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6 Ways To Immediately Improve Your Customer Experience

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Do you know how many customer calls came into your company yesterday? On average, how long did callers have to wait before speaking with one of your employees? Overall, how would you rate your customer experience with your staff?

If you can't answer these questions, you don't have good visibility.

At Broadview Networks, we understand that while every business doesn't have a call center, every business still needs tools to effectively manage customers' and prospective customers' calls and employee performance. That's why we designed OfficeSuite© ACD -- in order to provide small- to mid-sized businesses (SMBs) with enterprise-grade call center tools. Tools that used to cost thousands or more to buy and deploy are now available on a per-seat, per-month basis and can be easily managed in the cloud.

Implementing these tools will give you better visibility into how your company handles customer and prospective customer phone calls, which will enable you to improve employee performance and increase customer satisfaction.

Here are 6 ways that an ACD system can immediately improve your customer experience.

1   *IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS WITH CUSTOMERS AND PROSPECTS*

Let's face it: nobody likes waiting on hold, no matter how long. If one of your customers or prospects needs help, you need to get it to them, fast. OfficeSuite© ACD helps your organization ensure that calls are answered in a timely fashion and routed to the correct person the first time. It enables your company to service more callers with greater efficiency without having to rely on voicemail. By efficiently delegating each call to the right employee, you're signaling to your callers that you value their time.

The Auto Attendant in OfficeSuite© allows callers to self-select the kind of assistance they need; it then puts them in the right call queue so that they speak with the appropriate person on your team. This ensures your callers won't be transferred to different people numerous times until they finally get help. By self-selecting, callers get automatically funneled to the correct employee.

Using ACD not only tailors the experience for each caller, but it also encourages them to wait patiently. Playing music, promoting special offers, or playing recorded FAQs while callers are waiting keeps them occupied and entertained. And perhaps their question was answered by the FAQs, which means you were able to get them assistance even faster than they expected. We will talk about Hold Treatments (music, messages, and more) and how they can transform the customer experience later in the paper.

Every business has unique needs, just like all your callers have unique needs. OfficeSuite© ACD lets you tweak and test call routing designs in order to optimize the customer experience, which ultimately leads to increased customer satisfaction. ACD also offers more advanced routing capabilities which include the ability to route calls differently based on company schedules, calls currently in Queue and caller's phone numbers. If you decide you want your caller's to be able to press a digit to escape a prompt ACD has that flexibility as well.

Whether callers need sales or support assistance, it's still all about time. If they're calling for sales assistance regarding a certain product or service, then they are interested in buying. Instead of dumping callers into voicemail and calling them back later, you need to strike while it's hot. If you wait to call a customer or prospect back, they will most likely move onto something else. Even worse, they might call one of your competitors and you will lose their business. With ACD, the probability of your employees closing a deal is much higher because you're assisting callers at just the right time. Your customers and prospects will notice and appreciate this, which means the chances of them doing more business with your organization are also higher.

The same mantra of 'striking while it's hot' is also applicable to callers who need support assistance. In fact, it's even more important to get these types of callers help in a timely fashion. No matter what your organization sells - be it products, services or a combination of both - it's inevitable that a customer will have questions or need help resolving an issue. The faster you help them, the happier they'll be. And happy customers stay loyal, purchase more products or services from your company, and, most importantly, they tell others about you. If callers have a positive experience with your organization over the phone, there is a higher probability that they will recommend your company to their friends, family and colleagues. As everyone knows, word-of-mouth advertising is the most powerful form because it contains inherent credibility.

If your organization is primarily service-oriented, then it's important that you strive to solve a caller's issue the first time – this is what's known as first call resolution. With an ACD solution, you can dramatically increase the probability of first call resolution.

2 BETTER VISIBILITY INTO OPERATIONS

If you don't have an ACD platform, then you're essentially guessing at how well calls are being handled by your employees. We give you the tools that allow you to gain insight into your team members' performance; use the information to make better decisions and better manage your business.

OfficeSuite© ACD contains real-time, web-based dashboards that give you the insight you need. Key statistics are visually displayed in 3-D graphs so that you can quickly glance at the portal to get a snapshot of how well calls are being handled at that very moment. By viewing the dashboards in OfficeSuite© ACD's management portal, you can instantly see important data such as:

▶ *How many calls are waiting in queue*
▶ *What is the longest time someone has been on hold*
▶ *How much time employees are spending with each caller*

While reports enable you to look back over time to identify trends, dashboards show you real-time statistics, which enables you to see details on calls that are taking place at the exact moment you log into the portal. By seeing what's happening in real-time, you can make adjustments to queues and employees as necessary. By viewing the reports, you can see what has happened in the past so that you're better prepared to handle calls in the future.

