



Dell Calls on Echopass for 24 x 7 Customer Support



Challenge

- Expand call center capacity to meet growing business demand
- Improve redundancy and availability of call center service
- Provide flexibility to adapt as business needs change while maintaining 24 x 7 service levels
- Extend and grow the call center without adding complexity or infrastructure

Solution

- Replace premise-based hardware/software with outsourced solution
- Deploy Echopass Call Center On-Demand

Benefits

- On-Demand capability provides unlimited and hassle-free scalability
- End-to-end Echopass responsibility simplifies problem resolution and vendor management
- Flexible reporting and call routing under the control of call center management
- Dell freed to focus on its market-leading, core business of providing a full range of on-demand desktop management services

Results

- Echopass has enabled Dell to consistently achieve its 60-second call answer SLA goals in the 95+ percentile range and 24 x 7 service
- Two incremental personnel were not required to manage and maintain call center operations
- Call center staff has grown to over 90 call center agents
- Second hosted call center site added to accommodate increased demand, without any capital expense

Technology Partners

- Genesys
- Sprint

Background

Dell is the market leader in on-demand desktop management services, which it offers through a Software as a Service (SaaS) model. Dell also offers outsourced help desk support to its customers across numerous enterprise vertical markets. Customer staff from administrative assistants to the Chief Executive Officer may call at any time for help in diagnosing and resolving a problem with their laptop or desktop PC. A branded and dedicated phone number allows Dell's call center agents to answer with the company's name making Dell a virtual extension of the customer's own IT department. With operational facilities in Dallas, Texas, and Charlotte, North Carolina, Dell manages over 140,000 desktops in 60 countries around the globe.

In March 2005, Dell's 30-agent hardware-based call center was handling 15,000 support calls per month. Based on a growing list of customers and increasing call volumes, Dell estimated they would need to double the number of agents by the end of the year, and would require 100 agents within 18 months. With expansion, the need for creating and maintaining both high availability and call center redundancy became critical. "We commit to service level agreements with all our customers," says Lou Muggeo, vice president of customer operations. "Our call agents must respond to incoming calls within 60 seconds, or we face financial penalties. The system has to be available 24 x 7 x 365."

Scalable and Available

Dell's first impulse was to build on the infrastructure already in place: an Avaya call center switch and associated services and equipment, which included Cisco interactive voice response (IVR) and call recording, plus Qwest Communications for in-the-cloud call routing. "We could have built out and managed our own telephony infrastructure," says Keith Phillips, director of IT operations. "We'd have to expand the Avaya switch, purchase an additional switch for a second call center location, buy additional hardware and software for call routing and site-to-site failover, and contract with an MPLS supplier to ensure call quality. We realized quickly that this would become a very large and expensive project."

Because of the size and complexity of the project, Dell sought bids from three Avaya resellers who could act as project managers. All involved anticipated that once implemented, the infrastructure would be turned over to Dell to manage. When fully scoped, the estimated price tag was nearly three-quarters of a million dollars for equipment, contracts, and additional head count to maintain the solution, plus ongoing maintenance and support fees. And because the system would be built on Avaya hardware, Dell knew that they would have to buy excess capacity in order to accommodate their expansion plans.

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—KEITH PHILLIPS,
Director of IT Operations



On Demand

Always On

Guaranteed

End to End

Dell was in the late stages of price negotiations with the Avaya resellers when it was suggested they consider Echopass, which could provide an alternative and hosted solution. "Because we are an outsourced services provider," says Phillips, "we know how difficult it is to provide services on a 24 x 7 x 365 basis, and to successfully deliver on a SaaS model, which may have initially steered us away from looking at a hosted solution. We understood that model. However, we're very glad that we looked at and ultimately chose Echopass."

Go with the Always On Experts

The Echopass solution clearly offered Dell a more cost effective and flexible alternative to a self-managed, hardware-based system. "We understand managing IT assets," says Phillips. "We know how to do it. That's our core competency. Running telephone systems is not. Echopass provides always-on capability, they run their own data center with their own technical staff who specialize in running call centers. It seemed to us a safer and smarter decision to outsource our call center infrastructure responsibilities to the people at Echopass who had the core expertise."

The Echopass Call Center On-Demand solution went live in December 2005. "It was a very rapid and smooth deployment," recalls Phillips, which included the original call center in California, then a new call center in Charlotte, North Carolina. Since the initial deployment, the always-on availability of the Echopass solution has enabled Dell to consistently achieve its 60-second call answer customer SLA goals in the high 90s percentile.

Beyond the inbound customer support capability created by Echopass, Dell is continually looking for new ways to further leverage Echopass technology for greater market success. For example, members of the corporate sales team recently began using Echopass outbound dialing capability to market to prospects. And Dell is currently working with Echopass to integrate the call center with salesforce.com for sales force automation and on-line purchasing. "Everything is on the table for doing more with call routing, screen pops, data dips, and predictive calling, and we're working together with Echopass to continue to test new ideas," says Phillips.

Flexibility Improves Business Agility

Echopass has risen to the challenge of meeting Dell's dynamic requirements for flexibility. As a technically sophisticated and demanding customer, Dell appreciated Echopass' ability to respond. "Echopass was willing to modify, improve, and expand their capabilities to address our needs as they changed. Other vendors we evaluated, and certainly others we knew about from first hand experience did not offer that same speed, agility, or willingness to work with us," says Phillips, who points to another way in which Echopass showed its on-demand flexibility. "It's easy for us to expand quickly, add more agents, customize features, and respond to the ups and downs of business cycles because we outsource those functions to Echopass rather than trying to do it all ourselves."

Single-Vendor Accountability

As a single-source end-to-end managed service, Echopass has also eliminated the potential finger pointing that alternative solutions would have presented. With their previous in-house solution, Dell was forced to deal with individual hardware, software, and network providers whenever some component failed. Echopass, in contrast, offers an end-to-end promise with accountability for the completely integrated call center service including the applications, the carrier network connection, and integration with CRM applications and other internal systems. "Not that we have to because Echopass is a really solid performer, but their single point of accountability gives us one organization to deal with if something in the whole environment has a problem," says Muggeo.

Advanced Reporting Capabilities

In addition to the hosted call center service, Echopass also provides Dell with an up-to-the-minute understanding of what is going on at any given time. "The Echopass reporting capability is very usable and very valuable," says Muggeo. "I can get real-time data on current wait times, response times, incoming call volume by customer, and abandonment rates. The reporting features of the Echopass system are better than any I've seen in the past with the more traditional systems. We feel that Echopass is more than meeting our needs, they're exceeding our expectations."

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