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Dimension Data's Global Contact Centre
Benchmarking Summary Report 2009



REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

The Elevated Role of the Contact Centre in Business



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Dimension Data's Global Contact Centre Benchmarking Report, 2009 is a key resource for decision makers and managers in the contact centre industry. The Report covers the full breadth and depth of managing a contact centre – performance, processes, organisation, technology, as well as strategy, financial and customer management. Each section includes our analysis as well as recommendations for the day-to-day challenges that contact centres face.

2009 marks the release of Dimension Data's world-first comparative benchmarking portal which enables respondents to view their own data as well as compare themselves to others in the same region / industry vertical / size classification and outsourcer vs. captive contact centres. Never before have contact centres had such unprecedented access to benchmarking capabilities. If you would like your contact centre to access cutting-edge benchmarking and our revolutionary portal, please complete the 2010 Participation Form at the end of this document.

This Summary Report includes a short selection of some key trends and findings from the 2009 Benchmarking Report. It is by no means exhaustive. For the full report, please see the Order Form at the end of this document.

THE EVOLUTION OF CUSTOMER CONTACT

This year's Benchmarking results indicate that, as an industry, we are on the cusp of the next stage of evolution. More and more organisations are recognising that the contact centre can play a key role in the creation of value for the business. Even though we are seeing businesses wanting to shift focus to value generation, it doesn't mean that we forget about doing the basics and optimising costs.

One of the main proof points from this year's results, that this transition is underway, is an increase in the number of respondents who reported that they have implemented initiatives that identify trigger events in service environments that can generate value through cross or up-selling opportunities. We're also seeing an increase in the number of organisations who are tackling CRM at a far more practical and pragmatic level.

From a technology perspective, companies that are making this move to value creation are focusing their attention on integration initiatives to deliver solutions that enable this service and sales capability. We expect to see this transition to value creation to take the next three to four years to fully take hold and it is within this context that we expect to see investment decisions made over the next period. It's not something that happens overnight and we need catalysts to create change; the economic conditions in which we're now operating may well be that catalyst.

SOME OF THE MAJOR THEMES AND FINDINGS FROM 2009

A MIXED BAG FOR OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Looking at aggregated operational performance data always requires a degree of license. Overall, we would summarise this year's operational performance as 'mixed' - there have definitely been no great strides forward or any significant decline in standards.

CALL VOLUMES STILL ON THE RISE

Overall call volumes have risen slightly this year, contradicting predictions of the demise of contact centres as self service and contact avoidance initiatives are developed. Growth in call volumes is more pronounced in emerging markets. Since the onset of the Global Economic Crisis there has been a clear shift in the reasons for customer contact.

COMPLEXITY FOR AGENTS

Average Handle Times have continued to creep up but we believe that this is largely down to the migration of the simpler, commoditised transactions to self service channels which continues to increase. This obviously leads to front line agents having to handle more complex interactions that often require a greater degree of empathy, communication skills and access to the relevant information.

STILL WORK TO DO ON MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Management Information (MI) reported at board level under the guise of Strategic MI is still too focused on service levels. Instead of focusing on the inner workings of the operation, strategic MI focuses on outcomes. We believe this is an issue across the industry and we are still measuring the wrong things for the wrong reasons.

PROCESS OPTIMISATION REMAINS PRIMARY FOCUS

From a customer and agent perspective, the ongoing trend towards more End-to-End Process Automation is good news. Through increasing the number of processes that can be handled within contact centres, hand-offs will reduce as will operational costs.

OUTSOURCING STILL A COST DECISION

While we continue to see the role of outsourcing maturing, the top three reasons for outsourcing are all cost related. Cost remains the biggest driver for adopting an outsourcing strategy, but it is encouraging to see results that indicate a more balanced approach to outsourcing decisions.

CUSTOMER LIFETIME VALUE IS BACK ON THE RADAR

Over the past 12 months there has been a positive indicator trend suggesting that organisations are looking to improve the way they show how Customer Lifetime Value is impacted by customer interactions taking place in the contact centre.

CHANNELS ARE STILL TOO SILOED

Organisations are still not using customer insight across the organisation. It's a clear and disappointing indicator of the extent of the challenge facing the industry to deliver a joined up end-to-end experience.

WHY NOT MEASURE COST PER INTERACTION?

A third of all contact centres report that they do not measure the cost per interaction of agent assisted telephone calls. When you consider that this is the most accurate means of determining the cost effectiveness of an operation, it is a worrying trend that we have not seen improve in recent years.

