

WHITEPAPER

Outsourced Service Providers

5 Ways to Differentiate Your Service Offering ▶

eGain[®]

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Introduction

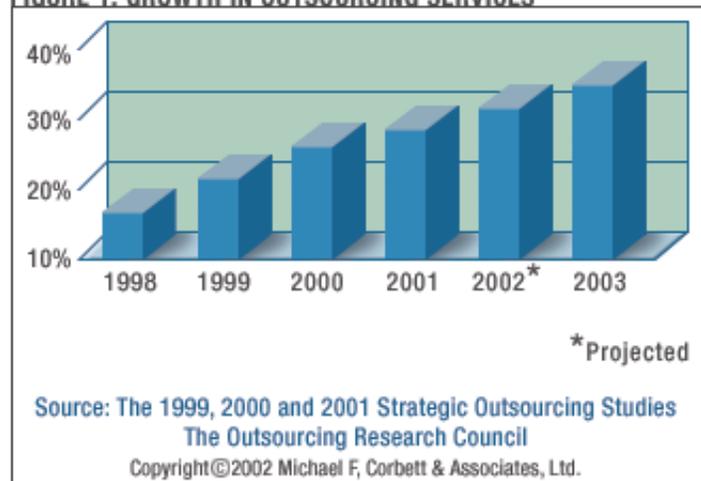
The immense growth in customer service inquiries and the shift to a multi-channel service environment has left many companies grappling with the problems of building and managing contact centers. While considering how best to provide effective service, these companies often look at outsourcing customer service. It allows them to reduce operating costs, conserve capital, and grow revenue by focusing on the core business. Another factor that makes outsourcing an attractive proposition is that it fosters quick implementation and, as a result, frequent improvement and innovation in the manner companies deliver customer service.

In fact, in spite of—or, perhaps, because of—the economic downturn, the market for outsourced services remains healthy and growing. Analysts such as Gartner, IDC and The Outsourcing Research Council predict that not only will the market demand for outsourced services remain strong through the downturn, but that it will continue to grow upward of 20% compounded annual growth over the next few years, representing a \$76 billion opportunity by the year 2005.

Despite the growth trends, the outsourced services market remains a challenging environment. Providers must enable integrated sales and service chains that leverage data, knowledge, and technology for their clients. They also have to continuously differentiate their offerings. Adding to these challenges are increased pricing pressure from offshore competitors, a move towards consolidation of outsourced service offerings with a focus on gain sharing relationships, and increased industry and security compliance requirements.

In this paper, we discuss five tried and tested ways of improving your outsourced service offerings, which will help you improve service levels and quality for your clients, along with differentiating your service with additional offerings. We also provide a checklist of capabilities to look for in a service management platform for the outsourcing environment.

FIGURE 1: GROWTH IN OUTSOURCING SERVICES



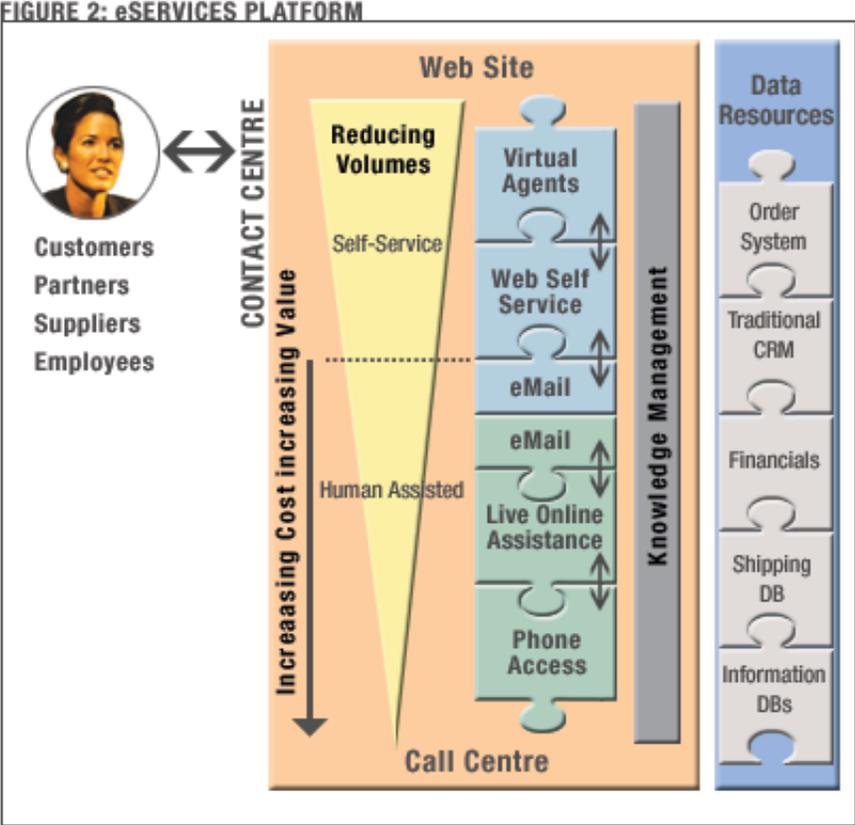
1. Provide an integrated multi-channel, multi-lingual offering

