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Seizing a Competitive Advantage: Going Beyond Automated Privacy Compliance to Integrated Customer Contact Management

By Keith A. Fotta
CEO and President
Gryphon Networks Corp.

Few would argue that the advent of Do-Not-Call (DNC) legislation has forever changed the rules of engagement for direct marketers, especially call centers and service bureaus. The creation of the national Do-Not-Call Registry in October 2003 forced many companies that relied on outbound calling as a primary feature of their business to navigate some very rough waters. The amended Telemarketing Sales Rule had the unfortunate, but not unexpected consequence of substantially shrinking the pool of potential new customer prospects as they registered for the national list. Each consumer registrant was effectively declared off limits to telephone sales contact, regardless of the value of the product or service offer, and with no consideration to offers that may be of legitimate interest.

The telemarketing industry generally did a poor job of

self-regulation since the original Telemarketing Consumer Protection Act established company-specific Do-Not-Call list requirements in 1991. The result was that consumers were sent scurrying to the protection of an all-consuming national list when it became available - a list that prevents all telephone contact from all callers. Seemingly non-stop regulations have since created a very complex and reactive business environment. jeopardizing the very survival of many outbound operations across a broad spectrum of industries. What began as Do-Not-Call has now evolved into Do-Not-Fax. Do-Not-Email. Do-Not-Mail and Do-Not-Knock as well, effectively tying the hands of companies, compromising their ability to thrive and prosper in an era of rampant regulatory constraints.

The ensuing challenges have created angst within professional call centers

seeking to consistently ensure compliance without sacrificing efficiency and productivity. This requires a balanced and focused effort among multiple departments including compliance, sales, marketing and IT. On the compliance side, it's a full-time job that consumes valuable resources to track and manage layers of overlapping state and federal regulations. Regulations differ from state to state and between federal regulators at the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission, and regulations continue to change on an ongoing basis. And there are more regulatory proposals looming on the horizon. Additionally, outbound business today is global, and regulations are clearly following international expansion, further limiting call center business. All this is bringing about a sea

change in the way companies conduct their outbound marketing campaigns and in how call centers can operate efficiently.

Among the many challenges facing companies operating call centers today are the following:

Growing revenue in an increasingly competitive environment Ensuring compliance with proliferating regulatory constraints Maximizing the prospect universe in the face of increasing growth of the consumer DNC list Establishing customer preferences by redirecting marketing efforts on how customers want to be contacted and in what products and services they are interested





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Measuring the overall effectiveness of sales and marketing campaigns

Given tightening regulatory constraints and these many challenges, we can legitimately ask the following questions:

Is telemarketing as we know it becoming an endangered practice?

Are automated privacy compliance solutions enough for the future success of direct marketers?

The answer to both questions is a resounding "no."

The real answer lies in creating opportunity from adversity. The most enterprising outbound marketers can actually create a competitive advantage by implementing unique customer preference marketing technologies. These technologies can create sales opportunities, some of which may be exclusive for a period of time. They do so by employing an approach that automatically recognizes existing business relationships, inquiries and opt-ins that may come from direct mail responses, e-mail contact or web site visits. Customers that are lawfully exempt from DNC rules are automatically flagged and identified as fully compliant calls during the outbound calling process. Companies that go beyond simply implementing

privacy compliance solutions and start managing exemptions most efficiently drive significant new sales opportunities and a quantifiable competitive advantage.

Creating Business Opportunities in an Era of Regulatory Compliance

Millions of US consumers are on the national Do-Not-Call list, making each off limits to telephone solicitation by every business in the world. Telephone sales remains king among the various methods of customer contact. Nothing else comes remotely close to the live, spoken word in communicating clearly, effectively and efficiently. The intimacy between buyer and seller cannot be duplicated by any other contact method, and provides real benefit to both parties. Through no other medium can a prospective buyer engage in an interactive dialog and get immediate answers to questions that are critical in the buying decision.

Although the law restricts calls from all businesses, consumers really do want to hear from some businesses selling certain products. So marketers seek alternative contact methods to introduce opportunities that may be of interest. Consumers have the choice of electing to receive additional information

(by direct mail, web, e-mail, etc. or by a direct phone call) from the marketer.

Technology has evolved to allow automation of the process, seamlessly creating a modular platform of interoperability that joins all customer contact methods to a common platform of database intelligence. So the intelligent marketer that wants to contact a consumer on the DNC list may elect to send that consumer an e-mail or piece of direct mail that introduces the sales opportunity and gives the consumer the opportunity to learn more. Once the consumer responds favorably, the "opt-in" gives specific lawful permission for the marketer to contact that consumer for up to 90 days. This opt-in allows the direct marketer to welcome the customer back into the prospect universe. Marketers that leverage this opportunity most effectively will create a clear incremental sales opportunity, an exclusive target prospect list, and a competitive advantage.

Reversing the Trend of
Dwindling Prospects Through
Customer Preference Marketing
Technologies

Managing this process in the face of ever changing regulations is where the best and most experienced preference marketing companies can prove of

superior value. They can offer technology that enables calls to be intelligently routed for completion, block any DNCrestricted attempts, and, most importantly, determine which calls should be allowed to pass through to a DNC exemption. In short, this technology provides companies the ability to accurately track information that determines an exemption, and empowers them to act upon it. This exemption management capability is helping direct marketers more fully leverage their investments in sales and marketing to sustain and grow their businesses.

