

Call Center Times

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Examining the Benefits and Concerns of the Virtual Call Center Platform

By Darren C. Prine, Director of Strategic Partnerships,
Northwinds Contact Solutions

The economy and companies needing to cut their overhead to a more manageable cost are two of the most popular reasons why the virtual solution is getting attention. Ironically however the virtual call center offers many other benefits to both the company and the employee working from home. Businesses may find these at home work centers much more beneficial than they ever imagined.

Besides the money saved in real estate costs on switching to a virtual call center, the greatest savings could essentially be for employees. Whether or not we realize it, there is a cost associated with going to work every day, and for some a fairly substantial cost when you multiply it by the amount of days in a year they travel to and from work. Costs such as gas, car maintenance and repairs, dry cleaning, day care or afterschool care, all amount to a considerable cost depending on the distance traveled everyday and whether or not day care is needed. Either way, "work from home" employees have the opportunity to save money with this solution and those savings can essentially become those of the company. Because the idea of working from home is appealing to so many individuals, most often workers are willing to take a reduction in salary in exchange for their virtual option.

A common concern amongst companies of the virtual call center is

productivity and client satisfaction/retention. Though arguments for both sides appear to be valid and make sense taking a look at other companies who have implemented the "work from home" solution and how their productivity has fared would be the most accurate measurement. Alpine Access one of the largest virtual call centers reported finding employees to actually work more hours in a work from home environment. Due to the opportunity to log on at any time of the day from their home computer makes it easy to get work done after standard business hours or during the hours they would normally be in an office. Jim Ball, cofounder and managing partner of Alpine Access responded to companies that have employee production concerns by saying that these were often companies plagued with cultural issues and those that have little trust in their workers. To be successful in any economic climate, companies need a business model

that is very cost-effective and takes advantage of virtual work practices, according to Chuck Wilsker, a member of the Worldwide Workplace Council and President and CEO of the [Telework Coalition](#). "Everything companies need to create a virtual work environment is readily available. The strategies are simple to use and low cost," he said.

Switching from an in house call center to a virtual one can be scary for companies who are concerned about the quality and or quantity of their business however with the help of a managed service provider trained in implementing these call centers and knowing what to expect will make the transition a much smoother one. Trusting in the abilities and responsibility of your staff is the first step to a successful transition. After all, lack of trust and ability in an employee to do the same job in a different location should pose the question of their ability to do it in house also, shouldn't it?

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RANTS & RAVES!

Randomly Timed Musings

Do It Once or Do It Over - The Humpty Dumpty Syndrome

By Kathleen M. Peterson
Chief Vision Officer, PowerHouse Consulting, Inc.

Let's pretend that Humpty Dumpty is playing the role of *single call resolution* - today's Holy Grail of measuring effectiveness and efficiency in today's Contact Centers (as a Quality measure the jury is still out).

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall

All the King's horses and all the King's men

*Couldn't put Humpty together again
Humpty Dumpty makes a call*

Humpty Dumpty suffers a stall

All the Agent tools and Management Zen

Couldn't keep Humpty from calling again

So there on the wall sits the fragile egg, just looking for an answer. The "stall" Humpty suffers represents the fractured processes that prevent frontline agents from having at their disposal the information, tools, and "permission" to resolve customer concerns. Consequently, Humpty is going to have to call back or be called back. Regardless of the agent's

amiability, Humpty's need will not be met and the Holy Grail of single call resolution will not be achieved.

Oftentimes today, the resolution of customer problems is severely delayed and the quality of the interaction is compromised due to *dysfunctional cross-functional relationships and processes* that are in place. Sadly, this means actually deploying "obstacles" to the swift resolution that customers seek. Cross-functional dysfunction is the number one reason that the achievement of single call resolution eludes many. The situation may be due to systems, fiefdoms, or just plain dumdums!

I had to laugh to myself when visiting a Call Center whose management wanted frontline agents to "practice single call resolution" in an environment where systems were so dysfunctional that *multiple* contacts were required. There simply wasn't a way for frontline agents to "practice single call resolution" on their own. This outcome can only be achieved via systems, processes, relationships, and leaders that are aligned to each other. The frontline certainly has its role from a quality and interaction perspective. But agents do not implement systems or design processes; they interact with them.

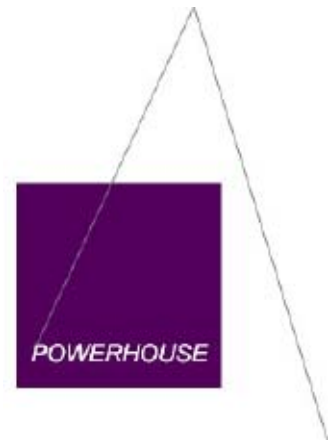
I have also encountered managers who assume that a totally "scripted" call will achieve single call resolution. Unfortunately, this strategy forces agents into a robotic and simplistic set of responses. It quite incorrectly assumes that the script will have the

ability to predict the caller's behaviors. This is highly unlikely! There is little point in recruiting people that are smart and possess "good communication skills" only to strip them of the privilege of using their brains once they log into the system for their shift. Here are some examples that illustrate why "true" first call resolution is often elusive and sometimes impossible.

I recall a conversation with the warranty department of my auto manufacturer. The only phrase the agent used to address my stated displeasure was, "I'm only authorized to apologize." That's the script - just keep saying it over and over. Trust me; this may be first call resolution. But it is the last car purchased from this manufacturer! Forget lifetime value!

I once observed calls at an insurance company where an agent had to inform a caller that his claim had been denied (the caller's *fifth attempt* to get status)! The caller went ballistic. The agent handled it deftly, but at the end of the call asked, "Is there anything else I can help you with today?" Well, the caller went even more ballistic. After the call I said to the agent, "I'm curious. Why would you ask a question like that at the end of the call? His response was, "I have to; it's worth 5 points on our quality score." *Somebody help me here. Is logic any longer relevant?* That is the risk when the scriptwriter or architect doesn't factor into the requirement some space for logic. UGH ...

Consider the department in which sales agents' objectives are based on



RANTS & RAVES!

Randomly Timed Musings

total calls *into* the unit - despite the fact that 40% of incoming calls must be transferred to other areas due to dysfunctional front-end IVR menu routing. Sales agents spend time transferring hopelessly lost and frustrated callers to other departments - transforming a would-be savvy sales operation into a switchboard function. Despite the discovery of these realities, the IVR menu remains in its same sorry state and sales objectives remain unmet (of course). But perhaps the most significant impact is declining morale - agents that were hired to sell, and whose compensation packages are linked to "closing" sales, are hogtied by handling misdirected calls. This situation is a challenge to correct due to the sheer number of departments, regions, managers, etc., required to correct it. IT "owns" the IVR. However, the IVR serves multiple departments which can cause limitations related to versions, capacity, etc. In a sense, there seems to be a regional tribal mentality that thrives on handling calls that are bounced around. This validates a load large enough for all departments to continue to exist.

Last week I had the opportunity to learn more about "unified communications." A vendor was demonstrating many wonderful methods to improve access to knowledge about an individual's availability for quicker entry to roles and/or skills needed to resolve questions or issues. This is not a new concept for the Call Center; for decades managers have been able to

monitor the status and availability of agents. However, processes that require support from another department often leave the agent with little choice but to promise a "call back" due to required, but unavailable, cross-functional resources. Until now, peripheral support operations have been entirely invisible to the CSR in need. With unified communications platforms, other departments are able to make the status of their knowledge workers visible to others via a "presence" function feature. Truly, this seems like a wonderful idea. The technology is proven and available; but there will be human and organizational challenges.

The biggest challenge I see with unified communications is that so many organizations today are so cross-functionally dysfunctional, there may be much to be done before lifting the comfortable veil of invisibility. How willing are cross-functional departments in offering their people to lend real-time support to a Call Center or other department? Consider this conversation: "Hey, guess what? I want to list your staff in my Call Center agents' *presence folder* for expert advice on ... (fill in the blank on whatever process requires external support)." I have witnessed plenty of folks reading the caller ID and refusing to answer because they do not want to "get involved" in "someone else's" problem!

This type of technology brings up lots of questions regarding the effectiveness, stability, and overall

functionality of processes, procedures, and access to real-time information needed to truly achieve and measure first call resolution. So if you find that you have a few of your own Humpty Dumpty customers/callers out there, the fix is not likely to come in the form of a new performance metric. Single call resolution must be put in place first to measure process, and last to assess any individual contributor's ability to properly utilize the process - not the other way around.

Identifying and documenting cross-functional dysfunction is generally a good place to start when single call resolution is on executives' minds. Silos (and other dysfunctional organizational relationships) create more customer experience failures than frontline agents ever could. Management at every level may have a Zen-like focus on single call resolution and think that it just might happen simply by imagining it.

No so! So get to the real work. Look around at exactly what relationships, processes, procedures, and budgets get in the way. *What will prevent Humpty Dumpty's stall and requirement for a second call?* Answer that question effectively and you are on the way to long-term and sustainable single call resolution!

(#30, *Do It Once or Do It Over - The Humpty Dumpty Syndrome, September 2009*)

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

9/22 – “Lasting Impressions: A Customer Feedback Case Study” -Verint -

What happens when a provider of semi-custom printed materials implements customer feedback as part a four-part workforce optimization strategy to find out what its customers really think about its services? The

answers may surprise you! Join us for an interview with Cory Gallagher, Director of Customer Service at “Midwest Call Center, a Navitor™ Company”. Learn how Cory and team also drive business and workforce optimization results as they enhance customer service across the organization.

http://crmexchange.com/webcast/verintsept09_feedback.asp

9/24 – Squeezing Significant and Hidden Value Out of Your Contact Center Strategic Plan- Bay

Bridge Decision Technologies This webcast will discuss the individual modeling technologies that will improve your current planning process and an

exciting class of commercially available contact center solutions, the Strategic Planning System. We will also discuss the areas of efficiency improvement, and the significant, but before now hidden, benefit you'll achieve by improving your planning process.

<http://www.crmexchange.com/webcast/baybridgesept09.asp>

9/29 “Self-Service ROI Fact and Fiction: Leading Experts Tell It Like It is” - Voxify

What steps can you take to get the full ROI from your speech self service? How can you ensure that you're getting the best possible performance from your speech applications once they're up and running? Join a distinguished panel of leading vendors in the industry, moderated by Speech Strategy News publisher Bill Meisel, as they answer your questions about how to extract the most value from self-service solutions.

