



CUSTOMER

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TAKING Account of the HOLIDAY Shopping Season

How the Tablet is Shifting
Online Shopping Behavior

Hurricane Sandy's Reminder
about Business Continuity

What Marriage and Outsourcing
Have in Common



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

SAP: Supercharging Mobile Customer Relationships

While the general consumer swoons over the latest device whether it is a tablet, smartphone or even phablet, the serious work often gets done when smart devices hook into the backend systems that corporations use to control everything from manufacturing to CRM and human resources. The reality is there are great gadgets and apps we hear about all the time, but when it comes to the things that make companies more competitive and profitable, we often don't get to see the ink and electrons devoted to them.

About three years ago SAP started making a major play into the mobile space – hoping to be the company allowing corporations to securely provide mobile solutions to employees, customers and partners. Through a partnership with RIM, and acquisitions of Syco and Sybase, the company's goal has been to provide a mobile platform that hooks into backend enterprise systems in a secure manner – allowing them to deploy innovative apps and services more quickly.

Recently I had a chance to speak with Nicholas Brown, a senior VP with SAP, and he walked me through the progress the company is making in mobile as well as helping its customers serve their customers more effectively. He talked about how the company's investment not only in mobile but cloud and big data have intersected, allowing companies to more effectively determine which customers are using what device and how best to reach them.

Moreover his company has an ecosystem of app developers helping his customers address the plethora of mobile opportunities available to them.

Some of SAP's most recent mobile news is the launch of six new apps on Windows 8 devices. Brown said: "This revolution is going to be beyond Apple and Android." He continued: "I think Windows is going to be a big player in that market." He further explained that Windows is a natural fit if you look at his company's customer base – where lots of money has been spent developing Windows apps. He believes Windows 8 will be a natural extension of the platform.

One of the company's most innovative offerings is SAP Precision Retailing, which combines analytics, a predictive engine in the cloud, and the company's HANA in-memory database to analyze a variety of information about a persona. Buying habits, demographics and POS information are then analyzed to suggest offers to make to a person in an effort to get that individual to purchase a cup of coffee or other product.

While the company thought this solution would be great for retailers, it was a bit taken aback when Societe de Transport de Montreal, the largest public transit corporation in Québec and provider of more than 1.2 million public transit trips per day, became one of its customers. STM selected SAP to generate new revenue streams, increase customer satisfaction, and bolster ridership.

"Given SAP's great credibility as a partner, we are very confident we will be able to meet and exceed our goals with SAP Precision Retailing," said Denise Vaillancourt, executive director at STM. "STM was named best public transit system in North America in 2010, and by partnering with retailers, other transportation partners such as taxis and entertainment and media providers, we will be able to bring personalized content and offers to our 1 million OPUS Card users who are always on the move and looking to understand what's nearby, what's happening and where to find help for daily activities. SAP Precision Retailing is at the heart of this real-time, geo-localized and personalized, brand and consumer experience, driving traffic from the streets to the store or to the next consumer experience. STM will be starting a pilot program this fall initially with 20,000 transit users and once the product is fully tested, we will open it to all Montreal OPUS Card holders."

A great feature of the system is it allows retailers to make offers to riders based on their location. Imagine having a special which is offered when there is a delay on the track for example. Then there is the ability for retailers to pull in customers on weekends with special offers, which benefits the retailer and the subway system.

You might not have expected the CMO of a public transit system to deploy such cutting-edge solutions which leverage the latest technology to delight customers and increase sales. But in response to the news, the question worth asking yourself is if the subway in Canada can do this, why aren't you? Hats off to STM and SAP for showing us the future of mobile CRM and commerce. **M**

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Paula Bernier,
Executive Editor

Make Technology Work for You, Not Against You

The cover story of this issue's magazine talks about online holiday shopping, how successful it was in 2012, and what can be done to make it even better in the future.

I know I personally received more e-mail appeals than ever before from a variety of retailers during the recent holiday buying seasons. And, in many cases, I took these retailers up on their offers, either via online transactions or by making in-store purchases. It's great that companies are using online technology to offer customers like me the opportunity to benefit from various deals and special offers. But while technology is great in that it allows businesses to deliver, and consumers to take advantage of, product and service offers, technology also can sometimes get in the way of what might otherwise be a great customer experience.

Case in point: My recent experience with a women's clothing retailer.

About an hour ago I e-mailed the retailer's CEO and head of corporate communications, so I'll just share what I wrote to explain the situation. This e-mail went out about an hour ago, and no reply yet (which to me is too long), but I'm going to assume this company is going to do something to right the situation, so in fairness I won't use their name here. I inserted xx where the company's name (or, in the first and second cases, where the CEO and pr person's name) was/were in the original.

Here's the e-mail:

Hello xx & xx,

I'm a loyal xx customer, and the editor of a magazine about customer service, so I thought you'd like to know that your company has a policy that may cause you to lose my business.

Here's the situation. I recently received an e-mail from xx reminding me of my dividend points balance and suggesting that I need to use or lose those points by the end of 2012. I was just \$5 away from getting a \$25 dividend, so I went in last night and brought four items to the register.

I told the store rep that I was \$5 away from my dividend, and that I wanted to apply that dividend to my purchase.

She and another store rep, both of whom were extremely helpful and nice, said she wasn't sure if the purchase/dividend would appear in the system right away, so we decided she should ring up just one of the items – to get me to my dividend reward – and then ring up the other three items as a separate transaction. After completing the single-item transaction, the dividend still didn't appear on her computer, so the reps suggested I come in tomorrow to purchase the other three items.

Today I called the xx at Kierland Commons in Scottsdale to see if the \$5+ purchase from last night had posted so I could come in and make the other purchase and get the dividend. The rep working (not one of the two from last night) told me it would take six weeks to get my dividend. That didn't make sense, given what I was told last night and given xx just sent me an e-mail suggesting I use my dividend points by the end of 2012. I told her this, and she suggested I call customer service.

So, I just got off the phone with xx customer service. After talking to three people, and asking that they post the purchase immediately so I could come in and spend more money with xx today, I was turned away. I told them this would cause xx to lose my business, but they said it was a computer records-related issue and there was nothing they could do. I told them that when a valued customer is involved, there's always something that can be done, but they didn't deliver on my request. That said, I can only conclude that xx, which I thought was finally turning around with better product and customer service, no longer wants my business.

If you do want to keep my business, please let me know by posting my dividend today so I can go in and complete the purchase of the other three desired items today.

Sincerely,

Paula Bernier

I'll let you know next issue how it all panned out. **M**

Happy New Year!

INDUSTRY WEB EVENT —

2013: Key Contact Center Trends and Priorities for the Upcoming Year — How you can be ready.

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Interactive Intelligence

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Sheila McGee-Smith
Founder
McGee-Smith Analytics, LLC

Contact center technology, as well as the dynamics of delivering a great customer experience, is changing at a rapid pace. The accelerated adoption of cloud-based solutions, the incorporation of social media into the multi-channel mix, the impact of smart phones and mobile tablets, the need to accurately capture the voice of the customer, new methods of measuring agent effectiveness...what changes are taking place in 2013 and how can you be ready? Join us for this live web event where Forrester Research principal analyst, Art Schoeller and Interactive Intelligence senior vice president, Joe Staples will discuss these topics and help you be ready to take the best advantage of the upcoming year and the contribution your contact center can make to the success of your business.

Following the web presentation, there will be an extensive Q&A, where Schoeller and Staples will be joined by industry veterans, Sheila McGee-Smith, Founder of McGee-Smith Analytics and Don Van Doren, Founder & President of Vanguard Communications, as the panel responds to audience questions.

Attendees of this Interactive Intelligence web event will receive four vendor comparison reports published by Gartner, Frost & Sullivan, Nemertes Research, and CRM.

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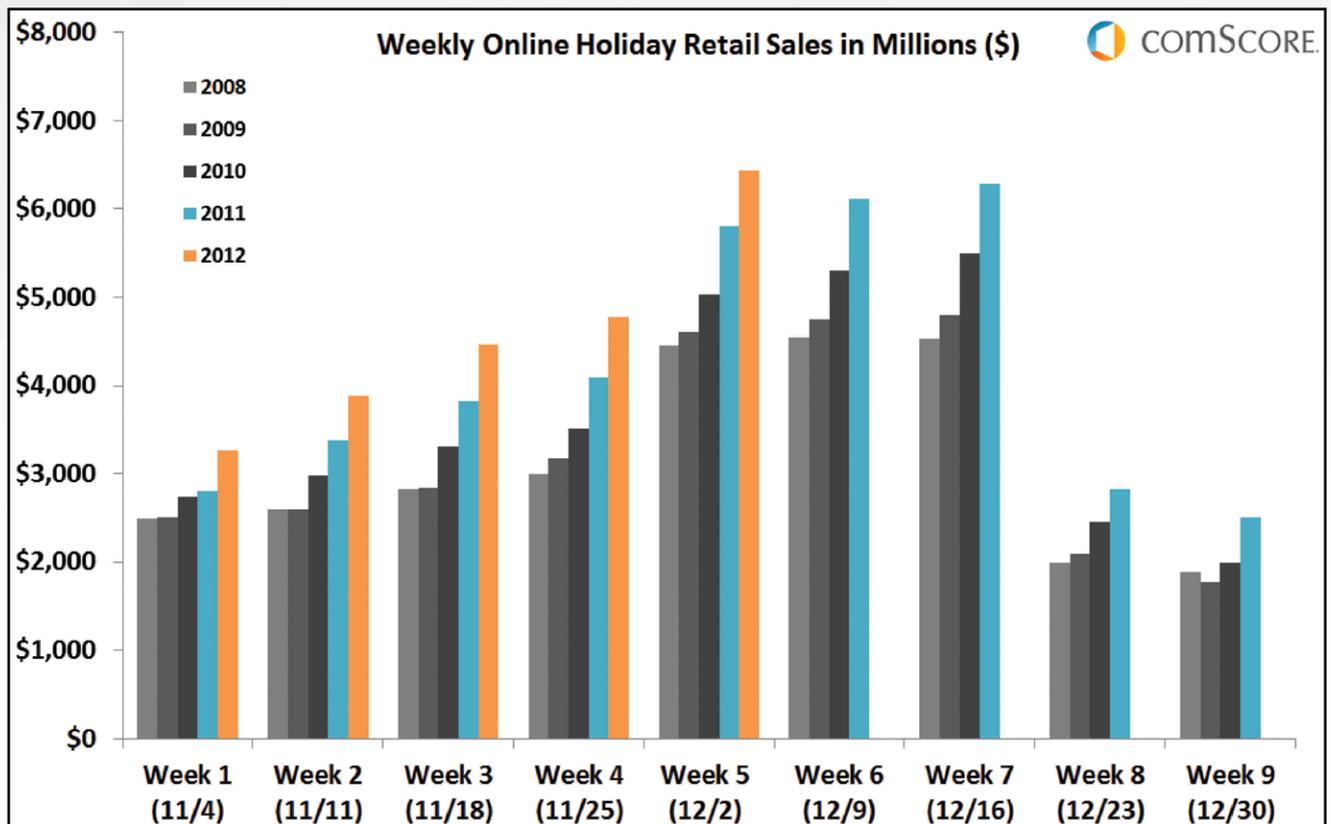
Taking Account of the Holiday Shopping Season

Online shopping for the 2012 holiday season set new records. As of Nov. 28, online holiday sales had reached \$16.4 billion, a 16 percent increase from spending during the same period in 2011.

