

Call Center Times

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Four Signs that a Hosted Contact Center is Right for you by Robert Hill

The number of Hosted Contact Centers is expanding exponentially. Analysts Frost & Sullivan predicted a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 34.1% through 2013. The prediction for contact centers of less than 100 seats during the same period was even higher – 41.3%!¹

A prime reason for this growth is that today's advanced hosted contact centers bring all of the features and functions that were previously available only to large institutions through on-premise solutions. Justifications for implementation vary from one organization to the other. However, four factors driving the current adoption of hosted contact centers could indicate that your situation is right:

1. You have multiple sites and want to utilize remote agents
2. You want to minimize costs and capital investments
3. You need to minimize IT maintenance and management costs
4. You have an immediate need for enhanced technology and capabilities

Multiple Sites and Remote Agents

Because the hosted contact center is located off-premise it is naturally predisposed to operating across multiple sites and with remote agents. There are a number of reasons that this is attractive to businesses.

Multiple Sites

Multiple sites put additional pressure on any network. As companies grow or acquire other companies, it can be expensive and time-consuming to expand the network. Downtime, especially during these critical growth periods, can be devastating and expensive. A hosted solution can be integrated with these companies' existing technology to expand the reach of their current capabilities. With a hosted solution, the software supplements the company's existing infrastructure, but

resides on a third-party network and can be accessed from workstations anywhere in the world via a web-based interface.

Remote Agents

There has been a tremendous movement to remote agents and virtual contact centers. And for good reasons. A virtual contact center gives organizations access to what is essentially an unlimited labor pool and unmatched employee flexibility. It enables organizations to offer service that follows the sun without physical contact centers located around the globe or employing workers at non-traditional hours.

Hosted contact centers enable agents to work from any location as long as it has a high-speed internet connection. They can employ the best



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qualified people for the job no matter where they reside and offer them the flexibility to work from home. This is especially critical for employers that require highly specialized or skilled agents where the potential talent pool might be extremely small in a single geographic area.

Minimal Costs and Capital Investment

Hosted solutions typically operate on a monthly subscription based on the number of users after a minimal upfront charge for

implementation. This pay-as-you-go method enables organizations to enjoy the robust features and functionality of a sophisticated contact center solution without the prohibitive upfront investments. It also enables the organization to tailor the contact center solution to their exact needs, paying for only what they use and nothing more. Because the software is actually running at a remote location implementation and customization costs are dramatically lower in comparison to on-premise, the provider typically can complete the installation and necessary adjustments from their remote location without traveling to the client's site, saving both cost and time.

The fact that the hosted contact is billed monthly is no small matter. This results in the cost appearing on the operational budget instead of the capital budget and its associated approval processes. As a fixed,



all inclusive monthly expense, it simplifies the accounting and business planning process.

Lower Ownership Costs

Comparing the total costs of ownership (TCO) of hosted to on premise reveals the dramatic cost savings that hosted delivers. When making this comparison with all of the associated costs – software hardware, implementation, ongoing expenditures, subscription (for the hosted solution) IT Staff Costs – Frost & Sullivan estimated a 64% cost savings for the first year alone for a typical 100 seat contact center.¹ Projecting out five years, the saving continued. After the three years the TCO was 36% less for the hosted solution; after five years, the TCO was 23%.

Minimize IT Costs and Management

The hosted model is ideally suited to smaller businesses that have a small or no IT department.

Typically help desk support and physical technical support is available with the subscription fee. The service provider guarantees performance, reliability, and support through service-level agreements with the client. The service provider provides all customization, integration, upgrades, support, and maintenance. This simplifies implementation and ongoing support.

Because all of the software maintenance, support, and updates as well as infrastructure systems and network monitoring are centrally administered, existing technical resources are available for other projects. The service provider's expertise as well as their investments in security, networking, monitoring, and reliability are not easily replicated. Overall costs are lower because the costs are spread across numerous clients.

One study revealed that the savings in IT staff alone could easily exceed \$75,000 per year for just an average sized contact center. The rapid implementation capability of hosted enables companies to accelerate their ROI by as much as six to nine months compared to a traditional, on-premise solution.

