tuned our dashboard presentation to deliver a very clean multi-level summary of live real-time information. We'll be taking advantage of some of the newer development tools to continue bringing enhancements and useful tools for our customer base.

## **Coveo ([www.coveo.com](http://www.coveo.com))**

Ed Shepherdson, senior vice president of enterprise solutions

The most relevant advancement in managing the multichannel analytics for contact centers is giving access to many data sources. Coveo Enterprise Search 2.0 allows organizations to have ubiquitous access to disparate data sources (including social media content), containing both structured and unstructured data. Other solutions use SQL-styled databases to access data, so all they are doing is joining together data records. In Enterprise Search 2.0 the index is created and constantly updated; these records are turned into knowledge through correlation and consolidation of the data as it is being indexed.

## **Enkata ([www.enkata.com](http://www.enkata.com))**

Joe McFadden, senior director of marketing

Enkata is continuing to see the value of solutions that support visibility into, and improvements in, the end-to-end customer experience. One example is providing a visual, graphical representation of the multi-point end-to-end path experienced by the customer. This path may include web self-service, IVR and multiple phone calls that included call transfers and repeat calls. This visual map supports the need for supervisors to isolate agent behaviors for the purpose of identifying coaching and training topics. The new feature requirement is to combine the data from all channels and provide root cause capabilities to isolate process issues. Working with a solution like our new Customer Experience Analyzer presents the cross channel data in a way that results in shortened time to insights and next best actions and improves the customer experience through process change management and employee performance.

## **HyperQuality ([www.hyperquality.com](http://www.hyperquality.com))**

Bob Kelly, senior vice president of sales and marketing

Acquiring and retaining customers (i.e. growing revenue) is essential to everyone right now. Analytics can help. Yet historically mid-sized companies have avoided analytics solutions because they viewed them as too rigid and expensive. Many companies developed their own "home-grown" solutions, which resulted in biased or irrelevant analysis. HyperQuality has innovated ClearMetrix 2.0 to solve the problems of expensive and cumbersome deployments. It eschews inflexible analytics platforms that



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require companies to change their attributes to fit within the software's framework, significant lag times in data availability and poor reporting. With ClearMetrix 2.0, customers get a flexible SaaS-delivered solution that can be tailored to their company, rather than the other way around.

### **Nexidia ([www.nexidia.com](http://www.nexidia.com))**

Jeff Schlueter, vice president of marketing and business development

Text-based analytics is becoming popular. Given that speech is still the primary and preferred means of customer communication though, it is imperative that companies search for solutions that can compare the textual results to those found in the audio. A phonetic indexing and search system works best for this. It will allow any new words, phrases or issues uncovered in the text analytics to be compared back to the audio without the need to re-index audio or update a dictionary.

Given the rapidly occurring and changing text-based communications, being able to quickly run them against the audio to determine the relevance and prevalence of the issues is essential. Last year we enhanced Enterprise Speech Intelligence Product Suite and of those components is Nexidia Discover, which provides automated topic and trend identification of both phone and textual interactions.

### **NICE ([www.nice.com](http://www.nice.com))**

Matthew Storm, director of innovation and solutions  
Companies need to begin viewing customer experience as an aggregate of multiple channels. And that means taking a proactive, intelligence-based approach to delivering comprehensive, relevant, personalized and timely service to foster loyalty, boost business and compete on a global scale. New solutions capture the entire customer journey across all touchpoints. NICE introduced real-time speech analytics to our enterprise offering. The new capability enables organizations to understand customer intent during the interaction with contact center agents, automatically providing the necessary insights and next-best-action recommendations to agents.

### **UTOPY ([www.utopy.com](http://www.utopy.com))**

Sean Murphy, director of marketing  
UTOPY's Interaction Analytics solutions classified customer interactions according to the reason for the interaction, the topics that were discussed by the customer during the interaction, and/or any events which occurred during the interaction. UTOPY's Multichannel Analytics solution enables the same methodology to be applied to the new, increasingly popular communication channels such as social media, chat and e-mail. This enables organizations to analyze the entire customer interaction lifecycle, regardless of the channels used during the interaction. They can discover the interaction reasons, agents, products or processes which are driving performance on contact center Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), thus drastically improving contact center performance.

### **Verint ([www.verint.com](http://www.verint.com))**

Daniel Ziv, vice president of customer interaction analytics  
Verint recently announced its new Voice of the Customer (VoC) Analytics platform to specifically address the growing multichannel manage-

ment needs of its customers. It can also collect and mine e-mail, chat and social media – which are mostly text-based now, but could evolve more into voice and video formats. We can then connect the dots by customer to provide a holistic view for our clients. We not only look at what's happening now, but also at emerging trends across the different channels. Interestingly, one channel can even predict what may happen in another, such as how frustrations with your contact center can then manifest themselves on social media.

