



This is Not Your Grandmother's Call Center

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Weary from squeezing productivity gains, organizations want to incorporate strategies that lock in new ways to fuel higher returns. An increasing number of companies are reorganizing their contact centers to generate revenue around the customer.

Three global forces play a role in shaping this new customer-focused contact center of tomorrow. One: Customers are sophisticated. They demand optimal service levels and expect their agents to create value for them. Two: Efforts to increase the bottom line urged some enterprises to move call center functionalities to cheaper offshore locations; now companies are trying to overcome customer frustration with poor English and cultural differences. Three: Federal privacy legislation restricts outbound telemarketers, forging a reorganization of their contact centers by building the inbound agents as the frontline force that generates revenue and cultivates the initial relationship with customers.

EXCERPT:

Customers at Austin, Texas-based Austin Logistics extract value by examining their propensity to buy and their propensity to churn by running predictive models that combine the data housed in the customer master record, prior call records, data logged in the CRM system, and then demographic information from a credit bureau. The organizations give each customer a score and then determine the highest predicting outcome. The vendor pushes the results to dashboards on the agents' desktops to enable them to respond knowledgeably to inquiries and to make behavior-appropriate offers.

A credit card company, for example, could use the system to build predictive models to find the customers who missed a payment, but typically pay on time. The card provider wouldn't bother those people. "A percentage of people will cut up the card if they're hassled," says Bob Tate, vice president of field marketing at Austin Logistics.

Tate says that customers see an average 4-percent reduction in attrition and a 10-percent to 20-percent increase in sales revenue after they apply predictive analytics to their outbound call campaigns. "You're taking talk time on people who would never buy, and eliminating that. They take that time saved and move toward those who have a high probability of attrition. The net resource is the same, but they're applying a focus," Tate says.