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December 2011 • Vol. 30/No. 7
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2012

Buyers' Guide

Also In This Issue:

- Customer Interaction Space Sees M&A
- Hold-Free Puts a Pretty Face on Customer Service
- Taking a Quick Spin with Interactive Intelligence



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



Gary and Mary West: Improving Health Care Through Disruption

For years, Americans have prospered like no other people on earth because our class-free society allowed virtually anyone with a good idea to launch a company, hire, prosper and keep the majority of the fruits of their labor. A competitive entrepreneurial culture further fostered an environment in which successful businesspeople went from being entrepreneurs to serial entrepreneurs.

Even more impressive, so many of these successful businesspeople seem to reach a point in their careers where they don't feel satisfied helping society through their inventions and hiring, they want to focus on problems with society and fix them directly.

Such is the case with Gary and Mary West – two legends in the call center space as founders of West Corp.

As you may know, in 1982 TMC launched the first magazine in the world in the call center space. At the time we called it *Telemarketing*. Of course, it now is the magazine you are reading: *Customer Interaction Solutions*.

Believe it or not, the term call center wasn't coined until the late eighties. And one of our areas of focus was on the outsourcing space, which at that time was done virtually all domestically in places like Iowa and Nebraska.

For decades, West Corp. constantly placed high on lists of contact center outsourcing companies TMC ranked. This past decade the company, which currently employs around 35,000 people, evolved by promoting home-agent outsourcing. That allowed U.S. workers to be more cost-competitive with their international competition from countries like India.

And recently Gary and Mary announced the formation of West Health Investment Fund LLC, a \$100 million fund to provide risk capital to lower health care costs and invigorate low cost health care innovation. The company explains that rising health care costs are an unsustainable burden on our economy and, moreover, that the fund will help bring disruptive solutions to market to help solve the problem.

The initial portfolio of the fund is as follows:

- Biological Dynamics, whose next-generation diagnostics technology may enable physicians to detect cancer from a simple blood draw and rapidly intervene, increasing patient survivability while driving down the cost of care;

- Change Healthcare, whose web-based decision support tool Transparency Messenger provides consumers with personalized views of pricing information and alerts on where to save money on routine health care services including medical, dental and prescriptions;

- goBalto, whose new generation web-based solutions simplify pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical device clinical research;

- Healthsense, whose in-home monitoring sensors and solutions alert family members and providers of potential health problems before they become acute, enabling seniors to remain healthy and independent;

- Humedica, a clinical informatics company whose cutting-edge analytics for health care organizations delivers a truly longitudinal and comprehensive view of patient care; and

- Sotera Wireless, whose new generation of continuous vital signs monitoring improves the safety of patients on the general floor of hospitals, while at the same time reducing costs.

This announcement comes at an interesting time as there seems to be intense media exposure for a group of a few thousand “occupy” protesters and union members who seem to think that wealthy people and corporations are not contributing enough to society. And when I hear such comments I wonder why the press never asks them – What about the company that invented life-saving cancer treatments or medicines to combat AIDS? What about the company that invented better fertilizers or seeds to help reduce world hunger? And what about the technology companies that helped third-world companies rife with poverty more quickly evolve into first world powerhouses? Brazil comes to mind.

So hats off the Gary and Mary. They have been held in the highest esteem here at TMC for many decades and although I didn't think it possible, they just topped themselves. **CIS**

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CUSTOMER INTER@CTION Solutions® magazine (ISSN: 1533-3078) is published monthly by Technology Marketing Corporation, 800 Connecticut Ave, Norwalk, CT 06854-1628. Periodicals postage paid at Norwalk, Connecticut and additional mailing offices.

— To Subscribe, Call: 203-852-6800 —

Or write to the circulation director at rsusso@tmcnet.com. Subscription rates (published monthly): Digital Subscriptions free for qualified U.S., Canadian and Foreign subscribers. Print Subscriptions free for qualified subscribers in the U.S.A. only. For non-qualified U.S.A. subscribers, \$59. All Canadian subscribers, \$89. All Foreign (air mail), \$109. All orders are payable in advance in U.S. dollars drawn against a U.S. bank. Connecticut residents add applicable sales tax.

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Postmaster: Send address changes to CIS magazine, Technology Marketing Corporation, River Park 800 Connecticut Ave. 1st FL., Norwalk, CT 06854-1628 U.S.A. Canada Post: Publications Mail Agreement #40612608 Canada Returns to be sent to: Pitney Bowes International, P.O. Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2, CANADA

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Reprints: For authorized reprints of articles appearing in CIS, please contact The YGS Group, 717-505-9701 or 800-501-9571 x105, tmcnet@theYGSgroup.com.

Lists: For list rentals, please contact Jill Olsen at JOlsen@listincorporated.com or call 914-765-0700 x 105.

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

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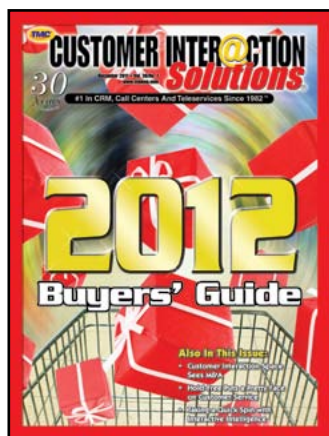
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Erik Linask, *Group Editorial Director, TMC*



Five Things Customer Service Operations Need to Improve

As another year comes to a close and I think back to what was the year 2011, we've certainly seen some remarkable changes in the contact center and CRM industries, not the least of which is the elevation of social media to a legitimate part of the customer engagement exercise. The fact is that most companies are now at least considering what social media means to them and how they should handle it.

I see that as a positive.

It's not that every social media mention needs to be individually addressed; more that there can be significant, important trends that can be easily identified with the right analytics. Of course, there are also opportunities for identifying the best individual social interactions to which to respond.

But, despite the attention social media has garnered, and despite the best successes of many businesses in leveraging both inbound and outbound social interactions in increasing customer satisfaction, many contact centers still fail in some basic elements of customer service.

Here is my customer service wish list for 2012:

#5 Escalation coaching

First call resolution is really the goal of every agent – or first interaction resolution, to be more specific. The quicker issues are resolved the better, as it allows agents to move onto the next calls, reducing both AWT and AHT, and increases satisfaction. In many cases, agents simply need to understand when to escalate situations to the next level of support – and it probably needs to be done more often than it is. This may require a few more level 2 support staff, but it will also allow level 1 agents to handle more calls, ultimately resulting in increased productivity and happier customers overall.

#4 Appropriate staffing

I get it, there will be periods where wait times will exceed 60 seconds – but the amount of time it can sometimes take to get a customer rep on the line (ahem, Verizon... iPhone 4S launch comes to mind) is simply unbearable. If you know you're going to exceed capacity of your staffing, develop a flexible operation, either through outsourcing or seasonal help using virtual contact center technology. It will allow the addition of a few to a dozen or more agents on a temporary basis to handle the influx of calls for a period. And it will keep all your customers calling about other, more routine issues, happier.

#3 Agent location

Most customers would prefer to speak to native-speaking reps. Callers from the U.S., for instance, would prefer to speak to some-

one in Madison, Wisc., or Detroit, rather than someone overseas. Just for fun, the next time an agent tells you he is from Detroit, ask if Aaron Rodgers is better than Matthew Stafford. The point is: Hiring agents in-country makes a difference in satisfaction.

#2 Proper IVR design

This is not a function of technology, but, seemingly, a lack of understanding of customers' needs when they call a customer service center. Just make it work properly. Why can't I get to an agent when I want to? Why does it never give me the options I am looking for? The first choice in every IVR system should be: Do you want to speak to an agent, or would you like to use our enhanced automated self-help system?

#1 Continuity within customer service organizations

Specifically, I'm talking about the number of times callers have to repeat their personal or account information during a single interaction. When you call a service provider (of any sort), the first thing you are typically asked to do is provide account information and verification of identity. Why, then, as soon as you get to a live agent, do you then have to repeat that information? And why, when you are transferred to a specialist or escalated to a higher-level representative, do you again have to repeat the same information? Over the years, I've asked quite a number of colleagues, friends, associates, and even clients to identify what frustrates them most about the customer service environment. The inability of organizations to deliver data and information to the necessary resources is noted most frequently, by far. Quite frankly, with the technology available today, I continue to be amazed at how many contact centers have failed to implement real-time data into their agent desktop systems.