End customers are becoming increasingly impatient, demanding higher levels of service from your clients. This is further compounded by the customers using multiple channels to get service. For example, a customer might send an email about an issue and then follow up with a phone call or initiate a chat session. Add to the complexity, the global presence of many companies requiring multi-lingual handling of service needs.

Enable the creation of clear and seamless integration across all communication channels (including phone, email, chat, co-browsing and self-service) and systems, regardless of location. That way your clients' customers will never feel lost.

Also provide multi-channel and multi-lingual incident tracking by making a 360-degree view of the customer accessible in each channel. The agent dashboard should always reflect complete and consistent customer information. Allowing complete access to customer profiles means that you are effectively capturing and delivering complete service resolution across all media channels.

Your agents appear competent, provide consistent high-quality service, and improve your clients' image and, therefore, lend credibility to your services environment. Another tangible benefit, of course, is that you can improve operating margins by leveraging agents across multiple channels, languages, sessions, and service domains for your clients.



2. Meet and beat client SLAs

Once service level agreements have been determined and defined with your clients, take steps to ensure you can deliver services that meet and enforce these response times. These steps include:

- **Provide intelligent routing and escalation paths across your contact center agents and client agents.**
For efficient delivery of responses, route service requests to appropriate agents, based on subject matter, skill sets, client customer profiling, or priority level. An efficient routing process with seamless transfer and forwarding capabilities, say from Level 1 to Level 2 agents or to the client's agents, will result in quick handling of all interactions. Having clients' agents share your systems to handle escalations means that clients benefit from your technology expertise. This encourages them to outsource technology in addition to services.
- **Use real-time monitoring and reporting of agent activities and interactions.**
Diligently track inquiries, identify service trends, and issues with service process flow to measure your overall contact center performance. Service level and handle time reports coupled with alarms that are triggered if an inquiry is not handled within a stipulated time with a defined escalation mechanism let you deliver optimal responses across all channels. Also, give your clients and their managers access to this monitoring capability to make your job easier.
- **Create an agent dashboard that can access client business systems and call center infrastructure.**
A well-integrated agent interface translates into quick access to critical information. It ensures that each service interaction is handled with a minimum number of clicks and without switching between multiple windows. As a result, you get lower service handle times and agent burn times.

3. Leverage Knowledge to drive customer service

Building an effective knowledge base can ensure consistent, high-quality service across agents (yours and clients') and interaction channels. Knowledge helps you to extend your outsourced service offerings by allowing agents to handle more complex calls that would normally have to be handled by the client, with increased revenue opportunities for your services. In addition, the effective building and use of knowledge provides significant operational advantages.

These increased revenue opportunities and operational efficiencies can be gained through:

- **Increase in first-time fix rates**
A key measure in many outsourcing contracts (it often comes with a penalty if not met), first-time fix rates can be increased significantly by empowering agents with consistent service knowledge.

