

## Communications and Customer Service: Frequency Matters

New communications technologies can provide a definitive and measurable boost to your organization's customer service. And the deployment does not have to be as complicated as you might think. It is true that to add functionality such as Automated Call Distribution (ACD) and unified messaging to an existing phone platform not designed with this technology in mind will lead to a complex, expensive, hard-to-maintain system that might be more trouble than it's worth. But if you deploy a phone system that already has ACD functionality in place, and is designed to work with the latest wireless and unified messaging technology, what you'll get is a new customer service engine. An affordable engine that will empower your employees with the ability to build customer relationships that are stronger and more efficient than ever before.

### ACD in action

Let's take a look at a concrete example of what this technology can accomplish: Delta subsidiary, Atlantic Southeast Air (ASA) has an Operations Control Center that is the core for coordinating and distributing flight information and activity for ASA crewmembers. The old (and obsolete) communications process for ASA had crewmembers calling random numbers and relying on transfers to reach an Operations Control dispatcher. Today, the Operations Control Center supports on-the-go crewmembers with an ACD platform.


Now a remote crewmember simply calls into an automated attendant and enters their flight number. Software then searches a flight information database and matches the entered flight number with the assigned group. The system then routes the call to a live dispatcher that provides the crewmember's flight plans. For the Operations Control Center and crewmembers, automated call routing makes coordinating and meeting strict flight schedules a much more seamless process.

### ACD for the small business

Many companies tend to think of ACD as only benefiting large organizations with warehouse-sized call centers, but the fact is that it can deliver real value to any business, regardless of size. Many small to medium businesses cannot afford a dedicated technical or customer support resource whose sole job is to sit by a phone. Now with ACD, a company can turn its knowledge workers into centers of opportunity. Callers can be directed straight to the knowledge resource that can help them as efficiently as possible. This gives workers the ability to assist customers, answer their needs and engage in selling new business just as effectively as if they were a full-time customer support representative.

### The mobility advantage

ACD can turn your different departments into opportunity groups that address specific customer support requirements, with every customer being connected with the right group to foster overall satisfaction.



But to realize the most benefit from this approach, your workforce needs to be mobile. When they are not chained to a desk, your employees are free to do their job, but they can still give your customers the support they deserve. And there are many levels of mobile solutions that can accomplish this goal.

The most basic is simply a wireless headset that keeps an employee connected to their desk extension. They will be able to answer inbound calls, but cannot make outbound calls. And they cannot access any of the calling features present on the phone system.

The next level is to install an in-building wireless network that operates on the traditional 802.11 or functions on a proprietary frequency. Now, mobile workers can make and receive calls as though they were sitting at their desk, from anywhere in the building. And they can access calling features such as call transfer, on-hold and conference calling.

But the ultimate enhancement in customer service comes through unified messaging. Through this latest technology, an employee can be practically anywhere in the world, and an inbound caller can reach them directly through one number.

### **The right approach**

When planning a wireless deployment, there is an advantage to utilizing a proprietary technology with its own unique frequency, rather than traditional 802.11. This technology will function as an independent unit, separate from your data network. This liberates you from the hassles of trying to piggyback voice and data together, and isolates your important voice communications from data network issues.

But no matter what approach you take, you must deploy a network that has functionality such as ACD and wireless already imbedded into the system. With an integrated platform, you will gain the mobility, reliability, and enhanced customer service that you're searching for.