



Improving Call Center Efficiency with a Predictive Dialer

Introduction

Countless benefits can be achieved through the implementation and use of an on-demand predictive dialer. Web-based call center solutions reduce overhead costs, increase campaign effectiveness, and build greater market share, revenue streams, and customer loyalty. That's why last year organizations across the United States spent over \$3.2 billion on predictive dialing technologies and related call center components, according to Datamonitor.

Perhaps one of the most important advantages cited is a dramatic rise in contact center productivity. Companies who use a predictive dialer report significant, measurable improvements in the efficiency of their agents, as well as their management teams. These improvements are especially critical given today's current economic climate, when all departments within all organizations – including contact centers – are being pressured to boost output with fewer resources at hand.

In this paper, we will examine some of the many ways in which a Web-hosted predictive dialing system can help improve contact center productivity. You'll learn how, through strategic use of these robust, full-featured call center systems, you can minimize administrative burden, maximize agent talk time, increase call volumes, enhance the way agents – and the campaigns they work on – are managed, and much, much more. You'll also find out about SafeSoft Solutions, today's most complete and innovative on-demand predictive dialers, and how they can empower you to optimize efficiency across your entire call center.

Eliminate Manual Activities

Your agents are hand-picked for their stellar communication, people, relationship-building, and sales skills. Yet, once they are on the job, they'll spend a large portion of their time performing simple administrative tasks such as pulling names from a database, then manually dialing those contacts' phone numbers. Geoff Alexander & Company, a well-known and respected enterprise training firm, states that the average telesales rep will spend only 6 hours per day actually talking to clients. That means, two full hours are devoted to tasks that will have little or no impact on campaign results.

A predictive dialer relieves agents from some of their administrative burden, giving them more time to focus on activities that will have a more profound effect on the achievement

According to some studies, the average telesales rep will spend only 6 hours each day talking to prospects or customers. →



of campaign results. The system will dynamically estimate when an agent may be ready to speak to a customer or prospect, and will then automatically initiate calls at an appropriate rate. If the system gets a bad number or receives a busy signal, it will hang up and begin dialing the next number. If it detects an answering machine, it can be set to either leave a pre-recorded message, or to disconnect and move on to the next call.

Only when a live person has answered will the call be transferred to an agent. As a result, your representatives will no longer need to hand-dial number after number before finally reaching a potential client.

Boost Call Volumes

An agent pulls a number from a database, dials the phone, and waits patiently while it rings. But sometimes that call will result in a busy signal or a voice mail box. Which means, the time it took for the agent to complete those tasks was, essentially, wasted.

Performing these activities over and over again not only prevents the agent from focusing efforts on interacting with existing and potential customers, it severely limits the number of calls they can place each day. In all contact centers – particularly those that conduct telesales or other revenue-generating campaigns – the more calls made, the better the results.

Predictive dialers fully automate all outbound dialing activities from end to end. Calls are placed at either a pre-determine rate, or at a speed based on anticipated agent availability. Call results – answering machines, bad numbers, etc. – are dynamically detected, and only “live” respondents are transferred to agents. Call completion rates from a typical campaign will usually fall within a few percentage points of these numbers:


Live Customer Connections - 33%

Voice Mail, Fax, Busy, No Answer, Disconnected - 67%

Just how effective is this approach? According to industry studies, the use of a predictive dialer boosts call volumes by more than 200 percent, and has been reported to deliver increases as high as 400 percent.

Maximize Talk Time, Minimize Down Time

No matter what kind of outbound calling campaigns you run, the more time agents spend actually talking to your target audience, the more successful you’ll be. When agents speak to more prospects, they’ll close more sales. When they reach more clients, you obtain a clearer and more accurate picture of customer satisfaction. If they can perform more research surveys, you gain more in-depth insight into the vital marketplace trends that will drive your business.

The use of a predictive dialer has been shown to increase call volumes by as much as 400 percent. 

The concept is simple, when agents spend less time manually dialing phone numbers, they can spend more time interacting – promoting your products and services, building relationships with clients, gathering vital research data, raising funds, and more. This, in turn, will have a significant positive impact on the results of your outbound calling initiatives.

Predictive dialers not only maximize talk time, they also reduce the amount of time agents spend idle between live calls. A world-class predictive dialer system will leverage an advanced algorithm capable of predicting when an agent will complete their current call, and be ready to take another, with the highest degree of accuracy. Dialing speeds are then intelligently adjusted to minimize idle time, and ensure that each agent conducts as many live interactions as possible.

Ensure Consistent Lead Nurturing

Many phone-based sales and marketing efforts fall flat due to a lack of proper lead follow-up. Many of today’s more comprehensive predictive dialers offer a wide range of features that provide agents with the tools they need to properly reach out to and nurture their contacts throughout their lifecycle. With the following capabilities, predictive dialing systems can help ensure proper lead handling from the time an opportunity is identified, until a deal is closed:

- An integrated CRM database that centralizes all contact and lead-related data, making it more complete, and more accessible to agents
- Cradle-to-grave history tracking, so agents can review the details and results of all prior interactions
- Callback notification, so agents will receive automatic reminders about scheduled follow-ups

Employee Retention

A study done at Purdue University's Center for Customer Driven Quality (CDQ) shows that annual attrition rates for outbound call centers range from an average of 21.3% for full-time agents to 35.5% for part-time agents. The highest rate encountered was 210% for full-time reps and 480% for part-time staff. The report also goes on to state that recruiting and training a call center rep can cost anywhere from \$5,000 to \$18,000. This adds up to a massive expense.

