

Call Center Times

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INTRODUCTION TO e-LEARNING FOR THE CONTACT CENTER

By Robert Koblovsky, CEO, Smart Telecom

Introduction to e-Learning for the Contact Center Robert Koblovsky, CEO Smart Telecom

One of the greatest growth areas for e-learning is the contact center/helpdesk market, and with reason. The drive for improved customer service, reduction of costs and the use of contact centers as revenue-generating centers mean that easy, continuous access to training is necessary. Once the domain of only the larger organizations, e-learning technology is evolving to become more accessible to the small and medium-sized centers.

The role of e-learning in the contact center

e-Learning is the use of information and communications technologies to create and maximize the learning environment and experience. It is particularly effective in teaching skills, such as how to use a software product, because of its ability to have the learner practice the functions. Helpdesks also use e-learning to teach concepts, such as policies, procedures and regulatory issues relevant to the market they serve or soft skills such as dealing with difficult customers.

What makes e-learning such a solid fit for contact centers and helpdesks? It addresses some very specific issues and challenges of the contact center environment. Agent turnover, for example, is a matter that centers have learned to live with, accepting a churn rate as high as 30-40%. This attrition means training of new agents is constant. The leaner centers of today often cannot spare anyone to sit down and train the new agents with classroom-style training. e-Learning enables the provision detailed tutorials and training, in an interactive format. Some interesting studies by research analysts also found a correlation between training and staff retention and that the implementation of e-learning can reduce churn to under 15%.

Well-trained staff also handle calls more efficiently, reducing time and costs for calls. E-learning as a training tool becomes of particular interest in centers where up-selling and cross-selling is an expected part of the agent's role. It is typical for agents to promote only the few products he/she is familiar with and herein lies the limitation of traditional training methods. They take too much time for a center to provide in-depth training on more than a few options. The use of e-learning technology makes it possible for agents to

increase their comfort levels with a greater range of products and services. This can result in increased sales in product areas that have been seen as low performing.

E-learning is effective in providing training to new hires, refresher training for existing employees and upgrade training to build on the existing knowledge base. Increased and better customer service is an expected result and empowering agents through e-learning increases confidence, which ultimately translates into better performance all around.

Features of today's e-learning

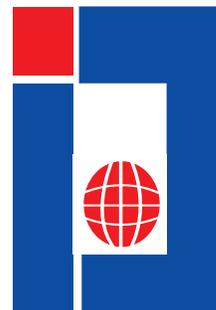
Today's e-learning technology has features that address the gaps left by other training methods.

Just in time (JIT) capability provides the contact center or helpdesk agent with immediate access to information about product and services portfolios. It turns the

training into a mini-helpdesk, where agents can search for specific information fairly quickly—even while on a call.

The implementation of e-learning provides agents with the ability to train anywhere, anytime. Allowing agents to train during downtime or slower call volumes maximizes their effectiveness and allows them to consolidate what they have learned through use and practice. E-learning can be delivered right to the agent's desktop, to their home or mobile laptop, making it a solid training option for those contact centers with staff working from remote locations.

The addition of simulation to skills-based training allows the agent to practice the required skill set before they deal with a real customer. Simulation in the learning environment is the fastest path to competency, providing agents with the ability to work in a "safe" environment while



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emulating the tasks required in a “live” or “production mode”.

The availability of administration features enables the contact center manager to track how the agents are doing in their training and allows the manager to administer, test and report on training throughout the contact center group.

The implementation of e-learning

Successful implementation of e-learning requires careful planning. Although it is easy to get caught up in the exciting, comprehensive features that are available out there, the focus should be on the specific learning needs of the contact center where it will be implemented. Start by defining these needs, reviewing factors such as agent turnover, training of new agents versus established agents, customer service requirements, corporate policies and revenue goals. Take a look at existing training materials and determine whether they can be adapted for e-learning or need to be updated. Identify what type of training best meets the needs and how frequently it will need to be updated. Look at timing and set short- and long-term objectives. Don't forget to consider budgets and the availability of other resources in the development of training. It is also a good idea to establish benchmarks which will provide a before and after comparison and measure ROI.

e-learning is strategic in nature

and requires executive involvement and commitment to be successful. Content is not static nor is the evolution of technology. As learning requirements change and technologies mature the e-learning environment will change to embrace new capabilities and processes.

