



callstreamTM

Travel Industry Telephony Survey

1st Quarter 2010

Introduction

Background

Callstream are a leading independent telephony partner to the Travel and Leisure Industry. We already partner many of the leading Travel businesses in the UK and, as such have gained an enormous amount of data and information with which we help our clients ultimately achieve more sales and become more profitable through the innovative use of network based telephony solutions.

Ever increasing costs of marketing and pressures on margins have dictated that Travel businesses now, more than ever, must identify and achieve efficiencies wherever possible within their businesses.

Types of businesses surveyed

We constantly analyse and benchmark our current clients to ensure they continue to make the very most from each and every telephone call in or out of their operations.

By way of a contribution to the mid market* UK Travel sector, we continue to publish a comparable quarterly report which anonymously analyses the basic call management and telephony efficiencies of 52 independent businesses within the Travel sector.

The need for Travel businesses to increase their efficiencies in order to continue profitably has never been stronger.

*The mid market Travel businesses range in size from approximately 25 agent / operator organisations up to approximately 300.

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Areas surveyed

From our 10 years experience in contact centre environments within the Travel marketplace we've highlighted six basic, yet fundamental indicators of telephony efficiency that often go overlooked. If managed correctly they can make a cost effective, tangible improvement on bottom line profitability.

- 1 - The average waiting time to answer a new enquiry (by an agent).
- 2 - Are calls acknowledged or professionally welcomed?
- 3 - Do callers have an option to directly reach brochure requests?
- 4 - Do callers have the option to speak directly to Customer Services?
- 5 - Do you confuse your callers with too many Options?
- 6 - Are calls managed with consistent, professional voice messages?

However, if there are specific areas you feel are missing but relevant; please feel free to request their inclusion in further editions.

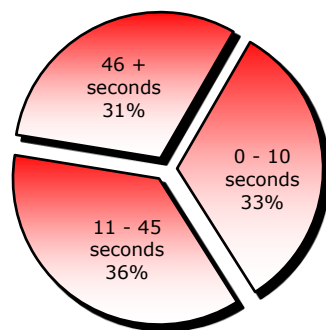
This quarter's survey was conducted between the 25th January and 26th February 2010. Our researchers contacted all 52 companies by calling the main advertised contact numbers. We contacted each company 5 times at various times in the day and week (including one evening call).

1: Average waiting time to answer a new reservation quotation.

- How long will customers wait in a queue for you to answer before hanging up?
- Management of new reservations enquiries vs human resource budget. Are there too few or too many agents?

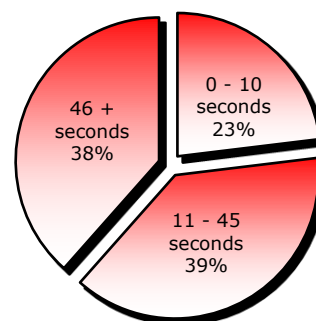
Peak Period

typical Monday morning
between 9am and 12 noon



Low Period

typical mid week afternoon
between 3pm and 8pm



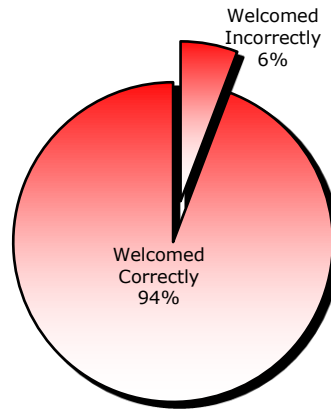
Solution

- If calls are queued at network level and not in-house, no switch capacity is being tied up whilst a caller is waiting for an agent.
- It can be more cost efficient to queue a call at network level, as extra line capacity required for queuing locally is not needed.
- A call can automatically be transferred to another location or outsourcer if you don't answer within a fixed timeline



2: Are calls acknowledged or professionally welcomed?

- Potentially a caller's first experience of your business and the start of their particular customer journey.
- Do customers know straight away they have reached the brand they called?
- Do they know that the business is aware of their call?



