

VOCALCOM

>>>> Contact Centres.
Client Relationship
Management.



>>>> Call Center Technology

A co-publication Vocalcom / En-Contact
All you have wanted to know....
And have never been told.

2007 : the question is no longer whether or not to create your contact centre or be concerned about your customer relations: these two questions have been troubling general management and marketing management in businesses for several years now, and have resulted in one certainty: the customer and user find out information, buy remotely and want a fast, personalised service. They choose the media they are familiar with and have available: Internet, telephone, mail... or point-of-sale visits.

In such an environment, how should contact centres be designed and organised ? What technologies should be selected and what investments need to be made ? Can telesales be adapted for my product? Is the 'general public' now using the interactive voice server? More recent questions are now being asked in addition to these somewhat old questions: is the offshore phenomenon worth exploring, should VoIP solutions be invested in, and what about creating virtual call centres ? Until now, it has been difficult, even impossible, to find simple and understandable answers to all these questions. Establishing your contact centre and improving customer relations therefore often seemed like nothing short of hard work.

The aim of this document is to give you the chance to benefit from the expertise and experience gained by top professionals in the field over the last 15 years. So take this opportunity and discover "Everything you've always wanted to know about contact centres, customer relations... but never been told".

The publishers

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Overview

How many contact centres are there in France ? How many agents work there ?

□ The good news is that contact centres now has a definition: “Call centres are designed to remotely manage the relations that businesses want to have with their current and prospective customers : it is the entire collection of human, organisational and technological means implemented in order to provide an appropriate response to each customer request. Call centres define themselves as entities made up of operators organised by skill type and grouped into teams on platforms designed to use only telephones to manage current and/or prospective customers through computer telephony integration systems, whether for making or for receiving calls. As entities for remote relations, call centres optimise telephone tools and their connections with computers and other media (email, fax, Minitel, Internet, Extranet, SMS, WAP etc). They integrate four key components :

- Human resources (call centre agents, supervisors, managers, trainers...)

- Technology (telephones, computers, Internet, software, application packages, multimedia servers, databases, switching cards, cabling...)
- Logistics (properties, furniture, ergonomics of the physical environment and the ‘screen’ environment...)
- A culture together with marketing methods (business strategies, customer relations, fulfilment, profitability...).”

Source: Collective Agreement of Service Providers in the tertiary sector field, Supplement n°10 Brochure 3301 – 2nd edition – December 2000 – Amendment dated 18 September 2001 relating to the modification of the field of application.

According to studies, there are approximately 2 700 call centres in France with more than 28 000 people working in them.

Where are the largest French call centres located ?

□ The contact centre market is based in 8 French regions representing more than 70% of contact centres listed. Number of employment positions in each region (as a % of the total in

France): Ile de France 24%, Nord Pas de Calais 9%, Rhône-Alpes 8%, Pays de Loire 8%, Midi-Pyrénées 6%, Lorraine 5%, Aquitaine 6% and the Centre 5%.

Source : CESMO Consulting

Who are the top 20 French outsourcers ?

Rang	Company	date created	Turnover 2005 in €m	No. of sites	No. of positions	% telephone
1	Teleperformance	1978	295	28	4681	96
2	Arvato	1996	94	6	1650	
3	b2s	1996	93	8	2000	91
4	Transcom	1999	81	4	1200	75
5	CCA	1994	53	8	1386	88
6	Vitalicom	1976	52	7	1700	85
7	Laser Contact	1998	47	5	1230	91
8	The Phone House Service	1991	46	4	1000	90
9	Armatis	1989	45	5	1900	96
10	ClientLogic	1985	41	2	1200	91
11	Fréquence Plus Services	1992	38	2	287	52
12	Site1	1998	32	2	850	95
13	Coriolis Service	1989	32	5	750	85
14	Webhelp	2000	29	1	200	80
15	Phone marketing	1995	26	4	600	96
16	Stream	1995	23	2	550	90
17	Intra Call	1996	23	2	620	
18	Acta	1992	21	1	380	100
19	Supporter	1990	20	3	400	85
20	Teletech	1993	16	5	490	99

The offshore phenomenon

□ The offshore phenomenon truly took off in 2004 and attracted increasing numbers of advertisers as well as outsourcers who developed additional platforms outside of France. The main locations are to be found mainly in the Maghreb (Tunisia : SR Téléperformance and Morocco : Webhelp), Mauritius (Rogers/V-Lines), Senegal (PCCI/Center Value), Romania and Quebec. How has this development come about? The recent development of new technologies and their reliability (satellite links, VoIP) have been incorporated to offer clear structural advantages :

- Labour costs that are significantly lower than in France, as well as more flexible legislation in terms of possibilities for working hours.

- Recruitment made easier in labour market areas that are yet to be fully capitalised on and that offer a young and qualified population affected by local unemployment.
- The image of a new and truly positive profession, far from what can still be offered in France and which undermines this sector of activity.