If you want more insight into a particular queue or staff member, you can search for recorded calls based on a variety of criteria. If you want to share the information in the reports with other people in your company, you can export the data into an Excel spreadsheet and email it. Just a few clicks and you're able to share pertinent data with the rest of your team. And since the management portal is web-based, you can

see what's taking place in your call queues from anywhere you have an Internet connection.

The ability to record calls and evaluate employees gives you insight into their performance. We make it very easy to listen to and evaluate recorded calls; in the call details report, simply click on the call to listen to it. Perhaps you discover that one of your employees is being rude to callers and is negatively impacting your business. Perhaps another employee is very pleasant and helpful when speaking to your callers. You can take the best and worst examples of calls, add them to your audio library, and use them for training and collective learning amongst your team.

OfficeSuite© ACD's Call Recording and Employee Evaluation tools give you better visibility into each employee's performance, which you can use in reviews to help your staff improve their skills. We will discuss Call Recording and Evaluation Tools in more detail under Benefit 6: Tools for Management.

3 *INCREASED ADAPTABILITY, FLEXIBILITY, AND MOBILITY*

The key to remaining competitive in today's fast-paced marketplace is having the ability to change business processes at a moment's notice. OfficeSuite© ACD allows you to make real-time changes to how calls are handled, which increases your adaptability. We make it easy and affordable to add and remove seats as needed and customize the messages callers hear while they're on hold, which increases your flexibility. And since the management portal is web-based, you can access the system from anywhere via the Internet, which increases your mobility.

Adaptability

OfficeSuite© ACD enables your organization to adapt to constantly shifting business needs by making real-time changes to your voice queues. With a few simple clicks within the web portal, you can instantly add or remove staff from various queues.

Real-world example:
When Hurricane Irene hit the Northeast, the call volume in your company's support queue spiked. Instead of placing your customers on hold indefinitely while your sales employees sat idly watching the clock, you could have logged into the portal and moved sales employees over to the support queue. That would have offloaded your overwhelmed support employees and gotten your customers the help they needed quickly.

Flexibility

Being able to scale on demand is necessary to ensure your company can handle increases in call volume. If your business experiences seasonal changes in call volume or your call volume simply increases, it's easy to add extra seats to your ACD platform as you hire additional employees. It's also cost-effective since adding extra seats does not require you to buy any hardware or hire additional IT staff.

OfficeSuite© ACD's customizable Hold Treatments can help boost your sales by playing specific messages in accordance with your company's marketing efforts. For example, if you're running a special promotion one week, you can call into the ACD system on your phone, record the appropriate message, click save, and then add it to your audio library.

Hold Treatments give you the ability to target the right customers and prospects for each marketing campaign. Let's say you're running a special promotion on Product

A. Simply record and add the appropriate Hold Treatment to your voice queue, and every person who calls will hear the targeted marketing message. While your callers are waiting for an employee, they are a captive audience -- taking advantage of this enables you to increase sales by up-selling and cross-selling. You can change Hold Treatments as often as you like, so if you wanted to play a different marketing message every day or even every hour, you could! You also have complete flexibility over the sequence of Hold Treatments; you can instantly change the order in which callers hear the Hold Treatments by simply dragging and dropping them within the portal. Whether it's promoting a special offer, playing music, or answering FAQs, Hold Treatments give you complete flexibility to alter the messages your callers hear.

Mobility

Do you want to know how calls are being handled even when you're not in the office? Our web-based portal is accessible from anywhere via an Internet connection, so you can get a pulse on how well your team is handling calls from anywhere and at any time.

With OfficeSuite© ACD, you can send calls anywhere, even to a cell phone. In fact, OfficeSuite© ACD lets you send calls to any phone, whether it's an office phone, home phone, or mobile device. This enables you to employ remote workers, which often reduces your costs.

Disaster Avoidance

Not only will OfficeSuite© ACD increase your company's mobility, but it will also enable you to continue servicing customers even when employees can't make it to the office due to inclement weather, natural disaster, or other emergency. Your customers and prospects will not remember why they could not get through to your staff; they will
only remember that they couldn't. The importance of keeping the lines of communication open cannot be underestimated. OfficeSuite© ACD enables your business to keep helping customers no matter what situation prevents your employees from making it to the office.

4 PROFESSIONAL COMPANY IMAGE AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE

Perception is reality, so as an SMB you can use that to your advantage. OfficeSuite© ACD allows you to project a professional image – one that gives your customers the perception of a larger corporation.

As discussed previously, customizable Hold Treatments enable businesses of any size to tailor the messages callers hear while waiting to speak with an employee. These can be used to answer FAQs, cross-sell other products or services, or simply to entertain callers while they're waiting for the next available employee.

