Call Center Times

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Cash or carry? Does money work as an incentive?

By Dawn McCoy, MBA and Brooks Mitchell, PhD

What makes employees tick? How can you get the most out of your people – consistently? As any good manager will tell you, rewarding employees for their efforts has a direct positive impact on productivity and ultimately, on the bottom line. An effective reward system can motivate employees, reduce turnover, improve morale, and in doing so, provide the organization with a competitive advantage. The question then becomes, "What kind of rewards are the most effective, produce sustainable behavioral change and give organizations the biggest bang for their buck?"

Years ago, when employers were just testing the waters of the world of incentives and for some time thereafter, cash incentives were the most common. People were initially given cash payouts for meeting goals or good performance. These bonuses, however, soon lost their reward power as people came to ***expect*** the extra money and essentially included the "reward" in their salary expectations. A classic example would be Christmas bonuses many companies still use to supposedly reward employees for effort expended during the year. Employees eventually come to expect the bonus every year and don't link it to performance. Further, as many a manager can attest to, if an employee receives a lower bonus than the previous year, the onus is often on the manager to explain the reason why to the employee, who considers it a *decrease* in compensation!

Employers began using merchandise rewards chosen from catalogues for incentives, and as a result, the incentive merchandise industry has now grown into a multi-billion dollar business. The theory is this provides a bigger bang for the employers' buck and also allows employees to choose their own rewards suggesting employees are more likely to be motivated. Over time, however, as most companies have discovered, people tire of the rewards offered in the catalogues and the reward system loses its effectiveness. As David Lewenberg, Vice-President of Genumark, a promotional product distributor, says, "Human nature requires constant change."

This problem has been exacerbated by the Internet because employees now have the ability to shop online and compare the value of the catalogued merchandise with prices of similar goods. Unfortunately, all too often, similar items or higher quality items are available for far less than the reward is supposed to worth, leading to dissatisfaction and a belief that neither employee or employer are, in fact, getting a bigger bang for their buck.

Where does money fit in on the hierarchy of employees' needs and wants? The literature and research is truly divided on this issue. Some surveys suggest money is low on the scale of what people want as rewards. *Managers* surveyed in these studies typically rate cash especially low as a performance motivator. For example, a 2003 survey conducted by the Incentive Federation reported that 60% of respondents agreed that travel or merchandise is preferable to money as an incentive. This same survey revealed that 61% of incentive program managers felt they could build a more effective incentive program with merchandise as opposed to cash. Another survey sponsored by American Express Incentive Services reported that only 25% of the respondents who had ever received an incentive award listed cash as the best job performance reward they ever received. The conclusion one might draw if only reviewing these surveys would be monetary rewards are not the best way to motivate employees. Lewenberg agrees, "We generally feel the online programs and gift cards are the flavor of the month rather than a long term change."

That leads into the next point – what is money? Is it just cash or is it anything that can be used as cash? Perhaps we need to redefine money in terms of incentive programs. In today's highly technological world, money is no longer confined to cash in hand. It can mean debit cards, gift certificates, and the latest innovation – stored value cards. So when employees suggest they prefer a gift card to merchandise, this is a form of money – it can be used to buy whatever they like.

While there are some surveys that indicate otherwise, there are other surveys where the opposite premise – money in its various forms is desirable as a motivator – is supported. For example, a 2005 survey by

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Regards,
Nosa Eke, Publisher

HR Innovator reported results which strongly *support* cash as an effective incentive award. Interestingly, 65% of the respondents preferred cash as a motivator and another 23% preferred another form of cash, gift certificates.

Source: May 2005, HR Innovator,

http://www.hrinnovator.com

With research results that are at best, confusing and mixed, as a manager interested in influencing employee performance, choosing cash or merchandise as a reward can be somewhat of a dilemma. Perhaps we should review some of the common problems with both systems to refresh our memories.

Historically, the biggest problem with using money as a reward has been that it was seldom *immediate* or directly related to the behaviors it was supposed to reward because it was usually paid out in a bi-weekly or monthly pay check or one time during the year. Research shows for a reward to be effective and sustaining, it needs to be *directly related* to the desired behavior. This is best achieved by rewarding the performance *immediately* after the behavior occurs. While new technology has allowed easier measurement, better accounting and real time reporting of performance results, in the pre-high tech world, was not easily measured or reported and therefore not easily linked to the accounting system. Therefore, many times, employees did not know what rewards they were entitled to leading to a lack of engagement in the incentive program.

Reviewing these problems, it is no wonder that employee incentive programs moved away from cash and toward merchandise and recognition items. But, as many incentive program managers will tell you, merchandise rewards also pose significant problems, some of which are the same as with monetary rewards. For example, the merchandise almost always comes *far after* an employee's rewardable behavior has occurred. In addition, merchandise incentives are often large items that employees have to "save up" for and may seem unattainable or far in the future. This again leads to the problem of relating today's behaviors to tomorrow's rewards. Rewards also should be *meaningful* to the employee and often the merchandise choices do not have something that appeals to each employees.