### **VPI ([www.vpi-corp.com](http://www.vpi-corp.com))**

Patrick Botz, vice president of workforce optimization  
Desktop analytics has emerged as one of the most powerful new forms of analytics. It can follow the agents through their applications as they are communicating with customers. It can also monitor the time it takes to navigate between application screens and fields to help optimize interaction handling processes. Desktop analytics can even identify when agents entered screens or fields with sensitive data and block it to help organizations comply with strict requirements such as PCI or HIPAA. Our new VPI Fact Finder automatically detects screen events and tags them to recorded interactions, which, enables automated classification and analysis. **CIS**

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## Leasing the Contact Center Vehicle

If contact center managers are the centers' professional drivers, then their vehicles are the IVR/speech recognition, dialing and outbound solutions, for these are the technologies that move the centers forward. And just as organizations have shifted from owning to leasing vehicles, as they have with the buildings that house contact centers, more are doing likewise with these key solutions through leasing them, specifically cloud hosting.

Ashwin Iyer, global program director, contact centers, reports that the North American combined contact center hosted market is \$1.3 billion annually. And hosted demand is growing twice as fast as that for their premise counterparts.

Mariann McDonough, chief marketing officer for inContact is seeing this growth. Her firm is beating out premise players in more than 50 percent of opportunities.

"In fact, we're seeing that more of the decisionmakers are demanding that a hosted solution be among the options in the early phases of the process," says McDonough.

### The Hosted Benefits and Drivers

According to Iyer, the principal benefits of hosted IVR, dialing and routing are cost savings in licenses, installation, integration, maintenance and support and in upgrades. Other key advantages include increased flexibility, scalability and business agility. For example, the go-live time with hosted speech rec is one to three months as compared with six to 12 months for on-premises deployments.

Many hosted offerings have also become quite sophisticated. To better serve VIP customers, Contactual's multichannel ACD routing provides service level optimization that aligns contact priority to specific service level agreements and with appropriately-experienced agents. LiveOps's call flow authoring studio application enables administrators or business users to streamline the inbound call process and with this, shorten overall implementation time and cost.

Moreover, many companies' on-premises IVR, dialing and routing products that were acquired prior to the economic downturn are now reaching the end of their lifecycles and are becoming obsolete. They often do not handle newer channels like chat or support applications like alerts and analytics for the increasingly popular automated outbound notifications.

Now that money is slowly being freed up, firms that did not have the resources to replace these tools are considering the



hosted option, reports Iyer. Hosting permits gradual and affordable phasing in of newer functionalities on legacy systems without rip-and-replace.

"Companies had tested hosted at the beginning of the slowdown and found that it works well and have realized the benefits," explains Iyer. "They would now rather use the capital for other IT investments. Managing customer relationships should be their focus, not managing the technology."

Bruce Pollock, vice president of strategic growth and planning at West Interactive reported that many companies are now faced with "forklift upgrade" scenarios; they need to undertake contact center transformations that encompass new inbound and outbound technologies. Yet they lack the justifiable capital to purchase and the internal IT/technology resources to install/integrate and support them.

"Thus, enterprises are turning to third party providers to help in designing, hosting, deploying and managing their applications – in other words, to help them 'move to the cloud', so to speak," explained Pollock.

One of many such companies realizing the hosted benefit is Vivint, one of the U.S.'s largest home automation companies. After deploying the Five9 Virtual Call Center that replaced premise-based technology for outbound telesales and telemarketing, it significantly increased its agent workforce and their productivity and sales while reducing costs. The Five9 solution enables Vivint to manage its leads more effectively by permitting agents to determine when the system dials or redials phone numbers based on call results.

"The deployment at Vivint is an example of the capability of cloud-based call centers to enable companies to reduce costs, increase sales productivity and focus on their core business," says Jim Dvorkin, CTO of Five9. "Our clients consistently increase productivity by up to 300 percent; business results like that can really be a game-changer for a company."

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## Is Hosted Only For SMBs/Small Contact Centers?

Hosting has proven popular for smaller centers and operations, enabling them to stretch their resources. Yet it is with the larger contact centers where hosted delivery generates the greatest ROI, Iyer points out. His firm's data shows that while over a three year period, a 100-seat contact center could save 42 percent with hosting, a 500-seat contact center would gain 58 percent.

The underlying reason is economies of scale. Hosting spreads costs over many more customers.