The main service providers set up offshore :

Morocco : PhoneAssistance/CRM

Value/B2S Maroc/Outsourcia/

Accolade/Sitel/ Webhelp

Tunisia : SR Téléperformance/Pro

2C/Carthago

Senegal : PCCI/Center Value

Mauritius : Rogers/VLines/Infinity

In which cases is the outsourcing of contact centres justified ?

□ In several cases :

- when the use of teleservices is very specific, linked to a seasonal activity,
- when the volumes of work (e.g. contacts to handle) are very irregular (work peaks) and require external support,
- when the business prefers to concentrate its financial and human

resources on its core activity and therefore entrust the overall management of the activity to a specialist service provider,

- during the start-up phase of a new business activity for which a contact centre is necessary, without there being any certainty that the activity will continue.

How many agents and hotliners work in the call centres of the SNCF, EDF and France Télécom ?

- Approximately 2 200 telephone sales agents work at the SNCF. 40 million calls are handled for ticket sales or information given to travellers.
- EDF: more than 20 call centres with 900 staff
- The different activities of the Orange group see approximately 28 000 workers employed in call centres and support centres

What is the average amount of daily calls an account manager handles at a telecom operator ?

- From 70 to 120 calls (in peak periods).

Entities that own or have set up their contact centres :

The tax office	true ✓	false
The CPAM (national health service)	true ✓	false
The huissiers (court officers)	true ✓	false
The city councils of Paris, Lyon and Marseille	true ✓	false
The ANPE (national employment agency)	true ✓	false
SOS dopage (doping support)	true ✓	false

Are there any standards for certifying the quality of customer relations ?

- The AFNOR (French standards association) has created an accredited standard: "service of customer relations centres" (NF, X50-798) specialist in contact centres, and in 2002 created a tool for analysing and measuring the quality of contact centres. Called Arcad, the tools and procedures received Anvar labelling (French innovation agency).
- The consultancy and training company Colorado Conseil (CCF) is a www.colorado-conseil.com

Overview of practices

□ Study “New issues in the area of Internet customer relations in European businesses”

Methodology: Since 2004, IDC have interviewed 309 managers who belonged to businesses based in England, Spain and France and who were directly involved in the management strategy for Internet customer relations. All of the business examined employed more than 500 workers and belonged to sectors that are acutely aware of the problems connected with managing customer relations (bank, finance, mail ordering, distribution, leisure, tourism, clothing, press, media, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and the public sector).

- Three-quarters of the businesses questioned said that they had a solution for managing customer relations on the Internet and all of them combined this with setting up an email address on the site.
- 43% of businesses say that they received more than 80 messages each day from their current or prospective customers.
- 21.3% of businesses questioned said that they did not deal with all current/prospective customer requests generated by email.
- On average, French businesses take 2.45 days to respond to an email request.
- 20% of the businesses surveyed manage their incoming emails with traditional email tools such as Outlook. 60% have developed inter-

nal scripts backed by a traditional messaging tool. 22% of businesses said that they opted for specialised solutions.

- 83% of businesses were acutely aware of the benefits of a management strategy for customer relations and believed that such a strategy meant they could respond more quickly to current or prospective customer requests, at the same time reducing costs (for 69% of them).

Source : IDC/Eptica joint survey – 2004

□ Call centres, victims of their own success !

Call centres are common and widely used in all business sectors...and are often victims of their own success. This is the observation made in the Dimension Data survey published in January 2005. The report set up a benchmark test worldwide for 166 call centres, including an average of 225 job positions spread across 24 countries. They were sent a questionnaire containing 350 specific questions on their work and how they carry it out. First lesson: call centres are victims of their own success as they are increasingly being called upon. Call centre agents find themselves faced with two types of problems: firstly they have to deal with noticeably increased levels of impatience from customers. Customers are willing to wait on average six seconds less than last year: i.e. 65 seconds instead of 71 (cf. table). In fact, the “abandon” rate has increased markedly, up from 5 to

13%. A further constraint inherent in this trend: the call centre agents also have to increase the call resolution rate and at the same time reduce the length of the calls. This is precisely where the problem lies, if the study is to be accepted, as the average length of calls increased from 222 seconds to 240 seconds between 2004 and 2005. Furthermore, 50% of the problems "suffered" by the customers are not resolved. Call centre agents spend 60% of their time reminding the people they have been in contact with. Hotliners are under constant pressure and have to manage problems that continue to increase in number and complexity. This would explain why a quarter of them leave every year. With such a gloomy outlook, the study highlights the insufficient length of training periods, reduced to 21 days from 36 last year. It believes that businesses do not place enough value on the benefits of quality training.