Technology is great, and it enables amazing capabilities in business and their customer service operations – but only if they are properly implemented. Ultimately, technology is only as good as the people using it. In order to get the most out of their technology investments, companies also need to make the investments in their staff – educate them, give them the tools to succeed, motivate them, then reward them. (As you might expect, CIS will be looking at each of these areas, and more, in 2012).

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by Rich Tehrani

Interactive Intelligence Introduces Quick Spin Cloud Contact Center Trial Portal

Coming off the first six months of 2011, Interactive Intelligence enjoyed cloud-based revenue growth numbers of 58 percent while orders increased a whopping 146 percent during the same period. Moreover, the cloud accounted for 26 percent of the company's total new order dollar volume in the first half of 2011.

Company CMO Joe Staples said the following to me in an October meeting in New York, "We are seeing a huge shift toward the cloud. It is talked about in every single deal we are in."

The company started selling a hosted solution in 2005, but re-launched its cloud-based communications as a service, or CaaS, solution in 2009.

When you have a successful service, you always look for new ways to expand in order to bring it to a larger audience. This is why the company has launched Quick Spin – a new trial site that is designed to allow companies to kick the tires of the hosted service before they buy.

Staples explained that some of the functionality has been removed – typically items that require training to use properly. What you get is full unified communications including conferencing, desktop call control and enterprise IP PBX as well as contact center functions such as ACD, basic IVR, reporting, analytics and on-demand recording. Some things not included are predictive dialing, workforce management and post-call surveys.

Joe tells me you can set up the service in about an hour. It supports a total of ten users, three workgroups and five skills. Moreover, you can have 10 keywords or phrases to use for speech analytics.

Here is the interesting part of my discussion. Interactive Intelligence is chosen by customers in part because of its long experience in the market. The reason this is interesting is the company has been in the contact center space since the mid-

nineties, which makes its longevity years longer than many newer cloud-based vendors.

When the company stormed onto the call center scene in the nineties it differentiated by unifying communications across once-disparate boxes for IVR, ACD and PBX. For the first time, you could have a single unified system handling most everything you needed your contact center to do. But for years, the company was considered a newcomer going up against more established players like Melita, Rockwell Electronic Commerce, Lucent, EIS Davox and Aspect. In the cloud-based contact center space Interactive Intelligence now is an established incumbent.

Of course there are other reasons the company is winning in the cloud, such as its use of virtual machines for each customer as opposed to a multi-tenant architecture. Although for most situations multitenancy works well at isolating user sessions, virtualizing each company's sessions adds even greater isolation to the user data that each customer uploads to the Interactive Intelligence cloud. As an added bonus, Interactive allows customers to migrate from the cloud to an on-premises based solution. This feature is obviously a great option for companies that aren't sure if they are ready to move to the cloud forever.

Companies looking to trial Quick Spin will go through a brief qualification phase to make sure they real companies and not competitors, etc. Then they will be off and running with 2,500 minutes of use or 14 days of service – whichever comes first.

Joe tells me companies will likely not use the system in a live environment but rather as a trial system. One of the benefits of note is the supervisor screens and reporting, which are both of production quality, meaning you get a great feel for what it would be like to become a customer.

Naturally, any new technology takes time to be taken seriously, but hearing that all discussions with new customers mention cloud and that 26 percent of the company's approximately \$200 million in annual revenue comes from cloud-based solutions show that as far as customers are concerned, the move to cloud-based contact centers is very real and not slowing down. **CIS**

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The Intersection of Customer Effort and First Call Resolution

Of all the metrics in a call center, first call resolution often has the biggest impact on customer satisfaction, yet it is also one of the most difficult metrics to measure.

Luckily, your customers don't think in terms of metrics. All that matters to them is that they have a positive experience. Like one of our guest bloggers, Greg Levin, says: "Your customers don't actually care if you know how to measure FCR – they simply want you to achieve it."

Though there are many ways to measure FCR, it is difficult to see the whole picture. Some centers use repeat call tracking technology, which tracks if a customer calls back about the same issue. But it doesn't tell you if the customer became so frustrated that they never called back and ultimately left you for a competitor.

Others utilize internal quality monitoring, which rates calls as solved or unsolved, but doesn't take into account the customer's perspective. Post-call transactional surveys are one of the best customer-centric methods used to measure FCR, as the agent asks customers directly if their call was resolved and if they were satisfied.

But there is another measurement that is often overlooked that can have a huge impact on customer satisfaction – the customer effort score.

When you talk about FCR, always consider customer effort. Remember, just because an agent resolves a customer's issue on the first attempt does not mean it was a positive experience for the customer overall. The customer effort score describes how much work your customers have to do to get their issues resolved – regardless of if their issue is resolved on the first call.

When agents are unprepared or unable to quickly access the information they need to resolve customer inquiries, they must often put customers on hold for long periods of time. Other times, customers reach agents after long, frustrating experiences with the IVR or interactions on your website.

Additionally, the types of calls most agents receive today have changed. With all of the self-service avenues available to customers including the IVR and the Internet, calls that require

live agent assistance to resolve tend to be more problematic in nature. One client of ours says that its center's number of problem/challenging calls has doubled in recent years.

Though issues might ultimately be resolved in one live interaction with a phone agent, multiple contact channels can lead to deceptively high FCR rates that leave managers wondering why FCR isn't aligning with customer satisfaction anymore.

To ensure that FCR is viewed in the full context of the customer experience, many leading call centers have comprehensive quality monitoring programs in place to give customers the ability to qualify their experiences. For example, rather than simply asking customers if the agent was able to resolve their issue with one call, additional qualifying questions are asked to determine customer satisfaction levels with the entire resolution process.

Bottom line: Customers want their calls resolved with one call but, perhaps more importantly, they want to reduce the effort required of them to get their issues resolved.

To reduce the effort required of your customers, keep hold times down and create an environment that prevents customers from having to repeat their issue multiple times to multiple agents. Find ways to resolve customer inquiries through multiple channels such as social media and user forums. And when it comes to measurement, look beyond the ability of agents simply to resolve customer inquiries on the first call.

Where the rubber hits the road is with the agents, ultimately. Even though time is at a premium, find the time to make them better. Train agents to handle customer inquiries effectively. Coach them to anticipate issues that will cause customers to call back, and teach them to take pre-emptive action. If agents are knowledgeable enough to anticipate potential call-backs, they can provide additional information to customers to resolve their issues on the first call.

If you make the effort to reduce the burden on your customers, you'll soon see real benefits in customer loyalty and the bottom line. **CIS**

For information on how to use existing idle time to make some of these improvements without increasing costs, visit <http://bit.ly/SU1AI0>



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Working Backward Toward Social Media

A few months ago the world lost Steve Jobs, a man who will very likely be remembered as one of history's greatest innovators and entrepreneurs. The influence of Apple's founder extended well past hard technology. He changed the way we listen to music, communicate with friends, and interact with our colleagues. In short, Steve Jobs used technology to transform how we connect as human beings.

Like many others, I was deeply touched by all the reflections that came in the wake of Jobs' death and astounded by how much wisdom there was in the speeches and interviews that resurfaced. During one of these, I heard something that struck me as particularly relevant to the contact center industry.

"You've got to start with the customer experience and work back toward the technology— not the other way around."

Although the contact center industry is theoretically all about people, many decision makers concentrate primarily on technology and data. Increasingly, however, companies that neglect the human part of the equation do so at their own peril. Faced with competition from work-at-home agents, chat and e-mail delivery, and premium in-house services, contact center executives are bracing for change and looking for ways to reposition. One area that has emerged as a way of dealing with this realignment is social media.

supposed to allow me to watch my favorite shows at any time. After signing up, I found that it was taking three hours or more for each show to download. Instead of calling my cable company's customer service line, I decided post my complaint on the company's Facebook page. While I received a posted response from a company technician within the hour, my happiness was short lived. The agent gave an incomplete response, so I entered a follow up post. Unfortunately, that was the last I heard from him.

The incident eventually led me to switch cable companies. More importantly, I posted a statement about the experience on my own Facebook page. From the comments I received back, it quickly became clear that the company will soon be in serious trouble unless it makes some real changes in its social media support practices.

Major companies are making big investments in social media. They're working hard at trying to figure out how to use it. Social media is the hot topic in trade magazines, at conferences, and on panels. Why, then, are so many companies having such a hard time delivering a consistently high level of social media service?