"The more the work involved and the bigger the installations the higher the benefits," says Iyer. "Hosted solutions are mature and they can scale to multiple sites onshore and offshore."

InContact's McDonough concurs. The size of the contact centers purchasing her firm's hosted software has grown substantially quarter over quarter.

"This is no longer a solution just for small contact centers," says McDonough. "It's a viable solution for large enterprise contact centers and contact centers that have forecasted substantial growth."

Ben Navon, founder, president and CEO of Optimized Business, reports the shift initially started with small firms with limited budgets who jumped to hosted solutions and dialing in the cloud.

"Now medium and large sized companies are learning to trust the hosted solutions, which assists them in minimizing their IT efforts and they benefit from the features available on the cloud," says Navon.

Chris Bohlin, senior product manager of Voice Communications at SoundBite Communications, says his company offers a hosted multichannel dialing solution that it is now building out and will allow organizations to replace their on-premise investments entirely.

"Surprisingly, we see many large-sized organizations still relying on agents manually dialing a phone number," reports Bohlin. "They're simply not taking advantage of the technology available to them. This is creating some of our biggest greenfield opportunities."

## Pricing, Stability and Security

Hosted IVR, dialing and routing are becoming more affordable. The price points have been declining rapidly for the past couple of years, reports Iyer. A full-suite suite ACD, IVR, outbound and chat with call recording platform that would cover 100-250 seats would cost \$200 per seat/month in 2008-2009. Today that is running to \$150 seat/month, 30-40 percent less.

Hosted solutions have become much more reliable and secure to where these issues are beginning to fade away although they will not disappear completely. Firms are providing network operations centers (NOCs), backup and redundant servers and power and connectivity. Standards like PCI and SAS70, solutions like locked-down desktops and compliance with regulations, plus options like having the data housed on premises while the applications are hosted are addressing them.

While there have been well-publicized cloud outages, like Amazon's, such events are unlikely to be replicated in the contact center environment. Tim McCurry, USAN's marketing director explains that Amazon utilizes virtual machines within multiple availability zones in multiple regions. Resources are allocated as needed and shared in a given zone. Therefore, a problem in one zone can lead to a catastrophic systemwide failure.

"In most contact center hosting environments, multi-node configurations in geographically dispersed data centers are totally independent and isolated from potential failures at other locations," explains McCurry. "There is load balancing among sites but no resource contention. In other words, a failure in one location will not affect other locations and traffic will be re-routed automatically to other sites until the failure has been corrected and the site is back online."

Navon points out that the probability of hosted solutions going down versus on-premises systems and connections going down are much lower. He recommends having fallback configurations just in case.

"These concerns are and will probably always be there," says Navon. "When you use a hosted solution, you are in the hands of your provider."

These reliability and security attributes do not extend to all hosting providers. McCurry reports that some of the newer entrants do cater to more price-sensitive customers with less robust and secure platforms than those of the more experienced providers.

"When selecting hosted solutions firms need to look under the hood," advises Iyer. "There are hosting providers that provide enterprise-class security. You get what you pay for."

BPO firms that offer hosted services like TeleTech are customers of its own technology hosting services says Tina Valdez, vice president of on demand operations. Her firm got in to the hosting business as a result of its contact center practice and the advanced technologies it needed to stay ahead of the competition.

"If the services are unavailable or cannot pass security audits, then not only are our hosted clients in a world of hurt, but our own agents in nearly 70 centers and TeleTech@Home home-based agents across the globe are unproductive or at risk of penalty," explains Valdez. **CIS**

### The following companies participated in the preparation of this article:

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www.contactual.com

**Five9**  
www.five9.com

**Frost & Sullivan**  
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**inContact**  
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# Dressing (The Contact Center) For Success

**L**ocating and designing contact centers are very much like recruiting staff. Both have to be the best fit for the enterprise and the applicants as to what they can offer each other, who must appear as professionally as they perform. And if you look good and feel good you will act accordingly.

NOVO 1 provides a case in point. It provides inbound and outbound BPO services from four U.S. locations: its Fort Worth, Texas headquarters along with Billings, Mont., Waukesha, Wis. and, since July 2010, Holland, Mich., with workforce totaling over 1,700 agents and supervisors, with 300 in Holland alone.

Faced with growing demand from existing and new clients, including work being repatriated from competitors' offshore contact centers, NOVO 1 began looking for a new contact center in October 2009. After an extensive search, it chose Holland, in the western part Michigan, in February 2010. Jack Wilkie, NOVO 1 CMO and senior vice president of business development, cites the city's available work force, low attrition, high education level, neutral accent and an incentive package.