Solution

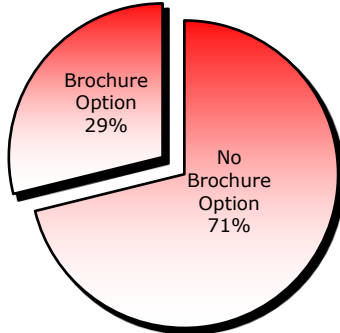
- By answering calls at network level, each caller can hear a customised welcome message and options, specific to the brand they have called.
- As there are no capacity limits with network solutions, customers always hear the correct welcome message and will never hear an engaged or unanswered tone.
- An infinite number of callers can be managed and delivered to single or multi site operations as and when in-house facilities allow.



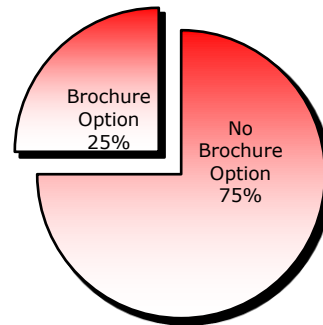
3: Do customers have an option to directly reach brochure requests?

- When your customers phone to simply request a brochure, can they reach this option at any time of day / week, as quickly and simply as possible?
- If a customer has to call the contact centre first, valuable sales agent time can be wasted whilst other more profitable calls could be left queuing.

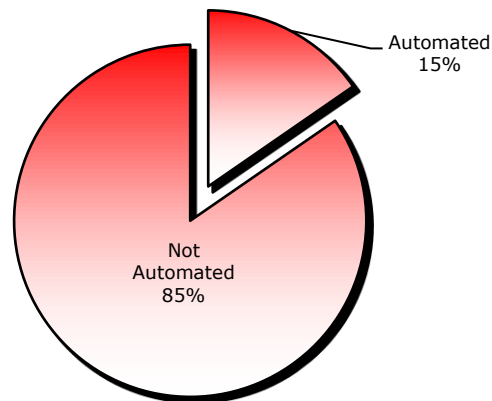
Option to reach Brochure Request?



Option to reach Brochure Request out of hours?



Are Brochure Requests Automated?



Solution

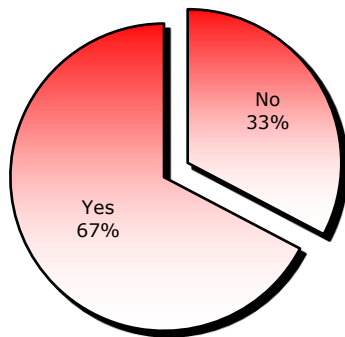
- Calls can be managed at network level, with the option to request a brochure and then be automatically connected to an automated data capture facility.
- This frees up agent time and reduces the number of calls on hold.
- Full (and if necessary, real time) Management Information is still available on these calls.
- Callers outside of your opening times will still have the ability to request a brochure.
- All brochure requests will be stored on the network, and can be downloaded and transcribed at a time suitable to the call centre operation or accessed by outsourced fulfilment organisations.



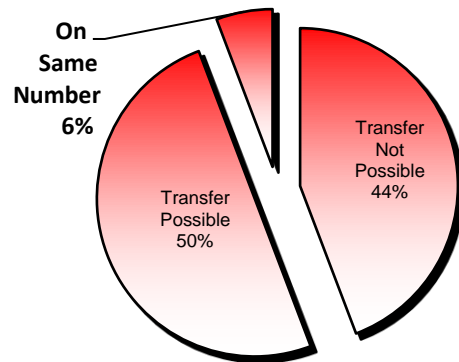
4: Do customers have the option to speak directly to Customer Services; if not, does the agent have the ability to transfer the caller to another department?

- Having made a booking, if a customer needs to speak to your Customer Services Department, is there an option for them to select?
- For callers that have no other option but to call the new reservations department, how quickly can agents connect them to customer services?
- If either the reservations or customer services department is outsourced, or in a different geographic location, are your agents able to transfer the caller, or do they have to issue the customer with another number to call?
- If an agent completes a typical transfer to the customer services operation from another geographical location, calls will still be taking 2 valuable telephone lines whilst live. Additionally, the transferred half of the call made outbound will incur a call cost.