The answer can be found by paying attention to Mr. Jobs. It seems that most companies are starting with the technology and working backward toward customer service instead of the other way around.

Regardless of how expensive or sophisticated the social media management platform or how many people you staff to handle posts, the processes and values that underlie your customer service are what matter most. Maintaining the integrity of the service provided through this channel goes back to providing streamlined training and education that can be delivered uniformly to every agent in

"You've got to start with the customer experience and work back toward the technology— not the other way around."

While just a few years ago the majority of customer service transactions were conducted by phone, more and more people are choosing to seek help online through platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Unlike phone interactions, the spread of negative opinions through social media is lightning-fast and exponential. One bad Facebook post or Twitter tweet might be seen by thousands of prospects and customers within minutes.

I work in the customer contact industry, but I'm also a consumer. It's in the latter capacity that I've best been able to observe the damage that poor social media customer support can do. For example, I recently purchased an add-on cable service that was

every facility. Instead of simply hiring agents to hover over computer screens and answer posts as they pop up, take the time to build procedures for teaching them what, when, and how to interact with customers via social media. Before you throw money at a shiny new social media management system, plan how you can programmatically train your staff on the unique elements involved in delivering great social media service each and every time.

Steve Jobs would be proud. **CIS**

Michael Schein is vice president of solution development at The Results Companies (theresultscompanies.com).

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Shifting from Mass Marketing to One-to-One Marketing

In response to decades of marketing overload, consumers have adapted the way they absorb information. Today's consumer hears an operator on the phone or glances at a piece of mail and decides in an instant whether it has value. Messages not immediately identifiable to the individual are promptly cast off into a sea of irrelevant clutter.

As the customer has evolved, so must your business. Companies need to move away from the traditional mass marketing practice of blanketing everyone with the same message (the one-size-fits-all approach), and start connecting with consumers on an individual basis. Customers want to feel that you know them, what they need, what they want.

By embracing a one-to-one marketing strategy, your company can enhance its brand position, improve return on investment, and increase customer retention. Here's where to start:

Get to know your customers

Every time customers purchase a good or service, they are telling you something – what kind of products they are interested in, when they are purchasing, how they make payments. Through data acquisition, you have the unique opportunity to listen to them. If a customer doesn't respond to phone contacts but responds to e-mail, take notice. It sounds obvious, but a lot of companies don't do it. They ignore the preferences of customers and, consequently, the customers don't come back.

As we all know, it costs more to acquire new customers than to keep current ones. By creating a relationship that your customer feels is mutually beneficial, you can establish a dialogue. From there, you can collect even more data about your customers – how old they are, how many children they have, what their hobbies are, if they vote, etc. Believe it or not, all of this information will help you better reach both current and potential customers in the future.

Use data to create customer profiles

Utilizing business intelligence to analyze data, you can create customer profiles that will help you up-sell existing customers and court new ones. Think about one of the most basic examples



By Ken Dawson

of business intelligence at work – Amazon.com. What does Amazon.com do immediately after you make a purchase? Recommend items bought by customers who made similar purchases.

The more data you collect, the better you can pinpoint customer need. When your data tells you that a particular product is consistently purchased by married men in their early 40s living in urban areas with two or fewer children, guess where you should target your marketing efforts? If you don't have the capability to collect and analyze customer data in house, you may have to look outside. But investing in data, profiling and analytics will make a significant difference in your ROI.

Employ the data in a way that captures the customer

Once you've attained data and created profiles, the next step is using the information to engage customers. How can you take everything you know about a person and use it to speak to them in the most effective way? This is where technology comes into play.

On the telephone, scripting that was once done with operators rustling through 10 different papers can now be accomplished with intelligent software that moves operators through thousands of different scripts seamlessly. In terms of direct mail, you can craft mailers specifically for the individual – or, more accurately, each individual profile.

If you're trying to sell a customer a new vehicle, show a picture of the exact model the customer currently owns (same color and style), and

channeled effort to meet the diverse needs of your customers. By improving the quality of their experience, custom-

We've reached an age where technology can actually bring businesses and customers closer together.

explain how the new vehicle would be more beneficial for their profiled lifestyle (e.g., minivan: accommodate a growing family). When an individual flips through a pile of mail and sees something personalized, the chances of the message being received increase infinitely.

Embrace technology and adapt to fluctuating markets

In the past, businesses were limited to traditional mass marketing techniques by equipment and cost constraints – but that's no longer the case. Technology has made it feasible and cost-effective for any company to employ a one-on-one marketing strategy.

Variable data printing and digital printing allow companies to personalize materials easily, and the web has opened up even greater possibilities. Companies can create personalized URLs so every individual receives a unique experience. For example, our minivan owner could be sent to a family-oriented web page, catered to his profile and interests, while a sports-car driver would be sent to a different landing page entirely.

We've reached an age where technology can actually bring businesses and customers closer together. All these components – teleservices, direct mail, the web – can be used as part of a multi-

ers will form a stronger bond with your organization and, as a result, increase your profit potential. **CIS**

Ken Dawson is the chief marketing officer of InfoCision Management Corp. Reach him at ken.dawson@infocision.com. In business for over 25 years, InfoCision is the second-largest privately held teleservices company and a leading provider of customer care services, commercial sales and marketing for a variety of Fortune 100 companies and smaller businesses. Along with call center solutions, InfoCision offers business intelligence, digital printing, direct mail solutions and fulfillment services. For more information, visit www.infocision.com.





Innovating the Back Office

Contact centers have been in the forefront of advancements in telecommunication, collaboration and customer service, being first with contact routing based on skill and experience, enterprise presence and instant messaging, recording, coaching, softphones, reporting, administration, social media integration and so on.

Unified communication, as defined by UCStrategies, is “communication integrated to optimize business processes,” which is what contact centers have been about since the early days. The back office is the focus of UC to bring innovation to the traditional office users. Contact centers handle volumes of contacts, every minute, everywhere. It is a pervasive technology that has enabled new business models and innovation in the market place.

Taking Another Step – Introducing Now Service

The industry is constantly scanning for new technology innovations – new software updates, features that add new ways for customer interaction to be improved, re-invented, or even over-turned and made new again.

I believe we are seeing the beginning of a new type of view of customer service. We can call it now service.

Now service has interesting characteristics:

- immediate feedback from customers who have an impact on product delivery, development and innovation;
- collaborative service where the customer and the company share the burden in helping users;
- customers who become audiences and fans.

Collaboration is in everything we do. Internal and external boundaries in customer service dissolve. This requires new technology, yes, but most of this is possible today. Customer service solutions have stagnated in its evolution. We are seeing more same-same, and less innovation.

Immediate Feedback

By enabling customers, devices, applications and service points to send feedback immedi-

ately, companies can react virtually simultaneously as a situation occurs. When a credit limit is reached, the financial institution can communicate this directly to a portable device (mobile phone or tablet), allowing the customer to choose to increase credit levels. An airline with available seats on a flight can offer these to travelers who have entered or are in the vicinity of the airport and are going to the same destination. A car that needs service can communicate with auto shops to negotiate the best price and find a place that is available when the car will be in the area.

Collaborative Services

Many companies see end users’ blogs and external how-to sites as a risk. Collaborative services is the next step in social media where users help each other with product support, tips and tricks, and even purchasing suggestions. These will become an increasing reality in many markets.

Innovative companies embrace them and assist them with product support. These groups can become your audience; they will listen to you, and in turn tell others about you and your products. You will exist in symbiosis to create value. But a company must be engaged and alert, as viral issues can quickly lead to disaster. These groups can also act as your testing ground for a new product or service.

Audiences and Fans

Companies that view their customers as just a transaction or a post in a CRM system will lose out to those that consider them an audience and fans. These companies will have their audiences close to their heart. They will use them as a marketing tool and make sure they are well informed.

Teach your customers how to benefit from your products and how to use them better. Let your audience hear from other customers and leverage these brand advocates as part of your strategy to win new customers

to enlarge your fan base and increase your worldwide audience.

Innovate by Collaboration

Innovation is not only to invent “electricity” it is also to improve on someone else’s thinking. Maybe you will be able to supply it better, or create a better user experience. Do it together with your audience and with your partners to find collaborative initiatives to innovate.

Collaboration is not a subset of innovation; it is the essence of innovation. Let your whole organization collaborate to improve customer service, products, product-related services, even supply chain, stores and on and on.