Wilkie recounts that Holland exceeded the BPO firm's standards of a two percent or less saturation rate, specifically, the number of people employed by contact centers, to minimize employer-jumping and an 85 percent or better high school graduation rate to ensure quality staff. The city and surrounding area had suffered badly in the economic downturn, with layoffs that resulted in a 14 percent unemployment rate. The local workforce also had the maturity and responsibility it sought in communities, with a labor pool that was predominantly 30 years-plus.

"Culture is also a critical component of site selection," explains Wilkie. "We look for a community that possesses a strong work ethic and the ability to cope with weather conditions," explains Wilkie. "Holland fit the bill perfectly. The community was well-equipped to handle winter snow and is a vacation

destination most of the year. The area is listed by Gallup and Hathaway as the 'happiest and healthiest' place to live and work in the United States. These traits are naturally conducive to service. The populations' neutral accent was also a plus for our clients."

## Building Design

During the site search, NOVO 1 found the facility that best fit its needs, a two story office building with 37,000 sq.ft. of space and plenty of parking. The BPO firm then invested over \$2 million to design and furnish the contact center. Federal, state and local governments pitched in some \$1 million to cover some of these costs, financed road improvements and paid for new hire-training; the city of Holland granted the firm tax abatements worth \$115,000 over the next nine years.

NOVO 1 fitted the contact center with 300 agent- and 21 team lead-workstations, 22 nesting positions and one lead station, 72 training seats and three training instructor seats, five training manager and four client cubicles, six operations and three scheduler positions. It also had carved out three lounge areas, 10 offices and three conference rooms and a reception lobby.

The floor plan featured a spacious and open design to facilitate collaboration with team leaders and agents. Color, lighting and other features were selected to dampen the typical call floor stress. Walls and floors were painted comforting colors like "tupelo tree," "sage green," "storm cloud" and "Navajo white." The lounge spaces featured comfortable furniture.

Productivity including encouraging employees is integrated into the design. The

private training rooms feature state-of-the-art instruction technology. The workstations are grouped in pods with a team lead station surrounded by 15 agent desks. Large photographs of top-performing staff are displayed throughout the center with company values and client fan mail.

## Built-In Security

Conscious of IT security threats and wanting to give its clients that protection, NOVO 1 had built layered security. To prevent agents or others from getting into the PCs and to prevent network intrusion and data theft, Interior Concepts ([www.interiorconcepts.com](http://www.interiorconcepts.com)), which is based in nearby Spring Lake, was called on to build custom-designed workstations that have locking mechanisms.

NOVO 1 also specified PCs that had no CD, DVD, media or USB thumb drives. Data cables from network/systems equipment to computers and cables are buried in a concrete floor in underfloor conduit to prevent slicing and tapping. There is CCTV, access control and locked cabinets; burglary and fire monitors are in place with door alarms and monitoring. There are no visual obstructions or power poles in the facility. AT&T connected the facility with voice/data including a secure fully managed VPN service; it enables this site to virtually travel to others through its AT&T Connect conferencing solution.

NOVO 1 rewired the building with flexible, expandable plug-and-play wiring. It refitted the structure with a new self-contained and more efficient HVAC system.

## Results and Growth

NOVO 1's Holland contact center opened July 12, 2010 and it has been a success since. The firm had forecast that it needed 125 agents to start; several months later it reached the 300 mark. In part, Wilkie credits the design and the Interior Concepts furniture. Now his firm is looking to expand into other communities, building on the methods, techniques and technologies proven out in Holland. **CIS**





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- How your Online Community can be more cost-effective, and powerful, than Search Click Ad campaigns
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## 2011 Speech Technology Excellence Awards

Speech technology is evolving as a tool for ensuring smooth, efficient, and effective communication between customer and vendor. As customers are finding new and increasingly more convenient channels – with convenience determined by each individual – customer service organizations are faced with adapting to these new customer behaviors. That means diversifying technology to accommodate the growing use of mobile devices and integration of multimodal communications into their customer facing technologies. But perhaps more than anything, customers demand quick, simple resolution to interactions, which means vendors must ensure – in both inbound and outbound channels – they have the latest, most functional and user-friendly speech interfaces as part of their technology deployments.

Fortunately, the vendors offering such solutions also recognize the growing demand for powerful and versatile advanced speech recognition and analytics technology, and are meeting that demand with their latest upgrades and

new products, designed for easy customer engagement and speedy resolution. A key consideration is automation, which not only reduces cost, but often results in the most efficient resolution and maximum ROI – though the ability to

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quickly move from automated to agent-based interaction is also a necessity.