<http://crmexchange.com/Webcast/VoxifySept09.asp>

###



Telephone Essentials

Send your frontline staff to telephone skills training without leaving the building! Learn how to:

Effectively open, close, and transfer a call

Create professional voice mail greetings and messages that get results

Choose the right words to turn negative statements into positive ones

Avoid "bad word" choices

Handle complaint calls

Turn around an angry caller

The Call Center School brings this essential training program right to your call center - via the Internet. Gather your frontline staff - as many as you want - for this hugely popular three-part training series. Every single person in your call center can benefit from learning these telephone basics and you can send an unlimited number of students to class for 90 minutes each week for one low price!

Do the Math

The regular cost for a single session is \$300 per seminar connection or **\$750 for all three programs** - a savings of \$150! (If 20 reps participate, that's just \$37.50 per person for a comprehensive telephone skills program. At this price, can you afford NOT to participate?)

Note: In order to receive the special savings of \$150, be sure to enter the code **FF3Pack67**.

Dates, descriptions, and registration links for the three phone skills web seminars are listed below:
Thursday, September 24 (10:00 am Central)

Power Phrasing: Winning Word Choices for Effective Communications

There are two components of every telephone conversation - the vocal message and the verbal message. How we say something and the exact words we choose have a powerful impact on the outcome of the conversation. This session teaches the skill of choosing just the right word or phrase to send the best message. Learn how to say "no" in a positive manner by performing a "message makeover" and eliminating negative words and irritating phrases from your communication. You'll learn to identify caller communication styles and select the best words and phrases to build rapport with your customers. The end result will be callers who leave with a positive impression of you and your company.

Seminar attendees will learn to:

Describe the importance of selecting the right words to convey your message.

Avoid using negative phrases and wording and replace with more positive phrases.

Identify key phrases to work into speech to build confidence and rapport with each customer.

Identify visual words and phrases that can be used to demonstrate interest and support.

Outline ways to keep a call on track and arrive at a positive outcome.

[Registration](#)

Thursday, October 1 (10:00 am Central)

Tyrant Turnaround: Going from Difficult to Delighted Callers

Being on the frontline in a call center is a tough job, and it's made even tougher by the occasional (or frequent) caller who is complaining, angry, or even hostile. Add to the mix other challenging calls that are just mildly annoying such as talkative, confused, or just impatient. But any of these calls can have a positive side with the satisfaction of being able to turn a difficult call into a positive customer experience for both the agent and the caller. This

session provides "must have" techniques for dealing with all kinds of calls, from mildly irritating to very difficult. Students will learn specific vocabulary formulas and voice tone techniques to use to turn a stressful encounter into a positive interaction. Particular attention will be paid to reaching a successful outcome with every complaint call.

Seminar attendees will learn to:

Identify caller types and how to categorize them in order to select the right phone technique. Outline proven practices for handling complaints, so that these calls become a gift instead of a nuisance. Describe the steps for diffusing a caller's anger so a positive outcome can be reached. Practice voice tone techniques proven to turn around an angry or hostile caller. Outline steps to reduce stress after a challenging or difficult call.

[Registration](#)





Award-Winning Program

The Masters Series in Call Center Management web seminar curriculum from The Call Center School is the industry's most honored training program. It earned **Best of Show** honors at last year's International Call Center Management (ICCM) conferences as the industry's best training solution, as well as ContactCenterWorld.com's **Members Choice Award** for favorite training solution for four straight years. It has also earned honors as the **Product of the Year** from Customer Interaction Solutions magazine. Come see what the rave reviews are all about!

On-Site Classroom Training

Prefer a classroom environment for your training program? Let our faculty come to your site to deliver this training program to meet the specific needs of your staff. All three of the topics above can be combined into a comprehensive one-day program. Each day of on-site training costs \$3,200 plus the cost of student materials and instructor travel/living expenses.

Licensing

You can also license any of our award-winning content for use by your own trainers. It's a great way to fill in the gaps of your

current training program. Call us at 615-812-8400 if you'd like to learn more about in-house licensing.

Information and Registration

To register for the web classes or to talk to us about classroom training, simply call The Call Center School at 615-812-8400 or register via our secure online registration system. Happy learning!

[Registration](#)

Contact Us

The Call Center School
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615-812-8400

EVENT

ATA Convention Sessions Promise First-Rate Content to Contact Center Professionals

by Kim Brandt

ATA Director of Marketing & Member Acquisition

The 2009 American Teleservices Association (ATA) Convention & Expo, the only contact industry event focused specifically on operations, regulatory compliance and top-level business decisions, will offer programming to meet a variety of interests among attendees. During the convention at the Sheraton New Orleans, October 4-7, over 20 sessions are scheduled, all with a focus

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on the conference theme, "Answering the Call". Each session has also been categorized to aide participants in selecting the most appropriate content to meet their specific needs. Categories include: Analytics, Case Studies, Customer Experience, Government Relations, Human Capital, Research/Trends, Operations, Outsourcing, Risk Management, and Social Media.

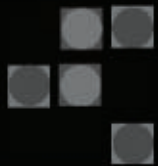
"ATA's content for 2009 has been designed to balance core operational strategies with new trends in the contact center," explains ATA CEO Tim Searcy. "I am especially

excited about the sessions that will focus on social media and the latest tools for unified communications. The ATA remains committed to consumer protection and delivery of an ideal customer experience, and our members will find that we've really taken their suggestions to heart in planning this conference. There is fresh content from some first-time ATA speakers, and many other that are 'back by popular demand'."

The 2009 ATA Convention will offer the following educational breakout sessions:

**Social Media: Impact on You & Your Business
What It All Means for Outsourcers
A Case Study in Increased Efficiency, Effectiveness & Empowerment
Creative Ideas for Recruiting and Retaining Top Talent
Purchasing Power Panel 911 – How to Answer the Call of a Government Investigation
Using What We Learned from the ATA: A Case Study on Agent Performance and Quality
Welcome to the Evolution – The Common Denominators of Successful Call Centers
360 Degrees of Customer**

**Care: Introducing Social Media to the Contact Center
Failure is Not an Option – The Audit and Certification Process
Capitalize Your Data for Acquisition, Retention and Growth
New Management Tools to Boost Call Center Revenues
Proven At-Home Agent Strategies: The Hilton@Home Story
Answering the Call to Reduce Employment Liability
The Case for Off-shoring
Why Smart People Do Stupid Things
Building a Customer Focused Culture
Bringing Jobs Back to**



Furnish your call center for optimal productivity.

Complimentary White Paper:
interiorconcepts.com/IC/Free-Info/

- The design of agent and supervisor stations can impact productivity.
- Various studies have shown that color factors into worker productivity. You can make a statement with color while keeping the furniture and surroundings generally neutral.
- The traffic flow of the call center floor is one area that is often overlooked. For tips on maintaining flow, visit the weblink above.
- It has been proven that attention to ergonomics can reduce repetitive motion injuries and costs associated with absenteeism and productivity.



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**America – Investing in Your Future
Agent Retention Through Positive Coaching
Compliance Talk
Using Social Networking and Emerging Channels for Customer Service
Federal and State Legislation Update
Using Speech Analytics to Get More Bank for the Quality Monitoring Buck
Using Inside Sales to Drive Revenue**

The speaker line-up for the ATA Convention includes representatives from companies such as Comcast Cable, Zappos.com, Hartford Life, American Express, Bank of America, and Disney. Presenters include some of the industry's leading legal

counsel, consultants, authors, certified auditors and contact center service providers.

For complete session descriptions, a detailed schedule of events, or to register to attend, see www.ata2009convention.org.

###

**The Silence of the Agents – Call Recording is Nothing to Fear
By Jeff Valentine, CEO, Callfinity**

Coming soon to a contact center near you. From the director/producer combo who brought you the sci-fi action-adventure "Automatic Distributor" and

the summer comedy "The Hang Up," comes the hack-and-slash thriller "The Night My Manager Implemented Call Recording." A contact center agent's worst nightmare comes true as his new manager begins to take a suspicious interest in his daily activity. After a quarterly review and two performance evaluations, our hero unravels an administrator's twisted plot to track his every move. For some contact center agents, the mere thought of call recording and screen capture causes panic. Like a scene from a dimly-lit horror film, agents feel the corporate shackle has them chained to their cubicle while sophisticated spy equipment tracks their every move. But this

theatrical trailer doesn't need to end in muffled screams. Once you remove the mask and dive into the soul of call recording, employees will realize that this 'bad guy' has a soft side. When utilized to its full potential, call recording can help agents become more productive, map out their career path, and increase their pay ... and that's nothing to be scared of. The primary reason many agents cringe at the thought of call recording is that no one has taken the time to put their mind at ease. Without a proper explanation, the true benefits of call recording may go unnoticed to anyone who isn't an administrator or manager. If your team still finds call

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Contact the decision makers at leading America's call centers (as well as call center directors in Canada and the UK)....

<http://www.callcentertimes.com/BookofLists/tabid/64/Default.aspx>

###

recording horrifying, perhaps it's time to disprove their initial perception with some enticing background information.

When faced with new contact center solutions, it's natural for employee's to ask "what's in it for me." They don't think that a call recording system can possibly aid them in their daily routine or help them lasso that team lead position that keeps getting away. If you want to know the truth, call recording benefits employees just as much as managers and team administrators.

Once your contact center team better understands this value, they can begin to assess various call recording features and figure out how these tools

can help them accomplish both professional and personal goals. If your business is searching for a new call recording solution or you feel your agents haven't yet warmed up to your existing call recording solution, it may be helpful to sit down with your team and list the ways call recording can be used to take each agent to the next step in their telecom career path. An effective call recording solution can be used to: Validate and refine existing training programs so employees are adequately prepared to operate software/hardware and properly serve customers.

Help employees answer difficult customer questions and improve their ability to react to re-occurring issues.

Improve productivity, attentiveness, and pride.

Identify areas where technique modifications may increase profitability.

Help employees provide superior customer care to valued clients.

Strengthen team morale by establishing concise goals.

Improve customer retention rates and workflow.

Aid employees with real-world examples they can easily implement.

Help pinpoint weak areas and transform them into strengths.

Enable organizations to share preferred customer care experiences with all employees.

Provide immediate feedback to agents using documented recordings.

Identify and evaluate high-performance employees.

Once your employees understand the true power of call recording, you should note that all of these bullet points can ultimately result in corporate recognition, promotion opportunities, and higher pay. Soon your agents will begin to embrace call recording instead of running in fear from the evil eye of big brother. It's up to the administrator to continuously reinforce these benefits by providing

consistent evaluations, sharing valuable calls with employees, and using audio files and metadata to locate and develop skills.

Unfortunately, not all call recording solutions make these tasks easy on contact center administrators.

Callfinity knows just how important ease of use is when searching for a viable contact center solution.

After all, what's the point of recording calls when

locating and sharing those calls with employees and clients is a nightmare?

Callfinity takes the horror out of call recording by providing maximum search fields for locating calls,

permission-based access for sharing calls, and comprehensive evaluation forms for grading performance.

With a little guidance, your agents will begin to appreciate the benefits of call recording and in turn create a

pleasurable service experience that won't scare away your customers.

Callfinity provides the easiest to use telecommunications software, systems, and services to contact centers, service providers, and enterprises. Since 1999, over 270 customers in six countries around the world have selected Callfinity's on-premise equipment and hosted services. For more information about Callfinity, please visit Callfinity's Web site at www.callfinity.com or



call (877) 897-2962 (within US) or +1 585-278-1940 (elsewhere.)

###

NEWS

Global Contact Services Earns PCI Compliance Certification

SALISBURY, NC – Global Contact Services (GCS) has received certification of PCI-DSS – Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard – for its acquisition and fulfillment services for clients requiring payment processing.

GCS is a leading provider of integrated customer care solutions and business process outsourcing (BFO) for many industries, including insurance, banking, financial, telecommunications, and fulfillment. It operates contact centers in Mt. Hope, Huntington, Summersville and Wheeling, WV; Lancaster, OH; Fort Lauderdale, FL; Yuma, AZ; Pittsfield, ME; Saltville and Pulaski, VA; and Odessa and Kingsville, TX, as well as the Philippines.

Security of client information is a prime consideration for our clients, according to George Simons, vice president of marketing. “Our long-term clients have documented our diligence in protecting their

sensitive data,” he said. “We hope the PCI-DSS certification will shorten and simplify the start-up process for new clients. Now any client with credit card information can feel confident that GCS is prepared to securely handle his requirements. This gives us another tool to increase satisfaction of current and future clients.”

To earn the certification, a GCS team led by Richard Johnson, director of information technology, worked for two years, according to Bob Dunmire, vice president of technology services. The team worked with Trustwave Security & Compliance, an on-demand data security and payment card industry compliance management solutions company.

The PCI Security Standards Council was founded by American Express, Discover Financial Services, JCB, MasterCard Worldwide and Visa International. It is an independent organization that develops, enhances, disseminates and assists with implementation of security standards for account security.

About GCS

GCS (www.GCSagents.com) is one of the top five providers of direct insurance programs in the U.S., with 2,000 employees at 13 contact centers – 12 located across the U.S. and one is in the Philippines.

Employees make more than 2 million customer contacts per month. GCS provides many of these services to major corporations throughout the United States, including AIG, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Valero Energy, JP Morgan Chase, HSBC and others.

###

Pipkins Celebrates Twenty-Six Years of Providing Workforce Management Solutions

Only Company to Consistently Deliver Workforce Management Solutions

ST. LOUIS, MO — Pipkins, Inc., a leading supplier of workforce management software and services to the call center industry, celebrates twenty-six years of consistently creating and delivering superior workforce management products for call centers of all sizes. Vantage Point, Pipkins’ premier product, is the most accurate forecasting and scheduling tool on the market. Pipkins’ systems forecast and schedule more than 300,000 agents in over 500 locations across all industries worldwide. Founded in 1983, Pipkins maintains its reputation for developing cutting edge solutions with thirteen industry-first applications.

1984 - Back office (non-phone related) processes
1992 - Merlang (modernized erlangC)
1996 - Vantage Point forecasting and scheduling; Skills based routing; Web agent access
1997 - Multimedia queuing
2003 - Intraday schedule reoptimization; Agent notification
2006 - Ability to incorporate 1-N policies and procedures into vacation tool
2007 - Spreadsheet integration tool
2008 - Smart phone support; Real Time Adherence (RTA) Plus; RTA Global View

For more information, visit www.pipkins.com.

###

PreVisor Front Line Manager Solution named 2009 HR Product of the Year

Human Resources Executive Magazine to present award at annual technology conference

ATLANTA, GEORGIA (PRWeb) — PreVisor, the global leader in employment assessments and talent measurement solutions that connect employment decisions to business results, announced that its Front Line Manager Solution has been named one of the 2009 Top HR Products of the Year by Human Resource Executive® magazine.

With the extended global



economic recession continuing to put pressure on organizations, it is more important than ever for talent management teams to make informed decisions about choosing the most effective leaders – those who can do more with less and inspire their people while doing so. PreVisor's Front Line Manager Solution provides objective insights to help decision makers understand the potential of candidates to become effective leaders efficiently and cost effectively through

advanced technology, particularly when compared with leadership assessments that are traditionally delivered at a time and resource intensive assessment center.

The Front Line Manager Solution is an employment assessment administered online, evaluating multiple leader competencies including coaching skills, ability to prioritize, decision-making, thoroughness, and sense of duty. The assessment includes highly engaging

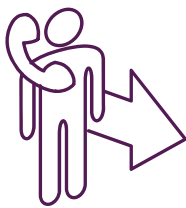
and realistic simulations of a manager's email inbox and employee coaching scenarios as well as critical cognitive and personality measures powered by PreVisor's PreView™ Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT) technology. In fact, PreVisor's adaptive personality measure, which enables more precise measurement of personality characteristics critical for success in managerial roles, is the only one of its kind available. It works by adapting the items presented to the candidate

according to the personality trait levels and abilities indicated by the candidate's responses to previous questions – resulting in a faster and more accurate measure of critical leader personality traits.

Each year, Human Resource Executive's editors select 10 products as the best of the year based on a series of criteria, including level of innovation, the value the products bring to the HR community and user friendliness. Only those that

plum improves call center efficiency

by lowering costs, increasing automation rates, and enhancing customer satisfaction through a suite of IVR solutions including:



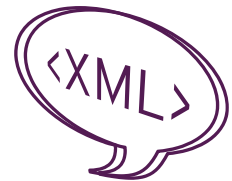
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truly deliver innovation and value to HR professionals are considered for Top HR Product of the Year.

PreVisor will be presented with the 2009 Top HR Product Award at a special luncheon held on September 30th at the HR Technology Conference and Expo in Chicago. More information and a demo of the Front Line Manager Solution will be available at PreVisor's booth in the Expo hall.

###

WS Live expands call center operations by adding a new Fortune 1000 technology client. Dubuque, Iowa – Even as

unemployment rates soar, WS Live expands its Dubuque-based call center operations to the first floor of the historical Interstate Power Company Building. The new contract initially adds 25 positions, while expanding client business could add up to 50 new jobs by the end of the year. The company's headquarters in Dubuque will now occupy the entire environmentally-friendly building in downtown.

"Our move early this year has really helped the company's visibility," said Kelly Uhlrich, Assistant Vice President of Operations. "We've been able to attract more job applicants, and we're

happy to be in a great, new work environment."

###

WS Live will be providing customer sales and support for the new Fortune 1000 technology client.

About WS Live: WS Live provides customer sales and service support solutions to clients in a variety of industries through its call centers in Iowa. By focusing on customer engagement, loyalty, and lifetime value of the customer, WS Live improves top-line revenue and profitability for their customer partners. Its affiliate sister companies, Working Solutions and WS iNet, are headquartered in Plano, Texas.

eGain Placed in Leaders Quadrant in Leading Industry Analyst Firm's E-Service Suites Magic Quadrant

Evaluation based on completeness of vision and ability to execute

Mountain View, Calif - eGain Communications Corporation (OTC BB: EGAN.OB), the leading provider of multichannel customer service and knowledge management software, on-site and on-demand, announced that it has been placed in the Leaders quadrant of the Gartner Magic Quadrant for

WHAT'S KEEPING YOU UP AT NIGHT?

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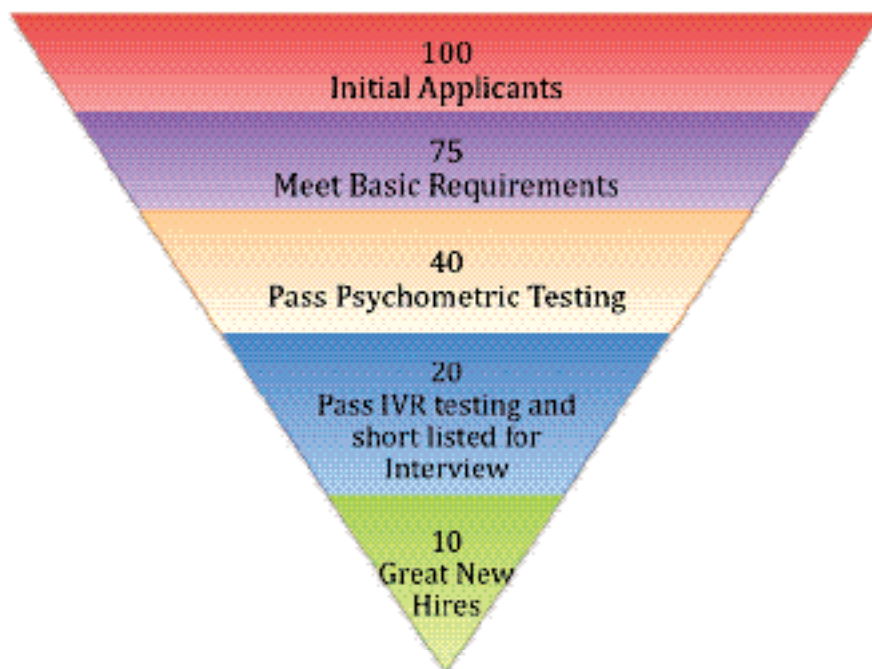
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E-Service Suites 2009 report, authored by Johan Jacobs and Michael Maoz (published September 11, 2009).

Gartner defines Magic Quadrant leaders as companies that “demonstrate market-defining vision and the ability to execute against that vision through products, services, demonstrable sales figures and solid new references for multiple geographies and vertical industries. Leaders provide functionally diverse and rich e-service suites that can be deployed and supported globally, and have at least five of the six e-service components supported by OEMs. They are suitable for all sizes and complexities of enterprises, and have broad industry coverage. Revenue is strong, and new references are readily available. When asked, their clients reply that this product has affected the organization’s competitive position in the market.”

The report also observes that there is an increasing acceptance of the need for customer interaction hubs and that “... during the past 12 months, 87% of multichannel product buyers preferred an e-service suite solution as opposed to a stand-alone single-channel or point-based product.” eGain Service™, available on-site or on-demand, is the industry’s most comprehensive customer interaction hub (CIH) software suite. It includes award-winning applications for call tracking and resolution, knowledge management, multimodal web self-service, email management,



automated and live chat, web collaboration, IVR, notifications, service fulfillment, social media interactions, and more.

“We are delighted to be positioned in the Leaders quadrant,” said Ashu Roy, Chairman and CEO of eGain. “We believe this is recognition of our ability to deliver market-leading customer service and knowledge management solutions year after year.”

###

Elanti Systems’s ENOS 2.1 Helps Companies Effectively Monetize IP Networks

New Real Time Intelligent Routing System To Be Unveiled at 4G World

SOMERSET, N.J. – [Elanti Systems, Inc.](http://www.elantisystems.com), a leading innovator in intelligent routing software for the telecommunications industry, announced the launch of ENOS 2.1. The new centralized control software solution for dynamic network resource management intelligently routes IP traffic and helps companies manage network resources in real time for optimal efficiency and service quality.

According to recent industry projections, mobile IP traffic will increase 66 times in the next five years

with video comprising 60 percent of all traffic. Providers will need to build networks that support the exponential traffic growth while simultaneously aligning huge capital costs with decreasing revenues. ENOS 2.1, a real time intelligent routing engine for IP networks, helps companies accomplish this goal by improving core network utilization by 100 percent. Additionally, the system effectively aligns network costs with predicted revenue growth and reduces cost per transported bit by 50 percent and more.

“To cope with exponential traffic growth, most often service providers build in massive amounts of spare capacity and over-provision their networks, which is inefficient, costly and can’t possibly keep up with the widening gap between demand, expectations and revenue,” said Michael Jaschke, CEO of Elanti Systems. “We’ve designed ENOS 2.1 to help companies achieve the most efficient use of their current network assets and streamline planning for future capacity and profitable service excellence.”

The ENOS 2.1 routing engine effectively balances IP traffic on networks, and allows service providers to differentiate their services

based on the underlying applications. Service providers can run their networks at much higher utilization rates while at the same time generating new service dependent revenue streams.

“In addition to optimal efficiency and increased profitability, some of the biggest benefits of ENOS 2.1 are improved customer service, increased customer loyalty and stronger brand integrity,” said Jaschke. “With our system, companies can guarantee consistently fast, reliable connections and are better equipped to meet their service level agreements.”

To learn more about ENOS 2.1, visit www.elantisystems.com. Live demos of ENOS 2.1 will take place at 4G World on September 15-19 at McCormick Place in Chicago.

About Elanti Systems, Inc.

Founded in January 2007, Elanti Systems, Inc. is a leading innovator of service experience management and intelligent routing software solutions for the telecommunications industry. The company is the result of a technology spinout from Telstra Corporation, the largest telecommunications carrier in Australia. Elanti Systems

is headquartered in Somerset, New Jersey. For more information, visit www.elantisystems.com.

###

Rapid Web2.0 Adoption Fuels the Transformation into Real Multi-Channel Contact Centers

Webcast by InVision Software Presents Best Practices for Multi-Channel Workforce Management

InVision Software, a leading international provider of contact center workforce management solutions, invites contact center managers, operations executives as well as workforce and forecasting managers to view the [free webcast](#) “Building a Multi-Channel Contact Center in the Era of Social Networking”. The web presentation is co-hosted with leading industry analyst Donna Fluss, President of [DMG Consulting](#), and focuses on benefits and challenges of contact centers in the web2.0 era.

The concept of [multi-channel contact centers](#) was introduced to the market more than 10 years ago, as the Internet became hot. Market innovators anticipated that the Internet would alter the way that customers and prospects interacted with enterprises and that sales and servicing



organizations would be quick to adapt. Surprisingly, most contact centers have not yet become accustomed to the changing needs of their clients: Too many contact centers continue to provide primarily phone-based support. And even worse, when they do provide support for alternative channels – email, chat, SMS (texting), community bulletin boards and increasingly [social networking](#) – service levels and quality are inconsistent.

During the 40-minute online presentation followed by a Q&A session, Donna Fluss, Founder and President of DMG Consulting, and Craig Shambaugh, Vice President Sales at [InVision Software](#) North America, give a review of the emerging channels and the year they are expected to become essential to leading verticals such as financial services, retailing, telecommunications, high-tech, travel, government and education. The new multi-channel contact center and the impact of social networking on contact center operations and technology will be presented, as well as best practices for [forecasting](#) and [scheduling](#) in a multi-channel contact center. Attendees will learn how to do multi-activity scheduling

in a multi-channel environment and how to involve and empower agents improving their work/life balance in the era of social networking.

To access the free webcast “Building a Multi-Channel Contact Center in the Era of Social Networking” go to: www.invisionwfm.com/en-gus/home/about_invision_events/tmcnet_com_online_webinar.

About InVision Software
InVision Software is a world-leading supplier of enterprise-wide workforce management solutions which enable companies to optimize their staff planning and scheduling processes. InVision empowers customers to reduce personnel costs, increase productivity, improve employee satisfaction and to boost revenue by leveraging better customer service. Founded in 1995 and based in Ratingen (Germany), InVision currently employs more than 220 WFM specialists and has offices across Europe, North America, and South Africa. InVision Software AG (IVX) is listed in the Prime Standard Segment of the Frankfurt Stock Exchange. Among InVision's clients are numerous international blue chip companies, such as ABN Amro, Allianz,

BMW, Deutsche Telekom, IKEA, Sky and Vodafone.
Further information at: www.invisionwfm.com

###

Budd Van Lines Delivers Consistent Quality and Award-winning Service— Even in a Down Market

Thirty-five years ago, David Budd Sr. had a vision for a new breed of van line company. He broke away from the standard agency system and established Budd Van Lines as an independent carrier specializing in executive relocation. Today, Budd Van Lines ([BVL](#)) is recognized as America's premier independent van line providing relocation services to corporate America.

“From the start, I set out to build the best moving company in America. It's really all in the details of taking care of customer needs,” explained Budd. He always believed that consistency of quality standards and control over the move process provides a better experience for his customers.

Unique Service Delivery Model and Stringent Standards

With Budd's vision in mind, their unique “Team Pack

and Team Haul” service delivery concept was born. A professional team of BVL personnel is assigned to handle 100% of every move—from packing and loading through delivery, unpacking and settling transferees into their new home. BVL does not outsource to other moving agents or companies—this ensures a consistently reliable moving experience—every time.

Budd's commitment to excellence is evident in their 15 **Signature Standards**—practices that truly distinguish them from the competition and help them win repeat business. Every single move has these same stringent standards. They commit to on-time service to the day and hour, and guarantee accuracy and timeliness of paperwork. And, they leave each home organized, free of debris and set up as requested by the family.

The Goal: Create a Consistent Service Culture

David Budd knew that as his business grew, it was important to find and train employees who could deliver a high level of customer service. “Our two number ones are our customers and our employees. Without them we are nothing,” he says. David challenged Cathy



Trementozzi, the newly appointed Vice President of National Services to create a consistent service culture, so employees would love to work there and customers would love to do business with them.

Cathy knew that developing a culture meant that every BVL associate needed to embrace a service mindset and model it in every interaction—internal or external. Cathy hired [Communico](#) to implement the proven [MAGIC](#)[®] customer service program to meet this lofty goal. MAGIC stands for Make a Great Impression

on the Customer.

Customized Training Creates a Buzz

Participants' input was essential to create a learning experience that would simulate BVL's working environment and address challenging customer interactions. The customized training created a palpable buzz—soon, employees in a wide variety of areas were asking for the training. BVL rolled it out to a mix of departments and participants found it thought-provoking, applicable to every function

and a practical method for creating positive relationships with co-workers, customers and clients.

The Entire Organization Goes through MAGIC

Cathy recognized that every contact made an impression. Ultimately, the entire organization went through MAGIC—every coordinator, salesperson, team member and driver now models the same standards.

Particularly impressive was that every driver team went through the program. "Moving can be a very

stressful time," explained Gary Grund, Vice President of National Sales. "The driver's communication has a huge impact on the transferee's comfort level, confidence and satisfaction with the move."

"MAGIC dramatically enhanced our drivers' interpersonal and customer service skills," notes Gary. "That's what Bud Van Lines is all about—making people comfortable and confident that BVL will make everything right. The training definitely fostered that culture."



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E-Mail Contacts Get a Makeover

The management team noted that about 75% of customer contact is through email. All it would take is one “tragic” e-mail to reverse the professional impression made in the face-to-face and telephone contacts. And, imagine the impact if that e-mail was forwarded to others.

This prompted BVL to implement Communico’s MAGIC E-Mail program. “This training had a huge impact”, exclaimed Cathy. “It got everybody to be concise and to the point. Our employees are writing faster and their e-mails are clear, accurate and more polished.” They have even received numerous compliments from clients, highlighting how their e-mail communication is easy to read and has all the information they need.

Relationship Selling Program Yields Immediate Impact on Sales

The sales associates were also part of this initiative. “We wanted clients to see each of our sales associates as a professional who adds value—not just a salesperson trying to sell something,” stated Gary. So, the MAGIC of Relationship Selling was

rolled out to the entire team. “The goal was to help our associates to make trusted partners with the clients and deliver tangible benefits. The training helped them tighten up their process,” added Gary.

And, the training yielded tangible results. Despite the down market, BVL has added 20 new accounts since January 2009 and had an impressive 26% close rate.

Coaching and Support from the Top Sustains Exceptional Service Behaviors

Keeping the content fresh and top-of-mind in a hectic environment requires coaching and reinforcement. The facilitators delivered refresher classes and found that associates’ service scores increased even further. Continuous monitoring and coaching of the Customer Service/Coordination staff ensure that they were consistently using the principles. Refreshers for the E-Mail program are also being provided to ensure consistently professional electronic communication.

To really shift a culture, new behaviors also need to be reinforced and supported from the top.

Senior management communicated the importance of the initiative, showed their belief in it and designed creative ways to support it. Ray Gunst, President and COO, sends out scorecards, dashboards and customer comments so BVL employees can see and celebrate the fruits of their efforts.

In January 2008, they rolled out a new recognition program, the Tradition of Excellence Awards. These honors are given to staff members and drivers that go above and beyond for their customers or associates—yet another way to emphasize the importance of these skills to the company’s success.