The Border-less Organization

Organizations that do not allow one part of the organization to communicate with another are going to be less successful than those that allow border-less collaboration. Management structures are great to manage people, but not for innovation. A manufacturing company organized teams to identify improvement areas to decrease shipping costs. Teams worked with improving scalability within software and hardware development, but the person who achieved the most innovative and cost-effective solution worked in the warehouse. He came up with a way of packaging the products that saved space and time loading and unloading.

Reinventing UC

UC is not about packaging features we already know and use. UC is about doing it better, innovating instead of doing things as we always have. You innovate in your back office not by implementing a new product, but by re-inventing how you do your business. Your company can have the innovation the industry is looking for. Successful companies will be the now service organizations with immediate feedback to its audience. They collaborate throughout the organization and invite customers to be part of the process.

Contact centers have innovated the market up to now, let’s take it another step. Innovate! **CIS**

Jason Andersson is a UC specialist with UCStrategies (www.ucstrategies.com).

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Listening on All Channels

Whether you're designing a mobile app, redesigning an IVR or an agent desktop, you know that understanding – and using – voice of the customer is critical for effective solutions. But you don't have budget or time for focus groups, surveys and all that entails, you say.

My first reaction is that if you don't invest in customer input at the front end, you'll pay a higher cost on the back end in customer dissatisfaction, complaints and defection. My second and kinder reaction is to offer free or low cost ways to capture the voice of the customer that you can do quickly and easily. Use inexpensive or free online survey tools. Focus on identifying the things that are important to your customers when dealing with your company, and the things that can differentiate you from your competition.

Consider new venues for focus groups and quick testing. If you're a retail store

or a bank, you can quickly assemble customers for a discussion. Or you can have customers try out your new website, mobile app or IVR.

Build customer experience maps. Put yourself in your customer's shoes and try to accomplish three or four common tasks. Where are the opportunities to improve the customer experience?

Understand customer lifecycles. Customers may start by browsing and research and move through acquisition to product replacement. Are you missing key moments of truth to

increase satisfaction, build loyalty or get more wallet share?

Base designs on customer segments or at least user tasks. Using personas helps you understand whether the channel and the design are useful and appropriate for different customer groups.

Get as close to the customer as you can. Having customers involved in all aspects of design is seldom an option. So include people who have regular contact with customers on your team – agents, repair and field personnel, salespeople, or tellers.

So next time you think you don't have time or money for customer research, think again. **CIS**

Elaine Cascio is a vice president at Vanguard Communications Corp. (www.vanguard.net), a consulting firm specializing in customer experience, self service, contact center processes, operations and technology.



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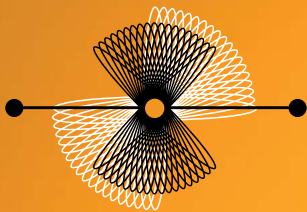
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Not Just Another Pretty Face Hold-Free Aims to Improve Customer Service

Customer service has become a joke to most consumers, but not a particularly funny one. In recognition of that fact, many businesses are working to make improvements on this front. But that can be an expensive proposition. To help make better customer service more easily attainable, Hold-Free Networks recently launched SaaS-based services that put “a pretty face on customer service”.

Wading through lengthy automated menus only to be put on hold for what can seem like an eternity may be the most dreaded aspect for customers in reaching out to organizations with which they do business. Hold-Free Networks takes that out of the equation by instead enabling consumers to tap into mobile applications from the businesses they want to reach and input personal data with one or two clicks. Individuals then get a screen pop on their mobile device as to when to expect a call from a business representative, who will already have their applicable personal data in hand. This way, consumers don't have to dedicate significant slots of time to wait on hold, explains Lance Fried, CEO and co-founder of San Diego-based Hold-Free.

“We’re going to provide a more dignified solution for consumers when they need live service,” he tells Customer Interaction Solutions magazine.

This service component is just one aspect of the four-module solution that Hold-Free can deliver. The company also offers sales, social sentiment and security modules.

The sales module allows businesses to send information and offers tailored to the interests of specific end users. For example, an airline could use this capability to send a customer a notice on her mobile phone that her flight has been delayed. A financial institution, meanwhile, might leverage the sales module to raise a red flag about suspicious activity on a user's credit card. In the process, the sales module helps businesses build customer loyalty and offers them a channel through which to up-sell customers on additional products and services.

“We truly believe service is the new sales,” says Fried.

As for the social sentiment module, that enables end users to provide a 1 to 5 rating of their customer service experience, which they can easily also publish to Facebook and Twitter if they so desire. Hold-Free also is working on a social customer interaction management solution, which it expects to launch next year, that will expand social listening and better enable businesses to streamline and manage the influx of information available via social networking channels, Fried tells CIS magazine. He explains that context is the new thing the company plans to bring to the table with this offering.

Meanwhile, the security module is a REST-based service that offers authentication, which leverages voice biometrics, as well as encryption.

Wendell Black, president of sales and business development, says that Hold-Free delivers all of the above without requiring any heavy lifting on the part of the business. Instead, the Hold-Free software works with existing mobile apps and business telephony infrastructure – no integration required.

The solution is aimed primarily at financial services, insurance, service provider and travel outfits and targets businesses of all sizes, although Black says that large enterprises have the most to gain. He says early Hold-Free customers saw a 25 to 30 percent savings on call handling, and agents spent 20 to 25 percent less on calls. This is all while customers experienced a higher level of service, he notes. **CIS**

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Zeacom Answers the Call For Fidelity Communications

Fidelity Communications is a triple-play service provider with a solutions portfolio of services that transcends the traditional boundaries of high-speed broadband, cable and legacy telecommunications. In addition to facing fierce competition from service providers with nearly unlimited resources at their disposal, such as AT&T, the company must also adhere to government regulations that require its contact center agents to live answer calls from no less than 80 percent of its customers in 20 seconds or less.

Hindering the company's ability to address the market competitive situation were:

- disparate call center sites across two different states;
- a contingent of remote workers operating in a vacuum;
- no reporting or agent monitoring; and
- rising costs and diminishing returns on the effectiveness of its business processes.

Following an extensive market search in 2006, Fidelity selected Zeacom as the partner through which it would evolve its legacy call center into a truly next-generation contact center. The Zeacom Communications Center solution suite possessed the inherent flexibility, scalability, transparent reporting and ease-of-use that Fidelity needed.

The first deployment took place in Fidelity's Missouri operations, encompassing more than 50 agents across 10 different locations. The rollout was seamless; the results were so overwhelmingly positive that Fidelity again used the Zeacom solution for its Oklahoma operations, which consisted of approximately 20 agents.

Zeacom's reporting functionality was first and foremost among the differentiators that caught Fidelity's attention. It gives Fidelity insight on anticipating customers' needs, and ensures that the appropriate agent is ready and available to respond promptly to those needs. Zeacom Desktop empowers agents with the ability to see – in real time – call load and allows them to route calls efficiently to the department best suited to handle the customer's needs.

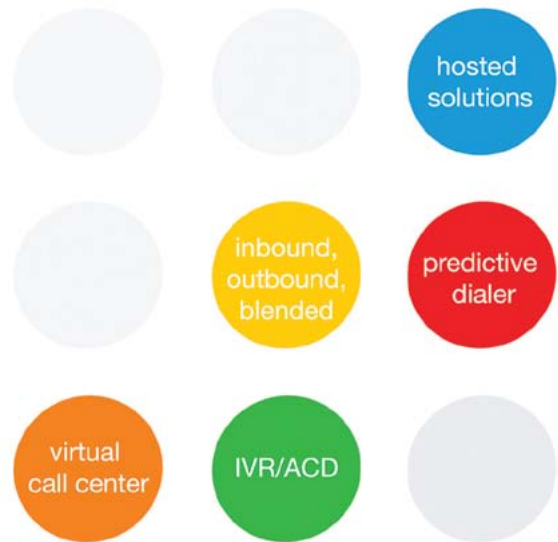
The solution's skills-based routing and the agent desktop empower a seamless sharing of call flow and customer interaction across Fidelity's contact center ecosystem. With advanced reporting and agent monitoring functionality, supervisors and managers are empowered with a clear view of all agents' presence, activity, location and performance. Following deployment of ZCC, Fidelity customers not only receive the right service from the right agent in less than the government mandated 20 seconds, Fidelity also improved its contact center productivity and effectiveness, thereby eliminating any need for additional headcount.