Customer Interaction Solutions has always encouraged and recognized technology innovation, seeking to highlight those technologies that drive increased customer satisfaction through efficient customer communication. In this issue, we present the winners of the 2011 Speech Technology Excellence Awards, recognizing vendors that have proven their commitment to the speech industry and are driving the evolution of speech applications. **CIS**

Company	Product
Angel	Angel Mobile Virtual Call center
Autonomy	Autonomy Explore
Delta Electronics, Inc.	Humanized Intelligent Voice Engagement, HIVE solution
NICE Systems	NICE Real-time Speech Analytics
Resolvity, Inc.	Resolvity Speech Applications Platform
Syntellect	Syntellect Communications Portal
UTOPY	UTOPY SpeechMiner
Varolii Corporation	Varolii Progressive Engagement Suite
Verint Witness Actionable Solutions	Verint's Voice of the Customer Analytics platform



"inContact resolved our holiday season call overload challenge with its on-demand scalability, but it has done so much more. With integrated support for our outsourced call center and comprehensive agent performance metrics and reporting, we have the tools to be more efficient than ever before."

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## Q&A on CIC 4.0

**I**nteractive Intelligence's ([www.inin.com](http://www.inin.com)) new Customer Interaction Center (CIC) version 4.0 is the latest release in the firm's long line of innovative contact center solutions. CIC 4.0 will give contact centers and enterprises significantly increased scalability, reliability and speech analytics capabilities, among other features.

Here is a Q&A about CIC 4.0 with Tim Passios, director of Solutions Marketing at Interactive Intelligence.

**Q:** Outline and describe the key changes in CIC from 3.0 to 4.0, what are the benefits to customers and why did you make them?

**TP:** The key changes include the following:

- Improved architecture

CIC 4.0 becomes a pure applications server with a new private cloud deployment option, full premise-based virtualization, elimination of third-party components and new concurrent licensing. The benefits include increased reliability and scalability and more flexible, cost-effective deployment options ideal for large, distributed organizations. We more than doubled the increase in the number of ACD-enabled agents supported on a single server; there is a five-time increase in the number of simultaneous IVR sessions supported and a seven-time increase in the number of calls that can be recorded per hour.

- Enhanced experience

CIC 4.0 includes new Web client features with support for non-Windows clients, upgraded e-mail handling and a new Interaction Web Portal. The benefits to customers encompass anytime/anywhere access to full CIC functionality. Supervisors and managers get increased performance visibility; that and additional Web and e-mail features that result in increased productivity/collaboration and improved customer service.

- Increased management insight

CIC 4.0 includes an optional real-time speech analytics application called Interaction Analyzer, enhanced recording and monitoring; a new Interaction Recorder Extreme Query Server and enhanced reporting. These new tools that tell contact centers what to pay attention to, while enabling them to quickly and effectively act on that information for increased customer retention, improved service levels and enhanced training.

**Q:** How big is the jump from CIC 3.0 to 4.0 compared with the move to 3.0, and when was that done?

**TP:** Overall, the "jump" from CIC 3.0 to 4.0 is about the same as the jump in the previous version. CIC 4.0 is a combination of major new features and re-architected components.

**Q:** Will CIC 3.0 (and earlier) customers be able to upgrade to CIC 4.0?

**TP:** CIC 4.0 is a free upgrade to all current software maintenance customers running 3.0 or earlier versions. Interactive Intelligence is also providing customers with migration tools to help them easily move configuration data to new servers, if required.

**Q:** What does CIC 4.0 bring to existing and potential customers that other solutions do not?

**TP:** In addition to CIC 4.0's increased scalability, reliability and a host of new and enhanced features for improved user experience and management insight, the product offers the following competitive differentiators:

- Single, all-in-one platform

This reduces overall costs by requiring fewer servers, provides a single point of administration, customization and reporting; reduces the datacenter footprint, lowers power consumption and provides centralized multichannel processing and inbound/outbound blending. It also eliminates multi-vendor sourcing.

- All-software, standards-based architecture

This feature eliminates the need for costly voice boards, eliminates forklift upgrades, offers scalability to meet the needs of large organizations and provides incremental application licensing for cost-effective growth. It also enables cost-effective disaster recovery, eliminates multiple points of failure for increased reliability and provides multi-site, location-independence.


- Broad set of applications for both the contact center and enterprise

CIC includes the broadest set of applications for both the contact center and enterprise that can be deployed and managed across multiple sites and are available to users regardless of location, including in-office, remote and mobile employees.

- Business process automation
- Maximum interoperability
- Cost-effective multichannel customer service

- Choice of premise, CaaS, or hybrid deployment **CIS**

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Avcomm Solutions has strong business relationships with the manufacturers we represent. These relationships bring additional resources and offerings to better support our customers. This includes Special Consideration Programs to support large end point device deployment opportunities and ensure that our customers realize the best value for their audio and audio/video communication product needs.

