

Call Center Times

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Survey Shows 68% of CRM Initiatives Unsuccessful

According to in-depth interviews with 89 senior managers across industries, 68% say that CRM initiatives are unsuccessful. The interviews took place from October 1, 2002 to February 22, 2003 and were conducted by Brulant, a consultancy providing web solutions to financial institutions.

"Roughly half of the 68% are either full failures, or cancellations initiated to avert

disaster," according to Len Pagon, President and CEO of Brulant. "The other half either blows up the budget, or don't fully meet requirements on time."

Pagon noted that when CRM initiatives fail, it is often due to problems with strategy and planning. "When people buy a CRM solution, either off the shelf or through a consultancy, their goal is usually to keep customers

and improve profitability. But, serving customers better does not always improve the bottom line. Companies need to tie customer information closely to profitability. If companies keep giving great service to customers that are not profitable, they will actually hurt, not help the bottom line. CRM can improve margins if it is focused on profitable customers," he said.

Pagon said that critical analysis during the post-

implementation period is crucial to CRM success. "Once the technology is in place, you immediately need to closely examine how it is affecting the bottom line. Critical factors that contribute to success include strong expectations, best practices and big bang. Many managers overseeing CRM implementation think the job's done once the technology is in place, but that is actually just the beginning," concluded Pagon. ■

TRENDS

MAJOR TELECOM CALL CENTER STUDY REVEALS FIFTY-EIGHT PERCENT IMPROVEMENT IN EMPLOYEE DISCOMFORT

Contour Design RollerMouse attributed for improvement in productivity, user comfort and reduced ergonomic risk exposure

Windham, N.H. (May 2, 2003) - An eight month long study on the impact of the RollerMouse in Verizon call

centers revealed a dramatic improvement in lowering ergonomic risk exposure, user discomfort and motion savings in keyboard and mouse-intensive tasks. One study finding indicated an improvement in elbow discomfort alone by 58%.

The RollerMouse, an input device for standard business and personal computer systems positions typical mouse controls beneath the spacebar, reducing the

repetitive reaching that normally occurs when using a standard mouse. This centrally located device offloads the repetitive stress on the mousing hand by allowing two-handed use.

A pilot study, conducted by Humantech, the largest occupational ergonomics consulting firm, hypothesized that the RollerMouse might be an effective solution for long

reaches to the mouse and demonstrated the potential for improvements in productivity, user comfort and ergonomic risk exposure. Initial findings from the pilot study indicated that RollerMouse reduced ergonomic risk exposure for the right hand/wrist, elbow and shoulder when compared to a conventional mouse.

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Trends cont'

Recognizing the value RollerMouse could bring to a call center environment, a study was designed by Humantech and approved by Verizon's National Manager for Inside Ergonomics to test the theory that RollerMouse use will measurably decrease discomfort and ergonomic risk with no negative impact on productivity or quality.

Fifty-one customer service representatives from Verizon's southern California offices participated in the study and were asked to replace their current input device with the RollerMouse station. The control group used their original keyboard and input device that

included any of the following: a straight keyboard, wave keyboard, touch pad keyboard and standard mouse. The study group used the RollerMouse station in place of their current input device.

All participants were asked to complete a discomfort survey to gauge their level of discomfort both before and after the 30-day product trial, as well as being observed by an administrator who captured participant's usage with a digital camera and camcorder for future analysis.

Prior to the installation of RollerMouse, the study group reported discomfort in

the upper extremities (i.e., hands/wrists, elbows and shoulders). After the study trial, participants discomfort improved by 24% and elbow discomfort alone was improved by 58% for the study group.

Woody Dwyer, CPE, managing consultant for Humantech noted, "93% of the study participants did not want to return to their original workstation set up after the study and many noted an immediate reduction in discomfort in the shoulders, elbows and hands/wrists.

"It is critical that a new piece of equipment in a call center doesn't hinder the service representative's time and that productivity is not

affected. The study hypothesis was confirmed at the completion of this study. RollerMouse is a viable solution to reduce the ergonomic risk and to potentially reduce employee discomfort without a negative impact on productivity."

Contour Design will work with any company interested in setting up an ergonomic study at their facility. Companies interested in conducting their own ergonomic workstation study are encouraged to submit an inquiry to study@contourdesign.com.



Customer Experience Management: A Case Study

Making the brand promise is much easier than actually delivering on it!

Today's corporations—well aware of the many statistics around customer loyalty and retention—are committing more time and resources than ever towards gathering customer feedback. And with good reason

- Acquiring a customer costs 5 times more than retaining one.
- The average customer is worth 10 times the price of a single purchase
- Disloyalty stunts corporate performance by 25-50 percent
- Over 95% of dissatisfied customers never complain,

yet 70% of customers that do complain will stay loyal if they feel the organization helped resolve the issue at hand

Despite this, the vast majority of companies do not go beyond the basic attempts at feedback collection (annual surveys, feedback forms, etc.). Very few companies proactively communicate with their customers, and even fewer,

actually do something with the information they do gather: New experience management-based software solutions, such as **ResponseTek's Customer Experience Management (CEM)**, reduces churn, and can impact the bottom line by as much as 5-10% on average. The CEM Software provides real-time, all-the-time feedback from customers through customized touch-points. For



Case Study cont'

example, ResponseTek CEM has helped **NTL** broadband services reduce churn by over 12% (see quote below).

An experience based management software solution enables an organization to actively engage customers to help identify root causes of service issues and other quality deficiencies. It delivers this information directly to those who are accountable, enabling them to rapidly resolve those issues affecting customer churn. What's more, ResponseTek CEM keeps the customer in the loop—and in control—throughout the process, building valuable customer loyalty and retention. Ironically, experience based management will supplant the need for expensive loyalty programs and other methods of buying back your customer's business.

ResponseTek is achieving real-time customer-driven feedback for clients such as **Washington Mutual Bank, Puget Sound Energy, Xerox, WestJet** airlines, **NTL** – UK based cable and Internet access provider, Canada's #1 sporting goods retailer **SportChek** as well

as Canada's largest credit union **VanCity Savings Credit Union.**

The key to building customer loyalty, according to ResponseTek CEO, Syed Hasan, is to deliver on all 5 steps for creating a customer-centric organization. While most organizations 'collect' feedback from their customers, they typically do not follow through to ensure they are delivering on their brand promises, nor do they keep their customers in the loop.