Another area of concern: the lack of well-trained supervisors equipped to deal with the overload of work connected with the job. This observation applies across the board in all countries, as the practices depend more on the sectors than the countries. The dominant use of IP telephony sits at the top of the main technological advances revealed by the study. This stems from the proven maturity of the market that has made it a necessary work tool for offshore call centres. On the customer side, voice recognition has managed to gain support and has succeeded in line with expectations. However there is one drawback concerning the integration of existing technologies. Often no training is given on how to use them !

* Source *En Contact* n°25

Global Contact Centre Benchmarking Report 2005 - Summary Statistics

	Last Year 2003	This Year 2004
Call Handling Statistics:		
Abandon Rate	5%	13%***
Average Time for Calls to Abandon (after connection to the agent queue)	71 seconds	65 seconds
Average Call Duration	222 seconds	240 seconds
Average Speed-to-Answer	29 seconds	28 seconds
Human Resource Statistics:		
Agent Absenteeism	10%	8%
Agent Attrition	19%	23%
Call Resolution Rates:		
Targeted First Time Resolution Rate*		85%
Actual First Time Resolution Rate**	85%	71%
Actual First Time Resolution by agent that initially handled the call*		50%

* (Not Measured Last Year)

** (Including all escalations to second and third tier agents and team leaders / supervisors) / Source : Dimension Data 2005 /

*** (record level since first recorded in 1997)

Human resources and legislation

What types of jobs are available at a contact centre ?

□ Prospecting, sales, consumer services, assistance (technical support), information and consultancy.

Are there diplomas for supervisor or call agent jobs ?

□ Today there are a multitude of training options designed for jobs in customer relations, offering qualifications, accreditations, continuing training and initial training. To become a CRM specialist or account manager, you are basically spoilt for choice.

- **Specialist certificate in Reception Consultancy Distant Selling :**

This is recognised by the Ministry of National Education and entitles people to a level IV diploma

(Bac+1 : one year of higher education). This training is given in professional institutes and is offered as block-release training. Entry requirements: must relate well to people and have a passion for multimedia. This training is offered in numerous professional institutes (more than 15 in France) – Furthermore, the National Education office uses Vocalcom solutions, which are recognised as useful educational tools for training institutes

- **Professional Degree in Teleservices :**

Offered as initial or continuing training. Entry requirements: must hold a certificate for two years' higher education (Bac+2) and have three years of professional experience in the framework of continuing training. This degree is awarded by CEPRESCO, the training centre of the Lille Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

- **Professional Degree in Operational Management of Customer Contact Centres :**

Offered as an apprenticeship contract or as a block-release training contract. Entry requirements: this course is designed for people with two years' higher education (Bac+2), eligible for a qualification contract or being a salaried worker and following a company training programme, on individual educational leave, or being a job-seeker. This course is provided by the IUT Lumière Lyon 2.

- **Professional Degree for Call Centre Supervisors :**

This is offered as initial training but in some cases can be offered as block-release training. Entry requirements: must have certification of two years' higher education (Bac+2) with or without professional experience depending on the organisations. Offered by numerous establishments including the ESICAD in Montpellier, the University of Metz, the University of Angers, SupMédiacom in Amiens...

- **Master's degree in Customer Relations Management :**

This is recognised and accredited by the Conférence des Grandes Ecoles association and is offered as initial or continuing training. Entry requirements: must hold certification of four or five years' higher education (Bac+4 or Bac+5) and have some professional experience. Offered by the ESC Rennes, Nancy and Clermont-Ferrand.

Is it legal to record the conversations of call agents ? Why ?

□ Yes, to the extent that the people recorded are advised of this and that the recordings are for training and quality improvement purposes only. Authorisation must also be obtained from customers before recording business conversations. This agreement can be verbal or implicit.

Can I listen to the telephone conversations of the telephone sales agents of my subcontractor ?

□ This function exists in certain systems. For example, Vocalcom systems enable the customers of the subcontractor, once given authorisations and personal codes, to directly listen to the different agents at the call centre. An interactive menu simplifies the navigation between the different operators. The listening is discreet and the person communicated with does not notice any difference. The call centre agent can be advised. If their 'rights' allow them to do so, callers can also be put into contact with the supervisor at the centre so that any comments can be shared with the supervisor.

Is there a collective agreement for contact centres ? Since when ?

□ Yes, the Collective Agreement of service providers in the tertiary sector field now applies to call centres. The application of this collective agreement was also extended to include contact centres in 2002 (application decree).

What is the average salary of an experienced hotliner ?

- Experienced hotliner: 16 900 € gross/year
- Supervisor at an outsourcer : 20 000 € gross/year
- Supervisor in an integrated contact centre : 22 500 € gross/year

Source: Comparative study of salaries in contact centres in 2003 – Colorado Conseil.

How can I optimise my recruitment ?