Immediate Need

In today's rapidly changing marketplace, an organization's needs can change quickly. These changes can range from additional capacity to enhanced capabilities to meet customer expectations. A hosted contact center solution offers the flexibility to meet quickly changing requirements, whatever they might be. A hosted solution can be up and running very quickly, in a matter of days in some situations. This enables the company to quickly adapt to whatever situation is at hand.

Outgrown existing application requirements

Hosted solutions provide organizations with an efficient and economical way to replace or upgrade existing solutions while minimizing disruptions to their day to day operations. With their customizable features, easy integration, and adaptability, a hosted contact center can provide the functionality and cost savings needed to upgrade from first-generation solutions that provide little beyond basic customer data tracking to the most advanced features available today.

Rapidly expanding

For companies undergoing rapid growth, the hosted contact center enables them to take on new business without worrying about infrastructure capacity. Hosted solutions are able to scale easily and quickly to maintain pace with growth. Additional agents can easily be added without the cost and headache of upgrading



or replacing the infrastructure. Simply increase the number of seats in your monthly subscription. Because the application remains the same, established training and management processes can be used.

Seasonal needs

Hosted solutions offer organizations with seasonal spikes in demand the ability to meet these demands yet only pay for the services required. For instance, organizations that have traditional

and anticipated increases in demand, such as retail and government, can have the ability to ramp up quickly during peak times, without having to make a “peak infrastructure investment” that would otherwise sit idle for most of the year.

Final Analysis

The hosted contact center offers a number of advantages that can benefit contact centers of any size. As the capabilities of hosted contact centers are now equal to those of on-premise in many

instances, the decision between the two comes down to the individual organization and their needs.

1. *The Hosted Model: Why It's Revolutionizing the Contact Center*, Frost & Sullivan

About the Author

Robert Hill is an industry sales consultant with over 20 years experience in information technology, customer relationship and supply chain management in corporate management and consulting roles.

Specifically, Mr. Hill specializes in the development and operation of state-of-the-art customer care and technical support operations, and has provided expertise to international companies such as Xerox, GE, Allstate, Computer Sciences, DuPont, National City Bank, QWest and Cincom. You can reach him at rhill@cincom.com or 1.513.612.2300.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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online assessment programs to drive impact to their bottom line.

<http://www.crmxchange.com/webcast/previsorjune09.asp>

7/8 - Roundtable-Workforce Management Roles, Responsibilities, and Employee Development-

The role of the workforce management team is one of the most crucial ones in the entire call center operation. Depending upon the size of the center, the many duties and tasks



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



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associated with workforce management may be performed by a single person, a team of specialists, or be divided among supervisors and call center management to get the job done. But regardless of the size of the center, it is imperative that the workforce management positions be filled with the right people, who are trained adequately. This session will explore the roles and responsibilities of the workforce management function, as well as ideas for keeping your team trained and up-to-date on their jobs. We will tackle issues like the correct tools to improve job efficiency. <http://www.crmxchange.com/webcast/wfmdebatejuly09.asp>

7/16 -Top Contact Center What-If Questions and How to Solve Them- Bay Bridge Decision Technologies - We should call 2009 “The Year of the What-If”. If ever there was a

time when alternative planning scenarios were being analyzed and reanalyzed, it is now. During times of significant business change, it is vital that these questions be answered accurately. In this webinar, we will discuss some of the most common what-if questions being asked today. <http://www.crmxchange.com/webcast/baybridgejuly09.asp>

7/23 – Capitalizing on Web 2.0; Integrating Your Web Portal and Customer Service Strategy- Nortel - Web 2.0, the second generation of the Internet, offers many opportunities for businesses to harness the power of their Web interactions and enhance the way information is shared throughout the entire organization. In a Web 2.0 era businesses must take a proactive customer service approach that links fundamental processes with technology to achieve optimal results; and Automation is the key.