The challenge is that various technologies encompassed by e-learning are maturing at different rates. For example Learning Management Systems (LMS) are reasonably mature while Learning Content Management Systems (LCMS), the new evolution, are still emerging. Both of these enable organizations to administer and manage training. Large companies may have these in place already for other departments and the training for contact centers will need to comply with them. Fortunately, industry standards such as AICC and SCORM promote interoperability standards and specifications for e-learning.

It is unlikely that any one approach or tool (or set of tools) will address all of the e-learning requirements of an entire organization; the development platform and approach used by corporate for general training may not be transportable to the needs of the contact center.

The good news is that the newer e-learning technologies are making it accessible to the small to medium-sized centers. The upfront investment is more manageable—particularly if the

solution is simply focused on the learning needs. (Video, multimedia or other lively features are great, but they are also expensive and may not help in better teaching the subject matter.) They are also more flexible in enabling change to content, increasing the life span of the tutorials.

Creating e-learning courses

In any e-learning environment content is king. The effectiveness of an e-learning program depends upon the creation of a learning environment that facilitates and supports the target user's ability to access relevant content, display the information in such a way that the user understand and allows for consolidation of learning, maximizing retention and recall.

Typically, training should be modular. This allows for users to train anywhere, anytime without the need to complete lengthy training modules. It also recognizes that learning is more effective if presented in smaller chunks. We have all experienced the effect of information overload when we attempt to learn too much too quickly.

Positive feedback mechanisms implemented through out the training program re-enforce the learning experience. It is unfortunate but true that few organizations take the time to understand how their target audience learns. Simple things such as age and sex and affect how people learn and more complex human factors exist

and need to be evaluated. The idea is to make the learning speak to the student in a language the student readily understands. For example, an inbound call center in the automotive industry provides access to Class “A” mechanics for specialized support. They are generally male, older and blue collar. CSRs that handle general enquiries are generally female, mid thirties with college or university education. The way information is presented and how each diverse group learns is different. In the first case there is a general technology phobia and a certain “set in their ways” attitude. There is a resistant to change and doing things differently.

Testing measures what the agents have learned and it is an integral part of an e-learning tutorial. There are various testing methodologies available for consideration (true or false, essay, task based). The training manager can define the minimum competency levels and track your agent progress. Monitoring agent responses on an on-going basis is necessary, particularly for new courses. If a large number of people are getting the same answer wrong, either the question could be incorrect or the presentation of the material that speaks to that question may not be clear.

e-Learning adoption will continue to grow

It is clear that more and more contact centers and help desks will implement e-learning, particularly as technology makes it more accessible and



cost-friendly. Research and understanding of the center's training needs are essential to take the first steps towards creating a plan. The importance of good preparation and execution, as always, cannot be overstated.

There is no doubt that e-learning provides tangible benefits and measurable results for the contact center. The success of your e-learning initiatives will be dependant upon the degree of effort and senior management commitment to the task at hand.

The importance of good preparation and execution, as always, cannot be overstated.



FIVE PILLARS OF SUSTAINING SERVICE

By Jean Marie Johnson, VP, Communico Ltd.

Five Pillars of Sustaining Exceptional Service

Have you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes of a great service provider? How do they consistently provide service that goes above and beyond customers' expectations? What makes it possible for some organizations to deliver consistently exceptional service? We at Communico have dedicated ourselves to finding the answers to these questions for years, and we are pleased to share our findings with you.

Certainly, developing the skill base of front-line, customer-facing associates is essential,

but something extraordinary goes on in organizations that are able to sustain great service over time. With the help of an independent research firm, we uncovered the core organizational competencies that great service providers had in common.