“That we are seeing growth come from an increase in both the number of buyers and the average spending per buyer suggests broad-based strength in the e-commerce sector,” said comScore chairman Gian Fulgoni. “It reflects not only the health of the e-commerce channel as more people buy online, but also the health of the consumer who has been willing to spend more online this year than last. It’s particularly noteworthy that half of the online population has made an e-commerce purchase thus far in the holiday season.”

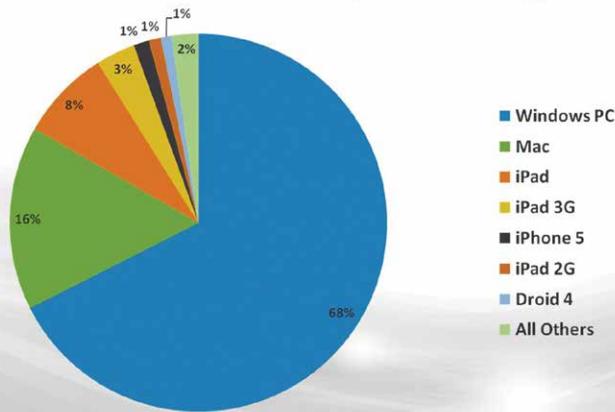
Purchases conducted via computers, smartphones and tablets exceeded \$1 billion both on Black Friday, on Cyber Monday, and on at least one other day this holiday season, according to comScore. Black Friday online sales in 2012 totaled \$1.042 billion, a 28 percent increase from 2011 on the same day. And Cyber Monday sales increased 17 percent from 2011 to 2012, when online spending on this day hit \$1.46 billion.

That growth, according to comScore, was driven both by an increase in the number of buyers (up 9 percent to 128.7 million) and the average spending per buyer (up 5 percent to \$165.90). It reflects a higher number of transactions per buyer (up 4 percent to \$2.19 per buyer) as opposed to a significantly larger amount per transaction (up only 1 percent to \$75.90). Cyber Monday shoppers spent an average \$194.46 online, more than the average person spent online over the Thanksgiving weekend (\$172.42), according to a BIGinsight survey for Shop.org.



Traffic from iPad was 12% of the total Thanksgiving through Cyber Monday traffic

Website Traffic Trend For 70+ Retailers, 700+ million Page Views



Source – Compuware APM

Considering that retailers saw an unprecedented amount of online action this holiday season both from mobile and other connected devices, the performance of their websites did great, indicates Compuware's Pierzchala. He notes that it's not unusual for this level of activity to create website outages, but that there were no known instances of major retailers having such experiences.

However, he adds, retailers will have to do this all over again in less than a year, and the online activity is likely to be even greater next time around. That said, Pierzchala suggests retailers – especially those whose websites and mobile apps tie in with various third-party online entities – start planning now to ensure they can again deliver top-drawer online experiences.

“Performance is a journey, not a goal,” he says.

The most popular items purchased online, according to comScore, included digital content and subscriptions, which grew 28 year-over-year; consumer electronics; video games, consoles and accessories; and jewelry and watches.

Smartphones and tablets played an important role during the online holiday buying season not only because they were among the top products purchased in the consumer electronics space, but also due to their role in the online shopping process. Accenture Interactive reports that 72 percent of consumers aged 20-40 in the United States and the United Kingdom use mobile devices while in-store to compare prices, but the majority leave before making a purchase. It appears that many may be making their purchases online instead.

Stephen Pierzchala, technology strategist at application performance monitoring outfit Compuware APM, says that November and December marked a “coming out party” for mobile. Pierzchala adds that, increasingly, people are using their mobile devices not only to browse and do comparison shopping, but also to purchase items. The increase in mobile usage for both Thanksgiving Day and Black Friday was staggering, according to

Compuware, which reports that mobile commerce was up both days by more than 250 percent as compared to 2011.

“Mobile has been the poster child of the 2012 shopping season,” he says.

And, increasingly, consumers are using tablets as opposed to just smartphones to browse and buy. Forrester predicts that by 2016 one in three Americans will own a tablet, and that tablet e-commerce traffic is growing exponentially, already surpassing traditional smartphone traffic, yet only 7 percent of retailers have tablet-optimized their websites and mobile apps.

So popular is the use of smartphones and tablets that comScore recently announced the U.S. beta release of Media Metrix Multi-Platform, a digital audience measurement and media planning tool that now addresses mobile devices.

“As an active investor in mobile and web businesses, I have been dying for an accurate consolidated view of web, mobile web, iOS, and Android audience data. comScore has delivered exactly what I've been seeking for the U.S. audience and I am looking forward to seeing them tackle the global audience next,” says Fred Wilson, managing partner of Union Square Ventures.

Five Fastest Desktop Homepages – November 22-29 2012

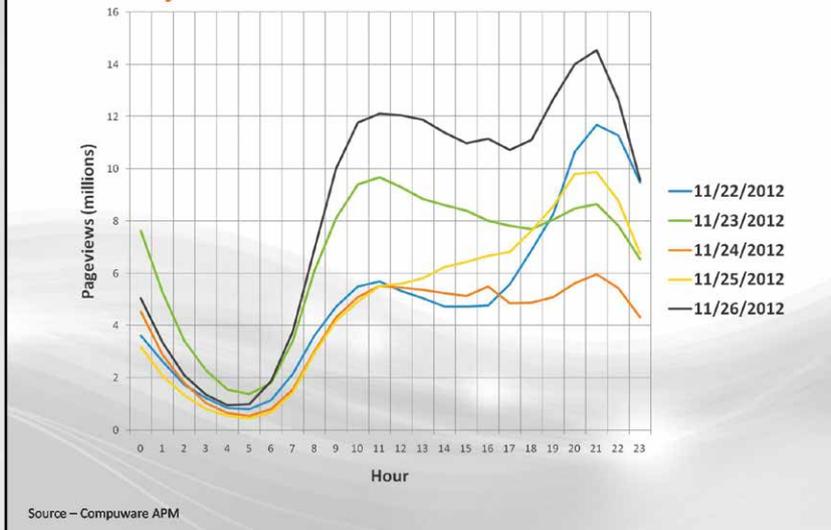
1. Apple
2. Costco
3. Dell
4. JC Penney
5. Macys

Five Fastest Mobile Homepages – November 22-29 2012

1. Office Depot
2. Barnes and Noble
3. Williams-Sonoma
4. Buy.com
5. Sears

Source: Compuware

Number of Pageviews: Thanksgiving through Cyber Monday



While retailers can optimize their online experiences by investing in acceleration solutions, he says they should also take a good look at how they might simplify their websites.

Many websites are designed using JavaScript and cascading files, he says, but sometimes such sites require up to 45 files to load before the visitor sees the first thing on a screen. In such situations, he says, companies should look to reduce the number of files on their websites, concatenating their JavaScript, and/or making sure content is positioned on the page in a way that doesn't interfere with the loading of that page.

Retailers might want to suggest that their partners do that same, considering that when issues and slowdowns were detected with sites, in most cases it resulted from third-party content performance issues, not problems with the host site, he says.

That's a noteworthy piece of information, particularly because we're seeing important companies working to position themselves as online shopping destinations. Of course, Amazon is the granddaddy of online shopping aggregation, having started with book sales and expanded to sell just about anything and everything, be it tactile or digital. And, just in time for the 2012 holiday shopping

season, Google got into the online shopping game in a much bigger way with a wide variety of new content and capabilities.

Google was ready for the online shopping season with the following, recently-announced features: a list of hot toys; rankings of products in popular categories, including a 1-10 rating program called GoodGuide; featured products that can be viewed online

from all angles; maps to help shoppers use their mobiles to navigate physical malls and select retailers most effectively; a tool called Shortlists to enable shoppers to research products and share interest in products with family and friends; and a single-source online destination to enable shoppers to view catalogs from select popular retailers (this was actually unveiled in 2011, but now includes catalogs from such popular retailers as Eddie Bauer, J.Crew and Williams Sonoma). As part of its shopping initiative, Google is offering retailers the ability to add promotions to their product listings on Google Shopping and/or distribute their promotions on other Google properties such as Google Maps for Android and the Google Offers app.

Competitor Microsoft, with its Bing search engine, launched a holiday campaign calling out Google on the fact that the Google shopping program is more a promotional tool for retailers than a helpful solution for consumers.

"Google shopping is nothing more than a list of targeted ads that unsuspecting customers assume are search results," Bing said. "We say that when you limit choices and rank them by payment, consumers get Scroogled." For an honest search result, try Bing."

The screenshot shows the Google Shopping results for espresso machines. It features a grid of product listings with images, titles, prices, and user reviews. On the right side, there is a 'NOTES' section with user comments and a 'Buyer's guide to espresso makers' link.

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How to Make Your Business More Efficient and Profitable via Address Data Cleansing and LBS

Customer contact databases are both one of the biggest boons and one the biggest headaches for customer service and marketing managers at organizations around the world.

These databases are invaluable tools for capturing, making available and storing data for call center, order entry, shipping and logistics, and other key business applications. But ensuring that data within these often-massive data repositories are accurate, in a usable format, and do not exist in duplicate is no small feat.

However, a company called Loqate Inc. now offers businesses of all sizes solutions that make customer address management fast and easy – and that can take customer resource management to the next level with location-based options.

“Dealing with customer addresses is no longer a problem,” says Geoff Roach, vice president of marketing with Loqate. “There is an easy, affordable way to fix it.”

Loqate provides the master data management and data quality technology that’s under the hood of database administrator-focused solutions from such major database companies as IBM, Pitney Bowes, Oracle, and SAS. Now Loqate is bringing its address data quality solutions direct to businesses like yours.

The Loqate solution looks at groups of characters that could be addresses, and makes sure they are correct, verifies they are actual addresses, and formats them as needed, explains Roach. It can be used for addresses in any country in the world, supports 10 languages, and even allows data to be transliterated between different languages, he says.

Verify is the name of Loqate’s batch cleansing solution. Robust parsing enables unrestricted address cleansing and the software automatically puts components into the correct address field, making applications that process location data more accurate and of higher value.

