EMEA Region

Customer Service Strategies for the Communications Industry
# Table of Contents

3  Introduction

4  The Key Challenges Facing the Communications Industry
   Market Saturation and Increased Competition Slow Growth
   Sales of Triple Plays are Disappointing
   Keeping Costs Down is Difficult

9  The Strategic Role of the Contact Centre in Communications
   Strategy 1: Facilitate Integrated and Consistent Cross-Channel Interactions
   Strategy 2: Offer an Inviting “Customer Front Door”
   Strategy 3: Get Customers Off the Phone and Onto the Web
   Strategy 4: Handle Calls More Intelligently
   Strategy 5: Give Agents the Information They Need to Do Their Jobs
   Strategy 6: Initiate Proactive Contact
   Strategy 7: Make More Effective Use of Customer Data and Segmentation
   Strategy 8: Optimise Business Process Execution
   Strategy 9: Pursue Open IP Migration
   Strategy 10: Boost Agent Productivity through Interaction Blending

16 The Genesys Dynamic Contact Centre

18 Genesys in Communications

20 Case Study

23 Conclusion

24 About Genesys
Introduction

Deregulation, innovation and technology convergence are reshaping the communications industry landscape across Europe. Traditional wireline carriers are now competing against unbundled local loop providers as well as wireless, voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), Internet service, cable and satellite television companies, mobile virtual network operators and search engine vendors. With more competitors chasing the same customers with the very same products, service providers are now promoting triple play bundles to increase average revenue per user (ARPU). But many communications companies are struggling because they are unable to differentiate their business, reach customers likely to respond to new sales opportunities or make the most of their valued staff.

Communications providers that define and implement solutions to these challenges are those that will successfully compete and thrive into the future. This paper examines the strategic role of the contact centre in the communications industry, and how it can deliver the increased revenues and cost savings that will drive profitability and shareholder value.

The paper introduces ten essential strategies you can use to realise this potential by improving the customer experience, leveraging cross-sell and up-sell opportunities and promoting agent productivity and satisfaction:

- Facilitate Integrated and Consistent Cross-Channel Interactions
- Offer an Inviting “Customer Front Door”
- Get Customers Off the Phone and Onto the Web
- Handle Calls More Intelligently
- Give Agents the Information They Need to Do Their Jobs
- Initiate Proactive Contact
- Make More Effective Use of Customer Data and Segmentation
- Optimise Business Process Execution
- Pursue Open IP Migration
- Boost Agent Productivity through Interaction Blending

This paper further explains how the Genesys Dynamic Contact Centre provides integrated communication technologies to optimise customer traffic, internal resources and business outcomes for today’s changing conditions. It concludes with a real-world customer case study that illustrates how Vodafone has used Genesys solutions to make its contact centre vision a reality.
The Key Challenges Facing the Communications Industry

Market Saturation and Increased Competition Slow Growth

Growth in Europe's communications industry is slowing. In the recent past, Europe has counted on mobile and broadband revenue growth to stem the losses in fixed line revenues. However, this is no longer the case as saturation is occurring in mature markets, particularly in Western Europe, where services growth has dipped below 3% in many countries. Even in Central and Eastern Europe, PMR, a research and consulting firm, forecasts a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 7.8% for 2007-2010 versus 14.6% for 2003-2006.

Not only has growth slowed, but competition has intensified across all services and across all countries in Europe for a variety of reasons. First, deregulation has led to market entry by unbundled local loop providers. Openreach, the network access arm of British Telecom, expects unbundled local loops to grow from 10.9 million in Western Europe in 2006 to 28.6 million by the end of 2010. Second, technology innovation has broadened the competitive pool from traditional wireline carriers to wireless companies, VoIP providers and Internet service companies. Online services such as Skype offer free calls from computer to computer. Third, technology convergence of voice, data and video has brought cable companies, satellite television companies, mobile virtual network operators such as Virgin Mobile and Tesco Mobile, and even Internet search engine/advertising giants Google and Yahoo, into the fray.

Fixed Voice, Mobile and Broadband Revenue are on the Decline in Western Europe

Communications service providers can no longer count on mobile and broadband revenue growth to offset losses in fixed line revenues.

Tremendous competition and commoditisation have placed downward pressure on profit margins. The introduction of multiple-play services (which combine video, Internet and voice services) has been largely motivated by the need for service providers to offset revenue losses from increased competition and to consolidate their market positions. Competitors have introduced multi-service bundles to increase ARPU, attract new customers, reduce customer churn (historically a huge problem in the communications industry) and to reduce operational support costs.

