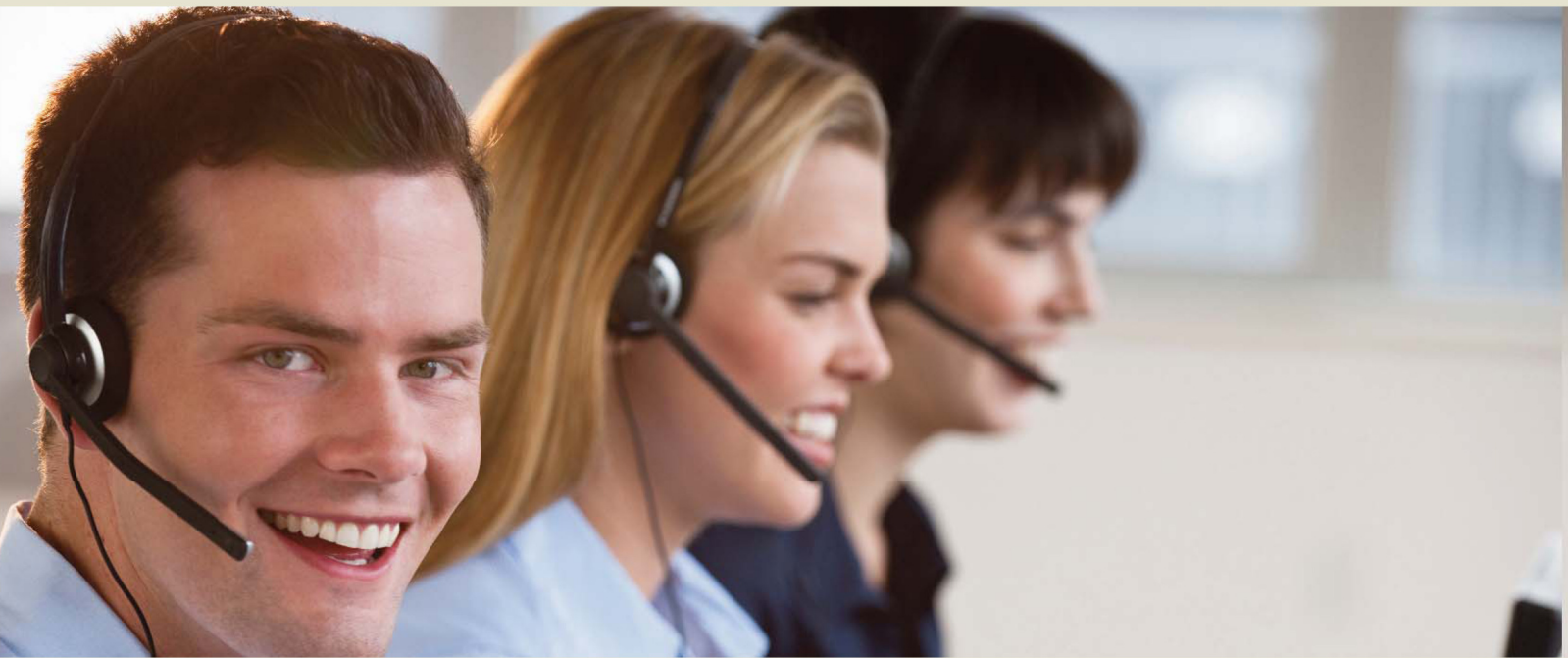


A FROST & SULLIVAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Can Your Center Keep Up With the Changes?

Manage the avalanche of complexity and still control costs



A Frost & Sullivan Executive Summary in Collaboration with:



**With the dramatic rise in technology in the past 10 years**—be it in social media, analytics or Web-based networks—contact centers are at a disadvantage when it comes to implementing new tools in the workplace. Increasingly Internet-savvy customers create a greater demand for quicker and simpler answers to their questions. This makes the need for centers to use the latest technology paramount.

Although the complexities of implementing technology into call centers are manifold, doing so is crucial to keeping up with competitors and increasing revenue. Using newer tools to better customer service is only one part of keeping up with the complexities. Re-organizing call center infrastructure and controlling activity in addition to using new technology will improve the customer experience overall.



### **I. The Call Center Environment is Increasingly Complex**

- a. The pace of running a call center has increased, and customers expect better and faster responses to their needs.
- b. Greater flexibility is needed for quicker response time and better communication between manager and agent.
- c. Conflicting interests between manager and staff leads to frustration and a lack of unified direction of the center.
- d. Tensions between stakeholders and centers are common.
- e. Understanding barriers helps to overcome the chaos in call centers.
- f. To solve complexity centers must choose tools that emphasize usability and simplicity.

### **II. Four Challenge Areas Affecting Call Centers**

- a. *Contact Center versus Enterprise:* They each share common goals and values, but measure success differently. In the contact center, success is measured by the number of calls and handle-time; enterprise measures success in revenue and profits. Both see the strategic need to address customer demands, but enterprise expects the center to speak the language of business though they are only trained to handle customers. This causes tension between stakeholders and centers.
- b. *Contact Center versus Agent Staff:* Millennial agents and older agents are at different levels when it comes to technology savvy. Younger agents utilize social media and better identify with impatient customers that want quick answers. Older agents have the necessary call center experience, but are out of the loop when it comes to technology channels. Training older agents to use technology and work at a quicker pace will benefit the customer.