Going Beyond an Automated Compliance Solution to an Integrated Customer Management Platform

To help companies achieve a competitive advantage, the best bet is to leverage a strategy encompassing a modular platform of interoperability across all customer contact methods (i.e. telephone, direct mail, e-mail and the web). This approach creates real-time integration between all these channel options, ensuring that alternate contact methods can be employed when one or more channels are unavailable due to some form of restriction. At Gryphon Networks, we call this an Integrated Compliance and **Contact Management** Platform (ICCMP). The platform



delivers enabling technology across all customer contact methods to ensure that users never lose a potential customer because an alternative outreach vehicle is constantly being provided that reaches the prospect by their preferred method of contact. In this process, an opportunity is created to launch direct mail or e-mail campaigns that extend beyond generating interest to creating a lawful exemption for businesses to call the interested consumer. The result is that the consumer prospect is safely returned to the prospect universe. The competitive differentiation lies in this exemption capability belonging exclusively to the company that successfully targets the consumer with an alternate contact method.

There are demonstrable results among clients who have adopted this exemption management approach. For example, one of Gryphon Networks' clients, a prominent financial services institution, is adding an average of 60 percent otherwise restricted telephone contacts back into the calling pool on a monthly basis. That 60 percent now becomes the most valuable set of prospects in the world to this company because there is either an existing relationship or the consumer has expressly requested a contact - and no one else can call them because

they are on the Do-Not-Call list. Effectively, these prospects have not only been pre-qualified, but they are likely to purchase the product or service.

Parlaying Integrated Compliance and Contact Management into a Competitive Advantage

Those companies that have the ability and foresight to effectively manage customer preferences across all customer contact methods position themselves well for a distinct competitive advantage. But to accomplish this is a substantial undertaking for most IT organizations supporting call centers and service bureaus today. Effective management in the absence of automated technology is a near impossibility, primarily because of the fluid nature of rules that drive exemptions and massive data flows from multiple and disparate sources. The industry is turning more and more to business process outsourcers as hosted and interoperable applications that have the expertise and resources to build and manage complex, largescale IT projects. The ROI versus internal design/builds is generally the most fiscally responsible choice.

While do-not-contact regulations continue to expand and further compromise the ability of direct marketers to reach their

customers, companies specializing in preference marketing technologies will be engineering greater functionality into solutions to help them simultaneously ensure compliance and expand their business. The solution lies in an integrated, easy-to-use set of tools that reduces the complexity for direct marketers. allowing them to take full advantage of their sales and marketing assets, and focus on their core competencies. This solution will ultimately differentiate them from their rivals, and provide them a distinct competitive advantage.

To achieve that competitive advantage and avoid the pitfalls of trying to internally manage a complex preference marketing infrastructure, direct marketers need to be resourceful. They would be well served to seek a partner that can offer them a true integrated compliance and contact management platform a partner who is dedicated to helping them remove the barriers to their success, expand their prospect pool, and pave the way for their future growth and profitability. ##

Prospecting: Getting through

Voice Mail

By Linda Richardson

Reaching a prospect is no easy feat. One salesperson experienced a voice mail obstacle that was more daunting for him than most. Here is the voice mail message: "If you are calling to sell me **X**, don't hold your breath for a return call."

When the salesperson described this to me I was intrigued — so I called and positioned Cyber Sales Tips and asked the prospect to call me back because I wanted the opportunity to interview him about his message. When I called the voice mail I not only heard his message but got insight into his approach by the delivery of his message. The prospect was positive, energetic, and sounded nice. I was pretty certain he'd call me back - and this CTO of a major retail chain did. Here's what I learned from him:

Linda: What motivated your creating this message?

Client: I was getting too many voice messages a day to sell **X** to me — that's 10 to 15 a week and I didn't have time to call them back. I used to just delete them but I felt bad. They could have been our customers.

Linda: What kind of messages did you delete?

Client: As soon as I heard, "We are doing a lot in **X**, and I was wondering if I could speak to you for 15 to 20 minutes to learn about what you are doing and tell you how we could fit in. We



just finished a project with
_____ (often the same
company was mentioned by
everyone who called!)."

Linda: What didn't you like about that message?

Client: It offends me. We are doing a lot, and to think I could explain it in 15 to 20 minutes is an insult. And everybody says they are doing a project for the same few big companies.

Linda: Your message got my attention. How has your message worked in deterring salespeople who prospect you?

Client: In fact it does work.
Yes! It's funny because I get a
lot more hang-ups. Very rarely
does anyone leave a message
and call back.

Linda: If you were the sales manager of the salespeople who prospect you, how would you feel about them not calling back and giving up so easily?

Client: Well, I'd want my people to spend time on hot prospects and not waste time on cold prospects, but I wouldn't want them to give up so easily. It's surprising.

Linda: Getting back to getting through to you, what kind of message would interest you?

Client: Oh, I don't think that I should give that secret away.

Linda: I know it is a precious secret. Why not?

Client: I'll get more calls than I do now!

Linda: I understand that. I won't tell our readers who you are, and we won't prospect you! To help our readers, what message would interest you?

Client: I need things that are problem specific so it's hard, but if it is something of interest, I would call back, ask for material and at least keep a resource file. I'm always open to consider a way for us to improve.

Linda: What kind of things would interest you?

Client: I am not interested in web design or the marketing stuff. I'm a technical person. I'm serious about good design and capacity for design and technical strength. I don't want to hear "We do a lot of work for X" if X has nothing to do with me. I want to hear about a company I relate to and to know I will get a bit more about the depth of the project. I want to know it was a major project, not some little thing to use a name. I also prefer to work with people close by. I look for good

pricing. I like wonderful service. And keep it short and crisp. Prospecting in this market is very tough. What can we learn from all of this to increase prospecting results? Prepare. The "dialing for dollars" mentality isn't very effective. Do homework on the company and person you are calling. Who is the person? What is his/her background? Use the web — you'll be surprised what you can find on the company and on individuals. Ask colleagues and his/her assistant for information on how long in the role, background, use of e-mail vs. voice mail, etc. Tailor your message. Use your preparation and experience. Keep your message very concise and focused. Refine your message — for example, rather than ask for the typical 15 to 20 minutes to learn what the client does, ask for a **few minutes** to understand the priority objective (vs. objectives) related to your capabilities so vou can focus and determine how you *might* support those priorities. Pick your examples of clients carefully. Don't just say "We work with clients like ," but say, "We