When two large companies merged a few years ago, the newly combined company ran data from both entities through Loqate Verify and discovered it had 2 million more duplicate customers than it had thought. “The payback on that kind of information is immense,” Roach adds.

Register is Loqate’s offering for real-time entry and verification of address data for a fast, accurate, and user friendly data entry experience in call center, CRM and e-commerce environments. Users of this solution

receive instant results when data is entered into the form, providing an intuitive experience for the user and ensuring only accurate data is entered into the database. The result is guaranteed clean data entry, positive customer experience, and reduced support costs due to greater efficiency in support interactions.

Roach points out that the Register feature that populates the user’s screen with an address once it recognizes that address can be especially useful in contact center applications in which agents are not working in their native languages and thus may not be as familiar with city names and address conventions.

An especially noteworthy part of the Loqate solution is Geocode, which is used to apply location detail to clean addresses or other data in the system. Geocode provides high-granularity generation of a latitude/longitude coordinate for any address worldwide, leveraging the most comprehensive multi-source reference data for GIS, location-based services, and any application where knowing the physical location is important. It works with any city or postal code, offering delivery point/rooftop-level coverage for more than 100 countries.

One example of how a company might use Geocode is to get a list of every home within 50 miles of a given address to enable more targeted marketing.

“It’s much more accurate than trying to do it by zip code,” explains Roach.

Of course, this is just one possible application for Geocode. Almost all data has locations, and accurate locations can power a wealth of business processes, including those related to customer relationship management, data quality, delivery of materials, goods or services, fraud detection, insurance risk assessment, data analytics, and store and territory planning.

Along with Register, Verify and Geocode, Loqate customers benefit from the capabilities of the Loqate Global Knowledge Repository. The GKR contains reference data relating to postal addresses and other geographic points of interest for more than 240 countries and territories around the world. The GKR is used in conjunction with the other Loqate solutions and, the company says, is the only reference database of its type with complete global coverage. Data is developed by Loqate and sourced directly from entities around the world and is licensed for use within the Loqate solutions.

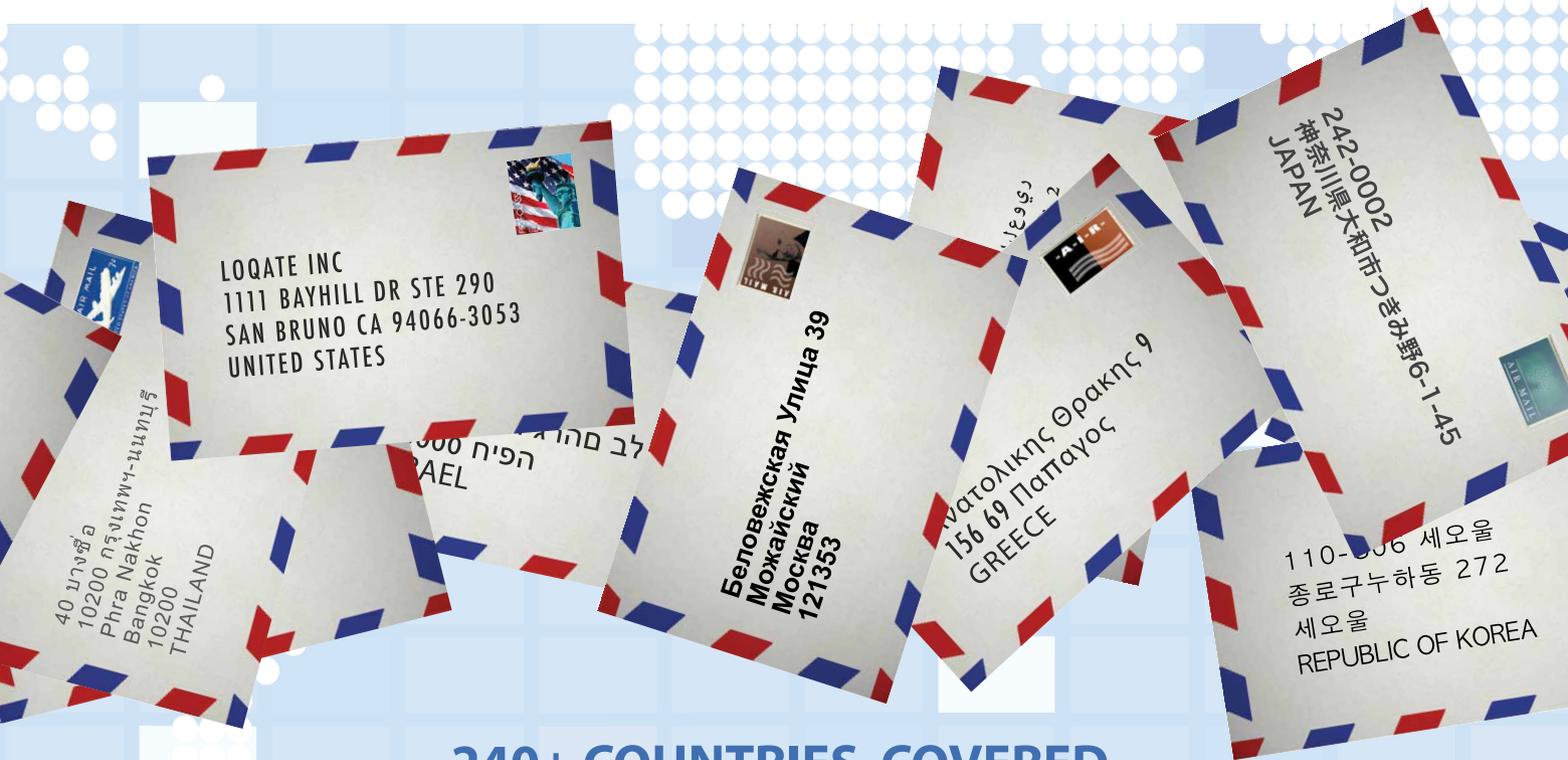
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VirtualLogger LLC combines the power of the cloud with plug computing to deliver scalable, full-featured call recording at an unprecedented price point.

Called RecordingMagic, the solution is one part customer premises equipment and one part software as a service.

A small Linux server running the VirtualLogger software sits at the customer location to capture and copy audio data (e.g. VoIP packets) and forward them to the cloud. Each unit handles at least 15 simultaneous calls.

For companies using softphone applications on their PCs, there is a software-only option that eliminates even the Linux device. And for analog phones, there's a unit that enables companies with analog POTS lines to be recorded by the system.

Recording and storage for RecordingMagic occurs within either the VirtualLogger cloud or a customer's data center. A year of recording service is included with each unit, and recordings are stored online for 12 months and archived for three years.

The result is call recording with no storage to manage, no capacity limit and no worries about losing calls. And advanced features, such as screen capture and speech analytics are available. Everything is professionally managed by a team with seven years of experience working with some of the largest banks, insurance companies and retailers in the county.

RecordingMagic is also very affordable.

"This is much, much, much less expensive than a standard call recorder," says VirtualLogger President Jim Veilleux.

The next least-expensive comparable solution starts at about \$6,000, Veilleux says. Meanwhile, the RecordingMagic device sells for less than \$200, and the monthly recording service fee is \$9.99 per line or \$99 per year.

The RecordingMagic device is also more efficient to operate than competing solutions because of its small size and power requirements, adds Veilleux.

"It's tiny – about the size of a double deck of playing cards," he says.

The small footprint, low power needs, ease of installation (about 30 minutes for most locations) and silent operation of the RecordingMagic device allows it to be used anywhere. Target customers include home-based businesses and consultants; small and medium businesses with 1 to 100 telephones; and multi-location businesses including automobile dealerships, franchise operators, insurance agencies and retailers.

Companies with multiple stores or offices can put RecordingMagic devices in each location and combine recordings from all of them into the VirtualLogger cloud, making this a manageable and affordable solution even for large scale enterprises. Veilleux says competing solutions at this scale would cost millions of dollars, because they rely on expensive servers, and that cost is multiplied with each added site. RecordingMagic, meanwhile, can record a thousand locations for less than \$200,000.

"RecordingMagic is a great idea," says Steve Varner, Vice President of Professional Receivable Solutions (PRS4U.com), a credit and collections agency in Texas. "Our business plan is to grow by leveraging home-based agents and RecordingMagic is the perfect solution for letting us expand our monitoring and recording capability as our business grows without overspending or tying up our capital."

"The RecordingMagic concept is a perfect model for our business," says Darryl Ogle, IT manager at Tri-Miss Services, Inc, a metal recycling firm. "With 11 locations throughout Mississippi, RecordingMagic offers a cost-effective method to record each office's calls and provide centralized access to all the recordings. We're excited about the service."

RecordingMagic is compliant with PCI, HIPAA and other security standards. It comes with security measures such as AES-256 bit encryption, multi-tenant database structure, and data-driven permission control. It works with most IP phones, protocols and codecs, including those from Avaya, Cisco, Nortel and Polycom, running SIP, SCCP, Unistim, MGCP, G.711 and G.729. And it can be connected multiple ways.

The call center recording space is a pretty crowded market, notes Veilleux, but RecordingMagic is a clear standout.

"The RecordingMagic concept is brilliant," says Christopher Sicard, a telecommunications consultant working with Sicard Office Solutions. "For recording multiple locations and bringing all the data together into a single web interface, there is nothing comparable or nearly as affordable. It is simple to install, call quality is great, and support is excellent."

Which Recording System Would You Rather Have?

Typical Recorder



\$5,000 and up per location
Noisy
Moving parts
Power hog
Weight: 20-40 lbs
Rack mounted

RecordingMagic



\$199 and up
Silent
Solid state
5V/3A
12 oz.
Goes anywhere

Small size, low cost, big features:

RecordingMagic™ from VirtualLogger uses small, simple devices to “tap” the phone line (over 99% of today’s phones, including VOIP and standard POTS lines) and sends the data securely to our central operations center for recording, storage and retrieval. Since the device itself is not a recorder, it’s much less expensive and much easier to get started. Installation is 30 minutes or less for most locations and can be done by almost anyone.

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- Easily share recordings with clients and others
- Complies with all important security standards (PCI, HIPAA, others)
- Perfect for small/medium businesses: 1-100 telephones
- Works with big call centers too
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- Great for home-based businesses and consultants
- Screen capture and speech analytics available



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On-Hold Messaging Delivery for the Digital Telephony Age

The colossal Cisco Unified CallManager phone system manual doesn't allot much space for on-hold messaging. It is simply one feature in a massive universe from the Cisco perspective. Yet on-hold messaging is a significant piece of the puzzle for businesses that use the application as a marketing component. The On Hold Messaging Association quotes sources stating that 70 percent of callers get put on hold.

The traditional on-hold messaging process was simple for many years: Service providers produced the messaging – typically a mix of music and promotional material – and delivered content to businesses in the form of physical media. That media was added to a player with a direct wired connection to an analog PBX phone system.

