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Rich Tehrani,
CEO, TMC

Talking UC with Aspect & ShoreTel

Aspect has made a bunch of investments and acquisitions, and it now has an extremely comprehensive omnichannel contact center capability in the cloud and on-premises. The company has multichannel self-service, agent assist in the contact center, workforce management, back-office optimization solutions, and more.

TMC has been covering Aspect since the eighties, and it is pretty amazing how many companies it has purchased during that time. Aspect was actually a company that was acquired, and then changed its name from Concerto. Some of my favorite acquisitions made by the company were of PackNetX, who produced the first ACD on a CD, and Cell-IT, the first IP contact center solution provider.

Nowadays, the company is finding it increasingly important for customers to enable consumers to communicate with them in the channel of their choice, said Jim Freeze, CMO and senior vice president, who added that cloud is becoming an important deployment alternative for customers. The company has been able to expand its omnichannel capabilities in part due to its Voxeo acquisition. Omnichannel self-service and proactive outbound were becoming important to customers so Aspect acquired the leader in the space.

In addition to Jim, I had a chance to speak with Spence Mallder, senior vice president and general manager of workforce optimization, and Tim Dreyer, director of analyst relations.

They discussed the new Aspect Proactive Engagement Suite. Similar solutions can let customers know via SMS when something happens – like when power will be restored after an outage. Aspect's solution, however, can turn this notification into a dialogue. A customer could use it, for example, to reschedule a delivery. In other words, you get a notification that your dentist appointment is tomorrow at 2 p.m., and you can interact with the alert to change it to a later time.

Another recent announcement from Aspect was the release of its Workforce Optimization 8.0 Suite, which provides icons, widgets and customizable dashboards as part of a new more intuitive graphical user interface designed to improve agent engagement. It promises higher productivity because day-to-day administrative tasks take less

time, simplify tasks such as vacation requests, add WFO features, ease remote agent deployments, and more.

I also recently had a chance to meet with Mark Roberts, CMO of ShoreTel, to get a handle on what the company has been up to lately. We started the conversation by discussing how companies with cloud communications solutions are valued far more highly than those with customer premises-only solutions. In fact, the more cloud, the higher the valuation.

ShoreTel has been ahead of this curve, purchasing M5, one of the leading cloud players in the space, almost two years ago. However, Roberts doesn't see cloud being something all his customers implement immediately. He said: "We don't see it as a flash cut, people moving from the prem to the cloud. But we do see a huge growth opportunity for the cloud and are configuring ourselves to take advantage of that."

To leverage the fact that the cloud is a cost-effective way to get a solution into the hands of the customer, but in recognition that companies aren't going to throw away their existing solutions, ShoreTel is developing more cloud-based solutions that work with its premises-based hardware. Think of this as new apps and features/functions.

From there he discussed the company's new 400 series phones, which allow customers to have the same phone features and functions regardless of whether they use a cloud- or premises-based communications solution. Roberts said the channel is especially happy about not only the phone but the story that one company can help them solve their communications needs from the prem to the cloud.

We also discussed how the communications platform has a new role to play – it will enable you to get higher value from the myriad apps your corporation relies on. And as this happens, we can only expect the value of your communications solutions to increase. In fact, ShoreTel is hoping this ecosystem of communications systems and apps makes its solutions that much stickier. **M**

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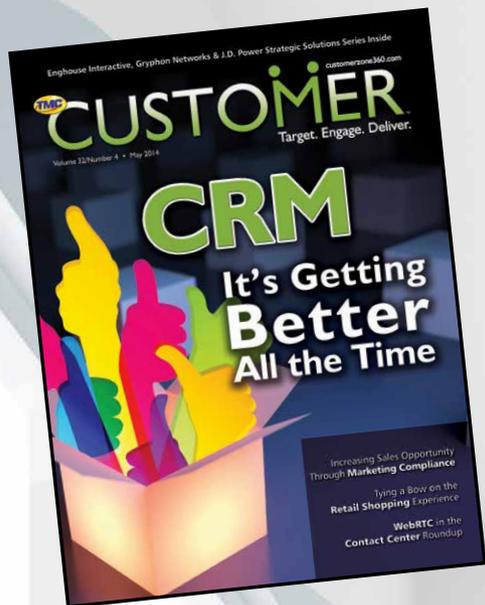
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Paula Bernier,
Executive Editor

Work-at-Home Model Takes Off in Outsourced Agent Arena

Telecommuting, as many of you already know, has its challenges. I'm not a fan of those times when I'm on a call and the doorbell rings, sending my dog into a barking frenzy. And those summer months when my lovely family is at home during the day are great, but do add a new element of distraction to my work environment at times.

But, on the whole, I have to say that working from home is awesome. I avoid wasting time on commuting. I can throw in a load of laundry when I get up to stretch my legs. And I can easily get a little extra work done if I wake up early, have some quiet time while my daughter is doing homework, or need to get some writing done while everyone else in my household is out for the evening at softball or soccer practice.

As I have experienced first hand in my past few jobs, plenty of companies give their employees the benefit of working from home. This trend continues, and contact center agents are no exception to the trend.

According to Ovum, the number of outsourced agents working at home will soon exceed 100,000 globally, and the variety of industries allowing for this is expanding. More specifically, the number of home-based agents, which is now around 84,000, is expected to reach 160,000 by the end of 2017, representing a compound annual growth rate of 17.5 percent.

Drivers of this trend include lower costs and the fact that leveraging work-at-home employees allows companies to draw from a larger – and often more experienced – labor pool.

“Outsourced home-based agents are starting to diversify beyond strict customer care functions to managing more complex enquiries across multiple channels,” says Peter Ryan, principal analyst in Ovum’s IT Services practice and author of a new report on this topic. “The long-time benefits associated with third-party home agents, such as competitive pricing and labor quality, have been determinants in helping to foster this significant growth.”

Ryan adds that “one of the successes of home-based agent outsourcing has been the ability to recruit large numbers of high-calibre agents. However, there are signs that attrition within this contact center segment is starting to creep up. To maintain a sizable pool of available agents, Ovum recommends that outsourcers seek out otherwise unexplored potential pockets of workers.”

Gating factors to further growth in this area include data security factors, infrastructure issues, and supervision concerns, according to Ovum.

Interestingly, for all the talk we hear about the security requirements of the health care space, it is the health care vertical that is expected to be the most aggressive adopter of outsourced home-based agent services between 2013 and 2017, increasing from 8 percent to 13 percent of total agents through this period, according to Ovum, which says most of this activity will be in the U.S. and related to new customer care demands due to the Affordable Health Care Act.

But Ovum says the financial industry – the other vertical that is best known for its regulatory compliance requirements – is a bigger challenge for this kind of worker model.

“It will be difficult for clients to move this work to outsourcers due to the heavy compliance requirements in this sector, which explains why the proportion of total home-based agents associated with financial services is slated to only increase from 11 percent to 13 percent between 2013 and 2017,” according to Ovum. “However, vendors should consider the opportunity to use the virtualized model to provide higher-value services to financial services clients, most notably brokerage support for capital markets and policy management functions in the insurance space.” **M**

According to Ovum,
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CRM: It's Getting Better All the Time

The outlook for CRM is a positive one, as more organizations move to employ these systems more widely in an effort to deliver better customer experience. At the same time, there's a lot of talk these days about the failure of CRM systems to reach their true potential.