With automation, companies will not only reduce operational expenses and increase productivity but also offer the most exceptional customer experience to your customers – keeping them satisfied and ensuring their future business. Join this webcast to learn more about customer service strategies that will help your business capitalize and thrive in the Web 2.0 world. <http://www.crmxchange.com/webcast/norteljuly09.web2.0.asp>

###

Call Centre Week Canada, August 17-20, 2009, Toronto, Canada

www.iqpc.com/us/callcentreCanada

Canada’s most highly anticipated call centre event returns! **Call Centre Week Canada is taking place August 17-19, 2009 in Toronto, Canada.** www.iqpc.com/us/callcentreCanada

Due to the rapidly changing economic environment, CCW Canada will focus on

strategies for weathering the economic storm, including how to retain top performing agents, how to keep top delighters, connect with customers and generate more revenue from existing customers.

Featuring primarily end-user, customer service executive case studies, and in-depth discussions on talent management, metrics/process improvement, remote agents and technologies, Call Centre Week Canada is this can’t miss industry event. For more information, please call 1-800-882-8684 or visit www.iqpc.com/us/callcentreCanada

###

The 2009 American Teleservices Association Convention & Expo will be October 4-7, in New Orleans and “Answering the Call” will be the theme. “Answering the Call” is about understanding how to maximize the value of every contact with each and every



customer or prospect. What role does teleservices play in the overall economy? How do we address improving our image and calls? How do we use the power of our employment base to make a difference on legislation in Washington DC and our own communities?

New Orleans was selected to answer the philanthropic call of picking a city that needs economic support. The devastation of Katrina is still being felt in New Orleans, and our Convention will bring much needed commerce and tourism dollars to a community still in trouble. Additionally, our Call Centers CARE initiative will put the hearts and hands of our members to use at the end of our event on a Habitat for Humanity project which will make a real difference in the lives of a deserving family.

This year will be a phenomenal balance of great content and great fun. Best of all, our entire Convention is a

philanthropic event for the benefit of a community. "I could not be more excited. The last time we held the Convention in New Orleans was pre-Katrina, and I was a volunteer for the ATA as the Chairman of the Board of Directors." said Tim Searcy, ATA CEO.

Register now to hear the best speakers the industry has to offer and learn specific ways to take your business to a higher level of performance. This event is an extraordinary opportunity to network with contact center professionals who are also shaping the future of teleservices.

Early registration savings and event details can be found on the convention web site – www.ata2009convention.org – and new event details are posted daily. In order for you to maximize your time at the event, we're calling on you to do some extra planning. Attendees go away happy when they KNOW their time was

well spent. Consider these tips:

Register Early – Save \$400 per person when you take advantage of ATA's early registration discount by August 7. Given the budget and ROI concerns we're all facing, why wouldn't you take advantage to save? Be sure to call and reserve your room at the Sheraton New Orleans (504-525-2500) to get into the ATA room block. It's the only place to stay if you want to make the most of your trip.

Build Your Network – Veteran convention-goers know that there will be many opportunities to meet colleagues, future collaborators, and potential vendors. Make sure you plan to attend all of the receptions, exhibit hall functions and special events to get as much networking time as possible. It's the single-most important reason our attendees come back year after year. Bring plenty of business cards, and don't pass up the chance to introduce yourself, schedule a

meeting time, or simply exchange email addresses.

Talk to the ATA Staff –If you're a first time attendee or a new ATA member, don't be shy. Come see the staff, tell us why you're in attendance, ask us to introduce you to others, and let us help you get the experience you're looking for. We want your time in New Orleans to be a great success!

Plan Your Days – Be familiar with the convention program before you arrive. Hit the key sessions in your area of interest, but then don't be shy about attending a workshop that covers an area you aren't too familiar with - or step into a session with a title that sparks your interest. And leave some time to connect with the people you do business with or want to learn more from. (A detailed agenda will be posted on the Convention web site shortly.)

Capitalize on Your Free Time – Find



times in your schedule to grab a cup of coffee with other attendees at Café DuMonde, peruse the exhibits, or hang out in the hotel lounge areas for casual conversations with other ATA members and staff. And make sure you stick with the crowd. Attend the PAC event – it's the best time of the entire event – and then have fun afterwards. You'll have chances to explore New Orleans after the Tuesday night Awards Gala too.

The ATA is preparing to "Answer the Call", and we hope you will plan to attend. Sponsor and exhibitor opportunities are still available. Contact us at 317-816-9336 for more information about advertising and reserving your booth space now!