Time moves ahead, however. Physical media is on the backburner as service providers move to electronic file-based distribution, reducing costs dramatically and delivering a faster and more reliable service. Meanwhile, businesses are migrating from analog to digital VoIP systems such as CallManager and Asterisk.

Businesses can play file-based on-hold messaging over digital and most analog phone systems, but there are recognizable challenges associated on the digital front. Those challenges are being faced with more frequency as migrations from analog systems increase. One challenge is that larger digital phone systems typically lack a physical socket where a media player would normally connect. This means that digital on-hold messaging requires uploading to a central server.

Traditionally, the admin department or a service manager oversaw the operation and care of analog PBX phone systems, which were straightforward and easy to manage. The migration to digital phone systems transfers that responsibility to the IT department. These VoIP systems do much more, and are correspondingly more complicated to manage.

With this role change, on-hold service providers face a greater challenge to ensure that new messaging files are correctly and swiftly applied. There is a sale date with on-hold messaging, as with all marketing material. Playing last month's sale information will create confusion, and potentially lead to bigger headaches for both the business and its customers.

IT and On-Hold Messaging

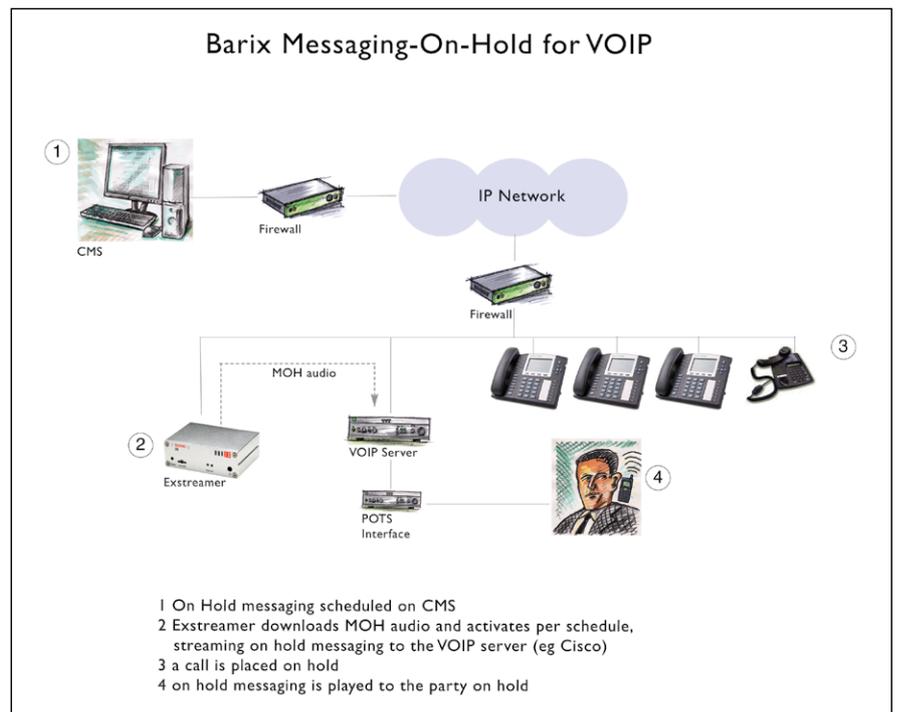
It's no secret that IT professionals don't want unknown parties to put strange files on their servers. This is precisely the challenge that

companies like Thanks For Holding, an on-hold messaging service provider based on Portland, Ore., face on a daily basis.

"Companies like Cisco make great phones and with top-shelf functionality, but they haven't done a very good job of interfacing on-hold messaging with their digital systems," says Michael Newman, president of Thanks For Holding. "So it quickly became a huge problem as to how we distribute our content to a third party. I'd e-mail the file to somebody in an IT department, with no idea if it was applied."

This is not to suggest that IT departments are filled with lazy and incompetent people. Quite the contrary; but they have many tasks and even more distractions. This means that initially, requests are often met with indifference due to prioritization; or with resistance due to security concerns and unfamiliarity.

The options for delivering on hold messaging files quickly became:





Call Center Software Online Community

<http://call-center-software.tmcnet.com>

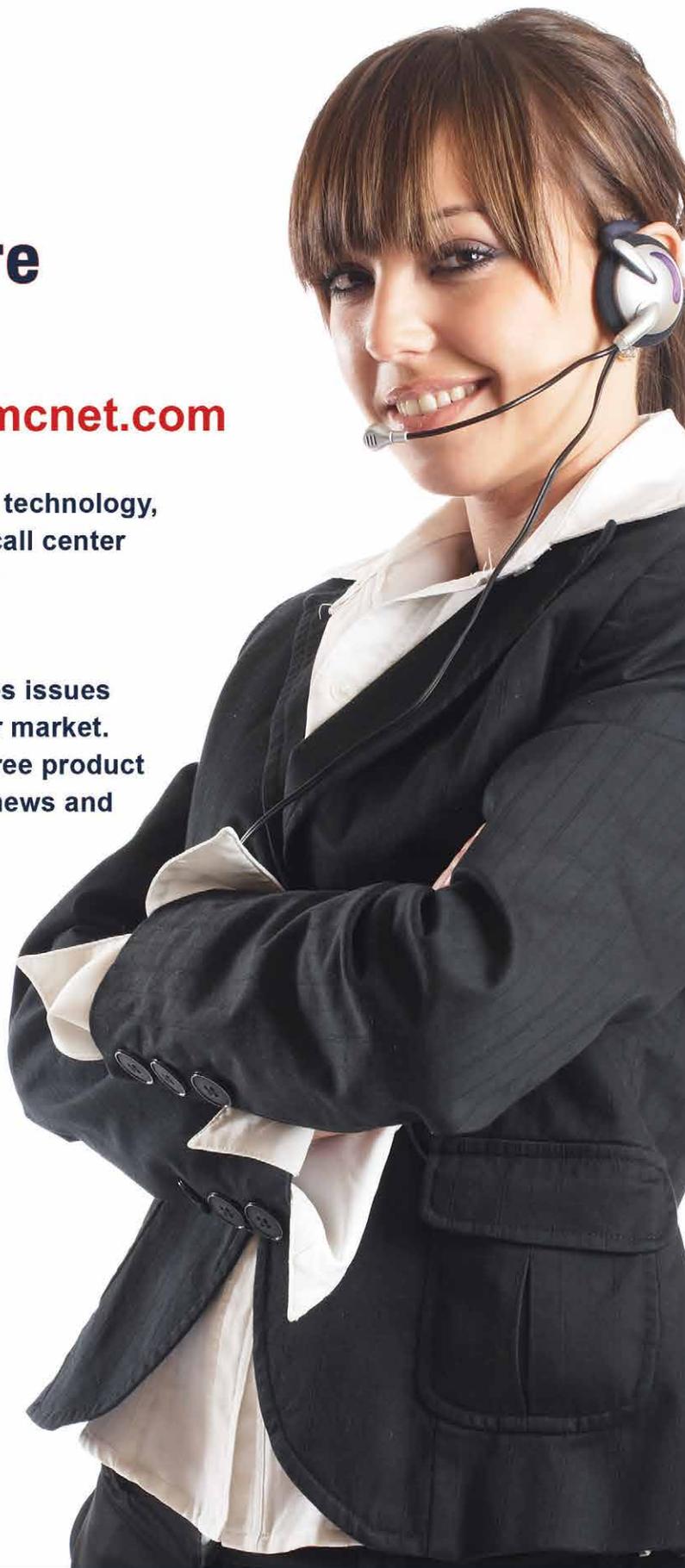
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Powered by:



- e-mail it to the IT department and hope they follow instructions; and
- ask the business' marketing representative to convince the IT department to allow a direct file upload.

The issue with this second point is that it becomes a three-way conversation. A service provider such as Newman is communicating with the marketing department, while both parties work to convince the IT department to open a port, or allow access to the server. It was abundantly clear that while these large digital phone systems were far more complex for on-hold messaging applications, the biggest obstacles were human.

A Direct Solution

The rise of audio over IP has introduced cost-effective, multipoint audio transport to many industries and market verticals. As more businesses replace aging traditional phone systems with new IP-based systems, there is a clear opportunity to adapt some of the same technology and infrastructure for the benefit of on-hold messaging.

Essentially, audio over IP technology enables a better delivery system for the digital telephony age – a timely consideration as the telecom industry in general moves toward touch-free, IP delivery.

MOH Technology and Barix have designed a complete solution to directly stream IP audio for on-hold messaging into CallManager, Asterisk and other VoIP systems. The architecture allows the phone server to take delivery of an on hold audio stream from a trusted hardware device that sits within the secured environment. The process keeps costs low and addresses network security concerns while ensuring that on-hold messages are updated as required – eliminating the burden for IT departments as they are not required to do anything once the system has been installed.

The network configuration is slightly different depending on the phone system, but remains simple. CallManager systems, for example, will look for a multicast RTP stream from a specific IP address. Asterisk systems actually request the audio stream from the assigned hardware device, which will then deliver the stream via a TCP connection.

For the service provider, life is equally straightforward: On-hold content is uploaded to a web-based central management system. Customer sites have a Barix Exstreamer that calls into the server, and downloads and applies any content or configuration updates. The on-hold messaging is output to the device's audio outputs and onto the network for a VoIP system to pick up.

The result is a maintenance-free solution that puts the service provider in complete control of the on-hold audio for the client and reports the status of each device for complete peace of mind.

Extending Reach

The scalable nature of the architecture ensures that phone systems of all sizes can cleanly integrate on-hold messaging, with specific content for different regions. Defined network zones on a regional, national or global basis can comprise multiple hardware playout devices, each manageable over a central web-based package.

Installation is usually simple and virtually maintenance free. Once the delivering device is connected to the local network, it contacts the central MOH server for the audio files and any further configuration settings. In many customer environments, this is a zero config act; however, where static IP addresses, name server entries or router configurations are needed due to IT policies, the device can be initially configured via any common browser.

The control aspect extends further than simplified delivery. The central management software alerts service providers to errors in two ways: graphically on the CMS, with information to help diagnose cause; and via e-mail alerts pointing to operational issues, detected automatically through routine communications with the device.

The entire concept delivers an automated and routine, yet reliable, solution. Thanks For Holding was the first to prove its validity, with a successful deployment for the Kendall Auto Group of Alaska. Newman is using the solution to update a mix of background music, ads and promos at three dealership locations (Fairbanks, Wasilla and Anchorage).

The dealership recently migrated from an analog system to CallManager.

“The benefit for Kendall Auto Group is that we can manage and monitor their on-hold messages, with remote and automatic program changes that require no action on their end,” says Newman. “Changes to programs are made remotely and automatically, requiring no action on their end. “Customers calling in hear a mix of instrumental music and information meant to educate, entertain and ultimately inspire them to become buyers.”

