AVAYA

UpSource Reaps Over $478,000 in Benefits with an Avaya Contact Center Solution

Challenge:

UpSource experienced 13 major call center system failures in a one-year timeframe and needed a change to maintain its competitive edge. UpSource wanted to work with a single vendor to develop a reliable, simple system that was able to recognize problems and issue alerts when they occurred. The ultimate contact center solution had to be flexible, scalable, and cost-effective.

Solution:

UpSource chose the Avaya Contact Center Solution powered by an Avaya Communication Manager with Avaya MultiVantage™ Communications Applications to provide critical support with contact center management, monitoring, and analysis.

Value Created:

- **Increased competitive advantage with more efficient call handling**. The Avaya Contact Center Solution and Avaya MultiVantage™ Communications Applications offer a suite of call-routing capabilities that help agents handle calls more effectively. It gives UpSource the flexibility of sending the appropriate calls to the appropriately skilled agent.

- **High reliability**. Avaya EXPERT Systems℠ Diagnostic Tools work to identify and prevent problems before they arise, minimize their impact if they occur, and identify ways to keep them from taking place again. No downtime has occurred since the new Avaya solution was installed.

- **Return on investment**. A detailed analysis of the implementation shows that UpSource will reap a cumulative five-year benefit of C$478,432 from the project. The $478,432 benefit is realized by a combination of an estimated cost-savings and increased revenue that UpSource will bring in by reducing downtime. The project yields an average annual ROI of 26 percent over the same period.

Reliability is absolutely critical to a customer service call center. When you lose calls, you lose revenue – and ultimately, you lose customers as well. So when UpSource, a customer service outsourcing company, experienced 13 major failures over a one-year period, it was time to start looking at other solutions. Reliability, as well as cost-savings, was top of mind. UpSource chose to replace its existing infrastructure with an Avaya solution because the team at UpSource felt Avaya had the strongest contact center platform and the broadest experience with convergence and IP Telephony. In reaching its target capacity of 300 seats for its existing center, UpSource expects to save C$90,000 compared to what it would have cost to grow the prior system. More importantly, it has suffered no system outages or downtime since the implementation.

The Company

UpSource, a multi-channel, inbound, contact center company, provides customer service, sales, and associated services to a variety of businesses and organizations. The privately held company, located in Massachusetts, has an Operations Center in Cape Breton Nova Scotia housing approximately 75 customer service representatives. Outsourced services are handled by telephone, Web, e-mail and traditional mail.

A primary source of UpSource's competitive advantage is its ability to provide cost-effective customer service using leading-edge telephony and customer relationship management (CRM) solutions. The network and software must be able to handle and route calls at a reasonable cost, allow customer service agents to immediately retrieve caller information on their desktop terminals, and provide a high degree of reliability with no downtime.

The Business Challenge: Reliability

For a customer service outsourcing business such as UpSource, reliability is the key to success. When customers call, the client UpSource represents expects their customers to be connected to an agent as quickly as possible, and they expect their customers' needs will be resolved with speed and accuracy. If a caller cannot get through, it means lost revenue to UpSource and an unhappy client.

At UpSource, a typical customer call and resolution takes approximately four and a half minutes. Clients pay UpSource either on a per-transaction or per-agent-hour basis. The faster

UpSource can resolve customer questions, the more revenue it can generate, because it will be able to handle a higher call volume in a given time period. The key to resolving customer calls quickly is providing UpSource's agents with expedited information about the customer and the reason for the call.

Driving the Need for a New Solution.

Prior to the Avaya solution, Upsource had an existing system for call routing and distribution, voice over IP (VoIP), and CRM. UpSource was looking to upgrade for several reasons:

- **Reliability:** Over a one-year period, UpSource's existing solution had a total of 13 major failures. A major failure is defined as one in which there is a loss of calls, which means a loss of revenue. There were multiple points of failure in that year – in the automatic call distribution (ACD) software, desktop applications, servers, and overall infrastructure. Additionally, even though the system had been designed to be redundant so that a backup system would take over when the first system failed, that backup system did not work properly.

- **Sustainability:** The existing system did not have "alarming" capabilities – it was not able to recognize when there were problems, so it could not issue alarms and alerts.