From these, we have identified five pillars to sustaining exceptional service, that, taken together, form the basis for Communico's Five Pillars of a MAGIC Service Culture. By evaluating how your organization measures up, you can determine your ability to provide exceptional service in the long run.

1. Shared Vision and Values
Top service providers have a clear and concise customer service vision, outlined from both the customer's and the associate's point of view. A corporate wide service vision is the foundation for inspiring great customer service behaviors. Executives at a financial services company have been able to do just this. They developed a service vision that included the overarching direction and commitment for the organization. As they rolled the vision out, energy accelerated as each department engaged in a team dialogue to explore the question, "What does this vision mean to us?"

The answers were captured in a 'rainbow' of departmental vision statements, all inspired by the service vision. With this type of vision and support from the management team, all of the

employees could articulate a common theme of what great service meant for them and their customers.

2. Service-Focused Leaders
A recent study associated a key driver of organizational change to respected leaders modeling the behaviors they ask of others. If leaders want their employees to focus on service, they need to practice what they preach.

Without examples to follow, employee morale and motivation will suffer. However, if across the organization everyone from front line associates to senior managers models great service, you will achieve greater consistency in your service and overall higher customer satisfaction ratings.

3. Consistent Service Delivery and Measurement Organizations
that excel in service delivery do a great job of translating their service vision into clear, consistent, and integrated standards. Establishing measures for face-to-face, phone, and e-interactions will help you monitor service quality and consistency.

Apply these measures to interactions between each employee and customer. Then monitor these measures on an individual employee-by-employee basis. You will find that not all employees truly understand the service vision, and this will hinder your ability to provide consistent service.

One of the nation's largest home builders and providers of an array of loan products has

developed a set of measurements to monitor service quality. Their goal is to provide a seamless service experience for all customers through every customer touch point.

Creating measures for each interaction with clients has enabled them to ensure a consistently superior customer experience. Through monitoring these measurements and making continuous improvements, courtesy and customer satisfaction scores, along with market share, are on the rise.

4. Developmental Training and Coaching
Approaching training as a process versus a one-time event is a key differentiator between organizations that consistently deliver exceptional service and those that do not. Quick-fix, silver-bullet methods can, at best, achieve short-term results. Behavior follows mindset and attitude instilled by ongoing training and development.

Coaching must also accompany training. Paying individual attention to what and how employees are contributing to service, and coaching them to hone skills and abilities, will boost morale, confidence, and service delivery.

An information management software and services company implemented an integrated training and development process to raise the skill level of their associates. They did not just do training however, they ensured that there was



continuous monitoring and coaching linked with the training. Now the company receives letters on a daily basis from clients thanking them for the high level of service provided.

5. Constant Systemic Improvement and Reinforcement The best of the best service organizations are nimble. They have honed their ability to course correct in the interest of their service vision. Organizations must continuously consider how systems and processes are contributing to the service experience along with how the service vision is being reinforced.

In the best service cultures, much work is done behind the scenes to address obstacles that may exist in human resource practices, work flow, IT and so on. Consider a cross-functional team in Los Angeles that used their newly-crafted service vision as a reference point for reviewing every work hand-off in light of its impact on the customer. Everybody could

see how what they do (and what everyone else does) affects the customer experience.

Creating the Service Culture

Apply these pillars at your organization and you will foster exceptional customer service. It will not be easy, and there are no quick fixes, but the results you can achieve will be worth the effort not only to your customers and your employees, but to your organization's bottom line.

Jean Marie Johnson
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THE COST OF OPERATING A CALL CENTER IN NORTH AMERICA AND OFF-SHORE DETAILED IN NEW BIZCOSTS.COM® REPORT

A recently completed BizCosts® study compares the cost of operating a call center in 102 U.S., Canadian, and

off-shore sites. The U.S. and Canadian sites included in the report all house significant concentrations of call center investment and jobs. The off-shore locations featured in the analysis include major European call center hubs as well as low cost alternatives in the Caribbean, South and Central America, India, Asia, Western and Eastern Europe, South Africa and in the Pacific. Costs include all major geographically-variable factors critical to the call center site selection process. Surveyed costs include labor, office rents, telecommunications, electric power, taxes, heating and air conditioning, corporate travel, and amortization costs. Costs are scaled to a 500 worker call center occupying 45,000 square feet of floor space. Annual telecommunications costs in the analysis are based on an assumed monthly usage of 2.50 million minutes of billable 800 service. Total annual operating costs in

the study range from an average of \$20.1 million in the three most expensive North American cities to a low of \$14.2 million in the three least expensive sites. In the off-shore operating cost comparison, costs range from an average of \$21.0 million to a low of \$4.3 million in the least expensive three cities.