Using merchandise as a reward also requires inventory and most companies simply don't wish to maintain large inventories of merchandise to pass out to employees for incentive programs. Consequently, a billion dollar industry has evolved over the last several years of companies who provide catalogs with thousands of prizes for redemption. Although this seems like an easy solution, it leads to another more significant problem. That is, research shows almost all catalog merchandise is *perceived* as being overpriced or outdated. For example, an item which can be redeemed for $100 in incentive money or points might be purchased for $50 or less at a local discount store and probably even for less than that if a person wanted to try to buy it on eBay. Ironically, what was meant to be a motivational to the employee may very well have become a de-motivational, because the employee now feels like he might have been ripped off.

Another problem is that merchandise is frequently a projection of what *managers* like or would want, while ignoring most of their employees who are operating on different levels of the organization. This patronization on the part of management or in other words, "management knows what's best for you," doesn't go far in motivating employees. As noted, for an incentive system to be effective, the rewards offered must be meaningful to the *employees*, not to management or just some employees. A classic example is an employer who uses football tickets to reward salespeople for high sales. The salesperson that would rather see a play or a movie will not be motivated by the reward offered and therefore it will not have any impact on his or her performance.

Is there a middle ground? Can't employees be awarded with money and use this to buy the merchandise or rewards *they* want without diluting the effectiveness of cash as a reward? While clearly advocating the use of merchandise as an incentive, Lewenberg does say, "I think it is a combination of recycling old combined with really new stuff. Clearly technology has supplied a tone of change." Perhaps, with changes in technology, managers won't have to choose between cash or merchandise and still have an incentive program that provides meaningful rewards to employees.

Online programs such as Snowfly Performance Incentives have changed the face of the performance incentives industry by reducing the effectiveness of catalogue rewards systems but also by providing the means to allocate cash rewards in different ways. *Money* can be paid out in many forms other than on the pay check including direct deposit, gift certificates, debit cards, stored value cards such as credit cards and PayPal, and often cash does not actually change hands. The use of these alternative ways to allocate cash rewards means monetary bonuses are no longer distributed along with the regular pay check. Managers now have the ability to reward employees with money *immediately* after the desired behaviors have occurred and as good managers understand, instant acknowledgement is a powerful motivator.

According to Stevi Hansen, a Vice President of Business Development at American Express, "Amex distributes a plasticized gift certificate that allows the reward earner to spend anywhere AMex is accepted. This reward allows the reward earner to get whatever they want, because everyone is unique. The card ordering is automated; the end user client can brand it with their company logo or branding (wallet real estate)." Stored value debit cards are a new way of giving instant cash for points earned. Cards can now be given to employees and if there is a point system, points can instantly be converted to money

on the cards.

If, for example, the card happened to be a VISA or AMex card, the employee could *immediately* redeem the points at any place that accepts VISA or AMex. For instance, an employee could earn $20 worth of points, go to their account on the Internet to make the conversion, and instantly redeem these points at a restaurant or an ATM machine. The card itself is a visible, tangible and separate instrument that helps the employee relate their performance to the incentive.

Another option, in addition to stored value cards, is that organizations can now offer employees the option of transferring their points directly to cash balances on PayPal. Many employees take advantage of this reward by going directly to eBay to redeem their points. The bidding element of eBay adds a dimension of fun to the incentive program as well. The Snowfly system makes use of stored value cards, PayPal, gift certificates, but also takes technology one step further and adds a gaming component to the incentive program, making it fun to redeem points.

Studies show companies with an employee reward system achieve higher sales levels and productivity than their cohorts without similar systems. The downside is employee incentive programs tend to get old fast for many different reasons. Employees get bored. The rewards don't change. The rewards don't reflect what the employees want. For any number of reasons, keeping motivation up is an ongoing job and employers are constantly looking for the next great incentive – something employees want and that will motivate them to achieve organizational goals.

New technology has made it possible to give cash a facelift, make it appear more like merchandise, but allow employees to choose what merchandise they want, and thus make money more acceptable and effective as a human motivator. Technology has allowed people to perform and *instantly* be rewarded with cash and then use this to get what they want as a reward. Given the current state of incentive programs, perhaps it is time to revisit the use of money as a performance incentive and consider using money as motivator in conjunction with tangible (merchandise like) stored value and PayPal cards which allow recipient choices. Perhaps we can have our cake and eat it to. Why have just cash **or** carry? Why can't we have both?

About the authors:

Dawn McCoy is a Certified Human Resources Professional and has an MBA. She teaches University courses in Business and Human Resources and is a freelance business writer. She can be reached at e-lynx@shaw.ca.