SEGMENTATION BECOMES MORE SOPHISTICATED (BUT FEWER PEOPLE ARE DOING IT)

More companies are using increasingly sophisticated methods of segmenting and differentiating their customers. There appears to be a very real desire to generate more value from customer interactions. What is worrying though, is the drop in the number of companies using segmentation.

HOME-WORKING BECOMES A REALITY

The number of home-working agents is generally growing in more mature markets across the globe. A large proportion of respondents are considering home-working, signifying a major shift in approach to employee management, where benefits include lower staff turnover and cost, improved productivity and reduced travel through the use of technology.

HOSTING AND 'ON-DEMAND' BECOMES MAINSTREAM

Most contact centres are still owned and managed within the organisation. The number of centres owned by organisations continues to drop year on year. With hosted technologies more secure and easier to manage than in the past, we expect to see an increase in the number of hosted centres due to the economic climate and convenience of the technology.

We expect to see this transition to value creation to take the next three to four years to fully take hold and it is within this context that we expect to see investment decisions made over the next period.

SAMPLE SPECIFICATIONS

Each year, Dimension Data strives for excellence in undertaking a comprehensive benchmarking survey of contact centres across the world. Our aim is to highlight key trends and emerging developments within the global contact centre environment and provide these insights to the industry. This year, we are delighted to have achieved worldwide representation by 554 respondents from contact centres across all industries in 36 countries; this is the highest level of participation that we have experienced in the 11 years that we have been producing the report.

In addition to producing the report this year, we have also designed and developed a world-first benchmarking portal for our participants and partners and revolutionised the way contact centres benchmark themselves and their competition. Our main priority for participants is to deliver maximum value from the time spent on benchmarking exercises and we've invested a great deal in making this happen. Our groundbreaking analysis portal gives analysis functionality to those contact centres who want to have a competitive advantage. If you would like to access these benefits, please ensure you register your contact centre to participate in the 2010 survey. Visit www.ccbenchmarking.com/Benchmarks to register.

REGIONAL REPRESENTATION

Percentage of contact centres | n = 554

	% Representation
Africa and Middle East	21.1
Americas	15.2
Asia	9.7
Australia and New Zealand	9.6
Europe	7.2
UK	37.2

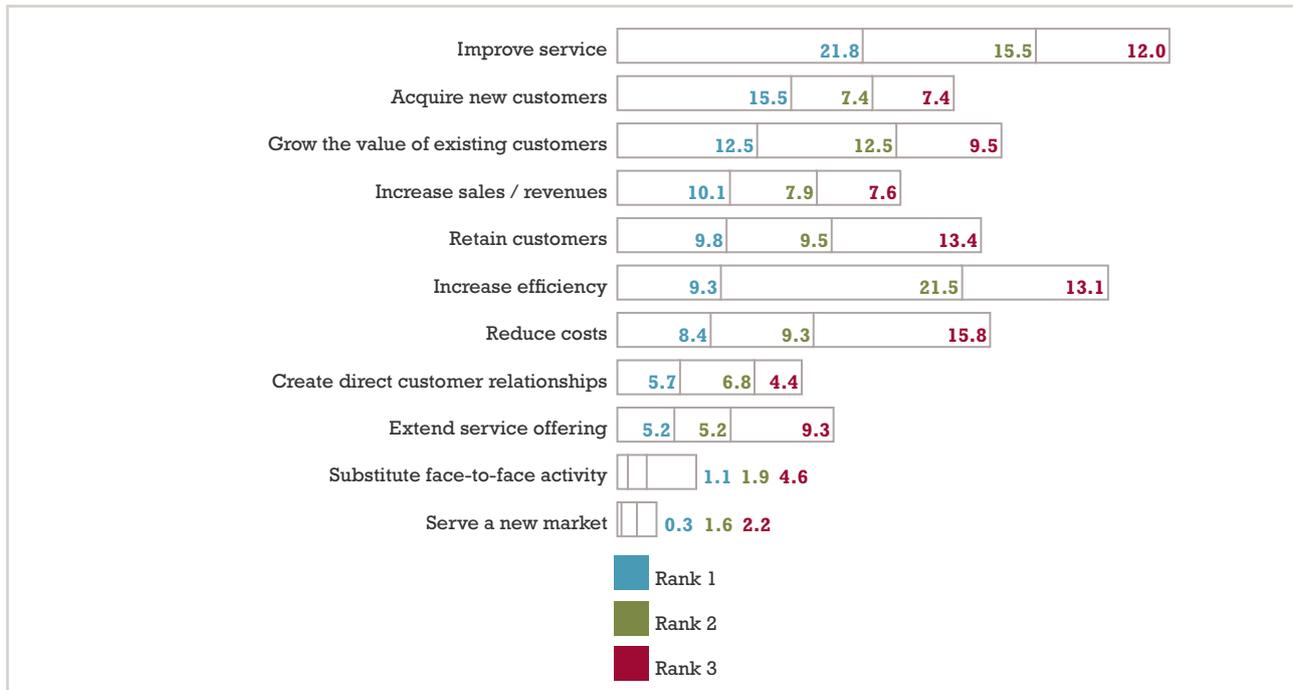
- This year's sample includes a new Outsourcing sector. The highest representation by sector in this year's survey was by Financial Services, Government and Education and Outsourcing.
- This year we see more highly specialised and smaller contact centres serving niche businesses (up to 50 agent seats). A fifth of the total respondents have 101-250 seats, making this the second largest group represented.
- Similar to last year, the use of channels is as expected. Notable exceptions include the increase in online and web chat and the use of video is significantly higher than last year. Americas report the highest use of speech self service. Europe handles the most physical correspondence while Africa is highest in handling SMS in the contact centre.

STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT

COMMERCIAL DRIVERS FOR CONTACT CENTRES

What are the three most important current main commercial drivers for the contact centre? (Overall)

Percentage of contact centres | n = 367



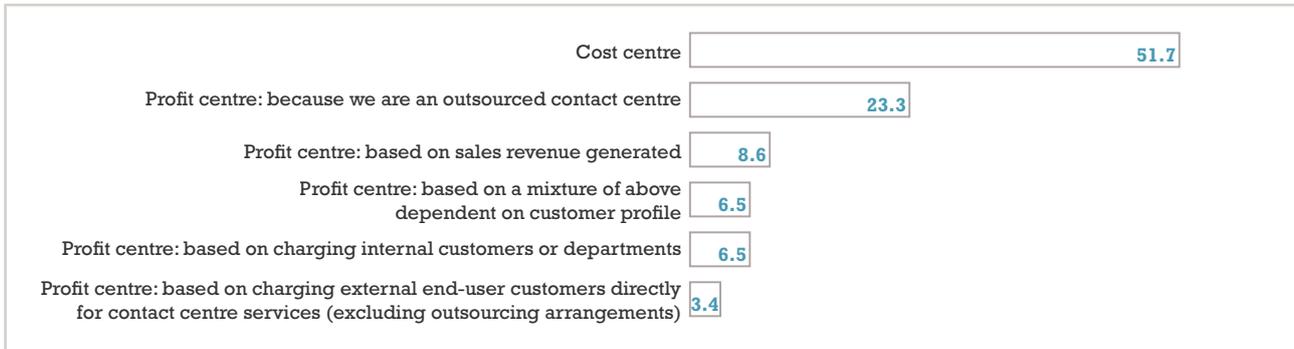
- Service Improvement is still the major commercial driver for contact centres across all regions and industry sectors. The largest rise on last year is the Drive to Acquire New Customers and similar importance is placed on Growing the Value of Existing Customers. Companies are clearly focused on value creation and it's interesting to note a large drop in importance placed on Cost Savings / Increase Efficiency.
- There is a positive increase in recognising the influence of organisational strategies on the Contact Centre Development Strategy. More priority is being placed on the contact centre and its positioning within the business. It's encouraging to see that organisations are seeing the importance of seizing the opportunities to interact and influence customer relationships as crucial to their ultimate success.
- There is a focus on Process Optimisation and Self Service and Improvement in the Quality of the customer experience. Overall, we see a more balanced approach by organisations to the strategy and development of their contact centres.
- While we continue to see the role of outsourcing maturing, the top three reasons for outsourcing are all cost related: Potential Cost Savings, Flexibility and Greater Cost Control. Cost remains the biggest driver for adopting an outsourcing strategy, but it is encouraging to see results that indicate a more balanced approach to outsourcing decisions. There is a greater recognition of retaining core functions and focusing the decisions on a balance of value, performance and risk, rather than cost alone.