- 1) **95% of companies collect feedback**
- 2) **50% alert staff of the findings**
- 3) **30% make decisions using this insight**
- 4) **10% deploy and improve**
- 5) **5% inform customers of the change**

Hasan says that to follow-through, organizations must gather real-time all-the-time feedback through key customer touch-points including Web, Call Center, Kiosks, IVR—and that's where ResponseTek CEM comes in.

"While there are a number of survey tools, customer

data collection services, and feedback analysis tools available on the market, none offers the range of capabilities for continual real-time customer experience management that is offered by ResponseTek's Customer Experience Management (CEM)." – **Patricia Seybold Group, 2002**

Some recent examples:

WestJet

WestJet, North America's 2nd most profitable airline, will be "checking-in" on its customer experience at different junctures. When you are booking on-line with WestJet, ResponseTek now captures the online customer experience with real-time feedback. When collecting your boarding pass at the self-serve kiosk, these kiosks are soon to become a two-way customer communications agent. Another option the company is exploring for the future is to use in-flight phones as an IVR experience management tool.

"With ResponseTek, our Interactive Feedback Corner allows our guests to simply and conveniently provide us with detailed information on every aspect of their WestJet experience.

ResponseTek's Experience Based Management helps us to continue improving our customer service levels, while addressing guest concerns in a timely manner." – Don Bell, WestJet's Senior Vice President, Customer Service and Co-Chief Operating Officer

NTL

"When I joined we had a churn rate of 22% - 45,000 customers per month calling to disconnect. 17,000 were joining, so net 28,000 lost per month. Our goal has been to do everything we can to bring down that churn rate, through improving our customer service. ResponseTek is a great tool for instant response. I have never seen better information at my fingertips.

"ResponseTek tells me which line of command led to that bad customer experience. I know which region they are in and whether it was a call centre, an installation or a service call. So I can go right down to the specific department that caused the problem and fix it. It gives me a very good idea of where the problems are. When you're a manager trying to fix things, you've got to know where to look. Our customer churn rate has



Case Study cont'

come down to record low levels – levels that we haven't seen in five years. Sky is at 10% and we view that as a realistic target.” — Aizad Hussain, Managing Director, NTL.

Washington Mutual Bank

In preparing for the launch of WAMU's new online business banking solution, ResponseTek's CEM tool was used to enlist the assistance of the customers to ensure the final product met the customer's needs.

Throughout the test launch of the solution, ResponseTek interacted with the controlled audience to understand specifically what aspects of the solution exceeded customer expectations as well as those areas that require attention prior to the public launch.

Using the real-time information from their customers, WAMU was able to identify areas requiring improvement before they had an impact on overall customer satisfaction or bottom line revenue/costs.

Since the public launch, WAMU continues to use ResponseTek's CEM solution to continuously

engage the customers in the ongoing improvements of their online business banking solution.

The Forzani Group Ltd. – SportChek

SportChek, Canada's largest sporting goods retailer, is currently using ResponseTek's CEM solution in an effort to maintain a real-time understanding of customer satisfaction, loyalty, and expectations. ResponseTek engages the SportChek customer both online at SportChek.ca and in each of the nearly 100 big-box retail stores across the country.

SportChek's use of the solution allows them to benchmark satisfaction across regions and stores, providing management with the ability to address issues before they have a significant negative impact on the bottom line.

Marshall Wilmot, FGL's VP of Customer Service and Training, felt that “The Responsetek CEM solution gives us a real-time understanding of our customer satisfaction levels and how we can enhance their shopping experience”



FEATURE

Mexico Shows Great Promise for Call Center Investment

New Datamonitor report examines opportunities in Caribbean and Latin American call center markets

Due to the abundance of geo-political, economic and social fallouts spanning the Caribbean and Latin America (CALA), determining which of these countries are best suited for international investment is increasingly difficult. According to a recently released report by business advisory firm Datamonitor, Mexico has emerged as a stable and financially practical alternative for call center investment. With staggering growth forecasts indicating that the number of agent positions will rise from nearly 51,000 in 2002 to over 190,000 in 2007, Mexico is one of a select number of countries that has successfully established itself as a viable offshore locale for servicing Spanish-speaking customers.

Datamonitor's new report, **Opportunities in Caribbean and Latin American Call Center Markets to 2007**, reveals that Mexico has a number of distinct advantages in attracting call center

investment. In addition to its political stability, relatively sound economy, and close geographic proximity to the United States and South America, Mexico is a member of the North American Free Trade Agreement, and possesses a skilled, bilingual and inexpensive labor pool.

With a steadily expanding Hispanic population in the U.S., Mexico is able to leverage its qualified and inexpensive labor pool to service these customers. The U.S. government estimates that in 2000 alone, over 20 million Americans were Hispanic, representing 12 percent of the country's population and an increase of 57.9 percent since 1990. According to a recent Datamonitor report, **The American Ethnic Consumer**, Hispanic spending power in the U.S. was \$580 billion in 2002, revealing lucrative potential lucrative exists for outsourcers looking to target this segment of the population.

The Bigger Picture

While Mexico represents a sizeable portion of the total call center market in CALA, with over 200,000 agent positions across the Caribbean and Latin America, there are a number



Feature cont'

of additional opportunities to exploit. By 2007, the number of agent positions will climb to over 670,000 and while overall growth for the region is promising, an array of challenges facing some of these nations may stifle near-term success.

The region has been racked with political instability, mounting foreign and domestic debt, and deflating currencies that increase borrowing costs, which in turn, fuel investor uncertainty and exacerbate economic difficulties. Undoubtedly, while countries in economic turmoil such as Argentina will

not witness exorbitant call center growth in the short term, others have demonstrated remarkable resiliency in the face of Latin America's domestic and international woes - chief among them Mexico and Chile.

It is clear that growth in the different regions will be attributable to a host of factors, some unrelated and others which will be directly linked to the call center industry.



HOT BUTTON

"Do Not Call" Notes as an FYI:

- President Bush recently signed a bill approving funding for the DNC national registry (10/1/03 compliance date expected)
- FTC estimates as many as 60 million U.S. consumers will sign up for the national DNC registry
- National registry will most likely be maintained IN ADDITION to state lists, complicating DNC compliance requirements

- Most states have DNC laws in place or pending, but they all vary, further complicating DNC compliance requirements
- FCC may rule on DNC this summer, which would cover banking, telecom and other sectors not covered by the FTC



PEOPLE

Astea International Names New Vice President of Marketing

HORSHAM, PA, April 15, 2003 — Astea International Inc. (NASDAQ: ATEA), a leading provider of Service Smart, Enterprise Proven CRM solutions, today announced the appointment of Marikit Klein-Smith to vice president of Marketing. In her global role, she will lead the company's strategic marketing programs, including branding initiatives, product marketing and marketing communications.

