

Setting up Cloud Contact Center using Asterisk

Cost Effective Next-Generation Contact Center Technology Platform

It has been an exciting time for the contact center industry with non-stop innovation and evolution in technology and telecommunications. Globalization driven growth in the last decade has created a shift from 'bricks and mortars' to 'clicks and online'. This has tremendously increased the technological demands on modern day contact centers. We often hear terms like "next generation" and "Cloud" to describe innovation and advancement in customer contact services. Technology evolution is often a by-product of the demands placed by users to enhance productivity, offer flexibility and reduce the overall cost of acquisition and operation of contact centers. This white paper will provide an insight into the technological innovations driving the contact center industry and a cost effective way to build out powerful Cloud Contact Centers using Asterisk.

For most call centers, the rapid changes in telecommunications technology has brought critical opportunities – opportunities to make significant improvements in productivity while greatly reducing operating costs. Internet Protocol (IP) based contact center

“A direct benefit of utilizing an Asterisk based contact center technology platform is the ability to avoid proprietary equipment lock-in.”

technology platforms have evolved to the point that highly reliable and full-featured systems are available to businesses of all sizes. The widespread use of VoIP can be seen daily (we are all familiar with the likes of Skype). However, the availability of such high-grade, quality software is not limited to simply placing and receiving calls. Next-generation contact center ACD software, capable of supporting both TDM and VoIP, is available

and is delivering groundbreaking advancements to call centers around the world. Many of these advances are due to the superiority of the telephony platform supporting the next-generation software. For example, the use of Asterisk, the leading powerhouse of IP PBX systems and VoIP gateways, is so pervasive that it can be considered omnipresent. Asterisk has experienced universal acceptance and is a market leader in delivering an enterprise-grade telephony platform at a fraction of the cost compared to the available proprietary telephony systems.

Technology managers now have access to this sophisticated and leading telephony platform for their contact centers. It is a great time to build out a cost effective, sophisticated, next-generation contact center technology platform. The right telephony platform with the right contact center ACD and Dialer software will deliver the competitive edge you require. This white paper will provide insight into the key components of a successful Cloud contact center platform. Along the way, we will introduce a leading and

unique ACD and Dialer software for contact centers, Q-Suite, which will allow you to compete head-to-head at a fraction of the cost.

Asterisk as your PBX

“Technology Changes in Telecom and Infrastructure are presenting opportunities to make significant improvements in productivity while greatly reducing operating costs.”

Telephony switch (PBX) and its accessories are a large portion of the initial cost of setting up a packaged proprietary contact center technology solution. It is a vital component of a contact center controlling the switching and connectivity to the outside world. The choice of PBX will have profound implications for the overall deployment success of the contact center platform. One of the best known hybrid PBX telephone switches is Asterisk and it will surely qualify as the top of the line next generation PBX for many reasons. In Asterisk, you have the most powerful open source hybrid telephone switch tested by millions of users worldwide. Most proprietary contact center telephone switch providers quite often have their internal teams playing “catch up” to keep their legacy CTI up to date, whether it is adding features or enabling cutting edge VoIP migration. Asterisk, on the other hand, provides all the PBX functionality independent of the underlying telecommunications connectivity, be it TDM (PRI E1/T1) or VoIP (SIP/IAX). It also provides seamless integration of the underlying VoIP and TDM connectivity. Asterisk comes with an incredible set of features and enormous flexibility and is commercially well supported by Digium.

There are other benefits in migrating to Asterisk. It is designed to work in commodity hardware, including Dell and HP. Again; there are multiple benefits to this feature. The most direct benefit is that you can easily avoid proprietary equipment lock-in by utilizing a proven Asterisk based contact center technology platform. Another benefit is ease of scale. When an Asterisk server reaches its processing limit, additional Asterisk servers can be added to scale with the growth of the call center. With this in mind, the platform can also be architected to be redundant.

