

CONTACT CENTER TEAM PRODUCTIVITY SUITES ENHANCE EFFICIENCY



A WHITE PAPER ON THE BENEFITS OF DEPLOYING AN ADVANCED, CONFIGURABLE CONTACT CENTER TEAM APPLICATION SUITE; ENHANCES PRODUCTIVITY, DELIVERS SUBSTANTIAL ROI AND BUILDS A STRONGER CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP

BY: SPANLINK COMMUNICATIONS



WHITE PAPER: ENHANCE EFFICIENCY IN CONTACT CENTERS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Contact centers can dramatically increase efficiencies and customer satisfaction by using advanced team productivity suites. These packaged solutions merge enterprise applications and Web services developed through a service-oriented architecture (SOA) with IP contact center resources to deliver a new level of productivity applications to agents, supervisors and administrators. Installed in days versus the months required with custom solutions, an advanced contact center productivity suite will enhance customer-enterprise relationships and facilitate the development of new enterprise applications to link customers' day-to-day needs with enterprise offerings. They deliver sophisticated agent and supervisor functionality by combining soft phones and task bars with automated customer account data and pre- or post-call actions, Web browsers, caller ID, dialed number identification service (DNIS), interactive voice response (IVR) system data and enterprise applications, giving team members the facility for a systematic approach to retrieve and enter data to allow the enterprise to address customer issues and develop sales opportunities.

Industry statistics show that basic screen pop-ups can save an average of 10-20 seconds per transaction – a significant impact on contact center performance. Expanding contact center team applications to include task automation, IVR integration and outbound transactions further enhances the business case for an automated, contact center team application suite.

But the cost barrier to entry for customized productivity applications can be high by some contact center standards. By allowing local administrators to easily create

and modify agents' and supervisors' primary work interfaces, advanced contact center team application suites minimize the need for professional services and lower the overall cost of ownership of the solution, maximizing return on investment (ROI) and significantly lowering the bar for implementing and supporting contact center desktop implementations.

Advanced team productivity suites enforce contact center best practices for agents and supervisors, enabling:

- > **Automated desktop environments** – The best contact centers rapidly handle calls by using productivity-enhancing tools such as integrated agent dashboards that include access to enterprise applications and Web services. By deploying advanced contact center team application suites, contact center business managers enjoy productivity levels that previously were affordable to only the largest contact centers.
- > **Productivity gains and high return on investment** – Seamless access to experts in the organization, customer data, call records, orders and trouble ticket entries, boosts agents' efficiency – freeing additional full-time employee equivalents (FTEs) to handle additional call volume. In addition, contact center productivity suites are easy to implement, speeding time to ROI.
- > **Enhanced agent effectiveness and training** – With an intuitive user interface, including customized workflows to automate customer data entry and post-call activities, contact center productivity suites require less agent training.
- > **Efficient team management** – Supervisors can monitor agents, provide instant communication and view critical call statistics based on team or skill set. Supervisors can

use on-screen "reader boards" and instant messaging to push valuable information to agents during training or live call sessions

- > Increased operating efficiency – Administrators can easily create agent desktop environments incorporating Web interfaces, soft phones, task shortcut buttons, call handling metrics and enterprise application integration. This minimizes professional services costs for application set-up and ongoing change management, which lowers the total cost of ownership (TCO).

Contact center productivity suites allow front-line agents in contact centers of all sizes to focus on resolving customer issues, generating revenue, increasing customer service efficiency and boosting overall customer satisfaction and enterprise relationships.

SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCE PRODUCTIVITY AND CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

Contact centers are critical interface points between customers and the enterprise. In addition to supporting customer service, outbound sales and other traditional functions, contact centers have a unique opportunity to expand their mission and enhance customer relationships. Through a service-oriented architecture, enterprises can quickly create business applications and Web services that contact center agents can use to match a company's product and service offerings to a customer's day-to-day needs. To achieve this capability as well as boost productivity, contact center teams need applications that can efficiently tie IP contact center resources with existing and new enterprise applications and Web services.