Good Day Sunshine

CRM software revenue is expected to reach \$23.9 billion this year, according to Gartner, which reports that this

space has seen strong investment in the past three years and can expect moderate spending in 2014. CRM is positioned to represent the largest segment of enterprise software by 2017, increasing to a \$36.5 billion worldwide market, Gartner forecasts.

"This is one technology area that will definitely get funding as digital business is crucial to remaining competitive," Joanne Correia, research vice president at Gartner, said earlier this year.

Hot areas for CRM investment include mobility, social media and technologies, web analytics, and e-commerce, she said. Meanwhile, verticals seeing the greatest uptake of



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CRM solutions include banking, consumer goods, high-tech, insurance, IT manufacturing, IT services, pharmaceutical, securities, and telecommunications.

One company benefitting from the growth in CRM is SugarCRM. Jennifer Stagnaro, the company's senior vice president of marketing, says that the privately-owned company has experienced 17 consecutive quarters of growth and more than 75 percent year-over-year growth in revenue. That means the company is growing faster than the market as a whole.

More than 1.5 million individuals in more than 120 countries use SugarCRM solutions. And now the company is pushing CRM as a way for non-traditional users to better understand their customers and their companies' work related to those customers.

The CRM industry – which is about 20 years old, has about 20 million users, and about \$20 billion in total revenues – could see another order of magnitude of growth in terms of CRM adoption, says Stagnaro, who added that LinkedIn is a “quasi-CRM” solution that already has some 200 million subscribers.

From Me to You

Here is an example of what SugarCRM is referring to in discussing how non-traditional users can benefit from CRM. The Redglaze Group of construction companies makes SugarCRM available to its sales people, but it also enables project managers and subcontractors to use the system to track customer deliverables and bill for their services related to Redglaze customers.

“Since deploying Sugar, we've seen dramatic and impactful efficiency increases – employees can now engage in more effective customer interactions with real-time access to information that spans the entire customer lifecycle,” says Dean Jessick, CEO of Redglaze Group, which relies on Sugar's platform “to connect critical, disparate pieces of information – from sales and project management to contracts and accounting.”

Geoff McQueen, CEO of AffinityLive, says it makes sense to bring CRM, project management, and service delivery into one platform. That way, sales people know what's happening, so if there's a customer problem related to a project they are not the last ones to find out.

Nowhere Man

For all the growth and success stories the CRM space has seen, however, many CUSTOMER sources say that CRM solutions are much less than ideal.

“CRM has realized that it failed its promise,” says Loren Padelford, executive vice president of Skura.

Some say that's because CRM solutions are built with the needs of organizations – and not users, which usually means sales people – in mind. Others talk about how sales people don't like to do data entry, and that CRM solutions need to be populated with usable information to be useful.

“It's classic for sales reps to say they'll do something and not do it,” says Mary Brittain-White, CEO of a Retriever Communications.

Here Comes the Sun

To help improve this situation, Retriever provides a cloud-based productivity tool called Barking for Sales that reps can use to log and share customer requests while they're still at the customer site.

Barking for Sales can help reps get up to speed prior to customer visits as well. As sales reps make customer calls, they are often not fully aware of what their own companies are doing with each customer, says Brittain-White.

But, for example, they might want to know details such as the solution their company has provided to the customer has been failing, that this particular customer is on credit hold, or that the customer's equipment shipment has been delayed. With Retriever's Barking for Sales, reps can request and receive such details via their mobile devices, and have access to that information even if there's not mobile coverage at the customer site.

Startup Tactile also has come out with a solution that “is a natural fit for customer relationship management, which is notorious for low salesperson adoption.”

Founded by former Salesforce.com senior vice president Chuck Ganapathi, Tactile in March unveiled its first app, Tact, which syncs e-mail, calendars, tasks, follow up notes, contacts, LinkedIn, and Salesforce information all in one place.

“In my 18 years in enterprise software, I've never met an end user who isn't frustrated by disconnected, company-mandated tools,” says Ganapathi, whose new company has secured \$11.2 million in Series A funding from Accel Partners and Redpoint Ventures. “In our personal lives, we have come to

The CRM industry could see another order of magnitude of growth in terms of CRM adoption.

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CRM solutions manage customer data, but have never once managed a customer relationship, Skura's Padelford says. She adds that CRM's limitation is that it doesn't work in the field, and it doesn't lead score very well either. Instead, she says, CRMs are essentially back office systems.

“What we do is we give tools to sales people that they want to use,” she says. “We're not about the back office.”

The Word

Skura delivers a SaaS-based solution that centralizes customer information from disparate CRM, social media, and other available data sources, as well as marketing content. It puts all that information in a mobile format so sales staff can access customer information, send marketing materials to customers, and see what those customers do that information – all from the mobile devices of their choice.

The Skura platform, which integrates with all major CRM solutions, is used by 40,000 sales reps daily, including the sales people at footwear company Clark, health care company GlaxoSmithKline, and golf gear provider Ping.

OptifiNow is another company that brings together CRM, content management/marketing, and sales. Its offerings are delivered as a modular solution set.

President John McGee explains that the OptifiNow software gives sales and marketing team members the ability to view company sales processes, see what marketing content should be sent to a customer at what points in that customer's lifecycle, get that content, and send it in any format to the customer. The 17-year-old company, which has more than 100 enterprise customers with tens of thousands of users, sells its software to such verticals as automotive, financial services, health care, IT software, and telecommunications.

Revolution

The Dun & Bradstreet Corp., a giant in the commercial data and analytics space, also talks about how its solutions can put the most useful data at sales' reps fingertips. But the content we're referring to here is something different.

Mike Sabin, senior vice president of partner solutions at D&B, explains that the company has compiled a database of more than 230 million companies across the world. That includes such basic information as company names, addresses, leadership, and employee numbers, to more detailed and predictive data such as

sales volume, and how likely particular companies are to pay their bills on time or purchase a particular type of product.

D&B's mission is to deliver indispensable content, so it wants D&B to be everywhere – when and where B2B professionals need it, says Sabin. Because many sales people already use CRM systems, D&B wants to natively integrate its content with popular CRM systems so that data become part of their existing workflows, he says. That way, if a sales rep is selling to company XYZ, he can enter that company's name into his existing CRM to receive a pull-down menu for that company in the D&B database to access a rich array of information on that particular customer or prospect.

In an effort to forward the D&B strategy to reach users where they are, the firm has announced integrations with Oracle's Eloqua marketing automation solution, and the SugarCRM solution. Sabin says similar D&B partnerships are in the offing.

“Sales, marketing, and customer service teams are fighting a losing battle against incomplete data,” says Sabin. “CRM users want to maximize their sales and marketing efforts, but until now they've had limited access to quality business information. Through our new partnership with SugarCRM, users can overcome this challenge with company, industry, and contact data flowing directly into their CRM.”

Gainsight is yet another company that pairs its solutions with CRM systems to make customer data more useful and accessible to sales people and other enterprise users. The company delivers a platform, which with its latest release provides what it calls Sponsor Tracking, which monitors executive and advocate relationships via LinkedIn and InsideView; a SalesforceI mobile app; Success Snapshots, which automate presentation materials with customer-relevant data and metrics; Gainsight Home, which presents specific data and workflow views targeted to each department with a role in the customer experience; and Enterprise Permissions, through which administrators can define data and system functionality access and usage privileges for employees.