□ Recruitment is obviously strategic in the success of a contact centre. With centres being spread out today, experienced people are becoming an increasingly major component, however there are not enough of them to meet the demand. As a result, recruitment costs remain high. Here are a few ways to overcome these obstacles :

- Target the job offers by using tools or media set up in the call centre sector: specialist press, Internet sites or recruitment agencies with a specialist branch. Furthermore, numerous interim agencies have developed special services for this industry.
- Partnerships with institutes offering block-release training for the call centre industry allow for investing in training and integrating young graduates.
- Initial and block-release training for call centre agents remain the key to ensuring successful recruitment. Some businesses incorporate this into their internal training programme. Others call on specialist organisations. Investment in training has two advantages: firstly, acquiring the skills needed for customer relations, and secondly, enhancing the value of the call centre agent function, thus creating loyalty through involvement and motivation of staff.

Performances & financial data

What is the cost of creating a contact centre with 10 positions / 50 positions in a provincial area ?

<u>Contact centre with 10 positions :</u>	starting from 52 000 €
Telephone equipment (PABX, CTI, Scriptor...)	25 000 €
10 computers connected with the server	6 500 €
Cabling	1 500 €
Special furniture	7 500 €
Headsets	1 000 €
Recruitment	10 500 €
<u>Centre de contacts de 50 positions :</u>	starting from 147 000 €
Telephone equipment (PABX, CTI, Scriptor...)	66 000 €
50 computers connected with the server	19 500 €
Cabling	4 500 €
Special furniture	22 500 €
Headsets	3 000 €
Recruitment	31 500 €

What was the average selling price in 2006 of one hour of B to B and B to C* telemarketing?*

- B to B : 28 €
 - B to C : 25 €
 - Offshore : 15 €
- Excluding the cost of implementing
- action, renting files and telephone taxes.
- * B to B: business to business / B to C: business to consumer

What is the average amortisation time for a predictive call solution ?

□ From nine months to one year depending on the size of the platform and how often it is used (refer to Vocalcom experts for a tailor-made study).

How many full sales pitch calls targeting corporate customers can be handled per hour by a junior telephone sales agent in B to C / a senior telephone sales agent in B to B?

- Junior telephone sales agent in B to C : 8 to 10 full sales pitch calls per hour with appointment made.
- Senior telephone sales agent in B to B covering a target of corporate customers : 4 to 6 qualified calls per hour (full sales pitch call is a call that enables a telephone sales agent to speak effectively with the prospective customer, present the offer, present the sales pitch and gauge the opinion of the other person as regards the offer).

Is it easy to obtain the file of names and telephone numbers of all the people who called you while you were absent ?

□ Missed calls are a lost opportunity for contact. Most call centre systems can provide the number of calls not taken. Computer telephony integration solutions can send the identified calling telephone number to the agent.

VOCALCOM systems also offer added telephone information with the name of the caller as well as their address.

The search can be carried out using the business database or the telephone directory. This functionality can also enhance the history of the relations in the CRM module. Fast Data can automatically create the personal data file for calls not taken and therefore constitutes a source for prospecting.

Techniques & technologies

I have two separate sites : Can I handle my calls with a single PABX (standard) ?

□ Most PABX offer the installation of another PABX on the offshore site and the network set-up of these PABX. The architecture is effective but can turn out to be redundant and costly if the voice is not transported in a compressed format. The Vocalcom PCBX offers the possibility of serving distant centres directly with VoIP or multiplexing. These architectures can result in considerable reductions in the bandwidth needed for the voice, in a proportion ranging from 1 for 8, even 1 for 10. Furthermore, these

architectures do not require PCBX on the distant site. The telephones of the agents are connected directly to the network switchboard for the VoIP or to an analogue distribution module for the multiplexers. The signalling and the rest of the digital information are managed on the CTI screen of the call agents. This architecture also enables remote working for call agents working from home and connected to the Internet with a high-speed connection.

Is it possible to obtain a freephone number from an operator other than France Télécom ? An 'Indigo' number (special rates) ? Through which operators?

□ Yes, under different names, since "Numéro Vert", "Numéro Indigo" (special rates/free numbers) etc. are registered trademarks of France Télécom.

The operators Neuf-Cegetel, Futur Télécom and Colt offer such telephone numbers.

Can an agent handle calls and emails consecutively from the same post ?

□ Some systems enable incoming calls and outgoing calls to be handled consecutively without having to change the identifier. These are call-blending systems. Handling emails is generally not part of this register, with the majority of systems handling emails independently. Vocalcom systems operate using Full Media Blending™ and distribute the interactions to be handled to the call agents. If the agent's 'privileges' are such that the agent is allowed to

do so, the same agent will be able to handle incoming calls, outgoing calls, emails or faxes received, chat conversations and co-browsing or Internet Web callback and any other interaction indifferently, all without having to change the identifier. This system for managing interactions offers optimal use of human resources based on their aptitudes, 'privileges' and availabilities.

Predictive solution : How can telephone prospecting costs be reduced ?