Zeacom's Agent Desktop allows contact center managers to view real-time information on queue and agent performance from their PCs. Because this information can be made available to any PC on the LAN, it can be shared with supervisors and the agents themselves. Agent Desktop is also a very powerful management tool, which addresses the need to monitor the performance of individual agents and queues increases, and delivers results and activity flow.

With Zeacom software in place, Fidelity is now able to account for employees' effectiveness at all times, and track the work, breaks, lunches and location of staff.

Utilizing Zeacom skills-based routing enables Fidelity to apply a "lite" auto attendant, or routing based on a customer PIN to get them to a live person in less than 20 seconds. Customer service agents are better equipped and more efficient in resolving customer queries quickly, and Zeacom's outstanding reporting features provide insight into customers' calling patterns, which enables Fidelity to have right person online at the right time. **CIS**

Mike Gorzik is service center supervisor for Fidelity Communications (www.fidelitycommunications.com).



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763-592-4600
www.calabrio.com
Products/Services: 49,51,136,175,171



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- ▶ Businesses
- ▶ Marketing Agencies
- ▶ Web Designers
- ▶ Ad Agencies
- ▶ E-tailers

PayPerVisit Email 

Alphabetical Listings



Caleris Inc. (S)

515-331-0560
www.caleris.com
Other: Help Desk/Tech Support

Call Center Development Services (CCDS) (S)

514-731-5046 x221
www.ccds.ca
Products/Services: 56,57,58,107
Other: Virtual Call Center Software - Hosted Predictive Dialer

Callbox Inc. (S)

310-362-3171
callboxinc.com
Products/Services: 54,118,121,130,133

CallCenterJobs.com (S)

888-353-7529
www.callcenterjobs.com
Products/Services: 46,96,98,99,145

CallCopy (C)

888-922-5526
www.callcopy.com
Products/Services: 123,136,146,171,174
Other: Call Recording

Celergy Networks Inc. (V,S)

760-268-1913
www.celergy.com
Products/Services: 20,23,25,26,29

Centrifuge Systems (C)

571-830-1390
www.centrifugesystems.com
Products/Services: 51,136,153

Centurion Inc. (M,S)

727-431-5300 x208
www.centonline.com
Products/Services: 8,47,49,56,166

Chrysalis Software Inc. (C)

831-402-9559
chrysalis.net
Products/Services: 7,49,143,149,166

CHT Global (Chunghwa Telecom Global Inc.) (V,S)

408-988-1898
www.chtglobal.com
Products/Services: 23,31,44,104,126

Cisco Systems

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

Claritas360.com (S)

+60378054185
www.claritas360.com
Products/Services: 47,49,53,95,171

Claritascloud.com (S)

+60378054185
www.claritascloud.com
Products/Services: 7,49,53,144,150

Claritascrm.com (S)

+60378053185
www.claritascrm.com
Products/Services: 47,53,95,107,142

CobbleSoft International Ltd. (C)

615-346-9241
www.cobblesoft.com
Products/Services: 173,53,95,111,114

Commence Corp. (M,C)

732-380-9100
www.commence.com
Products/Services: 53,73,86,95,142

Consona CRM (C)

317-249-1700
crm.consona.com
Products/Services: 47,53,106,111,114

Contact Centers of America (S)

407-641-0667
www.CallCCA.com
Products/Services: 130,132,133,134,135
Other: Technical Support

Contactual (M,S)

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

Copia International Ltd. (C)

800-689-8898
www.copia.com
Products/Services: 73,77,79,82,163

CosmoCom (M,C)

631-940-4200
www.cosmocom.com
Products/Services: 7,22,57,166
Other: Unified Customer Communications Virtual Contact Center Consolidation Technology

Coveo (S,C)

800-635-5476
www.coveo.com
Products/Services: 51,53,111,114,136

CSF Corp. (M,C)

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

Customer Services Audit Ltd. (S,C)

006493762806
www.customerservicesaudit.com
Products/Services: 13,173,46,136,148
Other: Contact Center Self Assessment Tool

Cyara Solutions (S,C)

415-946-8861
www.cyarasolutions.com
Products/Services: 14,46,50,136,152

CyberTech North America (M)

800-717-1808
www.cybertech-na.com
Products/Services: 173,51,123,136,175



Data Foundry (S)

888-839-2794
www.datafoundry.com
Products/Services: 103

Datatech SmartSoft (C)

888-227-7221
www.smartsoftusa.com
Products/Services: 62,65,69,107,119

DemandVoice LLC (S)

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

Dialexia Communications Inc.

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

Digital Voice Systems Inc. (V,S)

847-664-8887
www.dvsweb.com
Products/Services: 7,20,22,56,114

DiRAD Technologies Inc. (V,S)

518-438-6000 x149
Products/Services: 56,115,147,160,166

Drishti-Soft Solutions (S)

+91-124-4771000
www.drishti-soft.com
Products/Services: 7,19,47,104,107

dvsAnalytics Inc. (M)

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



Easton Telecom Services (V,S)

330-659-6700 x231
www.etel.com
Products/Services: 44,103,104,126,127

Echopass (S)

801-559-8680
www.echopass.com
Products/Services: 7,22,166,175,171
Other: SAS70 Certified

eGain Communications (M,V)

650-230-7500
www.egain.com
Products/Services: 82,107,155,156,157

EISI (C)

888-692-3474 x2
www.eisi.com
Other: Needs Analysis and Financial Planning Tools

Elliptical Mobile Solutions

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

Elsinore Technologies (M)

919-532-0022
www.elsitech.com
Products/Services: 73,95,114,140

Encore Networks (M)

703-318-4366 x4366
www.encorenetworks.com
Products/Services: 23,29,71,140,144



Enghouse Interactive (M,C)
2095 W. Pinnacle Peak Rd.
Suite 110
Phoenix, Ariz. 85027

800-788-9733
fax: 602-789-2768
www.Enghouse
Interactive.com

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ePath Learning Inc.

908-722-6622
www.ePathLearning.com
Products/Services: 173,107,156
Other: Online Training Portal

ePerformax Contact Centers & BPO (S)

402-498-5622
www.eperformax.com
Products/Services: 130,131,133,134

EPIC Connections Inc. (S)

402-884-4700 x201
www.epicconnections.com
Products/Services: 16,130,132,133,135

Epicor Software Corp. (C)

800-999-1809
www.epicor.com
Products/Services: 76

ethosIQ (V,C)

281-616-5711 x103
www.ethosIQ.com
Products/Services: 46,48,49,50
Other: Customer Experience Analytics

Evolve IP (S)

610-230-0825
www.evolveip.net
Products/Services: 71,144,159,175,171

Exselligen (S)

978-633-3500
www.exselligen.com
Other: Channel Acceleration Consulting

eZuce Inc. (M)

978-296-1005
www.ezuce.com
Products/Services: 7,19,45,101,159

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F-K

F

FaxLogic LLC (S)

972-664-3800
www.faxlogic.com
Products/Services: 77,82,85
Other: SIP Fax Trunking, Hosted Fax Server

Five9 Inc. (M)

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

Fonolo (S)

416-366-2500 x229
fonolo.com
Products/Services: 49,107,108,129,166
Other: Call Center Software/Virtual Queuing Software

G

GC Services (S)

713-776-6560
www.gcserv.com
Products/Services: 16,130,132,133,134

GetABBY (S,C)

412-227-6594
getabby.com
Products/Services: 107,111,147,166,163

Global Crossing (S)

973-937-0431
www.globalcrossing.com

GLOBALINX (M)

585-321-2600
Other: VoIP Provider

GM Voices (S)

770-752-4500
www.gmvoices.com
Other: Voice Prompt Recording

GMT Corp. (C)

770-416-6000
www.gmt.com
Products/Services: 76,136,171,174

H

HigherGround Inc.