Klein-Smith brings to Astea 14 years experience in developing and delivering successful, integrated business-to-business marketing programs on a global basis. Her focus has been on creating market opportunities for new and existing products or services in the enterprise software industry.

Most recently, Klein-Smith worked as a strategic marketing consultant for Full

Circle Communications where she developed messaging, positioning and marketing strategies for clients in the high-tech sector. Earlier in her career, she served as director of corporate communications at SAP America where she developed and managed corporate internal and external communications programs for the U.S. and Canada. In addition, Klein-Smith also served as manager of global marketing communications for Deloitte Consulting. ■



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EVENT

www.customerserviceweek.com

Visit customerserviceweek.com for free celebration tips and games, as well as reward and incentive ideas for National Customer Service Week (Oct. 6-10). This five-day celebration offers companies – from

small businesses to Fortune 500 firms — the chance to honor customer service, call center, help desk and tech support, teleprofessional and other frontline staff for their hard work and dedication throughout the year, while also thanking customers for their patronage. ■



BOOKS

New Book Puts an End to 1-800 Customer Frustration – Shifting Focus to Improving People, Not Just Technology

Knowlagent's "Customer Service at a Crossroads" Provides Roadmap for Building Best Performers Fast and Transforming Customer Service Centers into Strategic Assets

ATLANTA, GA – April 30, 2003 – Do you dread dialing 1-800? Chances are, like most people, you do. A company's customer service center is the lifeline to its customers, but people have come to expect poor service from customer service centers – leading to low levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Despite significant efforts, corporate executives are still grappling with how to fix the problem in order to retain customers.

In recent years, companies have made major investments in technology to improve their customer service centers, yet the focus has been tactical, not strategic. Instead of focusing on the people involved – customer service agents – corporations have been obsessed with efficiency,

handling each call in record time rather than making sure the customer's needs are met and that they are satisfied with the experience. This approach has created a gap between the performance a customer service agent delivers and customer expectations, ultimately impacting a company's bottom line.

Customer Service at a Crossroads—What You Do Next to Improve Performance Will Determine Your Company's Destiny, a new book by Matt McConnell, founder of Knowlagent, gives corporate executives decisive guidance on transforming their customer service center from a tactical, efficiency-focused environment to a strategic, performance-based culture. The book reveals how to build best performers fast to significantly improve the customer experience – increasing customer satisfaction and retention, and driving a company's profits. ■

ANALYSIS

"The simple process of serving customers has become overcomplicated," said Matt McConnell. "The way to a customer's heart lies not in software, systems and processes, but in people. *Customer Service at a Crossroads* speaks to a basic business principle: business is done between people, not computers. People – customers and employees alike – impact a company's bottom line. It's really that simple, and is the premise on which Knowlagent was built."

Co-authored by McConnell and renowned customer service center pioneer, Dr. Jon Anton, director of benchmark research at Purdue University's Center for Customer-Driven Quality, *Customer Service at a Crossroads* explores the current state of America's customer service centers, the crucial need for customer retention, and the critical connection between agent performance and customer satisfaction. The book contains tips on how executives can take a total

quality management (TQM) approach to customer service centers. This includes an individualized learning program for agents that involves training, simulation and incentives, and leverages previous technology investments. The book is packed with valuable insight to help companies meet the challenges of today's economy by focusing on creating the optimal customer experience through customized agent performance enhancement.

"For the past 30 years, the customer service center has been the most maligned department in corporate America," commented Dr. Jon Anton. "With 70 percent of all business transactions occurring over the telephone, a shift towards a service-based economy and an increasingly frustrated consumer, it's time for executives to pay attention to their customer service centers. Management needs to do more than just try to automate their customer service centers, they need to deal with the root of the



Analysis cont'

problem – agent performance. Our hope is that this book will enable executives to recognize the origins of their customer service problems and provide agents with the knowledge and skills they need to do their job effectively and be top performers.”

Customer Service at a Crossroads is available from Knowlagent’s Web site at www.knowlagent.com and the Purdue University Call Center Benchmark Research Web site at <http://www.benchmarkportal.com/store/index.taf> for \$15.95. ■

NEWS

SER Solutions Announces The Release of CPS 7.1

SER Solutions, Inc. has announced the latest release of its Call Processing System predictive dialer with powerful agent and campaign management capabilities for greater efficiency.

The new CPS 7.1 delivers robust new features:
— WebAgent, a web-based agent control interface
— Detailed reporting capabilities to address recent Federal Trade Commission compliance requirements.
— SmartSup(tm), a

sophisticated campaign and user management application

As more and more call centers are looking for technology that helps them meet new FTC mandates, we thought your readers might be interested in knowing about CPS 7.1

[CallProcessingSystemSeven.One4.03.doc>>](#)

Used by eight of the top ten outbound teleservice centers in the United States, CPS is a complete, turnkey system that combines sophisticated predictive dialing with inbound and call blending capabilities. ■

NETLERT COMMUNICATIONS SIGNS DISTRIBUTION AGREEMENT WITH DDV TECHNOLOGIES PTY. LTD.

Agreement Brings Innovative Contact Center Tools to Australia and New Zealand

NetLert Communications, Inc., an emerging innovator in contact center tools, has announced a new distribution agreement with DDV Technologies Pty. Ltd. of Australia. This agreement provides customers in Australia and New Zealand a direct channel to NetLert’s products, as well as more streamlined access to technical support.

“We’re thrilled to have DDV Technologies as our representative,” said Danny Councill, President of NetLert Communications. “ It brings an extraordinary level of expertise and service to customers in that part of the world, and broadens our audience base considerably.”

As part of the agreement, DDV will represent and distribute NetLert’s products, including N-Focus and N-Contact, which provide reporting

capabilities and real-time, online customer service tools.