□ As part of efforts to reduce prospecting costs, human resources play a significant part. It is important to reduce these costs by automating the tasks of dialling and managing call lists wherever possible. These tasks are 'big consumers' of time for call centre agents, whereas the call automation of VOCALCOM enables dialling, depending on the target (private or professional), by automating the management of lists and

reminders. In particular, the predictive call method results in a doubling of the number of contacts for a call prospector in B to C, by anticipating the dialling and 'distributing' only the calls that are useful to the call prospectors. This predictive dialling management results in an effective reduction in the human resource portion of the prospecting costs by doubling their productivity.

Making appointments: How can we make the most of the salespeople present out in the field ?

- Many marketing departments, conscious about making the most of salespeople's time, opt for entrusting the telephone prospecting task to the call centre so that the salespeople can spend more time out in the field. To be successful, the time management of the salespeople has to be extremely well thought through. It has to be possible to manage the number of daily or weekly meetings for each of the salespeople in the team, all the while maintaining flexibility in order to be able to act following unforeseen circumstances.

- The method for making appointments at Hermès Pro, VOCALCOM, is such that it is easy to assign the different contacts to the salespeople responsible for prospecting them. For example, in the majority of cases, this method of assigning results in a sectorisation of the target file across the geographical area. Hermès Pro also enables a diary form to be managed, whereby it identifies available slots.

- The salesperson can intervene in a slot of unavailability in his/her diary.

The corresponding time slot will be instantaneously greyed out for the telephone prospectors. The appointment-making process at Hermès Pro is integrated with the call engine of the system and thus allows for telephoning in preview, progressive or predictive mode, supervising the work of the call centre in real-time, and producing the reports, meeting files and salesperson diaries.

- During the conversation, the telephone prospectors can send confirmation of the meeting to the prospective customer and/or the salesperson by SMS, email, fax or post. The timetable for the salespeople can also be synchronised with Microsoft Outlook.

The appointment made through the Hermès Pro Call Centre is immediately synchronised with the mail messaging tool. The salesperson is simultaneously informed via SMS and receives the meeting file by email complete with details on how to get there and the itinerary calculated from the last meeting.

Intelligent re-routing: How can extra telephone costs be avoided in the case of re-routing calls from a central telephone location?

□ Increasing numbers of businesses are creating contact centres to relieve customer advisers of current

demands. Some bank networks have set up centralised telephone call centres that handle up to 65% of the

requests. For the remainder of the requests requiring a customer adviser, the calls are sent to direct lines at the agency. These call re-routings often incur considerable extra costs as the length of the call is borne by the contact centre. The V-Server of Vocalcom is the only customer equipment capable of sending the calls to a third destination from a centre on one of the special numbers of France Télécom (Vert, Azur, Indigo) or audiotel. This call forwarding does not incur any additional costs due

to the length of the communication forwarded. The call forwarding can also include a conversation between the contact centre agent and customer adviser prior to sending the communication. This service means that the service quality can be improved, as there is no need for the customer to repeat the reasons they called. Call re-routing on the intelligent network of France Télécom is exclusive to Vocalcom.

Relocation : How can I relocate my CTI call centre to reduce costs but without losing voice quality ?

□ Today more than ever, contact centres focus efforts on cost reductions. Relocation is a solution for reducing human resources costs. The less costly labour force in the countries chosen for this relocation must speak French and have the same technology as a call centre based in metropolitan France. Therefore, once the geographical location is chosen, a decision has to be made about where the telephone and computer systems will be based. This decision depends on the geographical location of the technical team.

In all cases, one of the major cost items is the specialised connection between the French site and the relocation site. These costs are calculated from point to point, depending

on the distance and the maximum transfer rate authorised on the pipe. If a voice communication is not compressed, it takes up 64 Kbps. Since the connection costs are calculated according to the distance and the transfer rate, it is worthwhile reducing the bandwidth used up by the voice and information. The Vocalcom solutions for relocated contact centres enable optimal use of the bandwidth by compressing the voice by 16 times with surprising quality; the routing and multiplexing Vocalcom solutions therefore drastically reduce the needs for inter-site connections and thus reduce the costs incurred through relocation.

Automatic data capture: How can I reduce the time spent capturing information from incoming calls ?

□ Some incoming services are designed to gather information or record orders on-line. As a general rule, capturing details presents two problems: the slowness and the quality of recording information of the call centre agents. Recording information dictated by telephone lasts 35 to 150 seconds depending on the typing skills of call agents. Furthermore, the agent cannot be expected to know how to spell all streets or to know the postcode information; there is also a likely risk of infor-

mation being recorded incorrectly. VOCALCOM offers use of the reverse directory in its solutions. Obtaining information based on the telephone number lasts less than a second and includes postal standards. This system means that laborious and often inaccurate or incomplete information recording can be avoided, at the same offering time reductions in the length of telephone conversations by half, with the result that more calls can be taken... and orders !