SafeSoft Solutions: Cutting-Edge Predictive Dialers Designed to Boost Contact Center Productivity

SafeSoft Solutions empowers customer contact teams with the robust tools they need to expand customer loyalty, generate significant revenues, and optimize profitability. Our predictive dialers are Web-hosted, on-demand solutions that offer rapid deployment and ease-of-use, with little or no capital investment.

The SafeSoft Promise - Low Monthly Fee

SafeSoft is committed to removing the investment barrier to technology adoption. When you implement a SafeSoft predictive dialing solution, you get a complete package - for one affordable monthly fee per seat. That includes domestic long distance and voice services like announcements and call recording. Customers can simply "pay as they go," using the service as long as they like, stopping at anytime, with no cancellation fees or penalties of any kind. We are changing the industry by delivering the promise and power of the Internet in ways that free companies to innovate and adapt.

Truly intelligent dialing

We've developed a sophisticated, state-of-the-art "self-learning" algorithm that uses historical patterns and trends in data (such as average call length) to forecast agent availability with the highest level of precision and accuracy. Dialing speeds are then dynamically adjusted, according to predicted agent readiness.

CRM and lead management functionality

We've incorporated powerful lead management capabilities into our Web-hosted predictive dialer. So, agents have immediate access to complete contact histories, including the disposition of previous calls. This provides them with valuable insight that can make interactions more personalized and more effective. Additionally, agents can segment the database and pull a list of leads by any criteria, at anytime, allowing them to conduct campaigns in a more targeted fashion.

Recording and monitoring capabilities

Integrated call recording allows team leaders and call center managers to capture and review sales rep interactions, so they can identify the need for training and coaching. Successful customer conversations can be saved and used as "best practices" training examples. Additionally, managers can "live monitor" calls in progress, and join the conversation to help assist struggling agents, or close the deal when needed.

Reporting and analysis

Sales managers can ensure optimum sales effectiveness by tracking vital patterns and trends in agent and campaign performance. SafeSoft Solutions enable real-time reporting of:

- Lead status
- Call results
- Average call lengths
- Calls made
- Talk time
- Agent log-in/log-out
- And much more!

Simplicity and ease of use

The SafeSoft interface is a highly intuitive and comfortable environment to work in – so critical customer campaigns don't have to be put on hold while agents learn how to navigate complex software features. In fact, our application is so user-friendly, sales representatives can get up and running in minutes, with little or no training.

Support for all industries and types of call centers

Our predictive dialers are currently in use in almost every major industry. Our systems enable the efficient and successful execution of all types of outbound customer contact – from telesales, fund raising, and market surveys to collections, appointment setting, and political campaigning. Wherever a business needs to reach out to its customers, SafeSoft can provide a more efficient means of getting the job done.

Maximum flexibility

A predictive dialer from SafeSoft Solutions provides customers with many options. Because it can be accessed remotely, from any Web-enabled PC, it can be used in both traditional and virtual call center environments. Additionally, clients can use it with standard phone lines, or they can opt for more cost-efficient phone service with VoIP technologies.



But there is an even darker side to attrition problems. In 2007, the International Customer Management Institute (ICMI) listed the top five business issues impacted by agent turnover, as reported by customer contact executives and managers:

1. Poor service quality (71%)
2. Lost productivity (64%)
3. Higher training and selection costs (59%)
4. Reduced employee morale (55%)
5. Increased stress (47%)
6. Higher recruiting costs (47%)

What's more, according to TARP, a recognized leader in customer experience consulting, over two thirds of customer loss is attributable to bad employee attitudes and behaviors.

So what can be done to improve attrition and employee attitudes? The virtual capabilities of today's technologies may hold the answers. According to a survey conducted by Yoh, a provider of talent and outsourcing services, 81 percent of hiring managers have turned to work-at-home solutions. Experts recognize that non-commute options mean that employees, including the disabled, realize lower work-related expenses and better work-life balance.

A survey conducted by BenchmarkPortal, a leading source of CRM information and practices, implies that another approach may be useful. It recommends the use of quality monitoring and call recording for the purpose of training and coaching. Their study reported that 61.8% of respondents indicated that most of their agents appreciate the feedback, and value the coaching process. Only 7% reported that most agents dislike the process, and do not value the feedback.

Enhance Management and Administration

Manual management of agent and campaign performance can be a cumbersome and error-prone process. Without the needed technology tools, the assessment of agent effectiveness and campaign success rates will be little more than "guesswork." As a result, your managers and team leaders will be challenged to implement the required measures to optimize productivity, and maximize the results of your outbound calling initiatives.

Many on-demand predictive dialing systems offer a wide range of features and capabilities designed to simplify and streamline campaign and agent management, while providing supervisors with greater visibility into their agents, campaigns in progress, and related activities. Such capabilities include:

- Call monitoring and recording, so agent performance can be evaluated firsthand
- Call and campaign tracking, so vital statistics and performance indicators can be analyzed in real time.

About SafeSoftSolutions

When companies want today's most innovative telemarketing and call center software, they turn to SafeSoft Solutions. We are committed to removing the investment barrier to technology adoption. When you implement a SafeSoft predictive dialing solution, you get a complete package - for one affordable monthly user fee. You simply "pay as you go," using the service as long as you like, and stopping at anytime, with no cancellation fee or penalty of any kind. We are changing the industry by delivering the promise and power of the Internet in ways that free companies to innovate and adapt.

Find Out More

To learn more about hosted predictive dialer systems and other on-demand call center software from SafeSoft Solutions – and how they can help you boost customer satisfaction and retention – visit our Web site at www.safesoftsolutions.com.

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