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

HireIQ Solutions Inc. (C)

678-279-2832
www.hireiqinc.com
Products/Services: 96,98,174
Other: Virtual Interviewing

Hold-Free Networks (V)

877-413-1911
www.holdfree.com
Products/Services: 19,52,108,111,166
Other: Smartphone App Services

Homisco Inc. (M,C)

866-583-7193 x2320
homisco.com
Products/Services: 7,11,12,166,175

Hoover's Inc. (S)

512-374-4605
www.hoovers.com
Products/Services: 70,117,118,120,121

Human Technologies Global Inc. (S)

845-222-2455
www.human-technologies.com
Products/Services: 46,97,155,156,157

I

Incendonet Inc. (M,C)

760-944-7698 x1004
www.incendonet.com
Products/Services: 1,166,167,163,170

inContact Inc. (UCN)

801-320-3200
www.inContact.com
Products/Services: 7,49,56,166,171
Other: Multi-channel, VOC, CRM Integration, Connectivity, Disaster Recovery

Infinite Conferencing (V,S)

888-203-7900
infiniteconferencing.com
Products/Services: 44,45,109
Other: Webcasting

Influent Inc. (S)

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



InfoCision (S) 325 Springside Drive Akron, Ohio 44333

330-668-1400
fax: 330-670-5690
infocision.com

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strategies and integrate teleservices into the marketing mix. Our customized core solutions can be deployed individually or combined to create a multichannel strategy that includes inbound and outbound teleservices, direct mail, fulfillment, e-mail, e-commerce, and business intelligence to name a few.

Ingate Systems (M)

603-883-6569
www.ingate.com
Products/Services: 31,140,144
Other: SIP trunking, E-SBC, Unified Communications, Remote Connectivity

Intelliverse (S)

888-INTELLI
www.intelliverse.com
Products/Services: 7,1,44,160,166

Interact Inc. (C)

402-476-8786 x383
www.iivip.com
Products/Services: 1,11,20,31,44

Interactive Digital (C)

631-680-4307
www.interactive-digital.com
Products/Services: 14,46,51,107
Other: Self-Service Call Optimization



Interactive Intelligence (S,C)

7601 Interactive Way
Indianapolis, Ind. 46278

317-872-3000
fax: 317-872-3000
www.inin.com

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(CaaS) solutions, both of which include software, hardware, consulting, support, education and implementation. At Interactive Intelligence, it's what we do.

Interior Concepts (M)

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

iPitomy Communications (M,C)

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

iQ NetSolutions (M,C)

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

IQ Services (S)

612-243-5114
www.iq-services.com
Products/Services: 14,50,104,151,152

ITS - Integrated Telemanagement Services Inc. (S)

805-520-7020
www.itstelecom.com
Products/Services: 7,20,29,31,161

J

J.D. Power and Associates (S)

214-789-4024
www.jdpower.com/certifications.htm
Products/Services: 46,66,148,157
Other: Benchmarking, Certifications: Call Centers, Outsourcers,

JoiBiz (V,S)

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

JoiPhone

770-504-5641 x8425
www.JoiBiz.com
Products/Services: 46,124,125,127

K

KnoahSoft (C)

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

Knowledge Wave International Inc. (S,C)

503-624-1503 x722
www.knowledge-wave.com
Products/Services: 51,53
Other: Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty, Agent Engagement

KnowledgeTree (S)

919-747-8271
www.knowledgetree.com
Products/Services: 54,114,171,174

Kunnect (S)

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



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K-R

KURANT DIRECT INC. (S)
212-866-0770
kurantdirect.com
Products/Services: 46,143,157
Other: Audits, Performance Improvement, Outsourcing Management



Lawrence & Schiller TeleServices (S)
605-978-2105
www.mostresponsive.com
Products/Services: 66,71,94,130,133

LeadMaster (S)
800-699-4164 x705
www.leadmaster.com
Products/Services: 47,52,54,55,142

LeadMaster Australia Lty Pty (M,S)
0294640717
www.leadmaster.com.au
Products/Services: 53,55,130,133,150

LeadMaster USA (S)
800-699-4164 x1
www.leadmaster.com
Products/Services: 47,52,53,54,142

Lenzi Martin Marketing
708-848-8404
lenzimartin.com
Products/Services: 46,59

Listen Up Espanol (S)
207-774-1425 x123
www.listenupespanol.com
Products/Services: 130,132

LiveLOOK (S)
732-520-2006
www.liveloook.com
Products/Services: 109

LiveVox Inc. (S)
415-671-6060
www.livevox.com
Products/Services: 7,4,31,57,166
Other: Cloud Contact Center Platform (ACD, IVR, Dialer, CRM, and Call Recording)

loote* (S)
905-238-8973 x221
www.loote.com
Products/Services: 43,97,117,128,139

Loquendo
+39 011 291 3482
www.loquendo.com
Products/Services: 166,167,170,168



Majuda Corp. (M,C)
561-981-0119 x502
www.majuda.com
Products/Services: 175

Maximizer Software (C)
604-601-8000
maximizer.com
Products/Services: 53,54,55,63,142

MEDIATEL DATA (M,C)
+40 21 233 45 33
www.diallogic.ro
Products/Services: 7,49,57,166,175

Mills Marketing & TeleServices LLC (S)
402-707-5654
millsmarketingteleservices.com
Products/Services: 110,126,130,133,135

Monet Software Inc. (S,C)
310-207-6800
www.monetsoftware.com
Products/Services: 107,136,171,174
Other: Cloud Computing for Call Centers

Mufson Howe Hunter (S)
215-399-5407
www.mhco.com
Products/Services: 46,88
Other: Capital Raising and M&A Services

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



NEC Corporation of America (S)
214-262-6384
www.necam.com
Products/Services: 47,149,159
Other: Unified Communications for Business

Netster Consulting Asia (V,S)
+60378054185
www.netsterconsulting.asia
Products/Services: 46,52,94,149

Network Direct Inc. (C)
818-908-4000 x4680
www.networkdirectinc.com
Products/Services: 46,130,132,133,151

Neutral Tandem (S)
866-388-7251
www.neutraltandem.com
Products/Services: 103,144

Nexidia Inc. (C)
972-770-2540
www.nexidia.com
Products/Services: 51,136
Other: Speech Analytics Solutions

NICE Systems (M,C)
201-964-2600
www.nice.com
Products/Services: 51,147,175,171,174

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

Novo Solutions (C)
757-687-6590 x162
www.novosolutions.com
Products/Services: 47,53,95,107,114

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



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

OAISYS (M)
888-496-9040 x2003
www.oaisys.com
Products/Services: 173,123,136,175,171
Other: Call Recording and Contact Center Management

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

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

OnviSource Inc. (C)
800-311-3025
www.onvisource.com
Products/Services: 27,123,160,175,174

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

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

Orion Communications Inc. (M)
877-812-7251 x105
www.predictive-dialer.org
Products/Services: 56,57,150,151,175
Other: Inbound VoIP Software

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



Pacific Interpreters Inc. (S)
800-311-1232 x5796
www.pacificinterpreters.com
Products/Services: 112
Other: Translation

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

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

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

Pegasystems (C)
617-374-9600
www.pegasystems.com
Products/Services: 51,53,114
Other: Business Process Management Software, Decision Making, Case Management

PhaseWare Inc. (C)
866-616-6629
www.phaseware.com
Products/Services: 47,52,53,94,95,111,114
Other: Customer Support Software

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

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

PowerNet Global (V,S)
866-895-9549
powernetglobal.com
Products/Services: 20,31,103,104,124

Presence Technology (S,C)
888-908-0117 x30000
www.presenceco.com
Products/Services: 13,16,27,57,104

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

Profitec Billing Services Inc. (M,S)
203-679-7010
www.profithecinc.com
Products/Services: 11,12
Other: Support Software

Promero Inc. (V,S)
954-935-8800 x643
www.promero.com
Products/Services: 22,53,57,143,171