Peter Bastable, Director of DDV Technologies Pty. Ltd. stated, “Having personally spent many years in voice/data communications, the NetLert Communications suite truly brings together the web and call center ACDs. In Australia, companies continue cost cutting exercises and need to scrutinize and increase the effectiveness of their contact centers, which can generate revenue opportunities. In the past this has not been considered easily achievable. Using NetLert’s N-Focus Call Management System, a company can now better meet the ever-changing wants and wishes of their customers and their own business units.”





Sento Corporation Releases New White Paper on Customer Choice Strategy: When Customers Choose, Companies Win

White paper is available free of charge from Sento

AMERICAN FORK, Utah - April 14, 2003 - Sento Corporation (Nasdaq: SNTO) a

leading provider of integrated, multi-channel customer support, today announced the release of a new industry white paper: "When Customers Choose, Companies Win."

The white paper provides background on Sento's Customer Choice strategy.

The new white paper is available now, free of charge, from Sento Corporation at www.sento.com.

"From our inception, Sento has specialized in the advancement of our Customer Choice platform," said Pat O'Neal, president and CEO of Sento Corp.

"We're helping medium-to-large enterprises save hundreds of thousands of dollars by deflecting their customers in a positive way to effective

self-help customer service alternatives, which include web self-service, chat, and e-mail in addition to live phone support. Again and again, our experience shows that

given a good alternative, most customers will actually prefer the self-service alternatives."

"Our white paper walks readers through the Customer Support platform, discusses the current trends and issues in web-enabled customer support, and offers actual case study and ROI examples of leading enterprises who have evolved their support programs to Sento's Customer Choice," O'Neal added.

Sento's internal research indicates that by deflecting customers to attractive options for self-service, companies can generally expect to

reduce their support costs by a minimum of 40 percent, and can often deliver exemplary support for a fraction of their traditional costs.

According to a recent Best Practices brief by Forrester Research, "Sento's offerings enable right-channeling, which Forrester defines as 'getting customers to use the right channels for transactions and interactions'. We believe that firms should aggressively follow this model." (Source: WholeView TechStrategy Brief, Bruce Temkin, March 5, 2003, Forrester Research) ■

SYKES CHOOSES NETBYTEL TO ADD ADVANCED SPEECH RECOGNITION TO ITS SERVICE PORTFOLIO

Offering Voice Self-Service to complement live agent Business Process Outsourcing Solutions

Speaking of great customer service...now

customers calling into some of the world's finest contact centers will have a new way to get their customer service needs met. NetByTel has announced that Sykes Enterprises, Incorporated (NASDAQ: SYKE) has chosen to add NetByTel's automated speech recognition solutions to SYKES'

existing Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) services and solutions.

The reselling agreement between NetByTel, the industry leader in voice self-service, and SYKES, a global leader in outsourced customer management solutions and services, signals an increasing trend

in the BPO industry as companies are looking for more innovative ways to reduce costs while maintaining high standards of quality customer care. SYKES is reselling the NetByTel solutions under the product name: SYKES Personal Voice Assistance, powered by NetByTel. Product information is available on the SYKES



Sykes cont'

web site
at: www.sykes.com.

"We chose NetByTel because many of our clients have come to us seeking ways to control customer service costs, and we wanted to bring to them the very best combination of people, process and technology available in the marketplace to help them

reach their objectives," said Chuck Sykes, General Manager and Senior Vice President - Americas. "NetByTel's deep expertise and brand recognition in the speech industry was a driving factor in our decision to co-brand their service, and we see it as a perfect complement to SYKES' core capabilities." ■

BEVOCAL ANNOUNCES SIMPLIFIED "HOSTING LITE" SERVICE FOR SMALL-SCALE VOICEXML DEPLOYMENTS

Pre-Paid Self-Provisioning Model Helps Companies Quickly and Easily Launch Small-scale Voice-enabled Applications

BeVocal, a provider of managed VoiceXML call automation solutions to enterprises and service providers, has announced

availability of a streamlined "Hosting Lite" service for companies interested in small-scale deployments of voice-enabled applications. The new Hosting Lite service is a self-provisioned, pre-paid, bundled telephony solution that enables developers to quickly set up and launch a hosted VoiceXML service on BeVocal's carrier-grade platform.

"BeVocal is filling a void for developers and companies who want to quickly and cost-effectively deploy

voice-enabled applications with modest initial call volumes," said Kevin Stone, senior director of products at BeVocal.

"Hosting Lite gives developers a no-hassle way to test, showcase, and launch applications without any surprise costs or long-term commitment. Once their business case is proven and call volumes increase, customers can easily migrate to BeVocal's Foundation VoiceXML Hosting Service, which includes guaranteed capacity, bursting, enterprise-grade support and service-level agreements."

"Hosting Lite gave Oncall Systems a low-risk way to pilot and demo our voice recruiting service as we were pursuing our first customers," said Udhe Ahluwalia, CEO of Oncall Systems. "Today, our service is utilized by such high-profile customers as the Venetian Las Vegas and franchise properties from leading brands like Hilton, Marriott and Holiday Inn. BeVocal provided us with a seamless

transition path from development on the Café to trialing with Hosting Lite to commercial production on BeVocal's Foundation VoiceXML Hosting Service, a platform that delivers the reliability, real-time monitoring and ease of development imperative to our and our customers' success." ■



NEW PERFORMANCE-BASED CALL CENTER TESTS FROM SKILLCHECK CUT TESTING TIME AND DRAMATICALLY REDUCE CALL CENTER TURNOVER

SkillCheck, Inc., international leaders in Internet and computer-based testing for call center, office, industrial and professional skills, announces the release of its new performance-based Call Center Scenarios tests. These multimedia, performance-based tests can quickly and effectively assess the ability of call center employment candidates to handle real-world customer service and sales situations.

SkillCheck's new multimedia Customer Service Scenarios and Sales Scenarios Call Center assessments allow call center managers and operators to determine if candidates have the skills to succeed BEFORE they are hired. "The cost of high turnover is the number one

problem affecting efficiency and profitability of a modern call center," says Jon Haber, President and CEO of SkillCheck, Inc. "SkillCheck's Call Center testing products have helped call centers reduce turnover to less than 8%".

SkillCheck's Customer Service Scenarios test places candidates in real-world customer service situations and requires them to respond to questions and complaints by simulated callers. Each response by a candidate determines the direction of the simulated call while simultaneously measuring the candidate's manners, effectiveness, and efficiency.

