



A Business White Paper

Rediscover Your Customer and Go Beyond Their Expectations

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Executive Summary

With nearly 50,000 contact centers operating in the United States, the premises-based contact center has become the face of customer service¹. But today that service goal is undermined by the demands of those contact centers, which distract corporate attention from the customers themselves.

The situation has been especially challenging for the 44,000 domestic contact centers that employ 100 or fewer agents². These enterprises often become so absorbed in managing the operation that they lose site of why the contact center exists. Ironically, for many companies the demands of the contact center have eclipsed the importance of the customer.

This paper outlines how hosted solutions can help free businesses from the complexity of the premises-based contact center, realize service goals, and travel a path that leads to Rediscovering the Customer.

In tracing that path, this article addresses why organizations lose sight of their customers and how hosted solutions can help companies relocate, understand and finally rediscover customers. Rediscovery should be the ultimate goal of all contact centers, and an impending revolution in reporting tools will leverage hosted network-based systems so companies can achieve it. These new reporting tools will allow companies to understand customer patterns and preferences as well as the obstacles customers encounter when they contact an organization. Using that perspective and information, companies can optimize their contact centers and improve automation, increase revenues, dynamically manage agent time, and deliver excellent customer service.

Losing Sight of the Customer

Companies that implement premises contact center technologies often find they have a tiger by the tail. At many business locations, it is not unusual to find a PBX serving an ACD that is linked to the IVR, CTI server, E-mail server, Web interaction server, workforce management application, and predictive dialer for outbound campaigns. For businesses with multiple locations, or that have grown through acquisitions, this environment is duplicated, as are the costs of equipment and staff.

Many organizations find this model unsustainable. Government agencies are under pressure to reduce budgets and do more with less. Mid-sized companies want to focus on their core competencies and reduce capital expenditures. Large businesses with call volumes reaching 1 million per week and more want transparency across all their contact

¹<http://www.justcareers.com/PressReleases/August2006CallCenterReportMER.pdf> - April, 19, 2007

²<http://www.witness.com/main.aspx?pid=79>, April 19, 2007

centers to identify and enforce best practices, only to find that their heterogeneous systems make gathering data very difficult.

But regardless of the industry or government sector, organizations soon find that the demands of managing a contact center with multiple customer touch points cause them to lose sight of the customer. Faced with finite resources and time, managers lose sight of the customer experience, buying patterns and preferences to focus on the contact center infrastructure and the demands its technology creates.

Qwest offers both a Hosted IVR service to provide advanced self-service features and a Hosted ACD service to provide inbound, outbound, e-mail and web-based agent transactions. Qwest's hosted Contact Center solutions utilize the open systems developed by Genesys so that companies can leverage their investment in existing infrastructure while enhancing customer contact functionality through hosted services. By shifting self-service and routing applications – as well as security, upgrades, and maintenance needs – to a hosted provider, organizations can redeploy staff and budgets to focus on improvement of the customer interaction experience.

Maximizing Your Customer's Experiences

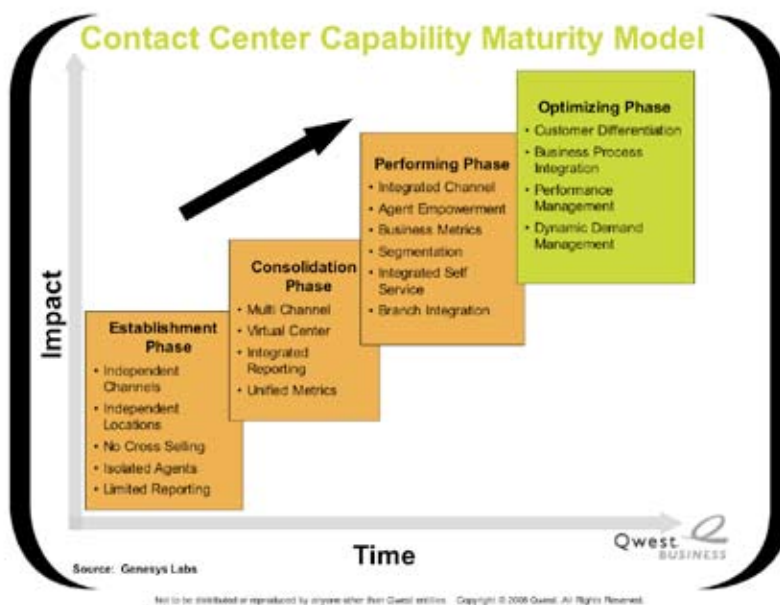
While the first generation of call centers focused on answering the phone and completing the call, the advent of contact centers in multiple locations, and the need to support multiple functions – such as sales and service for numerous products in various markets – have upped the ante for contact center infrastructure. Similarly, the rise of multi-channel contact options – voice, e-mail, chat, Web co-browsing — can pose an obstacle to consistent service. To maximize the experience of all customers in all locations and manage all their multi-channel touch-points, companies need a global view of all customer contact opportunities.