“The 360-degree view of customers has been talked about for years, but is usually little more than a transactional view of the customer,” says Jeremy Cox, principal analyst of customer engagement and CRM at Ovum. “Gainsight provides a predictive platform to enrich any enterprise B2B relationship by aggregating information from multiple sources together, analyzing the health of the relationship, presenting data in a role-relevant and intuitive manner, and driving actions through predictive playbooks. Gainsight, which is already natively integrated with Salesforce.com, provides a valuable augmentation to any CRM system – first to preempt customer defections and secondly to increase the lifetime value of strategic customers – which is the fundamental goal of any enterprise CRM strategy.” **M**

“The 360-degree view of customers ... is usually little more than a transactional view of the customer.”

- Ovum's Jeremy Cox



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WARNING: Benchmarking can be hazardous to your operation's health

CUSTOMER Magazine spoke recently to Mark Miller, the senior director of contact center solutions at J.D. Power, a leading market research company. We asked Mark to describe the benefits and pitfalls of benchmarking performance when building a world-class contact center.

How can benchmarking be hazardous?

One benchmarking hazard is comparing your performance against the "average" performance of other contact centers. Keep in mind that 50% of the organizations will perform "better than average." Settling for better-than-average gives the false impression that you've effectively differentiated yourself when you may not have.



J.D. Power's contact center benchmarks regarding customer experience and operational performance are derived from our certified contact centers, which represent multiple industries. Each certified organization has demonstrated that they

provide an outstanding customer experience, as verified through rigorous customer satisfaction research that puts them in the top 20% of all customer care and direct sales organizations. We document what these organizations do to achieve this high level of performance through extensive analyses and on-site evaluations of more than 200 practices. The net result is an unparalleled understanding of the strategies, tactics, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of top performers. These are true benchmarks that can help an organization reach targets and maintain a culture of ongoing improvement.

What are some successful benchmarking strategies?

1) Benchmark against others that value the same service standards as you do

Organizations that use J.D. Power benchmarks value *most* the provision of superior service

to their customers, and they balance that against their other priorities. They either currently provide, or want to provide, a differentiated experience through service. If your organization puts customers first, then benchmarking against organizations that put operational issues ahead of customers won't help you improve. Controlling costs remains an operational imperative, even among organizations that prioritize the customer experience. However, many of those organizations achieve cost controls through improvements in customer and representative retention and first call resolution as a result of their service orientation. Regardless of what your organization values most, benchmarking against organizations that share those values will improve your benchmarking.

2) Benchmark operational practices, not just statistics

Managing operational metrics or statistics is not enough. For example, it is insufficient to benchmark and then act on rep attrition statistics without understanding the drivers of that attrition. High-performing companies benchmark at least *three* elements to get the whole picture: (1) customer experience (including loyalty); (2) key operational and performance metrics; and (3) best practices.

3) Look outside your industry for top performers

Another critical component of effective benchmarking is to look at what high performers outside your industry do. Almost without exception, your customers' expectations of your contact center are not wholly created by interactions with your competitors or even within your industry, but rather by interactions with high-performing organizations outside your industry. A great experience anywhere becomes the standard by which consumers judge all other experiences, and J.D. Power can help organizations meet that standard.

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There is not one single metric that is shared by key stakeholders.

The Stakeholder Battle

Imagine attending an annual customer service organization budget meeting including finance, sales/marketing, and customer service leadership teams. Sound familiar?

First, finance explains how expenses must be reduced and identifies key opportunities – reducing average handle time and increasing rep utilization. You watch the customer service vice president turn greenish. He's trying to figure out how to hammer reps to speak more quickly in an attempt to reduce average handle time and how to schedule bathroom breaks during times of peak volume.

Next, sales and marketing talks about how customers are fleeing because they're not getting compensated following a service failure. They recommend compensating customers for every failure to make them feel better. Their strategy of buying happiness causes finance to demand a business case for this incremental spending.

Finally, customer service discusses high attrition and the need to provide more time off the phone for training and scheduling flexibility. Finance asks about the incremental cost. And on it goes.

So What's the Answer?

Wouldn't it be great to come up with a strategy that would satisfy the needs of each of the stakeholders simultaneously? Let's look at first contact resolution.

By definition, first contact resolution means that a customer's issue is resolved the first time he or she contacts a company. In a broad definition this may require an outreach to a customer to provide additional information, but from a customer perspective he or she is done after the initial contact. To successfully achieve FCR requires streamlined policies and procedures, effective tools and empowering reps (with controls). It also requires that controls are put in place to ensure that it doesn't drive other metrics like handle time or hold time in the wrong direction.

How can FCR satisfy all stakeholders?

From a finance perspective it is one and done. Their solution of reducing average handle time actually creates adverse behaviors where reps complete calls quickly without regard to the final outcome. The result is that customers may need to call back to follow-up on an issue that wasn't addressed properly during the first contact. It's more cost effective to have one contact of seven minutes than two contacts of five minutes each.

From a sales and marketing perspective, a customer is much happier and expends less effort if an issue is resolved in a single contact. This drives loyalty more than trying to buy happiness. Compensation is a Band-Aid – organizations need to fix the customer's issue – or even better, prevent the issue (but that's another conversation).

From a customer service perspective, representatives really want to help customers, but faced with unfriendly policies/procedures, poor tools, and the rush to give answers, they shortchange them. Call center employees will be happier and more engaged if they have the ability to truly assist customers. This, in turn, reduces attrition and impacts other metrics such as average handle time, training costs, and more.

So what does all this mean? With the proper focus, shared strategic vision, and organizational alignment, companies can satisfy the requirements of all stakeholders using first contact resolution. **M**

Scott Sachs works with Vanguard Communications Corp. (www.vanguard.net), a consulting firm specializing in creating first-rate customer experiences.

Strategic Solutions

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Presents:

A One-Stop Shop to Flexibly Address Any Customer Interaction Requirement

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A One-Stop Shop to Flexibly Address Any Customer Interaction Requirement

Traditionally, when selecting business applications, organizations feel restricted to a deployment model or deployment configuration, which often leads to them making compromises on feature and functionality. This directly impacts business processes and, in turn, customer experience.

What should matter the most is delivering the results your business, and its customers, require – and doing so without having to worry about how the business applications are deployed.

Enghouse Interactive, which has a wide array of best-of-breed products and services, provides a convenient way for your business to do just that. The company enables contact center service providers, business process outsourcers, and enterprises to choose the best solutions to solve their most complex business challenges, drive revenue, increase customer loyalty, deliver a stellar customer experience, and reduce operational costs and churn. And it helps those customers scale and manage complexity as their customer interaction and customer experience management applications grow over time.

Here are some of the key, technologically advanced solutions – which can be deployed in either on-premises or private cloud configurations, served up in community or public cloud setups, or in a hybrid situation in any combination thereof – that Enghouse Interactive offers to cater to the needs of businesses like yours.

Contact Center for Service Providers

Enghouse Contact Center: Service Provider (formerly CosmoCall Universe) is an all-in-one multi-tenant, multi-media, business continuity-enabled virtual contact center platform. It is ideal for business process outsourcers, large enterprise customers who want to deploy multiple disparate contact centers, and service providers that want to offer contact center in the cloud to their customers using a single hardware infrastructure.

Contact Center for Enterprises

Enghouse Contact Center: Enterprise (formerly Syntellect CIM) is a highly scalable, multi-channel platform that enables enterprises to deliver a superior customer experience. The application has been optimized for virtualized deployments in private cloud, such as the Amazon Cloud (EC2), as well as hosted/laaS, and hybrid cloud environments.