Reminder for missed calls: How can 100% of incoming calls be handled ?

□ During busy periods and peak times, these are frequent. Often the number of incoming calls surpasses the call centre's capacity. In this case, the overflow options do not always result in the requests being handled. When it relates to telesales following a television advertisement, the loss of earnings can be considerable. VOCALCOM has equipped its systems with a function to deal with this problem. When an incoming call is made, the VOCALCOM V-SERVER

PCBX captures the number of the caller and memorises it. If the caller loses patience while waiting, their number will be called by the system once the traffic allows for this. It will then be directly 'passed' to a call centre agent who will be able to handle the request. This system ensures optimal customer service quality, better contact centre performance, and increased productivity for call centre agents. Hermès Fast Data, the new reverse directory module from

Vocalcom, allows for creating a database of missed calls, including the name and address of the caller. Using the caller's telephone number, Fast

Data adds missing information to the prospective customer database. surname, first name, address with correct postal information...

Technology and supervision: How can my supervisors be more efficient ?

□ The function of the supervisor is to oversee a team of call centre agents. To be efficient, the supervisor has to have as much real-time information as possible available in relation to the business activity and the productivity of the call centre. The VOCALCOM systems are extremely comprehensive and functional. On a single screen, the supervisor has access to all the relevant information for each set of outgoing calls or incoming services. A summary table displays in real-time all the ratios needed to evaluate the production quality. The details in the comparative table allow for rapidly identifying the call centre agent(s) having difficulty. By changing tabs, the supervisor can compare the results of a call centre agent with his/her previous performances (e.g. last week or last month). With a simple click on the name of the call centre agent, he/she can discreetly listen in, thus enabling the super-

visor to get a better idea of where the problem lies. If necessary, the supervisor can either discreetly talk to the call centre agent without the other person hearing, or join in the conversation with the call centre operator and the other person. The supervisor can also instantaneously start recording the conversation, which may later be used in a briefing as part of enhanced training. At any time, supervisors and call centre agents can exchange requests and information in chat mode using instant messaging. The supervisor also has access to the different statistics reports concerning the incoming/outgoing call sessions and emails. The supervisor can easily produce a summary report listing details of the work time of the agents. Supervisors have direct access to the follow-up and reminder schedule and the salesperson schedule.

E-mail : What should I do to ensure that incoming emails are handled efficiently in the contact centre ?

- Efficient handling of emails requires the ability to answer them as quickly as possible: to achieve this, they have to be treated as incoming calls and distributed to the call centre agents when they arrive, though calls should still be given priority. VOCALCOM systems enable such priority distribution. Therefore, instead of having to go looking for emails in an in-box, the call centre agents receive the emails to be handled during periods when they have no incoming calls. Such a distribution system means that requests can be dealt with and that reactivity is indeed part of the approach.
- The second requirement for handling emails relates to the quality and relevance of the responses. But there is still the written work:

the company giving responses is committed to them. Furthermore, the responses must be legally reliable and in correct French. The VOCALCOM system scripter offers the option of creating a knowledge base with a tree structure for seeking the correct response which is already written and pre-formatted. The call centre agent only has to copy the response into the reply email. A quality control can be carried out by a trained supervisor to check the responses before they are sent. Certain semantic analysis modules can speed up the response by carrying out a search before the email is sent to the agent. Therefore, the agent only has to check the relevance of the response and send it.

Using special numbers : What types of numbers should I get for my contact centre ?

- All types of numbers can be used upstream of your contact centre :
- Geographical numbers (type 01xxxxxxx),
- Free numbers (080x xxxxxx),
- Free international numbers (00 800 xxxxxx),
- Shared cost numbers (type 0 810

- xxxxxx),
- Numbers with payback (type 0 892 xxxxxx),
- International numbers with payback (depends on the country),
- Short numbers (type 3xxx) or numbers that are free or with payback.

It is also advisable to use several numbers towards the same service to be able to identify the type of traffic. Different numbers with different rates can be used for prospective customer calls, After-Sales Service calls, faxes or customer calls. Special numbers can be published in different media in order to follow the effectiveness of different promotion channels. Irrespective of the type of number (including an existing number), it can be automatically routed towards one or more contact centres

wherever they may be located, all in a transparent manner for the user (for example, a geographical number from Paris can reach a contact centre in Marseille during the day and Guadeloupe during the night). The calls with payback can cover part of the operational costs of the contact centre and generate net revenue from the traffic reaching an interactive voice server.

Why, despite the fact that large-scale CRM projects often disappoint “those who initiated them”, are so many contact centres being set up ?

□ Irrespective of the size of the contact centre, it is virtually the key to any project concerned with improving customer relations. Creating it, operating it and managing it require pragmatic expertise and a ‘results’ focus. Furthermore, these are quickly identified. On the contrary, CRM pro-

jects have very often been managed using a conceptual approach, without taking into account the reality of the business: processes, tools and human resources are the key components of good customer relations, something that call centre managers have known for a long time.

