

This is the twelfth year *Customer Interaction Solutions*® has brought you the winners of its MVP (Marketing Via Phone) Quality Awards. In the ensuing years since we introduced the awards in 1993, we have been impressed by the growing sophistication of the quality measures that have been introduced to the contact

center by the leading-edge companies that apply for our MVP Quality Award.

Over the years, we have seen new technologies adopted and the standards for a quality interaction refined and improved. Each of the

following companies has demonstrated, through its MVP Quality Awards application, a true commitment to high ethical standards, stringent policies and challenging goals. Each of the award recipients is

involved in a quality process that stretches from its human resource development to its implementation of technology to improve quality to taking a leadership role in promoting a positive public image of teleservices, and more. The following brief extracts from the extensive award-winning applications will give you a glimpse into what the companies provided as their standards for quality.

On a 16-point essay, entrants described a specific teleservices program and its results, and explained their overall policies and procedures, including human resources, technologies, customer services, ergonomics and public image that are used to establish, sustain and measure the program's quality. Judging the applicants was an arduous task, and the scores were not given lightly. Judging involved assigning a numerical point value from 1 to 10 for each of the 16 evaluation points.

Through the winners' essays, we learned that there are countless individuals within these organizations whose combined efforts and teamwork have contributed to elevating their companies' marketing via phone practices to the forefront of the industry. To all of the winners, congratulations.

12TH ANNUAL MVP QUALITY AWARD WINNERS



GOLD AWARD WINNERS

APAC Customer Services, Inc.
Integrated (Outbound and Inbound),
B-to-B
<http://www.apaccustomerservices.com>

Q: *What elements make it easy to do business with your firm (800 lines, warranties, guarantees, free delivery, etc.)?*

A: Benchmarking — With [the client], APAC participates in once-a-month benchmarking meetings with all other of the client's service vendors. This meeting is an open review and roundtable discussion of best practices in call handling. The client has repeatedly noted APAC's leadership on these calls and that our teams provide more improvement recommendations than other vendors.



Center Partners

Inbound, B-to-C

<http://www.centerpartners.com>

Q: Specifically state your policies on quality and your company's philosophy/motto with regards to quality.

A: Center Partners employs three Japanese business practices to implement the improvements identified through its quality-driven management system, called Nichijo Kanri ("daily control"), Kaizen ("continuous improvement") and Hoshin Kanri ("policy control"). We use these methods to implement the smaller improvements that add value, as well as the breakthrough improvements that fundamentally shift business practices.

Our long-term vision, through our QDMS (quality-driven management system), is to be widely recognized as the world leader in quality contact center management practices. While we believe that QDMS is further proof that Center Partners' services

are *done right*, we hope it illustrates our commitment to continually do things *better*, as well.

Convergys

Integrated (Outbound and Inbound),
B-to-B and B-to-C

<http://www.convergys.com>

Q: Describe all efforts to promote the quality image of teleservices to the public.

A: An excellent example of this is Convergys' support of educational initiatives around the world. Recognizing that education today will provide students with limitless opportunities tomorrow, Convergys supports a wide range of initiatives that promote accessibility, sustainability and self-sufficiency. The following are samples of our work: PACE Center for Girls; National Underground Railroad Freedom Center; The Ananya Trust (in the Philippines), SAS (SA AKLAT SISIKAT, in the Philippines); Convergys Academic Achievement Recognition Program; and the Educational Matching Gifts Program.

GC Services Limited Partnership

Integrated (Outbound and Inbound),
B-to-B and B-to-C

<http://www.gcserv.com>

Q: Describe all efforts made to make your work environment more stress-free and ergonomically correct.

A: We encourage all employees to participate in making their work environment

more effective and efficient. For some of our more stressful programs, we have built some downtime into our agents' schedules, which allows them to be off the phone and participate in a non-phone-related activity. Such activities include creating contests, decorating the center, creating development materials, assisting in training classes, mentoring other agents and helping management with miscellaneous projects.

Hamilton Contact Center Services

Outbound, B-to-B

<http://www.hamilton.net>

Q: Describe all efforts made to make your work environment more stress-free and ergonomically correct.

A: Utilizing a management approach made famous by management guru W. Edward Demming, we believe that mistakes should not facilitate blame; rather they should facilitate improved processes. Essentially, we have built a culture around Point 8 of Demming's famed 14-point management philosophy: Drive out fear and build trust so everyone can do a better job. By focusing on what caused a breakdown in the system instead of focusing on the individual who incurred the mistake, employees are able to work better after a mistake and without any fear of recrimination. This environment reduced employee stress while ultimately increasing agent productivity.