The Customer Service Scenarios test is adaptive, so that when candidates perform well on a call, they are next presented with a more difficult call. When they perform less well, they are presented with a less difficult call. "Using this unique adaptive methodology, test administrators can zero in on a candidate's capabilities in the shortest amount of

time," says Haber.

The SkillCheck Sales Scenarios test requires candidates to interact with contacts and prospects at various stages of the sales cycle, from prospecting and information gathering/controlling the sale to handling objections and closing.

At the end of each Call Center Scenarios test, the test administrator is provided with a detailed report, describing overall performance and performance in all relevant areas. These include Manners, Effectiveness, Accuracy, Evaluation and Follow Up for Customer Service and Prospecting, Information Gathering/Controlling the Sale, Handling Objections and Closing for Sales.

SkillCheck's Call Center Test package includes all of these powerful assessments, as well as assessments covering a broad range of additional call center skills, including data entry from audio input, data analysis (including

referencing and cross-referencing information), telephone and spelling skills.

SkillCheck's Call Center testing products can be delivered on PCs, LANs or the Internet. SkillCheck testing is also available for Microsoft Office, Clerical, Industrial, Computer/Digital Literacy and other critical job skills. ■



TELSIS IVRS BOOST ROI IN CORE BT CALL CENTRE SYSTEM

Second round of paybacks generated as flexible platforms are redeployed

Telsis, a specialist in voice and text applications, today announced that its programmable carrier-grade Ocean fastIP is being used as part of BT's call centre operations. The system has already been used successfully in various short-term applications throughout BT's network.

Now upgraded with new software, up to 60 of the advanced platforms are being consolidated at sites in Cambridge and Leeds as the front-end of BT's continually evolving Intelligent Call Manager service. Using Ocean fastIP applications developed by BTextact, BT's research and technology business, Intelligent Call Manager saves call centre operators money and effort by providing core response and

intelligent routing services at the network level. The capability is also currently being augmented to support interface to Genesys CTI systems.

"BT's innovative re-deployment of the Telsis platforms underlines just how flexible our technology really is," said Telsis marketing director Alan Pinnegar.

Kelvin Silburn, team leader, voice and intelligence engineering at BTextact, said: "Intelligent Call Manager moves the first point of contact for in-bound callers out of the call centre and into the national network where BT can provide very cost-effective response, queuing and routing services.

"If we needed to procure new IVR systems today for Intelligent Call Manager then the selection criteria that applied in the case of the fastIP would remain valid. For such applications, BT requires resilient and well-engineered systems offering a powerful and flexible service-creation capability

that can support complex applications. For the Intelligent Call Manager application, BTextact specialists used the Telsis PDL programming language to integrate the fastIPs with the other major intelligent network components of Intelligent Call Manager."

Substantially more powerful and capable than conventional interactive voice response technology, the Ocean fastIP can hold up to 6000 hours of high quality audio and handles up to 120 simultaneous calls with the same high quality of audio and speed of response as it delivers when handling just a single call. The platform supports a number of signalling schemes including SS7 and Euro-ISDN.

The fastIP can operate under the control of a service control point or in standalone mode, supporting up to 1000 different services. Services are selected by the number dialled and content can be varied according to the CLI or other signalling parameters. Services may

be added or modified concurrently whilst the platform is live.

An optional conferencing capability enables callers to be connected together. Live audio feeds can be connected via dial-in circuits. ISDN Keypad protocol enables the fastIP to communicate with and control other equipment including network switches enabling it to support advanced applications such as mid-call transfer. ■



LifeWay Deploys Newest Version of Verint ULTRA Intelligent Recording Solution

Verint Systems Inc. (NASDAQ:VRNT), a leading provider of analytic solutions for communications interception, digital video security and surveillance, and enterprise business intelligence, has announced that LifeWay Christian Resources has deployed ULTRA™ version 9 across its 17 contact centers.

LifeWay is engaged in the production and sale of Bibles, church literature, books, music, audio and video recordings and church supplies. The company owns and operates more than 115 LifeWay Christian Stores throughout the United States, as well as two of the largest Christian conference centers in the country. LifeWay's decision to implement the ULTRA solution was driven by a commitment to gain insight into customer needs and expectations, and share this intelligence

throughout the organization, according to Nancy Marks, LifeWay's telecommunications manager.

"ULTRA will help us deliver on our vision for customer care by enabling key managers at LifeWay to more thoroughly understand the customer experience and develop more effective customer strategies," said Marks.

ULTRA Intelligent Recording is designed to drive enterprise quality by enabling organizations of all sizes to cost effectively capture every

customer interaction and extract actionable intelligence from telephone, Voice over IP, email, chat or agent assisted co-browsing contacts. Easy access to customer data through ULTRA's Web-based desktop portal enables enterprises to use what they learn from customer contacts to optimize their processes, increase productivity, comply with risk management requirements and improve service to their customers. ■

NICE Systems launches NICE Feedback, real-time application for improving customer satisfaction and business performance

NICE Systems (NASDAQ: NICE), has announced the release of NICE Feedback™, a new business performance application for gathering customer feedback and improving customer satisfaction. This IVR-based survey system, which is the

most efficient way to assess customer satisfaction, is fully integrated with NiceUniverse®, NICE's quality monitoring solution. Linking the recorded interaction between agent and customer with the relevant customer feedback enables contact centers to improve business performance by identifying service gaps that require immediate corrective action. NICE Feedback also provides an immediate and reliable measurement for first-call resolutions, which is an important measure of

contact center effectiveness and productivity. In addition to monitoring customer satisfaction levels, the application can be used by other departments, such as marketing or product development, to obtain valuable insight more quickly than by using other survey methods.

"Obtaining direct customer feedback has become an essential activity for most contact centers," commented Eytan Bar, vice president and general manager of NICE CEM

Product Division. "Now, by polling a customer when their relationship with the company is uppermost in their mind — right after they have spoken to an agent — organizations can immediately hone in on areas where agent skills or business processes need improvement or identify positive customer reactions that can be acted on quickly to gain competitive advantage".

NICE Feedback enables contact centers to:



NICE Systems con't

- Compare quality monitoring scores with customer surveys to obtain a full picture of the customer's experience.
 - Launch multiple surveys simultaneously each catered to a specific caller type or product.
 - Route callers automatically, without the agent being involved, to a relevant survey
 - Capture responses to open- or closed-ended questions, such as Yes/No, 1 - 10 rating scales, and voice message responses.
 - Instantly drill-down from a report to the customer survey and customer's responses and comments.
 - Automatically link the survey results with the actual call recording to gain greater insight
 - Generate customer feedback reports and distribute automatically within the organization using the NICE Reporter application.
- "NICE Feedback is a flexible and cost-effective tool for gaining valuable customer insight," continued Eytan Bar. "We are encouraged by the enthusiastic reaction we've had from multiple functional areas within customer organizations that have previewed the product." ■

e-Talk Announces New Monitoring Solution

e-Talk Corporation, the global leader of Performance Impact™ solutions for contact centers, has announced new functionality for its award-winning quality monitoring (QM) solution, etalk Recorder™. Recorder 4.0 provides powerful features for contact centers

focused on 100 percent call recording to better manage customer transactions, dispute resolution, and overall risk management. Such capabilities allow companies within the financial, insurance, retail, and healthcare industries to minimize their risk and effectively manage customer resolutions. ■

New Agent Notification Module for Pipkins' Vantage Point Sends Pop-Up Alerts for Intra-Day Schedule Adjustments

Supervisors Can Send New Schedules, Request Overtime without Disrupting Operations

Pipkins Inc. has announced an industry-first Agent Notification System for its Vantage Point workforce management software that expedites intra-day schedule adjustments by enabling call center supervisors to send pop-up messages to agents' computer screens. Messages can alert agents to schedule changes and incorporate each agent's new schedule within the pop-up window; or send overtime requests and allow agents to respond with a click.

The optional module, available now, ensures that intra-day adjustments can be finalized and communicated quickly without any interruption to call handling. It also eliminates the need for supervisors to print and distribute new intra-day schedules, and/or talk to agents individually by phone or in person to solicit overtime hours to

compensate for absences or other last-minute staffing problems.

"If a supervisor has to take the time to print and distribute a new intra-day schedule, some of the breaks and reoptimization for the day may already have been missed," said Jim Hogan, Manager of Customer Care for Pipkins. "Our new screen pop strategy eliminates that lag time by immediately sharing schedule changes with the entire staff as well as speeding the process of obtaining overtime commitments from agents. This system can therefore play an important role in helping call centers meet their service levels."

The new Agent Notification System complements Pipkins' other intra-day adjustment capabilities, including intra-day forecasting and intra-day schedule reoptimization. It can also be used to send general business messages, configured to issue audible prompts notifying agents to check their computers for screen pops, and used to send information in ticker mode across the top of agents' screens. ■



Concerto Software, Inc. Announces General Availability of Unison 7.0

Latest Version of Industry-Leading Call Management Solution Features Increased Telephony Capacity

Concerto Software, Inc. (NASDAQ: CRTO), a proven provider of customer interaction management (CIM) solutions, announced that the newest version of its comprehensive outbound customer contact solution, Unison, became generally available on May 9, 2003. Unison Version 7.0 delivers greater system capacity, redundancy and performance for businesses that produce high call-volumes and need to improve campaign effectiveness.

The latest version of Unison supports dual Digital Communications Processors (DCPs) in a single system tied together via ATM (Asynchronous Transfer Mode). This capability doubles the line-to-agent ratio in a given physical system allowing for increased productivity. Support for dual DCPs in a single system also lowers the cost of acquisition and ongoing operation by reducing the number of systems that need to be

deployed and maintained.

"In the past year or so, Concerto Software has seen considerable success with its inbound and multichannel strategy, notably through the acquisition of CELLIT and the introduction of EnsemblePro," said Sheila McGee-Smith, President & Principal Analyst for McGee-Smith Analytics. "However, there is a large portion of Concerto Software's embedded base whose needs are fully met with the Unison outbound solution. The release of 7.0 continues to support these customers by improving and expanding the Unison application."

Unison is Concerto Software's comprehensive outbound customer contact solution. The software is specifically designed for businesses that undertake extensive telemarketing, proactive customer contact, and collections campaigns. Unison contains all of the tools needed for outbound contact, including predictive dialing, call blending, browser-based agent desktop, real-time reporting and campaign development. These tools serve to maximize agent productivity and work to enhance the quality of each interaction.

Patelco Credit Union Implements eQueue® Multi-Media Contact Center Solution

eOn Communications Corporation(tm) (NASDAQ: EONC), a leading provider of unified voice, e-mail and Web-based communications systems and software, will implement its eQueue® Multi-Media Contact Center Solution at San Francisco-based Patelco Credit Union to help ensure superior service for its more than 190,000 members. Using eQueue's Automatic Call Distribution (ACD), Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and reporting functionality Patelco's member representatives, which field more than 250,000 calls per month, will be better able to answer member inquiries regarding loans, checking and savings accounts and credit card services. By the end of the summer, eOn's eQueue will be installed in Patelco's corporate headquarters in San Francisco, and in two other call center facilities - one in Atwater, Calif. and one in Citrus Heights, Calif. "Using technology to ensure our members get the best service possible has long

been a goal of ours. We know that enhancing our contact centers will continue to make every member interaction a positive one," said Andrew Hunter, CEO of Patelco. "eOn is a company with a proven track record for helping credit unions communicate more effectively and efficiently with members. As a trusted partner to many in the industry, we knew that eOn would be the right fit for our high standards." By utilizing the eQueue Multi-Media Contact Center Solution, Patelco will be able to network together all three of its contact center facilities as if they were one location. In addition, the call centers' will achieve a high level of redundancy that will enable any of the three locations to handle all member service support functions in the event of a service outage at any of the centers. Hunter says this is critical because, "Patelco cannot be in a situation where we cannot take a member's call." The flexibility of the new system gives Patelco better visibility into agent activities, stronger reporting capabilities and will allow for remote agent supervision. In the event of a disaster at



Patelco Credit Union (Continued)

one call center, agents also will be able to handle calls remotely from home. Patelco will be using eOn's SoftPhone, which equips PC workstations for call handling by providing easy, point-and-click operations for dialing, transferring, conferencing and other phone features. In addition, Patelco agents will be able to integrate phone calls with member email messaging, expediting member inquiries and increasing productivity in the call center.

"We know that our members will instantly benefit from our new eQueue system," said Sherry Callahan, senior vice president of operations for Patelco. "We expect to immediately improve member service levels. In addition, we will be in a better position to rapidly escalate and resolve any member issues."