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## ***Company History***

Avcomm continues to grow significantly by offering high quality audio and video appliance solutions to customers that include global and domestic enterprise corporations, as well as, SMB organizations and small businesses with a staff of one.

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To offer high quality and cost effective audio and video end point device products, provide exceptional customer service/support, and have strong business relationships with the manufacturers we represent. Avcomm's product portfolio includes high quality audio and video hardware solutions that are positioned to support the ever growing Unified Communication Solutions markets.

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High quality end point devices that offer premium audio and video technology are needed to support high quality Unified Communications applications in business communication markets today and in the future. Avcomm is confident that the audio and video appliance products we offer provide leading edge technology for our customers. Avcomm associates have great expertise and knowledge to effectively support products Avcomm offers. By combining our product expertise and knowledge with a high interest to understand the audio and audio/video communication needs of our customers, Avcomm is able to provide product solution recommendations and options that meet the Unified Communication audio and video appliance needs of our customers.



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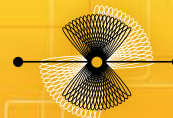


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## All-in-one

Since 1994, Interactive Intelligence has provided its customers with an all-in-one IP communications software suite comprised of premise-based and hosted offerings, including software and hardware solutions, as well as support, education, and implementation services. Awarded *Customer Inter@ction Solutions* magazine's 2010 Product of the Year Award.

Interactive Intelligence is a global provider of unified IP business communications solutions whose common, standards-based software platform gives organizations comprehensive, enterprise-wide functionality that helps them succeed by maximizing productivity and providing the most effective customer service.

## Solutions

Interactive Intelligence has the most innovative solutions available today for the Contact Center as well as unmatched Global Support and services to ensure your implementation and education is successful from start to finish.

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- Workforce management (WFM)
- Outbound dialing
- Multimedia recording
- Screen recording
- Agent Scoring
- Multi-site routing
- Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- Speech analytics

### Global Support

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- Outbound campaign management
- Speech analytics
- Customer self-service and eService automation
- Workforce management (WFM)
- Supervision and system monitoring
- Remote agent capabilities
- Unified communications and collaboration
- Business process automation

## The Interactive Intelligence difference

Interactive Intelligence offers a single, all-in-one platform designed to blend all media types with your business rules in one unified system. With the benefit to reduce costs, simplify deployment, improve customer service, increase security and support broader integration to business systems and end-user devices it's easy to see why we stand apart from the competition.

- Manage and blend inbound/outbound multi-channel interactions
- Automate multimedia routing and queuing processes
- Create revenue-producing outbound campaigns
- Improve agent performance, remote agents included
- Elevate service levels and customer satisfaction
- Increase the accuracy of forecasts and schedules
- Simplify administration in a single, central environment
- Unify communications on the desktop
- Connect multi-site operations with a single platform



# OPTIMIZE CONTACT CENTER OPERATIONS



At TelStrat, we're in our 18<sup>th</sup> year of bringing to market breakthrough products for the telecommunications industry. This includes comprehensive solutions for contact center environments and enterprise communications, as well as a line of advanced OEM devices for major telecom vendors.

TelStrat's flagship product, **Engage Contact Center Suite**, combines the ease and power of our award-winning call recording technology with an array of best-practice product technologies for all areas of workforce optimization. Together, these yield an integrated, single source, total contact center solution.

Engage's award-winning technology is proven in everything from small companies to large call centers at over 2000 installations worldwide. A customer-centric, channel-focused organization, TelStrat offers its Engage portfolio through a global network of over 300 reseller partners, including the most prominent names in telecommunications.



From capturing customer interaction to forecasting and scheduling, TelStrat's **Engage Contact Center Suite** answers each major aspect of contact center operation. Engage lets you:

- Capture complete customer interaction at every point of contact
- Streamline call times, ensure consistency, and increase quality
- Elevate agent performance and training, and improve retention
- Knowledge mine call content, maximize resources, and enhance the bottom line
- Easily blend multiple PBXs & voice technologies on the same server



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Engage Suite's modular design means each component augments and enhances the next, so you grow at your own pace. Within one suite. From one source. **TelStrat.**

For more information, contact your authorized telecom equipment reseller or TelStrat

[www.telstrat.com](http://www.telstrat.com) | [sales@telstrat.com](mailto:sales@telstrat.com) | 972-543-3500



"Your Call Center in The Cloud!"™

### Your Business Challenges

*Are you worried about maintaining focus on your core business?  
Do you want to replace major capital expenditures with manageable monthly payments?  
Do you face rising maintenance costs and outdated legacy IT systems?  
Do you want to use technology to drive more revenue and customer loyalty?*

**TelStar Hosted can help you!**

### With TelStar Hosted, you stay focused on your core business, and trade CapEx for OpEx

TelStar Hosted provides state-of-the-art Communication-as-a-Services ("CaaS") via the cloud to companies with inbound, outbound or blended call center requirements. We manage the technology supporting your call center services for you, so that you can focus on and invest in your core business. Our hosted call center services offer a scalable and variable cost alternative to capital expenditure, so you reduce overall operating costs.