Brooks Mitchell, PhD is the founder of Snowfly Performance Incentives (www.snowfly.com), and developer of a game-based approach to performance incentives. He is a professor of Business at the University of Wyoming. He can be reached for more information on the Snowfly system at bmitchell@brooksmitchell.com.

CASE STUDY

Electric Insurance Company (EIC), a nationwide direct writer of property & casualty insurance for over 35 years and benefits provider for the General Electric Company, was looking for a software solution to create digital dashboards (sometimes referred to as "cockpits") with views into performance data for call center operations. In particular, the company required a highly flexible product that could support an exacting set of Six Sigma calculations and process metrics across the company's three call centers.

The company was using an industry-leading business intelligence product and data integration tool to gather, report on, and analyze customer and financial data, but these tools could not provide adequate digital dashboards, reports and analysis to meet their specific call center requirements. An additional objective was to introduce automated, web-based agent performance reports to improve agent accountability and self-correction. At the time, agents received monthly summaries of their performance on key measures from their supervisors.

Electric Insurance selected the Merced Performance Suite, which integrated data from systems ranging from ACDs to workforce scheduling to a mainframe sales system. Personalized, role-based dashboards were created so agents could see an updated view on their performance stats, where executives could see several dashboards with summary information on all aspects of operations - productivity, cost and quality, with the ability to drill down into detail for root cause analysis.

With Merced, the company was able to reduce by over 50% the amount of time analysts and managers spent preparing reports. The company reported that some analyses that previously had taken 2 days could be conducted in 10 minutes due to Merced's centralized data store and analysis features. Most significantly, Merced's product allowed EIC's call center management to analyze aspects of their operations that were previously too labor intensive to perform on a regularly recurring basis.

The company also chose to deploy Merced's workflow features including Forms and Alerts. With Alerts, all levels of management could receive emails when performance was not meeting target thresholds. With Forms, the company could comply with a critical Six Sigma requirement — the tracking of processes which were previously paper-based. With Merced, several processes were automated including the hiring of new agents, tracking customer follow-up phone calls by agents, and collecting "Voice of Customer" feedback from customers. Metrics were created for each of these processes (e.g., % late call-backs) which were then added to management dashboards.

By actively using Merced's data analysis tools and work flow features, Electric Insurance has reduced productivity variation by 16% to its lowest level in 13 months, despite a continuing influx of new hires. It has gained greater insight into its processes, notably improving its sensitivity to the concerns of its customers and has used this knowledge to reduce justified customer complaints a consistent 50% year over year

since 2001. ■

COMPANY PROFILES

The LOMASelect(r) Customer Service Suite offers a range of tools to assist you in the hiring and development of your company's call center and contact center employees. With LOMASelect, you'll hire employees that can do, will do, and like to do customer service work-thereby improving morale, raising performance, and decreasing turnover. The tools in the suite include:

Can They Do It?
High-tech, high-touch contact centers require specific skills. Unless you evaluate candidates in every aspect of their potential job responsibilities, you can't know how they'll perform-and that can cost you a bundle. LOMASelect(r) REPeValuator uses a Web-based simulation to assess how candidates really perform in the call center hot seat.

Will They Last?
You can choose candidates with the right skills to do the job, but if they aren't a good fit for a customer service environment, you can face high turnover, low morale and big expenses. LOMASelect(r)-Service Index measures a candidate's preference for working in a customer service environment.

LOMASelect(r) will help you to get a clear picture of who you hire.

For more information:
Visit www.loma.org/LOMASelectCustSvcSuite.asp
E-mail empselect@loma.org
Call 770-984-6450 ■

Amcat Offers Company Case Studies On Line

Amcat, a leader in inbound outbound contact center solutions, researches customer case studies that allow their prospective customers to understand how other companies in their sector are solving problems and improving productivity and thus are enhancing their overall profitability or competitive position. The studies closely examine the practical issues with which Amcat and others within the industry are often confronted. Studies can be searched on their website at www.amcat.com by industry, problem and solution

Recent Case Studies:

Postnet: Loans & Mortgage
Vilcol: Debt Collection
Allserve: Outsourced call center
Cerebra: Fundraising

Amcat invites you to learn more about Amcat by viewing their library of online case studies at www.amcat.com.

Amcat and USA Digital Communications, an Amcat subsidiary, will be participating in the upcoming ATA Convention and Expo, September 25-28 in San Diego, California.
Go to ATAConnect.org or www.amcat.com for more information.

Amcat Technology Wins CRM Excellence Award By Helping Mobile Phone e-tailer Reduce Customer Churn

Amcat's contact center technology has been awarded the "CRM Excellence award" from Customer Interaction Solutions magazine in its July 2005 issue. The award recognizes how Amcat's inbound & outbound unified contact management system has enabled a growing online mobile phone e-tailer, e2Save.com (part of CarPhone Warehouse) to take a proactive stance to reduce customer churn. For more information, go to www.amcat.com.