The ASP boom. Virtual contact centres

The traditional large call centres with hundreds of agents in a single office are no longer the only solution.

They have been transformed into human-level call centres and often geographically relocated. The virtual

contact centre has become a reality. Some ASP contact centre solutions offer all the functionalities of a multi-channel contact centre with almost immediate set-up and a high degree of reliability. They thus enable businesses to intelligently distribute calls from a central platform in line with the skills of each agent, wherever the geographical location may be. Such architecture, whether VoIP based or otherwise, offers the possibility of sharing the CTI servers and databases among the different sites of a single business or several businesses. The costs are therefore shared, and furthermore the businesses can harmonise their technologies within the different sites with incomparable ease of use. Increasing numbers of advertisers are also using this architecture to outsource their call centres, all the while retaining control over call

management and the databases. They make a single piece of technology available to all their service providers and can spread the workload depending on the human resources available at each site.

The virtual call centre enables multiple sites to be managed wherever they may be located and also enables contacts to be distributed to the agents as though they were on the same site. The virtual contact centre meets the current and future needs of contact centres, whether they are internal or outsourced: they offer flexibility in the use of technology at different sites as well as centralised administration.

Detecting answer machines: How can the handling be optimised ? Is it possible to detect mobile phone messaging ?

Detecting answer machines automatically means that these fruitless calls are never sent to the agents, thus saving time. The detection of so-called "analogue" telephone answering machines (for example, those we have at home) cannot be 100% reliable, irrespective of the dialling system. However, the major-

ity of predictive motors can detect them, thereby enabling productivity to be increased somewhat. Calls to mobile telephone numbers are increasingly important. The detection of mobile answering machines exists and is 100% guaranteed. The same applies to operator messaging on fixed telephones.

Apart from detecting answering machines, their reminder strategy is important for achieving a maximum file exploitation rate. It is therefore possible to set a reminder for a detected answering machine every n hours for example, in order to contact them again at times the customers are easier to reach. Finally, it also possible to automatically leave messages on these

answering machines, whether detected by the system or by an agent. A pre-recorded message of excellent quality can be sent out. You can therefore leave a number that your current or prospective customers can call you back at, or simply send out your information to your target for a minimal cost.

What is VoIP ? What are its advantages ?

VoIP, or voice over IP, is technology that allows communications to be passed on no longer through the telecom network but through special connections or the Internet. The voice therefore passes through the same channel as the data, at significantly lower costs.

Businesses concerned about rising telephone costs are looking for solutions to reduce costs and open the way to new methods of interacting. Using a single network for voice and data offers numerous measurable advantages :

- easy, centralised and relocated administration,
- cost reductions for communication

between the sites,

- optimisation of the inter-site bandwidth,
- enhanced contact centre operations for each site,
- use for remote working...

This technology is very highly prized among businesses with several national or international sites. Based on extremely reliable multiplexers, VoIP has enabled the development of offshore sites by avoiding the cost of telephone taxes connected with international calls

VOCALCOM

Call Center Technology

Vocalcom is a software publisher and developer of technological solutions and has specialised in the multi-channel call centre field for 10 years. It is the leader in Europe in this field. Through continual innovation, staying tuned into the market and possessing the ability to react, Vocalcom has provided solutions to world leaders. From the "ready-to-wear" of Hermès Pro to the haute couture of the Hermès.Net suite, Vocalcom offers a wide range of solutions on Intel Dialogic and Avaya platforms, enabling different business to interact with their clients through all manner of media: telephone, e-mail, fax, Web, SMS...

Elected product of the year for the fifth consecutive year, the Hermès software suite is also "Recognised as being of Educational Interest" by the Ministry of National Education. The Vocalcom solutions have proven their relevance, extensive operational use and extreme reliability.

Vocalcom has equipped companies in more than 37 countries and set up more than 125 000 user posts. With its set-up in Benelux, Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Morocco, Brazil, Argentina, Dubai, Canada and the USA, Vocalcom is able to conduct almost 70% of its business activities outside France, and has seen annual growth of more than 20% since it was first established.

More than 1 300 customers have achieved real profit from using Vocalcom solutions.