FINANCIAL RATIONALE AND MANAGEMENT

FINANCIAL STATUS OF THE CONTACT CENTRE

What is the financial status of the participating contact centre - within your organisation? (Overall)

Percentage of contact centres | n = 232



- Over the past 12 months there has been a positive indicator trend suggesting that organisations are looking to improve the way they show how Customer Lifetime Value is impacted by customer interactions taking place in the contact centre. We have seen a significant increase this year in the number of organisations looking to focus on Customer Lifetime Value Management within the contact centre.
- Organisations continue to focus on Cost Optimisation at similar levels to previous years, but the number of organisations that are prioritising Value Generating activities has increased significantly. In demonstrating the value contribution of the contact centre, organisations are focusing their attention on initiatives that generate immediate return.
- Most contact centres still do not offer any incentives to customers to use lower cost channels. But, more organisations are telling their customers that their lower cost channels are more available and easier to use. Doubling this year, this is an encouraging sign, though it will only benefit the organisation and customer if the lower cost channels meet expectations.
- A large proportion of all contact centres report that they do not measure the cost per interaction of agent assisted telephone calls. When you consider that this is the most accurate means of determining the cost effectiveness of an operation, it is a worrying trend that we have not seen improve in recent years.

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CUSTOMER KNOWLEDGE AND MANAGEMENT

AVERAGE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SCORE

If you measure customer satisfaction, what is the average customer satisfaction score recorded for the past year? (Overall)

Percentage of contact centres | n = 246

2008	83.8
2007	80.4
2006	81.5
2005	82.0

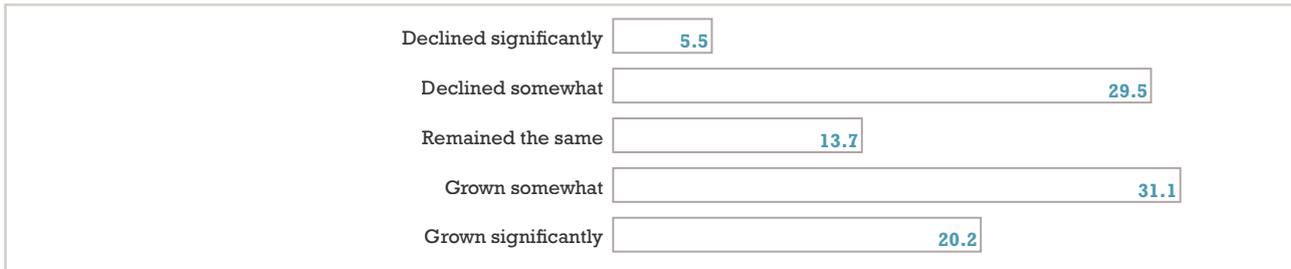
- More companies are using increasingly sophisticated methods of segmenting and differentiating their customers. The top three methods used for segmenting the customer base are: Product Holding, Value of Customer and Transactional data. There appears to be a very real desire to generate more value from customer interactions. What is worrying though, is the drop in the number of companies using segmentation.
- A disappointingly low number of companies are able to glean customer information easily and without having to do multiple searches on back end systems. Many contact centres are still unable to access basic information about their customers. If companies want to maximise value from existing customers, priority should be placed on providing this customer information to agents when they take a call.
- There is little change this year with companies measuring customer feedback. Nearly half measure feedback specific to the contact centre. And we believe more organisations will follow suit as they seek to reduce costs and optimise customer satisfaction. Of concern is the fairly high proportion of respondents indicating that their organisation does not measure satisfaction generally or within the contact centre. This should be standard practice for any organisation seeking to improve the customer experience and add value to the business.
- Customer satisfaction has risen year on year. An average customer satisfaction score is a combined metric looking at satisfaction with the organisation and the contact centre specifically. We expect to see the growth of near real-time surveys and the increased use of Net Promoter Scores (NPS) as a substitute or complementary measure of 'satisfaction'.
- Organisations are still not using customer insight across the organisation. It's a clear and disappointing indicator of the extent of the challenge facing the industry to deliver a joined up end-to-end experience. Joining up the customer journey across different units of the organisation will improve the overall customer experience, yet in reality it remains one of the main challenges facing the contact centre industry.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND METRICS

INBOUND CALL VOLUMES

What has the net effect on inbound call volumes handled by your organisation been?

