Maximizing Outbound Dialing Capabilities:

Achieve True Differentiation Through Your Outbound Contact Center Technology Platform.

Executive Summary

Developing two-way interactions to provide timely, important and actionable information to customers is a great way to develop personal customer relationships, build loyalty, drive business efficiencies, and significantly increase revenues and return on investment (ROI). Many leading outbound contact center service providers are implementing innovative outreach programs within their call center operations to reach out to customers in a timely fashion so that they can convert leads into sales; enabling the call center to take immediate advantage of a willing buyer. These innovative leaders are utilizing new, forward-thinking features of their contact center technology platforms to achieve new standards in outbound marketing. Implementing these new technology components into your technology platform has never been easier.

But what are these strategies and features? And how do they enable you to substantially differentiate you from your competitors? This white paper provides an overview of emerging strategies in proactive outreach, and it outlines key components of a successful outbound contact center technology platform. Along the way, we discuss how a leading call center software for Asterisk, Q-Suite 5.0, can set the stage for you to deliver targeted, relevant offers and services in order to build a delighted customer base, improve revenues and substantially improve the ROI of your contact center technology platform.

Dialer

One of the most important features to examine closely is what is often referred to as the 'Dialer'. The Dialer refers to the overall dialing capability of the system and should offer advanced dialing features capable of running multiple concurrent outbound campaigns in both Predictive and non-Predictive dialing modes. The flexibility of your dialer is a key component to creating successful outreach programs and the minute features of a high quality dialer can make the all the difference when reaching for true differentiation.

Predictive dialing should be self-pacing and efficient in order to increase agent talk time and avoid leaving agents idle while on the clock. The connect time between the caller going OFF-Hook and the agent getting the call should be in the order of milliseconds. Other key features to look for in a high-quality dialer are Concurrent Dialers, Individual Pacing Setup and Drop Rate Controls. Concurrent Dialers allow for multiple outbound campaigns to be operated simultaneously, without exceeding the total calling capacity of your setup. This important feature allows call center administrators flexibility in distributing agent resources. Individual

Pacing Setup allows for control of the call pacing for each of these concurrent campaigns and delivers maximum control to call center administrators. The Drop Rate Controls enable call centers operating in multiple countries to easily meet regulatory guidelines for all countries they may be calling. The term drop rate simply refers to the ratio of dropped calls to calls connected to a live agent. Finally, all good dialing algorithms are Self-Pacing with the ability to self adjust the rate of dialing to various factors, including wait-time, dropped call percentage, drop rate, and hit-rate. A self-pacing dialer keeps your outreach operations humming smoothly and requires little overview in order to minimize agent wait time between calls.

Indosoft clients utilize Q-Suite's predictive dialer, and its precision controls for outbound campaigns to maximize productivity. Its Concurrent Dialer, Individual Pacing Setup, Drop Rate Controls, and Self-Pacing algorithm with multiple concurrent dialers enable call center floor managers to achieve the dynamics required for profitability.

Enterprise-grade dialers deliver functionality beyond predictive dialing. For robust control of dialing, and the resulting control over customer interactions, seek a dialer capable of delivering Preview Dialing and Progressive Dialing. Preview Dialing allows agents to review the lead before dialing, with the option to not dial the number but schedule a call for a later time. This feature is useful for targeted, personal outreach programs on a small scale. Progressive Dialing is a 1:1 dialing mode where the agent has no control over whether a number is dialed or not, but allows the agent to terminate each call. To achieve maximum calling flexibility, ensure that both Preview Dialing and Progressive Dialing modes are capable of running concurrently with Predictive Dialing mode, a feature Q-Suite delivers out-of-the-box.

Key Dialer Features:

- Predictive Dialing
  - Concurrent Dialing
  - Individual Pacing
  - Drop Rate Controls
  - Self-Pacing
- Preview Dialing
- Progressive Dialing
- Auto Dialing

Auto Dialing is another bundled component and Q-Suite and is a must have component of any outbound contact center technology platform. Auto Dialing enables lists to be called and then handled through IVR automation. Emerging trends are crafting a standard of using relevant data and information from business systems to provide the customer with the ability to quickly and easily take a diverse range of immediate actions. The response can be handled automatically, without agent intervention or, if the interaction is more complex or sensitive in nature, the customer can be directed at any point during the contact to a live agent to complete the customer interaction. In essence, Auto Dialing is an automated self-service setup that makes frequent interactions extremely economically feasible, while increasing the efficiency and overall effectiveness of your outreach programs.