How do we make a professional company image affordable? Our solution delivers the call center features of PBX and stand-alone ACD systems without the expense of on-site equipment or additional IT support. Premise-based systems, such as PBXs (Private Branch Exchanges) can cost tens of thousands of dollars to implement. In addition, ACD software might come with a PBX system, but it typically costs extra. And if you want advanced features, such as Employee Evaluation tools, you will pay more for those. In contrast, OfficeSuite© ACD is a hosted model, and every feature is included1. You achieve cost-savings by deferring the need to buy expensive equipment, hire additional IT staff, or load special software onto your servers.

Another way OfficeSuite© ACD saves you money is by delivering a powerful ACD platform and a complete phone system in one cost-effective solution. As an SMB, you might not need a full-blown, stand-alone ACD system. With OfficeSuite© ACD, you get the best of both worlds - a complete communications system and a robust ACD solution – all for no up-front capital, maintenance contracts, or extra IT staff to manage the system. Instead of paying thousands of dollars up-front for expensive, on-premise equipment, you can get all the call center functionality you need for a low monthly cost. Even if you don't think of your company as a call center, you still need tools that allow your organization to efficiently prioritize and distribute incoming phone calls.

5 *EASE OF USE*

The beauty of OfficeSuite© ACD is how easy it is to use. Its user interface is intuitive and does not require extensive training. You can be up and running in a day instead of weeks. And you can use in-house staff to manage the system; simply designate one or more people to act as tenant administrator(s.) These employees do not need technical backgrounds to learn how to operate the system. Your tenant administrators can set up voice queues quickly and easily, and assigning employees to the appropriate queues is very simple.

Common queues include:
- ▶ *Sales*
- ▶ *Sales Escalation*
- ▶ *Customer Service*
- ▶ *Support*
- ▶ *Spanish*
- ▶ *Executive*
- ▶ *Overflow*

You can add any department you want to the queues, and also assign priority to queues. Priorities can be assigned to both employees and queues: Employees have priority within the queues, and the queues have priority amongst themselves. You have complete control over the priorities and can set as many as you want.

Real-world example:
Let's say you have five employees assigned to a queue: three employees have priority 1, one employee has priority 2, and the final employee has priority 3. The three employees with priority 1 will always get the call first. If all these employees are busy, it will ring the employee with priority 2, and if he or she is busy the priority 3 employee will receive the call. If all five staff members are on the phone, you can keep the caller on hold for an amount of time you specify and then escalate it if the call still has not been answered. This can be accomplished by:

1. Keeping the caller on hold for 45 seconds (or any length of time you determine).

2. After 45 seconds, sending the call to a different queue, perhaps your Sales Escalation queue. Having different queues is very helpful when it comes to reporting because you'll be able to see how many calls were escalated.

By defining the priority of each employee with each queue, you'll ensure that the people who are best equipped to handle the call are rung first. Assigning priorities to each of your queues is also helpful when your staff members perform multiple duties (i.e., they can handle both support and sales calls.) For example, in your organization

the sales queue might take precedence over the support queue. If your organization is more focused on service, then the opposite would be true. No matter which call queue is more important to your business, you can ensure that the calls with the highest priority are handled first by the employees who are best equipped to handle them.

To maximize the talents of your staff, you can easily set up skill-based routing. OfficeSuite© ACD takes the concept of traditional skill-based routing even further by using "prioritized skill routing," which allows you to more effectively distribute the right call to the right employee at the right time. Prioritized skill routing allows administrators to create a number of queues, each with separate priorities, such that staff members can have different priorities in different queues. In this way, calls can be automatically distributed to alternate employees when primary employees are too busy. As a result, if all the primary workers are busy handling calls, the next best people are automatically included and sent the next call that is waiting in the queue.

6 TOOLS FOR MANAGEMENT

Simply telling management, 'Our new ACD system is improving our level of customer service,' is not enough – not only does your management want to know how, but they also want quantifiable data. OfficeSuite© ACD contains a web-based management portal that provides key statistics including:

- ▶ *Active calls*
- ▶ *Calls handled*
- ▶ *Calls abandoned*
- ▶ *Talk time*
- ▶ *Average Time to Abandon*
- ▶ *Average Speed of Answer*
- ▶ *Service level*

Powerful Information at Your Fingertips

Our reports give you service level statistics and the ability to drill down for more granular information. Reports can break down call volume on an hourly, daily, and per queue basis. This information is crucial in helping managers plan their staffing needs, ensuring that there will be enough staff members to service customers when call volumes peak.

Establishing a Service Level is the equivalent of establishing a baseline – it tells you what you want to report against.