Percentage of contact centres | n = 183



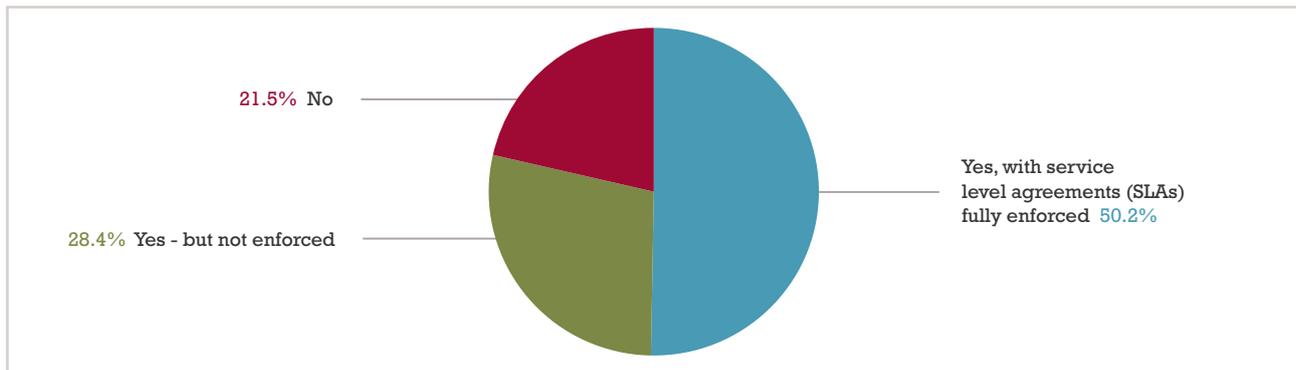
- Overall call volumes have risen slightly this year, contradicting earlier predictions of the demise of contact centres as self service and contact avoidance initiatives are developed. Growth in call volumes is more pronounced in emerging markets, but in a global recession we would expect call volumes to drop and are noticing this in particular sectors like Automotive and Manufacturing. The most significant driver that impacts call volumes is change in the Size of the Customer Base, followed by the Changing Reasons for Customer Contact. There is also some evidence that online activity is having an impact.
- Average Handling Times (AHT) continue to grow as self service takes on the simpler, transactional calls. The proportion of wrap activities has dropped slightly but is still a drain on capacity. Targeting AHT through process optimisation is an obvious strategy while targeting Wrap is a little more difficult. The best way to target AHT is in conjunction with First Call Resolution and overall customer satisfaction.
- Organisations continue to focus on responding to electronic communications over physical mail. Email response has improved significantly but response times to physical correspondence remain problematic as companies focus more on email and web. Improving response times has a significant impact on staffing and processes. While it may be appealing initially to have a multi-skilled agent across multiple channels, the reality is somewhat different. We would like to see more organisations training agents that operate in single skill groups.
- Contact centres perceive the most important factors impacting positively on First Call Resolution to be Advisor Knowledge followed by Routing the Call to the Right Agent as the top two ranked drivers. Systems / Information is the second most important driver overall with the second highest total mentions. Interestingly, a low significance is placed on Accessibility of Experienced Staff and joined up End-to-End processes. Again we see the onus being placed on the agent. Most surprising is the very low importance placed on Customer Need. While this is probably true for simple transactional calls, it's definitely not the case for complex queries.

PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

Does the contact centre have defined and documented service level agreements (SLAs) in place that involve other business areas within the organisation? (Overall)

Percentage of contact centres | n = 275



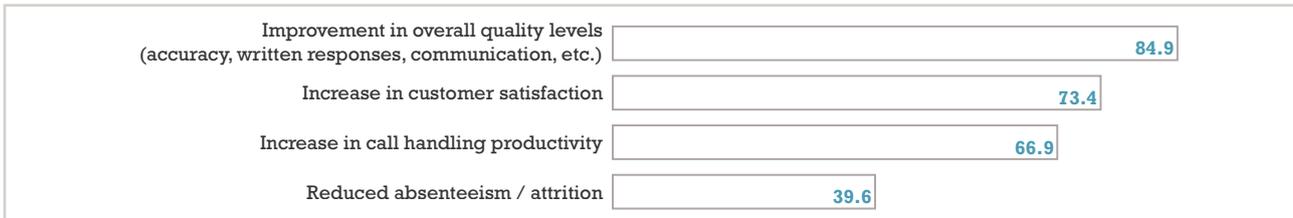
- From a customer and agent perspective, the trend towards more end-to-end process automation is good news. Through increasing the number of processes that can be handled within contact centres, hand-offs will be reduced as will operational costs. Reduced Hand-Off and Extending the Reach of Processes Performed within contact centres are two areas receiving attention and are likely to have a positive impact on call resolution rates, resulting in less hand-offs to other areas. An end-to-end approach offers the biggest opportunity to increase operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.
- Whilst it's encouraging to see that progress is being made with greater business involvement in process redesign overall, nearly a third of respondents have either limited or no business involvement in their process redesign efforts. We believe this will remain a key challenge and area for differentiation in the foreseeable future. Without full collaboration across all business units, the end-to-end customer experience will remain fragmented and a major source of dissatisfaction.
- Almost half of all contact centres either don't enforce or have formal SLAs in place. We have seen a large rise in the number of participants with fully enforced SLAs this year and centres with no SLAs in place have dropped slightly. Though this is a major step forward for contact centres, the absence of SLAs can have a hugely negative effect on process effectiveness, customer satisfaction and employee engagement.
- Contact centres should be following the example of more mature regions across the world when it comes to tracking customer enquiries. We see little progress in contact centres' ability to track hand-offs and only a small drop in the number of centres not tracking hand-offs at all. And, although customers should welcome such a move, the contact centre industry still has a long way to go in providing agents with a full status view of open transactions.