Looking Forward

There are certainly going to be challenges moving forward, especially as more companies explore cloud-based phone systems. This potentially removes the physical telephone server from the equation, moving services to a third-party central server farm that provides telephony services to many customers. This is certainly an evolution in both business terms and also in the physical architecture, though the cloud-based concept is still in its infancy.

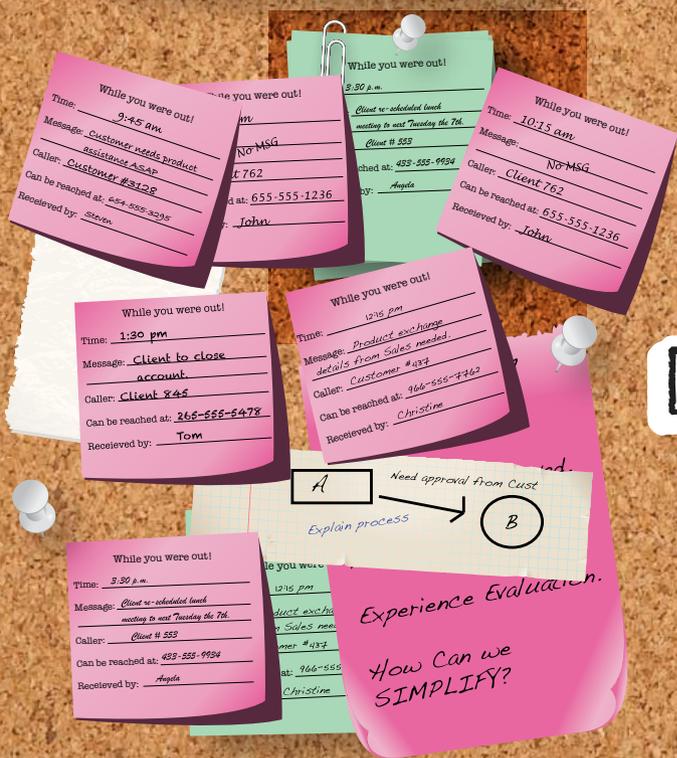
Companies are also inquiring about live audio feed injections directly into their phone systems. This uses a similar architecture to the one explained above, though the information source more often comes from an in-house department or an external media source rather than an on-hold service provider.

Whatever the purpose, on-hold messaging is a way to inform and captivate customers while keeping them waiting. Occasionally, they hear the information they were seeking in the first place, potentially turning a call into a new sales opportunity. Statistics prove that businesses with meaningful messages retain listeners on hold for longer periods, and keep those listeners calmer and in a better frame of mind to continue the call. Simplifying the setup, installation, operation and maintenance of the on-hold messaging systems can keep your service providers and IT departments calm as well. **M**

Johannes G. Rietschel is CEO of Barix (www.barix.com) and David Gostick is product manager at MOH Technology (www.moh-technology.com).

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WE GET THE CLOUD

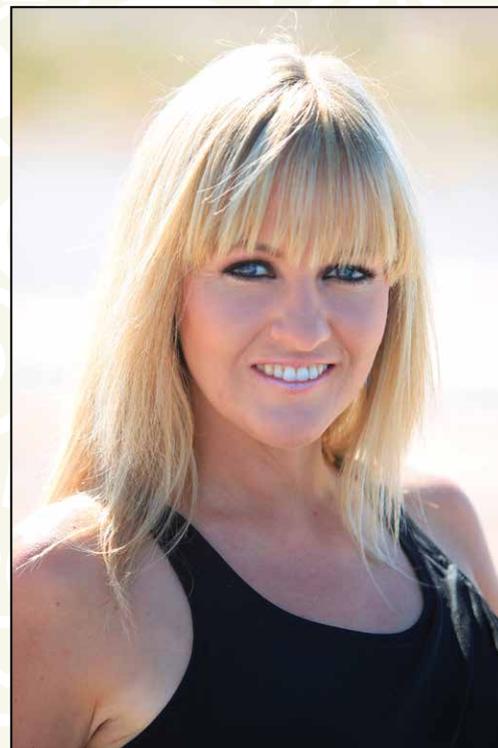
How the Tablet is Shifting Online Shopping Behavior

The rapid adoption of the smartphone from 2007 onwards has caused a new set of challenges to retailers, which as a result had to optimize their websites for the exponentially growing number of people trying to access their sites from devices with much smaller screen sizes. Just as they got to grips with the trial and error of how to create a mobile website that their customers actually found easy to use and can potentially purchase from, Steve Jobs launched the iPad, which instantly captured the hearts and minds of the public and caused a new challenge for online retailers.

Apple wasn't the first to bring a tablet to the market, but with a combination of an easy-to-use interface mixed with the power of the Apple brand, this product quickly dominated the market. Despite other manufacturers' attempts to try and gain market share, today the iPad accounts for more than 90 percent of all tablet online traffic.

The tablet actually achieved a faster market penetration rate than the smartphone. In the two short years since it has been launched, 18 percent of Americans bought a tablet. And Forrester projects that by 2016, one in three Americans will own a tablet. Retailers have seen tablet traffic beginning to outpace smartphone traffic.

At first, most retailers didn't really know how to respond to this new market segment of tablet visitors. As it has a much bigger screen



size compared to smartphones, most retailers' websites felt their sites worked adequately so took a wait-and-see approach. But as more data on tablet usage and their owners came to light, it became apparent that tablet usage had its own unique set of behaviors and characteristics that were enough for retailers to begin to take notice.

While the conversion rate was slightly less of that of the desktop, the average order value was significantly higher at \$123 against desktop (\$102) or smartphone (\$80) – indicating that the tablet shopper was a more affluent customer and a bigger online shopper.

Furthermore, when and where people actually use their tablets has become very significant. It is more than likely that a tablet owner will be a multi-device owner – with a desktop and a smartphone – and have developed a different relationship with each device. Tablet usage is highest in the evening and weekends, indicating that tablet owners

The Changing Face of Customer Service

Five years ago, 51 percent of respondents named landline telephone customer support as their most preferred channel. That number has declined to 19 percent today. What has risen up as preferred channels in the last 5 years? You can probably guess: e-mail and websites.

A whopping 63 percent of consumers first turn to a company's website before placing a call to customer support, according to a survey Angel conducted at the 2012 Dreamforce event in San Francisco. That means your company's website can be major cost savings for the company. If the proper information is easily available on your website, you can save hundreds or even thousands of calls to your customer service center by allowing customers to self-serve without needing to talk to a representative.

Another indication of the changing face of customer service was revealed by this answer: 41 percent confirmed they have downloaded a mobile app to connect to customer service. That stat indicates rapid adoption in a channel that did not even exist a little over 5 years ago. Certain companies have been first-movers in this new arena. For instance, 3 years ago USAA, the military-focused bank, added a feature to its app that allowed customers to take a picture of a check and immediately deposit it into one of their accounts. Other banks have followed suit, most recently with Bank of America adding this feature earlier this year. This functionality is precisely what consumers are looking for – and frankly, have come to expect. The convenience of the app affords consumers the ability to self-serve and take care of their banking needs directly from their mobile devices at any time they choose.

In addition to the banking industry, which the survey indicated was the leading industry among respondents for most time spent on customer service, the retail industry was second. Retail organizations have the potential to harness purchase history data about their customers, and ideally provide a personalized experience for them. Amazon is the premier example in this field. From early on, Amazon leveraged the massive amount of data from its customers and built algorithms to generate recommendations for customers about other products they may be interested in purchasing. While this is helpful to consumers, simultaneously, Amazon increases sales as customers take them up on the recommendations and place orders to buy additional products.

A final finding from the survey reveals that customer service is oftentimes not one-to-one any longer, and instead is one-to-many. The cause: social media. Twenty-six percent of the respondents indicated they are likely to tell their friends about their experience. An additional 14 percent said they would share their experience online. The ease – and seemingly second nature for many – that social media affords consumers to share both positive and negative experiences with customer service, increases the importance of every interaction. A great experience when a customer question is answered in seconds through instant messaging could result in a rave review on Facebook. Alternatively, a frustrating customer service phone call during which the customer is transferred multiple times and the experience takes a long time to accomplish a single task could easily end up on Twitter and take on a life of its own. Case in point is the YouTube video that went viral about a customer's United Airline experience when his guitar was broken; the video has more than 12 million views 3 years later. **M**

Kelly Weinhold is a product strategist at Angel (www.angel.com).



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Report Shines New Light on Key Factors Impacting Customer Management

Recently, my company, Dimension Data, a global IT service and solution provider, released its 15th annual Global Contact Center Benchmarking Report, entitled, “Transforming Customer Management.” Providing insightful information from our clients, peers and industry colleagues, the 2012 report summarizes the survey results of 637 companies from 72 countries – including over 100 respondents from North America. It covers six key areas: strategy and development, operations, customer interaction management, self-service, workforce optimization and technology.

A few major themes jump out from the 2012 Benchmarking Report and warrant discussion: the rise of mobility and agility; increased customer expectations for collaboration; and self-service needs help.

Mobility and Agility

The most dominant theme in this year’s report is mobility and agility. As we’re all experiencing in our daily lives, consumers are more in control than ever in how they interact with the organizations they do business with – whether it’s via a smartphone, wireless connectivity or social media.

This proliferation of interaction types is a double-edged sword. Self-service continues to dominate as the primary interaction type for most customers, and while voice is still a critical component, web and mobile applications must also provide robust service capabilities. But that puts the other edge of the sword on agent-assisted service, which is now more complex than ever. And with that increase in complexity, the implication is that standard measures of agent performance, such as average call handle time, are no longer as useful as they once were.

Customer Collaboration and Convenience

Following on the mobility and agility theme, one of the major findings of the 2012 Benchmarking Report is around what I call the convenience factor. Consumers, whether they are engaged in business-to-business or business-to-consumer interactions, are now driven as much by the convenience of service as anything else. Smartphones, free (or near-free) and ubiquitous Internet access, and social media all play a part in this. Further, the commoditization of products and services has left customer collaboration – or customer care – as one of the few competitive differentiators. Add to the mix that, overall, the number of interactions between organizations and their customers, across all channels, is rising – as are expectations. The good news is that over 63 percent of the respondents acknowledged that their contact center and customer care is viewed as a competitive differentiator. On the other hand, analysis and fine-tuning of the most used channel of customer care – self-service – is largely absent.

Self-Service: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

The 2012 Benchmarking Report contains an entire section devoted to self-service, and the results are a mixed bag. The good news is that for almost 90 percent of the organizations surveyed, self-service is considered a critical tool for the company and its customers. Further, many organizations are responding to the demand for self-service from channels that didn’t even exist a few years ago, such as mobile devices and social networks. Even with the significant uptick in the use of emerging technologies, interactive voice response self-service continues to grow.