Consumers' primary motivation for purchasing bundles has been to obtain price discounts. However, just because price matters the most, doesn't mean service doesn't matter. The customer experience is also important, and factors such as convenience and responsive and reliable support will help win and retain customers.

In fact, the ability to provide an excellent customer experience may become the only way for competitors to differentiate themselves in the commoditised market, and may ultimately determine the new winners and losers. In the European Mobile Operators' Cross-Channel Experience 2007 report, Forrester Research reveals that customers rate good customer service as one of the top three purchase decision criteria when choosing an operator. Further, the 2006/07 Genesys Consumer Research Study of the European market discovered that 35% of consumers say that customer service has the biggest impact on their loyalty.

Sales of Triple Plays are Disappointing

According to InfoCom, a market analyst, at end of 2Q 07, the number of broadband connections (DSL, cable modem and fibre optic) reached more than 85 million in Western Europe, positioning the region to exploit emerging triple play developments. Survey results from Forrester Research, however, show that in 2006 only about 8% of Western Europeans had broadband triple play — the bundled offering of voice, video and data — although 36% said that they were interested.

The contact centre is a necessary component of making sales strategies to exploit triple play opportunities more successfully, but there's a lot of work ahead.

"Triple play will be a key battleground in the competition for consumer spend. The stakes are high and, as various players increasingly offer the same set of services to the same customers, casualties are inevitable."

- Stephen Sale
  Senior Analyst
  Analysys
First, channel interactions aren’t as automated as they should be. Many communications companies are not able to identify high-value customers when they call or to allocate agents with appropriate sales skills, which results in missed opportunities to increase ARPU and to retain already high ARPU customers who are expecting the very best service.

Second, contact centres aren’t as integrated as they should be. A company’s Website, e-mail and self-service systems are often silos separate from help or order lines. Forrester Research estimates that more than 30% of telecommunications subscribers use the Web to research services. This behaviour makes it difficult for companies to engage the customer during the key points in the decision making process, and companies may be losing sales by not being able to provide relevant information or sales assistance.

Triple play reduces profit margins and service providers will not be able to continue to offset falling ARPU by increasing subscriber numbers, given the slowing growth rates for communications services in Europe. To increase profits and differentiate their services from competitors who all offer the same bundles of services, companies will need to provide value-added services targeted at specific demographics and businesses. This holds true in the consumer, small- and medium-sized business (SMB) and enterprise markets.

**Consumer Market:** Successful service providers need to offer lifestyle service bundles targeted to groups of users according to their interests and usage patterns. For instance, younger and higher-income consumers might be more receptive to buying video on demand, digital video recorders, Internet protocol television and VoIP than other groups of consumers.
**SMB Market:** There is growing interest in offering this market additional value-added services, such as software-as-a-service, e-mail, Website hosting and security services.

**Enterprise Market:** In addition to horizontal bundles, providers will need to develop and sell vertical bundles that offer value-added services around core services such as Internet access and telephony.

**Keeping Costs Down is Difficult**

Communications companies are trying to keep costs low without negatively impacting customer service and sales. This is a tough task among commonly used techniques to improve efficiency and reduce contact centre costs, such as reducing call volume, handling time, workforce costs and overhead costs.

- **Call volume is high**
  In their efforts to reduce call volume, communications companies are making progress transitioning customers to the Web, but adoption has been slower than it should be, in part because of the fear that customer visits to Websites rather than call centres will lead to lower sales per interaction.

- **Handling times are too long**
  One factor increasing handling times is that communications companies can’t identify their customers when they call or route them to the appropriate specialist. Further, a complete picture of the customer’s previous history of enquiries and interactions is rarely accessible, particularly if the communications occurred across several channels such as phone, e-mail and the Website. Customers are likely to be frustrated because they have to repeat the same details over and over again and the call takes longer to resolve than it should have.

- **Workforce costs are higher than in other industries**
  The communications industry has higher contact centre salaries than other industries because of the skill requirements for IT support. To keep wages under control, communications companies rely heavily on outsourcing. Datamonitor rates telecommunications as one of the three leading industries investing in contact centre outsourcing. But many companies are now having second thoughts as they realise the strategic importance of call centres in customer service, which operate as the primary point of contact with the customer.
• **The migration to IP-based contact centres is difficult**

Organisations are continuing to migrate to IP-based contact centres as they recognise the inherent benefits that can be gained by moving from closed proprietary solutions to a more standards-based environment. Still, one of the biggest concerns for businesses considering the move to IP is how to leverage existing systems. More specifically, they must be convinced that they will not only gain new features and functionality, but will not lose existing applications or functionalities. Equally important is the ability to select and deploy new functionality while retaining compatibility with a variety of new or existing applications and product vendors.