Comparative Call Center Locations

Following is a listing of cities included in the North American and Off-Shore BizCosts® Report.

New England Region:

- Portland, Maine
- Boston, Massachusetts
- Springfield, Massachusetts
- Manchester/Nashua, New Hampshire
- Hartford, Connecticut
- Providence, Rhode Island

Middle Atlantic Region:

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- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Allentown/Bethlehem, Pennsylvania



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Dover, Delaware

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Norfolk/Virginia Beach, Virginia
Charlotte, North Carolina
Greenville, South Carolina
Atlanta, Georgia
Augusta, Georgia

Florida Region:

Jacksonville, Florida
Orlando, Florida
Tampa/St. Petersburg, Florida
Ft. Myers, Florida
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
Miami, Florida

Mid South Region:

Louisville, Kentucky
Memphis, Tennessee
Nashville, Tennessee
Knoxville, Tennessee
Birmingham, Alabama
Mobile Alabama

East North Central Region:

Columbus, Ohio
Cincinnati, Ohio
Indianapolis, Indiana
Chicago, Illinois
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin

West North Central Region:

Omaha, Nebraska
Des Moines, Iowa
Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Wichita, Kansas
Kansas City, Missouri
St. Louis, Missouri

West South Central Region:

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Dallas, Texas
Austin, Texas
Houston, Texas
San Antonio, Texas
Shreveport, Louisiana

Mountain Region:

Phoenix, Arizona
Tucson, Arizona
Las Vegas/Henderson,
Nevada
Salt Lake City, Utah
Provo/Orem, Utah
Boise, Idaho

Pacific Region:

Seattle/Bellevue, Washington
Spokane, Washington
Eugene/Springfield, Oregon
San Jose, California
Los Angeles, California
San Diego, California

Eastern Canada:

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Moncton, New Brunswick
Montreal, Quebec
Ottawa, Ontario
Toronto, Ontario
Cambridge/Kitchener/Waterloo
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Western Canada:

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Edmonton, Alberta
Calgary, Alberta
Regina, Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Winnipeg, Ontario

Western and Eastern Europe

Region:

Dublin, Ireland
Madrid, Spain
Copenhagen, Denmark
Prague, Czech Republic
Warsaw, Poland
Bucharest, Romania
Tallinn, Estonia

Caribbean Region:

Kingston, Jamaica
Bridgetown, Barbados
Castries, St. Lucia
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad
Santo Domingo, Dominican
Republic
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Latin America Region:

Monterrey, Mexico
Tijuana, Mexico
Campinas, Brazil
San Jose, Costa Rica
Panama City, Panama
Santiago, Chile

Asia Region:

New Delhi/Gurgaon, India
Bangalore, India
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Manila, Philippines
Singapore City, Singapore
Taipei, Taiwan

**Pacific and South Africa
Region:**

Capetown, South Africa
Johannesburg, South Africa
Sydney, Australia
Melbourne, Australia
Auckland, New Zealand

Operating cost differentials
between an acceptable location

and an optimum call center site
can be very substantial, often
running into millions of dollars
per year. Itemized factor-to-
factor annual operating cost
comparisons in the BizCosts®
Report are detailed in the
following table.

**BizCosts®: What It Costs To
Operate A Biotech Facility in
the U.S. (1)**

Additional Information and the
Full BizCosts® Report
Additional information as well
as the complete and
downloadable BizCosts®
Report are available for
purchase at the BizCosts®
website: www.BizCosts.com

**MYTHS ABOUT
CANADIAN CALL
CENTERS EXPLORED
IN SURVEY**

Contributed by Elizabeth
Winter

*Myth #1. Most Call Centers are
big.*

Many banks, credit card and
telephone companies have big
Customer Service operations,
sometimes numbering
thousands of staff. However,
the median staff size of Call
Centers in Canada is only 44
full-time equivalents (FTEs).
HRDC reports that the CC
industry employs 1 in every 25
working Canadians and that
89% of Call Centers in Canada
have fewer than 50 employees.



Myth #2. Call Centers are open 24 hrs. a day. Only 25% of Call Centers stay open 24 / 7 / 365. The average open time for others was 12 hours a day from Monday to Friday, and 3 hours per day on Saturdays, Sundays and statutory holidays. This data may lead to the conclusion that weekend calls may be outsourced to other Call Centers.

Myth #3. Everyone is outsourcing, and everyone is outsourcing to India. Based on the 2005 survey, the vast majority (71%) of Call Centers in Canada do not outsource customer service calls at all. 10% route overflow / weekend calls to another Call Center within their organization, and the other 19% outsource to 3rd party providers. Of that 19%, 73% outsource within Canada, and only 26% (that's less than 5% of the total respondents) outsource outside of Canada, to India, the USA, Ireland, England and the Philippines.

Myth #4. Most Call Center workers are female and most are first-time job holders. It's true: approximately 65% of employees in Canadian Call Centers are female- that is until you hit what appears to be the glass ceiling. Men hold more than half of the top jobs (Directors, Managers).

In Canada, 47% of Customer Service Reps (CSRs) are

between the ages of 25 and 34, and many have college degrees, dispelling the myth that young people who can't find 'good' jobs elsewhere are the main group who seek jobs in Call Centers.

Some perceptions are true. Union activity is on the rise. 19% of Call Centers surveyed are union shops, and unionization rates have risen 54% annually over the past 3 years. In addition, staff turnover, often more than 20% per year, is also still an industry issue.

The above data is from CPA's 2005 3rd annual Canadian Call Center Salary survey. The full survey report (44 pages) can be purchased for \$299+ gst at www.cpacan.com. CPA is the largest peer-to-peer Call Center association in Canada. For more info, contact Elizabeth Winter.

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Toronto M4W 3E2
Elizabeth Winter, Founder
(416) 410 4663 or (866) 465 2233 eliz@cpacan.com



Answering the Service Dilemma

By Gary A. Pudles

President and Chief Executive Officer, AnswerNet

Call centers have long struggled with the 'dilemma of service'. It is this: most everyone prefers to reach live agents without being put on hold. Yet few people want to pay more for products and services, so that organizations can hire more staff to shorten queues.

Methods like music/messages on hold help retain callers. You can pitch your offerings or suggest callers use your IVR or web self-service. Automated callback applications enable customers to leave their numbers for staff to call in a more ordered way.

Yet as fine as these techniques are they have limitations. Most do not supply definite opportunities to speak with service or sales professionals. Automated callback does not help if there are conflicts between customers' and agents' availability; it is a nuisance to change later.

Online appointment scheduling, long used by telephone answering services supporting doctors, lawyers, contractors and service firms like realtors, can help overcome the service dilemma.

With online appointment scheduling call center agents set up times that are convenient for organizations and for callers. There is no overlap; everyone is on the same page.

To help ensure these times are kept some schedulers can send out reminder emails to customers and staff or systems can be tied to automated call reminder systems. Supervisors and managers and other authorized staff can check and track appointments.

Changes and cancellations can be made easily. To enable changes, give customers a special number to call or add an option on your auto attendant to reach an agent who will make the adjustments.

Appointment-setting calls can be brief. If callers have contacted organizations before, scheduling appointments gives preparation time to the staff who will be handling them.

Appointment applications

Online appointment scheduling is a vital tool for products/services that require installation. Agents sell customers, process their applications and use the schedulers to set up the dates/times. If customers need service the help desk triages service calls to see if they can fix problems over the phone. If not they schedule field repair visits.



Online appointment scheduling is especially helpful when marketing a product or service that requires a licensed professional to complete the deal, such as insurance, real estate and securities. Call center agents pre-screen callers and then set up inbound or outbound appointments.

Similarly call center agents can make appointments for sales professionals to call prospects, or arrange audio or data conferences to demo products or services. Agents can also book field sales staff to visit customers' homes or businesses.

Consider deploying online appointment scheduling as a queue-shortener. Offer on your auto-attendant the choice of

making appointments with staff. The request can be then processed by live agents.

Appointment scheduling helps overcome outbound sales or billing call hassles. If the agents detect or are told by called parties that this is not a great time to call, set up callback times. If customers or prospects agree they are obliged to answer at the agreed time. If they don't they can be struck from sales lists or bucked up from curable accounts to collections.

In-house or outsourced
Online appointment scheduling software can be purchased, licensed or hosted. Among the features we look for in the scheduling software we use: customizable appointment types and times; automated address books that

remembers' callers' names and information; automated email reminders; and multiple appointments scheduling. The other choice is outsourcing appointment scheduling. Telephone answering services have these tools in place, applied by experienced agents. By having such outsourcers handle appointments you free up your call center agents to process the more complex calls that require their knowledge and expertise. For example when your agent has pre-qualified a customer they can tell them: "I'm going to transfer you to our receptionist agent who will make the appointment for you".

If you already outsource your sales and service calls, ask your partners if they provide appointment scheduling. If they do not have such capability, you can suggest they partner

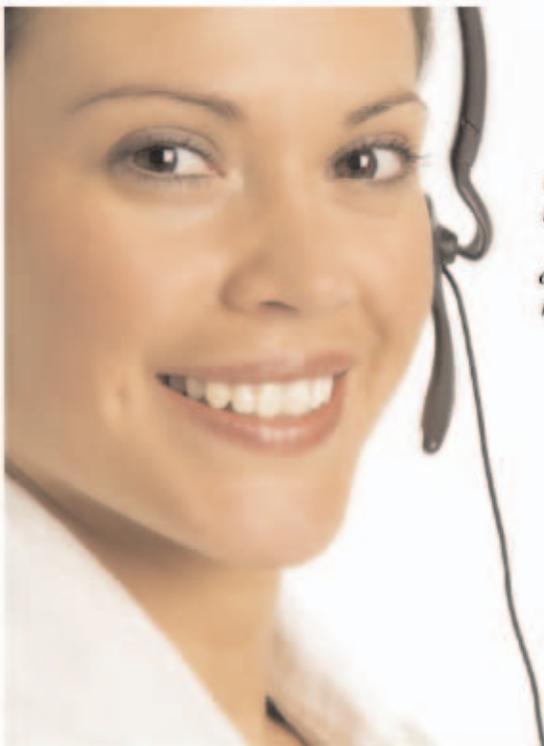
with a telephone answering firm that has that capability and expertise to provide this service and software. Either way you will find appointment scheduling a worthwhile choice in the range of services you provide to your customers.



NEWS

IEX Releases TotalView® Workforce Management Version 3.9

São Paulo, Brazil & Richardson, Texas: IEX Corporation, a Tekelec company (Nasdaq: TKLC) and



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leading provider of workforce management and optimization tools for contact centers, and an Avaya Certified Business Partner, announced the general availability of version 3.9 of the TotalView® Workforce Management system. TotalView 3.9 offers skill block scheduling features that make it easier to manage multichannel contact types and other back office work. The new version also heightens agent empowerment with new time off management and schedule preference capabilities.

“IEX is a market leader with a thorough understanding of its customer’s workforce management needs,” said Seema Lall, contact center analyst for Frost & Sullivan. “They continue to show a strong commitment to research and development that addresses the real world challenges facing contact centers today.”