Savvy business managers know that enhancing contact center productivity

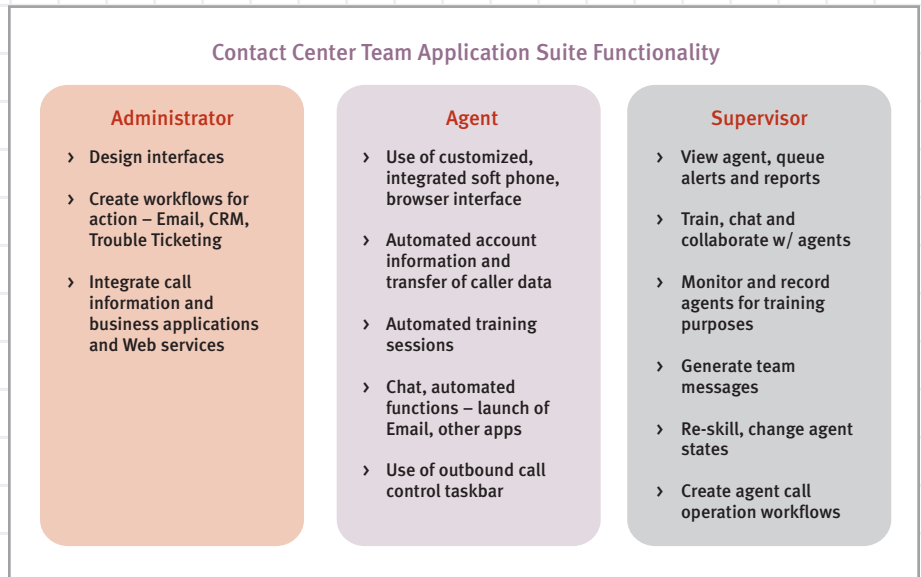
Contact center teams need applications that can efficiently tie IP contact center resources with existing and new enterprise applications and Web services.

provides significant business benefit. Advanced contact center team application suites that integrate enterprise applications, Web services, IVR systems and automated workflows enable contact centers to considerably increase efficiency and tie customers closer to the enterprise. According to Gartner Measurement, the top 25 percent of contact centers are 26 percent more efficient than the average contact center. World-class contact centers have realized that applications that automate customer database entries and after-call activities, such as sending email, save agents time and allow them to handle more calls, decreasing costs and potentially increasing revenues.

In the past, business and IT managers have relied on professional services organizations to develop custom applications that provide these benefits. Professional services organizations have:

- > Developed custom contact center desktop applications for agents and supervisors, combining soft phone interfaces, enterprise applications integration and task-specific automation
- > Integrated ACD, IVR and call routing systems with agent and supervisor desktop applications and phones
- > Served as a required resource for periodic application enhancements and change management

While the largest contact centers can afford professional service-based solutions, a broader set of contact centers require a lower cost of entry – one that provides configurable interfaces, integration with IVR, ACD,



Packaged contact center team application suites support, agent and supervisors with interface tools, application integration wizards, application-to-application communications tools and statistical engines to enhance contact center productivity and build stronger customer-enterprise relationships.

enterprise applications and Web services and tools to simplify implementation. Advanced contact center team application suites offer the functionality and flexibility of customized contact center solutions at a lower cost of entry. Contact centers of any size can realize a rapid return on investment and attractive overall cost of ownership.

Incorporating intuitive wizards and easy-to-follow configuration steps, contact center productivity suites allow business managers to rapidly configure agent and supervisor desktops, linking caller ID and DNIS with Web services and customized Microsoft® Windows and enterprise applications. These solutions provide agents and supervisors with easy-to-use interfaces that consolidate multiple functions, including a soft phone, Web browser, call center metrics dashboards, customer database integration and after-call-work. These advanced contact center productivity suites deliver:

- > **Productivity gains for agents** – Shave minutes off call handling time by automating frequently performed

tasks. Agent management features allow for scripting agent behavior throughout the day to enforce best practices and efficiency. Screen pop-ups with customer data and automated entry of account data into trouble tickets, purchase orders and other customer service applications allow agents to handle more calls.

- > **Productivity gains for supervisors** – Supervisors receive needed information to manage agent teams and are alerted when performance service level targets are at risk of being missed. Supervisors have the tools to act to resolve issues and drive agent teams to meet targets.
- > **High-visibility dashboards for agents and supervisors** – Interface creation tools and workflow wizards build agent and supervisor interfaces to unify soft phones, browsers, screen pop-ups, and buttons to automate common tasks, record calls and call queue statistics with task bars and automated pre-, in- and post-call actions as well as enterprise application integration. Supervisor

screens can include agent or team statistics, as well as the ability to initiate one-on-one instant messaging or team broadcast messages.

- > **Simplified maintenance and upgrades** – Administrators have the capability to push new agent and supervisor interfaces to the desktop regardless of location. To minimize service requirements, desktop applications transparently connect to central servers for maintenance, upgrades and new releases that provide new functionality or address usage issues.

