***ConnectFirst***

*866-601-2707*

*Cloud Routing*

**Cloud Routing Overview**

Cloud routing lets you use the internet to route your inbound calls between one or more remote call centers. It combines our proprietary QueueFlow™ routing technology with the open architectures of the internet. With cloud routing, an internet connection and browser are all you need to create a virtual “queue in the cloud”. Whether used to extend your existing call center capacity, or to manage all of your inbound call traffic, cloud routing makes it easy to quickly and flexibly scale up and down as your call volume fluctuates.

Cloud routing is destination agnostic, so it does not matter what kind of equipment your remote contact centers use. You can monitor agents, generate reports, and view real-time telephony just as you would if you were sending calls to your own inbound Connect First queues. Although your calls are routing through a virtual internet queue, you maintain full control so you can manage your customer’s experience.

Cloud routing provides an ideal solution for the spiky traffic generated by direct response advertisers. You do not need to choose between maintaining large numbers of agents to minimize queue times, or maintaining fewer agents and risking the loss of customers who will not wait very long in queue. Call routing lets you agilely respond to sudden fluctuations in call traffic.

**Cloud Routing and Direct Response Advertising** Direct response advertisers share a common dilemma. Their advertisements generate huge spikes of traffic during and immediately after they are aired. Then call volume drops sharply until the advertisement airs again. The traffic spikes generate too much call volume for a small call center to handle. But there is not enough traffic in the lulls between spikes to keep the agents at a large call center busy.

One solution is to lease agent time from a large call center that services many other direct response advertisers as well. By serving many direct response advertisers, the large call center’s traffic spikes even out, and they are able to keep their agents busy most of the time.

A problem with the mega call center solution is that since the agents have to represent so many products, they don’t have time to learn very much about yours. They are essentially, just order takers. They can’t answer customer questions, they can’t up sell, and they cannot promote or communicate your company’s brand.

Our cloud routing service offers a better solution. Instead of leasing agents from a large, one-size-fits-all call center, cloud routing lets you spread your calls among several smaller boutique-style call centers. These smaller call centers might not individually have enough agents to handle your call spikes, but by routing your calls between several smaller call centers, you are still able to capture all of your calls.

A benefit of using a smaller call center is that, since they can only work for a few clients, their agents have the time and motivation to learn more about your products. They are better able to answer your customer’s questions, to up sell and cross sell, and to communicate your brand.

You get the best of both worlds – the high quality customer service offered by small boutique style call center agents, and the ability to capture the calls generated during your highest call volume peaks.

Although originally developed to meet the unique needs of direct response advertisers, cloud routing has other uses as well. Among those are:

* Business continuity challenges, such as natural disasters, network / facility failures, or to respond to a homeland security threat
* Agile response to unexpected call volume spikes
* Load balancing calls across a network

**How Cloud Routing Works**

When you sign up for Connect First cloud routing, we provide you with access to our cloud routing platform, and with a set of phone numbers for your direct response campaigns. Use the platform and phone numbers to configure cloud routing to the call centers you want to work with.

If you do not yet have relationships with call centers to handle your calls, we can help point you to the centers best suited for your business. We can configure and manage your cloud routing for you, or you can use our call center platform to manage your cloud routing configuration yourself.

When configured and active, customer calls to your cloud routing phone numbers come to us first. We then route the call to an available agent at one of the call centers configured to handle your calls. This call routing happens almost instantaneously, with no discernable lag to your callers. You can rest assured your customers will reach a knowledgeable, high quality, customer service agent, even during your highest call volume peaks.

**Features of Cloud Routing**

Our Cloud Routing service includes the following features:

* **Flexible call routing options** - Choose between “roundrobin” to distribute calls evenly between agents across multiple centers, “sequential” to fill the first center up and then overflow to the next, “percentallocation”to indicate the percent of calls going to each call center, or “georouting” to dynamically send your callers to the call center nearest them. You will find detailed information about each of these options in this section, so you can select the routing scheme that best matches your needs.
* **Detailed reports** - so you can monitor each call center’s performance and the performance of the agents taking your calls.
* **Call recording** - so you have a record of each transaction and so you can monitor agent performance and troubleshoot the reasons for long or short calls, should they occur.
* **Reverse matching** - so agents can see a caller’s name, address, and phone number as their call connects, if that information is publically available
* **Whisper messaging** – to let agents know what kind of call is connecting so they can be better prepared to talk with the caller.
* **Call termination options** – so you can send calls to regular phone numbers, soft phones, or your own inbound queue.
* **Billing codes** – so you can track which calls went with which products in case you want to bill a third party for your services.
* **Call tracking** – so you can test different marketing strategies without changing the destination phone number.
* **Messaging** – so you can play recorded messages for callers while they are waiting to connect and before their call ends.
* **Long and short call reporting** – so you can notice and take action if callers are hanging up before being connected to an agent, or if agents take too long to handle your calls.
* **SOAP services** – to allow real time data transfer when calls start, connect, and end.
* **API keys** - to sync data transfer to and from call centers with various kinds of call distribution systems.
* **Voice mail** – so callers can leave a voice mail message in the unlikely event that all of the agents at all of your call centers are busy