In the future, Callahan says Patelco will evaluate the use of Voice over IP (VoIP) technology inherent to the eQueue systems to network together all 36 branches. By taking advantage of the eQueue's advanced routing capabilities for both traditional voice and VoIP,

the facilities can be joined into a single unified voice and data network. According to Callahan, this will enable Patelco to provide higher service levels at all locations and to benefit from cost reductions in both call routing and long distance fees.

"Patelco's focus on superior member services and understanding of leading technology solutions is what makes selecting eQueue such a perfect fit for its contact centers," said Mitch Gilstrap, eOn's chief operating officer. "Within the financial services community we have proven time and time again that eOn delivers real value in terms of increasing service levels and reducing costs. We are proud to add Patelco to the growing list of financial institutions around the World that are turning to eOn to power their contact centers." ■

PERFORMIX TECHNOLOGIES AND IEX ANNOUNCE ALLIANCE

Integration drives profitability and customer satisfaction for contact centers

Performix Technologies, the industry leader in enterprise employee performance management software, and IEX, the leading provider of workforce management solutions, has announced a new strategic alliance. This alliance brings together the fundamental benefits of enterprise performance and productivity management to result in significant improvements in the way employees work within the contact center, increasing profitability and improving customer service as a result.

The integration of Performix Technologies' solution, Emvolve Performance Manager, with the IEX TotalView® Workforce Management solution takes the optimization of contact centers' workforces to new levels. Emvolve Performance Manager provides the window through which agents and managers

can get detailed analysis of their performance against targets and objectives. The integration of information from the IEX solution enables Performix Technologies to provide granular level detail on the critical performance metrics impacting employee adherence to schedule and resource planning.

The detailed analysis of performance against such metrics combined with performance results from multiple sources enables contact centers to truly optimize the performance of their business.

"With the integration of Emvolve Performance Manager and TotalView Workforce Management we were able to achieve a 3.5% improvement in our agents' adherence to schedules which not only increased our profitability, by improving the productivity of our agents, but also increased our customer service level," explains Tom Sultenfuss, Spherion Corporation.

Emvolve Performance Manager integrates statistical information on



actual employee performance and applies proven performance management techniques to this, which drives increases in productivity and business performance. The alliance with IEX will enable rigorous and in-depth performance results on scheduling metrics such as shrinkage, adherence, conformance, absenteeism, and exceptions to be available to agents and managers at the click of a button.

“Working with IEX will enable us to deliver a deeper level of understanding of what is driving performance within the contact center. Our ability to combine these performance results with all other critical metrics within the contact center, makes this alliance one that will bring tangible and measurable benefits to our customers,” states Cathal

McGloin, CEO of Performix Technologies. “Our ability to provide this information across all levels of the contact center ensures that individual employees can clearly see what is driving their performance, and gives them the information they need to impact their results.”

“The alliance between IEX and Performix Technologies will bring to the market a combination of solutions that will enable customers to achieve true employee optimization,” said Debbie May, IEX General Manager. ■

Amerix Corp. Paves the Way for Performance

- Industry leader, Amerix Corporation raises the bar on service and support with the deployment of Emvolve Performance Manager

Performix Technologies, a leading global provider of enterprise employee performance management solutions has announced a new contract with Ascend One Corporation. Ascend One is the parent company of Amerix Corp, the nation’s leading technology and processing service provider to the credit counseling industry.

The use of leading edge technology to enhance service and support has been the mantra of Amerix Corp. since its inception in 1997. Raising the bar once again, Amerix is deploying Emvolve Performance Manager to empower their team members to drive their own performance in supporting the credit counseling agencies Amerix serves, improving the consumers’ experience and positively enhancing their

overall business. The solution will be initially employed at the Columbia, Maryland contact center.

“The very tangible and direct correlation between employee performance, customer satisfaction and business performance, set us on a quest to find a solution that would enable us to effectively manage and improve the performance of our people to increase service to our customers” explains JP Hussey, Sr. Director of Operations for Amerix Corp.

“What we found was Emvolve Performance Manager, which not only allows us to manage performance better, but goes further by enabling our employees to manage, monitor and improve their own performance. This approach drives action across our entire employee base, and that means all of our people are collectively focused on our business goals. This results in much better individual and overall business performance.”

Emvolve Performance Manager is the leading



Amerix Corp. con't

solution in the employee performance management market - a market that is growing rapidly and currently forecasted to achieve double-digit growth, as performance management becomes the primary concern of executives in organizations across the world.

The solution works by integrating statistical data on employee performance from all existing systems within the contact center and applies, to that data, performance management techniques to drive significant changes in performance across the entire employee base, resulting in increased business results.

Emvolve Performance Manager provides the process by which corporate objectives are translated into easy to understand activities for employees to focus on. In addition, it provides the mechanism by which daily feedback on performance is delivered to each employee in the organization, empowering them to take

ownership of their own performance and driving collective responsibility for achieving corporate objectives. The solution sustains improvement through integrated reward and recognition programs and targeted development plans to ensure the continual shift in the enterprise's performance curve.

"Amerix has always led the way through technology innovation, and their choice of Emvolve Performance Manager is just another example of their business savvy" comments Cathal McGloin, CEO Performix Technologies

"Smart companies such as Amerix are quickly realizing the hard measurable benefits that employee performance management can bring to their businesses. We are delighted to be able to help them realize those benefits through Emvolve Performance Manager".

AAA Selects CIAC as a Preferred Supplier Offering Call Center Certifications to the Association's Call

Centers Throughout the U.S. and Canada

The Call Center Industry Advisory Council (CIAC) has announced that AAA has selected CIAC Certification to certify its contact center managers and leaders. AAA will use this industry-standard certification program to develop and validate mastery expertise in their contact center management professionals throughout its 79 clubs across the US and Canada. Ten AAA managers will begin a pilot program during the second quarter of 2003. Over the three-year contract period, AAA anticipates 1,700 call center executives, including vice presidents, directors, managers and supervisors, will pursue CIAC Certification within the Management Track.

"We seek partner opportunities with organizations that offer services that assist in increasing the call center manager's range of

knowledge and expertise," said Patricia Kleinfeldt, director, Quality and Education Services, Automotive for AAA. "CIAC Certification will guide individuals in identifying areas of improvement and help them plan their professional development. AAA managers that participate and achieve their professional certification will be recognized as leaders throughout our entire organization and the call center industry." AAA individuals in the certification process can obtain three of the four CIAC Certification Management Track designations. They will be pursuing the CIAC-Certified Strategic Leader (CCSL), CIAC-Certified Operations Manager (CCOM) or CIAC-Certified Management Apprentice (CCMA) designation.