• **Poor contact centre efficiency increases operational costs such as bad debt**

Bad debt is a growing problem for most carriers as they attract younger and less creditworthy customers. Inefficient contact centre operations are partly to blame for failure to collect unpaid bills. For example, some communications companies make little effort to identify high-risk customers or to reach out to them as soon as there is evidence that there may be a payment problem. And once there is a problem, communications companies have a tendency to treat all late bill payers the same rather than to develop personalised strategies for repayment.

Few communications companies identify callers who have delinquent accounts. These companies don’t have agents working on debt collection in the evening or on weekends when the customer is more likely to be at home, or they fail to send out reminders that bills must be paid by a certain date to avoid penalties or loss of service. Confronted with costly manual collection processes, communications companies eventually give up because it has become more costly to collect on debt than to simply write it off.
The Strategic Role of the Contact Centre in Communications

Communications companies have long understood the value of their contact centres in providing excellent customer service and driving new revenue. Now, companies are calling on their contact centres to do even more as innovation has expanded product offerings and invited new market entrants.

In today’s competitive market, contact centres are an even greater strategic asset for survival and will have to go the extra mile to deliver value. Contact centres are a way to improve the quality of customer service to help differentiate themselves. Fundamental customer service goals that should be delivered by today’s contact centre include cross-selling and up-selling more products and services by understanding customer needs, and running more cost efficient operations by increasing agent productivity. Further, contact centres are now considered a key instrument in changing the public’s perception of a company, creating a great customer experience and executing on the business goals of the company as a whole.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Top Customer Service Objectives</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Customer Experience</strong> — People evaluate their business relationship every time they contact a company; therefore, making this experience as enjoyable as possible is essential to customer acquisition and retention.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cross-Selling and Up-Selling</strong> — Generating revenue through cross-selling and up-selling has become just as important in contact centres as providing customer service. Every customer interaction, regardless of channel, should be explored as a sales opportunity and acted on accordingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agent Productivity and Satisfaction</strong> — Since the majority of contact centre costs lie in employing agents, any increase in their productivity and satisfaction can significantly enhance return on investment.</td>
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How can your contact centre accomplish these service objectives? Depending on contact centre maturity and business requirements, here are ten possible contact centre strategies to make your goals a reality.
**Strategy 1: Facilitate Integrated and Consistent Cross-Channel Interactions**

The first step in offering an exceptional customer experience is to offer multi-channel contact centre interactions comprised of phone, fax, e-mail, SMS, and perhaps even Web chat, so that prospects and customers can conduct business with you exactly when and how they like. For instance, the Genesys Consumer Survey 2007 — Europe found that 89% of consumers would like to communicate with a company via e-mail and 50% say that e-mail is their most preferred method of communication.

With one view of the customer across all interaction channels, communications companies are able to deliver better service, improve cross-sell and up-sell rates and lower operating costs. Providing customers with a seamless experience across all channels ensures that their interactions are as consistent and efficient as possible, which will help build a solid relationship with the customer. Sharing custom data across channels helps create a more complete customer profile which can be used to identify cross-selling opportunities. And, streamlining data exchange and supporting collaboration across all channels promotes operational efficiency.

For relationship selling, agents require a unified view of interactions across all channels to effectively promote and sell services. In the early promotional stage, this means ensuring that communications companies don’t repeat turned-down offers to customers at different touch points, such as the call centre and the Web. As the customer responds to the promotion, agents can pick up where the customer left off at each stage in the sales process, regardless of which channel the customer was using. For example, if a customer (let’s call her Sophie) had gone online to review features of a triple play bundle, the call centre would be aware of this and take steps to sign her up for the package.

**Strategy 2: Offer an Inviting “Customer Front Door”**

When customers use the call centre channel, the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system provides the customer’s first impression of the company. It also serves as a guide to the communication provider’s services, and determines how well the provider can decrease handling times or the volume of calls that agents must handle.

Traditional IVR menus have frustrated customers with long and confusing menu trees. Open dialog call steering is emerging as an innovative alternative to traditional IVR menus. By asking what the customer wants, recognising key words in natural speech and integrating with business rules and routing strategies, open dialog call steering applications take intelligent action to ensure the most efficient resolution of the call.
An example:

IVR: “Thank you for contacting Premier Communications Services. How can we help you?”