QuadManage (M,C)
+972-9-7460241
Products/Services: 11,12,23,24,31

Quintus (M)
215-064-0345
Products/Services: 81

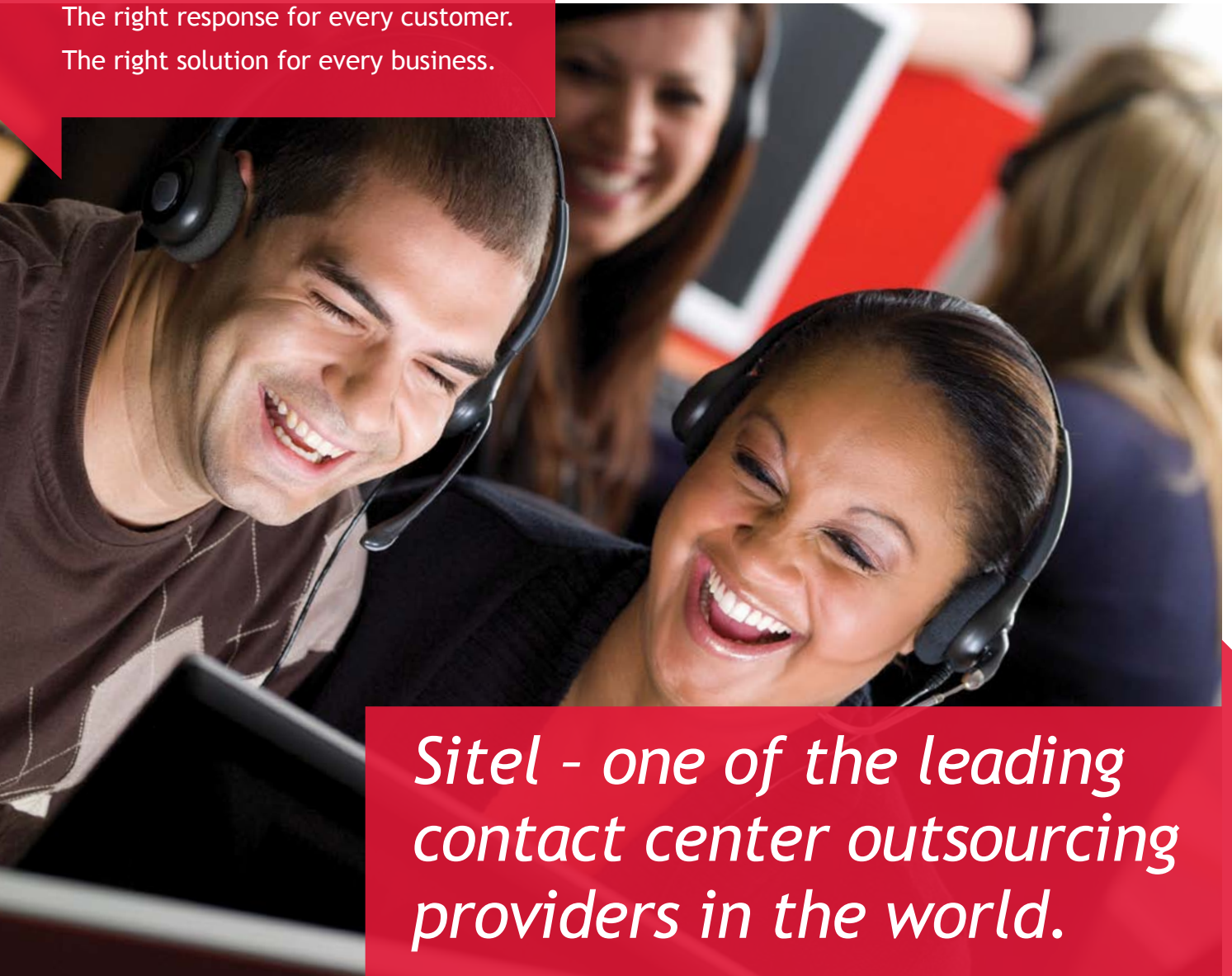


RCCSP Professional Education Alliance (S)
708-246-0320
www.the-resource-center.com
Products/Services: 9,43,156,157,158
Other: Certification

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

Respondz
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www.respondz.com
Products/Services: 130,132,133,135

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R-U

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

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

RTX Products Hong Kong Ltd. (M,S)
852 2487 3718
www.rtx.hk
Products/Services: 20,25,31,32,91



Sage Software (S,C)
800-643-6400
www.sagecrmsolutions.com
Products/Services: 47,53,76,87,142
Other: Cloud-based Connected Services including E-mail Campaign and List Building

SATMAP (S)
201-888-5407
www.satmaptrg.com
Products/Services: 47,53,117

ScreenConnect (M)
919-532-0022
www.screenconnect.com
Products/Services: 140

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

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

Sidera Networks
800-615-1412
www.sidera.net

Siemens Enterprise Communications (M)
800-310-6308
www.siemens-enterprise.com
Products/Services: 7,8,20,22,57

Smart Action Company (S,C)
888-882-9520
www.smartaction.com
Products/Services: 166,163,170

Snowfly Performance Incentives (S,C)
307-745-7126 x701
www.snowfly.com
Products/Services: 61,97,136,139,171

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

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

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

Star2Star Communications (M,S)
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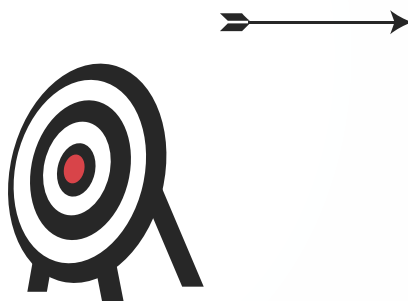
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A Customer IP Communications System Roadmap

The best way to choose and implement a new enterprise communications system successfully is by first preparing a system roadmap. To make an informed decision when preparing such a roadmap, it's vital to know what systems currently exist, the justification factors for a new system, what's coming by way of next-gen solutions, and recommended planning guidelines to help you move your communications system forward.

A new IP communications system should be viewed as a business asset and not an expense item. Therefore, effectively justifying the move to an IP system comes down to hard cost savings, productivity and peace of mind, mainly in the form of:

Reduced hardware costs, owing to fewer hardware elements; the use of nonproprietary third-party servers, media gateways and SIP telephone instruments; and PC-based soft phones in place of more expensive desktop devices.

A single shared voice/data IP network infrastructure, which reduces installation costs, ongoing maintenance expenses, and time-consuming move/add/change operations.

Enhanced system survivability and resiliency, based on fewer points of potential system failure; fully redundant geodistributed control server options; pooled media services and gateway resources; and alternate transmission signaling paths among servers, gateways and endpoints.

A centralized data center system, meaning more efficient administration, more manageable growth and network expansion, shared application resources across locations and greater user mobility across the network.

SIP trunk services that provide significant cost savings through a reduction of PSTN TDM hardware interfaces and fewer off-premises trunk circuits for local, long distance, and E911 transmission requirements.

Teleworking from anywhere, which can reduce costs for office space and overhead, and increase the production of road warriors via connections to the enterprise system using a PC softphone, web portal or smartphone.

Unified communications for cost/time savings and productivity features such as presence management, IM, calendar access, unified messaging, self-managed audio conferencing, web collaboration, and desktop video communications.

A unified all-in-one IP solution lets an enterprise easily make all system subscribers available to support contact center

operations. Beyond a formalized agent group configuration, co-resident enterprise users with unique work/knowledge skills can offer expertise for customer service, or simply provide back-up whenever call volumes spike and agent staffing isn't sufficient. All call scenarios also get the benefit of things like monitoring, reporting and an analysis of each call, regardless of who participates or how the call is handled across the enterprise.

If an IP system is configured on a SIP-based network for contact center operations, an added advantage is multi-modal functionality and the ability to collaborate and exchange information among dispersed call participants. Networked unified communications tools also are easily applied to contact centers: presence/IM helps agents determine the availability of other agents or experts to address a specific issue; conferencing services facilitate connectivity among multiple parties; mobile solutions support roaming or off-site agents; and teleworking options let you support home agents virtually anywhere.

Several enterprise communications innovations are now in the development or just-released stage, and one such solution worth note is business process automation. In essence, BPA is the automation of multi-step people-centric processes (document management included) using enterprise telephony, unified communications and contact center technologies and practices to distribute work. An IP communications system is actually a sound platform for BPA with its inherent SIP/SOA capabilities, interoperability with third-party applications, and ability to support BPA's objectives of reducing the latency, human error and costs associated with communications contacts and the flow of information.

To identify how a new system can contribute to objectives such as revenue enhancement, cost reduction, competitive positioning, market expansion and improved customer service, following a few key guidelines can help.

Avoid a "one size fits all" system approach by specifying the distinct communications needs of different system subscriber communities.

Educate and gain the support of all stakeholder groups at the beginning of the planning process.

Plan an incremental implementation approach across the enterprise network for manageability, and to avoid too much change at once.

Conduct group (user) trials for new applications and capabilities, phasing in a few features at a time, and ensure sufficient training and help desk support for system interfaces.

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Allan Sulkin is with TEQ Consult Group. Brad Herrington is with Interactive Intelligence.