With advanced contact center team application suites, business managers can better link customer day-to-day needs with the company's service and product offerings, ensure that all agents and supervisors have the latest desktop environments, as well as reap productivity gains across their contact center operation.

HIGH-VALUE ROI – LOWERING THE BARRIER FOR DEPLOYMENT BY LOWERING THE TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP

Pursuing contact center projects requires care and planning. Business managers must weigh the cost per seat, deployment time per center against expected gains. Implementing a fully-customized contact center solution with a professional services firm involves a degree of risk – schedules may slip, specified functionality may not be delivered, costs may escalate and change management may require continued dependency on the professional services firm, keeping the barriers to entry high and causing small-to medium- and even some large-sized contact centers to avoid these projects.

Advanced contact center team application suites can lower implementation costs by more than

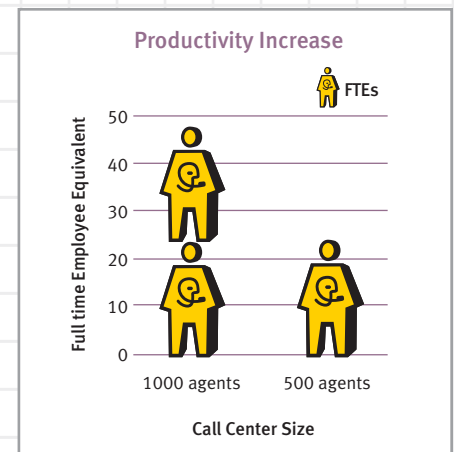
15 percent by eliminating or minimizing professional service fees. With automated features that lower deployment complexity and ease customization of agent and supervisor desktops, these solutions shorten implementation times, minimize reliance on IT staff and significantly lower project risks. These suites:

- > **Provide functionality of fully-customized solutions with only a fraction of the programming required** – Advanced contact center team application suites provide the sophisticated functionality of full-customized solutions, but avoid programming. Agent and supervisor interface tools incorporate integration with Web services, enterprise applications, IP PBX systems and contact applications including Web, email and voice messaging. Supervisor desktop tools support metrics based on team, agent and skill-sets to track performance. Combined, these capabilities reduce deployment time and complexity.
- > **Provide multi-function workflow wizards to automate in-call and post-call activities** – To systematize best practices, managers can use wizards to quickly program on-screen buttons to support a wide variety of actions and enforce agent procedures – for example, update or populate account data and reason codes in databases for each call, initiate call recording or launch an application or Web service.
- > **Simplify change management** – Companies can easily implement additional functionality, such as new enterprise application linkages, recording functions and communications capabilities across all centers.

These capabilities reduce project implementation risk and allow agents and supervisors to begin enjoying productivity gains in a shorter time line compared with a fully-customized solution.

FREEING FULL TIME EMPLOYEE EQUIVALENTS

Advanced contact center team application suites increase agent productivity and reduce the number of agents required to handle a given call volume. With integrated caller ID and DNIS and IVR system prompting for the customer's account, these applications allow agents to directly access a caller's account data from customer relationship management (CRM) systems, helpdesk software and other business applications. They also automatically provide agents with customer data when they receive calls. In this way, contact center team application suites eliminate errors and save agents 10-20 seconds per call. Applied throughout a call center, the productivity gain translates into additional full-time employee equivalents that provide substantial savings and increase ROI.



A contact center team application suite frees additional full-time employee equivalents by increasing agent productivity. Compared to deployment and annual maintenance costs, free FTEs deliver rapid payback.

AGENT ASSUMPTIONS:

Caller data screen pop time savings for initial call and call transfer	10 seconds
Calls with CTI hits	70%
Call transfers during workday	10%
Full time employee equivalent (annual)	\$48,000, at \$40,000 base, 20% burden rate
Workday hours	8 hours
Workday breaks	1 hour lunch, 2x15 minute breaks

In evaluating the payback period for an advanced contact center team application suite, consider a center with 500 agents, handling 800,000 calls per month with each agent averaging 5 minutes per call. An advanced contact center team application suite can increase agent productivity and free 23-24 additional FTEs. The solution scales linearly – a 1,000 agent center would see agent productivity and free an additional 47 FTEs.