Sophie: “I am having trouble connecting to the Internet”

The Customer Front Door application automatically looks up Sophie’s operating system and sends Sophie’s request to a technical support agent who specialises in broadband service for that system.

Strategy 3: Get Customers Off the Phone and Onto the Web

Opportunities for self-service abound in the communications industry. Customers can order new services — or add, change or move services — as well as view or pay bills and request customer support. Using Web self-service, customers can interact with the company whenever they want, not just during weekday contact centre service hours. Web self-service enhances customer service and also helps migrate calls away from expensive call centre agents, who can then dedicate their time to handling more complex enquiries and concentrating on selling activities, rather than responding to routine calls that can be easily automated.

Integrating self-service with agent assistance allows the customer to interact with a service provider in a convenient way whilst still receiving the same personalised service offered by call centres. As customers increasingly engage in online research and transactions for communications services, they can be offered agent assistance to make their Website interaction go just as smoothly as those directed to the call centre.

For instance, Sophie goes to a communications provider’s Website and reviews two bundles — a triple play package and a triple play premier package. As she reads the details of the packages, an online chat window pops up inviting her to speak with a customer service representative. Sophie accepts the offer to chat and asks for a brief summary of the key differences between the features of the two packages, which the customer service representative summarises for her. After some consideration, Sophie initially declines the invitation to sign up for one of the packages, stating that she wants to explore other options as well. The customer service representative then counters by offering Sophie free installation to sign up for the service, a savings valued at €100. This extra incentive is enough to convince Sophie to move forward with purchasing the package.
Strategy 4: Handle Calls More Intelligently

When taking calls, a top priority for communications companies is to make sure they provide acceptable customer service. Skills-based routing, virtual hold and business priority routing are three key strategies for meeting service requirements as efficiently as possible whilst also making the most of opportunities to drive new revenues.

An IVR system not only identifies customers, but also why they are calling. With this knowledge, skills-based routing determines where the call should be directed — either to a self-service application, or to a customer service agent or support specialist most qualified to efficiently handle the call based on technical knowledge, selling and language skills, or the ability to handle a specific type of service, billing or sales enquiry.

During times of peak volume, virtual hold technology allows customers to receive a callback at a convenient time rather than wait on hold. This technique improves call response times and increases customer satisfaction levels without adding costs for additional resources.

Often, response times are easily met during times of low-call volume and agents have free time to focus on other activities, such as ringing clients to explain new services or promotions. Business priority routing uses business rules to prioritise calls based on customer value, customer segments, available channel resources, hold times and other factors.

For instance, when Sophie, a double play customer with home phone and Internet service, calls with a billing question during a period of low demand she is passed to an agent who specialises in upgrading existing customers. The call centre agent answers her billing question and informs her about a special deal that will give her three months of free service if she also signs up for wireless and digital television services.

Using business priority routing, communications companies can also match service priorities with customer value. For instance, high ARPU customers who generate the most profits can be extended priority service whilst calls from less profitable customers can be directed to self-service when needed.
Strategy 5: Give Agents the Information They Need to Do Their Jobs

The integration of back-office system information with everyday contact centre activities helps agents resolve calls more quickly and effectively. As soon as the agent takes the call, relevant customer information is displayed within a single screen so that agents don't need to manually navigate through systems to find the information they are looking for.

Workflow management allows the service representative to efficiently take all necessary steps to resolve customer issues, reducing the time it takes to get customers the answers they are looking for. As back-office integration with the call centre and workflow management decreases average handling times and reduces unnecessary repeat contacts to resolve issues, customer satisfaction becomes higher whilst the contact centre workload and costs are lowered.

Strategy 6: Initiate Proactive Contact

Proactive outbound communications is a way for communications companies to set their service apart from the competition. With everyone vying for their business, customers like to know that providers value them. Results of the Genesys Consumer Survey 2007 — Europe reveal that 89% of consumers would have a more positive opinion of a supplier after receiving a courtesy call just to thank them for their business or ask them how satisfied they are.

In addition, proactive contact is also of tremendous value for improving debt collection. Customers can receive messages when their accounts are overdue and payments must be made to prevent service interruptions. These notifications can be sent at any time, which is especially advantageous in reaching customers who are not normally at home during contact centre operating hours. Because the proactive contact is automated, it becomes less costly for the contact centre to pursue bad debt, giving a communications company more time before they have to move to the write-off stage. Further, improved collection times on overdue or disputed bills add directly to the free cash flow of the business.