- c. *Contact Center versus the Customer*: the greatest source of complexity. Customers have access to an infinite amount of information on the Internet, and have done research themselves prior to calling centers with questions. As a result, they ask more questions and expect more from the call center. Most centers have trouble handling disconnect between what customers feel they deserve in terms of service, and the help with which agents can provide them.
- d. *Contact Center versus Itself*: Replacing the traditional contact center with ones that are more fluid is a great challenge. Outsourcing is one way to do this, but it often leads to trouble with controlling interaction, measuring activity and revenue. At-home agents working away from centers create disconnect with customers, and communication ultimately suffers. There are too many variables to accurately measure customer care performance.

### III. Two kinds of centers

- a. *Cost-focused and Conservative*: This type of center is slow to change, and cost control is its most important goal. New technology is adopted only when it is tried and true, and there is a tendency for having a difficult relationship with IT and marketing.
- b. *Forward-looking and Flexible*: This center exhibits speed of action and flexibility in the face of changing business conditions. It uses the best and most innovative tools, understands what drives the business and provides services to support it.

### IV. Key Takeaways

- a. Both centers work, but you want flexibility, simplicity and workplace optimization.
- b. Training older agents on the latest in technology will create a faster response-time and increase the quality of customer service.
- c. Take advantage of the latest in Web-based technology.
- d. Intelligence about the value of operations, insight into customers, and ability to work with demanding insiders and outsiders is necessary.
- e. Eliminate operational complexity by organizing workforce infrastructure. The combination of tools for scheduling, performance evaluation, analysis, training and coaching touches every aspect of the problem. Tracking agents' skills and readiness, and interdepartmental reporting are important for reviewing customer service quality.
- f. To beat complexity and master change, by having a big-picture view of the customer that goes beyond latest call status.
- g. Make sure employees have views into data that are appropriate to their different roles.

## Case Study I: Republic Services

### I. Republic Services

- a. A leading provider of solid waste collection and transfer.
  - i. \$8.1 billion in annual revenue
  - ii. \$19.5 billion total assets
  - iii. 348 hauling companies
  - iv. 204 transfer stations
  - v. 76 recycling plants
  - vi. 193 operating landfills



- b. Has had experience with call center challenges and revamped its customer service network to improve the overall customer service experience.

### II. Pin-pointing the Challenges

- a. Prior to reorganizing infrastructure, Republic Services was decentralized with many call centers and non-standard metrics. Measuring and controlling activity was impossible, and training was limited and non-standard. Cost-consciousness took precedence over quality. Customer service quality was low.

### III. Addressing the Problems with Appropriate Solutions

To better customer service, the company:

- a. Focused on the contact centers and developed a standardization of business processes which gave agents a solid set of answers to customers' questions, creating continuity for helping clients.
- b. Started rating agents and keeping track of activity to check on customer service quality.
- c. Recorded agents' interactions with customers, making it easier for issues to be addressed, problems to be corrected and assessments to be made.
- d. Implemented technology to better help the customer. Embraced social media, chat, Web interaction and customer online portals.

#### IV. Results: Measuring Success

- a. Implementing these changes increased revenue, customer service quality and standardized all call centers.
- b. Customers now receive the same quality of service at any call center they contact.



#### Case Study II: Calabrio

##### I. Contact Center Technology Challenges

- a. *Outdated technology:* The tools many companies currently use are too complex to do anything but the status quo and making modifications. Functions are not stream-lined, progress is limited and costly, from an administrative standpoint. Complexity makes it difficult to keep pace.
- b. *Outdated capabilities:* Out-of-date technology for checking progress of handled calls doesn't promote collaboration or new directions such as opening up new channels, sites and analytics.

##### II. Solutions to the Four Challenge Areas

- a. *Contact Center versus Enterprise:* Support the contact center's role in success. It has a wealth of data and value to be shared to help the overall business thrive. The call center does not only measure success in terms of how it handles calls, so it should not be viewed as a limited entity.
- b. *Contact Center versus Agent Staff:* Research has shown that the millennial generation wants to be an active participant in their company's success. They want feedback, criticism and direction immediately. Doing yearly assessments of agents is not enough; they should be done on the spot as needed. Give them information about their performance and some control over their own destiny. They'll be happier and more loyal which will lead to better service, and empower the agent.
- c. *Contact Center versus the Customer:* Speak to them in their language—social media makes communication faster and more accessible. Don't deny the reality that customers need to have the

option of contacting the centers via the Web. Agents will have to learn multichannel communications, but it is worth the time and training.

- d. *Contact center versus itself:* To keep pace and maintain a competitive advantage, you need to fight against the way things have always been done. Keep up with the mounting complexity by following social media and the trends. Use technology to support your growth and take care to make sure it does not hinder it.

## Conclusion

The next generation of customers and agents are flexible, mobile and social. To maximize workforce optimization, there needs to be a utilization of social media tools and other technologies. Understanding the various complexities that occur in contact centers is crucial to managing them. Implementing the appropriate steps and solutions will help your contact center function to the best of its abilities.

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### ABOUT REPUBLIC SERVICES, INC.

Republic Services, Inc. is a leading provider of services in the domestic, non-hazardous solid waste industry. It provides non-hazardous solid waste collection services for commercial, industrial, municipal and residential customers in 40 states and Puerto Rico. Learn more at [www.alliedwaste.com](http://www.alliedwaste.com)

### ABOUT CALABRIO

Calabrio is a leading provider of contact center workforce optimization software. Calabrio redefines workforce optimization with products that are truly integrated, intuitive, flexible and hassle free. Learn more at [www.calabrio.com](http://www.calabrio.com)

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