### TelStar Hosted is an extension of your IT team

TelStar Hosted acts as an extension of your IT point-of-view, platform, and staff. We are visionary sales, marketing, and IT professionals with dozens of years of software and call center delivery experience, delivering tactical, pragmatic services.



### TelStar Hosted is affordable, scalable, flexible, stable and reliable

We offer leading edge technologies from vetted providers. Our proven cloud-based delivery model provides speed, flexibility and agility with critical cost savings and the ability to deploy and scale rapidly with your changing business needs. We deliver the ability to effectively manage a distributed work force from a single location, and offer a ready solution for diversification, overflow or disaster recovery. Our hosting infrastructure is located in a state of the art, SAS70 Type II compliant, fully redundant data center.

### TelStar Hosted increases productivity and contact rates

Our industry proven solution with predictive dialing maximizes agent productivity, controls drop rates and dialing speed by campaign, uses skill based routing with multiple priorities, and provides real time reporting of queue volume, staffing and call statistics. Call or visit our website to find out more.

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**IMPACT 360®**

## Verint Systems Inc.

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### ABOUT VERINT WITNESS ACTIONABLE SOLUTIONS

Verint® Witness Actionable Solutions® is the worldwide leader in enterprise workforce optimization (WFO) software and services.

Our unified Impact 360® suite enables organizations of all sizes to capture and analyze valuable information and related operational data from customer interactions; gain an unprecedented level of visibility into customer service processes, workforce performance, and customer intelligence; and benefit from a holistic view of operations across the enterprise for faster, enhanced decision making.

### BENEFIT FROM REAL TIME AT THE RIGHT TIME™ BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

As the market's first 5th generation WFO solution, the Impact 360 suite provides a rich set of unified capabilities to help organizations maximize information and workflow across critical customer service functions, including:

- Quality Monitoring and Recording
- Voice of the Customer Analytics
- Desktop and Process Analytics
- Workforce Management
- Performance Management
- eLearning
- Coaching

Verint's Voice of the Customer Analytics platform is designed to provide a wider unified framework for customer experience management—helping organizations develop a centralized means of detecting, gathering, analyzing, and acting on insights from the voice of the customer. It includes applications for Speech Analytics, Text Analytics, and Customer Feedback Surveys, and the ability to integrate data from web analytics, social media channels, and other customer interaction points.

Through Impact 360's unique architecture, information from critical customer service functions is available at a click of a button, regardless of where those functions exist within the organization. This *Real Time at the Right Time* solution sets new standards for:

- Real-time enterprise collaboration
- Navigation and ease of use
- Reduced total cost of ownership
- Simplified system administration
- Depth of functionality

Impact 360 solutions from Verint offer organizations the tools and insight needed to capture, analyze, and act on customer, business, and market intelligence.

Find out why thousands of organizations around the globe rely on Impact 360 to help shape the customer experiences delivered through their front- and back-office sales and service operations.

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To stop overspending on wireless,  
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OneCall Manage is the industry's leading provider of WEMaaS (wireless expense management-as-a-service) solutions. Our solutions uniquely combine advanced business intelligence and proprietary algorithms to automatically pinpoint opportunities to reduce your monthly wireless spend and better allocate that spend to meet your business needs.

Because we automate analysis of both your spending and your users' behaviors, you can quickly and easily discover exactly where you're over-spending—without the cost, time or effort associated with conventional WEM. You get actionable insight. And you get it fast.

### Why you need OneCall Manage

Your business runs on your mobile phones. Your people use those phones every day to close deals, solve problems, and relay vital information.

But without visibility into how your users are actually consuming minutes, you invariably pay too much for wireless service. Some users rack up overage charges. Others under-use their plans—which means you pay for minutes you don't need. You probably won't do a very good job of tuning your aggregate purchase of poolable minutes, either.

On the other hand, you don't have a whole lot of time to devote to investigating your wireless spend. And you probably don't want to start a big WEM project if you're uncertain about the eventual payoff.

