

European organisations seek to increase productivity by a third, through improved contact centres

Investment in multimedia, IP contact centres and CRM integration technology cited as top priorities, NextiraOne analysis finds

17 January, 2005. Advances in European contact centres will increase staff productivity by a third within two years, according to customer analysis by NextiraOne. Organisations are investing in multimedia, IP and CRM integration to drive these improvements.

New multimedia contact centres that allow multiple channels of communication with customers such as telephone, email and web chat and link to business applications are seen as clear ways to optimise all customer interaction, increase agent satisfaction and lower operating costs, the analysis found.

Closely integrated with business applications, especially Customer Relationship Management (CRM), improved contact centres enable a more personal service to be offered to consumers. For example, in customer contact centres, very important callers can be automatically routed to a dedicated agent who knows their preferences well. This agent can then customise the call, proceed faster, increase satisfaction and upsell according to their needs, and so develop greater customer loyalty.

When implemented over IP, these features can be delivered anywhere. Agents can operate virtually in a branch office, or better still at home. This increases opening hours and geographical diversity. IP can also dramatically reduce telecoms costs and optimise all existing contact centres into a single virtual one, meaning one global call routing strategy and a single management team.

NextiraOne is a leading European provider of contact centre solutions with more than 170,000 agent deployments for 5,000 customers in 16 countries. These include T-Mobile (Czech Republic), Volksbank (Hungary), OMV (Austria), Corsica Ferries (France) and Direct Seguros (Spain). NextiraOne has a seven year track record of developing contact centre solutions and a convergence and applications sales force of more than 970 staff plus highly skilled software integration centres.

In the second half of 2004, NextiraOne undertook a study of the costs that its key European customers had saved by embracing new contact centre technologies, their business goals for contact centre investments and their future plans of customer service. The exercise looked at the productivity, return on investment (ROI), customer satisfaction and employee motivation versus 'traditional' call centres.

The study revealed that while in most cases ROI had been significantly enhanced, business goals were normally achieved only when closely integrating contact centres with CRM applications through connectors and deploying new technologies, such as IP and multimedia contact centres. ROI time depended on the technology deployed but was typically within 18 months for large contact centres and six months for mid-sized centres.

Examples of successes include:

- CRM - T-Mobile in the Czech Republic has achieved 95 per cent first call resolution by connecting its contact centre to its CRM application
- IP – OMV in Austria has cut telecom costs by linking its contact centres through IP communications
- Multimedia – By enabling agents to manage different media such as email simultaneously with calls, Flemish government department VDAB has raised the number of contacts handled by 53 per cent

“By using multimedia technologies and better integrating contact centres with the business, organisations in Europe are starting to deliver their Holy Grail – improved customer service at a lower cost, “ said Valerie Scavinner, solutions director, NextiraOne. “Increasingly, the main method of communication with customers is through the contact centre, making it the crucial engine of customer service. Only by carefully partnering with experts who can help with choosing and deploying the right technology to solve specific business problems will organisations reap productivity and customer satisfaction rewards.”

According to industry analyst Datamonitor, the number of call centres in Europe, the Middle East and Africa will increase by more than 50 per cent between 2003 and 2008 - from 29,000 to 45,000.

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About NextiraOne

Headquartered in Paris and Houston, NextiraOne is a leading global provider of integrated enterprise network solutions and services that enable effective, reliable business communications. We cover everything from planning and design to the implementation, support and management of voice, data and converged communications networks. We provide best-in-class technologies from leading partners including Alcatel, Cisco Systems, Genesys and Nortel Networks. And we offer consultation and solutions development ranging from contact centre applications to network infrastructure outsourcing. Discover more at www.nextiraone.com. NextiraOne is owned by Platinum Equity (www.platinumequity.com), a global acquisition firm specializing in the strategic operation of mission-critical services and solutions businesses according to a unique M&A&OSM model of value creation.

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