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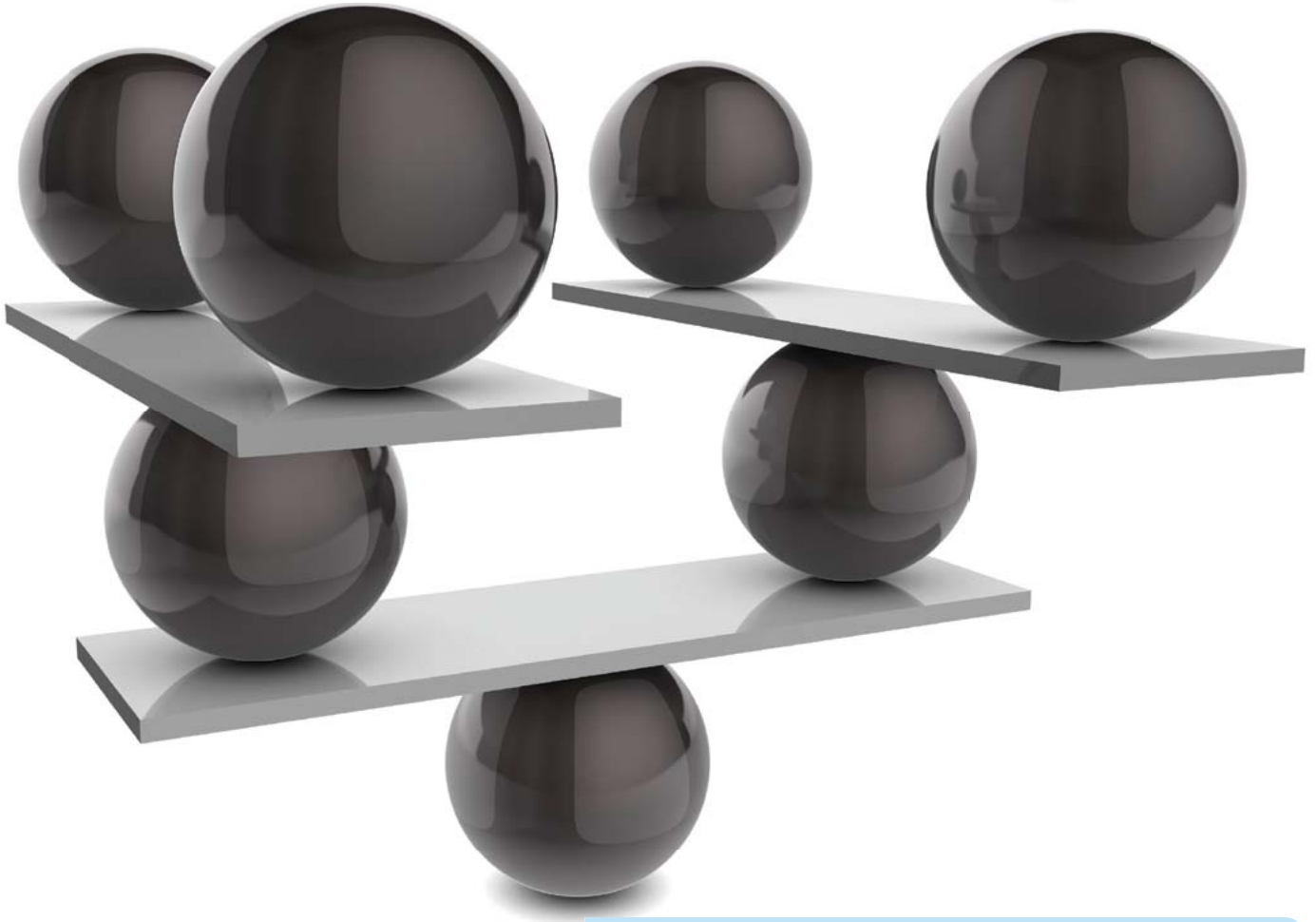
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CUSTOMER INTER@CTION SOLUTIONS® magazine (ISSN: 1533-3078) is published monthly by Technology Marketing Corporation, River Park, 800 Connecticut Ave 1st Fl., Norwalk, CT 06854-1628 U.S.A. Periodicals postage paid at Norwalk, Connecticut and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to: **CUSTOMER INTER@CTION SOLUTIONS®**, Technology Marketing Corporation, River Park, 800 Connecticut Ave 1st Fl., Norwalk, CT 06854-1628 U.S.A.

To subscribe, call toll-free: 800-243-6002. If busy, call 203-852-6800 or write to the circulation director at srusso@tmcnet.com. Subscription rates (published monthly): Free for qualified subscribers in the U.S.A. only. For non-qualified U.S.A. subscribers, \$59. All Canadian subscribers, \$89. All Foreign (air mail), \$109. All orders are payable in advance in U.S. dollars drawn against a U.S. bank. Connecticut residents add applicable sales tax.

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Paula Bernier, *Executive Editor*



Customer Interaction Space Sees M&A

The last few months of 2011 were an active time for M&A in the customer interaction solutions space. News broke in mid October of Alcatel-Lucent's selloff of its Genesys customer service solutions. Shortly after that, Oracle revealed plans to acquire RightNow Technologies.

Marty Beard, CEO and president at LiveOps, told CIS magazine that both deals are further evidence of the move toward the cloud and the central role that contact centers play in business-to-customer relations.

"RightNow is being acquired at a huge multiple because Oracle recognizes the importance of the cloud, and it highlights the growing importance of customer service," said Beard of LiveOps, a contact center software and call center outsourcing provider. "The contact center is becoming the epicenter center of customer communications between the consumer and the enterprises. This is directly impacting customer service at all levels, including multi-channels.

On Oct. 19 Alcatel-Lucent announced that it had received a binding offer of \$1.5 billion from a company owned by the Permira funds for the acquisition of its Genesys business. Permira is a European private equity firm with global reach. Genesys is a long-time leader in customer service software and contact center solutions for enterprises; it reported 2010 sales of \$500 million.

"Permira's intended acquisition of Genesys would enable this profitable business to flourish further; with Enterprise, we have reached the conclusion that retaining it and strengthening it further serves Alcatel-Lucent and our customers best," said Ben Verwaayen, CEO of Alcatel-Lucent, in announcing the deal. "Our chosen direction is to leverage the natural connections that exist between enterprise and carrier customers, and proactively apply Enterprise's strengths and momentum in unified communications and data networking with them."

Alcatel-Lucent also said that Genesys and Enterprise "would continue to enjoy a strong commercial relationship, with a joint development agreement and the two businesses continuing to have access to each other's product portfolios."

Beard of LiveOps said: "Genesys is known as a traditional call center vendor, and the game is changing. In order for them to compete, they had to make a dramatic change and going private is not a surprise." Beard added that "private equity typically looks to take as much of the profits from an ongoing entity and restructure."

As for Oracle, it expects to buy cloud-based customer service provider RightNow for around \$1.5 billion, or \$43 a share.

The deal, which represents a premium of roughly 20 percent on its closing price on Oct. 21, is expected to close this year or early next.

Thomas Kurian, executive vice president at Oracle Development, said: "Oracle is moving aggressively to offer customers a full range of cloud solutions including sales force automation, human resources, talent management, social networking, databases and Java as part of the Oracle Public Cloud. RightNow's leading customer service cloud is a very important addition to Oracle's Public Cloud."

About 2,000 organizations worldwide rely on the solutions of RightNow, which was established in 1997 and went public in 2004. Gartner in September recognized RightNow as a 2011 Magic Quadrant leader for CRM web customer service.

The company's solutions allow customers to access information via e-mail, Facebook widgets, the web or other channels. That way, agents don't have to get involved in inquiries for which customers can find the answers themselves. And the millennial generation tends to like chat or other mediums over phone calls anyway, so this speaks to that customer preference.

For example, RightNow delivers a service called RightNow CX for Twitter.

The importance of businesses making it easy for customers to get answers is highlighted in a new study from Convergys Corp., which indicates that the percent of U.S. consumers who report a bad service experience to the offending company continues to rise, up 5 percent in the past year and up 13 percent since 2009. The top complaint, according to the study, is customer effort.

"Clearly, 'effort' is the flashpoint of the service experience, and those companies who make problem resolution hard for customers can pay a stiff price," said Igor Sarenac, Convergys vice president.

"Although small in number compared to the mass of U.S. consumers who gave high marks to service in the research, greater vocalization by a handful of dissatisfied consumers can do considerable damage to a company's reputation, leading to a drop in consumer purchases, reduced advocacy, and new customer avoidance," he noted. **CIS**

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