By: Marquisha Bridgeman, Marketing Communications Specialist
Marquisha@ataconnect.org
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###

Apple Leads in Customer Satisfaction in Vocalabs Tech Support Study

MINNEAPOLIS, Minnesota – Apple beat Dell and HP in satisfaction with phone-based technical support, according to a study conducted by [Vocal Laboratories Inc. \(Vocalabs\)](http://www.vocalabs.com). In telephone interviews conducted with 1,147 consumers immediately following a support call, 58% of Apple customers reported they were "Very Satisfied" with the call, compared to 46% of Dell customers and 43% of HP customers.

This ongoing, independent research is underwritten and conducted by Vocalabs to benchmark industry trends in customer service. Results are for the year ending May 31, 2009.

The study found that customers from each company are generally satisfied with hold times and agent professionalism. In contrast, there was a

significant difference in the percentage of customers who reported their problem was solved: 53% of Apple customers reported their problem had been resolved on the call, versus 45% of Dell customers and only 39% of HP customers.

"Electronics are among the most complicated and expensive products consumers buy, and support is an important part of the package," said [Peter Leppik](#), CEO of Vocalabs. "This data reveals that there is a real difference in satisfaction with the technical support provided by leading providers."

Download a summary at <http://www.vocalabs.com/Press>. The full data set is available to Vocalabs clients.

###

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###

Telrex Announces Availability of CallRex Computer Recording Version 3.9

Companies can maximize employee productivity with desktop analytics and quality monitoring software.

Kirkland, WA – Telrex, provider of the award-winning CallRex™ suite of IP call recording and call center optimization solutions, announced the immediate availability of version 3.9 of CallRex Computer Recording™ software. The flexible desktop analytics



software solution enables companies to capture desktop images and videos in order to assess the complete employee-customer interaction. Full-motion videos, synced with call audio, provide a holistic view into customer interactions, allowing contact center managers to identify positive experiences or areas for training.

Companies use computer recordings for comprehensive quality monitoring and employee performance optimization. Average call handle times and post-call wrap-up times can be reduced through streamlined business systems and data entry processes. Contact center managers can discover where additional employee training is required or

which systems require fine-tuning by observing employee computer use. Live monitoring and full-motion videos can provide valuable insight into the flow of business systems. Further, the complete customer interaction—including the desktop video and the telephone conversation—can be exported to be attached to e-mail,

CRM records, or other business systems to provide an audit trail or training clips for quality monitoring.

Version 3.9 of CallRex Computer Recording includes full-motion video capture, including voice and data, as well as the ability to live monitor employee desktops or take screen snapshots at pre-determined intervals throughout the business day. "CallRex

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Computer Recording software empowers companies to capture complete customer interactions, enhance employee productivity, and provide an audit trail for increased customer satisfaction and security,” said Robert Kapela, president of Telrex. “With desktop monitoring software, companies can streamline their business processes, resulting in improved customer service and increased employee productivity, and impact their bottom line.”

###

Hiring Agents Based on Previous Call Center Experience: Why This Approach is Hurting Your Bottom Line.

By David Ostberg, Ph.D.

As a call center recruiter or hiring manager, what’s one of the first things you do when evaluating a new applicant for an agent position? If your answer involves reviewing resumes or basic job applications so you can focus primarily on

candidates with previous relevant experience, you’re likely overlooking individuals who could ultimately prove to be some of your organization’s top performers. By putting too much emphasis on previous experience (not to mention that an estimated 30% of all resumes often contain misleading or completely fictitious information), you may be unintentionally hurting your bottom line.

Although you have the best intentions for bringing in high performing agents, the rationale for looking beyond previous call center experience is simple:

Previous experience in an agent job ≠ High performance in an agent job

Stated another way, just because an individual previously held a job as a call center agent doesn’t necessarily mean he or she was good at the job or will be successful

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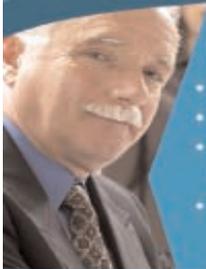
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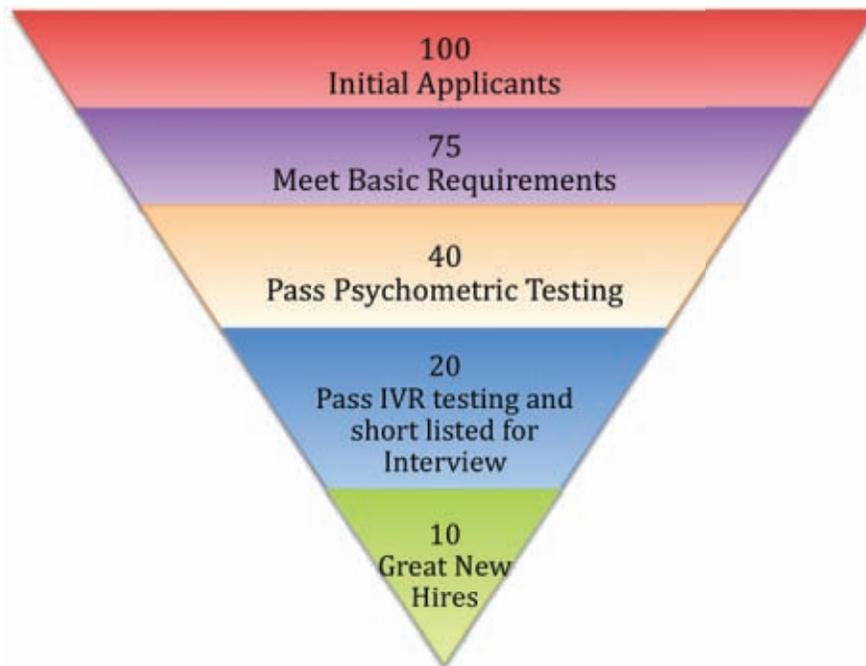
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in an agent role in your call center. Think about this: you've inevitably hired, trained, and coached agents who have eventually terminated due to lackluster performance or poor job fit, yet once these agents are back on the job market, they'll have "call center experience" on their resumes... and some well-meaning recruiter will likely make the regrettable decision to hire them despite the high likelihood that they will underperform yet again. As a result, because that recruiter put too much emphasis on previous experience, his/her call center's clients, stakeholders, and bottom line will suffer.

Another way to think about this is that if you focus primarily on past experience, you are most definitely bypassing applicants that, after some basic training, could have proven to be superstars in your organization. Not only did you reduce the candidate pool you have to choose from and miss the opportunity to hire a great employee, but you've dismissed the applicant on non job-



relevant criteria while increasing the size of the available candidate pool for your competitors. Don't let that recruiter be you. Taking it one step further, if applicants have previous experience as an agent in a call center with processes and operations that differ significantly from those in your center, their previous experience may actually make it more difficult for your coaches to train them on your organization's ways of getting the job done. This, however, is not to suggest that you should automatically screen out applicants with previous relevant experience, but you should be asking yourself *why* you're screening on experience and what true value that approach provides. Is it

possible that you're taking that approach just because that's the way your organization has always handled recruiting? Think of the saying..."If you always do what you've always done then you'll always get what you've always got." So... how *should* you be evaluating all of the applicants who want you to hire them? In order to find your future superstars – your best collectors, customer service VIPs, technical support gurus, and sales luminaries – you need to make sure your recruiting team focuses on the traits and interests that separate the best from those who will just scrape by at a level that won't get them fired or who won't even make it through training. Your team needs to be able to get an accurate measure of what the individual *can do*

and *wants to do*. Hiring experts agree – when hiring frontline, hourly employees, experience is considerably less important than are aptitude, workstyle, and motivational fit. However, getting a true measure of these applicant traits can be challenging, unless you put the right *scientifically-designed and proven* tools in place. Assessment tools that are scientifically-developed and based on client performance data can predict an individual's likelihood of behaving or performing in certain desirable ways on the job. Well-designed workstyle and aptitude assessments capture information on what applicants *can do* by measuring stable characteristics associated with job applicants'

personalities and natural abilities. For example, some jobs may be a better fit for individuals who have a high stress tolerance and are conscientious, while others may be more suitable for employees who are persuasive and results driven. Although every human being is unique, our differences fall along a continuum for every possible personality and ability dimension. Assessment experts can create valid predictions about how a person may behave in various situations by developing assessments that measure where an individual falls on various job-relevant dimensions of personality or ability. The benefits realized from this approach to recruiting are that hiring managers and recruiters can make decisions about how job candidate will perform on the job



without relying on potentially misleading information about the person's previous job experience. As a result, these "can do" measures are usually the most appropriate type of screening tool for hourly and entry level jobs and should cover a significant portion of the assessment solution.