- **Complexity:** The existing system was very complex. Multiple vendors were involved, and so tracking down the source of problems was exceedingly difficult. *"There were too many vendors in the mix,"* says Mark Burns, CTO, UpSource. *"We always had to coordinate troubleshooting among different vendors, each of whom frequently passed the problem on to other vendors."*

- **Cost:** UpSource needed to expand and was looking to grow the number of seats on the system from 75 to 300. The ultimate solution had to be as cost-effective as possible.

UpSource Meets the Challenge

The UpSource team considered only two choices for a new solution to handle a maximum of 300 seats – either upgrade the existing system or implement a solution from Avaya. The objective was a low-cost, reliable system that would help UpSource keep existing business and provide the necessary flexibility and scalability to ensure the company's continued growth.

Stability, reliability and feature-richness were UpSource's key deciding factors. The UpSource team concluded that Avaya had the best call center platform available, and would offer unparalleled reliability and cost-savings. They also expected the new solution to improve the company's competitive advantage through unique predictive routing capabilities, as well as protect their investment as they move further into a converged networking environment. Additionally, Burns knew from hands-on experience that Avaya solutions were highly reliable.

Cost was the final deciding factor. To grow a potential, new, 75-seat Avaya solution to 300 seats would cost approximately C$465,000 less than it would to expand the existing system from 75 to 300 seats. When coupled with the actual cost of the new system, the resultant savings was over C$90,000. If UpSource had stayed with its existing system, it would have had to pay substantial software licensing costs for each of the additional 240 seats.

An Inside Look at the Avaya Solution

The Avaya solution is based on Avaya MultiVantage™ Communications Applications and an Avaya Converged Infrastructure. It includes an Avaya S8710 Media Server powered by Avaya Communication Manager as well as Avaya Call Center Software for call routing and distribution. The Avaya Call Management System provides critical support with contact center management, monitoring, and analysis. Avaya Contact Center Express, using the voice and e-mail channels and applications enablement services, assists UpSource in supporting its client base with CTI-enabled, multi-channel capabilities, offering intelligent screen pops at the agent desktop. In other words, the software takes information about an incoming call from Avaya Communication Manager and then automatically opens a window on the call center agent's computer screen that has as much information about the caller and the question or problem as possible.

For one typical UpSource client, a customer first calls into an interactive voice response (IVR) system. If the call can be handled by the IVR system, the call ends after resolution. However, if the customer decides help from an agent is needed, the call is routed to customer service agents. When the call is routed to agents, a billing number that identifies the customer and information about the customer is passed along as well. The call is routed and distributed to an appropriate agent and information about the caller is

passed over the network via a "screen pop" to the agent desktop. In addition to that screen pop information, the agent has access to a variety of information on hosted databases and the Web to help resolve the call.

The Bottom Line for UpSource

A detailed analysis of the implementation shows that UpSource will reap a cumulative five-year benefit of C$478,432 from the project. The project will yield an average annual ROI of 26 percent over a five-year period. The C$478,432 benefit will be realized by a combination of an estimated cost-savings of C$90,000 when compared to expanding the existing system, and increased revenue that UpSource will bring in by reducing downtime. Because downtime has been reduced, each seat will be more productive and generate an additional C$2,882 over a five-year period, for a total of C$390,000 in higher productivity.

The numbers tell only half the story: benefits of the solution go beyond statistics. Reliability and stability top the list. The new system has been in place since December 2002, without a single outage. This is, in part, due to Avaya EXPERT Systems℠ Diagnostic Tools, which work to identify and prevent problems before they arise, minimize their impact if they occur, and identify ways to keep them from taking place again.

Eliminating outages not only increases user productivity and revenue, but is important for UpSource's credibility with its clients. Having a solid solution that does not go down means that UpSource's staff need not invest time in troubleshooting problems, and can instead focus on providing customer service and new client implementation.
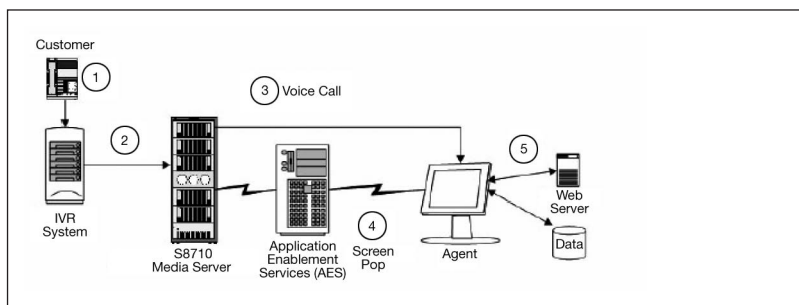