That's why OneCall Manage's WEMaaS model makes so much sense. We make your life easier, not harder. And we don't ask you for a penny before you see worthwhile results.

### Your best long-term partner for wireless expense management

OneCall Manage does more than just pluck low-hanging fruit from your current wireless spend. Thanks to our advanced technology and unmatched understanding of how wireless carriers structure their invoices, we can help you keep optimizing your wireless spend over the long haul. Our complete, highly automated WEMaaS solutions enable you to:

- ▶ **Continuously avoid all forms of wireless over-spending**
- ▶ **Ensure that users have the services they need to stay productive**
- ▶ **Optimize the structure of your contract, including minute pooling**
- ▶ **Immediately detect month-to-month trends and anomalies in wireless usage**
- ▶ **Rationally categorize costs for more accurate chargeback**
- ▶ **Generate ad hoc reporting as required for finance, compliance and other business needs**

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### OUR RISK-FREE OFFER

*Because we are so confident in our ability to quickly discover ways that you can reduce your monthly wireless bills, we offer you a unique **free wireless cost assessment**. This assessment provides you with a fast, accurate and impartial analysis of your current spending. There is no risk or obligation on your part—only an upside opportunity to cut costs and more intelligently allocate your telecom dollars.*

*Even if you already have a WEM system in place, we challenge you to try OneCall Manage. We consistently find savings that conventional WEM providers miss. And no WEM solution can match us for ease of use, rapid results and richness of insight.*



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## Introducing the Outbound Call Center Online Community

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## The (Social) Customer Isn't Always Right

There appears to be a tendency with social media as a new and highly visible channel to overstock the value of the sentiments expressed in posts and tweets, that these truly represent the collective voice of customer and that the comments and complaints are factual, well-founded and sincere. And that those who made them must be supplicated to keep them as customers, lest they tell hundreds of others never to do business with one's company ever again.

In short, to update the old cliché, "the (social) customer is always right."

Nonsense. Balderdash. Rot.

"Social" customers are not always correct. Just ask anyone who deals with customers – counter/front desk/retail staff, attendants and servers and contact center agents. And they will tell you that too many of the complaints that they get from patrons are not valid, either from misinformation about hours, offers, prices and features or mishandling, specifically, the individuals didn't read or correctly follow the instructions.

Of the customer abuses, product returns are the worst. Too often the goods are brought back and sometimes damaged not because of flaws but because the customers abused them or "borrowed" them for special occasions. This last one is a big scam in women's apparel, report friends who work for retailers.

Alas those obscene customers are, more often than not, the enterprises' sweet spots, the ones that firms are fighting to attract and retain, namely the affluent and influential. Unfortunately too many of these people are accustomed to bullying and lying either outright or by omission to get their way even for the smallest purchases – techniques no doubt well practiced in their professional lives. These people, not surprisingly, treat customer-facing staff like serfs, other buyers with disdain – unless they have something to gain from them – and get a perverse satisfaction from haggling over pennies and humiliating others in the process. For them winning, and with this brandishing their rank and superiority, no matter how trivial the matters involved or upsetting to others – is what counts.

Individuals' behavior on social media is no different than that on other channels. Anyone can post and tweet com-

ments. Whether these are accurate, have value or are not part of any scams are collectively another question altogether. Moreover, there is so much muck out there that it takes an immense amount of precision sifting to get to those messages that are worthwhile and detailed. In too many cases, though, the social statements can be distilled to "(fill in the blank) sucks" or "I like it".

One of the great social channel/media attributes that is not available to in-person or contact center voice channels is that there is a briefly-opened time window to sift the whiners out of the winners. There are a growing range of social media monitoring and sentiment analysis tools available to do just that and to find productive insights from them. When coupled into social profiling and other customer-identifying solutions and CRM systems, they can provide contact center agents with effective, customer-specific suggested responses.

More important than buying and mashing solutions, firms should consult with those who work directly with customers to learn about the issues they face and obtain suggestions on how to handle them. Companies should also engage with those who work at every other supply chain link to find out what needs to be done to ensure product and service quality, delivery and fair pricing. These insights can minimize misunderstandings and complaints, and customer service (and returns) expenses.

The customer may or may not be right. Understanding their intentions, and anticipating, identifying and responding to legitimate core issues, sifts out the classy from the cranks. More importantly, this strategy improves quality and reduces costs that permit competitive prices that then attract and retain truly valuable customers whose patronage maintains and grows profits. **CIS**



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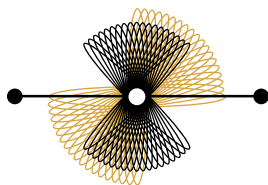






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