Cloud Setup

While setting up a contact center platform you have the option of a premise-based deployment or utilizing a Data Center. Setting up operations in a reliable data center provides instant scalability and does away with the need for large capital investment and capacity planning. Furthermore, infrastructure and bandwidth have become more powerful and reliable, at the same time less expensive. The other advantage of deploying in the Cloud (data center) is the option of choosing VoIP and SIP for your Telco connectivity. These options provide an opportunity to scale on-demand. Once you identify an ACD and Dialer engine to go with your Asterisk based contact center platform, you have opened an unprecedented opportunity to move to a distributed cloud based contact center platform with far superior capabilities at much lower cost.

Q-Suite: Advanced Contact Center Software for Asterisk

Q-Suite is a robust, feature-rich and scalable multi-tenant contact center software for Asterisk and can be deployed for both hosted and premise-based solutions for medium and large call centers. Inbound call centers will appreciate Q-Suite's unique ACD, which provides Skills Based Routing, Queue Prioritization, Virtual/Personal Queues, Agent Hot-Desking and Customizable IVR. Outbound call centers will benefit from Q-Suite's efficient self-pacing predictive dialer capable of running multiple concurrent outbound dialing campaigns. Q-Suite's Script Builder and Dialplan Builder tools are easy to manage and meet the most complex call center software requirements.

Q-Suite offers all the important features required for your contact center, right 'out-of-the-box'. It provides a customizable Web interface for Agents as well as a .NET based Native Windows client. It offers API for CTI Integration to your custom applications and CRM. It comes with a sophisticated ACD capable of queue prioritization and skills based routing. Agents can work in blended mode on both inbound services and outbound calling campaigns.

The Script building tool within Q-Suite is powerful enough to satisfy the requirements of most inbound and outbound contact centers. The Script Builder comes with an array of drag and drop tools to develop powerful scripts that meet the demands of the most sophisticated script building requirements.

Cradle to grave reporting is an intrinsic component of the call center software CDR. There is detailed reporting on Agent productivity, Queue and Agent Statistics, Performance reporting, Wallboards and other necessary metrics to manage the operations of your contact center. Voice recording and Listening are built into the standard feature set of the call center software.

Scaling is an important consideration when selecting a contact center technology platform. Scalable to multiple Asterisk servers, Q-Suite allows for easy expansion for future growth while avoiding proprietary equipment lock-in. With .NET and socket interface libraries, Q-Suite enables medium and large call centers to easily integrate into other products requiring CTI, such as your CRM.

Multi-tenant Call Center Software, Q-Suite provides the following features:

Q-Suite Product Features Matrix	
Inbound Features	Q-Suite 5.5
ACD with Skills Based Routing & Queue Prioritization	✓
GUI IVR Setup	✓
GUI Dialplan Builder	✓
GUI Script Builder	✓
Hot-Desking, On/Off Hook Agents	✓
Outbound Features	Q-Suite 5.5
Predictive Dialing	✓
GUI Script Builder	✓
Campaign & List Management	✓
Do-Not-Call Compliance	✓
General Features	Q-Suite 5.5
TDM & VoIP Connectivity	✓
Multi-tenant	✓
Real-time Reporting	✓
Historical Reporting	✓
Voice Recording	✓
Quality Monitoring	✓
Web Agent Interface and Native Windows Client	✓
API for CTI Integration (.NET and Socket)	✓
Asterisk PBX with Voicemail	✓
Hosted & Premise Based Installs	✓
High Availability for Redundancy	✓
Mid-call Recovery for Fail-over	✓
Open Access and Full Knowledge Transfer	✓
Unique Support	✓
Workforce Management Integration	✓
On-demand Scaling	✓
Real-time and Near-time reporting	✓

A Final Word

The paradigm shift in technology has opened an unprecedented opportunity to enhance your contact center platform, lower your cost and add functionality. There has never been 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 contact center software for Asterisk. It has been providing call center solutions to medium and large contact centers around the world for over ten 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.

Visit www.indosoft.com.