



Challenge

- Improve both customer service and agent utilization
- Provide additional customer touch points while concurrently reducing costs
- Upgrade contact center technology

Solution

- Replace existing on-premise ACD hardware from Aspect with hosted Echopass EchoSystem™ including Echopass Advanced Contact Center On Demand Service

Benefits

- Voice, email, fax, Internet chat from customers are now unified in common PC interface
- Better personnel utilization, as incoming contacts are matched and routed to the appropriate agent with the right skills
- Dramatically lower operating costs
- Maintenance-free solution
- Future forward: Echopass service enables employees to work-from-home

Results

- Significantly better overall customer experience – a “wow” factor delivered
- Ability to manage increased contact volume over previous year without hiring additional staff
- All targeted operational and performance metrics met
- Improved office and agent efficiencies
- Higher agent satisfaction
- Over \$100,000 in cost savings

Technology Partners

- Genesys and Sprint

Outrigger Hotels Books Echopass Contact Center On Demand, Gains Integrated Voice/Fax/Email/Chat Service Capability

Background

For over 40 years, the Outrigger name has been as much a part of Hawaii as surfboards and mai tais. Starting with the Outrigger Waikiki Hotel on Honolulu's famed Waikiki Beach, Outrigger Hotels and Resorts has grown to become the largest locally-owned hospitality chain in Hawaii, and one of the fastest-growing companies of its kind in the Pacific. Today, Outrigger, manages 51 hotels and resort condominium properties in Hawaii, Australia, Micronesia, Fiji, Tahiti and New Zealand under the Outrigger and OHANA brands.



In the early days of the company, all Outrigger guest reservations were handled at the Outrigger Waikiki where, in a small office behind the front desk, employees would hear the phone ring and yell, “I’ll get it!” Those times have long since passed. Now fielding 3,000 inbound phone calls, 1,000 faxes, plus several hundred Internet customer chats each day, the hospitality company’s customer contact center in Denver, Colorado employs 55 highly trained call center reservation agents who lead the South Pacific tourism industry in prompt, professional customer service.

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—BILL PETERS, VP of Reservations

It was Outrigger’s continuing commitment to excellence that led it recently to upgrade its customer contact infrastructure. “While we had always used the latest technology available, each separate channel—phone calls, email, fax and Web chat—was isolated both physically and technologically,” said Bill Peters, vice president of reservation services for Outrigger Hotels and Resorts. “If call volumes went up, for example, we had to temporarily pull agents from doing

another function to handle the calls.”

Peters also knew that Outrigger’s existing ACD (Automatic Call Distributor) system from Aspect was expensive to maintain. “We decided that a cutting-edge hosted contact solution was the answer. We wanted to lower our technology purchase and maintenance costs, plus create the new system that could also enable us to integrate all our inbound customer contact channels—not to mention adding new features and capacity whenever we needed it - which was impossible with the existing inflexible hardware,” he stated.

Sophisticated, Reliable, On-Demand

With these goals in mind, Outrigger began looking for a Web-based, on demand call center service. Peters identified six different providers and was literally pen-in-hand to sign a contract with one of the companies when Sprint, the company’s telecom network provider, asked, “Have you looked at Echopass?”

“On Sprint’s recommendation we made the call,” said Peters. “Echopass immediately scheduled a presentation with us. It was evident even in our initial discussion, that the Echopass service was a cut above everything we had seen to date.”

Peters was impressed with the sophistication of the Echopass Contact Center On Demand solution. The reliability of Sprint and the Genesys routing technology embedded within the Echopass service, he said, combined with Echopass’ highly-secured hosting facility in Salt Lake City, its flexible per-seat licensing program, and its Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telecom platform, would provide Outrigger the best possible infrastructure at the lowest possible overall cost.



On Demand

Always On

Guaranteed

End to End

“We recognize that companies like Outrigger are entrusting us with one of their most valuable assets—their customer communications,” said Vincent Deschamps, Echopass chief executive officer. “Our goal is to provide the most reliable and flexible contact center solution available anywhere, which is why we have integrated our solutions with technology from partners like Sprint and Genesys, and why we built, own, and operate our own Network Operations Center.”

