FONALITY

TouchPoint
CONTACT CENTERS, INC

Contact centers dial up reliability, functionality, and savings

TouchPoint Contact Centers

The Ashland, Ohio, welcome sign proclaims it "The World Headquarters of Nice People." The town is also the headquarters of TouchPoint Contact Centers, an alternative to traditional call center outsourcers, boasting higher-paid, more-skilled agents who deliver better service with less attrition. It was founded in 2006 by CEO Chris Eisdorfer, who has been president, chief operating officer and chief information officer for major call center companies and serviced large customers, such as American Express, AT&T, Bank of America, Office Depot, and JP Morgan Chase.

"TouchPoint is actually the second call center operation I founded," Eisdorfer said. "When I started my previous company in 1994, there was no such thing as VoIP or hosted PBX solutions. We had a huge telecom department and high speed connectivity between our offices with dedicated private lines. It was a gigantic infrastructure, from both maintenance and cost perspectives."

"With TouchPoint, I thought, 'There must be a better way to do this. Do I really need hundreds of thousands of dollars of IT support just to answer, make, and track phone calls, get good reporting, have digital recording in place — all the things I need?'"

Business Snapshot

Industry:	Contact Centers
Locations:	3
Number of Users:	210
Business Goal(s):	Integrate a more valuable solution

TouchPoint's first foray into the world of hosted VoIP solutions for its newest location was with another provider. That fully hosted environment had problems, including several systemwide outages.

And though costs were lower than when TouchPoint connected multiple offices with traditional PBX systems, these quality issues helped Eisdorfer realize he could get a better value at a lower cost. "If you include the license fees and the variable phone bill, it was costing us $150 per person per month," he said. "TouchPoint is a boutique call center serving midsize customers. We focus on getting the best possible price point in order for our customers to be able to enjoy the benefits of outsourcing. With every dollar we save we can reduce our price point to our customers and offer them a better service for less money."

"Reliability has been a huge benefit"

After evaluating six Internet telephony providers, TouchPoint's choice was clear. "We spoke to many references, and we couldn't find anybody who had ever been completely down using Fonality," Eisdorfer said. "Reliability has been a huge benefit.

"Another has been cost savings." Fonality helped TouchPoint reduce monthly costs per user by more than two thirds. At between $40 to $45 per person, the company will save $264,000 on an annual basis. "That has a huge impact on our business," Eisdorfer said.

"We're getting all the benefits of VoIP, but we're getting them at a much more cost-effective price point."

He also noted how Fonality bundles the variable phone bill. "That was a shock to us! After 20 years of running call centers, you're used to getting a big phone bill every month. But with Fonality, it's our per-user fees and pretty much nothing else.

The only variable cost is if you have an 800 number, which adds typical toll free charges. If you're using regular phone numbers for inbound and outbound calls, you have zero additional telecom costs."

> "With Fonality, we get contact center specific solutions that go beyond just having a great phone switch."
>
> Chris Eisdorfer, CEO

Features that deliver

Built-in call recording. "When you're a third-party outsourcer, you live on quality assurance. That's your business. So we have a 100 percent recording of every phone call. Fonality gave us the ability to record easily, access the recordings, search the recordings by agent name, by the phone number that got dialed in, and then use those recordings in coaching sessions without breaking the budget."

Work from anywhere. Eisdorfer appreciates the way the Fonality business phone system eliminates physical barriers to work. "The fact that some employees are working from home in Ohio and some of them are in an office in Nevada really doesn't make any difference to the system.

Once you have that connection, you are fully enabled. There's a lot of power to that. Not only is it good for employees to be able to work from home part-time or even full time, but it gives you a very powerful disaster recovery solution."

Robust reporting. While Fonality has a complete suite of reports that cover all the traditional contact center metrics, it also offers the ability to extract all of the raw data in a call detail record. "You have every single phone call at the absolute raw data detail level. We use the Fonality reports and then do analyses to look for trends on call patterns. Prefab reports as well as raw data access are available. We use both extensively."

Advances in voice quality

"Some people think there are going to be voice-quality issues when their phone calls go over the Internet as opposed to over a private PBX," Eisdorfer said. "We're not seeing any issues for two key reasons. First, Internet bandwidth is so much more affordable than it used to be. With bandwidth so available, voice quality becomes very much a nonissue. "The other reason is packet prioritization. Voice packets are being prioritized now; and data that is not voice takes a back seat so voice packets can move ahead of it. The ease of upgrading Internet connections combined with packet prioritization has led to a tremendous improvement in voice quality."

Getting more for less

Since making the switch to Fonality, TouchPoint has rolled out the solution at all three of its sites. "Fonality has given us improved reliability and additional functionality while lowering our costs," Eisdorfer said. "That lower cost of ownership allows us to offer lower price points to our customers and give them more value for less money. We call it 'getting more for less.' It's what makes us different — and better."