Outbound Communication

A suite of fully integrated on-premises, private, and public cloud-based outbound dialing and messaging capabilities, this solution offers true predictive dialing with inbound/outbound blending technology. It is employed for

payment and appointment reminders, emergency alerts, credit card fraud notifications, and many other use cases.

Knowledge Management

Enghouse Knowledge Management Suite includes applications to deploy and administer knowledge base portals and online community forums. It allows users to quickly customize support sites, optimize articles, and gain greater business insight with powerful real-time reports and analytical tools.

Communications Portal

Enghouse Communications Portal (formerly Syntellect CP) is an open, standards-based platform that combines the industry's most complete support for IP communication. Its integrated application development and management components have been optimized for virtualized deployments in private, hosted/laaS, and hybrid cloud environments.

Cloud Connector for CRM

Enghouse CTI for CRM (formerly Syntellect CT Connect) for Salesforce and Oracle/Siebel allows service and support organizations to interact with their CRM systems during customer communications. To help enhance business processes and reduce call resolution times, it provides access to data and features for agents such as click-to-dial and screen pop capabilities.

Customer Interaction Quality Management

Enghouse Quality Management Suite (formerly CallRex) is designed to let organizations optimize their customer services and customer interactions. With tools to quantitatively and qualitatively evaluate agent performance, record and annotate voice calls with flexible recording options, capture screen activity, and more, QMS is a multi-site and multi-language solution that integrates with your existing contact center infrastructure.

With an ecosystem of contact center service providers, system integrators and tens of thousands of agents, handling millions of customer interactions daily worldwide, Enghouse Interactive's flexible deployment model enables enterprises to select the best solution for a given business problem. And customers can be confident that the total solution will perform as required – regardless of where and how the technology is deployed.

So, whether your business is looking for a full contact center solution, an IVR, a knowledge management solution, or anything else that relates to the customer experience, Enghouse Interactive can meet your need. Enghouse Interactive brings together an industry-leading portfolio so it can be your one-stop shop for any solution you need to address the customer interactions aspect of your business.

To learn more about Enghouse Interactive's Cloud and other flexible deployment options for the contact center, visit www.inghouseinteractive.com or call us at 1-800-788-9733.



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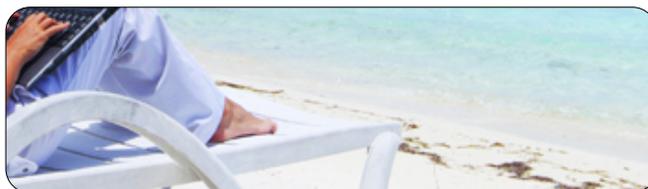
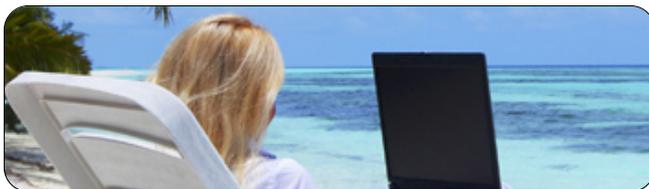
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Industry Solutions



1.800.788.9733
info.ei@enghouse.com
www.EnghouseInteractive.com



Tying a Bow on the Retail Shopping Experience

Whether the customer buying your sweater is a consumer or a retailer, chances are good that the individual in question has also used Amazon or other online portals in the past to make a purchase, so is a good target for a self-service buying experience regarding the sweater or sweaters.

That's the thinking of Sean Cook, CEO of e-commerce provider ShopVisible.

The company, founded in 2006, provides a SaaS-based platform that powers retailers', brands', and manufacturers' websites and channels, and ties in with their point of sale systems. As a result, everything on the front end, as well as the back-end order management, is connected and ties into points of fulfillment for customers.

Making those connections and enabling customers to buy in person or

online, while drawing from a single collection of inventory, allows for more profitable engagement with customers, gives customers more control, drives up average orders and order accuracy, and increases customer satisfaction and loyalty, says Cook.

Different channels are clearly converging, and customers want a consistent experience with companies, while companies want to have a single view of customers that lets them better cater to those customers and better leverage

their inventory – so, for example, if a red sweater is not available at a certain location, it can find it elsewhere, says Cook.

The ShopVisible solution can also be used to enable in-store sales staff to use online resources to better serve shoppers and their own interests, he adds, explaining that the tool enables a sales person to use a tablet to make a purchase for the customer but still get credit for the sale.

ShopVisible also includes a multi-touchpoint tracking tool that enables organizations to track a customer through each of the times they've engaged with them, so they're not giving all the credit to the last touchpoint that customer engaged with. That way, organizations can better understand which of their tools and campaigns are working.



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Increasing Sales Opportunity Through Marketing Compliance

Gryphon Networks Tells Us How

CUSTOMER Magazine recently spoke with Gryphon Networks to get an update on what's happening in the important area of marketing compliance. Here's our interview with Melissa Bateman Fitzgerald, Esq., CIPP Vice President, Privacy Consulting & Counsel at Gryphon Networks.

federal and state wireless prohibitions. Scrubbing does not ensure the most up-to-date information across all these regulations. But the bigger shortfall with scrubbing is the massive sales opportunity lost to over-suppression. Scrubbing doesn't account for a company's established business relationships,

call is then automatically blocked or allowed, based on real-time consideration of hundreds of rules. This approach is 100 times more effective than a scrubbed list.

How does the cloud enable companies to more effectively leverage their customer contact lists?

The cloud is a key enabling platform for a centralized communications contact strategy. With the cloud, companies can have a hosted, always-current database that houses all their customer info, transaction and inquiry history, internal DNC and opt-ins that are updated in real-time 24x7. The cloud makes integration with a company's in-house systems, as well as integration with the company's third-party marketing service providers and e-mail providers, dead simple without extensive IT involvement. The cloud is the great enabler and accelerator.

Who relies on Gryphon Networks for marketing compliance today?

We have over 600 clients and growing. About half of the world's largest banks, eight of the top ten insurance providers, several well-known retailers, and several of the largest communications companies rely on Gryphon for automated, integrated, real-time, always-current, and indemnified compliance because they don't want to be experts in do-not-contact regulations and legislation. They want to be able to focus on marketing and selling their products and services to drive revenue. Many of our clients have been with us for more than 10 years. That kind of loyalty can only come from a relentless focus on reliability, accuracy, customer service, and continuous innovation. Also, our clients enjoy bulletproof legal protection, since we indemnify them against any investigations or fines.

List scrubbing unnecessarily suppresses contact points 20 to 60 percent of the time.

Gryphon Networks is a marketing compliance company. What does that mean?

We help firms that market directly to consumers comply with the myriad of federal, state and industry do-not-contact and call-recording laws. We protect them from violations, fines, and brand damage, while simultaneously ensuring they have largest possible universe of legally contactable consumers.

How do most companies address marketing compliance?

Most firms rely on list scrubbing, either internally or by third parties who are essentially data vendors that reconcile a company's marketing leads by removing numbers that exist on a do-not-contact list, like the National Do Not Call Registry, and returning only marketing contact points that are allegedly permissible to contact.

Why do you say allegedly?