Freeing additional FTEs can provide substantial savings and increase ROI:

- > Additional FTEs enhance outbound contact centers by increasing outbound call volume and generating incremental revenues, without adding agents. By multiplying the average revenue per closed sale by the number of additional closed sales generated by increased call volume, one can calculate the value of an advanced contact center team application suite.
- > Additional FTEs increase inbound call center capacity and obviates hiring additional staff during seasonal or holiday periods, dramatically reducing costs.

Assuming a \$48,000 fully burdened rate per agent and an average selling price per desktop for a leading advanced contact center team application suite, the payback period for the advanced contact center team application suite is less than six months.

PROVIDING EFFECTIVE AGENT TRAINING AND TEAM MANAGEMENT

To ensure complete customer service, agents need to access enterprise applications such as CRM, trouble ticket and accounting systems, as well and email and instant messaging, but learning these systems can be time-consuming and costly. Speeding the learning process is critical to smooth operations, especially as the contact center introduces new products, services, promotions, campaigns, procedures and tools.

Agents and supervisors are given effective application resources for training and full production use. Supervisors can facilitate agent training, assist agents during operation hours and resolve issues.

Advanced contact center team application suites markedly enhance agent effectiveness, training and team management:

- > **Agents reach high levels of preparedness** – Supervisors can schedule training and during training sessions, transition agents into training mode with a “not ready with training reason code” indicator. Supervisors can push training modules through Web pages at pre-determined times and follow agent learning progress until agent teams have reached peak knowledge levels.
- > **Application integration creates shortcuts** – Linking caller ID, DNIS and data entered through IVR

systems with enterprise or custom Microsoft®Windows applications or Web services eases agent enterprise application training requirements. Advanced contact center team application suites automatically start enterprise applications, display the necessary customer information and place the agent at the appropriate spot for data entry to support in-call and post-call actions.

- > **Supervisor messages and URL push provide reminders and relevant information** – Supervisors can provide guidance on new campaigns, programs, sales or customer service initiatives by interactively pushing data, such as product or campaign information and revised customer service policies, to agents. With real-time coaching, agents more quickly learn to support seasonal or special campaigns and become more proficient in locating critical information valuable to maintaining customer satisfaction or closing additional sales.
- > **Chat and live recordings enable in-call and post-call support** – Supervisor-to-agent and agent-to-agent secure chat allows for coaching on handling of callers, situations or scenarios. Supervisors can record and evaluate sessions to identify correct customer handling techniques and flag areas for further development. With hands-on coaching, agent skills quickly improve, customer satisfaction increases and supervisors increase their ability to lead one or more agent teams.
- > **Live-call monitoring and agent, skill group and team statistics allow for supervisor action** – With readily available call and queue metrics, agents are more productive and the application can automatically trigger an action to keep customer service at a high level. Supervisors can evaluate call statistics and call

WHITE PAPER: ENHANCE EFFICIENCY IN CONTACT CENTERS

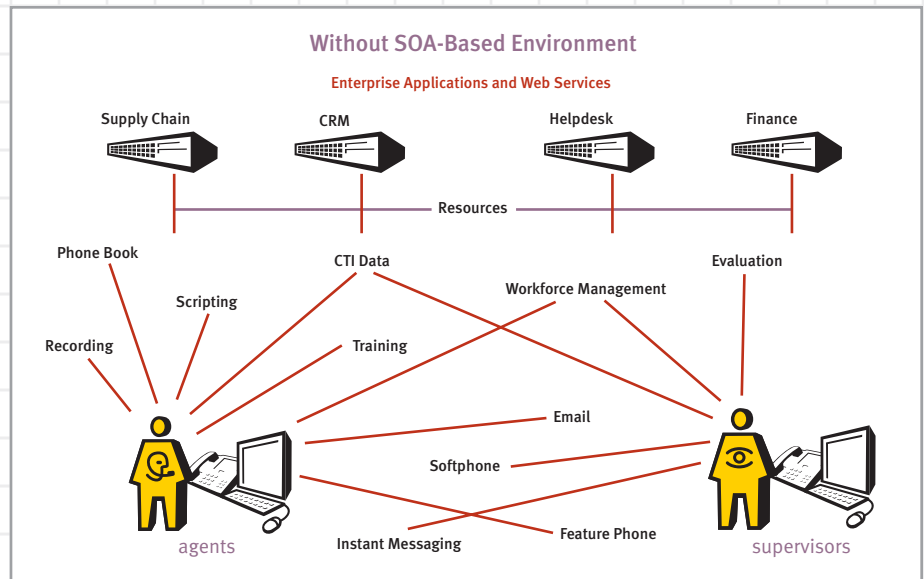
handling in any contact center, agent or skill group to identify problems and initiate corrective action to avoid service issues. Actions can be taken to lower caller queue lengths, resolve demanding call situations, decrease call handling times and implement daily agent availability guidelines. Customers are better served while agent team management improves.