Network-based contact center solutions offer the advantage of an end-to-end customer perspective, beginning from when the call is first initiated over the Toll Free network, through connection to the IVR, to delivery to an agent. Qwest is a leader in data networking and hosted Genesys IVR, CTI and hosted multi-channel ACD services. By adding the power of the network to hosted services a new generation of Contact Center capabilities becomes possible. Companies can gain a “customer's-eye view” of the entire experience and see themselves as their customers see and experience them.

Rediscovering the Customer

The fullest realization of the hosted network-based contact center will come when companies rediscover their customers through comprehensive reporting and the on-going analysis of those reports.

On the horizon is a new level of reporting that monitors customer contacts from the moment the contact is initiated, tracking all metrics until the transaction is completed in the IVR or with an agent. Such historical reports will reveal customer trends, application bottlenecks, routing successes, and demographic patterns. Such data creates an ability to optimize contact center applications, drive channel choices, and up-sell services, and has the potential to yield continual improvement in customer service, customer sales, cost reduction, and system efficiencies. Reports can be used to design improvements, and the results of these improvements can also be monitored through reporting tools, leading to further improvements. The end result of this reporting and improvement cycle is the evolution of the contact center to its highest capability, a state many are calling the Optimized or Dynamic Contact Center.



The Dynamic Contact Center integrates technology and business processes to dynamically manage agent productivity and other tools (resources), prioritize business objectives (outcomes), and respond to fluctuations in demand (traffic). By harmonizing these three parameters, the Dynamic Contact Center can optimize the contact center's three major business measures: cost, quality, and revenue.

Very few contact centers approach this highest level of operations, which Genesys has placed at the top of its maturity model (see previous chart). Its success depends upon gathering reliable data from across a contact center's many platforms, devices and switches, and until today that has been prevented by incompatible methodologies and proprietary data collection. Network switches collect data on calls differently than do IVR platforms and each vendor's IVR operates according to its own proprietary language. Even coordinating all reporting clocks so they are all set to a common time zone has proved to be an expensive obstacle.

But with the growing acceptance of standards for data collection, including the increasingly popular VXML standard for web-based speech and Touch Tone (DTMF) applications, reporting across devices will soon be possible. Companies using hosted network-based contact centers will be in the best position to take advantage of these new reporting standards. The unification of end-to-end reporting in a hosted network will yield Optimized Reporting and deliver the benefits of the Dynamic Contact Center. The building blocks of optimized reporting will allow companies to view:

- Integrated data from the network source and IVR application – When did the caller enter the network? How long did they stay in the IVR? When did they leave? Where did they go?
- Network and IVR availability – Did the IVR accept the call, was there a busy signal?
- Customer data – Who called? Has the customer called before? Why is the customer calling so often? What time did he/she call and is there a pattern?
- IVR performance — Is the application properly constructed?
- IVR opt-out points – When are callers choosing to go to a live agent? Where is the IVR application losing users? Are opt-outs higher among a certain type of user – older, higher value? Is the application providing the service it was designed to provide?

A library of reports can be assembled to ease access to common information, and those reports can be customized according to the needs of particular departments.

With the hosted network-based solution providing a global view of all customer interactions, advanced reporting can retrieve and recombine an infinite number of reports to reveal new customer characteristics and behavior. Marketing can look at customer

demographics and Finance can look at contact center investment and ROI figures. Contact Center management can have access to a dashboard that profiles operations at the highest levels, and sales can monitor up-sell and cross-sell patterns. All of this leads to:

- An alignment of each department's business objectives,
- A means to routinely validate this alignment,
- A timetable to drive corrective actions when the department's goals and customer experience objectives are not being achieved.

Conclusion

A hosted network-based contact center, such as Qwest's, deploys sophisticated multi-channel solutions without the complexity, the challenges, the management overhead, and the pain that companies must bear when overseeing premises-based solutions. Furthermore, Qwest's Hosted Contact Center solutions can provide comprehensive reporting and analytics to help companies rediscover customers and exceed their expectations.

About Genesys

Genesys, an Alcatel-Lucent company, is the world's leading provider of contact center and customer service management software — with more than 4,000 customers in 80 countries. Genesys software directs more than 100 million interactions every day, dynamically connecting customers with the right resources — self-service or assisted-service — to fulfill customer requests, optimize customer care goals and efficiently use agent resources. Genesys helps organizations drive contact center efficiency, stop customer frustration and accelerate business innovation.

About Qwest

Qwest Contact Center Solutions® is comprised of several flexible, scalable and highly reliable Qwest network hosted contact center services that can work independently or together to assist customers in managing their inbound and outbound contact centers. These services include routing and distributing of voice, Web chat and email requests to live agents regardless of geographic location as well as caller self service interactive voice response applications. The portfolio includes: Qwest® Hosted IVR, Qwest® Notify, Qwest EZ Route, Q Routing® and Qwest® Toll Free Service. Qwest was recognized by Genesys as the 2007 North American Partner of the Year.

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