Customers value proactive outbound communications. The “Genesys Consumer Survey 2007 — Europe” discovered that 88% of consumers would like to receive proactive communications from companies to keep them informed about service delivery and/or other products and services that may be of interest to them.
Strategy 7: Make More Effective Use of Customer Data and Segmentation

Given that most communications services are commodities vulnerable to significant price competition, some communications companies are abandoning their service-features approach to selling. Instead, they are exploring cross-sell and up-sell strategies based on the customer relationship to capture new high ARPU sales opportunities. In this new paradigm, contact centres reach out to individual customers with service bundles and prices designed specifically to attract and meet their needs.

Front-office integration with the contact centre helps to increase sales. Communications agents are able to provide customised offers based on the customer's recent interactions across all channels, existing services, usage trends and detailed knowledge of the customer's demographics, lifestyle and propensity to buy.

Going one step further, high-value customers may interact, when possible, with a dedicated agent who is intimately familiar with the client’s history and needs. Or, demographic matching may be used to assign the customer to an agent who has a common demographic profile. The result is that customers get to interact with agents who will more readily relate to them because they share certain commonalities, such as native language, age range, degree of technical competence, and so on.

To make relationship selling a success, front-office integration gives agents a 360-degree view of the customer, which helps in focusing on long-term customer profitability. Agents have access to the right information across all touch points to enable effective interaction with the customer. In this way, customers may receive customised offers based on their current behaviour, recent interactions across all channels, existing services, usage trends and detailed knowledge of their demographics, lifestyle and propensity to buy.

For example, suppose Sophie, a customer who only has home phone service, rings to enquire about obtaining caller identification. The call is routed to a call centre sales specialist who is in the same age bracket as Sophie. After providing Sophie with the monthly cost of obtaining caller identification, the agent tells Sophie that she has rather high long distance charges and explains how she can save money by either adding wireless to her package or by purchasing unlimited long distance service for a fixed price. After being reminded about how much money she is spending on long distance and given some options, Sophie decides that now is a good time to finally get wireless service.

Strategy 8: Optimise Business Process Execution

Many communications interactions involve multi-step business processes that may include multiple contacts with customers, internal departments and third parties. As the communications hub for the company, the contact centre can be harnessed to automate and expedite end-to-end business processes supporting these communications. By directly integrating a business workflow engine, the contact centre becomes an active participant in driving business efficiency.
For instance, a communications service provider can reduce the time and effort for activities such as signing up new customers, provisioning service, resolving technical support issues, and collecting late payments by automating the various external interactions and notifications required to complete these processes. Contact centre agents can play an even broader role in these and other processes through integrated workflow that enables the routing of back-office tasks as work items to available agents for processing. And, integration between in-house and out-sourced processes and personnel offers transparency as well as efficiency gains.

**Strategy 9: Pursue Open IP Migration**

The widespread emergence of the open standard Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) means that organisations no longer need to rip out existing legacy systems to add new IP functionality. The open, standards-based SIP approach maximises the benefits of IP networking by enabling application portability, technology compatibility from multiple vendors, consolidation of application infrastructure and reduced total cost of ownership.

One of the major business drivers in the shift to IP technology is virtualisation. A Virtual Contact Centre allows geographically dispersed contact centre agents to operate as a single, winning team. Regardless of where the contact centre agents are located, they can be called upon, as available, to ensure appropriate response levels and provide access to needed expertise.

Rather than trying to physically consolidate contact centres, communications companies ought to consider linking them together to create a single virtual contact centre. This approach will not only help to quell concerns about providing quality customer service, but it can be far more effective for agent utilisation and will also cut costs without negatively impacting customer service. Research shows that the time agents spend unproductively in sub-50 seat operations is over 50% higher than in 100+ seat contact centres.

Virtualisation will also allow outsourced resources to be utilised in a way that will not jeopardise valued customer relationships. Outsourced agents can be brought into the fold during peak periods to handle routine types of calls, whilst more demanding interactions can still be handled at local contact centres.

