
Reviews On 2004/2005 From Azita Martin Of TuVox

What has been the greatest challenge the contact center industry has faced in the last 12 months and why?

According to a recent report by Datamonitor, one out of every 24 call center agents serving U.S. customers is outsourced to a near or offshore bureau. Datamonitor predicts that by 2008, one in 15 agent positions will be outsourced to a foreign market. The growing trend to outsource contact centers has been the industry's greatest challenge in 2004. Speech enabled technology is now competing with offshore call center agents as it provides companies a more cost-effective approach to service low level transactions. Contact centers have to compete with offshore locations as companies view outsourcing as an effective way to increase their respective cost effectiveness without regard to the impact on their ability to deliver quality service. Outsourcing is a double-edged sword – while it often results in cost reduction it usually results in a lack of customer intimacy, ultimately leading to a drop in customer satisfaction levels.



Azita Martin
Marketing
TuVox

In addition, historical IVR systems continually frustrate and confuse callers prompting them to zero out to reach a live agent. These antiquated systems can only automate certain types of calls offering very limited options for customers. IVR systems have created enormous frustration, leaving customers to believe call centers cannot provide the quality and efficiency of service they expect.

In 2005, what do you think will be the top priorities for:

Contact Center Managers

In today's competitive market, businesses are investing in technologies that not only improve customer service but also provide the greatest possible returns through cost reduction and workforce productivity gains. Increasingly, American businesses are investing in speech solutions to improve customer service, reduce costs and increase top-line revenues. Although the numerous benefits of speech technology provide a compelling case for investment, selecting the right vendor will have a significant impact on the deployment time and cost as well as the Total Cost of ownership over the life cycle of the speech application. Contact center managers must reduce overall cost by improving call resolution time and enhancing agent productivity. They need to improve customer satisfaction by providing high quality voice self-service applications that callers will prefer over an agent. Contact Center managers need to consider high quality speech applications that can be easily customized to their enterprises business processes, without the need for specialized custom coding. They also need to evaluate vendors that provide the tools and built in component services that enable companies to frequently update the speech application with their internal IT resources.

Company Executives

Company executives must increase customer satisfaction by providing a differentiated customer service through every channel the customer prefers. Whether it is through web self-service, voice self-service, or a live agent, companies must provide customers with the kind of service and attention they want: fast, effective and responsive. Today, ATMs and self-serve gas pumps are considered beacons of customer service. The momentum experienced by both TuVox and the industry in general demonstrate the market's increasing acceptance of speech self-service and the benefits it offers businesses and its customers.

What impact do you believe will have the biggest impact on the industry over the next twelve months – how and why?

Since 1997, companies have been deploying IVR systems to streamline call center processes. However, the limitations of IVR are clear and customer frustration is growing. The ability to replace outdated IVR systems with sophisticated speech applications that can handle routing, transaction and customer support calls will have an enormous impact on the industry. Current IVR systems hinder companies from delivering

a high quality, high performance caller experience by greeting their customers with a frustrating, push-button maze with limited options.

In comparison to traditional IVR solutions, today's sophisticated speech applications offer a personalized caller experience, higher automation rates and increased flexibility. Using technologies such as conversational call routing, callers are quickly directed to the appropriate resource, whether it be a voice self-service system or a live agent. By removing outdated IVR systems and replacing them with the latest generation of speech tools and components, companies can provide customers with first class conversational speech applications.

There is tremendous opportunity to upgrade and replace existing touchtone and IVR systems. Industries like healthcare, retail, and finance have started to take notice and offer voice self-service to customers. As more and more industries replace existing IVR with the latest speech applications, the call center could possibly be the next "it" in self-service. The result is better caller experience and customer satisfaction, combined with lower cost resulting from more call automation.

What impact have "external" events had on your company and how have you adapted your business, if at all?

Changes in the economic landscape have had a direct impact on all technology firms and at TuVox we are pleased to see a definite upswing this year. In times of such a temperamental economy, we like to emphasize the efficiency of speech self-service. We are constantly refining and perfecting our solution. Due to continued acceleration of customer acquisition, significant momentum with strategic partners and the delivery of seven new product releases, TuVox has announced an 800 percent increase in revenue during fiscal 2004. We thrive in the changing economy by keeping our eye on the core themes of our service: saving our customers money and allowing them to offer their clients a superior call center experience.

Do you feel the service you personally get as a customer is better or worse than it was a year ago and why do you think it's so?

Both. It seems as though businesses are realizing the importance of customer service and making great strides towards improvement. Web self-service is becoming more effective and user friendly. However, I think that the trend towards outsourcing call centers has impinged many companies' ability to provide a quality call center experience. Personally, I find outsourced call centers very frustrating. There have been times when I needed very specific answers to very specific questions and could not cross the cultural barrier that existed between the agent on the other line and myself. An exasperating call center experience often makes customers change their purchasing behavior, which is why outsourcing is so risky. I hope to see less outsourcing and more high quality automation in customer call centers in 2005.

About Azita Martin:

Azita Martin is responsible for all aspects of marketing for TuVox, including analyst relations, PR, branding, lead generation and all outbound marketing activities. Azita brings over 18 years of experience in Marketing and Alliances. Prior to joining TuVox, Azita was VP of Marketing at InQuira, a web self-service search company. Prior to InQuira, Azita held a number of executive and marketing management positions at companies such as Siebel, OnLink Technologies and SGI. Azita has a BS in Aerospace Engineering and an MBA from the University of Southern California.

About TuVox:

TuVox is a provider of enterprise software for speech applications. TuVox's software creates a superior caller experience through sophisticated speech applications that are fast to develop and easy to deploy and maintain. Built completely on open standards, TuVox's enterprise software can automate virtually any type of call - including natural language call routing, self-service transactions, information requests and customer support. TuVox has technology that allows enterprises to quickly create highly sophisticated and conversational speech applications from their existing content, data and business processes.

Author : Azita Martin - VP of Marketing, TuVox
Date and Time Posted : 12/22/2004 6:07:15 AM

About ContactCenterWorld.com

ContactCenterWorld.com is the world's premier on-line resource for the call and contact center industry. This article is one of hundreds available on-line to registered members. Our resource is updated every working day and includes content from every corner of the world. If you are not a registered member go to www.ContactCenterWorld.com and register today.