References include :

Outsourcing : Armatis – ADM- Arvato Services- B2S – Brucall – Call Center Bulgaria – Client Center Alliance – Client Logic- Comtree – Groupe Actif + – Groupe Everest – GTN Communications – E-Laser – EOS Contact Center –Leenart & Heemskerk – Mezzo groupe 3 Suisses –

Pages Jaunes – Signature Telemarketing – Sitel – Suntasia Marketing – Télécenter Antwerpen – Téléperformance – The Phone Huse – Victoria Line – Vitalicom groupe SNT – Web Help

Banks / Insurance companies : Abbey National Bank –AGF – AIG – AON – Banca Popolare Italiana – Banque Populaire – BNP Paris – Caisse d'Epargne – Cardif – CBC Banque – Cetelem – Creditech – Crawford Adjusters – Crédit Agricole – Gestitres groupe Natixis – Groupama – Groupe Eovi – La Banque Postale – MACIF – Société Générale

Services : Adecco Services – AFPA – Ajilon Sales & Marketing – Altroconsumo – Atos Origin- Bex Reizen – Cito – Dec Italia – Elyo – Fi System – Gexel Telecom – Gold Key Resorts – Golden Pages – Groupe Akerys – KPN – La Poste Lastminute.com – Les Taxis Bleus – Moov, groupe Atlantic Telecom – Pixmania – PSA –Sagem – SD Genisys – Sodexho – Svp Multi-Info – Tir Groupé – Thalys – UGC- Wave

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Debt Collection : American Agencies – CashPerformance – GCQ Canada – Citibank – Cofinoga – Contentia –Groupe Co-Or – Intrum Justitia – Les Huissiers – Pouey International

Distribution : Albert Heijn – Argel – Boulanger – Maximo – Surcouf – The Carphone Warehouse – Sico – Sony Music – Toupargel-Agrigel

Cable/Internet : AOL – Canal + – NC Numéricable – Noos – UPC

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North American IP contact center market

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According to this study on the North American IP contact center market from Research and Markets* IP-based contact centers are entering a boom period. A few pertinent points from the report :

- Market-wide revenue has crossed 50 percent for the past few years, and this quick growth is expected to continue for at least the next two years.
- The adoption of IP telephony is slower at smaller contact centers than at their larger counterparts.
- More than 50 percent of contact center seat sales in North America are expected to be IP-based by 2008.
- The small-mid sector holds the greatest potential for the future, following the saturation of the large contact center market.
- The migration to IP is driven by the fact that consolidation of infrastructure for distributed

enterprises and the associated consolidation for applications like quality monitoring, CRM, and interactive voice response (IVRs) result in a simplified architecture that supports changes and upgrades and also provides a centralized administrative view of all customer contacts.

- IP telephony also facilitates integration between IVRs and Web self service applications.
- IP environments are easy to maintain, operational costs are less, agents are more efficient, and customer experiences are improved.
- The success rate of migration depends on vendors who should promise and deliver effective distribution and channels strategies, and trouble-free migration paths that tap into the least number of customer IT resources.

* Ref : Customer relationship management news - <http://www.researchandmarkets.com/>

VOCALCOM

Call Center Technology

The Company has been created in March 2006 in Dubai Free Zone Area to sell and support appointed non-exclusive local Distributors/Integrators on Vocalcom products and solutions

The Countries under this agreement are the followings : Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Yemen, Jordan, Irak, Iran, Egypt and Libya.

The Middle East region is a fast growing market in Contact Centers and has seen the implementation in the region of the main CC providers as : Avaya, Genesys, Nortel, Cisco, Altitude ...

The industries are Telco's, services, Petroleum and governments which are all benefiting from the high price of Oil and are attracting more and more investors thus workers, engineers and management to the area.

Due to the Arabic as well as foreign languages

required , Egypt has captured International Companies thru ASP's for servicing their products inside and also outside their borders.

Private local Companies as Banks, Insurances, Distribution are now willing to benefit from low cost internal Contact Centers and represent a good part of the market.

VOIP remains still a problem due to local regulation not yet ready to open borders specially on internet facilities very closely controlled by the Telco's . However VOIP is accepted in most of the Countries inside borders.

Since its opening in March 2006 , VOCALCOM ME has participated and installed two clients

1 ASP in Jeddah-Saudi Arabia with 50 seats

1 additional 50 seats on an ASP equipped with Nortel (1200 seats) for outbound campaigns in UK, US and Egypt also using e-mail facilities.

Numerous questions arise when it comes to set-up a telemarketing campaign, creating a contact centre, improving customer services, briefly, improving the customer relationship management. Two professional and experts of the field, **Vocalcom** (European leader of software solutions for contact centres), **En-Contact** (professional magazines specialised in customer relationships management), have united their experts, and their journalists, to give you the opportunity to make use of their knowledge and acquired experienced. In less than 35 questions, discover, due to this white book, « all that you have always wanted to know about contact centres and customer relationship management... and all that you have never been told. »

Manuel Jacquinet



Editor of the magazine
En - contact

The author : *En-contact and founder of the first telephone industry institute (Colorado), Manuel Jacquinet is considered one of France's call centre experts. At the end of 2004, he was the official representative of the Ministry of Labour (J.L. Borloo) for the future of the call centre industry in France and is also the author of the 1st book on the call centre profession.*

A joint Vocalcom/En-contact publication
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