On the bad side of the equation, over half of the organizations surveyed don’t pass any information collected in the IVR on to agents. Further, most companies don’t perform any regular performance analysis of their IVR systems, and nearly half don’t seek any IVR-specific feedback from customers.

Are you ready for the ugly? Most organizations aren’t even attempting to analyze their emerging technology self-service capabilities, including speech-driven IVR, nor are they seeking to measure customer satisfaction with self-service channels. If we proposed this hands-off approach for human-assisted channels, my belief is that we’d be told that we simply don’t understand how to provide consistently good service. On average, 80 percent of customer care traffic now goes through some type of self-service application. I would definitely recommend discussing your self-service strategy – including performance analysis, tuning and satisfaction measurement – with your solution provider. **M**

Dan Goodwin is practice director of customer interactive solutions at Dimension Data (www.dimensiondata.com).



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Hurricane Sandy's Reminder about Business Continuity

Hurricane Sandy was the storm consumers and businesses alike thought would not be as bad as forecasted, but it was. As the massive storm moved ashore, large technology companies around the country began having major outages due to the weather brutalizing operational sites on the East Coast. If you weren't prepared, it showed, especially in the contact center industry. For centers that were caught off guard, it meant valuable communications were being delayed, or not sent at all. It also meant a complete breakdown in communication with consumers at a time when it was of the utmost importance.

Contact centers are in the business of communicating, so we must also be in the business of communicating during a crisis. It is during these times of calamity when information most needs to be relayed. Whether you were prepared for Sandy or not, the more important question now is: Are you prepared for the next disaster? To help you prepare, we suggest the following steps for creating an effective disaster contingency plan for your contact center.

Practice Makes Perfect

First and foremost, you need a disaster recovery and business continuity plan in place. It is also important that you have frequent crisis simulations to ensure all staff knows their roles and responsibilities in the midst of a crisis or disaster.

Utilize Automation

On the technology side, it will make the disaster management process much smoother if you have a self-service solution in place that will enable real-time disaster recovery management, such as temporary messaging, queue messaging, queue management and alternate center routing to complement your disaster recovery plan.

Diversify Data Centers

You must be sure that your data centers are in geographically diverse locations to safeguard against natural and man-made

disasters. By strategically placing your data centers across the U.S., you provide multiple layers of redundancy and ensure that no single point of failure can cause a disruption to service.

Don't Panic

If you know a disaster is on the horizon, don't panic – this is what call centers are designed to do. First, you need to determine whether the issue is going to affect your data center. Next, leverage your processes for volume management, which should include optimized self-service, automated communications, additional staffing, remote employees, overflow centers and vendors.

Communicate

Communicate with employees and customers who may be affected in advance. Will the natural disaster impact your service to customers? Are customers in impacted areas? If you have an automated solution that enables you to effectively communicate with your customer base, plus up-to-date contact info, this can be a benefit.

Understand the Impact

If the unthinkable happens, and you do experience a disruption, start by communicating to staff and customers to let them know the status of the situation. During this communication, share a timeframe of when you expect normal service to begin, and tell them when you will be sending an update on the state of affairs. If you understand the impact as soon as possible, and work to solve any performance issues, you can communicate with consumers throughout the process by utilizing self-service.

The contact center is already a disaster recovery hub, but amidst a crisis, professionals are often bombarded with the pressure of short-term volume management rather than medium- to longer-term objectives. It is important for contact centers to take the time to understand and prepare for natural disasters. By making a commitment to ensuring non-failing communication during a disaster, you can completely change the course of a crisis situation. If you prepare your employees, clients and technology, you are setting your contact center up for success instead of failure. **M**

Paul Logan is president and CEO of Contact Solutions (www.contactsolutions.com).

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What Marriage and Outsourcing Have in Common

Like a marriage, outsourcing relationships involve two parties working together to build a successful and sustainable partnership, starting with a solid foundation.

In 2011, the U.S. \$60 billion global outsourcing market witnessed the highest level of outsourcing transaction activity in North America and the U.K. since 2007. It's a huge industry with lots of people walking down the aisle. And like marriages, outsourcing relationships can deteriorate without a continued investment of proper care and attention.

What are the signs of an ineffective partnership? We've listed the symptoms to watch out for below.

Happiness: If your satisfaction levels decrease over time in your relationship, you may need to re-evaluate your commitment. The same rule applies for your outsourcing partner: A constant decline in customer satisfaction is a clear indication of a challenged relationship.

Distraction: If you're not getting the attention you need or your partner is constantly distracted, then dissatisfaction usually arises. With an outsourced partner, if you see patterns of increased attrition or escalated calls, then it's a sign that your account may not be as important to the service provider as others. High attrition is not a new problem for the contact center industry. However, above average attrition or staff rotation is a cause for concern and should be investigated.

Over-analysis: As a buyer, it isn't a good sign if you are spending disproportionate amounts of time managing your service

provider. Good relationships in a personal and professional sense run naturally; too much feedback or constant analysis is not a sign of a healthy union.

Money: Money is a sore point in many relationships. A consistent decline in the revenue or profit of your outsourcing supplier could mark deterioration in their performance. Solid financial health is crucial to the provider's ability to invest in its customers, and investments are key to forging long lasting partnerships in this business.

Forgetting what's important: Situations can arise when even though service levels and metrics are being met, users remain dissatisfied. Why? It often happens when the relationship is focused on minimizing cost and maximizing efficiency – a scenario that's not typically suited to maximizing what's most important – customer experience.

Passion: Every relationship needs passion. If your service provider is content with the status quo, not showing proactive intent to add value or grow your account, there is little chance that the relationship will evolve into a true partnership. An important question to reflect on: When was the last time your service provider engaged in a discussion around best practices or ideas to improve customer experience? If you cannot recall, then the signs are clear – your service provider isn't hungry for your business.

Disinterested friends and family: If you find your partner's friends and family have little interest in meeting you, then it's a sign they may not be taking your relationship seriously. Similarly, senior executives from successful service providers should connect with their key customers on a periodic basis. If your provider's executives are conspicuously absent, it is a clear sign that your account is not high on their pecking order.

Vows: Guiding a relationship by the letter of the contract – or the words in your vows – instead of its spirit is an obvious sign that the relationship is strained. This only happens when either party feels it's not getting the value it originally set out to achieve, and means it's time to prepare for challenges in service delivery.

Some of these symptoms are clear signs of a poor relationship and are easy to identify. However, the absence of certain behaviors, such as a hunger for your business and the presence of senior executives, is also important to track.

Operational issues may be possible to fix through a disciplined process requiring communication and a commitment toward resolution from both sides. Cultural differences and misaligned values remain harder to address, and usually result in changes to the service provider portfolio.

The behaviors listed here can be indicative of deep-rooted problems that need to be understood and addressed. In the end, this can make the difference between a good marriage and a great one; or in customer service terms, between customer satisfaction and customer delight. **M**

Jeffrey Puritt is president of TELUS International (www.telusinternational.com).



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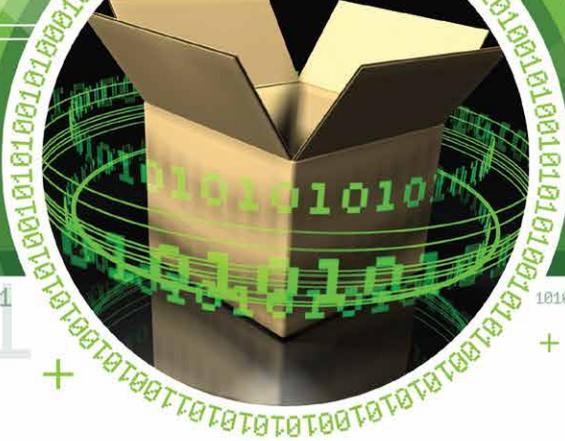
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Resolutions for 2013

Although I'm not one to make personal new year's resolutions, I've found that beginning the year with some goals in mind for my professional life often helps focus my efforts and priorities. Here are my top customer-focused priorities for 2013. Pick one or all – each of them can truly make a difference in your customers' experiences and help build loyal relationships.

Get back to basics

So often, I see people running after new and shiny things, but neglecting the basics and the foundations of customer service. Let's make sure that we're tending to things like regularly tuning voice applications, usability testing web changes and updating agent skills and associated quality controls. Getting back to basics also means ensuring that technology is serving you well, providing you with the reports you need for key customer analytics, and that it's configured in ways that streamline management and reduce complexity for multi-channel development and administration.

Walk in your customers' shoes

To truly understand the voice of the customer, understand your customers' journeys. Regularly attempt to perform the top four to five customer interaction on every channel and across channels. Use the data to reproduce great experiences and eliminate bad ones; to identify and fix inconsistent cross channel experiences; and to increase personalization across all channels. And to see where you are missing opportunities, where there are channel gaps, and where customer contact channels should be beefed up.

Measure the right things

When it comes to customer experience, not many of us are measuring it well. In a world of multiple channels and changing expectations, traditional measures aren't enough. Develop key metrics that support your strategy. If your goal is to

build customer relationships, concentrate less on average handle time and more on the quality of the contact; measure success based on the level of visitor involvement with your website, not the number of hits. Your metrics should resonate with senior management. They should be customer centric, strategic and make a difference in how the business operates.

Understand customer lifecycles and moments of truth – and measure how well you are meeting customer expectations at key moments of truth. Also make sure that you quality monitor the customer experience across all channels, not just live contacts.

Empower your agents

Empowering agents is more than giving them the ability to waive a \$25 late fee. It's empowering them with the right tools and knowledge to create a great customer experience. Create a culture of knowledge management to support them and streamline interactions. Make sure agents know what other channels the customer used before they reached for the phone. Provide them with ways to anticipate customer needs based on patterns, history and memory. For many, a call to the contact center is the last resort, so it's critical that we get it right!

Get mobile

If you haven't implemented mobile applications in 2011, or if your mobile apps are cobbled together in ways that mean re-entering data or impossible reporting, get to work. Mobile is important in nearly

all industries, but is required in retail, banking, insurance, transportation, and more today.

Start by making mobile part of your contact strategy. Create goals, understand customers and requirements and ensure that it fits into a comprehensive multi-channel strategy that provides a consistent, compelling customer experience. Some of the keys to successful mobile deployment are apps that address all the mobile devices your customers use, apps that leverage mobile device functionality like video and location-based services, and apps that are multimodal in nature, enabling users to communicate in the mode that's right for them at that moment.

Finally, resolve to get closer to your customers in 2013 to truly understand their needs. I don't necessarily mean more surveys or focus groups. You can do it by analyzing the data you have at hand: evaluate customer behavior, analyze customer journeys, understand level of effort, evaluate how you can provide the best experience at key moments of truth. What's important to your customers – speed? Handholding? Intimacy? Collaboration? They may want all of them but at different moments in the relationship. This complexity is what makes the customer experience so important and so dynamic.