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www.spiritDSP.com/voip





InfoCision Management Corp.

Outbound, B-to-C

<http://www.infocision.com>

Q: Describe all efforts to promote the quality image of teleservices to the public.

A: This year, InfoCision Chairman of the Board Gary Taylor donated \$1.5 million to the University of Akron for the creation of the Taylor Institute of Direct Marketing. Created to elevate the direct marketing industry and to provide students entering the field with valuable skills, the Institute offers an e-marketing and advertising major and two minor programs in database marketing and direct interactive marketing. The Taylor Institute is the only program in the country that offers a facility, faculty and curriculum dedicated to direct marketing. Taylor has pledged an additional \$1 million to develop a graduate program and to expand the facilities.

Precision Response Corp.

Inbound, B-to-C

<http://www.prcnet.com>

Q: What is special or unique about your staff that contributes to quality?

A: PRC has developed several Manager Initial Training Programs for our front-line supervisors and middle management levels. Each program provides learning opportunities for the development of management and leadership skills for those individuals externally hired or internally promoted to the position. These courses are customized to address the skills appropriate to the positions of Team Manager, Operations Manager, Account Manager, QA Supervisor, QA Representative and Trainer.

Synergy Solutions, Inc.

Integrated (Outbound and Inbound), B-to-C

<http://www.callsynergy.com>

Q: How do you measure customer satisfaction?

A: We have found that the best way to measure customer satisfaction is through

customer retention. Synergy is proud to have significant tenure with many of our clients, and we continue to work with several of our original clients. Client referrals also serve as a testimony to customer satisfaction. Whether it is a client giving us a referral upon request when a prospective customer asks for one, or even more important, when clients move to areas of new employment and proactively recommend that their new company partner with Synergy Solutions based on our history of quality.



SILVER AWARD WINNERS

Access Direct

Outbound, B-to-C

<http://www.accdir.com>

Q: Explain how quality has evolved in your contact center, how it is sustained and how it is measured.

A: The VIA Cup is a companywide award presented monthly to the outstanding call center each month. VIA stands for Vision In Action, recognizing superior achievement in an overall effort of quality, production, hours and citizenship; most improved, value-added efforts, above and beyond dedication and worth ethic, and simply demonstrating the best of the Access Direct family. Each month, the management staff from each center composes a VIA Cup nomination and submits it to the executive staff for review. The award ceremony is done by surprise and takes the center team by storm; handing out candy, a drawing for gift certificates, the trophy presentation, balloons, and congratulations all around.

Alta Resources

Integrated (Outbound and Inbound), B-to-C

<http://www.altaresources.com>

Q: Describe all efforts to promote the quality image of teleservices to the public.

A: Each December, Alta Resources hosts "Christmas Jingles," two nights when area senior citizens are invited to come in to our facilities and make phone calls to friends and loved ones throughout the country. They can talk to as many people as they'd

like, for as long as they'd like, at no charge. This has come to be an Alta tradition, and each year our employees look forward to volunteering for this special event and experiencing the joy that comes from helping others.

Colwell & Salmon Communications, Inc.

Outbound, B-to-B

<http://www.colwell-salmon.com>

Q: What is special or unique about your staff that contributes to quality?

A: Because we offer flexible work hours to our telephone marketing staff, we employ telephone representatives who have a variety of backgrounds, including entrepreneurs or start-up small business owners, utilizing the flexible hours to supplement their own income; retired professionals who need to challenge themselves but do not want full-time hours for personal and social security reasons; college students who need supplemental income yet the flexibility to schedule work hours around their classes; and stay-at-home moms who want supplemental income but also want to be at home when their kids get off the bus.

Cross Country Automotive Services

Inbound, B-to-C

<http://www.crosscountry-auto.com>

Q: What is special or unique about your staff that contributes to quality?

A: In 2004, Cross Country developed the Process Excellence Department. The Process Excellence Department is a dedicated team of people whose sole responsibility is to initiate, facilitate and drive continuous process improvement through the use of Six Sigma, statistical process control and other structured methodologies. With the help of this internal group, each department or functional area continues to monitor performance of the various procedures, and each uses a consistent methodology for root cause analysis to make improvements to the procedure through changes to people, processes and technology.

ePerformax Contact Centers

Outbound, B-to-B

<http://www.eperformax.com>

Q: What do you do to demonstrate your commitment to staff quality, i.e., training motivational techniques, etc.



A: We respect and embrace the idea that treating our team as a “family” will build greater loyalty in the Philippine culture than providing individual rewards or more money. That doesn’t mean we don’t have individual rewards — we do. But we’re also committed to building the concept of family and have developed a position we call the “Happiness Manager,” whose primary goal is to look for opportunities to make this the place our employees want to be.

eTelecare Global Solutions
(a merger of eTelecare International and the former Phase 2 Solutions)

Outbound, B-to-C
<http://www.etelecare.com>

Q: Specifically state your policies on quality and your company’s philosophy/motto with regards to quality.

A: eTelecare Global Solutions recruits only the best people through a rigorous six-step screening process that hires less than five percent of all applicants. Our new employees receive extensive instruction on call center skills (including American culture and idioms for Filipino agents), sales techniques and customer service before they train on client programs. As a result, our employees are dedicated, thoughtful problem solvers, capable of handling even the most complex programs or demanding customers.

Excell Services
(formerly OSC, which acquired Excell Agent Services in January 2005)

Inbound, B-to-C
<http://www.osc.com>

Q: Describe all efforts made to make your work environment more stress-free and ergonomically correct.

A: Agent workstations are designed to allow the appropriate amount of workspace for the task that is being performed. During the formal training process, each employee receives training on exercises that can be

done, while seated, to help to relieve stress and tension. In addition, every Friday, Excell Services makes available to its employees the services of a massage therapist and a reflexologist.

Hispanic Teleservices Corp.
Integrated (Outbound and Inbound), B-to-C

<http://www.htc.to>

Q: What do you do to demonstrate your commitment to staff quality, i.e., training motivational techniques, etc.?

A: For agents who pursue the career path to coach, supervisor or manager, it is HTC University that teaches them the tools they need through “Coach-the-Coach” and “Train-the-Trainer” modules. These courses specialize in campaign-specific skills, such as the most productive ways to give feedback, goal-setting and time management.

Unicall International, Inc.
Integrated (Outbound and Inbound), B-to-B

<http://www.unicallinc.com>

Q: Describe all efforts made to make your work environment more stress-free and ergonomically correct.

A: Each agent at Unicall goes through a well-developed training program and progresses through a set training curriculum. The more competency and skills an agent can obtain, the less stress is associated with various tasks. The more comfortable and secure the agents are with their work responsibilities, the better they feel, therefore there is less perceived stress. This behavior attributed directly to a work environment that is engineered to reduce stress.

BRONZE AWARD WINNERS



The Connection
Inbound, B-to-C

<http://www.the-connection.com>

Q: What implementation tactics and strategies were used to accomplish the goal [for the customer detailed in the questionnaire]?

A: Agents assigned to this client program were extensively trained prior to answering any calls. The Connection ramped up to 150 agents in 60 days and increased that to 260

agents within six months. The Connection successfully used mock calls as part of the certification process before agents were allowed to take live calls on the floor. In addition, The Connection used online quizzes and tests to monitor agents.

NOVO I
(formerly Protocol Communications)
Outbound, B-to-C

<http://www.novoi.com>

Q: Explain how quality has evolved in your contact center, how it is sustained and how it is measured.

A: Early on, we concluded that growth alone, including new call centers, expensive technology, numerous workstations and thousands of employees, is not the key to teleservices success and long-term client relationships. Quality is. Due to expansion and the narrowing of NOVO I’s focus to exclusively high-tech outbound sales and lead generation, our company has grown by as much as 500 percent during the past four years. However, annual growth has been decelerated to between 50 percent and 100 percent to ensure that quality remains fully within our control and can be improved and made consistent at our initiative. Uncontrolled growth can often usurp management’s control.

Vision-X Inc.
Outbound, B-to-B

<http://www.vxi.com>

Q: What do you do for customers that gives them the impression of quality and high ethical standards?

A: Vision-X’s compliance department is consulted frequently to ensure that all legal and ethical standards are adhered to for each program. Any issues raised by the compliance department are immediately escalated to our clients. Clients are given unrestricted Web access to digital recordings for each customer contact on their campaign, and unlimited unescorted monitoring via a toll-free number.

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