

# CLOUD COMMUNICATIONS OVERVIEW



The Connect First cloud communications solutions requires minimal upfront costs, and delivers unlimited scalability, agility and flexibility so you can achieve your aggressive goals. Work directly with Connect First to build out a platform to support your in-house, work-at-home or location-based contact center agents, so you can focus on core competencies and not the technology infrastructure.

The Connect First platform is built to be hosted, providing companies with a contact center solution that is scalable, stable and will perform according to customer expectations. The focus at Connect First is to deliver a cost-effective calling platform that integrates directly into your environment, regardless of the network type. With a senior management

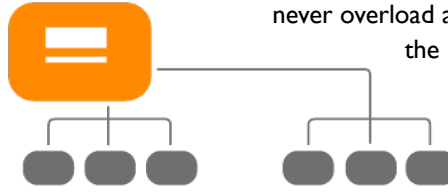
team rich in experience and expertise, we can provide value for the Fortune 50 organizations to the small entrepreneurial startup.

Eliminate your reliance on legacy, premise-based contact center solutions and the associated cost and infrastructure commitments. When you partner with Connect First, you gain access to leading system administrators, business analysts and engineering professionals focused on exceeding your expectations while delivering the seamless contact center technology infrastructure to support your customized environment

# SCALABILITY

The Connect First platform was specifically built to be hosted, creating unlimited scalability for your organization. Without traditional functional limitations to deal with, we enable you to grow how you need and when you need, leveraging our technologies for your benefit and cost saving.

Our key strength is service reliability, performance and scalability. We are fanatical about how our systems and networks are designed, managed and maintained; thus we are able to support greater than 99.99% uptime year over year. The shared architecture of the Connect First platform is run on commodity hardware and open source solutions to



maximize uptime and the resiliency of the network. Redundancy is built in at the network level, and there is no legacy hardware in this all-VoIP environment. Customers can never overload any piece of hardware since it is not tied to the number of sessions and special events that require scaling; this can be supported in a matter of hours.

Commended for our outstanding audio quality, the Connect First platform is built for the end-user. We only use Tier I carriers for our browser-based platform. Call centers simply need a PC with a flash player and a softphone, IP phone or PBX phone to launch the Connect First call center platform. Our commitment to our customers is the Connect First platform will fit in any contact center infrastructure at a minimal upfront cost.



**No Expensive Software**

## We Are Experts at:

- Delivering the most robust, **scalable** and intuitive hosted contact center solution.
- Providing passionate and **personal** in-house customer service.
- Solving your problems through **agile** integrations



**No Expensive Hardware**



**No Expensive IT Personnel**

“Connect First provides you with the flexibility to handle multiple jobs at the same time, while maximizing your effort to reach the greatest number of people. There are not a lot of upfront costs, enabling a company to move to this solution as quickly as possible. And, given the very real and measurable benefits, I would recommend that move as soon as possible.”

# SOLUTIONS

## ACD

Gain total control over the call flow in your inbound contact center with the Connect First Inbound Call Routing Platform. Key features such as skills-based agent selections, flexible scheduling and our proprietary QueueFlow routing engine ensure you can easily route calls to your exact specifications. Our completely self-service contact center management platform allows you to easily manage and monitor your contact center from anywhere in the world with just a browser and an Internet connection.

## CLOUD ROUTING

With Connect First's Cloud Routing, you can easily manage spikes in your call volume, business continuity and load balancing. Cloud Routing helps you to effectively manage your call traffic through the use of multiple destinations where calls are distributed according to your preferences.

## DIALER

Driving successful telemarketing and telesales activities demands the integration of market-leading cloud-based dialer technology. Connect First's cloud-based outbound solutions allow you to guide your leads through our dynamic loader. Once your agents log on, they can immediately begin connecting with live customers answering their calls. Our outbound dialer ensures you get all the benefits of the on-premise dialer, eliminating the delays, headaches and costs.

## IVR

In a market complete with the consumer bent on self-service, you can drive greater satisfaction and reduce costs with a powerful Interactive Voice Response (IVR) platform. Connect First can provide you with a best practices approach to IVR, guiding callers according to predetermined options and call tones. For more complex IVR, we'll work directly with your development team to ensure that it matches your customer service goals. When developing your unique experience, we'll guide you on what should be available as a self-service option and what live operators should always handle.

## LIVE AGENT CHAT

Consumers today are searching for ways to enable self-service, without complicating their interactions. With Connect First OnQ Live Agent Chat, customers can easily interact with the cloud-based contact center through the website. Simply click on the chat option and the "caller" is put into the queue. The first available agent will take the "call" and interact with the customer, providing the necessary information or assistance.

## CALL TRACKING

Realizing a strong ROI on contact center campaigns is always a challenge. Connect First Call Tracking allows you to capture vital statistics and contact center metrics so you can maximize your advertising dollars and optimize your advertising and telemarketing strategies. Need more advanced call flow functionality? Our team of expert engineers can design a low cost IVR solution to meet your needs.

## REAL TIME TELEMETRY

The efficient and effective management of your contact center operations relies on access to real-time streaming data. Design your strategies to enable your agents to respond instantly to client demands with informative and intuitive real-time statistics. Fully-integrated remote call monitoring and visual alerting ensures you achieve the highest possible level of call center quality assurance and customer service. The Connect First real-time telemetry engine enables unsurpassed remote monitoring for real-time data capture.