Real-world example:
In a support queue you can specify that calls be answered within 30 seconds. When you look at the report for that queue, perhaps you'll find that employees have only met your Service Level 37% of the time. Once you know the Service Level isn't being met, you can work with your team to increase that percentage.

The management portal enables your business to increase operational efficiency; the more information that is available, the easier it is to allocate resources. It also delivers another efficiency benefit: your tenant administrator can modify settings and preferences without having to involve the Help Desk, IT Department, or service provider. This enables your company to make changes on the fly in reaction to shifting customer demands.

Create Your Own Audio Library

From Hold Treatments to Whisper Announcements, your audio library contains the standard stock files also available in OfficeSuite© in addition to any audio files you record.

Whisper Announcements

If you have employees assigned to different queues (i.e. sales and customer service queues), it is helpful to tell them what type of call is coming in so that they can prepare as necessary; this is where Whisper Announcements come into play.

Real-world example:
When a call is distributed to an employee in a sales queue, a Whisper Announcement will tell them, 'You've got an incoming call from the sales queue.'

Hold Treatments

We know what you're thinking – you don't want your callers stuck on hold listening to bad elevator music. We understand. While you can play a wide variety of music files, you can also create your own custom messages easily. Every queue can have its own Hold Treatment so that you can custom tailor messaging on a queue-by-queue basis. You may decide to describe a new product in a sales queue, or assure existing customers in a service queue that their business is important to you and that someone will answer the phone shortly.

Other great options include answering FAQs and up-selling. Let's say a customer calls for support on Product A; you can play the FAQs for Product A and perhaps their question will be answered before an employee picks up the line. Or, if a customer calls for sales information on Product B, play the up-sells in a marketing message for Product B.

You can change the Hold Treatments at any time, re-order things, and add new messages. All Hold Treatments can be managed easily using the management portal. None of this customization requires extensive training or any IT staff. The simplicity of managing OfficeSuite© ACD is one of the reasons it is so valuable.

Call Recording Capabilities

OfficeSuite© ACD with Call Recording is an invaluable tool for SMBs. Here are just some of the reasons why.

Increase Customer Satisfaction

Gaining insight into how your staff members are handling calls gives you the power to provide training as needed to improve the customer experience. Satisfied customers can be great promoters of your business, and give you the most powerful form of advertising available: word-of-mouth. If your customers have positive experiences with your business over the phone, chances are they will tell others. This means you can organically grow sales simply by providing great customer service.

Evaluate Employee Performance

How do you ensure your team is providing excellent customer service? The answer is by using call recording. By purchasing call recording, you get the capabilities to easily evaluate and train your employees.

You can search for recorded calls based on various criteria, including employee, queue, date, time, and phone number. You design your own evaluation forms and can include a section for comments. The forms are pre-populated with all the call

details. The call recording plays in the left-hand portion of your screen so that you can fill out the form in the right-hand side at the same time. The evaluation forms are graded automatically with the criteria you specify.

Real-world example:
Let's say one of your team members has an exceptional call that is a great example of how you want other staff to respond to callers. Simply download and add the call to your Recording Library and easily share it with your whole team for collective learning.

The saved calls in your Audio Library can be used for performance evaluations and training – both of which result in increased quality.

Why OfficeSuite© ACD is the Right Choice for Your Business

Throughout this white paper, there have been overlying themes; the first of which is simplicity. OfficeSuite© ACD is easy to use, meaning anyone in your organization can manage it and you won't have to hire additional IT staff. For seamless management, the solution is fully integrated into your OfficeSuite© phone system.

The second theme is improved customer relations. Taking advantage of customizable Hold Treatments will improve customer satisfaction, which will in turn enable your company to organically grow sales. Getting customers the help they need quickly en-sures that they will have a positive experience with your customer service or support line. And since every point of contact with customers shapes their overall opinion of your company, using Hold Treatments is the equivalent of telling them 'We value your business' and 'We understand that your time is valuable.'

The final theme is cost-savings. Broadview Networks designs cost-effective solutions that will help your company achieve its goals. Similar to our other products, there is no equipment to buy, no additional IT staff required, and no software to load.

By implementing OfficeSuite© ACD, you're taking the burden of choice off of your employees and putting it on your decision-makers. No longer will staff members have to decide how to handle every single call – those decisions will have already been made for them. At the same time, it eliminates the opportunity for them to be inefficient, which means your expenses will decrease and you will need less staff to accomplish the same amount of work.

 OfficeSuite© ACD offers different levels of features depending upon your small- to mid-sized business' needs. For more information on
 OfficeSuite© ACD, or to schedule a demo, give us a call at 1-800-405-2200 or visit us at: www.broadviewnet.com/acd.