have long-term, deep

client(s) of interest to the

(and choose a

relationships with

prospect) in providing ." (Of course do not disclose confidential information.) Prepare your benefits. This is tricky since you really don't know needs. But make an educated guess based on your homework and experience and hedge your bet by mentioning two, not one, benefits and strengths vs. just mentioning X from one perspective. Most of all be persistent — be creative. Just think how few people called this prospect back. This is giving up too early in my book. Remember this prospect has needs and almost no one trying to get through. When you get him or her on the phone, be ready to gain his/her interest, ask one or two questions to get at his/her priorities, needs, and questions, ask for your action step, and follow up, follow up, follow up. The best, most successful prospectors are prepared and persistent and make second, third, and...

Of course try different times of day and different numbers. When you make a call in the a.m. don't leave a message and try again in an hour and leave another message. Use e-mail if you have the e-mail address or try to get it (use a letter to get in touch if all else fails) and do everything you can to get personal referrals to

efforts.



warm up otherwise cold (frigid) calls!
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Combating Workplace Violence In The Call Center

By Michael Miles

One of the major challenges facing companies in today's business culture is combating increased occurrences of violence and/or harassment in places of employment. This can be especially true in call centers, where many diverse employees are brought together in a hectic work environment that can no longer automatically be considered entirely safe for employees or employers.

Several government studies indicate that workplace violence and sexual harassment has increased dramatically in the past decade, with workplace homicide now a leading cause of iob-related deaths in North America. All one has to do is tune into the nightly news to see the ramifications brought home. One of the reasons cited for increased job violence is the fact that many employers have increased their labor forces due to the

growing trend toward outsourced telemarketing and call center operations. All too frequently, however, in the rush to fill positions, new hires are brought onboard without proper candidate screening by employers who are not fully prepared to meet the challenges of increasingly hostile work environments. And while many businesses have sexual harassment and safety policies in place, many of these procedures to enforce these policies remain outdated.

A U.S. Department, Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics study reported that the decline in violent instances from 2001 to 2002 was the lowest ever reported, with no sign of reversing. Approximately two million American workers are victims of workplace violence or harassment every year, with more than 15 percent of reported incidents resulting in serious, aggressive acts that lead to employee reprimand or termination. Another study conducted by The U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration (EEOC) estimates that 40-70% of women and 10-20% of men experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. More than 15.000 sexual harassment claims are reported to the EEOC

annually, and many of these occurrences take place in call centers.

Employers, of course, are liable for their employee's job safety, and consequently many experience millions of dollars in annual losses due to absenteeism and workman's compensation payouts. A recent study from the United States Department of Labor reported a total of 5.2 million total workplace injuries and illnesses, which resulted in 2.6 million lost workdays a year. Some of these incidents are due to job stress, a common symptom of workplace violence or harassment, and many could be avoided with proper safety preventative measures in place.

In addition to lost workdays, there can be a huge additional cost associated with call center violence, as significant legal implications may be incurred when a case goes to court. Liability expert Norman D. Bates reports that since 1980. out-of-court settlements have been averaging about \$500,000, while a jury verdict can lead to a settlement as high as \$3 million. These figures are based on a landmark case in which an employee, who had not undergone a full background check, subsequently assaulted a co-worker. If a background check had been completed,

either by the employer or an outsourced staffing agency that provides background checks and applicant screening, a \$750,000 award would have been avoided, as the offender had a criminal record.

Dr. Dana Picore, PhD, a former Los Angeles police officer and instructor for the L.A. Police Department, who is now a licensed psychotherapist and threat assessment expert says that: "In the U.S., governing authorities encourage and recommend suggested policies and procedures to address workplace violence, but the solutions vary widely from state to state. And, many companies only offer minimum risk management procedures

such as the development of safety guidelines and a pamphlet that outlines these procedures for employees. However, these procedures are not always enforced and do not put a complete threat management program in place that trains others to prevent violent acts before they occur. Most importantly, there are few workplace management programs that instruct personnel on how to handle issues of threat or violence when they arise."

These studies and comments all clearly underscore the growing need to develop



structured and enforceable onsite violence prevention programs for call centers if the industry is to reverse this workplace violence trend. The best protection available to any company's call center is a zerotolerance policy toward workplace violence - against or by a company's employees. All companies should be prepared to proactively provide safety education for its employees, including new hires, so they fully understand that any threat of violence or harassment will not be tolerated. Proper policy and procedure guidelines should clearly spell out what threats or violence entail, and what actions an employee should take if they feel threatened. Furthermore, it is in the best interest of both employer and employees to fully understand, right up front, the exact course of action a company will take against any person who enacts a threat of violence or harassment against another employee; and, this may include involving the authorities. To further reduce workplace violence, companies should also encourage witnesses of violence to feel secure in reporting an act on behalf of someone else.

Many call center operations today use video surveillance cameras, alarm systems, ID badges, electronic keys, and guards to help maintain a safer work environment. Some companies are even installing new biometric techniques such as eye scan systems, but these are costly and not yet perfected. Most importantly, managers and supervisors should all undergo regular safety training, and employees also need to know where to go to get help should a situation arise. OSHA suggests that any person who has been a victim of violence or witnessed an incident should feel comfortable reporting the incident to the appropriate person within the organization, as well as to the police. Ironically, according to a report by the Bureau of Justice, 52.1 percent of all violent acts committed at a place of work are never reported to the police, meaning that perpetrators often are not punished to the full extent of the law.