Unlike traditional phone systems, Q-Suite utilizes Asterisk, a leading hybrid telephony platform, which provides a qualitative advantage in that its IVR configurations are fully customizable and incredibly versatile. This unique capability, inherent to Asterisk, delivers the ability to fully control the handling and processing of calls, regardless of complexity. The flexibility and power

of Q-Suite's IVR builder, also called a Dialplan Builder, emerge from its unique ability to develop call flow and auto-attendant capabilities. Asterisk Dialplan is a very versatile and unique structure based on contexts, extensions, priorities, applications and a powerful syntax to construct call handling instructions. As you can clearly visualize, this is a programming language of its own, yet Q-Suite Dialplan Builder provides all the controls through an easy-to-use Graphical User Interface (GUI). The resulting ease-of-management allows call center administrators to fully control and manage customer interactions, whether they are through an automated or live agent. This combined power of software and telecommunication functionality unleashes new opportunities for many outreach service providers.

CRM Integration & Script Builder

Agents rely upon scripts to provide consistent customer interactions. However, the growing demand for handling increasingly diverse and complex customer interaction has become a challenge for contact centers. The agent's ability to provide real-time responses and rapid resolutions are dependent upon the capabilities of the call center software. This requires tools and processes that will optimize agent performance without sacrificing customer experiences. As a result, the need for a powerful scripting tool has become increasingly important to contact centers around the globe.

Key Script Builder Features:

- Custom Variables
- Text Blocks with Embedded Variables
- Post to URL
- External Links with Command Line Parameters
- URL in I-Frame or Separate Window
- Static Web Pages
- Conditional Display
- Branching to Another Page
- Start and Stop Voice Recording
- Transfers (Blind, Conference & Consultative)

So, what enables a script builder to be capable of delivering the power you demand? There are a number of key features to source in any script builder. These include the ability to insert Custom Variables directly into the script. Delivering the ability to create, display and store values in Custom Variables, including TEXT, NUMBER, LOV (List Of Values), and more, should be a core component of your script builder.

Another prerequisite feature to obtain is the ability to create Text Blocks with inline variables, as it can be utilized to display embedded variables like Agent Name, Date or other call record or custom variables whose values have been preloaded. Innovative users of Q-Suite utilize this tool to generate scripts with embedded inline data that is specific to the customer in order to make targeted, personal interactions a reality.

Post To URL is a feature of Q-Suite's script builder that provides the capability to upload or post information real-time from the agent script to a website or an application enabled to receive it. This immediate update allows for improved response and better productivity. Embedding a URL within a Script I-Frame or in a separate window should also be standard to your script builder. Q-Suite allows you to integrate web applications, such as a web-enabled CRM, directly into the

script. Again, this provides all the resources an agent requires in a controlled environment. A good script builder, such as that of Q-Suite, will also be able to support Static Web Pages in order to link display FAQs, maps and other static information.

Another especially important feature of a high-quality script builder is the ability to Display Data Conditionally. Every component within the script can have conditions attached before displaying it, which are typically responses to previous questions, and enables you to build smooth flowing scripts capable of branching in endless directions. This provides the unique ability to create highly personal customer interactions. This feature is fully supported in Q-Suite.

Finally, many contact centers have clients that utilize an evolved business application. The call center's ability to support these advanced applications is important, and they rely upon their contact center technology platform to be able to support full Computer Telephony Integration (CTI). Users of Q-Suite utilize its advanced set of APIs to fully embed the call center features into evolved business applications. APIs for CTI telephony include socket and .NET API for integrating session management and telephony session control. Q-Suite's XML API for database integration enables unified reporting on agent performance and overall call center performance.

In summation, integrating business applications into the agent screen enables your call centers to follow well laid out processes for managing the interaction between an agent and the customer. Unlike contact center technology platforms requiring lengthy and costly developments to support these common points of integration, Q-Suite enables many of these integrations from within the easy-to-use GUI powering its Script Builder. Furthermore, Q-Suite has an open architecture system, which allows easy integration to other software in the back-end for processing. When all is said and done, Q-Suite Script Builder is one of the most powerful scripting tools available with any call center software and will be one of the biggest differentiators of call centers in recent times.

Campaigns

Campaigns are the great unifier of outbound contact centers. The ability to unify all aspects of dialing like customer information, agent interaction, phone-lists, scripts and wrap-up under a single, easy-to-manage umbrella is important for operational efficiency. Industry leaders are continually searching for campaign management solutions that deliver the maximum amount of flexibility and control to their call center administrators.

Effective Campaign Management equips call centers with the agility necessary to make on-the-spot adjustments to calling. The ability to include custom variables within any list allows call centers to load

Campaign Highlights:

- Unique Caller ID and Name per List/Record
- Control Dialer per Campaign
- Assign Scripts
- Assign Multiple Lists
- Create Unique Dispositions
- Perform Transfers
- Control Call Record Display
- Specify Trunks and Patterns

lists with prior data to relate to the Customer. Associating multiple lists with a single campaign is also important, as is list mobility, or the ability to move lists from one campaign to another.

Other features common to quality campaign management is an easy to use interface that allows call center administrators to quickly customize the Caller ID and Name to per record or per list or per campaign granularity.

List Management

Contact centers require absolute control over the records they can call, as well as the ability to make contact through any one of multiple phone numbers associated with a customer. Also important is the ability to dial hot leads as soon as they come in. Floor managers want to control the leads that can be called at any given time based on other business criteria. Q-Suite provides the required flexibility to handle each of the above requirements right out-of-the-box. The Dial-able check can be customized to run in the background for groups of leads or can be used to check every individual lead before dialing them again. Hot lead insertion can be integrated with Web-sites to drive traffic into the dialer that will go on the

List Management Features:

- Multiple Concurrent Lists

- Insert Hot leads on top

- Multiple phone numbers

- Associate multiple phone records with Account id

- Dial-able check

very top of the dialer. Having multiple lists allows the contact center to pause or retire lists based on business criteria to ensure that the call center floor. Q-Suite also aptly unifies its robust script builder options with campaign management by allowing custom scripts to be assigned to campaigns or individual lists within a campaign in order to further enable personal customer interactions.

Agents

The trends defining this mature industry are quickly changing, and forward-thinking, innovative organizations are touting new technologies as the primary drivers of healthy ROI. Finding ways of distributing costly components of the daily call center operations have never been easier.

Q-Suite brings tremendous flexibility in controlling large cost elements of the contact center. Distributed operations, or operations where the call center infrastructure is consolidated in an easy to manage location and the agents are capable of working from altogether different geographic locations, enable significant cost reductions for the contact center. For example, organizations can safely consolidate their software and supporting hardware in a data center in one location while employing agents in different locations to use the software when servicing calls. This ability to utilize distributed agents is revolutionizing the contact center industry.

In terms of agent features, Q-Suite delivers the maximum amount of flexibility to call centers seeking agility and an improved bottom line. Q-Suite supports Free Seating, allowing agents to sit in any available agent seat and use the computer and phone in the desk to login. This enables flexibility within your call center. Contact centers sometimes utilize a mix of designated seating and free seating.

Options with agent phones go hand in hand with agent location and notification options. Q-Suite allows agent phones to be an extension within the PBX (phone system) of the call center, or they can belong to an external phone system. Internal phones could be IP phones, Softphone or regular POTs phones behind a PBX. Most new generation phone systems like Asterisk, the underlying telephony platform of Q-Suite, offer VoIP capability and seamless integration of VoIP with older telephone technologies. Within the Local Area Network (LAN), IP phones and Softphones offer greater flexibility and do away with telephone wiring and clutter.

Quality assurance is a function of any high-quality contact center technology platform. New generation telephony platforms offer a distinct advantage in that they deliver built-in call recording and monitoring features. Previously, costly CTI developments were required to achieve these features, but Q-Suite's built-in features deliver immediate and significant cost savings. Commonly used quality monitoring tools available in Q-Suite include Listen to Agents, Whisper, and Barge.

Reporting

Being able to see deep into your daily operations is clearly an extremely important factor to achieving operational leanness. Q-Suite offers a complete set of reports and an open database to integrate to other reporting engines. Its Agent Performance report allows for reporting on the time spent by an agent on all agent states, including custom DND states. It is compiled and presented as a time profile for every session. Call dispositions provide an indication of the conversion rate for an agent. Campaign and List Performance is an indicator of how well the campaigns and lists are performing. It provides metrics on the quality of leads. Supervisor Dashboards and Wallboards provide call center administrators with a view of the call center performance broken down by agent and campaign performances. Wallboards allow supervisors a bird-eye view of the floor performance. Since all these screens are Web reports, it provides an across the board view for management. Periodic and Historical Reporting can be scheduled and emailed automatically to any distribution list.

A Final Word

The paradigm shift in technology has opened an unprecedented opportunity to enhance your call center platform, lower your cost and provide much more functionality. There has been never such an opportunity to compete and grow with industry leaders. In order to take full advantage of what cutting edge technology can deliver, a close analysis of Asterisk and Q-Suite should remain central to your search for a next-generation contact center technology platform.

There are a number of resources to help you learn about the benefits of Asterisk. In addition to the reference materials available at www.indosoft.com, you can find valuable information here:

Asterisk Website
www.asterisk.org

Commercial Asterisk Support
www.digium.com

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About Indosoft

Indosoft is a global provider of call center software for Asterisk. It has been providing call center solutions to medium and large contact centers around the world for over nine years. It also licenses its ACD for Asterisk with .NET and socket library to enterprises utilizing Asterisk in their product line. Indosoft has been making available Q-Suite ACD for private label contact center technology solutions.
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