ORGANISATION

MEASURING COST VS. BENEFIT OF TRAINING

If you measure the cost of training against overall benefit, which of the following mechanisms do you use?

Percentage of contact centres | n = 139



- The top four planned strategies are: Establishment of Mentorship programmes, Implementing Performance Support Tools, Programmes to Reduce Attrition and Defining a Career Development Path which is an extremely positive sign for the sector of such a move to find, develop and retain people in the industry. Other regional differences include less multiple channel development in Europe and less concern over attrition and home-working.
- The number of home-working agents is generally growing in more mature markets across the globe. The largest proportion of home-workers appears to be in the Americas and Australia and is particularly prevalent where organisations want to retain specialist skills despite changes to employees' personal life circumstances. Interestingly, participants from Africa reported no use of home-working which may be linked to technology and bandwidth issues. One third of respondents are considering home-working, signifying a major shift in approach to employee management where benefits include lower staff turnover and cost, improved productivity and reduced travel through the use of technology.
- Most respondents report over half of their agents work with the telephone channel only and only a few centres make use of email-only agents where email-only outsourcers exist to service customers of technology related providers, where a telephone channel is unavailable. This is an interesting trend to watch for the future where organisations are either looking to drive efficiency in a channel or broaden job specifications for staff and create more interesting work to reduce attrition.
- Respondents rated Improvement in Overall Quality Levels and Increase in Customer Satisfaction as their two top mechanisms for measuring the effectiveness of training. It is pleasing to see that the customer experience appears to be the most important factor in delivering training. Regionally, we see the top three ranked factors in measuring training effectiveness being Improvement in Quality, Increase in Customer Satisfaction and Improvement in Productivity which is a significant global trend.