If any company's HR department feels it cannot undertake the necessary steps to avoid call center violence, there are numerous agencies and staffing companies available to which these important functions can be outsourced. These specialists, working with best of breed technologies and highly trained management personnel, provide such functions as candidate screening,

background checks, drug testing, behavioral screening processes and on-site risk management programs effectively and at less cost than trying to keep up with workplace violence procedures in-house. Violence prevention programs are necessary regardless of the expense, and it is incumbent upon every company, as well as state and federal governments, to implement successful safety measures to prevent workplace violence. If done properly, a company that takes extra precautions can benefit from increased employee loyalty, low turnover rates, better reputations, lower insurance costs, and often incalculable savings that can be passed along to the customers they serve.

However accomplished, it is critical in today's business environment that employers help alleviate this growing trend toward increased violence within call centers and other places of work by creating and maintaining a safe work environment and strictly enforcing a policy of zero-tolerance for job violence.

Michael Miles is the president of Staff Management, a Chicago-based vendor-onpremise staffing solutions provider. Staff Management has implemented an awardwinning violence prevention program with the help of Picore & Associates. Contact Michael Miles at 312 915 0900 or email him at:

mmiles@staffmanagement.co
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##

Cartoons Capture the Attention of Call Centers Operators.

As all of us who are in the call center industry know running a center is no laughing matter.

Dealing with behavioral problems as diverse as poor call quality, absenteeism and harassment makes the management of large employee populations a very serious business.

However that doesn't mean that laughter and the appropriate use of humor can't be used very effectively to deal with difficult situations in employee training and communication.

At least that's the point of view of MaraStar Communications an employee training and communications company in Paoli, PA that develops and distributes business animations that are being used by major companies throughout the US to deal with behavioral issues.



The cartoons are actually called ToonUps because they are used to tune up performance and enhance employee communications. The message may be customized for one person or broad enough to send to the entire office as a message of the week. They can even be displayed in a PowerPoint presentation.

Handling customer calls, office etiquette, communication skills, diversity, harassment, and dealing with difficult callers are just a few of the topics these cartoons tackle. For example, one animation depicts a dry cleaner dealing with an angry customer. A werewolf, who enters the store growling angrily, plays the customer. Instead of becoming aggravated, the dry cleaner remains calm and defuses the situation. By the end of the conversation the werewolf turns back into a man leaving as a satisfied customer.

Ray Hansell, 55, of Villanova, founded MaraStar with partner Marysue Lucci in 1999. The duo previously built RMH Teleservices, one of America's largest teleservices firms, in Bryn Mawr, which went public in 1996 with a market valuation over \$100 million.

"We were always conjuring up this idea but never took it anyplace because we were busy building the other business," said Hansell. "Earlier in our careers we had worked as corporate trainers to help improve call-center operations. One of the things we frequently did in the context of our corporate training experience was we used humor to try to break down defenses and get people to open up."

After leaving RMH
Teleservices in 1998, Hansell
and Lucci explored Internet
investment opportunities. One
of the companies they
investigated used
Macromedia's Flash program
for animation.

"We thought, 'Wouldn't it be neat if you could create animations that basically do what old-fashioned quality or safety posters do, but in a much richer and more personal way?" Hansell said.

After taking six months to assemble the team and create the prototypes, they presented a variety of business appropriate cartoons to focus groups. They received extensive feedback from corporate executives like telesales managers, customer

service representatives, training managers and information technology managers.

"What they really liked were the short little bursts, which we would come to call 'ToonUps," said Hansell. "We got some great ideas from them. Focus group participants said, 'We would like you to put in some "Toon Tips" at the end so that the message gets carried home to the employee.' In addition, they wanted customization and personalization as much as possible."

Of the roughly 500 accounts, MaraStar handles many large companies such as ADP. They do a lot of work with financial and insurance companies like American Modern Insurance Group. Nonprofit organizations like San Antonio Water also use their cartoons. "An awful lot of nonprofits have customer call centers or other large employee population groups that they want to communicate with." Hansell said.

Many of their clients use the MaraStar program entitled "ToonUp Your Call Center"(TUYCC.) Included in this program are animations that address the issues common to call center operations. MaraStar users

typically select the animation they wish to use and then incorporate them into weekly meetings, for example, quality issues. They can also use them to send to an entire group or to individuals to address various call handling issues that were observed during a monitoring session.

As one of MaraStar's clients observed recently, "These animations are an excellent way to deliver positive messages to employees and to reinforce training initiatives that may otherwise lapse into problematic behavior."

For the past few years MaraStar has offered these product via annual subscription to their various libraries of animations sent from MaraStar's website. Customers simply log onto the www.marastar.com and send the personalized messages to their intended recipients. This web-based method offers a safe, inexpensive and convenient way for users, although it does limit the usage and the users ability to customize the actual animation files.

As a result of feedback from some of their larger accounts MaraStar is currently developing packages for major users that will enable them to



obtain unlimited perpetual licenses to the MaraStar libraries including the original source code thereby enabling the customer to change/modify the animations in any fashion via the use of "Flash" software from Macromedia.

"Making people laugh is no longer just a laughing matter but one that Corporate America is taking very seriously" Hansell added. "By offering unlimited capability and perpetual licenses to our larger corporate customers we fully expect them to take advantage of this unlimited control and flexibility to shape the animations in ever more creative ways in order to better address the ever challenging world of corporate communications and training."

To learn more about MaraStar, visit

http://www.marastar.com/tuycc .asp

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EASY & EFFECTIVE TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE TIPS

by Lisa Raven

Fostering a long-lasting patient relationship starts from that very first contact someone makes with your office....here are two Easy & Effective Telephone Etiquette Tips to make sure you and your staff give all of your callers the "Five Star Treatment"!