Amcat Customer Care Sets the Standard for Service

One of the areas that distinguishes Amcat from other companies is the dedication and skill of the Amcat Customer Care Team. It is made up of some of the finest and most skilled engineers in the software field. These fine software engineers frequently receive unsolicited praise from the Amcat customers they serve.

These days when service is

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often a cost item that is downplayed or outsourced, it's refreshing to see a team that goes the 'extra mile' for the customer. Please read the following unsolicited letter from an Amcat customer:

American Fidelity Group, July 2005

"American Fidelity Group would like to express our sincere appreciation for the superior customer service provided by one of your colleagues, Josh Wilsie. His 'can do' attitude along with incredible flexibility has proven to be most helpful. As we've experienced some system difficulties beyond our control, Josh has been extremely helpful in finding resolution to the problems- he's even managed to turn these misfortunes into positive situations.

Josh has an incredible work ethic and his passion for what he does has made a tremendous impact on all of us at American Fidelity Group. We are encouraged to know that Amcat can professionally handle any issue we may encounter as we continue to grow and develop. Knowing that individuals like Josh will be there to guide and support us is a huge comfort for our staff."

Thanks to the Amcat Customer Care Team for a job 'well done'!

Amcat wins 'Effective IT Award 2005' Children's Charity is named as Most Effective Software Project

Edmond, Oklahoma, 13th July, 2005 - Amcat, a global leader in call center technology solutions, together with children's charity, Cerebra won a prestigious award for 'Most Effective Software Project', part of the annual Effective IT Awards, sponsored by Information Age magazine. The winner was selected from more than 400 entries.

■

PRODUCT PROFILE

FilesX's Tapeless Branches™ Safeguards Call Centers' Data

Offering a complete, centrally managed backup and recovery solution for call centers with multiple offices, improves data protection, eliminates tape, and lowers total cost of ownership

FilesX, dedicated to enabling a Tapeless Enterprise™ environment through a set of disk-based short-to-long term data protection solutions, provides call centers a 24/7, centralized backup & recovery solution. Tapeless Branches helps global multi-site call centers consolidate all backup & recovery processes from their worldwide offices into one or more Data Centers, thus eliminating the tape-based backup infrastructure in all these remote locations along with the high operational costs associated with it.

"While enterprises commit significant resources for protecting their corporate data centers", said Alon Cohen, Chairman of FilesX, "data generated at the branch level is often backed up using costly and unreliable traditional tape-based backup solutions. Even worse, some companies use disaster recovery only solutions such as replication, thus ignoring operational recovery regulations and needs".

Unlike Replication only solutions, FilesX has created a comprehensive solution built from the ground up to cover all aspects necessary for a true Tapeless Branches™ environment including:
A local short-term data protection solution on disks for each of the branches.
Data consolidation over the Internet for cloning backup repositories into the main data center.
Tape backup integration for long-term archiving of branch data in the main Data Center.

"Dealing with IT issues at remote locations is a complex challenge for many organizations", said Steve Duplessie, an analyst with Enterprise Storage Group, "FilesX' Tapeless Branches not only reduces costs by eliminating tape from the equation, but also eliminates the 'I forgot to do it' excuse that is the cause of many remote data storage issues."

As a centralized and fully automated solution, Tapeless Branches™ eliminates the operational and infrastructure costs associated with tape-based backup solutions. It takes advantage of the existing data protection infrastructure of the main data center, offers a quick return on investment for each and every remote office that is migrated into it and ensures full compliance with disaster as well as operational recovery regulations.

About FilesX

FilesX Inc. is revolutionizing the Backup & Recovery market by enabling a true Tapeless Enterprise™ environment. The Company's **3-Tier Block-Level Data Protection Technology™** overcomes the **durability**, **mobility** and **capacity** barriers of disk-based backup technologies thus enabling Global Enterprises to upgrade their existing mixture of Tape & Disk-based backup solutions to an advanced, purely disk-based, long-term data protection infrastructure.

Backed by an ever-growing customer base and some of the world's most successful venture capitalists, including Benchmark Capital, Index Ventures and Genesis Venture Partners, FilesX is headquartered in Southborough, Mass. and located throughout the US and Europe. More information can be found at www.filesx.com.

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Ripple Effect Communications
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■

The Virtual Support Engineer: Redefining Service & Support for the 21st Century
By Adi Dulberg

For several years, we have listened to colleagues recount horror stories surrounding CRM and support system rollouts that have fallen well short of expectations.

"My costs far exceeded the original budget estimate…our customers still experienced continued delays in problem resolution – even after implementation."

"System crashes are still a major problem and we're losing customers – and revenue – as a result."

Any of these complaints sound familiar?

With the ever-increasing dependence of businesses on technology, system and network availability are key to bottom line performance. And when it comes to complex, business-critical systems that serve at the backbone of global, 24X7 systems and applications, availability is critical to profitability and survival.