Because scrubbing gives companies a false sense of security. The federal list is only one marketing regulation. Additionally there are 14 state-specific lists, varying call time curfews, holiday solicitation bans, state-of-emergency restrictions, and

consumer's recent opt-ins, inquiries or transactions, or number reassignments that would allow numbers on the federal or state lists to be legally contacted. We find list scrubbing unnecessarily suppresses contact points 20 to 60 percent of the time, on average. This means companies scrubbing lists are getting the worst of both worlds: they're leaving millions of legal numbers out of their marketing campaigns in an effort to remain compliant, but they're actually still at risk of violating numerous other regulations.

What's a more effective way to ensure marketing compliance – and not lose opportunity to over-suppression?

The most effective way is to automate compliance and certify phone numbers or e-mail addresses as close to the point of marketing interaction as possible. This means that when an agent or auto-dialer dials a phone number, that number is certified right then, ensuring every law, curfew, and internal policy is adhered to in real time. And the latest opt-ins, exemptions, or recent number reassignments can be applied. The

IF THIS ISN'T STILL YOUR CRM...



AND THIS ISN'T STILL YOUR DIALING

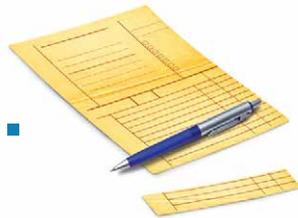
PLATFORM...



AND THIS

ISN'T STILL YOUR LEAD TRACKING

SYSTEM...



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YOU STILL SCRUBBING LISTS



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WebRTC in the Contact Center

WebRTC in the contact center is the focus of the roundup in this issue of CUSTOMER magazine.

WebRTC is a disruptive new technology being driven forward by none other than Google, among many others. Already, WebRTC is supported on more than 1 billion endpoints, says Google, and Disruptive Analysis expects that to grow to 3.9 billion by 2016.

Not only does the technology enable browser-to-browser communications without the need to download plugins; it also simplifies application creation for developers on the back end. And the contact center, and customer interactions in general, are expected to be one area that will benefit from WebRTC. Here are a few examples of solutions that address this space.

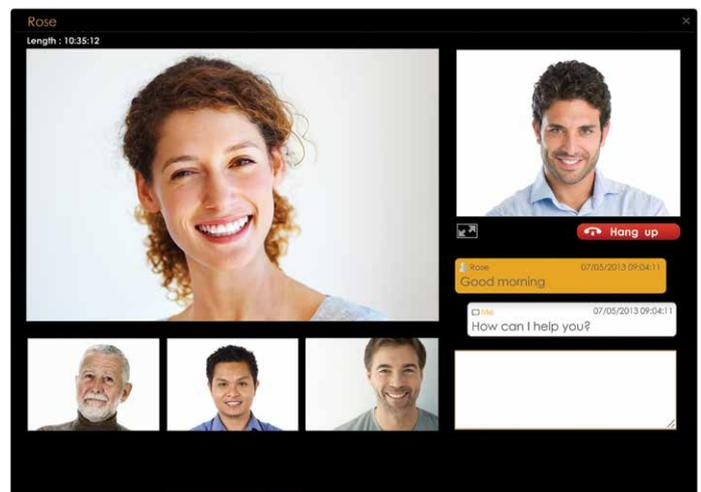
AGNITY Inc.
www.agnity.com



AGNITY's ACONYX Unify is a mobile contextual communications and collaboration solution that enhances the customer care experience while transforming the typical contact center delivery model. Built on the latest WebRTC and mobile technologies, it empowers video contact centers. Unify Web Smart Client embedded on any B2C website enables customers to have a video/audio call with contact center agents to seek assistance with their online purchase or support. They can do this using their regular desktop/laptop without needing to install anything or through their smartphones/tablets through intuitive mobile applications. Businesses may also place Unify-enabled video kiosks at self-service stores, ATMs, etc., to expand their customer service reach. At the same time, ACONYX Unify empowers Virtual Contact Centers – with virtual agents flexibly located at remote locations. Agents may login from their office desks, home offices, or even smart devices to deliver

customer care. This facilitates hot-desking and is also very useful in multi-center multi-vendor environments. It can also be paired with AGNITY's Call Center Routing offering – a core network-based application that automatically distributes calls to assigned users based on time, location, skills, IVR or percentage with support for call queuing. ACONYX Unify supplements agent capabilities with converged messaging (text, voicemail, videomail, fax) and multimedia conferencing. It is a high performance, open standards-based solution that helps deliver customer service and greater customer satisfaction.

Apizee
www.apizee.com



Apizee develops WebRTC instant messaging, audio and video cloud communications solutions for integration in applications and websites. Telephony and videoconferencing are available from a web browser on any devices. IzeeChat is a contact center solution that handles WebRTC communication between web visitors and enterprises. This solution integrates an automatic chat distributor with several priority levels for agents regarding their competencies. The solution is able to address several sites on the same contact center, with agent distributions regarding priorities for these sites. IzeeChat is also able to address RCS/Joyn communication of mobile users with a WebRTC agent. The solution is proposed as a package, with several APIs to allow integration and customization to fit partners' needs. The solution permits organizations to increase conversion rates on websites and help desks on mobile browsers. Features include presence, view pages, filter on pages, chat and pages history, statistics, several sites on the dashboard, enhanced automatic chat distributor with several priority groups, chat transfer, conferencing, and interactive whiteboard.

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AudioCodes

www.audiocodes.com/webrtc



Enabling WebRTC application development for the contact center, AudioCodes has recently announced and demonstrated WebRTC Opus Codec support on the AudioCodes 400HD series IP Phones – a first in the industry. Expected to enable contact center and other knowledge worker applications for WebRTC and other existing SIP applications, IP Phones with Opus support high-definition calling from consumers to contact center agents without transcoding. AudioCodes also supports WebRTC enablement with the Mediant line of session border controllers, providing SIP over WebSockets conversion and codec conversion (transcoding).

BrowseTel (UK) Ltd.

www.browsotel.com



The BrowseTEL Cloud Contact Center provides companies with integrated customer interaction management, combining the handling of all incoming and outgoing marketing campaigns through various communication channels (voice/video, fax, e-mail, SMS, web chat) on a single platform. WebRTC has not only added new communication channels where customers can initiate calls from a Click2Call button on a web page or by scanning a QR code on a product or promotional material, but has also added a new level of

interaction where customer browsing history can enforce skill-based routing. An agent's busy scripts played when a customer is in queue have become interactive multimedia pages playing audio and video files, opening customer's supports forms, consequently offering much more information than voice announcements. High-quality video calls have brought another much more personal level of communication, which can be applied for more demanding services and customers. Screen sharing and co-browsing are other new features, which will help agents to solve customer problems on the spot where they happen. WebRTC has also brought an evolution to agent working places. They have finally moved to the browser environment, fueling the transition of a contact center to a cloud-based thin client architecture – lowering both deployment and operational costs while gaining security and quality of service.

Commodisee

www.commodisee.com

The rapid evolution of WebRTC technology prompted young start-up companies to redefine the standards of the traditional contact center, integrating direct HD audio/visual communication geared toward the enterprise's most important part of CRM. Commodisee, however, has taken a different approach and brought the contact center down to the people, to the lowest fundamental level, small-independent store owners. Commodisee has introduced WebRTC capabilities to the contact center in its most fundamental form: HD audio/visual communication between buyers and sellers. By doing this, commodisee.com is becoming a centralized contact center for the small independent store owner. This new level of communication was achievable up until now by any other video chat software, but it has never been implemented in the retail world as well as Commodisee has implemented it. Combining WebRTC technology on top of the powerful Kamailio SIP server (with its presence module) allows Commodisee to bring shoppers both a private (one-way only video, no UserID or login) and easily accessible (no extra software installation required) experience. Finally, for a fraction of the price of a traditional solution, any store owner can have a HD live audio/visual contact center of his or her own.