Happy New Year! I'd love to hear about your resolutions. **M**

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.



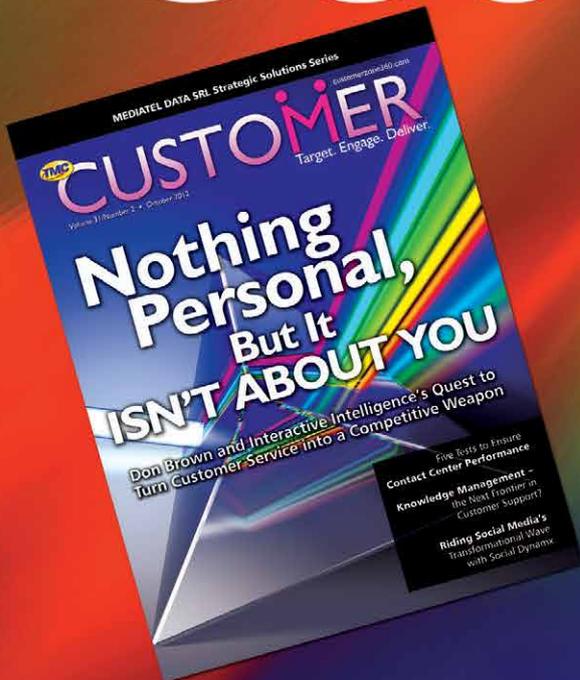
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NEWS



Customer Loyalty Wanes

During 2012, 20 percent of consumers switched companies they buy from in sectors such as banking, wireless phone and Internet service, according to Accenture's annual Global Consumer Survey. That is a 5 percent year-over-year increase in switching from 2011, the report indicates. The largest rises in consumer switching were among wireless phone providers (26 percent, up from 21 percent); Internet service providers (23 percent up from 19 percent) and retailers (22 percent, up from 16 percent). Of the 12,000 consumers surveyed, 85 percent of those who switched providers in 2012 said their service provider could have done something differently to have kept them aboard.

Speed is Central to Conversion

A new Leads360 study analyzing the contact practices of more than 400 companies indicates response speed is the single largest driver of lead conversion, with the likelihood of making a sale dropping dramatically after just one minute. Leads called within the first minute are nearly 400 percent more likely to convert, according to the research. The report also indicates that making more than one call and sending even just one e-mail can have a positive impact on lead conversion, yet 50 percent of leads are never called a second time and 59 percent of leads never receive an e-mail. "Even companies that have an expressed lead follow-up guideline in place rarely address the topic of contact or call strategy, or understand the impact it can have," said President and CEO Nick Hedges. "Leads360 research clearly shows that a calculated and disciplined approach to following up with sales-ready leads can have a tremendous impact on customer acquisition and revenue."

Envision Names New CEO

Coaching and workforce optimization solution provider Envision has a new CEO. Ron Strandin returns to the company in this role. He replaces as CEO the founder of Envision, Rodney Kuhn, who remains chairman of the board. Kuhn tapped Strandin, who was vice president of sales and marketing during his last stint at Envision from 1999 to 2003, to move forward the privately-owned company's marketing and sales initiatives. In an interview with CUSTOMER magazine, Strandin said the time is right for Envision to introduce new products that address trends like social media, texting, and all the ways Envision's customers talk to their customers. He declined to discuss specific new product plans, adding that his first day is Nov. 1 and that he will spend his first 60 days at the company listening to customers and what they want in terms of solutions. Envision over the past two years has significantly changed the way it releases products, having adopted an agile

lifecycle development model, said Kuhn, an advisory board member of CUSTOMER magazine. Now, he said, the company needs to do the same thing with its sales and marketing culture.

Genesys Brings It Together

Genesys One is a new offer from the company that packages Genesys' contact center capabilities with customer service best practices in the form of templates and applications, making it fast and easy to deploy a next-generation contact center. Genesys One is based on the Genesys 8 software suite, including the SIP-based Genesys Customer Interaction Management Platform. It features a fixed-price installation for deployment in 30 days or less. "Until now only the largest, most sophisticated companies have benefited from the world's most advanced customer service solutions," said Paul Segre, president and CEO at Genesys. "With Genesys One, we are delivering more than a new product. The broader enterprise market now has access to a transformative solution that gives them instant access to industry-leading technology and years of customer service expertise and best practices – packaged together for rapid deployment and low TCO."

Interoperability Gains Altitude

Altitude Software's Altitude uCI applications have been integrated with Cisco Unified Communications Manager 8.6 and Cisco UCC Solutions. "Cisco and Altitude Software both have decades of experience working in the contact center arena, delivering substantial business results," states Miguel Lopes, marketing vice president at Altitude Software. "Altitude Software's powerful applications can help Cisco customers deploy flexible technology that protects their investment while effectively improving, in real time, key operational and business processes in the contact center." Altitude Software is a long standing member of the Cisco Developer Network, conducting interoperability testing since 2002.

New Website Caters to Customers, Resellers

Interactive Intelligence Group Inc. has launched an e-commerce website to give customers and resellers fast and easy access to products that complement the vendor's all-in-one IP communications software suite. The Interactive Intelligence MarketPlace features a collection of third-party and internally developed products – from process automation templates and packaged integrations, to custom reports and dashboards – all designed to leverage the vendor's contact center automation, unified communications, and business process automation functionality.

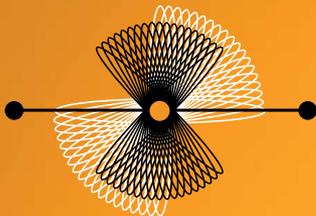
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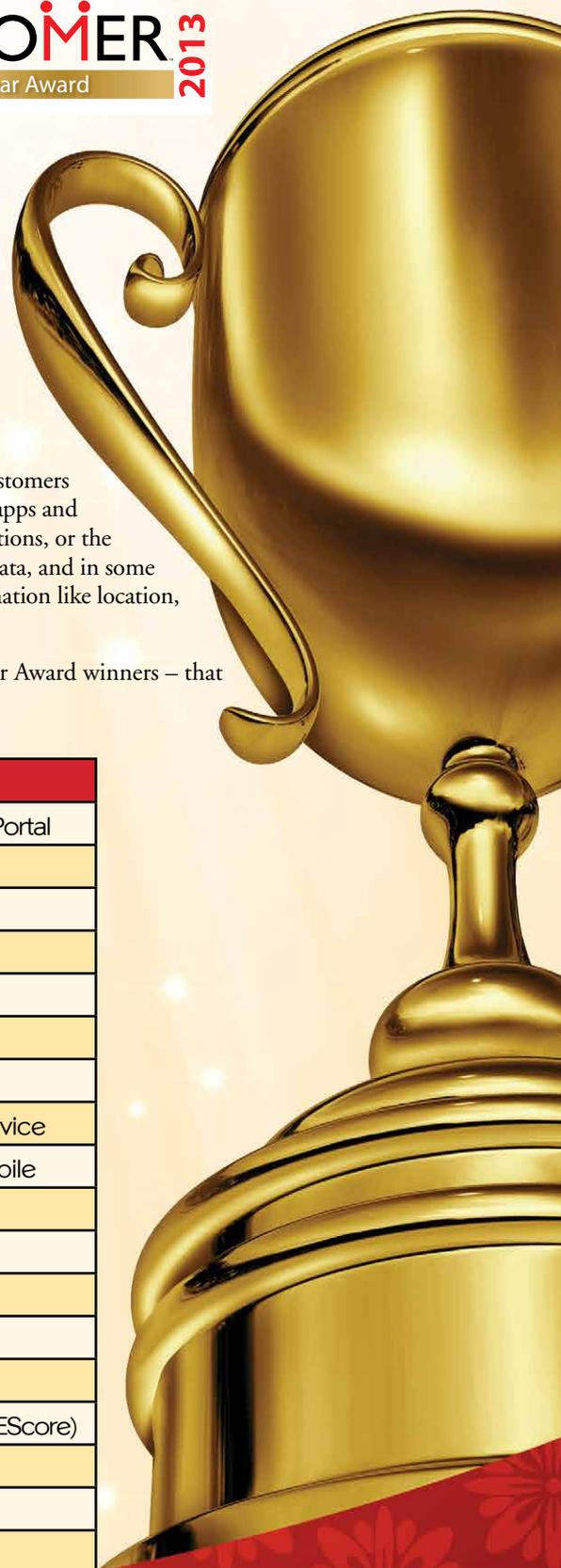
The world of customer service is changing drastically and quickly. In the past, it was enough simply to have a call center to take orders and answer customer inquiries, a telemarketing effort to reach out to prospects by phone, and some folks available to read and respond to customer letters.

Today customer service and outreach is a whole different ballgame.

Customer service in this day and age requires a multi-channel strategy that allows customers and businesses to reach out and touch each other in a variety of ways – be it mobile apps and promos, social networks, e-mail, location-based services, digital displays at retail locations, or the good old telephone. Increasingly, businesses are also leveraging their own customer data, and in some cases pairing it with information in other databases and communications and information like location, to deliver more personalized messaging and offers.