For example, Sophie has just called to transfer her service but, unfortunately, it is at a time when call volume is exceptionally high due to a recent service promotion in her area. Because arranging for a transfer of service is a straightforward process, Sophie’s call is sent directly to an outsourcer rather than making her wait.
**Strategy 10: Boost Agent Productivity through Interaction Blending**

Communications companies benefit from optimising their agents' time as much as possible. Call blending allows agents to handle both inbound service calls and outbound sales calls as call volume and skills permit, whilst task blending allows agents to offer their assistance at different interaction channels. Or, contact centre agents can be switched to answering e-mails or engaging in text chats with customers. Not only does this maximise agent productivity, but interaction blending also breaks up the potential monotony of the position.

**The Genesys Dynamic Contact Centre**

The Genesys Dynamic Contact Centre is designed to transform customer service by automatically optimising customer traffic, internal resources and business outcomes. Whilst contact centres can manually adjust to changing patterns, an advanced — or ‘dynamic’ — contact centre has the know-how and technology to make automatic adjustments in real time. As contact centres become increasingly important channels, communications companies can convert themselves to dynamic contact centres to automatically optimise the customer experience, foster cross-sell and up-sell opportunities and increase agent productivity.

The Genesys Dynamic Contact Centre provides key customer service capabilities that are integrated and orchestrated to fulfil these objectives:

**The Genesys Dynamic Contact Centre**

The Genesys Dynamic Contact Centre provides integrated and orchestrated customer service capabilities to optimise the customer experience, foster cross-sell and up-sell opportunities and increase agent productivity and satisfaction.
• **Customer-Centric Routing** puts an end to customer frustration by ensuring that each interaction is routed to the ideal resource with the right information — no matter where that resource is located in your organisation. This helps you increase first-call resolution rates, meet variable call volumes with limited resources, increase cross-sell and up-sell rates and improve agent satisfaction.

• **Business Process Routing** integrates phone, e-mail and fax with back office business processes to improve agent productivity and customer service. Through this integration, contact centre resources can be leveraged as part of workflow processes such as processing a claim, fax, work order or other interaction. Ultimately, contact centre and back-office processes are streamlined, and agent utilisation is improved.

• **Workforce Management and Optimisation** are central to managing and optimising contact centre resources. It gives you control over your operations by allowing you to forecast and schedule agents dynamically based on traffic volumes and resource availability — across a multi-site, multi-channel environment.

• **Proactive Contact Management** provides a personalised customer interaction experience by allowing you to send relevant outbound notifications at any time. It also enables you to create, modify, run and report on voice and multimedia outbound campaigns for proactive customer contact and sustained communications.

• **Integrated Self-Service** provides a holistic caller experience whilst reducing handling times and service delivery costs. These capabilities provide touch-tone or speech-enabled access for conversational exchange to identify and resolve routine customer requests and transfer more complex calls to the best skilled agent.

• **Internet and Multimedia Integration** capabilities allow customers to interact with you the way they want to when they want to — through voice, e-mail, Web chat, Instant Messaging and even video calls.

• **Branch, Remote and Expert Integration** allow you to extend your contact centre to manage interactions based on business strategies and objectives. For example, higher valued clients might be sent to a highly skilled resource located within a branch office, rather than being sent to the general call centre.
• **The Virtual Contact Centre**, enabled by voice over IP (VoIP) technology, allows geographically dispersed contact centre agents to operate as a single, winning team. Regardless of where the contact centre agents are located, they can be called upon, as available, to ensure appropriate response levels and provide access to needed expertise.

• **Real-Time Offer Management** helps you capitalise on cross-sell and up-sell opportunities by providing the capabilities to recommend an offer to an agent in real time, based on a customer's background, history and interaction type.

• **Reporting and Analytics** allow you to assess your contact centre and customer service activity by providing real-time and historical views on the performance metrics of contact centre objectives and how these metrics change over time.

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**Genesys in Communications**

Genesys is the world’s No.1 contact centre software company. Global leaders in 28 industries answer the call with Genesys, including:

- 16 of the world's 20 largest telecommunications companies
- Over 40% of the Global 500
- 21 of the world’s 25 largest companies
- 63 of the world’s 100 largest companies

Below are just a few of the many examples of how communications companies in the EMEA region are benefiting from their Genesys solution.

**Eircom** is the largest provider of telecommunications services in Ireland, offering voice, data, wireless and mobile services. It has approximately 79% of the fixed line business and 15% of the mobile market. Using the GenesysVoice Platform, which incorporates speech recognition technology, eircom has raised recognition levels from 70% to 96%, including calls from mobile phones. Also, using Genesys Inbound Voice for intelligent call routing, the company routes more calls through self-service and has reduced call duration in its service centres.
Lattelekom is one of the largest telecommunications companies in Latvia, offering telecommunications, data transmission, Internet and contact centre services, integrated electronic communications and IT solutions. Lattelekom has leveraged the Genesys Customer Interaction Management Platform to run its five contact centres as one virtual, integrated contact centre. Further, with Genesys Workforce Management, agents are able to answer queries on up to 20 different service types.