“The proliferation of multichannel contact types has made managing agent’s time more complex. At the same time, productivity pressures have added stress to the

agent’s already stressful job,” added Lall. “The features available in TotalView 3.9 improve multichannel scheduling efficiency while offering empowerment tools to improve agent job satisfaction.” ■

ENVOX WORLDWIDE ADDS CPT INTERNATIONAL AS A PARTNER TO DELIVER HOSTED VOICE SOLUTIONS

Envox Worldwide, a leading provider of voice solutions, announced that it has added CPT International, a leading provider of standards-based voice application hosting services, as a partner, enabling the company to offer developers using the Envox 6 platform a hosted alternative to customer premise equipment (CPE) deployment through the Voice Harbor service.

“This partnership with CPT allows Envox Worldwide to expand its services for customers requiring hosted solutions,” said Mark D. Flanagan, president and chief executive officer of Envox Worldwide. “A steadily growing

number of our customers are seeking hosted services as a means to shorten time-to-market and remove the barriers that they may be facing with internal deployment. This relationship with CPT is just another example of the steps we’re taking to ensure that our customers can enjoy the benefits of Envox 6 regardless of whether they are seeking a CPE or hosted solution.” ■

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) Poison Control Center Selects Kaidara to Improve Call Center Service for Animal Emergency and Safety Programs

Los Altos, Calif. – Kaidara Software, Inc., announced that the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center, the world’s first animal-oriented poison control center, has selected the Kaidara Advisor™ knowledge management system to improve consistency and quality of response to calls regarding animal medical emergencies and safety matters.

“The ASPCA Poison Control Center is committed to protecting and improving the lives of animals through our educational programs and research,” said Harold Trammel, Senior Director of IT for the ASPCA Poison Control Center. “Our extensive medical records database includes over 800,000 cases. Kaidara will be instrumental in providing our staff with rapid access to this critical information to help save the lives of animals and further our efforts to educate the public regarding animal safety.”

Kaidara’s flagship knowledge management solution will be used to harvest and rapidly retrieve critical, proprietary veterinary medical records and toxicology information used across the poison control center’s special services including its Animal Product Safety Service, Veterinary Lifeline Partner Program, and Veterinary Toxicology Education Program. Additionally, Kaidara Advisor will be instrumental in providing life-saving information to the center’s support staff and veterinarians who handle incoming calls from animal owners and veterinarians in North America and Canada.

 ■



Formula Telecom Solutions Selects NEXTNINE for Service and Support of its Converged Billing, CRM Systems

New York, Tel Aviv – NextNine, a leading global provider of proactive automated, remote service and support solutions for business-critical systems, announced that Formula Telecom Solutions (FTS) has selected NextNine Service Automation for support of its billing and CRM suite of products, and has begun deploying it at several customer sites.

Formula Telecom Solutions chose NextNine Service Automation to continue delivering superior service and support to its customers by maximizing the availability of their business-critical billing and CRM solutions. With customers around the globe, ensuring optimal system performance and efficient deployments at every site, was a key necessity for FTS. By empowering the adoption of a proactive, automated approach to customer support, using proactive monitoring, automatic problem escalation, automatic preventive maintenance and self-healing,

NextNine enables FTS to minimize service disruptions, Mean-Time-To-Repair and service costs, driving customer satisfaction. ■

Envision Announces Second Quarter Results

Seattle — Envision Telephony, Inc. announced a 44 percent increase in second quarter revenue for 2005 over the same period in the prior year. Revenues for the first half of 2005 exceeded 2004 by 49 percent. Total revenue for the last twelve months increased more than 40 percent over the preceding twelve months.

Envision is a privately held, Seattle-based leader in contact center recording, coaching, workforce optimization and business intelligence software.

During the second quarter of 2005, the company added twelve new customers, spanning the globe and several industries including retail, outsourcing, utilities and telecommunications. Envision also secured major expansion orders from one of its signature branded customers in the financial industry as well as one of the world's largest software companies. ■

Genesys Announces IP-Enabled Genesys Voice Platform for the Enterprise Market

SAN FRANCISCO – Genesys Telecommunications Laboratories, Inc., an Alcatel company (NYSE: ALA, Paris: CGEP), announced an IP-enabled version of the Genesys Voice Platform (GVP) to serve enterprise customers of all sizes. The new offering is available now.

The introduction of the new IP-enabled enterprise edition of GVP supports Genesys' strategy to expand Internet Protocol (IP) capabilities throughout the Genesys Voice Platform product portfolio. Enterprises actively considering migrating to IP can do so without an extensive system overhaul because the new IP-enabled version of GVP allows for time-division multiplexing (TDM) and IP to coexist within the same environment. Existing TDM-based environments limit the return on investment (ROI) on contact center software due to the inherent complexities and high cost of ownership at the infrastructure level. By adopting an Open IP approach being driven by Genesys,

enterprise customers can maximize ROI on GVP, while enhancing the customer experience and increasing customer retention.

"Enterprise customers that are actively moving forward with IP initiatives will find value in the self-service and ROI deliverables of the IP-enabled Genesys Voice Platform," said Elliot Danziger, chief technology officer, Genesys. "With this new offering, Genesys presents flexible IP migration solutions to enterprises of all sizes."

IEX Receives Customer Interaction Solutions® Magazine's 2005 CRM Excellence Award

TotalView® Workforce Management System Singled Out for Helping Clients Improve CRM

RICHARDSON, TEXAS: IEX Corporation, a Tekelec company (Nasdaq: TKLC), announced Customer Interaction Solutions magazine has named its TotalView® Workforce Management system as a recipient of the 2005 CRM Excellence Award. ■



Syntora Signs Agreement with Matrium Technologies to Offer Real-time Analytics and eLearning Solutions to the Australian Call Center Market

Toronto, Canada—Syntora, Inc. announced an agreement has been signed with Matrium Technologies Pty Ltd, a leading provider of contact center solutions, to distribute the company's Agentivity Analytics and eLearning solutions. Under the terms of the agreement, Matrium Technologies will provide full local support for Agentivity in Australia.

The Australian contact center industry is experiencing continued growth. Increased competition among companies for skilled customer service agents has pushed salaries higher and placed a greater focus on operational costs. Syntora's Agentivity helps improve agent performance through its Analytics and eLearning modules offering reduced operating costs year to year.

"The distribution agreement with Matrium Technologies allows Syntora to take advantage of the growing

international market for analytics and eLearning solutions," said Henry Lach, President and CEO of Syntora Inc. "We are excited about the opportunity to partner with Matrium and to bring Agentivity to the Australian Call Center Market."

"Matrium Technologies is the leading supplier of the workforce management solution IEX TotalView," said Anthony Pisani, General Manager for Matrium Technologies. "We are expanding our presence in the Australian contact center market by offering further Workforce Optimisation suite of products to the Australian Market. Syntora's Agentivity Analytics and eLearning solution allows us to go beyond traditional workforce management, to provide real-time analytics and eLearning to call centers. This agreement will serve to strengthen our presence and leverage upon our strong reputation in providing workforce management solutions."

CLASSIFIEDS/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

CollabGen has announced the release of a generic white paper series on Unified Telecommunication Model C. Each part in the series will categorize a major component or set of components as an integral part of an overall telecommunications architecture (infrastructure, systems and applications) and will cover the major trends including networks convergence, TDM / IP Telephony, portals, presence / proximity, multi-modal and collaborative communications. If you are interested in receiving, distributing or sponsoring any of the white papers in this series, please contact Ed LaBanca at 877-7Collab (877-726-5522) or elabanca@collabgen.com. You can also visit their web site at <http://www.collabgen.com>.

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M.E.R., a premier Executive Search Firm in the Direct Marketing, Call Center (Customer Care and Collections) BPO and CRM/E-CRM industries, recently released a North American Call Center Report. Receive a free copy (compliments of Call Center Times) by clicking here:

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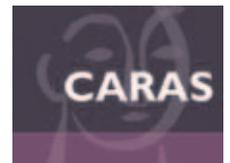
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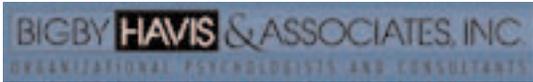
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