All that said, here is a list of the companies – the CUSTOMER Product of the Year Award winners – that are working to help businesses make this all happen. **M**

Company	Product
ac2 Solutions Inc.	Advanced Workforce Optimization Portal
Alloy Software Inc.	Alloy Navigator Express 6
Alorica	Alorica Analytics, Alorica Helix
Altitude Software	Altitude uCI8
AMC Technology LLC	AMC Contact Canvas
APAC/NCO	APAC/NCOePayments
Aspect Software	Aspect Unified IP 7.1
Autonomy, an HP company	Autonomy Media Aggregation Service
Avaya Inc.	Avaya Customer Connections Mobile
Calabrio	Calabrio Speech Analytics
Citrix GoToAssist Corporate	Citrix GoToAssist Corporate
Clear C2 Inc.	C2CRM
CloudTC Inc.	Glass 1100
Confirmit	Confirmit Horizons
Convergent Outsourcing Inc.	Convergent Employee Scorecard (CEScore)
Coveo	Coveo for Salesforce
CSG Systems International Inc.	CSG Enhanced Sales Edition
Cyara Solutions	Cyara Solutions Suite Version 4.1
Drishti-Soft Solutions Pvt. Ltd.	Ameyo



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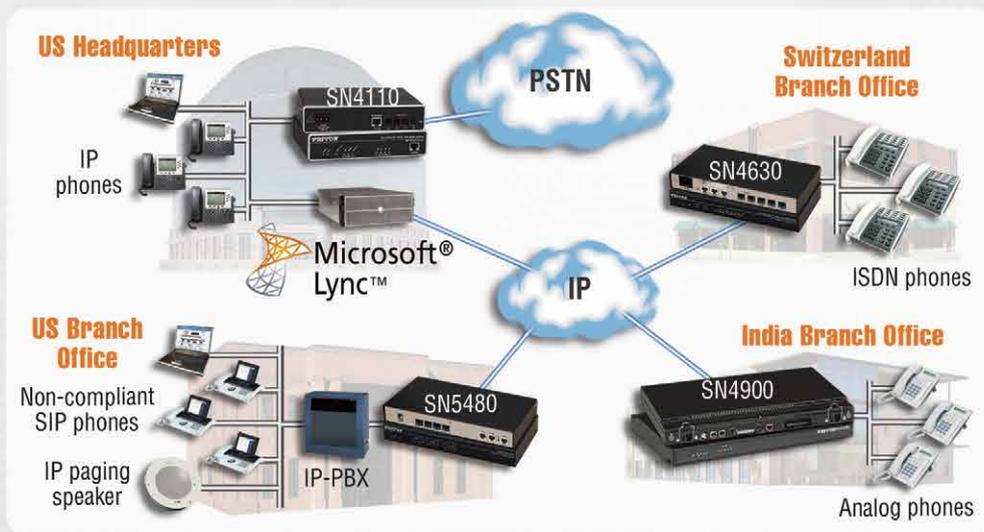
888VoIP
Distributing Success

Company	Product
Enghouse Interactive	Syntellect CIM (Customer Interaction Management), CosmoCall Universe, CallRex Quality Management Suite
Enkata	Enkata FCR
ePath Learning Inc.	ePath Learning eSource
Epicor Software Corp.	Epicor Eagle Mobile Manager
ethosIQ	Customer Engagement Platform v4.0
FieldSync Mobile Solutions	FieldSync Health
FrontRange	HEAT Cloud Service Management
HireIQ Solutions Inc.	LanguagelQ
InAppCare	Mobile Care Made Easy
inContact Inc.	Intelligent Call Suppression
KANA Software	KANA Express
Knoa Software	Knoa Experience and Performance Manager (EPM)
Leads360 Inc.	Leads360 Dial-IQ Inbound and Multi-Line
LivePerson	LiveEngage by LivePerson
Magnetic North	Hosted PBX
Mattersight Corp.	Mattersight Behavioral Analytics
MEDIATEL DATA SRL	MediaCallCenter
Mitel	Contact Center Solutions Version 6.0 SP1
Monet Software Inc.	Monet Metrics - Call Center Performance Management in the Cloud
Moxie Software	Social Knowledgebase
Noble Sysetms Corporation	Noble Mobile Solutions
OAISYS	Tracer with Mobile Recall
Pegasystems	Pega Sales Force Automation (Pega SFA)
prairieFyre Software	prairieFyre Contact Center for Microsoft Lync Version 5.10.1
Radialpoint	Radialpoint Remote Premium Technical Support
RightAnswers Inc.	RightAnswers Unified Knowledge Platform Version 7
Sage North America	Sage ACT! 2013
SmartAction	Smart Call Agents
SoundBite Communications	SoundBite Engage
SugarCRM	Sugar Professional
Tigerpaw Software	Tigerpaw 12R2
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Beginner's Guide to Data Security and Information Security Compliance & Audits

In virtually any regulated industry, compliance is at once a legal requirement, a risk management strategy, and an ethical imperative. Healthcare, insurance, finance, and especially accounts receivable management, compliance is a full-time concern. Or at least it should be. If you are a third-party collector for a creditor, for example, chances are good that, at some point, you'll be audited for recovery performance as well as compliance practices. Moreover, in this era of consumer lawsuits, no company that deals with consumers on a regular basis can be effective if it isn't fully cognizant of compliance issues.

Here are some critical steps that can help reduce risk both for compliance and security.

Goals for a comprehensive data security program

The primary objective in designing a data security program is to mitigate risks. To that end, first identify the different data types and classify them based on company needs and legal and regulatory frameworks. This approach allows for a straightforward determination of data value, and helps determine protective measures to be implemented, along with associated retention requirements. Thereafter, implementation must be part of a coordinated comprehensive information security program, with adoption and support from the top of the organization.

10 steps to data security

1. Inventory: Know what data you have and where it resides. Label data repositories and data records, and use these labels (maintained in electronic logs) to track individual records along their lifetimes.

2. Research: Understand the laws and regulations that could apply to data, as well as the controls that various regulations require.

- Is encryption of data at rest required?
- How long should this data be retained?

- Is there ongoing litigation that would require retaining this data for a longer period of time?
- What is the value to the business?
- What is the risk level associated with the loss/exposure?
- Is any of this data subject to credit card industry PCI compliance?
- Is off-site backup of this data needed?

3. Access controls: Identify groups that should have access to data, compare them with people who should have access based on data sensitivity or regulatory requirements, and then correct the gap. To prevent unauthorized access, implement an authorization process during access provisioning, and ensure an expedited access revocation process upon job role changes or terminations.

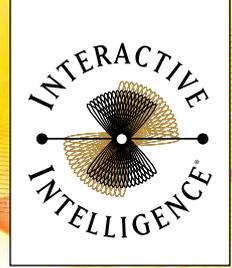
Additional measures should include periodically reviewing the access process, and ensuring that data is made available only on a need-to-know basis.

4. Application security: Review the security of all applications that have access to your data. If applications are built in house, implement a Secure Development Lifecycle process to provide defensive coding practices training, foster code reviews, and perform regular application security assessments.

If applications are commercial apps, ensure that vendor notifications on security issues are promptly handled, and that updates and patches are swiftly deployed.

5. Infrastructure security:

- Verify that any external access to data repositories is properly vetted, and that adequate isolation is in place across the network architecture.
- Implement physical access controls where applicable.
- Implement a data disposal program to ensure that magnetic and non-magnetic media is securely wiped before their removal from secure environments.
- Deploy data encryption at rest and/or full disk encryption if any data repositories leave the secure perimeter (laptops, mobile devices, off-site backups).
- Ensure that transmission channels are encrypted for sensitive data.
- Implement two-factor authentication if external access is required to sensitive data.



6. Data retention policies: Define a consistent policy and communicate it across the organization. Avoid complex classifications and keep the number of categories to the minimum required by law, regulations or company needs.

7. Data loss prevention: Implement a system to detect and block accidental and/or intentional data leaks.

8. The human factor: Conduct background screening as part of your hiring and contracting practices, and provide regular awareness campaigns and training for data security and cyber threats.

9. Audit: Assess regularly the effectiveness of all security measures and apply corrective actions to improve controls over time.

10. Transfer residual risk: If, after applying the previous nine security steps, the residual risk is still not acceptable to the level of risk tolerance of the organization, transfer part of this risk by contracting an insurance policy to cover it.

Information security compliance audits

The best approach here is to answer three high-level questions with regards to information security compliance:

1. What are you trying to accomplish? Begin by clearly defining your requirements.
2. Which compliance framework are you trying to achieve? Determine guidelines that most cleanly align with your requirements: PCI-DSS 2.0, SSAE-16 (replaces SAS 70), ISO1799 27001 (compliance), ISO 17799 (certification), COBit, and COSO.
3. Who or what is driving compliance efforts? Include all stakeholders and influencers. Many times compliance efforts are driven by clients. When that's the case, take the time to ensure that client requirements are legitimate, and appropriate for your organization. **M**

Download the complete whitepaper to learn more:

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Erik Linask,
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Ear to the Ground

It's been about half a year since we launched CUSTOMER magazine, which continues TMC on its 30-year journey of covering the customer service space.

As many of you know, TMC got its start covering the call center space with the launch of Telemarketing magazine. In January of 1996, we expanded the title to Telemarketing & Call Center Solutions. TMC dropped the telemarketing part in July 1998 and went with the broader handle: Call Center Solutions. Then, responding to the rise of CRM, TMC in January of 2000 officially broadened its coverage and title again to Call Center CRM Solutions. And the first issue of Customer Interaction Solutions magazine hit the street in December of 2000.

More recently, customer service has taken an interesting new – and even more dramatic – turn.

The wealth of online content, the popularity of the smartphone, and the widespread use and unpredictable possibilities of social media have turned marketing, sales and support upside-down, as Executive Editor Paula Bernier wrote in the inaugural issue of CUSTOMER magazine.

That's what led us to launch CUSTOMER.

The technological innovation, the new opportunities for businesses and customers to interact and engage, have also given customers unprecedented control and – in the case of the online experience – led many of them to expect nearly instant results and gratification. As one source recently told us, in the online world, everyone imagines himself at the front of the line.

So, businesses now have to expand beyond surveys and longer-term voice-of-the-customer activities and keep their ears to the ground on a daily basis. But, the new demands related to customer service go further still. Not only must businesses increasingly listen to what customers are saying via social media and other channels, but they should outfit themselves to be ready to move in an instant when a situation requires such action. And they surely need to be able to deliver, engage and target customers via a variety of in-person and online channels.

Building customer loyalty and driving financial growth is about more than simply being reactive. Businesses can also use the new trend toward connected lifestyles and big data to their advantage by leveraging customer data from one or many sources, and advanced tools that enable them to better understand their customers – down to an individual level – and cater to those customers with personalized offers and messaging.

This, in turn has resulted in a new breed of software and analytics platforms designed specifically to monitor, capture, track, analyze, and even respond to the multiple sources of social commentary, in an effort to capitalize on customer preferences, trends, and feedback. And, whereas traditionally, customer experience was a personal matter, today's businesses are seeking more and more to build communities of experience – or have third-parties build and manage those communities for them – to capitalize on the always-on and always-connected customer.

Big data, social analytics, enterprise social software, social CRM, social

media integration, social marketing, mobile marketing and LBS, and much more, are all part of the new world order of customer interaction, where the customer has a much louder megaphone than ever before. The businesses that equip themselves with the best multichannel listening tools – and tools to react appropriately as needed – will come out on top.

Indeed, today's customer wields much more power than his predecessors thanks to technology. But, businesses can harness the same technology to create a balance of power of sorts. If the customer is happy, he spends – and when he spends, the business succeeds.

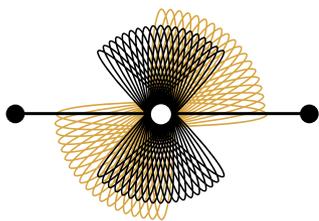
As Henry Ford once noted, "It's not the employer who pays the wages. Employers only handle the money. It's the customer who pays the wages."

Not every business has reacted to the changes in technology that have created the transfer of power in the customer-business relationship. But, any that has designs of remaining in business for any length of time, will need to make plans to address this new reality.

We at CUSTOMER magazine would love to hear what your company is doing with this new customer paradigm. If you have a story to tell, we're all ears – as you should be too. **M**

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