Mobile Telesystems is the largest mobile phone operator in Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States. The company has a customer base of more than 60 million subscribers. Since implementing Genesys solutions, the company has seen a significant improvement in the delivery of enhanced customer care with both self-service and assisted agent support. At the same time, Mobile Telesystems has boosted first call resolution, reduced abandoned calls, centralised control and reporting and reduced costs.

O2 (a Telefónica company) offers international mobile phone roaming to 160 countries around the world and services 22 million customers across Europe. Using Genesys Workforce Management, O2 ensures that the right agents are in the right place at the right time. And, with the Genesys Customer Interaction Suite, the company efficiently directs calls across its three-site virtual contact centre network.

Telewest Broadband provides multi-channel television, telephone and Internet services to 1.8 million customers in the UK. Genesys solutions have allowed the company to have more proactive communications with its customers. In addition, new agent blending strategies have yielded significant efficiency gains; 85% of calls are now answered within 30 seconds, an increase of 45%.
TIM Hellas was the first company to launch mobile phone services in Greece. The company offers more than 200 value-added services to more than 2.5 million customers. Genesys solutions enable TIM Hellas to distinguish itself competitively in the market through quality service. The company has also boosted agent productivity and increased first call resolution rates.

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T-Mobile Czech Republic, a subsidiary of T-Mobile International, has more than five million customers. The subsidiary uses Genesys to obtain greater control over the deployment of its call centre and back-office workforces. T-Mobile Czech Republic has also improved management reporting with an integrated view of customer interactions.

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Case Study

Vodafone Greece, established in 1993, has led the local mobile communications market by pursuing a policy of innovation and investment.

As in the rest of Europe, the Greek telecommunications market has grown increasingly competitive over the past decade, with more and more companies striving to become the top service provider. To stay ahead in this maturing market, Vodafone realised that it needed to offer its customers a distinctive experience — a level of service that no other company could match.

"Our strategy is to differentiate by offering the best customer service. To do this we rely on technology, of course, but also on employing and empowering the right people — those who embody the Vodafone service philosophy," said Tasos Aktipis, CRM Systems Manager at Vodafone Greece.

Many of those people are Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) working in Vodafone’s five fully interconnected customer contact centres. The four centres in Athens total about 400 seats and the one in Thessaloniki (also known as Salonica) has almost 100 seats. Vodafone employs 620 CSRs in all, handling an average of 55,000 incoming contacts every day.
The number of daily outbound contacts is 3,000, although there can be an additional 10,000 due to surveys and collections.

The contact centres offer a broad range of services, from supplying customers with billing information and technical support to offering Help Desk services to internal staff on Human Resources and IT issues. In addition, some CSRs are responsible for outbound marketing campaigns and collection services, and Vodafone continues to enrich its offering by introducing new services such as its "Panorama" information line, which gives fixed and mobile network customers air, road and rail timetables and news about travel disruption, an entertainment guide, weather reports, and full listings for local businesses and services.

The Vodafone contact centres also offer a "Smartline" service to high profile companies throughout the region. This is essentially a managed contact centre service, providing Vodafone's own in-house expertise and experience to other organisations.

But none of this was possible before the Genesys implementation. The system in place at that time had such limited functionality, and imposed so many restrictions on the workforce, that it was impossible for Vodafone to handle a high volume of contacts, stay ahead of the competition through innovative new services, or provide valued services to the business community.

The Challenge

Based on the existing switches, the old solution had no integration with any other systems, such as the Siebel CRM application, and also generated a variety of other problems. For example, the company could not introduce intelligent routing or load balancing, or apply any segmentation criteria. What's more, the system offered no automated CTI (computer telephony integration) outbound capabilities, and no integrated IVR automation or self-service option.

Additionally, waiting times were unacceptably long and the abandoned call rate too high. Even when customers did get through, they often experienced quite limited service and call transfers between CSRs. To make matters worse, contact centre managers struggled to keep track of service levels or improve quality because the system offered only substandard reporting facilities.