Give a Warm Welcome Satisfy the caller's goals in your greeting, not your own. Let them know you are glad they called by using welcoming words and a positive voice tone, and be sure to identify your organization or department, and yourself. An example of an effective greeting is "Good morning, Family Care Center, this is Mary." Let your first name be the last word the caller hears. Greetings should be short and sweet (3 seconds). Be sure to provide your first name in the greeting - this is your first chance to introduce yourself, and by putting it last in the greeting, it increases the likelihood that the caller will remember it. And usually, the caller will give his/her name to you in their next statement so you won't have to ask for it! Using names in a phone

conversation is the highest form of interaction you can have, and it starts the call off in a positive and engaging manner.

Acknowledge their Need, then Take the Lead All callers have their own agenda for why they are calling, which usually involves some form of needing help. We shouldn't assume we know why they are calling until they tell us. Forcing them to give you information before they are ready can cause the staff member to lose control of the call or make an unfriendly "I'm all business" impression at the start. Instead, after your caller's opening remark, for instance, "Hi Mary, I'm calling to get my test results", use a word or words to acknowledge that you are ready to serve them, such as, "I'd be happy to help...", or "Certainly...", then take the lead and the control in the call by asking them to provide you with what you need to serve them, like "...may I have your date of birth please?". So here's wh

So in the spirit of maintaining a positive voice tone, here's a good chuckle to start your next call with a smile!

Funny Telephone & Customer Service Humor

Watch 2-minute Demos of our

Customer Service Web Seminars & see what topics are covered

How can Phone Pro help your staff? Since 1985. Phone Pro has trained everyone from Fortune 500 companies to smaller organizations with a back office staff. Whether you're handling thousands of calls each day, or communicating with a few hundred patients on a regular basis, our convenient web seminars and customized onsite programs are designed to give your staff the tools and techniques that can make your patient's interactions with your staff more productive and enjoyable.

To chat about how our training courses can improve how your staff interacts with your patients both on the phone and in person, call Terry at 1-800-888-4893 or email us at marketing@phonepro.com



Case Study: UnumProvident Delivers Superior Customer Service with GN Netcom

UnumProvident Corporation (NYSE: UNM) is the largest provider of group and individual disability income protection insurance in the United States and United Kingdom. With primary offices in Chattanooga, Tennessee and Portland, Maine, the company employs more than 12,000 people worldwide, and insures more than 25 million individuals. At its core. UnumProvident provides financial support for policyholders if disability strikes, and in 2004 provided \$5.9 billion in total benefits to thousands of individuals and families.

UnumProvident's business is defined by customer-centric relationships where communication is fundamental. Many individuals are in their greatest need when they place the call, and are depending on the agent to not only listen and hear them, but to offer a clear response to their questions.

"The calls that come in to our contact centers are highly sensitive in nature," says UnumProvident Contact Center Manager Tony Pilcher. "It's very possible the customer may be in a terminal situation, and to have someone say, 'I can't hear you, could you please repeat that?' would be unacceptable."

With so many customers

depending on them,
UnumProvident's contact
centers experience extremely
high call volumes—20,000 on
a typical Monday and over 3.5
million calls per year. To
provide the highest level of
service, it's imperative that
agents have reliable, state-ofthe art equipment that frees
their hands to multitask while
staying on the phone with the
customer. It was precisely this
reason why UnumProvident
turned to GN Netcom.

"My agents were coming to me with multiple complaints about their headsets," said Tony Pilcher. "Some said they were having migraines, others that their customers couldn't hear them, and that their headsets were shorting out. These were all flaws that we just couldn't have, and GN Netcom provided the perfect solution."

UnumProvident's two-year transition to the GN Netcom 2100 Series of professional headsets has met with fantastic results. More than 300 agents in its Portland and Chattanooga contact centers now experience vastly improved sound quality with their GN Netcom headsets. Repetition on calls has been eliminated. And equally important in this demanding environment, the sleek. lightweight design and multiple wearing styles of the GN 2100 Series means agents work more comfortably throughout their long shifts without constantly adjusting their headsets.

"As part of our performance management system, we record each agent on four calls a month," continues Pilcher. "Because they are digital recordings we can also detect any headset problems. With our old headsets it was often difficult to hear the agent, but since we switched to GN Netcom, I can actually say I haven't heard any kind of interference."

What's more. Pilcher now has happier, more satisfied employees. "My agents are really pleased with their GN Netcom headsets because they're so comfortable and they make their jobs easier." And that has made his job easier too. Pilcher hasn't heard any complaints since switching to GN Netcom. "To a contact center manager, no news is good news," he says. "GN Netcom is dedicated to ensuring our satisfaction, which ultimately has a positive impact on our customers. It's a true win-win situation all around "

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About GN Netcom

GN Netcom is a world leader of hands-free communication technologies including a broad portfolio of corded and wireless headsets and related products. Its innovative solutions address the diverse needs of professionals in the office, SME and contact center environments. GN Netcom is the Office and Contact Center division of GN Store Nord based in Copenhagen, Denmark. For more information, visit www.gnnetcom.com

About GN Store Nord

GN Store Nord has helped people connect since 1869, initially as a telegraph company and now as a global market leader in personal communications providing increased mobility and quality of life for users. GN develops and manufactures headsets for hands-free communication. hearing instruments and audiologic diagnostics equipment, GN Store Nord products are marketed globally and the company is traded on the Copenhagen Stock Exchange (Reuters: GN.CO; Bloomberg: GGNDF). For more information, visit www.gn.com



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ENTRY-LEVEL MANAGEMENT

InfoCision is a full-service marketing consulting firm, specializing in providing a full spectrum of teleservices products, such as: inbound, outbound and blended calls as well as e-mail, e-commerce and Web-based services.

Team up with InfoCision and become part of a company: With proven growth Who is the 3rd largest company in its industry That offers personal growth opportunities by promoting from within That offers competitive salary plus monthly bonus with benefits package

InfoCision is a leader in the teleservices industry and is currently hiring entry level managers to work at our Austintown, Boardman, Youngstown, Mansfield, Gallipolis, Huntington,

<u>Columbus</u>, and <u>Dayton</u> locations.

Responsibilities:
Managing a team of 8 to 15
call center employees
Running team meetings and
contests
Employee Coaching and
Development
Monitoring team members for
quality presentations
Knowledge of clients and call
center programs
Report writing

Qualified candidates must have a Bachelors degree, strong interpersonal communication, and leadership skills. We offer full benefits including health, 401K, paid holidays and vacation.

InfoCision is an equal opportunity employer.

Send resume to:
InfoCision Management Corp.
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Rd.

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available (10,000 ksph and up a must)
Pay range up to \$17/hr DOE
and position.

For immediate consideration please email your resume to: gwenettescott@spherion.com Hiring conducted by Spherion. Fax (817) 524-3882

Company Name: St. Paul
Travelers
Job Title: Unit Manager –
Claim Customer Care –
CONTACT EMAIL:
FGONZALE@stpaultravelers.c
om
PAY TYPE: Annual
PAID RELOCATION: No
CITY: HOUSTON
STATE/PROVINCE: TX
POSTAL CODE: 77001
COUNTRY: United States
REQUIRED EDUCATION:
Two-Year Degree
REQUIRED EXPERIENCE: 3

TRAVEL: 0
JOB DESCRIPTION:
St. Paul Travelers currently
has exciting opportunities

available in the Customer Care area for individuals committed to providing exceptional customer service in a fastpaced call center environment.

In this customer service call center environment, the Unit Manager is responsible for day to day leadership of customer service representatives, with focus on quality external and internal customer communications. Responsibility includes selection, training and motivation of staff; communicating work quality standards, closely monitoring those standards, and performance feedback to staff on a regular basis.

Qualified candidates should have extensive knowledge of claim reporting procedures in a telephonic customer service environment, good communication skills and a solid understanding of product lines. Prior management experience a plus. College degree or equivalent work experience preferred. Schedule will be 12:00 Noon -9:00 pm Saturday -Wednesday. JOB REQUIREMENTS: We offer a competitive salary and full benefit package. Please submit resume and salary requirements, to: St.



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Richmond Ave., Suite 300;
Houston, TX 77042. ATTN:
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Relationship Manager (Sales) Full-time Opportunity

Communico is a leader in service training and development. We help organizations develop service-focused cultures so that they: Consistently deliver exceptional service Build and sustain relationships with customers and associates

The Relationship Manager is responsible for business development and client management. Compensation includes salary, bonus and full benefits.

The Relationship Manager will:
Generate leads and seek out sales opportunities
Qualify prospects effectively

Schedule phone and sales appointments Develop and deliver sales presentations Establish, develop and maintain rapport and credibility with prospects/clients Identify and develop potential sales opportunities with prospects/clients Close sales Act as client's key contact Uncover additional needs and/or contacts in the client organization

Competencies include: Consultative selling experience in Customer Service training solutions, HR and OD Ability to interface effectively with middle and senior management Thorough knowledge of and ability to articulate Communico's vision, services, products, contribution and business results Microsoft software (Word. Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook) Business contact management software (ACT!)

The Relationship Manager will have an office in Communico's headquarters in Westport CT. Travel expectation is approximately 25%. A BA is required, along with three to five years of successful sales experience.

Please send resume to Jean Marie Johnson, Vice President

E-mail: jmj@communicoltd.com Fax: (203) 227-2144

###

Job Overview
The Call Center, LLC is
looking to expand our sales
staff and is currently seeking
a Professional Sales Manager
to identify, target and close
new business in our state-ofart, 125-seat, Reno— based
call center.

Specific Responsibilities
Manage prospects and
customers throughout the
entire sales process, from
cold calls to following up on
leads and closing customer
deals.

Set appointments with key decision makers to introduce our call center capabilities and quote our value proposition.

Meet or exceed revenue goals according to sales plan.
Assess potential deals, negotiate favorable terms, and acquire prospect commitments.

Communicate ongoing contact/sales activities through Sales Reports and Call Reports.

Attend networking events and tradeshows.

Requirements

3-5 years successful experience in call center business development

Sense of urgency and a proven ability to generate new business
Strong telephone and computer based skills
Capable of presenting ideas in a clear and compelling manner
Skilled in relationship development and opportunity identification
Confident and poised with strong professional presence

Please email resume to debbi.murphy@thecallcenterll c.com

###

Customer Service Trainer

A leading 24/7 after hours travel call center located in the West San Fernando Valley is seeking a Customer Service Trainer. This position will be responsible for implementing both new hire and continuing education curriculum. The successful candidate will assume the role of teacher, role model and tutor as well as take on administrative and managerial tasks. He or she will develop awareness and knowledge of Company values, customer care skills, computer systems and policies and procedures. And will also contribute to curriculum design.

Customer service training



experience is a must as is GDS familiarity and computer proficiency. Supervisory experience along with organizational, motivational and fine management skills will be considered a plus.

We offer a competitive salary, outstanding benefits package which includes 100% paid medical, dental and vision insurance, paid holidays, paid personal days and more.

Email your resume with salary history to:

hr@reservtioncenter.net or fax to 818-889-4547. EOE.

###

Quality Control Supervisor

A leading 24/7 after hours travel call center located in the West San Fernando Valley is developing an enhanced quality assurance program. A minimum of 3 years experience in the travel industry is required as well as a demonstrated proficiency in manual entries in the major GDS systems (Apollo, Sabre, Amadeus and Worldspan). Background in supervision and/or coaching is also required. The successful candidate must have strong PC skills, be highly organized with the ability to multi-task and enjoy working in a fastpaced and changing

environment. Experience in the use of digital voice recording systems is a plus.

We offer a competitive salary, outstanding benefits package which includes 100% paid medical, dental and vision insurance, paid holidays, paid personal days and more.

Email your resume with salary history to hr@reservationcenter.net or fax to 818-889-4547. EOE.

###

Customer Care Representative

A leading 24/7 after hours travel call center located in the West San Fernando Valley is currently searching for a **Customer Care** Representative with 3-5 years travel industry experience and familiarization with multiple GDS's. The successful candidate will also possess a friendly and helpful phone presence, as this position requires a substantial amount of telephonic contact with our clients. Also required is computer proficiency including knowledge of Microsoft Office.

We offer a competitive salary, outstanding benefits package which includes 100% paid medical, dental and vision insurance, paid holidays, paid

personal days and more.

Email your resume with salary history to

<u>hr@reservationcenter.net</u> or fax to: 818-889-4547. EOE.



CLASSIFIEDS/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Call Center School Announces 2006 Masters Series Curriculum

Seven Tracks for Call Center Leadership, Operations, Supervisory, Quality, Technical, Frontline, and Workforce Management in 2006

The Call Center School (TCCS) announces the expansion of its popular *Masters Series in Call Center Management* web seminar curriculum for 2006. The expanded curriculum for 2006 includes seven professional tracks and over 50 unique topics.

10-course Frontline Track10-course Supervisory Track10-course Leadership Track10-course Operations Track

10-course Workforce
Management Track
5-course Technical Track
5-course Quality Track

The 90-minute seminars are delivered on Thursdays and Fridays throughout 2006. Participation in all courses within a track and a passing score on the mastery exam for that track earns students Masters Certification in that topic area from The Call Center School.

The cost for a single seminar is \$275 per web connection and an unlimited number of students may participate. Pricing is \$250 per seminar when 5 or more sessions are purchased, and \$225 per session for 10 or more sessions.

Detailed descriptions of all tracks and courses are available at: www.thecallcenterschool.com.

Some of the benefits of the *Masters Series* web program include:

Award-Winning Program.

The Masters Series was named Best of Show at last year's International Call Center Management (ICCM) conference as the industry's best training solution. It has also received the coveted Members Choice Award voted on by customers in the annual ContactCenterWorld.com's competition for 2003, 2004, and 2005.

Expert Instruction. Every course in the *Masters Series* is facilitated by the Senior Partners from TCCS. Our

seminar leaders are widely recognized as industry experts and are well-versed in how to make online learning both a valuable as well as enjoyable experience. TCCS is currently the ONLY training company in the industry in which all its trainers have achieved Call Center Management Consultant certification from CIAC.

Certification Content. Our Masters Series courses were designed with CIAC Certification in mind, and the courses have been reviewed and approved as a recommended training solution by CIAC. Every area of certification content is covered in the learning objectives of our many seminars. Practice tests at the end of each seminar, along with mastery exams at



Business Spanish Training

Employees who interact with Spanish-speaking customers need to have the ability to communicate in professional "Business Spanish" as well as understand the geo-demographic diversity of Hispanics in the US. Our clients who have taken our Business Spanish Training seminars have benefited through:



Improved Customer Service & Retention Rates Reduced Call Duration

Fewer Escalated Calls to Supervisors

For further information on our Business Spanish Training seminars for bilingual customer service agents, collectors, & telemarketers, please call 888.446.2331, e-mail info@arialinternational.com, or visit us on the Internet at www.arialinternational.com





the completion of each Masters Track are another way to help test students' knowledge and prepare staff for the CIAC exam.

Cost-Effective Solution.

Each Masters Series seminar allows an unlimited number of students to participate around a single web/audio connection. Should a call center choose to have 20 persons attend per site, the cost per student is less \$15 per class. And since students don't have to leave the call center to attend, the call center will also save unnecessary travel dollars.

Modular Learning Approach.

Knowledge and skills gained in the Masters Series classes are more likely to be maintained than learning from a multiple-day classroom seminar. Students spend 90minutes per week in a focused class and then have time to apply their new knowledge before proceeding to the next topic. TCCS can assist companies in determining suitable work projects to ensure knowledge is transferred from the classroom to the real-life call center for fast, measurable ROI.

Flexibility. Each of the 50+ topics in the *Masters Series* is scheduled for multiple

deliveries in 2006, so there are several opportunities to attend each class. If a date is inconvenient, TCCS can also deliver any topic as a private session at a mutually convenient time.

About The Call Center School

The Call Center School provides a wide range of education and training services for call center professionals. The Tennessee-based company has training programs for all levels of call center personnel, including frontline staff, supervisors, managers, directors, workforce planners and quality specialists. Programs are delivered as either traditional classroom training, live instructor-led seminars over the web, or as self-paced e-learning programs. TCCS also specializes in customizing educational programs to fit the specific needs of any organization. For more information, visit the TCCS web site at www.thecallcenterschool.com or call 615-812-8400.

The Power of One Book Available for Frontline Staff Nashville, TN – The Call Center School (TCCS)
announces the publication of
its latest book, *The Power of One.* The book, written by
TCCS founding partner Penny
Reynolds, is a book aimed at
the frontline staff in a call
center.

According to Reynolds, "The most important resource that any call center has is its people. We wanted to provide a resource that helped the frontline staff understand the important role they play in customer relationships and in the effective operation of the center."

The Power of One is an easy-to-read book that illustrates the importance of a single individual in a customer interaction. The book outlines the critical aspect of customer relationships and what role the frontline employees play in customer satisfaction and retention on every call. The book also helps describe in a practical way the impact that one person can have on speed of answer, staff occupancy, and bottom-line cost.

The book can serve as a resource for new-hire orientation to the center, as well as be a valuable learning tool for existing staff.

The cost of the book is \$5.95. Quantity discounts are available at a 100 level (\$4.95)

and 200+ level ((\$3.95). The book is available at The Call Center School web site at: http://www.thecallcenterschool.com/bookstore/index.html.

Free preview copies are available for a limited time. To request your free copy, call Debi King at 615-812-8400 or respond to this email with your postal mailing address.

TOUCHSTAR SOFTWARE RELEASES DIAL-ONDEMAND HOSTED SOLUTION FOR AS LITTLE AS \$4/HOUR

TouchStar Software is pleased to announce the release of its new web-based dialer application: **Dial-On-Demand**.

Dial-On-Demand is easy-to-deploy, affordable and allows users to immediately realize increases in productivity, while providing agents the tools they require to deliver exceptional customer care. Call 866-338-0678 or simply visit www.touchstarsoftware.com/hosted.shtml to get started today.



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| Monthly Newsletter Classifieds Advertisement : (through 12/06) | | | | | | |
| Website Classifieds Advertisement: (through 12/06) | | | | | | |
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Dallas, TX 75251

Telephone: 972-233-6055 x.110

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 Call Center Associates, Inc. - Years of operations and management savvy gained through real world experience led Call Center Associates to develop



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

CALL CENTER COACHING INSTITUTE - The Call Center Coaching Institute's Positive Coach Approach training program teaches a revolutionary method that's designed to insure extraordinary performance by newly hired agents or veterans. Coaches using this method will enable call center personnel to gain real ability to use learned skills and positive attitudes thus reducing the work load on managers and quality assurance departments.

For complete information, scheduling, and a proposal, contact: Sally Cordova or Judy McKee at 760-738-8200 Or SallyCordova@Phonedamentals.com

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Management Consultants who spend our time helping clients improve the quality and quantity of customer care and sales experiences. Since our inception in 1990,



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communico LTD - Communico partners with organizations to help them build and sustain exceptional service cultures. The heart of our commitment is the MAGIC® System. MAGIC, which stands for Make A Great Impression on the Customer, is an integrated system of assessment, customer service training and consulting that ensures consistently exceptional service.



Contact:

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

Diane.berenbaum@communicoltd.com

CRMXCHANGE - Founded in 1995, CRMXchange has long been recognized as a



premiere destination on the Internet for the exchange of information and ideas on customer relationship management issues including customer care, sales, lead generation, and technology.

Contact: sgreenhaus@crmxchange.com 201-505-1743 (v)

DATA-TEL INFO SOLUTIONS - Whether your business is just starting out with a few agents or it is well established with hundreds of agents, Data-Tel has a solution to fit your needs.

Contact - Data-Tel Info Solutions Phone: (614) 895-8852 Fax: (614) 901-2059





DIAL CONNECTION - Dial Connection is a call center solutions provider providing innovative solutions for



inbound/outbound call management. Established in 1989 as a software application development and consulting firm, Dial Connection provided software application development services for fortune 500 companies.

Contact Information: Dave Sargent (davids@dialconnection.com)
National Sales Manager

GLOBAL RESPONSE CORP. - A

pioneer in web-based call center services, Global Response has gone on to become one of the nation's



largest and most diverse contact centers serving clients in the catalog, retail, healthcare, automotive, media and finance industries.

Contact Information:

Global Response Frank Shooster

<u>franks@globalresponse.com</u> 954-973-7300 or 800-537-8000

GMT - GMT makes companies more profitable through the effective use of their workforce by combining leading edge technology with the features most desired by customers. Contact: Gordon McMahan, E-mail:



gordon@gmt.com

GN NETCOM - Delivering Value to Contact Centers - GN

Netcom delivers added value to your contact center by increasing the quality of customer interactions through superior products and services.

IEX CORP - IEX Corporation, a Tekelec company, is a leading provider of contact center workforce management and optimization technology. IEX has a strong market presence worldwide in



over 40 countries, with more than 800,000 agents spread across 2,800 sites. Founded in 1988, the company delivers award-winning products and services that help customers improve planning, enhance performance, streamline tasks and integrate data. IEX was recognized as the 2005 Growth Strategy Leader

by Frost & Sullivan and was named the 2005 Workforce Management and Optimization Leader by CRM Magazine. The company has several strategic partnerships with global contact center solution providers that enhance the value of its flagship product, the TotalView Workforce Management system. IEX is based in Richardson, Texas.

For more information, visit http://www.iex.com, e-mail iexinfo@iex.com or call 800-433-7692.

InstantService

InstantService provides an integrated suite of live chat, email management,



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Contact Information:

Paul Sewell Manager, Marketing Communications

Main: 770-352-1300 Fax: 770-352-1313

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LOMA - The LOMASelect(r) Customer Service Suite offers a range of tools to assist you in the hiring and development of your company's call center and contact center employees.



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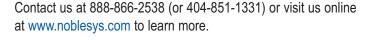


M.E.R. Inc. (McDaniel Executive Recruiters) is a highly specialized search firm in the CRM, Direct Marketing, Call Center, and Collections Industries. We specialize in sales, marketing, operations and support function staffing. Contact: Chad McDaniel

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POWERHOUSE CONSULTING - PowerHouse Consulting, founded by Contact Center expert Kathleen Peterson in 1987, is a professional management consulting firm providing expertise in Contact Center Solutions and Technology/Telecommunications Consulting. Our services include: Strategic Planning, Contact Center Assessments, Training, Outsourcing Relationship Management, IT Assessments, Telecom Assessments, System Integration, and IT Infrastructure Services.

For more information about engaging a PowerHouse resource, please call PowerHouse Business Development at 603-472-6616. ext. 234 or email sales@powerhouse1.com. For complete information about PowerHouse, visit www.powerhouse1.com.





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email: donald.edman@rsa.fiserv.com

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SYNOVATE - Synovate, one of the world's top research firms, is the market research arm of global communications specialist Aegis Group plc.



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Contact: deb.carmachel@synovate.com



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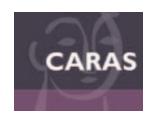
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