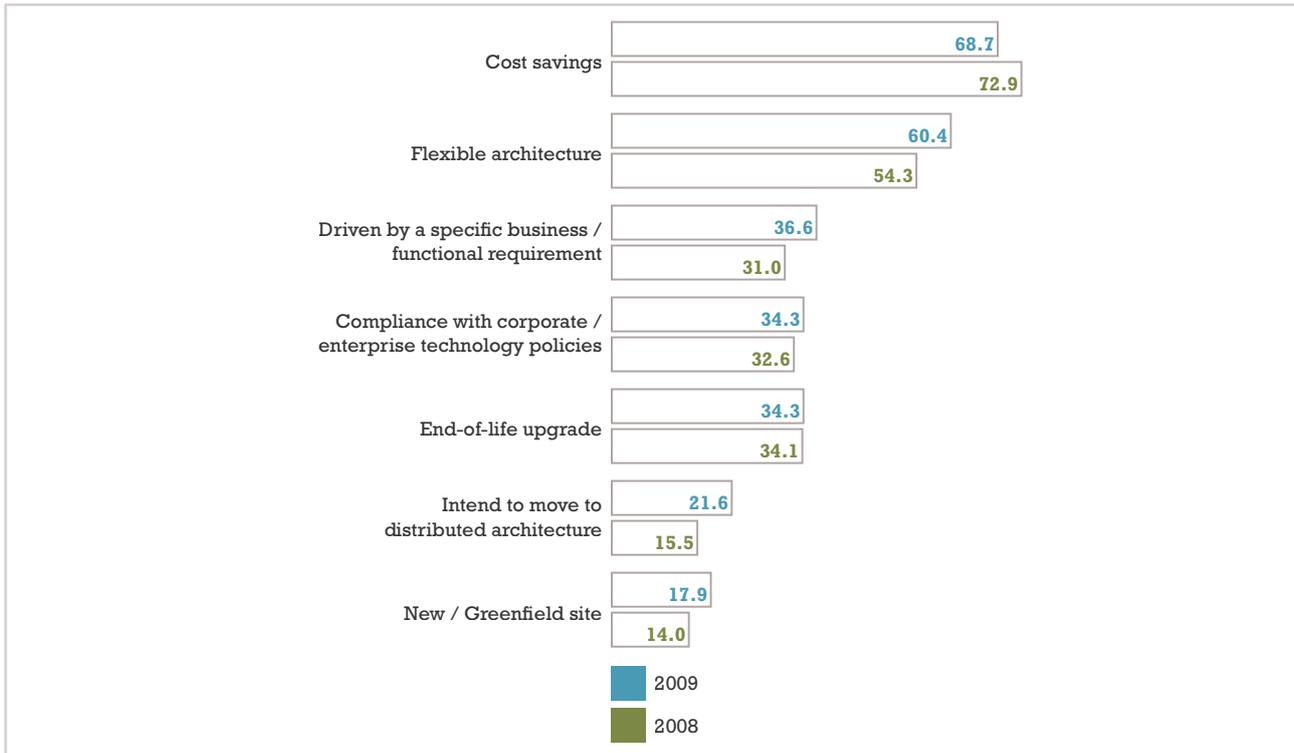
The largest proportion of home-workers appears to be in the Americas and Australia and is particularly prevalent where organisations want to retain specialist skills despite changes to employees' personal life circumstances.

TECHNOLOGY ENVIRONMENT

REASONS FOR INTRODUCTION OF IP

If you have introduced or intend to introduce IP into your contact centre, what are the main reasons for this? (Overall)

Percentage of contact centres | n = 134



- Most contact centres have some level of planning and a formal process that aligns IT with the business. Over two fifths of contact centres have Post Implementation and Ongoing Review and Measurement of the Return on Investment (ROI) which reflects a more strategic approach by companies to evaluating long term viability of solutions. Current economic pressures are presenting organisations with the opportunity to critically evaluate technology decisions across the board and evolve their ways of doing business.
- Most contact centres use Automatic Call Distributor (ACD) and Voice/ Call recording, while half of all centres now have Telephony Soft Switching based on an internet or network-based switching protocol - Session Initiation Protocol (SIP). While contact centres are interested in Multimedia, SMS and Video technologies, many appear to ignore them. Organisations will need to balance operational issues against strategic objective in introducing multimedia solutions to enhance the customer experience. SMS remains a cost effective solution offering many benefits to managing customer expectations and introducing call avoidance strategies.
- Cost Savings is cited as the main driver for the implementation of IP, followed by Flexible Architecture. Given current economic conditions, organisations should see this as a well timed opportunity to justify the move to IP to save costs. Interestingly, we note an increasing focus on Business Requirements as a driver for implementing IP compared to last year and expect this to become one of the main drivers over the next three years.
- This is the first time that Adoption of IP has been named as the top technology trend influencing the contact centre. It's a further indication that most contact centre owners are planning how and when to introduce IP rather than questioning its validity. Availability and Business Continuity is still a top priority and there is a definite trend towards Reducing Complexity through fewer technologies from different vendors. This will result in simplified architectures and support models and enable better integration of the contact centre into the rest of the enterprise.

ORDER FORM

Please complete your details in full. If you require any assistance with completing the form, please contact Nicki Downing on +27 (0)11 575 6855 or email ccBenchmarking@za.didata.com. To complete this form online, please visit our website: www.ccBenchmarking.com.

CONTACT DETAILS

Title _____ First Name _____

Surname _____

Job Title _____

Telephone _____
(please include country and city code)

Company Name _____

Facsimile _____
(please include country and city code)

Physical Address _____

Email _____

Town/City _____

Price per Report

Quantity

County/State _____

US\$ 1,500 | Standard Price

Postcode/Zip code _____

US\$ 1,200 | 20% Event Discount

Country _____

US\$ 1,050 | 30% Event and Participation Discount

Association _____

US\$ 1,200 | 20% Industry Association Discount

(Please name the association you are a member of, if applicable)

(Only associations detailed on the website will qualify for a discount)

Please select your preferred currency

Membership Number _____

GBP USD AUD ZAR EUR

PAYMENT DETAILS

Credit Card

Please debit my credit card for the sum of _____

Card Number (16 digits)

Expiry date (MM YY)

CVV Number 3/4-digit Security Code

VISA MasterCard American Express

Cheque

The correct details will be sent to you along with the invoice for your purchase

EFT or Transfer

The correct banking details will be sent to you along with the invoice for your purchase

Please fax this form to: Nicki Downing | Dimension Data | +27 (0)11 576 6855 or email: Nicki.Downing@za.didata.com

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Dimension Data's Global Contact Centre Benchmarking Report 2009

2010 PARTICIPATION FORM

Participation Form 2010: Yes, I would like to participate in the 2010 Annual Benchmarking Survey.

NOTE: You may also complete your details on our online form www.ccbenchmarking.com/Benchmarks

Please complete your details in full: complete one form for each contact centre you would like to participate.

If you require any assistance with completing the form, please contact Nicki Downing on +27 (0)11 575 6855 or email ccBenchmarking@za.didata.com. For more information, see our website: www.ccbenchmarking.com.

CONTACT DETAILS

Title _____ First Name _____
Surname _____
Job Title _____
Company Name _____
Direct Telephone _____
(please include country and city code)
Switchboard _____
(please include country and city code)
Mobile _____
(please include country and city code)
Facsimile _____
(please include country and city code)
Email _____

DELIVERY DETAILS

Physical Address _____

Town / City _____
Country / State _____
Postcode / ZIP _____
Continent _____

CONTACT CENTRE DETAILS

Number of seats in your contact centre _____

When was your contact centre established? _____

What industry does your contact centre operate in? (select one)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Automotive and Manufacturing | <input type="checkbox"/> Media and Entertainment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Outsourcer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer Goods and Retail | <input type="checkbox"/> Service Providers and Telecommunications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Services (banking, insurance, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government and Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel and Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities and Energy |

How many locations does your contact centre have? _____ (Number of locations)

How many other contact centres in your organisation? _____ (Number of contact centres)

Has your contact centre participated in previous Global Contact Centre Benchmarking Surveys? Yes No

Would you like to complete a Benchmarking survey for each centre? Yes No

Association (Please name the association you are a member of, if applicable) _____

Please fax this form to: Nicki Downing | Dimension Data | +27 (0)11 576 6855 or email: Nicki.Downing@za.didata.com

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ABOUT DIMENSION DATA

Dimension Data plc (LSE:DDT), a specialist IT services and solution provider, helps clients plan, build, support and manage their IT infrastructures. Dimension Data applies its expertise in networking, converged communications, security, data centre and storage, Microsoft and contact centre technologies and its unique skills in consulting, integration and managed services to create customised client solutions.



For more information, please visit www.dimensiondata.com

ABOUT MERCHANTS

Merchants is one of the leading customer contact solutions companies, providing a full range of innovative contact centre services and contact centre consultancy expertise to enable the successful generation of customer value in real time, every time. From contact centres in Europe and South Africa, Merchants manages the outsourced customer contact operations for some of the world's best known brands. Merchants Consultants work globally with clients understanding their customer needs and contact centre requirements providing insight and value drawing on over 25 years of contact centre operation and consultancy expertise. Merchants is a Dimension Data group company.



More information can be found at www.merchants.co.uk or www.merchants.co.za

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Datacraft is a wholly owned subsidiary of Dimension Data plc (LSE:DDT), a US\$4.5 billion leading global IT solutions and services provider. Datacraft operates in over 50 offices across 13 Asia Pacific countries. We help clients plan, build, support, manage, improve and innovate their IT infrastructures. Datacraft combines an expertise in networking, converged communications, security, data centre, storage, converged communications, Microsoft solutions and contact centre technologies, with advanced skills in consulting, integration, training and managed services to craft IT solutions for businesses.



For more information, please visit www.datacraft-asia.com

ABOUT CUSTOMER INTERACTIVE SOLUTIONS

With our broad spectrum of contact centre integration, self service, workforce optimisation, interaction management, hosting and outsourcing solutions, Dimension Data is well positioned to help clients streamline their contact centre operations - improving productivity, increasing efficiency, and enhancing customer experience. We touch over six billion customers in interactions every year via contact centres and self service channels we've planned, designed, integrated, and managed on behalf of our customers.

More information can be found at www.dimensiondata.com/Solutions/CustomerInteractiveSolutions



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