Dilogr

www.DilogR.com

DilogR is the new automated customer solution for the WebRTC age. It provides the same type of interactivity as IVR does for voice, but with the added benefit of pictures and video to deliver rich customer interactions that lead to satisfied customers and a reduced load on agents. DilogRs can be video, slides, or pictures and can be used

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as a standalone solution like a video FAQ or as a tool for agents to send/share with customers. DilogRs can be created and published in minutes and then distributed over web, mobile, and social to engage customers where they are, when they need it, on any device. Additionally, all interaction data is collected and returned to the admin so that you can learn which messages are resonating, which are most popular, and which need work. DilogR is a cloud solution that can be self-managed through the easy to use GUI, or DilogR can help you tell your story from script development to video production.

Flashphoner LLC
<http://flashphoner.com>



Flashphoner Web Call Server 3, aka WCS3, is a server-side software platform designed for two-way browser-SIP calls with WebRTC, Flash, and SIP capability. WCS3 is perfect for web call center deployment. It is not necessary for the call center operator to install, update, or configure any additional software. The operator simply opens a web page and is instantly ready to receive and place calls. WCS3 is fully compatible with existing VoIP equipment: no matter your current SIP/VoIP system, whether it be a commercial SIP switch such as Cisco or an alternative VoIP PBX such as Asterisk. Using WCS3, a user interface can easily be

integrated into an existing web system, since the user page is simply a web page connected to WCS3. The user interface can be fully customized and adapted according to your business requirements. WCS3 supports two mainstream technologies: WebRTC and Flash, covering the most popular desktop and mobile browsers such as Chrome, Firefox, IE, Safari, and Opera. Unlike the standard WebRTC peer-to-peer approach, WCS3 proxies all WebRTC calls through itself and then through your VoIP environment, enabling you to have full control over the call center based through Flashphoner Web Call Server 3.

Frozen Mountain Software
www.frozenmountain.com

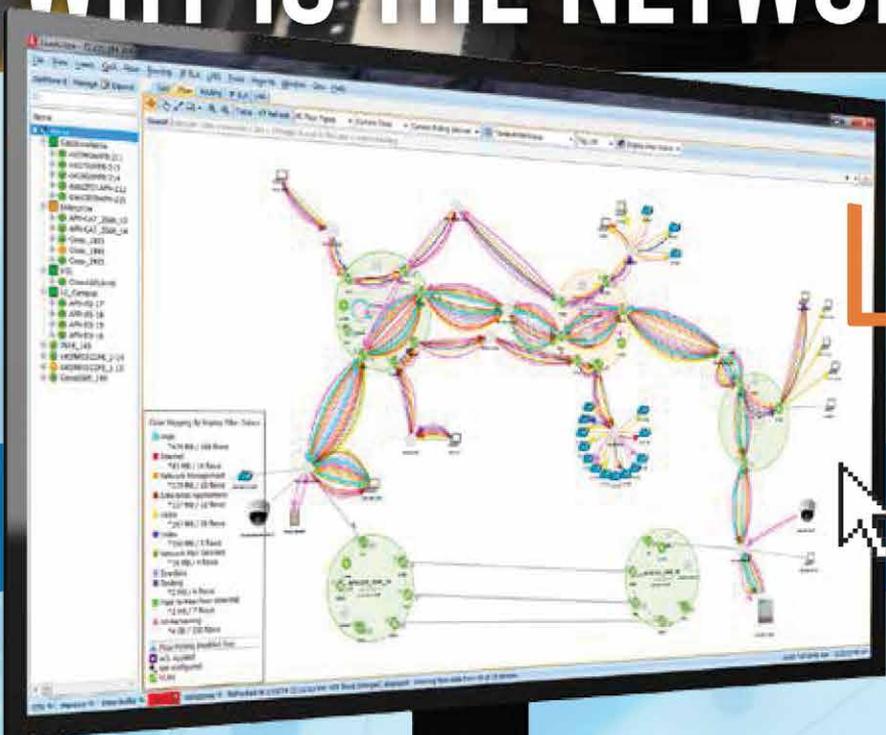
IceLink is a collection of libraries that enable developers to create reliable UDP media streams between peers, regardless of the peer's network configuration and environment. IceLink traverses every possible firewall/NAT combination to guarantee connection establishment. It uses IETF/IANA standards to provide the broadest compatibility with third-party components. IceLink includes a WebRTC extension for select platforms that implements the WebRTC standards for communication, including stream formatting, RTP/RTCP packet processing, DTLS key exchange, audio/video capturing/rendering, audio/video encoding/decoding, data channels, a full MediaStream API, and more. IceLink works in conjunction with any third-party signaling library (like WebSync, XMPP, or SIP) to perform an initial offer/answer exchange when setting up peer connections.

LiveOps Inc.
www.liveops.com

LiveOps, which provides cloud contact center and customer service solutions, is leading the adoption of WebRTC in the next-generation contact center. WebRTC, the emerging standard for browser-to-browser communications, extends LiveOps' traditional customer service support by integrating real-time voice, text and video. LiveOps Engage, the industry's first single integrated multichannel (voice, chat, e-mail, social media, and SMS) agent desktop, provides native integration with Twilio Client to deliver a true virtual contact center. Brands are now able to manage voice calls directly from the browser – whether from a PC or tablet – with zero requirements for a landline, mobile phone or any downloads. With LiveOps Engage, brands can now significantly reduce their capital and operational costs by eliminating the need for expensive servers, software, landline and phones required by traditional call center technologies, all



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while enhancing agent experience and productivity. Best of all, brands can create and tailor call routing strategies to enhance their call resolution through advanced call management and dynamic business rules. Leveraging Twilio Client, LiveOps Engage provides brands with an opportunity to eliminate their legacy telephony infrastructure for an all-encompassing contact center in the cloud.

Net Medical
www.netmedical.com

Net Medical is a multi-faceted, FDA-regulated medical company with six divisions, over 400 physicians and 400,000 cases completed yearly. While this solution is not a contact center one, it does address the customer experience. The company provides telemedicine programs for diagnostic and clinical medical services to mobile companies, urgent cares, hospitals, trauma centers, imaging centers, jails, nursing homes, corporate health departments, and out-patient medical facilities. The company's WebRTC solution is an open source browser-based videoconferencing tool that allows organizations to set up users, groups and, subgroups with crystal clear, real-time, face-to-face web-based connections. Although designed specifically for the health care industry, where it significantly facilitates doctor-patient and hospital communications, other types of companies and organizations can also use the system. The company also provides the WebRTC Conference Switch on iPads, iPhones, and Android devices. Recently the company moved its encrypted cloud services to AT&T, which provides certified HIPAA guarantees. In addition some of the new features include easy to embed website software, echo canceling detection, push to talk microphone switching, improved reliability error correction software, optional FDA510k cleared Stethoscope with remote readings within the WebRTC interface, and optional speech to text integration.

Nex Gen Bits LLC
<http://ngmsvid.com>

NGVX, or Nex Gen Video Exchange, is a video calling server from Nex Gen Bits bridging together the world of WebRTC and SIP. It incorporates videoconferencing and streaming technologies, enabling deployment for contact center-based video collaboration applications. NGVX allows you to leverage the in-browser videoconferencing capabilities of WebRTC to enable seamless real-time video communication between customers and live support. This means your customers are given more choices for when and how live video or audio assistance can be provided, includ-

ing multimodal and mobile devices. NGVX supports server side video recording, multi-party conferencing, and efficient high-definition audio to augment your real-time contact center offerings. Video support is available for WebRTC as well as native devices such as iPhones, Android, BlackBerry, and desktop clients. Leveraging the media engine of Nex Gen Media Server, it is capable of operating as an MCU, providing video interoperability and live video streaming services to a variety of devices. The software is open source and customizable for integration into your own proprietary contact center solution and architecture.

Solaborate
www.solaborate.com



Solaborate is a social and collaboration platform dedicated to enabling technology professionals and companies to connect, collaborate, discover opportunities, and create an ecosystem around products and services. It provides technology professionals a central place with the right tools and services to collaborate in real time. Solaborate has fully embraced the use of WebRTC to provide real-time communication and collaboration tools to its users within the browser and free of plug-ins or software downloads. It delivers functionality such as: chat, 1:1 and group audio and videoconferencing – that includes an instant messaging feature to allow members to communicate via text and share rich media while on the call, in-chat file sharing – allowing users to communicate and share important files; and in-chat screen sharing – allowing users to share their screens with others exactly as they see it on their screens within the chat. This is a true unified virtual communication and collaborative space for technology professionals to gather to network and collaborate with co-workers, partners, and customers in real time.

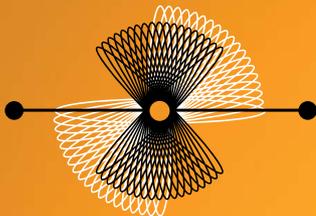
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www.twilio.com



Twilio Client leverages WebRTC to improve communications for thousands of users every day and power millions of browser-based calls for businesses around the world. Applications powered by Twilio Client include complete contact centers, browser-based conferencing applications, customer support tools, etc. Twilio Client provides a simple, standardized wrapper around browser's WebRTC APIs, and if a browser doesn't support WebRTC, it defaults to Flash. Our Twilio Client WebRTC implementation makes it easy to embed real-time communications into web apps, and connect them to other browsers or legacy SIP and PSTN networks. Many of our customers, such as Zendesk, Wix, Send Hub, etc., use Twilio Client in real production environments for their contact centers to improve user experience and productivity, reduce communications costs (as browser-based communication allow you to get rid of your desk-phone and telecom closet, saving on high licensing and support costs), and be always-on and globally scalable. Twilio has phone numbers in more than 40 countries, which gives on-demand scalability, and the ability to make calls worldwide. Twilio Client is part of the Twilio Cloud. So now you have access to features WebRTC can't provide, including conference calling, call recording, and much more.

Weemo
<http://weemo.com/salesforce>

Weemo for Salesforce Service Cloud enables contact centers to deliver high-touch customer service experiences us-



ing live video. With Weemo for Salesforce Service Cloud, contact centers can emulate the in-store experience, increase conversion rates of complex sales, or quickly resolve problems that need visual assistance. The integration of Weemo into Salesforce Service Cloud is seamless for the agents and the customers. Agents access live video from their Live Agent console while routing rules are defined within the contact centers' existing engine. Customers access live video from the company's website or mobile app. No download is required to launch the video. Weemo for Salesforce Service Cloud offers a variety of implementation options. Contact centers can give their customers direct access to live video via a click-to-video button or let their agents initiate the video during a text chat. Contact centers can also choose to implement two-way video or one-way video only. Weemo relies on WebRTC as well as other best-of-breed technology to make live video easily available to agents and customers on every browser and device at a global scale. **M**

Where to Learn More about WebRTC

If you're looking to learn more about WebRTC, or just want an opportunity to network with the key movers-and-shakers in the WebRTC ecosystem, TMC and CUSTOMER magazine invite you to attend the WebRTC IV Conference & Expo.

The longest running global WebRTC ecosystem event, WebRTC IV Conference & Expo is being held June 17 through 19 at the Cobb Galleria in Atlanta.

For more information, visit: <http://www.webrtc-world.com/conference/east/>



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Human Capital Management

A New Twist on How to Drive Employee Engagement, Lower Costs

Customer service means different things to different people. If you're an employer, you may even want to think about your employees as customers, given that you want to keep them and make them happy so you can get the best work from them in return.

Thomsons Online Benefits works to provide employees with the best possible experiences when it comes to their benefits, and in the process it reduces administrative costs and decreases the time required for workers to sign up for their benefits, explains Chris Bruce, managing director and co-founder of Thomsons Online Benefits, which has \$70 million in annual revenues and offices around the world.

Darwin is the name of the company's multitenant SaaS application. This end-to-end automated administrator effectively removes the burden of managing benefits from both employee and employer, he says. One company using Darwin went from average benefit signup times of two hours and 20 minutes per employee to nine minutes.

In the U.S., it's typical to use online technology to enroll for benefits, he adds, but that is

not usual in rest of the world. Now, Darwin makes that possible for more companies, wherever they are.

Not only does Darwin enable workers to enroll for their benefits online, says Bruce, it can make suggestions as to which options might best meet their needs.

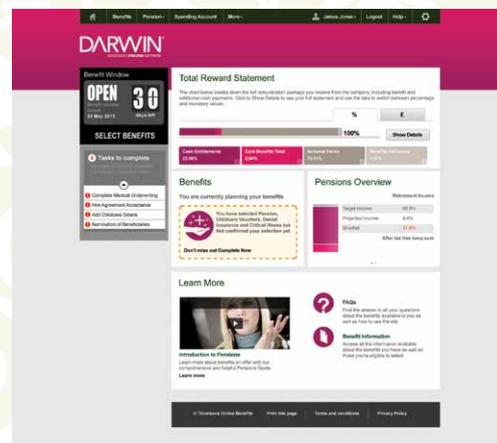
A big new trend in lots of countries is the introduction of copays for medical service, which has been big in the U.S. for a long time, but is just now popping up in other countries, says Bruce. With copays, the onus is on the employee to make decisions. Technology can help with those decisions, says Bruce, adding the Darwin portal is dynamic so it shows users the impact and costs of different health care plan options.

Darwin can also assist employees with other aspects of their lives related to benefits.

In India, for example, employees have allowances they

can choose at their companies to get more effective tax treatment; the Darwin software suggests which allowance is the best choice for the employee. Meanwhile, in the U.K., people can get childcare vouchers of up to \$4,000, getting tax back for childcare, Bruce adds. Darwin can see that an employee has two children, for example, yet hasn't taken advantage of the vouchers, and can alert the employee to this fact.

This is the kind of thing that can result in better employee engagement, which enhances brand, says Bruce. It can also be leveraged as a recruitment tool for job candidates, he adds. When candidates are presented with job offers, he says, they can be provided with a USB stick with a link to portal where details of benefits are provided, and maybe a video of the CEO saying the company would really like the prospect to join the company and here is link to more information on their benefits. **M**



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Why Government Contact Centers Must Look to the Cloud

Seizing Opportunities to Improve Infrastructure and Operations

A Thought Leadership Advertorial from Interactive Intelligence



Contact centers operated by the US federal government are stuck in the '80s and '90s. Literally, most of these centers still use wired PBXs and premises-based communications systems installed 20 or 30 years ago. They still segment communications channels and provide inefficient service for constituents. They also still require excessive IT budgets just for system maintenance, never mind updates.

Creating more headaches for contact center CIOs at the federal level are lengthy cycles for technology budgeting and procurement – the infamous government red tape. Even when components and vendor services are available for system upgrades, obtaining funding and resources can take months. Or years.

Given the mix of antiquated equipment, needed updates and IT spending control, federal initiatives are steering government contact centers and agencies toward cloud communications. These “Cloud First” policies are a good call, for several reasons.

Reduced OpEx, CapEx, and overall spending on underutilized infrastructure. With a cloud solution, the service provider is responsible for managing and running the services being used, thus bearing much of the cost of doing business. This enables government entities to reduce OpEx and CapEx significantly. Government IT chiefs also continue to reduce the federal IT energy footprint by moving communications and business missions to the cloud and shutting down older, underperforming data centers.

Faster deployment. Cloud communications solutions eliminate the need for assorted system hardware and facility infrastructure as a whole. For the government’s purposes, cloud solutions also largely eliminate the bureaucratic stages of procurement and certification that can slow deployment processes, making it feasible to deploy a new solution often in a matter of days. Once a cloud solution is implemented, provisioning, managing, and modifying it can be done in the same near-instantaneous manner.

Broad functionality from all-in-one suites. Cloud solutions for contact centers have trended toward integrated application suites supported on the cloud provider’s platform and developed to provide multichannel functionality “all-in-one.” Because applications are integrated for various channels and functions (voice, email, chat, routing, monitoring, reporting, and so forth), they can replace

multisystem infrastructures entirely. A common interface for administration also gives contact centers greater control of their own operations and the services they offer.

Open environment for integrations. With the cloud’s open environment, contact centers are able to integrate the cloud applications they use with business systems, business processes, and with apps for specific functions such as CRM, speech analytics, strategic resource planning, content management, and others. Particularly with the on-demand licensing structure of most cloud offerings, contact centers find it easier to fine tune applications, add new capabilities, and manage users, all with minimal IT involvement.

Increased flexibility and scalability. Workforce management and fluctuations in agent staffing are constant issues in virtually any contact center, and government centers are no different. Again using the cloud’s on-demand licensing approach, centers can scale agent counts up and back down quickly for monthly or seasonal spikes in interaction volumes, without overstaffing or understaffing. They can also expand agent sourcing with the cloud’s ability to support remote agents. Centers can just as flexibly activate cloud-based functionality as needed. (A reminder: whether scaling agent counts or adding new service capabilities, the center pays only for what they use and the period of time they use it.)

Increased agent utilization. With the integrated multichannel capability in most cloud solutions, a contact center can uniformly route calls, emails, chats, SMS texts, and so on to any available agent. Rather than segmented agent groups for various media, this “big pool” effect expands the number of available agents, including remote agents, to help reduce customer wait times and speed issue resolution. Of course, agents must still be skilled across channels and media types, since responding to customer emails and chats is different than interacting on a call. Historical and real-time reporting tools now offered in many cloud contact center solutions help centers increase agent utilization consistently and accurately to reduce overhead.

Adopted from the white paper, “Cloud Communications and the Federal Government: Opportunities to Seize,” by Abdo Rabad of Blue Kite Consultants and Mechele Herres of Interactive Intelligence.

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TMC Congratulates CRM Excellence Award Winners

As discussed in this issue's cover story, CRM software revenue is expected to reach \$23.9 billion this year. This space has seen strong investment in recent years and is positioned to represent the largest segment of enterprise software by 2017, increasing to a \$36.5 billion worldwide market, according to Gartner.

Here is TMC's list of the latest and greatest in the CRM arena. **M**

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NFL Looking to Score Big with the In-Stadium Fan Experience

The customer experience – that’s what business success hinges upon today. Without customers, there is no business. Thus, the stakes are high, considering the competition that’s out there, looking to scrape away at your revenues, one customer at a time – regardless of your product. For many businesses, the mobile explosion has created a number of challenges but, with them, opportunities that can help increase satisfaction and loyalty via a positive experience (see my column in the April issue on the Wi-Fi opportunity).

One of the markets that is clearly feeling the impact of mobility is the sports and entertainment industry. When people visit a venue, whether for a concert, game, or other event, they hardly leave their mobile devices behind. In fact, those devices, in many cases, become more active than at other times, as users check e-mails, follow other scores, watch replays or other footage, chat with friends watching the game elsewhere, or what have you.

Not long ago, the National Football League began an extensive fan experience initiative to measure and enhance the digital fan experience in its venues across the country. In fact, despite the obvious perception that the on-field contest is the main attraction, CIO Michelle McKenna-Doyle says that’s no longer the case.

“Next generation fans aren’t OK with just the on-field product,” she says. “It’s about the complete experience, and being connected is an expectation.”

For McKenna-Doyle, it’s not about one stadium or club. Rather, it’s about creating consistency of experience across the 32-team league, which is why the NFL has released a set of minimum standards for stadium networks and connectivity – which are at the heart of the connected fan experience. One of the vendors it selected is Extreme Networks, which it is leveraging for Wi-Fi analytics and experience measurement.

“We shopped for partners and found Extreme Networks, which has done a great job on work with the Eagles and Patriots in delivering the connected fan experience,” she says. “That’s why we’re recommending the Enterasys high-density solution to our clubs.”

Beyond what’s happening on the field, fans have an expectation of connectivity so they can remain active in their digital lives. That may mean posting to Facebook or Instagram, or messaging, or e-mail, or any number of activities. For the NFL and its member clubs, the goal becomes to create an experience such that fans would rather be at the game than anywhere else.

“There’s nothing better than the in-game experience, but we know the in-home experience has continued to improve – couchgating has become very popular,” says McKenna-Doyle. “We have to deliver the same level of connectivity and experience.”

That means providing value-added services and features that make the in-stadium experience more valuable than the in-home option, including custom video feeds, real-time stats, custom stat packages for each game, on-field replays, graphics and more. Because much, if not all, of this is available for at-home fans (perhaps with the exception of the replays, though that is easily accomplished with the rewind button on DVR-enabled STBs), the NFL must also deliver additional services.

“Engagement is where the focus is going to be,” says Chip Suttles, vice president of technology for the Seattle Seahawks. “We will create in-game experiences you can’t replicate in the home or other places and, knowing there are a variety of people who want different things from their at-stadium experience, we are going to deliver to them all.”

That means there will be additional focus on extending the digital experience to the parking lot for pre-game tailgating experiences to help drive the social experience at the stadiums. It will mean in-seat ordering, bathroom line wait times, fan engagement activities during time outs, and more. Perhaps what ultimately will be the driver is teams’ ability to drive users to their apps outside the stadium because, as Luis Perez, CFO for the Detroit Lions, points out, fans who don’t use the app at home are not likely to do so at the stadium, limiting any opportunity for personalized engagement.

How will this initiative evolve into a complete fan experience remains to be seen, but the NFL has begun its journey on the path to delivering the digital experience to its fans, understanding that it isn’t competing with just the other local sports organizations, but with other destinations – that’s what McKenna-Doyle sees the stadium experience as.

“We aren’t unlike other destinations, like Disney, which has created something so special, an emotional connection that is hard to replicate,” she says. “If we can build that emotional connection, and supplement that with information, we will succeed – the NFL has the best content on the market.” **M**

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