- **Reduced agent training times**

Easy access to service knowledge cuts training times from months and weeks to days. The more complex the questions, or the larger the number of products handled, the greater the potential for reducing training time. In addition, it allows you to hire less expensive agents, resulting in cost savings for your clients and higher operating margins for yourself.

- **Easier load balancing and agent scheduling in the contact center environment**

Agents can be “multi-skilled” and handle more products and queues than would be normally possible. This allows for effective leveraging of agents across products and service complexity.

- **Opportunities to provide customer intelligence to clients**

The ability to gather customer knowledge in service interactions is invaluable. Enhance the knowledge base with your insights about client problem areas or sales opportunities. Help your client build better products and services, foster closer client and end-customer relationships, and achieve higher profits—creating, in the process, a significant competitive advantage for your services.

4. Provide web based self-service and proactive services

Web-based self service is here to stay. It is sometimes viewed as competing with outsourced service. By taking a holistic view of the service interaction management environment, you can offer services that incorporate effective knowledge management for your client in conjunction with your interaction management services. This approach enables you to differentiate your offering by managing self-service in addition to the multi-channel interaction handling via phone, email, or chat and become a provider of knowledge services. The knowledge base developed to support agent-assisted interactions can be easily extended to a dynamic web self-service environment that client customers can use for frontline support. It also allows your agents to focus on more complex and expensive calls. By taking a proactive approach to service helps you solve problems for you clients before they become real problems, becoming a partner as opposed to just a service provider.

Mix and differentiate your service offerings with the ability to provide up-sell and cross-sell services across channels for your clients and their customers. By integrating marketing and up-sell message in service responses, you can offer targeted, direct marketing, direct response and incentive-based communication across multiple media channels based on for your clients thereby building high value for you clients.

The management of the entire client customer life cycle and not just a series of transactions by utilizing all client customer touch points to generate value and closed loop customer data intelligence building allows you to offer maximize profitability of each end customer relationship for your clients.

5. Use a proven solution

In evaluating service management systems, start with those solutions that are proven in an outsourced services provider environment. It is important to partner with a solution provider with a history of innovation, expertise, and success in a global operating model that can ensure your success and scale. At a minimum, look for the following capabilities:

- Multi-tenant deployment capabilities that reduce infrastructure cost by maintaining multiple clients on the same system.
- Best-of-breed unified multichannel interaction management with end-to-end service process automation for competitive advantage.
- Service workflows for interactions to ensure regulatory compliance and quality control.
- A searchable, self-learning knowledge base that is easy to create, use, and maintain for service consistency and operational efficiencies.
- A comprehensive set of multi-client and multi-channel monitoring, reporting, and archiving tools that can be shared with your clients.
- Ability to handle multi-lingual content, for a truly global service environment.
- 100% browser-based high-productivity agent interface for easy deployment independent of location.
- Open platform with out-of-the box integration with call center infrastructure and business systems to leverage existing investments and reduce total cost of ownership.
- Reliability, availability, and scalability for mission critical customer service.
- If you wish to avoid the IT investment and system administration efforts, opt for a hosted services platform. Again, look for a vendor with a proven track record.

About eGain Communications

eGain (Nasdaq: EGAN) is a leading provider of customer service management solutions for global enterprises. 24 of the 50 largest global companies rely on eGain solutions to transform their traditional call centers into profit centers. eGain Service 6™, the company's software suite, also available as a hosted service, includes integrated, best-in-class applications for web self-service, virtual agent customer service, customer email management, live web collaboration, and knowledge management. These robust applications are built on the eGain Service Management Platform™—a scalable next-generation framework that offers end-to-end service process management, multi-site contact center management, a flexible integration approach, and certified out-of-the-box integrations with leading call center and business systems.

Headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, eGain has an operating presence in 18 countries and serves over 800 enterprise customers worldwide—including ABN AMRO, Daimler Chrysler, and Vodafone.

To find out how eGain can help you leverage customer service for competitive advantage, visit <http://www.eGain.com> or call the company's offices—United States: (888) 603-4246; London: +44 (0) 1753-464646.

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