Unprecedented Measurable Quality Results

BVL recorded measurable improvements to Client Services’ Quality Assurance scores in a short amount of time and received unparalleled industry recognition and awards:

Communication (helpfulness) of move coordinator throughout the move:

The number of excellent scores increased 109% since 2004 and 42% from 2006.

Overall moving experience:
The number of excellent

scores increased 129% since 2004 and 44% from 2006.

Rated top in the nation in the 2008 and 2009 Surveys of Corporate Relocation Managers (Trippel Survey & Research)

Rated highest net satisfaction score in the 2008 and 2009 Nationwide Relocating Employee Survey (Trippel Survey & Research)

Made Parsifal Corporation’s 2008 and 2009 Benchmarking Report (used by Parsifal’s clients to benchmark against the best of the best.)

Won six awards at the 2008 Cartus Global Network, including the most prestigious Cartus Cup award.

What’s Next for BVL

The winning feeling permeates throughout the organization. Cathy noted, “MAGIC produced real tangible results and has transformed the way we deal with one another. It now embodies who we are.”

Even though the economy has led to a decline in corporate relocations, BVL is holding steady as other van lines’ volume decreases. “Quality is what keeps us in the game,” declared David Budd Sr.



“Especially in the unprecedented times we are in now.”

BVL’s focus on quality and its people is sure to help them succeed, not only in this tough market but far into the foreseeable future.

Diane Berenbaum, Senior Vice President, Communico Ltd. (203-226-7117)

diane.berenbaum@communico.com
nicoltd.com

###

Value vs. Price by Jennifer Way

There is the old saying that price is what you consider when making a purchase but value is what you expect after the purchase, long after price is forgotten. Furniture is no exception although there are many variables influencing the purchase. A few key variables are how the furniture is purchased and the type of furniture purchased.

One way to reduce price while increasing value is to purchase directly from a manufacturer, avoiding a dealer/distributor markup.

There are several concerns when purchasing furniture that is not from a ‘local’ company. One concern is the local economy. Many companies feel that

purchasing from a local furniture dealership will help to support the surrounding economy.

Purchasing local is a great thought, but even if a company purchases furniture from a local furniture distributor, more than likely the furniture is manufactured somewhere else.

With today’s technology working directly with the manufacturer doesn’t detract from, but improves the level of service. Working directly with the manufacturer, means working with the same point of contact regardless of the call center location. With this approach nothing gets lost in the translation and a direct purchasing relationship can result in a typical savings ranging between 10% to 30%.

Given our economy, another value vs. price consideration is the purchase of used or remanufactured furniture versus new furniture. A used/remanufactured purchase may be a “one time deal” on price and such things as station design and finish selections. Be careful not to settle on a station design that might have poor ergonomics, undesirable panel heights, and workstations that uses floor space inefficiently. The

initial savings on the furniture will not compare to the cost of carpal tunnel injuries and/or employee turnover due to a poorly designed space.

The furniture limitations with used or remanufactured products may not be terribly important if planning to add or expand one small center; it would be altogether different if developing company standards over multiple site locations.

A system with unnecessarily wide panels, for example, could mean fewer seats, and less revenue, depending on floor space. And always compare warranties when considering the purchase of new versus used/remanufactured furniture; the longer warranty typically found with new furniture certainly adds value. Another key consideration is the purchase of environmentally friendly furniture, typically recognized as Green or LEED compliant. While this can be a consideration in the purchase of new and some remanufactured furniture, these increasingly important standards likely were not recognized when certain used furniture was manufactured.

Occasionally call centers will consider built-in furniture. If considering

built-ins, evaluate the true cost of construction, particularly including the cost of electrical hard wiring, to the cost of a furniture system with electrical included. The greatest detriment to built-ins is the loss of flexibility and mobility; the station design/layout/use of space “is what it is” and will “remain what it is”.

Another consideration of built-in versus systems furniture is depreciation schedules. Compared to the cost of capital or leasehold improvements, systems furniture will have a much shorter depreciation schedule. This means that call centers can expense the furniture more quickly, thus reducing taxable income and positively impacting cash flow. In some cases, including the furniture in the construction or leasehold costs can also drive up architectural and/or contractor fees.

Last and not least, in today’s economy, you can certainly find a furniture provider that can offer both a competitive price and longer-term value.

Jennifer Way
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liveops®

CONTACT CENTER IN THE CLOUD: HELPING COMPANIES MANAGE THE NEW SECURITY PERIMETER AND SUPPORT REMOTE AGENTS

PREFACE

LiveOps is in a unique position to offer best practices for remote contact centers. We operate the world's largest virtual "contact center in the cloud" using our own on demand, SaaS-based technology, so we have first-hand experience managing the pressures, complexities, and security risks of day-to-day contact center operations.

Because our own business depends on rock-solid performance, we designed and built our on-demand contact center platform to deliver highly scalable, mission-critical contact center services that meet the most stringent enterprise requirements. Our customers span industries ranging from healthcare and insurance to banking, which means that we need to be PCI-certified and compliant with HIPPA and other government mandates.

Moreover, we use the LiveOps On-Demand Contact Center Platform

every day to optimize the performance of our contact center, which:

- Manages over 43 million calls per year
- Provides 99.99% availability
- Maintains the highest levels of security with sensitive customer data, handling over 15 million credit card numbers, over 1 million bank account numbers, and over 100,000 social security numbers each year

Because we rely on the platform as much as our customers, we continuously invest in it. We're constantly developing new functionality to simplify the job of managing agents,

routing calls, driving performance, and enhancing security. We also leverage our experience to develop and share best practices so our customers can use the platform and its accompanying application suite to achieve new levels of service and operational efficiency.

This paper explores the security implications for running a "contact center in the cloud." It is intended to help those interested in moving their contact center infrastructure into the cloud to understand the many benefits of this model and the options they have to address their security concerns.

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CONTACT CENTER IN THE CLOUD: HELPING COMPANIES MANAGE THE NEW SECURITY PERIMETER AND SUPPORT REMOTE AGENTS

SECURING THE “CONTACT CENTER IN THE CLOUD”

Moving contact center infrastructure “into the cloud” is no longer just a concept – and LiveOps’ customer list proves it. This innovative deployment model is being adopted rapidly by some of the largest and most trusted companies in the world. Why? Because cloud computing radically simplifies how you deploy, maintain, and access software, platforms, and infrastructure. Everything you need (including infrastructure, platform, and software) is available through the Internet as a service. You can access capacity and software via a standard Web browser with little or no up-front capital investment. Looking ahead, analysts see this as a long-running trend where a broad range of business services will be virtualized, enabling massive interoperability and the potential for huge cost savings.

While the business case for moving your contact center platform into the cloud will likely be to reduce costs,

quickly access the latest capabilities, or increase flexibility (for example, to send agents home), you need to ensure that your new platform is safe and secure. Concern about security has been one of the primary barriers to adoption of cloud computing – especially among contact center managers; their teams often handle large volumes of customer information protected by industry-specific mandates (such as HIPPA for health information), as well as business-critical data such as customer lists that must be protected from competitors. This makes security a top-of-mind issue for any business with a contact center.

RETHINKING THE SECURITY PERIMETER IN THE ERA OF VIRTUAL WORK

But due to present workforce trends, using a traditional contact center platform and running it within a physical building where agents work isn’t perceived to be as “secure” as it used to be. Trends such greater employee mobility and tendencies to work at home either part time or in the

evenings have reduced the value of the traditional “security perimeter” (i.e., the four walls of your contact center). Mobility enabled by laptops, mobile devices, and Wi-Fi access at coffee shops and airports worldwide have freed employees to work remotely whenever and wherever they want. This means that data can go with them, too. The new security perimeter is indeed virtual and worldwide.

So even if you decide you want to continue to maintain a traditional call center, you still need to address the virtual perimeter because employees, their devices, and data can’t be effectively contained by the four walls of a building. And more than likely, at some point in the future, you will be asked to support a remote agent team to cut costs or boost retention of your best agents. To be successful, you will need a way to secure virtual contact center operations.

The contact center in the cloud recognizes and embraces the fact that physical perimeters offer limited

security value in today's world. Whether your agents are on site or remote, or whether you have an in-house team of agents or outsource calls to third-party agents, there is little value in hiding behind the false sense of security afforded by physical walls. And more importantly, proven technologies and best practices are available now to help secure the virtual perimeter of the contact center in the cloud – and to a greater extent than the physical perimeter has afforded. These technologies follow people wherever they go and push your enterprise security requirements down to them regardless of their location.

ENTERPRISE-CLASS SECURITY IN THE CLOUD? ABSOLUTELY

By addressing the increasingly virtual nature of work head-on, cloud computing is defining the new business standard for enterprise security within contact centers. The right technology platform provider offering a “contact center in the cloud” can help you formalize and strengthen your security – and even leap ahead of the competition from a security perspective – while simultaneously alleviating you of the burdens, costs, and risks of trying to secure the virtual perimeter. Here's why:

- **Focus:** Technology platform providers have the enviable position of specializing and focusing all their resources on providing their service efficiently and securely. Security is core to their business – not just a supporting function – so they tend to innovate and invest heavily in this area. This specialization can allow

a technology platform provider to provide a level of security that may not be affordable or practical within a typical organization. For example, they may be able to provide in-depth security and risk and audit controls that far surpass industry security requirements and comply fully with key industry security standards, including GLBA, PCI, HIPAA, and SOX, among others. By leveraging their platform and specifying security requirements, you can quickly and easily meet your company- and industry-specific needs.

- **Economies of scale:** Technology platform providers can leverage economies of scale such that security controls that would be prohibitively expensive for a single corporation are justifiable investments in a cloud-based computing model. The cost of implementation and 24x7 security monitoring and support is spread across multiple clients, so every client enjoys all of the security benefits and controls at a fraction of the cost and effort of implementing them individually across each client.
- **Control and agility:** A contact center in the cloud – delivered by a reputable and trusted technology platform provider – can give you more control and agility. Within many organizations, getting the support and funding to implement a new security control is far more difficult when you have to implement everything internally. It requires a huge amount of coordination to get it done. But if you leverage a contact center in the cloud, your technology

platform provider is focused on responding to your needs as they change – and in most cases, already has the security functionality developed for existing clients; they just need to enable it for a new client when required.

EVALUATING TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM PROVIDERS TO MEET YOUR NEEDS

Implementing a highly secure contact center in the cloud isn't easy. It requires advanced security at the platform, application, and agent desktop level so you can secure end users wherever they are. Thorough due diligence is critical in selecting a technology platform provider that offers truly enterprise-grade security, as the security controls, technologies, and regulatory compliance may vary from provider to provider.

The technology platform provider should not only be in a position to meet industry and client security requirements, but surpass them as a result of their specialization and economies of scale. Secure technology platform providers should also be fully compliant with industry requirements such as PCI-DSS or HIPAA, where applicable, and have a security program that is available to you for inspection at any time. They should also welcome on-site security assessments as an opportunity to demonstrate their level of commitment to security and compliance. Due diligence should also include a thorough security review prior to signing a contract, and detailed security requirements (including periodic security

audits) should be built into the contract.

You also need to consider the scope of services you would like the technology platform provider to deliver – now and in the future. For example, with regard to contact center operations, you can leverage the contact center in the cloud to support your internal team of agents – and by default, instantly secure the virtual perimeter of your business. This allows you to maintain control over your agents and processes. At some point in the future, you may also want to leverage the platform to send your agents home to work (for example, to eliminate facility costs) and maintain the same high security levels for each employee. In other cases, you may be interested in supplementing your agent resources with a “workforce in the cloud” offered by the technology platform provider – for example, to handle calls from Spanish speakers, or to handle unexpected call spikes or overflow.

Regardless of the types of cloud computing-enabled services you are interested in, look for technology platform providers that have the following security capabilities and best practices in place:

- Platform- and application-level security
- Agent desktop security

PLATFORM- AND APPLICATION-LEVEL SECURITY

Securing the contact center platform in the cloud (and the applications that run on it) requires the following technologies and capabilities:

- **Physical security:** Because your data

resides in a network operations center hosted by the SaaS vendor, you need to ensure that their data center is protected by several layers of security perimeters, including mantraps, surveillance cameras, and security staff. You should also inquire about how many security experts they have on staff and qualify their credentials, as best practices are typically driven from the top down.

- **Network security:** Before selecting a SaaS vendor, ensure that their network is protected by multi-layer firewalls and intrusion detection systems. Weak network security is one of the biggest threats to your corporate data.
- **System- and application-level security:** Ensure that security was an integral part of how your potential SaaS vendor designed and built their call center technology – not just an afterthought. Effective security at the systems and application level requires careful planning and execution through every stage of the software development lifecycle. In addition, developers and testers need to perform thorough code testing to prove that their software adheres to industry-standard security processes. You should also fully understand their data encryption standards; not all vendors are able to meet specific industry standards, which can inadvertently place your organization at risk.
- **Interoperability and data exchange security:** Make sure the technology platform provider can provide a



By addressing the increasingly virtual nature of work head-on, cloud computing is defining the new business standard for enterprise security within contact centers. The right technology platform provider offering a “contact center in the cloud” can help you formalize and strengthen your security - and even leap ahead of the competition from a security perspective - while simultaneously alleviating you of the burdens, costs, and risks of trying to secure the virtual perimeter.

rich feature set of application interfaces that can communicate securely between your contact center and the contact center platform in the cloud – for example, so that your agents can chat back and forth without fear that anyone is looking at their traffic. Equally important, the on-demand platform needs to interface securely with other enterprise applications so that data and information, such as real-time reports, can be sent and received securely.

- **Industry-level security requirements:** Bring your industry-specific security requirements to the table early on to ensure that the technology platform provider can meet your needs. For example, if you are in healthcare, you likely need to comply with HIPPA and other regulations, so you'll need to see that the technology platform provider has a proven track record working in this industry.

AGENT DESKTOP SECURITY

Should you choose to send your agents home to work – or leverage a “workforce in the cloud” – you'll need a technology platform provider that can push enterprise security controls into the cloud and down to each remote agent. In addition to standard security elements, such as complete background checks on agents, look for:

- Enterprise desktop security
- 360-degree agent visibility
- Training sessions on security standards and processes and procedures

- “Need to know” data access controls
- 24x7 agent security support

Enterprise Desktop Security

The on-demand contact center platform in the cloud should provide built-in security, data access controls, and monitoring capabilities that help you secure the data within each agent's environment. Ideally, the platform should provide each agent with a secure, encrypted workspace (or desktop) that allows them to access data in a secured and highly controlled environment. It should disable features such as cut-and-paste, as well as prevent agents from printing confidential data or saving it to fixed and removable drives, such as USB flash drives.

You also need to be able to monitor agent desktops so that only computers that meet rigorous security standards can log on to the contact center platform in the cloud. Every time an agent's computer attempts to connect, the on-demand platform should complete in-depth antivirus, personal firewall, system integrity, and service pack compliance checks. Ideally, the platform should also help detect and block key loggers and screen scraper viruses in real time.

Comprehensive Agent Visibility and Control

When looking at a virtual contact center for the first time, many enterprise customers worry about losing visibility or control. In a traditional contact center, there may be a supervisor who walks up and down past the agents' cubes and

monitors what agents are doing and saying. The right technology platform provider should be able to provide you with an equivalent or better level of visibility and control. For example, an innovative technology platform provider should be able to provide on-demand “virtual supervisor” functionality that allows remote auditors to hear everything each agent says and see everything each agent does – in near real time – regardless of where they reside or what time it is. This level of cloud security, control, and visibility can be a reliable indicator of an enterprise-ready cloud provider.

The provider should also be able to track security-related metrics in real time (such as the number of attempts to infect agent PCs with a virus). Armed with this insight, clients can take proactive steps to tighten security, as well as communicate the overall security status to agents so they have the knowledge to play a valuable role in security. Look for a technology platform provider who can provide this level of visibility 24 hours a day and in real time.

“Need to Know” Data Access Controls

Generally, the more tasks and functions that your agents have to perform, the greater the access they need to your systems and data. The universal key to protecting data is to limit access to sensitive data and applications by keeping it on a “need to know” basis. For instance, if agents need access to credit card numbers to handle a customer call, you may choose to allow them to

view the last four digits only. This approach allows truly sensitive information to reside in secure data vaults while giving agents working in the cloud appropriate but highly restricted access.

Training Sessions on Security Standards, Processes, and Procedures

When agents work from home, rather than inside a physical contact center, they are more isolated. For this reason, it's vital that your technology platform provider help you educate agents about security and boost general awareness. For example, find out if they can help you set up programs to educate your staff about security and the responsibilities they will have as agents working both inside the call center and remotely. Review and role play common social engineering strategies designed to give outsiders access to sensitive information. And communicate security standards that must be complied with as a prerequisite for employment. The goal is to make security a part of every agent's thinking so that they help to secure the virtual perimeter of your business.

24x7 Agent Security Support

One of the best investments you can make to improve agent security is to choose a technology platform provider who can provide agents with 24x7 security support. If agents have to look through manuals when security questions arise, the likelihood of them handling issues correctly decreases considerably; in many cases, they don't have time to look

up the right answer, so they take their best guess. The cloud can make it seem as if security experts are just a cubicle away and ready to help, and as a result, agents are much more likely to ask for help, talk to an expert, and follow through on expert advice on everything from handling social engineering strategies to dealing with everyday security issues.

LEARN MORE

Securing the "contact center in the cloud" is not only possible – it's a reality today. And it's one reason why more companies than ever are realizing the benefits of on-demand contact center platforms that reduce costs, increase business agility, and accelerate business innovation.

There's no one-size-fits-all approach to security – and technology platform providers must be constantly innovating in this area to address new risks as they arise. But by partnering with the right technology platform provider, you can be confident about moving your contact center infrastructure into the cloud and maintaining – or even improving – the quality of your contact center security.

For more information about securing a contact center in the cloud, please visit www.liveops.com

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A BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESSFULLY DEPLOYING REMOTE AGENTS

Executive Overview

In today's tough economic environment, many companies are moving to virtual contact centers, which can be staffed by home-based agents or a combination of home-based and site-based agents. This innovative approach to setting up a contact center – which leverages software delivered using a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model – means that your company is free to find and hire the best agent talent from anywhere in the country.

Because your potential agent pool is so much larger, you can find higher-quality agents who can provide higher-quality service. This is no small thing – particularly when you're facing increasing commoditization of products and services; customer service can be one of the few ways you can differentiate your offerings. And as many businesses have already discovered, you can also:

- Reduce recruiting and training costs
- Eliminate or significantly reduce capital expenses
- Lower agent attrition with a higher quality of life and greater job satisfaction

In addition, sending your agents home to work is a creative, no-cost way to give them a virtual pay raise while simultaneously boosting productivity and lowering the carbon footprint of your business. Did you know that avoiding the typical 40-minute commute can equal up to eight weeks of regained productivity – and significant cost savings for agents in terms of gasoline and car maintenance? This paper overviews essential best practices for sending your agents home so they can work successfully as remote agents. Learn how to enable real-time performance management, optimize training with distance learning (or e-Learning), maximize agent desktop security and align compensation with performance.

Each best practice outlined is based on LiveOps' years of real-world experience running one of the largest virtual contact centers in the world with over 20,000 independent agents. You'll understand what it takes to manage agents successfully and how to achieve the 360-degree visibility and control needed to maximize their performance.

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BEST PRACTICES FOR OPTIMIZING COSTS, IMPROVING AGENT RETENTION, AND ENHANCING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE.

PREPARING TO SEND AGENTS HOME

If you are reading this paper, then you've either already decided to send your agents home or are seriously considering doing so. You'll be joining thousands of companies like West Marine, a national marine supply retailer that increased its competitive advantage by deploying remote agents.

Management at West Marine wasn't even thinking about sending agents home – they just wanted to upgrade their contact center infrastructure. But when the lease for their contact center facility came up for renewal, the economic downturn had hit, and management wanted to focus on reducing costs. They decided that the best way to do this was to not renew the lease on their physical contact center facilities and have their agents work from home. They needed a way to enable this transition without losing visibility and control, so they chose the LiveOps On-Demand Contact Center Platform. By sending their agents home, West Marine has been able to eliminate expensive leasing costs for

one of their contact centers – and ultimately improve agent utilization across their regional contact centers. In addition, West Marine has been able to maximize store employee utilization – which is important given the regional nature of the business. With the LiveOps on-demand platform, when business is slow in one region – and sales people are not in a store selling – they can take customer service calls or field questions from stores that are busy.

But deploying remote agents successfully – as demonstrated by West Marine – requires new technologies and best practices that are quite different from those used by a traditional contact center. For example, you need a way to maintain – and even heighten – the level of oversight for remote agents as you do for traditional contact center agents; managers will have to remotely train, oversee, and monitor agents, as they can no longer walk the floor to listen in on calls, answer questions, and mentor agents face-to-face. In addition, to sustain

high customer service levels, you will need to use different types of key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor and incent home-based agents to perform at their best. Equally important, you need to continue to provide a secure IT environment that protects customer and company data – even as agents work from their homes.

This paper summarizes essential best practices developed by LiveOps, which uses its proprietary, on-demand contact center platform to manage 43 million calls per year and deliver 99.99% availability. In an annual period, the LiveOps virtual contact center securely collected 15 million credit card numbers, over 1 million bank account numbers, and over 100,000 social security numbers.

Our extensive, real-world experience means that we know first-hand the challenges that businesses face when sending agents home and how to overcome them to ensure success.

LiveOps' best practices for deploying remote, home-based agents fall into the following categories:

- Selecting the right technology platform
- Enabling real-time performance management
- Optimizing training with distanced learning
- Maximizing agent desktop security
- Aligning compensation with performance or talk time
- Creating a sense of community

SELECT THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM

To implement these best practices, you first need an on-demand contact center infrastructure that automatically routes calls to the right agent and enables remote agents to access it using a PC and high-speed Internet. In addition, this infrastructure needs to provide a comprehensive, integrated set of capabilities to support a remote contact center operation. For example, it needs to:

- Enable interactive distanced learning
- Provide agent access to contact center systems from any phone, anywhere
- Support complete visibility and control from a management perspective
- Record and enable easy replay of every call, if desired

- Support 360-degree visibility into agent performance
- Instantly track every agent action
- Ensure tight agent desktop and data security
- Support performance-based compensation plans by tracking relevant metrics for each agent
- Support real time, performance-based and skills-based call routing
- Support diverse multimedia and multimodal communications

One of the fastest ways to implement these and other essential capabilities is to use an on-demand platform designed from the ground up to support the entire virtual contact center lifecycle. These types of platforms offer significant benefits over the "build-your-own" approach to contact center solutions. With the right platform, you can quickly deploy all of the functions needed to support remote agents – and do so in a way that is less costly, lowers risk, is scalable, and ensures a faster return on investment (ROI). In addition, a fully integrated, on-demand platform provides greater visibility into operations; it can capture data in the course of daily business, centralize it, and make it readily available for reporting and analysis – functionality that is essential to effectively managing home-based agents.

Traditionally, the only way to access this kind of integrated contact center solution was to purchase a "contact center in a box." But today, you have

more innovative, flexible options. For example, you can use an on-demand contact center solution that's hosted in "the cloud" (i.e., the Internet) by an application service provider. For instance, the LiveOps offers its on-demand contact center in the cloud, giving our customers benefits such as:

- A pay-per-use model that keeps costs down
- Elimination of nearly all up-front capital investments, such as real estate, furniture, and premise-based equipment
- A fast, hassle-free deployment that requires no hardware installation
- Elimination of ongoing software maintenance and version issues
- Ongoing access to new enhancements without having to perform upgrades

The approach you take to leveraging on-demand contact center software depends in part upon your business and IT needs. If your existing platform is solid, but it doesn't support some of the best practices for remote agents, you can integrate it with an on-demand solution, such as the LiveOps platform, to complement or enhance your current environment. Alternatively, if your entire contact center environment is at the end of its life, then consider replacing it with a comprehensive, on-demand solution that supports both on-site and remote agents. With an on-demand, SaaS-based solution, you can quickly transform your contact center for

greater efficiency and effectiveness while lowering costs.^{1,2}

ENABLE REAL-TIME PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

When agents work from home, performance management is all about communication and transparency. Agents still need someone to report to, provide feedback on how they are performing, and suggest ways to improve their performance. They want to know how they are doing today (particularly over the last 50 calls). And they still need encouragement, answers to questions, someone to monitor their daily activities – virtually and in real time – and continuous incentives to perform their best.

LiveOps recommends using the following best practices that enable effective, real-time performance management in a virtual contact center.

Best Practice #1: Enable virtual, 24x7 supervision so that agents know someone is watching and listening all the time.

In a virtual environment, it's critical that agents understand that someone is constantly watching and listening to. This visibility is a requirement for success – and it sets up unique needs from a technology perspective. As a best practice, ensure that your contact center platform allows you to:

- Record every call so agents know that someone might be listening at any time
- Support supervisor-to-agent chat

sessions in real-time to coach and assist agents, when needed

- Allow anyone who is a stakeholder to listen to a call (because in the virtual world, auditing isn't just for auditors)
- Regularly audit a representative number of calls to assess agent performance
- Quickly access performance information on each agent – in real time – so you can take action swiftly

In addition, you need a way for callers to give feedback on agent performance (for example, via customer feedback surveys) and escalate issues quickly, if required.

Best Practice #2: Manage by performance and route calls to the best agents.

In a virtual agent community, the only way to manage agents effectively is to measure their performance in real time, reward those agents who meet performance goals, and take action with those who don't. This requires that you have an automated way to capture and report on all relevant agent and campaign performance metrics, such as:

- Queue length
- Call hold times
- Handle times
- Sales numbers
- Media effectiveness



“Achieving better agent utilization and greater operational efficiency were important factors in our decision to adopt a virtual call center model. What set LiveOps apart was its ability to rapidly deploy and integrate with our existing systems. We were up and running in a matter of days versus the months it would have required with other vendors.

Matt Wise
Senior Director of
External Customers
West Marine

¹ LiveOps white paper: A Faster Way to Achieve Greater Call Center Cost Optimization Using On-Demand Call Center Platforms. Available at www.liveops.com.

² LiveOps white paper: The Top Six Considerations When Evaluating On-Demand Call Center Technologies. Available at www.liveops.com.

- Offer effectiveness
- Script effectiveness

In addition, as a best practice, leverage these metrics to determine the best agents to route calls to. For example, with the LiveOps contact center, you can use performance-based routing to ensure that new calls are always routed to the highest performing agents (based on metrics you determine). This ensures that customers have the best experience possible and agents are incented to perform their best on every call. The business benefits can be significant. For example, one of LiveOps customers used performance-based routing and increased their conversion rate from 29% to 52%. They simultaneously boosted agent productivity (revenue per agent minute) by 13% from \$4.13 to \$4.67.

Best Practice #3: Put the “performance” monkey on the back of the agent – rather than supervisor.

As a general rule, the more you can measure and communicate, the more you can rely on agents to self manage. As a best practice, when you have a contact center platform that gathers performance metrics in real time, you can create a culture around self-improvement. Communicate to agents that they are ultimately responsible for their training, professional development, and overall performance. Emphasize that they have the power to improve themselves and seek out the training, coaching, and other supports needed to achieve their goals. When you combine this cultural shift

with access to real-time performance metrics that enable agents to see how they are performing, you’re in a position to realize the best performance from each agent.

Remember: it’s still a rarity to work from home, so set high standards, and you’ll see that agents will be motivated to improve their performance because they don’t want to lose the flexibility and quality of life afforded by home-based work.

Best Practice #4: Establish multiple, virtual modes of communication.

As stated previously, when agents work from home, performance management is all about communication and transparency – because you can’t look over someone’s shoulder, walk around the floor, or chat at the water cooler. As a best practice, re-create communication channels via technologies such as real-time chat so that agents can talk to supervisors and other agents. You’ll find that with the right combination of virtual communications, supervisors actually have a broader reach and faster response times; there’s no need for agents to raise a hand and wait for someone to come to their cubicle to answer a question. At the same time, chat gives your management team a real-time view into what’s happening within your organization, as well as an easy way to broadcast messages instantly to all agents.

You can also set up message boards, forums, and online polls to support virtual communications. These technologies support real-time

performance management by enabling you to gauge the pulse of your agent community, identify issues that are hindering performance, and fix them quickly. When agents know that you listen and take action on the issues that are most important to them, it gives them a feeling of involvement, which ultimately leads to improved performance.

Best Practice #5: Keep virtual feedback and coaching focused on an agent’s most recent performance.

When working with remote agents, it’s important to focus on very recent performance; you get the best outcomes when you deal with the immediate. Yesterday’s performance metrics are the latest you want to look at. This means you need a contact center platform that allows you to:

- Generate up-to-date reports
- Find and listen to recent call recordings by any agent
- Report on outliers and exceptions (for example, calls that take too long, calls where sales values are low, or calls that didn’t result in sales)

As a general rule, don’t be punitive with feedback. Audit for what’s most important – not for everything – so that auditing is a tool for helping people, not punishing people. If an agent isn’t doing well, have them work with their team leader to listen to their own calls, compare them to model calls illustrating best practices, and identify helpful training resources. In addition, enable agents to flag calls that were problematic, and make it safe for

them to ask, “How can I have performed better?”

OPTIMIZE TRAINING WITH DISTANCED LEARNING (OR E-LEARNING)

As you send agents home to work, consider using distanced learning, or e-learning technologies, to train and certify them on new campaigns, products and services, applications, and more. With distanced learning, you can overcome some of the common challenges associated with traditional classroom training, such as poorly designed content, overemphasis on lecturing, failure to address multiple learning styles (auditory, visual, read/write, and kinesthetic), and limited interactivity. Lack of interactivity can be a serious problem; research shows that when adult learners don't do something new to do every seven minutes, they disengage.

In contrast, when you use well-designed, self-paced e-learning, it drives agent performance because it rewards participation, motivation, and independence. Agents can choose which learning sessions to participate in and learn at their own pace. This model can also dramatically increase comprehension and retention of material because it's easier to make learning interactive (for example, every few screens, you can built in practice time or a quiz to test agent understanding). In addition, because the investment you make in good instructional design is reused across all agents, you know that every agent receives a higher quality, more consistent learning experience.

From a financial perspective, e-learning offers other benefits as well. LiveOps has found that its customers can compress training time by 30% simply by moving from a traditional classroom model to e-learning, as they no longer need to waste time with administration, bathroom breaks, and lunch breaks. In addition, e-learning makes organizations more agile and scalable, as you can quickly train additional agents on new or modified campaigns to meet changing business requirements.

LiveOps recommends that you apply the following distanced learning best practices to ensure a successful launch of e-learning for home-based agents.

Best Practice #1: Implement a learning management system.

Implement a learning management system that acts as a bridge between the content and learner. The system should provide the tools and capabilities needed to manage learning remotely, such as test scoring for each learner, support for interactive learning methods (such as gaming courses), and reporting and tracking of training modules as they are completed by agents. It should also deliver e-learning in a way that's logical and enables you to monitor agent experiences in real time (for example, so you know how long it took agents to complete modules).

Best Practice #2: Implement an effective learning methodology.

When creating content to populate the learning management system, use a closed-loop learning methodology



LiveOps has found that its customers can compress training time by 30% simply by moving from a traditional classroom model to e-learning, as they no longer need to waste time with administration, bathroom breaks, and lunch breaks. In addition, e-learning makes organizations more agile and scalable, as you can quickly train additional agents on new or modified campaigns to meet changing business requirements.

to ensure development of high-quality content that accomplishes your objectives. For example, LiveOps uses a five-step ADDIE model for creating materials: analysis, design, develop, implement, and evaluate.

The goal of analysis is to make sure that the learning is linked to actual agent performance. The best way to do this is to design training around performance-based learning objectives that are aligned with strategic goals and related metrics. The end result is training that drives agent performance because it's engaging and changes agent behavior in ways that improve outcomes.

When developing content, build in an interactive experience every three pages. For example, you can have agents go through a real-life simulation or perform a skills practice exercise, communicate with fellow agents to hear their questions and experiences, and engage with them in virtual role playing. In addition, use a blended learning approach so that you engage all adult learning styles (auditory, visual, read/write, kinesthetic). For instance, you can include self-paced modules, study guides, learning games, practical application, quizzes, and interactive video demonstrations.

Delivering and implementing content can happen in virtual classrooms – not just traditional classrooms. You can make learning opportunities available on demand or at a specified time when everyone “shows up” online, which can help you foster a vibrant learning community for agents.

When evaluating program effectiveness, don't just settle for assessing each agent's reaction to a course. Instead, analyze and report on training at multiple levels, including changes in agent behavior, the degree to which you achieved predefined business impacts (such as reduced handle time), and the true ROI of your training for the business (for example, can your agents close more business faster?)

MAXIMIZE AGENT DESKTOP SECURITY

When you send agents home to work, they are no longer working within the secure confines of your corporate building and network. You may have seamless, eight-layer firewalls in place, as well as comprehensive systems and applications security for your brick-and-mortar contact center – protection that agents likely aren't even aware of. In contrast, when agents work remotely, they leave these controls behind, so you need to re-create them and shift some security burdens to agent shoulders.

Your choice in technology platform greatly impacts the amount of effort required to achieve appropriate levels of agent desktop security. The good news is, when your platform supports the right combination of virtual technologies, you can achieve heightened security oversight and stronger controls than is possible in traditional contact center settings.

Best Practice #1: Set up compliance training sessions before agents work from home and communicate security standards.

When agents work from home, they

are more vulnerable to security risks. Not only do they work over the Internet, which can place data at risk, but when a caller makes an unusual request for information, there's no one nearby to ask, “Is it okay to answer this question?” That's why agents need to be trained to think: Is this appropriate? Am I protecting the organization? How do I keep my environment secure?

The first step is to educate agents about security common sense and heighten their awareness about the need for security. Set up programs to educate your staff about security and the responsibilities they will have as agents working from home. Review and role play common social engineering strategies designed to trick them into providing callers with sensitive information. And communicate security standards that must be complied with as a prerequisite for employment. For example, LiveOps requires that its agents follow the “Six Steps to Protect Your PC”:

- Turn on an Internet firewall
- Keep your operating system up to date
- Install and maintain antivirus software
- Install and maintain antispyware software
- Enable strong passwords
- Always lock unattended PCs

The goal is to make security a part of every agent's thinking before you send them home.

Best Practice #2: Implement tight desktop and data security – and validate it regularly to ensure the integrity of agent systems.

Most likely, the security systems that you use to protect agent PCs internally will not work for agents working from home. So you need to “push” enterprise security down to home users and constantly monitor that it is in place and working. In addition, you need a way to be sure that you’ve limited each agent’s ability to see, touch, copy, and manipulate data.

By far the easiest and most effective way to implement tight desktop and data security is to deploy a contact center platform with built-in security, data access controls, and monitoring capabilities. For example, LiveOps has developed Secure Desktop, which helps to secure the data that agents handle. The platform provides each agent with a secure, virtual, encrypted workspace (or desktop) that allows them to access data in a secured and highly controlled environment. It also disables cut-and-paste features and prevents agents from printing data or saving it to fixed and removable drives. Secure Desktop also helps to ensure that only agent computers that meet LiveOps’ rigorous security standards are allowed to log on to the LiveOps contact center platform.

Every time an agent’s computer attempts to connect to Secure Desktop, it must complete in-depth antivirus, personal firewall, system integrity, and service pack compliance checks. Secure Desktop can also help detect and block key loggers and

screen scraper viruses as they execute in real-time. All agent desktops can be remotely monitored and managed by the LiveOps Secure Desktop Dashboard, which LiveOps customers can access on a 24x7 basis.

The alternative to leveraging security built into a contact center platform is to proactively maintain the security capabilities of each home-based PC via remote software upgrades. This may require that you own all agent PCs and take them back when an agent no longer works for the company. Maintaining security in this way is a far more complicated and costly way to ensure adequate agent desktop security.

Best Practice #3: Manage your distributed perimeter with a “need to know” policy and use tools to control data access.

Generally, the more tasks and functions that your agents have to perform, the greater the access they need to your systems and data. The key to maintaining tight security is to limit their access to data and application types on a “need to know” basis. For instance, if they need access to credit card numbers to handle a customer call, you may choose to only allow them to view the last four digits.

The easiest way to implement this functionality is to leverage a contact center platform with sophisticated data access controls built in. For example, LiveOps uses a feature called Secure Exchange to ensure highly sensitive data never leaves our environment. As customers speak and



Because the security systems you use to protect agent PCs internally won’t work for remote agents, you need to “push” enterprise security down to home users and constantly monitor that it’s in place.

record sensitive information, agents can't listen in. This data is then stored in PCI-compliant vaults, ensuring the tightest security. Alternatively, you can have agents collect the information and enter it directly into your contact center system. But this isn't optimal, as it provides a way for remote agents to write the information down, which means you lose control of the data.

Best Practice #4: Provide remote agents with 24x7 support to address security issues.

One of the best investments you can make to improve agent desktop security is to provide agents with 24x7 security support. If agents have to look through manuals when security questions arise, the likelihood of them handling issues correctly decreases considerably; in many cases, they don't have time to look up the right answer, so they take their best guess. But if you make it seem as if security experts are just a cubicle away and ready to help, LiveOps has found that agents are highly likely to pick up the phone, talk to an expert, and follow through on expert advice on everything from how to handle social engineering strategies to dealing with system errors. Ideally, you want to equip these support resources with remote access tools so they can access agent PCs, if needed.

You can also complement this 24x7 support by establishing of a virtual community that focuses on security; sometimes, agents prefer to reach out to a peer who has greater experience with security issues – for example, though a security forum and chat room.

Best Practice #5: Raise security visibility by proactively measuring and communicating security metrics and maintaining a 360-degree view of agent activities.

In our experience, agent desktop security quality goes down when you're not able to regularly audit home-based agent PCs. That's why you need a way to track related metrics in real time, such as how many PCs were infected with viruses and if security is going up or down in real time. Armed with this insight, you can take proactive steps to tighten security, as well as communicate your overall security status to the agent community so they can take responsibility for it.

At the same time, you need a way to constantly monitor agent behavior as a way of keeping agents on their toes – just as you do in a traditional contact center. You can re-create this oversight virtually by deploying remote monitoring of agent screens, monitoring calls, and more. When agents know that everything they do is always available for auditing, it helps to ensure their best security behavior.

ALIGN COMPENSATION WITH PERFORMANCE OR TALK TIME

As stated previously, in a virtual contact center world, you can't physically observe agents to make sure they are maximizing their productivity or effectiveness. The way you measure people's performance ends up driving their behavior. So if you are paying agents by the hour, you could potentially be paying agents for unnecessary downtime – or living with sub-par productivity and performance levels.

The best way to address this issue is to pay per minute of talk time or for

actual performance (for example, based on number of sales). Once you define the metrics by which people will be measured and compensated, you want to use your contact center platform to measure these metrics in real time and pay agents accordingly.

The business impacts of aligning compensation with performance or talk time can be significant. For example, VForce – a LiveOps customer who uses our platform to support a team of 60 home-based agents – realized a 20% increase in agent productivity by simply changing their compensation structure. They found that agents weren't calling the next customer as quickly as they could and were taking too many breaks. Moving to a performance-based pay structure enabled Vforce to align agent behavior with company objectives.

FOSTER A SENSE OF COMMUNITY THROUGH VIRTUAL COMMUNICATIONS

Successful virtual contact centers find ways to recreate – and even improve upon – the types of peer-to-peer interactions that agents experience in traditional contact centers. As a best practice, provide remote agents with multiple ways to ask questions of other agents, stay connected to the company, and build a meaningful social network. For example, you can support online chats and establish in-house forums so that agents can talk offline about anything without fear of repercussions (barring obscene language and personal attacks on others). Businesses can also implement a peer-to-peer "coaching" process whereby agents can listen in on calls and provide constructive feedback to

other agents – feedback that can help improve your customer satisfaction and service level scores.

Establishing multiple, open lines of communication not only increases job satisfaction and retention, but also gives management an inside view into areas of agent frustration. By monitoring these communications, you can proactively identify and address issues in order to reduce turnover and foster community loyalty. Responding to agent needs can go a long way toward making home-based agents feel connected to the community and valued for the services they provide. These communications also empower the community to self regulate. For example, if an agent doesn't have a great attitude and vents on forums, other agents can respond and turn the situation around without management intervention.

LEARN MORE

Taken together, these best practices are vital to ensuring a smooth and successful transition from a traditional contact center to a virtual contact center staffed with home-based agents. And in nearly all cases, applying them is much easier and less costly when you deploy a state-of-the-art contact center platform designed from the ground up to support virtual work.

For example, the LiveOps On-Demand Contact Center Platform offers a comprehensive, SaaS-based contact center solution that you can deploy in days. The platform supports every process required to manage a virtual

call center. Intuitive, fully integrated applications provide unprecedented visibility and control into every call center activity – right down to individual agent performance and calls. Business users are empowered to control the effectiveness of their call centers by centrally managing every call center function in real time. And call center management and agents can log in from anywhere in the world using just a PC and an Internet browser.

For more information about setting up a remote contact center or leveraging the LiveOps On-Demand Contact Center platform, please visit www.liveops.com.

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