With respect to what job applicants *want to do*, selection tools can assess applicants on their position-specific motives, aspirations, preferences, and interests. Despite these tools being less effective for predicting actual job performance, they are very well-suited for assessing candidates on affective metrics such as job/culture fit, employee satisfaction, and retention. Realistic Job Previews (RJPs) fall into this category, allowing

candidates to take a 'sneak peek' into the position and larger organization and self-select out of the application process if something looks mismatched with their interests, preferences, and expectations. Consequently, a well-designed RJP is critical for filtering out applicants who will not be suited for the environment and task demands characteristic of call center work and who would likely not be successful in training and/or would not survive the first few months on the job. Of course, assessments do not come without criticism. Typical concerns are that they don't work, they're not fair, and they're too 'fake-able'. However, research indicates that well-designed, validated assessments can predict performance and

early retention more accurately and fairly than traditional subjective approaches. Well-designed hiring tools help remove bias that hiring managers and recruiters unintentionally bring to the process. Although a wide body of evidence demonstrates how powerful and accurate well-designed assessments can be, there are, unfortunately, many poorly-crafted, inappropriately-applied assessments on the market. Because so many unproven, poorly-designed assessments and hiring platforms are available today, it is critical that organizations take time to investigate how and by whom the tests were developed. Further, although many vendors take a "one-size-fits-all" approach, no assessment is as effective and accurate as one

that has been designed and validated by experts for specific positions within specific industries. Although there's no such thing as a perfect solution for every selection challenge, a well-thought out process that incorporates multiple hiring tools such as a realistic job preview, basic qualifications screening, validated assessments, and behaviorally-oriented structured interviews can significantly improve the quality of call center hiring decisions. Consequently, call centers that invest the time and resources into evolving their recruiting processes will see a dramatic improvement in the productivity of their workforce, while improving retention and reducing the burden on their hiring professionals... and boosting their organization's bottom line.



David Ostberg, Ph.D., is an Industrial and Organizational Psychologist with 10+ years experience designing and evaluating selection systems for hourly employees in service industries. A member of the American Psychological Association and Society for Industrial & Organizational Psychology, Dr. Ostberg is currently the Vice President of Selection Science for Evolv On-Demand and can be reached at dostberg@evolvondemand.com. For more information, visit www.evolvondemand.com or call (866) 971-4473.

###

Do I Need Workforce Management Software? By: Bob Webb, Pipkins, Inc.

Workforce management is the most cost-effective and underutilized contact center software. More than 80% of contact centers employing over 500 agents have

automated workforce management systems. The number drops to less than 25% for centers with less than 250 agents, even though these centers employ over half of all agents and comprise over 95% of all centers in the world. Experts say that once a center employs more than 25 agents, manual forecasting becomes ineffective. There is increased chance of errors and decreased accuracy. Making changes quickly also becomes difficult to impossible.

Workforce management software uses mathematical algorithms for accurate agent scheduling based on data exclusive to each center's target service levels, fluctuating call volumes, agent skill set, and "what if" scenario requirements. Management has the ability to judge implications of proposed changes before implementing final decisions. Workforce management solves the costly under- and

overstaffing problems experienced by all call centers. Scheduling can be configured to accommodate agent preferences and proficiencies that coincide with the needs of the center. Workforce management software also allows time-off requests to be handled based on business rules particular to each company.

Cost is a major consideration in acquisition of workforce management software with most in-house installations exceeding six figures. While there are less costly options such as Excel spreadsheets and Erlang calculators, they are ineffective for centers with more than 25 agents, widely fluctuating call volumes, or centers with locations across different time zones.

One viable alternative to purchasing a full blown installation is to consider a hosted versus in-house system. A hosted system offers many advantages over in-

house installations: little or no capital investment
no risk of major systems failure
pay as you go and only for what you need
no interruption to business as upgrades can be downloaded during slow times
fast implementation
little or no need for in-house IT support
rapid adjustment to changing business conditions
benefits for staffing contingent on varying workflow
users experience the benefits before purchasing an in-house system
same benefits as in-house installations

Once you outgrow the hosted option, or if you can support a full blown installation, in-house systems quickly pay for themselves through better staff utilization, reduced administrative costs, and the ability to run "what if" scenarios before making costly changes. Real-time adherence options provide an extraordinary benefit in ensuring agents are in



the right seat at the right time and performing assigned tasks. An unexpected benefit can be realized through agent empowerment as workforce management software allows agents to have a degree of control over their schedules. This can have a direct impact on attrition rates as well as a reduction in supervisory administrative tasks. Forecasting can be performed for both multi-channel and multi-site environments.

Workforce management software is instrumental in impacting a company's bottom line through improved customer service. Busies and abandon rates are reduced and target service levels are more easily achieved.

An investment in workforce management software in today's call center environment is critical to remaining competitive and providing the service

your customers expect. Whether you choose a hosted system or in-house installation, making the right purchasing decision to meet your needs on the front-end eliminates the need for future adjustments. Investigate before you buy and talk to more than one vendor to ensure you are getting the right solution.

About Pipkins Inc.

Pipkins Inc., founded in 1983, is the leading supplier of workforce management software and services to the call center industry. Its Vantage Point product enables managers to solve the complicated operational issues in today's multi-faceted call center environment. Pipkins' systems forecast and schedule more than 300,000 agents in over 500 locations across all industries worldwide. The company is headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. For more information, visit www.pipkins.com.

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Call Center Furniture Makeover by Jennifer Way

In spite of the economy, call centers have weathered the downturn better than other markets. There have been many stories about the openings of new centers and expansion of existing centers in the news. As always, call centers face a higher turnover rate than other industries, even in this economy as call center work is demanding and agents must be able to communicate intelligently and professionally. If your center is facing these issues a furniture makeover may be in order.

A few of the reasons for high turnover rates include insufficient supervision, a lack of self-empowerment, and a lack of identity. Working in a contact center can be a rewarding and fulfilling occupation and with the help of proper call center furniture design, some of the reasons for high turnover rates

can be combated.

Designing agent workstation runs with supervisors in mind can help supervisors be more helpful and efficient. One effective supervisor station design is to place a supervisor at the end of a station run, and give them a higher workstation than the agents. This design can help a supervisor keep all of the agents clearly in view and help them when they need assistance. Additionally, incorporating clear acrylic panels to the upper sections of agent workstations can help to keep noise contained in a cubicle, while still allowing supervisors to keep agents fully in view.

Although furniture may not be able to empower agents in the traditional sense of the word, workstations can be designed so that agents do have control over their environment. One way to do this is to design a Sit-to-Stand Workstation. This is not as difficult or expensive as it once



was. New developments in ergonomic tools such as keyboard mechanisms and monitor arms with increased height adjustment can create a Sit-to-Stand Workstation for a fraction of the cost of a traditional sit-to-stand station where the entire workstation moves up and down.

Giving the agent the option to adjust their position during the day can help them to feel empowered, not to mention adjustability is a good ergonomic solution.

Employees at some call center outsourcers may feel a lack of identity as their job changes per client. To make employees feel more connected to the company, employers can design call center furniture with company colors in mind to keep employees feeling like part of the team. Also, screen-printing the company logo on workstation panels throughout the facility can be an effective way to brand the

company.

Hopefully, as the economy improves, the stories about the successful openings and expansions of businesses in the call center industry will increase. With the opening and expansions of call centers, the need to address furniture arises. And simply making some slight changes to the furniture design can improve the functionality of the call center while helping to reduce turnover.

For more information on Sit to Stand Workstations visit: www.interiorconcepts.com/uploads/pdf/IC_Whitepaper_CallCenterErgonomics.pdf

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