After viewing the Echopass presentation, Outrigger changed its decision and chose Echopass Contact Center On Demand. Thirty days later, the system was installed, operating and already producing results.

High Performance and Immediate Results

One of the initial advantages Peters appreciated was the short learning curve of the new contact center solution. “The Contact Center On Demand onscreen interface is very intuitive. In fact, our agents spent more time learning the new VoIP softphone than they did training on the system software,” Peters reported.

Echopass also eliminated a number of large unnecessary machines and related hardware that filled Outrigger’s Denver Contact Center. Instead of using ACD equipment for phone calls, fax machines for travel agency bookings, and PCs for Internet chat and email, the center now houses only workstations and a single, router-based interface (see chart). All forms of inbound customer communications—voice, faxes, Internet “live help” chat and email—come from Echopass’ Salt Lake City operations center where the core EchoSystem technology is integrated, delivered and managed

Echopass intelligently routes inbound requests according to their particular requirements. Whether the contact is for corporate accounts, VIP lines or condominium reservations, all are quickly and efficiently forwarded to the appropriate service personnel. Even foreign language customers are connected with a third party, meta-ASP service qualified to handle them.

‘Wow’ Factor

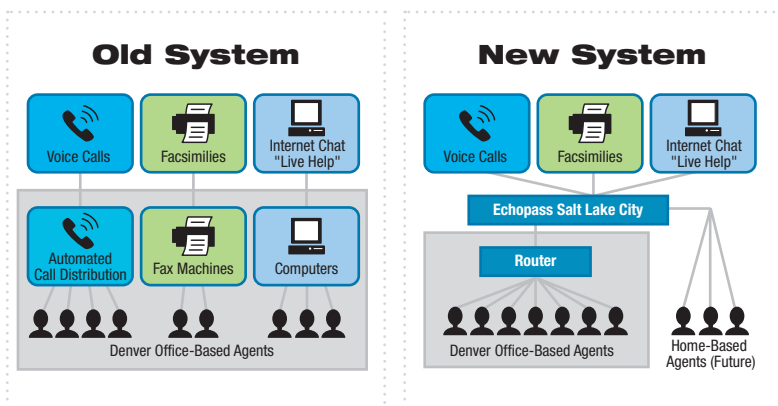
Overall, Outrigger Hotels and Resorts discovered that Echopass exceeded system specifications, and delivered an end-to-end, managed flexibility that simply wasn’t available from Outrigger’s previous inflexible hardware-based call center technology—or, for that matter, from any of the other six hardware or software vendors it had considered.

Despite that fact that business is up roughly 15 - 20% versus the year earlier, there has been no need to hire additional staff. Contact center agents, who now work together in the same room, have the cross-training necessary to handle any form of electronic request, from phone calls to Internet chat to faxes and email, eliminating the need to re-deploy workers when call volumes are heavy.

According to Peters, better staff utilization, lower maintenance costs, and the elimination of major infrastructure expenditures have together saved Outrigger more than \$100,000 in contact center expense alone. The new system also enables Outrigger to institute a future work-at-home option for agents, reducing the need for office space and allowing agents to be placed in different time zones in order to improve Outrigger’s customer service levels.

“We pride ourselves in offering our customers a complete destination experience, not just a hotel reservation,” Peters observed. “Implementing a high-quality, technically-sound inbound and outbound solution, therefore, was a top priority for us. We needed a state-of-the-art customer interaction system that would complement that philosophy, allowing our team to deliver ‘wow’ customer service regardless of how our customers chose to reach us. We found Echopass was the only hosted solution that could help us accomplish that, and they have done so quickly and cost effectively.”

OUTRIGGER/OHANA DENVER CONTACT CENTER



Almost immediately, Echopass Contact Center On Demand produced the efficiency Outrigger was looking for. “We quickly reached the 50 to 60 percentile range for conversion of calls to bookings—that’s unusually strong for the hospitality industry,” Peters said. In addition to meeting desired call center standards for transactions per hour, calls handled per hour, and average call answer times, Peters noted that Echopass Contact Center On Demand’s ad hoc reporting features help keep the Outrigger’s quality assurance efforts on track. Department supervisors can easily monitor both overall system and individual agent performance, ensuring consistently high service levels and pinpointing problem areas should they arise.