The Virtual Support Engineer

Some progressive, forward-thinking organizations have realized that the only real solution for today's customer-service starved world can be found by examining (and eventually replacing) the antiquated, reactive service and support methodology used by most enterprises. These visionaries of whom we speak – those who are truly interested and are doing something to provide their customers with the best-possible service and support – have adopted an innovative new tack: **proactive** support.

Proactive support implies taking the *initiative* to locate, identify and diagnose problems at their most nascent stage, and having the technical means to deliver rapid problem resolution so that a customer's system can continue to run and be available 24X7.

This approach **empowers vendors** to provide rapid support and problem resolution, ensuring constant system availability and revenue continuity, while simultaneously increasing system efficiency and lowering service costs.

Called the "**Virtual Support Engineer**," this proactive service and support model is based on a new paradigm that enables vendors to virtually "be there" 24X7, monitoring the systems for which they are responsible, identifying and detecting problem symptoms. As this new service model enables early problem detection, resolution can be achieved at the root – *before* it manifests itself in the system – therefore preventing service disruptions and downtime.

Automation of preventive maintenance and remote support activities is no longer a "nice to have" - **it's a must**. Technical support departments across all vertical industries, including telecom, finance, healthcare, are adopting support automation technologies to improve their level of support and reduce their support costs.

Think about today's hyper-competitive telecom jungle; the offer of converged telecommunications services drives subscriber growth at an incredible rate, and with a constant stream of functionality additions, supporting increasingly complex networks and systems is a daunting challenge that demands a more proactive, results-driven support strategy.

Or, consider a Hospital Information Systems vendor (HISV) supporting hundreds of hospitals, each one having a number of database and application servers. Downtime of its information systems can create absolute chaos in possible life or death situations. If patient data cannot be retrieved or updated, and many business, or in this case, life-critical activities are delayed, this costly disruption could truly result in fatalities.

Also relevant – in our global, constantly evolving financial markets - is accurate, up to the minute data around the clock, which today is a prerequisite for success. But when underlying information systems experience outages or downtime, services are severely affected, resulting in significant revenue losses. Also of note, compliance with the Sarbanes Oxley act of 2002 further adds to the complexity and cost of maintaining and supporting financial systems.

Unfortunately, the ugly truth remains that service and support professionals are caught in a vicious cycle: the only way they can manage this increased demand for service and support from their existing and new customers is to hire new teams of support engineers and force them to work 24 hours a day.

But with few, if any support teams receiving increased financial allocations, this "solution" will not help achieve the sweeping changes that most in our industry are crying out for. In fact, most support professionals will tell you that they are increasingly being told to deliver more (results) with less (financial support).

And let's face it, the harsh reality for today's service and support PRO, is that in the 21st century world of corporate belt tightening, we all serve two masters: our CFO who demands financial conservation, and our customers, who demand – and deserve – state of the art service and support. Rarely is there an opportunity to truly satisfy both – **until the Virtual Support Engineer, as part of the proactive paradigm, came along**.

Once the "Virtual Support Engineer" detects a problem symptom, an advanced alarm, coupled with related configuration and log files, is sent to the tech support engineer who then uses the information to diagnose the problem and **immediately address it at the root**.

Being proactive doesn't just stop at monitoring systems, it also means performing other tasks such as automated preventive maintenance, inventory updates, software distribution and more. Automating these tasks not only increases system uptime, but also dramatically improves support team efficiency and effectiveness,, and allows the **same team to support many more customers**, thus enabling vendors to scale. The result – downtime prevention that ensures customer satisfaction and significantly lowers service costs to keep our CFO happy.

It's Judgment Day. No longer can we justify the expenditures, recurring travel expenses, or investment in new infrastructure to provide support that does not even guarantee SLA requirements.

The answer – a simple change of approach that will not only help deliver truly superior support, but will also protect profitability, customer loyalty and dramatically improve customer satisfaction.

The Decision is yours.

For additional information on NextNine, please visit www.nextnine.com. ■

Virtual-Agent® SERVICES

Virtual-Agent Services (www.vagent.com), a privately held company headquartered in Schaumburg, IL, is a unique provider of contact center solutions for today's demanding customer care industry. Servicing a wide range of industries including roadside assistance, catalog sales, travel and hospitality, and utility services, VAS provides a variety of support options that include inbound sales and customer service, customer account maintenance, credit management, and travel reservations. VAS' efforts have earned the company numerous accolades, including recognition from both Entrepreneur and Inc. magazines and a number of prestigious awards.

VAS has elevated the expectations of contact center customers and their clients by focusing on service quality as well as price. By pioneering a new ACD application that allows smaller contact centers to access a single central telephone connection, VAS has brought work to areas with smaller but more highly skilled groups of workers. The result is better service, higher retention of experienced agents, increased customer satisfaction, and demand by companies requiring qualified agents capable of handling complex inbound service calls and queries.

Contact VAS today at 888.827.7253 or sales@vagent.com

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Contact VAS today at 888.827.7253 or

News

SlashSupport sets up support center in California.

SlashSupport, the technology support services company announced the opening of a new support center in San Jose, California. It is SlashSupport's sixth center (adding to its existing four locations in India and a redundancy center in Singapore). SlashSupport is a part of Cybernet Software Systems (CSS) Group.

###

Avaya Helps Allstate Insurance Company Enhance Customer Service With IP Telephony

BASKING RIDGE, N.J., — Avaya Inc. a leading global provider of business communications applications, systems and services, announced today that Allstate Insurance Company has deployed Avaya Internet protocol (IP) telephony solutions to new locations in the U.S. and Canada.

###

Workforce Management Best of Show Awarded to IEX at ICCM 2005

TotalView recognized for ease of integration, implementation, system quality and customer service features

RICHARDSON, TEXAS: At this year's ICCM Conference & Exposition, held at the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas, IEX Corporation, a Tekelec company (Nasdaq: TKLC), was named the recipient of the Best of Show Award for its TotalView® Workforce Management system. Best of Show Awards honor exhibitors and products with the greatest potential to change the future of the contact center industry.

###

Dendrite Launches New 360° Support Center Designed Specifically for the Needs of the Pharmaceutical Industry

Bedminster, NJ, - Dendrite International, Inc. (NASDAQ: DRTE) a leading provider of sales, marketing, clinical and compliance solutions for the life sciences industry, has launched 360° Support Center, one of the industry's leading pharmaceutical-specific sales support services.

The launch of Dendrite's 360° Support Center comes as the

ICCM Conference & Expo Announces 2005 Best of Show Awards

Las Vegas, NV – Questex Media Group, Inc. announced the recipients of its sixth annual ICCM Conference & Expo "Best of Show" Awards, honoring exhibitors and products with the best potential to change the future of the contact center industry.

Best of Show Award winners for ICCM 2005 include:

Category	***Winner***	***Product***
Contact Distribution Systems	Telephony@Work	CallCenterAnywhere Version 8.0
Desktop/Agency Productivity Tools	Ericsson	Solidus eCare 4.1
Call Monitoring/Recording Systems	Witness Systems	Impact 360
Workforce Management Products	IEX Corporation,	The TotalView
A Tekelec Company		Workforce Management System v3.9
Voice Processing Products	Aspect Communications	Aspect Customer Self-Service (CSS) v7.1
Reporting Tools	Symon Communications Inc.	Symon Digital Appliance/SDA-500 Series
Training/Education	The Call Center School	Masters Series in Call Center
Management-Web Seminar		Outbound Dialers SER Solutions, Inc.CPS Enterprise Edition
Curriculum		(CPS E2™)
	VoIP ApplicationsInteractive Intelligence, Inc.	Interaction Director®
Agent Performance	NICE Systems	NICE Perform
Optimization Solutions		
Other Best of Show	SafeHarbor Technology Corporation	SafeHarbor SmartSupport™
Other Best of Show	VoxifyVoxify	Automated Agents™

pharmaceutical industry faces a myriad of new challenges, including more rigid state and federal compliance regulations, waning blockbuster drug pipelines and increased revenue attainment pressures. These challenges demand support offerings that are rooted in the deepest understanding of the industry, as opposed to horizontal support services that claim easy adaptability. The 360° Support Center offers an enhanced and pharma-specific help desk service that enables users to dramatically enhance their productivity. Dendrite's 360° Support Center features several differences compared with horizontal help desk offerings, including:

o Help Desk Institute Certified staff experienced in supporting SFA and CRM applications, third party software applications, diverse communication applications, multiple MS Office Suite applications and operating systems;

o Sample Compliance Assistance: Dendrite's 360° Support Center guides a sales representative through the complicated regulatory process involved in sample management; and

o Support focused on solving customer problems: many IT Help Desks concentrate efforts on resolving just the technical issues rather than the entire scope of the customer's problems

###

CHECK POINT ADVANCES VIRTUALIZED SECURITY SOLUTION ON NGX UNIFIED SECURITY PLATFORM

REDWOOD CITY, Calif. –Check Point® Software Technologies Ltd. (NASDAQ: CHKP), the worldwide leader in securing the Internet, has announced the introduction of VPN-1® VSX™ (Virtual System Extension) NGX™, the latest version of the company's innovative virtualized security gateway that provides unmatched security protection and simplified deployment and management for complex security environments. VPN-1 VSX NGX is an integrated VPN/firewall solution designed for enterprise and service provider customers that protects multiple networks by utilizing up to 250 virtualized security gateways running on a single hardware platform – reducing hardware costs and complexity. The new version has just been added to the NGX platform, a unified security architecture for Check Point's perimeter, internal and Web security solutions.

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MOHR PARTNERS NAMES VAN POWER AS MANAGING PARTNER

DALLAS — Mohr Partners Inc., an international corporate real estate advocate, announced that Van Power, former principal and president of Arledge/Power Real Estate Group, has joined the firm as a new managing partner. In addition to representing corporate tenants, Mr. Power will also lead the firm's Global Call Center Services.

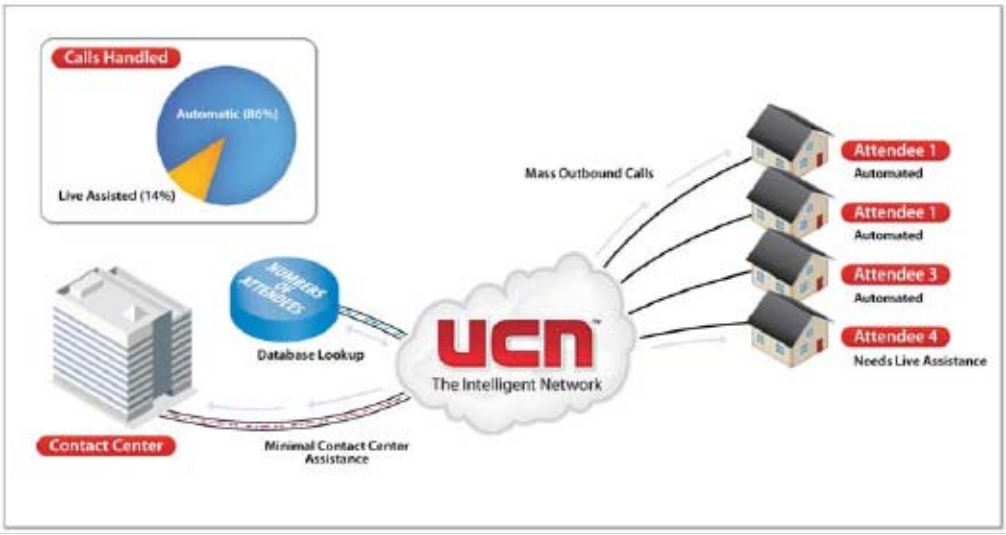
Mr. Power specializes in representing corporate tenants throughout the United States, Canada, Caribbean, Mexico, and the United Kingdom, combining comprehensive office, industrial, and build-to-suit market knowledge with 25 years negotiating experience. He has unique expertise in municipal and state/provincial incentive negotiations and site selection for the telecommunications industry, and has negotiated numerous call centers and service center locations throughout North America.

inContact™
PRODUCT IN PRACTICE

Automated Announcement Broadcaster

Time is money

Spoken communication has long been regarded as one of the most universal and effective forms of communicating. But when communicating with large groups of people using the telephone it can be time consuming, tedious, and expensive. With UCN this can be automated, making it faster, easier, and less expensive with the same or better results. UCN's Automated Announcement Broadcasting solution is an efficient and effective way of quickly communicating with a large number of people.



Reminders and more

A US-based time management company offers time management seminars throughout the country as well as personalized time management products to accompany the training. When a client registers for a time management seminar, they also order personalized time management products to use at the seminar. The company has historically had problems with people forgetting the date or location of the seminar and missing the training. As a result, credits must be issued, the customer must register for another seminar in the future, and the company ends up with an expensive inventory of personalized products. Another problem the company frequently faced is backorders for the personalized materials resulting in customers at the training without the materials they requested.

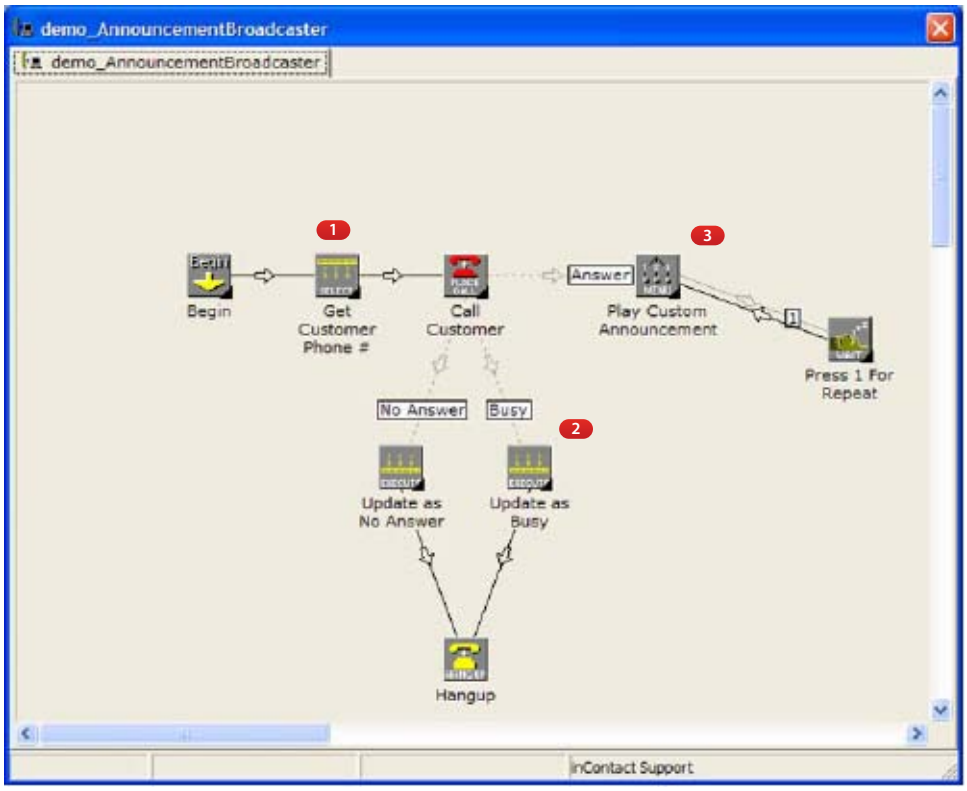
Two automated announcement broadcasters were implemented to solve these problems. First, the list of registered attendees of upcoming seminars are automatically called within 2 business days of the seminar and reminded about the date, time, and location of the seminar. The announcement starts with a friendly standard greeting then speaks their name, the name of the seminar and the date, time and location of the seminar, ending with a service number to call if they have any questions.

The second process was initiated to support backorder situations. In this case, the automated announcement broadcast begins with an automated greeting, thanking the customer for their seminar registration. Then the system announces that one of the items in their order is backordered and will be not be ready for the seminar. The system speaks the name of the item and offers the attendee a couple of options:

The first option maintains the order, which will be shipped as soon as it is available, and confirms that standard temporary materials will be available for the customer when they arrive at the seminar. The second option immediately transfers the customer to an agent so that the person can order something different which will be available at the time of the seminar. Finally, the caller is given a service number to contact if they have any questions about their order.

Better attendance and happier customers

The company found that in the first few months of implementing the seminar reminder announcement broadcaster, the number of absentees dropped significantly. All that was needed was a little reminder, and attendance was improved significantly.



In its most basic form, the automated announcement broadcaster gets a number from a database, places the call, detects the state of the call (busy, ring no answer), then plays a pre-recorded message to the person who answers the phone. 1. Customer numbers are selected, then automatically dialed. 2. The system detects an answer. 3. The pre-recorded message is played with an option to repeat.

(The solution samples depicted here were built using inControl, a rapid application development tool that comes with the inContact suite. InControl features a visual drag-and-drop user interface for creating contact management flows tailored to meet the specific needs of a business.)

(Continued from front)

The company also reduced the number of complaints about backordered items by having a system in place that informed the customer ahead of time of the situation and giving them a set of alternative options. This increase in customer satisfaction was credited with higher sales of additional time management products.

CLASSIFIEDS/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

Job Title: Business Systems Specialist: IRC1982

Job Information:
Ohio Savings Bank's Customer Contact Center (CCC) is looking for a Business System Specialist. The BSS will provide on-going evaluations of Call Center technology, processes, and procedures measuring the effectiveness of each. Make recommendations for improvements / possible replacement of systems. Implement approved enhancements in a timely manner. Qualifications are Bachelor's degree in related field or equivalent experience. A minimum 3 yrs experience with Call Center systems such as, Voice Response Units, CRM's and ACD's. Moderate to Advanced knowledge of telephony systems. 3-5 years minimum Call Center experience needed. Preferred experience with Speech VRU and Nortel Call Center Systems.

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(A Call Center Times' guide to providers of call center products and services)

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General Information: info@callcenterscheduler.com
Customer Support: support@callcenterscheduler.com
E-mail: wayne.shaw@callcenterscheduler.com

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Phone: 954-720-6242

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Diane Berenbaum
Senior Vice President
Communico Ltd.
(203) 226-7117
Diane.berenbaum@communicoltd.com

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Envision
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Contact Information: Global Response
Wendy Shooster, Vice President
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For more information, visit http://www.iex.com, e-mail iexinfo@iex.com or call 800-433-7692.

http://www.iex.com/TotalView/overview.htm

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Contact Information:
Donald Edman, VP
email: donald.edman@rsa.fiserv.com
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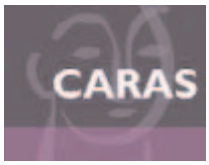

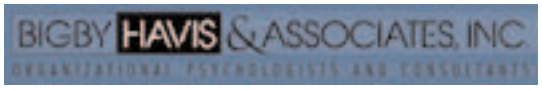

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