Can the caller speak directly to Customer Services?



Can the Reservations agent transfer to Customer Services?



Solution

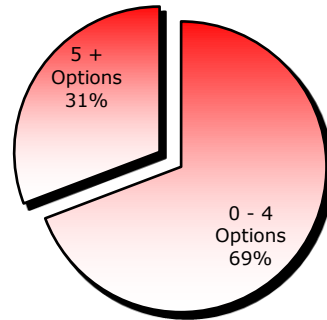
- With the use of network based solutions, you would be able to distribute a call to the correct department, even if the contact centres are situated in different geographic locations.
- The network itself can be used by your agent to transfer a received call to a secondary location. The call is effectively taken back up into the network and resent to the alternative location. No modifications to existing hardware are required and no additional call costs are incurred – but crucially, none of your telephone lines are “tied up” whilst the customer is dealing with the correct department.



5: Do you confuse your callers with too many options?

- New sales opportunities could be missed by confusing your callers with too many options to select from.
- Are your callers able to get through to the right department with their first selection?
- Do you find too many calls landing at the wrong department, taking up valuable agent time?

How many options do you give your callers?



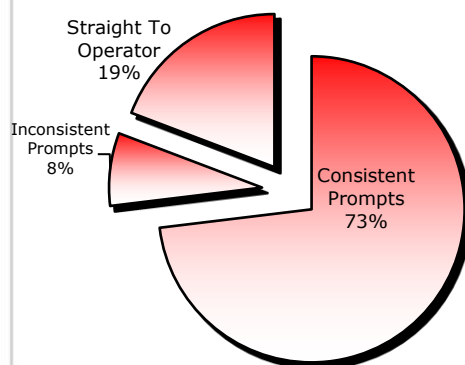
Solution

- Call Stream's experience within the industry recommends that customers are ideally given no more than four options at any one time
- With the use of the Network statistics, you will be able to see the usage of each of these options in real time, and make sure that these are being used efficiently

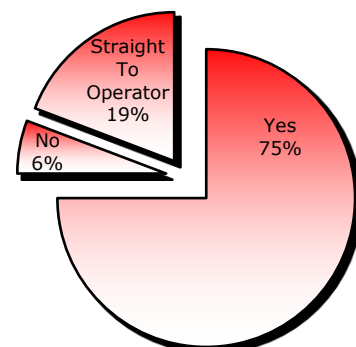
6: Are calls managed with consistent, professional voice messages?

- Messages are your shop window.
- Is the perception of your business tailored, suitable and accurate for your target markets?

Are message prompts consistent throughout the duration of the call?



Are calls answered by a professional voice?



Solution

- By employing call management at network level, "message banks" can be professionally pre-recorded by voice artists and inserted or changed quickly.
- Welcome and all holding messaging can be specific to the brand dialled even in a multi brand operation.



Let us know your thoughts.....

Our objective is to continually develop the content and worth of our quarterly reports to the Travel Industry.

Any feedback you can offer is welcome and appreciated.

If you would like to contact us to discuss the report in more detail, see how your operation compared with the average results, or if you would like to have different aspects of your telephony operation included in future surveys for benchmarking purposes please contact us on 0844 557 7800 or at survey@callstream.com

In order to include new aspects relating to your business, we would ask you to forward some basic information in the following form so that we can ensure your results remain comparable with existing survey parameters.



Callstream Quarterly survey response form

Please fill in and return to:

Fax: 0844 557 7801 or e-mail: survey@callstream.com

1. Your name -----
2. Your position -----
3. Company name -----
4. How many agents/operatives are *currently* within the call centre and could potentially be on the telephone at the same time?

Question suggestion 1 for inclusion in the next survey:

Question suggestion 2 for inclusion in the next survey:

Question suggestion 3 for inclusion in the next survey:

