

Call Center Solution

Cost Effective Solution for Hosted Call Center Agents & Supervisors



The Consolidated Communications Server fully integrated Host Call Center solution allows agents and supervisors access to basic and enhanced call center functionality with the ease of being located anywhere in the world.

Business Requirement

Many businesses today depend 100% on incoming calls for their business. Examples of these are customer service, catalog sales, technical support, car services, insurance agencies, physician's offices, etc. Each of which require calls to be directed to the appropriate personnel to answer their calls efficiently. While waiting, callers need to be notified of important documents, advertisements, and/or legal requirements such as call recording/monitoring or HIPPA rules.

The Consolidated Communications Application Server has Call Center integrated in the solution to ensure business users can be apart of an Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) Queue while using the vast array of features and applications found in the Consolidated Solution.

More and more businesses that depend on incoming calls as revenue have opted for hosted business solutions to ensure their calls are answered even in a natural disaster like a hurricane or inclement weather.

Challenges

Because many traditional PBX/PABX telephone systems have call center solutions as an added piece of equipment or additional cost, ACD was not always available to small to medium businesses due to the cost of investment.

Others who migrate from a telephone system with ACD functionality need a seamless transition when they move from an on-premise based phone system to a network-based hosted platform like the Consolidated's. Not all hosted VoIP platforms have integrated Call Center and therefore require purchasing and integrating third party equipment.

Still others who want to keep their current Call Center solutions can integrate any SIP-based Call Center solution with Consolidated's application.

Solution

Consolidated Communications Application Server provides Call Center (ACD) capabilities that provide small to medium businesses an integrated approach to servicing their clientele. Consolidated provides flexible announcement trees, time of day routing, and multiple routing patterns to extend calls to agents, as well as many agent and supervisor handset features to make answering calls easier.

The Consolidated solution allows agents within the same ACD Queue to be located anywhere a broadband connection exists if using an IP phone or anywhere their mobile phone takes them as a remote agent.

Benefits

- Cost-effectively provides integrated access to call center agent and supervisor features.
- Offers flexible call routing, announcements, and menu trees.
- Provides time of day routing, overflow routing and advanced call center routing functionality
- Consolidates Menu Services, Call Routing, and Call Queuing and Agent Assignments within the same provisioning interface
- Supports basic as well as enhanced ACD functionality including:
 - Multiple Queue Assignment
 - Wrap Time
 - Number of Calls Overflow
 - Time-based Overflow
 - Night Overflow
 - Multiple Agent Answering Methods
 - Remote Agent Access
 - Time of Day/Day of Week Routing
 - Flexible Menu Services/IVR
- Method for Disaster Recovery when Agents within the same queue are in different locations
- Enables service providers to customize their solution to fit the needs of their end customers.

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Step 1: Call Flow Planning

When creating Call Center services, it is important to plan out on paper how calls will enter the system, what treatments they will be provided while waiting to be answered by an agent and what resources should answer each type of call. In addition to these, planning should be done for calls that enter the system during non-business hours and how they should be treated.

Step 2: Create Announcements

Announcements should be created using the Announcement Wizard and recorded using any telephone assigned and working in the partition.

Before recording the announcements, write down the script and find a quiet place to do the recording.

From the planning session in Step 1, you should have accounted for at least two recordings played to the incoming callers using the following as examples where the first example is only played once:

- “Thank you for calling *<insert company/product>*. All of our representatives are currently assisting other callers; however your call is important to us. Please remain on the line and a representative will assist you momentarily.”
- “All of our representatives are still busy assisting other callers at this time. Your business is very important to us. Please remain on the line as calls are answered in the order they are received. We will provide the same quality service to you that we are providing to them.”

Depending on the type of incoming calls you may need to also give instructions to the caller such as “please have your account number ready”. Some call centers who use call recording need to by law tell the incoming caller “your call may be monitored or recorded for quality/training purposes”. These should also be included in the announcements recorded above.

If menu services are used prior to routing callers to the appropriate queue, these announcements should also be recorded. Examples of these are listed below:

- **BUSINESS HOURS MENU** “Thank you for calling *<insert company name>* Please listen carefully as our menus have changed:
 - For New Sales Press 1
 - Existing Customers Press 2
 - To Speak with a Customer Service Rep Press 3
 - For Billing-related Questions Press 4
 - If You Know Your Party’s Extension press or to Dial by Name Press 5
 - To Speak with an Operator or All Other Inquiries Press 0”
- **AFTER HOURS MENU** “Thank you for calling *<insert company name>* Our business hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 8:00 pm Central Standard Time
 - If You Know Your Party’s Extension Press 1
 - To Dial by Name Press 2
 - To Leave a General Message for the Attendant Press 0”

Using the Announcement Wizard, create each announcement noting the announcement ID assigned for Play and Record. Using the telephone dial the Announcement Menu Service (default 599) to play and record the announcements just created.

After recording each announcement play the announcement back for review to ensure all the necessary elements were included in the recording and no ancillary noises were recorded.

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Step 3: Create Overflow Destinations

Overflow destinations are used to route incoming callers when no agents are logged into the queue or the maximum calls in queue setting is reached. Overflow destinations can also be used to route callers who enter the system outside of normal business hours. Typical overflow destinations can be:

- Department Voice Mail Only Accounts
- Hunt Groups
- Lines of Users in the Database
- Other ACD Queues staffed 24x7
- Offsite Answering Services via Trunk Groups
- Number Plans used as Menu Services
- Announcements that Play to Callers then disconnect them from the system.

These need to be created so they can be linked to the Queue as an Overflow destination. Using the Consolidated Service Administrator User Guide, create the above as needed for the particular routing for this ACD Queue.

Step 4: Build ACD/Queues

Prior to accessing the System Administration to create the ACD Queues needed for call routing, the following should be considered:

- Should the Pilot number for the ACD Queue be a Direct Dial (DID) number only reached via menus or attendants using a Non-DID?
- What announcement should be heard by callers when they enter the ACD Queue and no agents are available? (Typically repeated only once)
- What announcement should be repeated to callers who are still waiting to be answered by an agent? How many times should it repeat?
- What music//advertisements should be played in between announcements?
- How much time should the music/advertisements play before hearing the repeated announcement?
- Should agents who have remote phone enabled be allowed to answer calls for this queue?
- If all agents are logged out of the Queue, do you still want calls to be queued to it or should they be routed to the overflow destination?
- What should be used as an overflow destination? (See step 3)

- Should there be a limit to the number of calls that enter this queue?
- Should all agents be given a configured time after answering a call to complete after call paperwork?
- Is there a goal or ideal timeframe that all calls should be answered by an agent? (Example: 20 seconds)
- What users within the partition wish to see a status indication on their telephone as to how many calls are waiting in queue?
- When calls are extended to agents what routing mechanism should be used?
 - Longest Idle Agent (Default)
 - Round Robin
 - Top-to-Bottom
 - Bottom-to-Top

Once these questions are answered and/or considered, access the Service Administration and create the Queue using the Queue Wizard. After creation, access the Queue Component and enter any data not found in the Queue Wizard and to see the status of the queue.

Step 5: Build/Modify Users

If users are already created in the database within this partition, use the User Wizard to modify and add the Queue as a line appearance on the phone.

If creating new users, use the User Wizard to create the user following the steps in the Service Administrator User Guide. Be sure to select a line appearance as the ACD Queue just created.

Agents can have more than one ACD Queue assigned to their phone depending on phone type.

Agents can also have speed dials configured to call their supervisor or to escalate calls already answered to other call centers, etc.

Agents using SCCP or MGCP IP phones can see a display waiting calls indication on their telephone display if the Queue is provisioned to provide this. See Step 4.

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Step 6: Build Menu Services

Using the Number Plan Wizard, create any menu services that will be used for routing incoming calls to the correct ACD Queue.

Connect the Incoming Announcement field to the previously created announcement that will give instructions to callers as they enter the Menu Service.

Ensure that the instructions given to the incoming callers match the Number Plan entries for routing purposes. Example: If the instructions provided are Press 1 for New Sales, then callers should be routed to the New Sales ACD Queue when digit 1 is collected/accepted.

If different menu services are provided for business hours and off-hours, two menu services/Number Plans will need to be created.

Step 7: Time of Day Controllers

Time of Day Controllers can be used at any place in call routing. They can be used and connected to the Incoming Number Plan to route calls to the day automated attendant during normal business hours and used to route calls to a night automated attendant or directly to the General Delivery Voice Mailbox during off-hours. Time of Day Controllers can also be used when the Queue Pilot number is called from outside the network to route calls to the Queue during business hours and to a recorded announcement or other call treatment like off site answering services after hours.

Create a Time of Day Controller using the Components View in System Administration. Connections as Mode 1 will route during business hours. Connections made as Mode 2 will route calls outside of normal business hours. Multiple Mode 1 entries can be made if different call routing is needed based upon time of day/day of week. Mode 1 override settings can provide holiday coverage.

Step 8: Advanced Functions

Each time an ACD Queue is created, a corresponding Multi-Announce and Number Plan are created. These can be used to create very flexible advanced routing patterns for Call Centers.

The Multi-Announce component can be modified after creation to provide different music/announcement sources and call routing based upon how long a call has waited in queue for an available agent. This can be modified to also route calls out to an escalation queue once a set time in queue is reached.

The Number Plan component created for this Queue can be used at any time while waiting for an agent to become available. This by default is set as press 0 to route to the Automated Attendant created with the Partition by default. This can be modified to press a defined digit to leave a message in the department voice mail box to be checked during business hours. Repeating announcements or at a certain point in the Multi-Announce can give instructions to callers once they have waited a designated time in queue.

Step 9: Ensure Call Routing is to Plan

Once the users have been assigned the queue as a line appearance and if needed, display waiting calls indication is assigned, ensure the call center routing is functional by plugging in the phones and logging in the agents in order to receive calls.

SCCP and MGCP phones simply press the line button corresponding to the line appearance for the queue.

SIP Phones will need to enter the following star code sequence in order to login and accept incoming calls.

- *10 Login/Logout
 - 0 = Not Ready
 - 1 = Ready

Call Center Solution

Broadband Phone Service Record On-Demand Client Feature

Does your business have a need or requirement to record business calls? Consolidated can meet this need without having to purchase special equipment or hire an outside recording company.

We now have the option for customers to record and monitor live calls on their Cisco Broadband Phones.

How It Works

There are two ways you can choose to record your calls — Record Live or On Demand. If you choose the record live feature, all calls to and from your designated phones will be recorded.

A second option to record a call is On Demand. This is an application that is installed on a supervisor's computer. When a call takes place, just press the "save" button and the call will be recorded from the beginning to the end. Even if you push the "save" button a few minutes into the call, the whole call is recorded.

Both options allow you to search for calls by date and time and choose to play the call, email the call or save it as a file on the computer.

Costs and Requirements

The cost to add the Record On Demand Client feature to your existing Broadband Phone service is \$10/month per seat to record the calls and \$10/month per seat to listen (replay feature) to the calls. For example, if your company only needs to record calls for security purposes, the cost would be \$10/month per seat. If your business requires you to record and monitor calls, then you would need to add the replay feature making your total cost \$20/month per seat.

The two requirements are Broadband Phone service from Consolidated and Broadband Cisco phones.