Figure 1: How the Avaya Solution Works

1. A customer calls into an IVR system. 2. If the customer wants to speak to a live agent, the call is transferred out to the ACD. 3. The call comes through the Avaya S8710 Media Server and is routed and distributed to a call center agent. 4. Information forwarded to Communication Manager from the IVR system identifies the caller. Application Enablement Services and Avaya Contact Center Express generate a "screen pop" to the agent, which populates the agent's screen with information about the caller. 5. The agent handles the call. If he/she needs more information than provided by the screen pop, he/she can access hosted databases or Web servers.
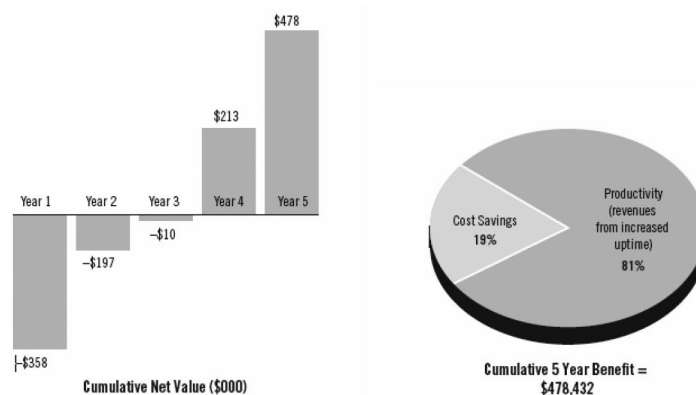
UpSource's bottom line for the project: A cumulative five-year benefit of more than

UpSource Looks Toward the Future

The Avaya solution will yield financial benefits in excess of C$478,000, but more importantly, it has increased the company's ability to serve its clients. With the new system in place as a foundation, UpSource is looking toward future expansion, notably by creating custom call centers for individual clients. UpSource expects continued growth to reach its goal of 300 agents for its existing center, thanks in large part to the reliability of the Avaya solution. The Avaya solutions give the company confidence in performance of its 24x7 operations and in creating custom outsourcing solutions for new clients.

"We're confident that with Avaya we have investment protection," Burns concludes. *"We've chosen the solution that will give us the most feature-richness and flexibility, and that can best help us meet the goals we've set for the company. Our next step is the deployment of VoIP to allow us to use remote agents as well."*

Learn More

For more information on how Avaya can take your enterprise from where it is to where it needs to be, contact your Avaya Client Executive or Authorized Avaya BusinessPartner, or visit us at **www.avaya.com**

BUSINESS ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

Project Summary

Annual ROI	26%*					
Benefit/seat (over 5 years)	$2,882					
Cumulative 5-year benefit	$478,432					
Payback period (months)	36					

Project Costs ($000)	Startup	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Initial Equipment	$316					
Implementation	$59					
Total	$375					

Benefits ($000)						
Cost Savings		$0	$116	$116	$116	$116
Productivity (revenue from increased uptime)		$17	$45	$71	$107	$150

Financial Analysis ($000)
Net Value
Cumulative Value
Net Present Value
Annual ROI
Internal Rate of Return
Payback Period (months)

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Revenue/Seat/Year	$47,511
Cost/Seat/Year	$560
Benefit/Seat/Year (vs. existing)	$576
% Annual productivity improvement/seat	1.2%

*over a 5-year period

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**Note: All numbers are in Canadian dollars. This financial analysis was performed by ITCentrix, the premier software and services company for measuring and managing the business value of information technology investments. Results shown are not a guarantee of equivalent performance.

ABOUT UPSOURCE

UpSource delivers high quality customer service and sales support for organizations of all sizes, leveraging outstanding agents and industry leading technology to service customers quickly and efficiently. UpSource delivers service with the same commitment and motivation one would expect from its own employees. Whether over the phone, delivering live support on the web, answering an e-mail, or white mail, UpSource stands for intelligent and cost effective Customer Service, based on state of the art infrastructure. For more information visit the UpSource website: http://www.upsource.ca.

Applications	Systems	Services
• Avaya MultiVantage™ Communications Applications • Avaya Communication Manager • Avaya Call Management System • Avaya Contact Center Express • Avaya INTUITY™ AUDIX® Voice Messaging	• Avaya S8710 Media Server • Avaya G650 Media Gateways	• Avaya EXPERT Systems℠ Diagnostic Tools • Avaya Enablement Services

AVAYA

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