Managers pursuing CCSL and CCOM designations will each complete a rigorous six-step testing process. The process consists of four knowledge



Amerix Corp. con't

assessments covering the critical call center management areas of operations, people, customer relationships, and leadership and business. They will also complete a Work Product Assignment that assesses their ability to apply their expertise in a call center environment. The final step requires them to complete a cross-functional 360° Review that verifies their behavioral characteristics meet those identified as essential for executive leadership success. To keep their CIAC Certification active, they will be required to re-certify their proficiency in three years by completing a Master Knowledge Assessment based on then current competency requirements. Individuals pursuing the CCMA designation complete the four knowledge assessments to obtain their certification. They have the option of completing the Work Product Assignment and

360° Review at a later date to obtain their CCOM designation. They must also re-certify their proficiency in three years by completing a Master Knowledge Assessment.

Fredia Barry, President of CIAC said, "We are extremely pleased to have to AAA join the ranks of innovative organizations that are using CIAC Certification. These organizations understand the strategic value of their human capital and the role of their contact center(s) in meeting business objectives."



IDEA

New Businesses Lower Startup Costs and Get Fortune 500 Image by Outsourcing Phone System

The world's lingering economic uncertainty has dramatically tightened the operational belts of all businesses— especially new start ups. Finding ways to reduce business phone set-up costs without sacrificing quality or function is more essential than ever. One way businesses can do this is through a hosted communications service provider like Virtual PBX. The VirtualPBX service provides all the sophisticated phone capabilities of a large company phone system such as auto-attendant greeting, voice and fax mail, automatic call distribution, and extension to extension transferring without the disadvantage of having to buy, install and maintain a PBX system on site. This can save companies upwards of \$75,000 for equipment alone, not factoring in the costs of maintenance, programming and

redundancy that a traditional system would require.

- With the VirtualPBX service, small firms look to the rest of the world like established companies with high end, sophisticated call management systems. Each customer gets a toll-free number with "virtual extensions" that can be mapped to any phone number anywhere in the world. All employees are integrated under a single phone number whether they work in distributed local offices, telecommute from home or are mobile. The system also comes with powerful follow-me calling, call screening and new message paging for all extensions.

The mobile sales and installation professionals at Home Game LP, the exclusive distributor and installation trainer for Putting Greens Unlimited serving the central and northern California areas, need an efficient and reliable way for customers to reach them whether they are in



Idea con't

their offices or on the road at appointments. General Partner Greg Pickens decided on a VirtualPBX phone system because "it was not only the most economical and professional alternative out there, but could also quickly and easily accommodate our expanding sales force and licensed installation contractors."

Phelon Consulting, a new strategic marketing firm that specializes in defining, implementing and managing customer reference programs, also considered a variety of voice communication options but likewise chose the VirtualPBX hosted service. Phelon's unique business brings together experienced customer reference professionals from all over the country to provide top-level service to its clients. Phelon needed a central phone system that would connect clients quickly and invisibly with dispersed consultants. "Projecting a professional public image right from the start was a primary goal," said Principal Promise Phelon. "I want

clients to have immediate access to our consultants, no matter where they are located, without having to invest a lot of our resources in equipment and technology. VirtualPBX met both of these considerations."

The VirtualPBX Small Business System takes less than 24 hours to install and is offered as a month to month service with a one time \$150 setup fee, a per extension charge of \$5 to \$15 per month, depending on the number of extensions in the system, and call traffic as low as 5.5 cents per minute. It would take a business over eight years of using the VirtualPBX service before a hardware PBX purchase of equal functionality could be justified. ■

COMPANY PROFILES

AAA Certificates

Call Centers need rewards and recognition programs that are at once efficient, effective and easy to administer.

AAA Certificates is a proven provider of excellent awards that meet the needs of reward/recognition administrators as well as the recipients. Read below feedback from their current customers:

- "Thank you, thank you thank you! You have no idea how much easier your award certificates site has made what used to be one of the most stressful parts of my job!"
Joan M., Businesswoman, New York
- "Your site has saved us a small fortune in costs. We never liked using the generic certificates we could get locally. But now we can reward our employees with cheerful, fun awards on an ongoing basis for next to nothing!"
Jake C., Customer Service Supervisor, Texas
- "I discovered your site recently and have used it extensively. I love the

variety and the fact that I can have them modified the way I want. I use them for graduation certificates, for awards and for fun. Keep up the great work."
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Don S., Dept. of Defense

Here is why you should contact AAA Certificates today:

- The fastest, easiest and most affordable way to reward any accomplishment!
- Truly Professional Quality Certificates!
- The Ultimate time saver for you, the busy business professional...

Plus the following fantastic benefits:

- Save time since you don't have to create your own certificates or search for just the right one
- Save money because you're not buying hard printed copies which cannot be altered
- Have a wide range of

certificates available to present to your employees, co-workers and friends

- Be able to reward anyone for a special accomplishment any time
- Vastly improve office morale since employees will feel more appreciated
- Have the ability to request new certificates or categories from our professional graphics designers
- Show your co-workers how much you appreciate them, easily and cost effectively
- Access any of your favorite certificates from anywhere using nothing more than a simple internet connection
- Print onto any type of color of paper
- Be able to personalize each award certificate if you choose to, or leave fields blank for later use

Contact:

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JDM Systems, Inc.

We are a professional services firm providing systems development and integration expertise for Contact Centers with Customer Enterprises, including Computer Telephony Integration (CTI), call routing design, call flow analysis & design, collaborative web/telephony technology for web based customer service and Voice Response application design and development. Having worked extensively with ICM Virtual Routing Technology we can assist clients in engineering a single or multi-site Contact Center configuration for optimal efficiency and cost effectiveness. We can provide full integration of Contact Center events with enterprise CRM systems providing a full 360-degree customer view.

Picking the right professional services firm can be challenging. You want a firm that has experience, industry knowledge and innovative ideas. Our firm has the background and knowledge to help you and your

company succeed. This site will provide in-depth information about our background and describe the different services we offer. We'll also include information about some of our top consultants.

Please contact us for more information or if you have specific questions about our services. We look forward to working with you.

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