Enhancing agent effectiveness and training increases job satisfaction and employee retention, as well as delivers a positive caller experience. As the contact center grows to support new functions and modes of communication, agents are able to adapt and improve their effectiveness by learning new tools, techniques, products, services, programs and promotions quickly.

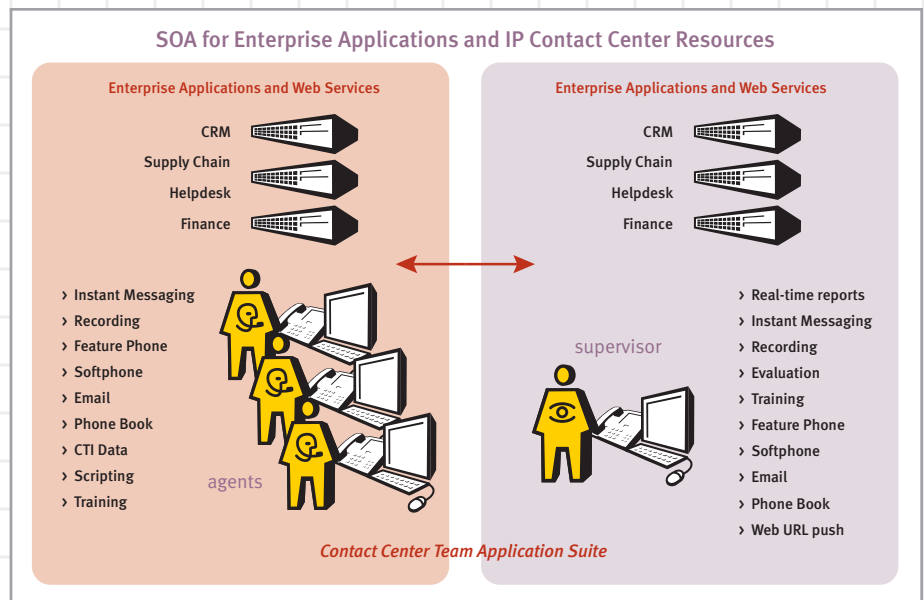
THE ADVANTAGES FOR CONTACT CENTERS

Increasing contact center productivity pays dividends. Advanced contact center team application suites offer an integrated interface for supervisors and agents to enhance productivity, operating efficiency, agent training and team management. With tools that simplify interface design, and integration of pre- and post-call actions involving enterprise applications and Web services, advanced contact center productivity suites minimize project implementation times and minimize or eliminate the need for professional services. This lowers the total cost of ownership for a solution that drives a “best practices” approach for many businesses – making the deployment of contact center productivity suites cost effective for contact centers of any size.

By saving agents’ time through on-screen presentation of caller data, full transfer of caller data to other agents, and automating email and population of account data into trouble ticketing, purchase, billing and other applications,



Agents and supervisors are challenged to juggle a myriad of disparate tools and resources.



Agents and supervisors have a unified interface to the tools and resources they need to interact with customers and with each other.

advanced contact center productivity suites reduce the number of agents required to handle a given call volume, freeing full-time employee equivalents. These FTEs minimize the need for more staff to support added call volume from special circumstances, seasonal campaigns and promotions, or enable

existing agents to make additional outbound calls. In addition, business managers are better able to plan contact center agent growth and focus on keeping customer satisfaction levels high and build stronger customer-enterprise relationships.

ABOUT SPANLINK COMMUNICATIONS

Spanlink Communications is a leading provider of customer interaction solutions that leverage VoIP technology. A Cisco ATP Certified Channel Partner, Spanlink has unmatched experience with Cisco IP telephony solutions and is a leading developer of advanced contact center team performance suites, customer interaction products and IP Communications system management products for public institutions as well as medium and large enterprises.

Spanlink developed the Cisco Agent Desktop and Cisco Supervisor Desktop, a contact center team application suite widely deployed in medium and high-volume contact centers.

For more information on Spanlink Communications and its Cisco Agent Desktop and Cisco Supervisor Desktop application suite, visit www.spanlink.com, telephone 800-303-1239 or email Mktg@Spanlink.com.