Not surprisingly, the level of both customer churn and CSR turnover was higher than Vodafone liked. And with the competition for customers in Greece growing more intense, the company needed to find a way to differentiate itself. Vodafone wanted a technological solution that could improve service and also engender a change in processes and attitudes.
After evaluating the best technology solutions available, Vodafone Greece selected Genesys. "Because Genesys offers such an open platform, we didn’t have to change our existing computing environment or our IT strategy to accommodate the technology," said Aktipis. "We knew this solution would allow us to extend the best possible service to our customers as technology evolved in the future."

Vodafone's experience with IT implementations led the company to favour a phased-approach, which allowed for a smoother transition, quicker results and greater management over the process. Aktipis explains, "We started by introducing voice inbound, followed by skills-based routing on a single site. Then we migrated the solution to three additional sites, two in Athens and one in Salonica. Later, we implemented the outbound suite and about a year later, Genesys Voice Platform across 300 ports. Then we introduced the Genesys SIP Server on to a limited number of seats. This allows our CSR's to use both traditional telephony and the latest generation of IP phones, and call recording and monitoring tools."

The company has since implemented Genesys Workforce Management to help senior staff cope with the very complex Vodafone environment. "We had so many CSR's and services that our scheduling was, to be honest, very poor, with both over-staffing and under-staffing. Workforce Management helps resolve these issues by allowing us to optimise staffing levels."

**Results**

The Genesys installation has allowed Vodafone Greece to improve service and thrive in the marketplace. First-call resolution, a key consumer priority, has improved 32% and hold-times have been cut up to 40%.

Genesys delivered these benefits by allowing Vodafone to apply both skills-based routing and a segmentation strategy within its customer contact centre environment. For example, the system routes corporate customers to their dedicated service representative whilst other callers are routed according to their customer profile information or value. Segmenting by customer profile delivers the best service experience to customers and allows Vodafone to effectively cross-sell and up-sell relevant services based on customer account history. The company uses segmentation according to customer value — diamond, gold, silver and bronze — which helps to ensure diamond customers receive diamond service.

The improvement in first call resolution can be attributed, in part, to the fact that certain requests can be handled directly by Genesys Voice Platform. For example, customers can perform balance enquiries and activate certain services using the IVR menu. Genesys Voice Platform categorises and filters other calls, assigning them to the appropriate CSR. With Genesys, the CSR now sees "screen pops" of caller information directly on their desktop, which includes information from internal databases and the Vodafone intranet.
“Our CSRs now serve customers in much less time than before, and with more accuracy,” said Aktipis. “And because the CSRs only receive the calls they’re trained to answer, each one can become a specialist on certain subjects and be more efficient. This helps CSRs achieve greater job satisfaction and enjoy faster career progression. The advantage to Vodafone is that we’re now experiencing a lower turnover of contact centre staff.”

Genesys has also improved agent productivity on specific Vodafone services, such as “Through Connect” directory assistance, which connects Vodafone customers to each other. Before Genesys CTI, the CSRs had to search for customer contact details and then dial all the numbers manually. Genesys has automated the process. The CSR now has the right number instantly and simply pushes a button to start dialling.

Given the benefits that Genesys has brought to Vodafone Greece, it’s perhaps not surprising that the company is still investing in the technology. For example, it has already started to implement the Network Edition of Genesys Voice Platform along with network routing. Vodafone also plans to expand the SIP migration to all CSRs, migrate a G-plus Adapter to their Siebel Customer Relationship Management system, implement the new Genesys reporting suite, Info Mart, and introduce voice recognition, speech and text technologies into their IVR environment to improve customer self-service.

**Conclusion**

As this Strategy Guide has detailed, the communications industry currently faces its own unique set of contact centre challenges. Commoditisation and increasing price competition mean that customer service is increasingly important for winning new and retaining existing customers. In addition, communications companies should replace service-centric approaches to selling and, instead, develop cross-selling and up-selling strategies that maximise ARPU by understanding which service bundles meet the needs of specific target audiences. Further, cost cutting pressures should be balanced against escalating customer service expectations, a tough task amid increasing pressures to increase sales and decrease bad debt, manual processes that lack integration with front- and back-office systems, and complex technical support requirements.

To meet these contact centre challenges, communications companies can strive to transform their operations into dynamic contact centres that ensure an excellent customer experience across channels, increase customer loyalty, implement cross-sell and up-sell strategies based on customer relationships and promote agent productivity and satisfaction.
Additional Information

Genesys Worldwide
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.

For more information: visit us on the Web: www.genesyslab.com, or call +1 888 GENESYS (1-650-466-1100).

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