## CONTACT CENTER REPORTING

Connect First's cloud contact center platform delivers hundreds of detailed "out of the box" reports, including inbound/outbound reports, agent reports, survey reports and more. What's more, each report contains dozens of sub-reports. These reports are invaluable for driving agent performance, as well as making timely business decisions based on changes in customer behavior. The system's report scheduler allows supervisors to schedule reports to run when they want – weekly, daily, hourly, etc. In addition reports can be automatically emailed to supervisors, managers and upper management.

## CASE STUDY:



A provider of business-to-business and business-to-consumer services, Bolder Calls has been delivering successful client acquisition and direct sales campaigns since 1992. The company's team of customer contact professionals works with clients in the financial services, publishing, insurance, hardware/software, telecommunications, nonprofit, eCommerce and environmental consulting industries.

### **CHALLENGE**

Bolder Calls was facing an interesting challenge with its outbound dialer, including onerous limits on concurrent calls. With a focus on generating leads for customer companies — and a newly identified revenue stream in warm transfers — Bolder Calls did not have the capacity to generate the connection rates needed for its aggressive growth.

The cost to expand the existing infrastructure was substantial. Maintenance costs with the legacy platform were increasingly difficult to control and connection rates were only 60-70 percent. Reporting also showed that answering machine detection was inaccurate, creating a significant need for an alternative outbound solution that would improve efficiency and boost productivity.

### **OPPORTUNITY**

As part of the selection process, LeGrand Bonnet, director of operations, Bolder Calls brought in 10 different vendors for technical demonstrations of their dialer solutions. One of the solutions could not be successfully integrated with the Bolder Calls environment; others offered little advantage over the existing solution. The Connect First solution, however, impressed right from the start.

"We considered a number of strong competitors, but many lacked the newer technology I knew we had to have to meet our growing needs," said Bonnet. "Connect First was the only contender with a proven platform that incorporated the newer technology that we believed could meet our demand. Plus, they didn't have the history of outages that had tarnished the reputation of one contender. This helped to quickly place Connect First in the lead."

### **SOLUTION**

The Connect First platform gives Bolder Calls flexibility and scalability, as well as a host of features and capabilities found on expensive on-premises systems that help improve customer service.

Bonnet said he was impressed with the advanced capabilities and the way the dialer could be customized to accommodate the Bolder Calls environment.

"The technology gains realized with the Connect First platform are significant and you truly cannot move fast enough to accommodate the benefits," said Bonnet.

Bolder Calls faced an interesting challenge with the implementation of the Connect First dialer. The technology was so new that the internal IT team needed help to learn the platform and streamline integration. While this step of the process was outsourced to a skilled provider, Bonnet describes the experience as smooth and positive.

"We have been aggressively migrating over to the Connect First dialer, canceling our old T1s and moving over larger projects," said Bonnet. "Customer service reps left on the old dialer during this process are frustrated as they see the performance their colleagues are able to achieve with the new dialer. They're anxious to make the move."

### **RESULTS**

Bolder Calls enjoyed immediate benefits following implementation of the Connect First dialer. The company was able to accurately detect answering machines and dramatically increase connection rates. Plus, the Connect First dialer allowed agents to penetrate lists more deeply, generating increased sales. What's more, the company is using fewer lines to connect more calls, thus realizing a reduction in communication costs.

Prior to deployment of the Connect First dialer, one particular large warm transfer project for a premium client simply proved too challenging for the legacy platform. However, after Bolder Calls migrated to the Connect First platform, the firm was able to generate more leads in less time and deliver better customer service. Agents are finally able to fulfill their quotas and Bolder Calls is now enjoying a lower cost per minute for all outbound calls.

# BENEFITS OF A CLOUD CONTACT CENTER

BY **DONNA FLUSS** OF **DMG CONSULTING**

- Conserves cash; no capital investment and low start-up/implementation costs
- Relatively small monthly payments come out of the operating budget instead of the capital budget
- Generally has a lower total cost of ownership than a premise-based solution
- Vendor is responsible for system installation, implementation and ongoing maintenance
- Rapid implementation – users are generally up and running in 1 day to 3 weeks with a full-featured implementation
- Solutions can be right-sized for small, mid-sized and large contact centers
- Easy to scale up and down
- Browser-based offerings require little on-site technology
- Investment protection: the vendor is responsible for upgrades, and there are no additional costs
- Vendors release new functionality more frequently than premise-based providers; this can be used to achieve a strategic service advantage
- Ongoing technology refresh can be done without forklifts or major disruption to the operating environment
- Reduces internal IT support costs, eliminates need for IT staff and related management overhead (indirect cost allocations)
- Eliminates hidden support costs, e.g., data center real estate (for servers), power, cooling costs, systems administration, database administration, help desk, change management, etc.
- Handles virtual and geographically dispersed locations
- No (or little) incremental network costs or application expertise required to support multiple sites and at-home agents
- Reduces the time and complexity of opening additional contact center sites
- Standardized functionality and best practices are easily implemented across departments or the entire enterprise
- Simplifies disaster recovery/contingency planning, testing and implementation
- Users are not locked into a long-term capital investment, and can negotiate a flexible contract

*\*From the Connect First and DMG Consulting white paper: The Executive Guide to Cloud-Base Contact Centers*



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