

Contact Center Outsourcing: Why Right-Sized Is the Right Choice

In certain industries, bigger is better. But when it comes to contact center outsourcing, that's not always the case.

Financial institutions recognize the benefits of building long-term relationships with their account holders. The smartest institutions align their organizations around account holder service and satisfaction.

According to a 2011 Forrester Research report¹ on the relationship between call center interaction and customer loyalty, "Call center satisfaction correlates with three loyalty metrics: consumers' willingness to repurchase, reluctance to switch, and likelihood to recommend." Forrester says the data is clear. "Customers care about the quality of call center interactions, and they're willing to vote with their wallets."



This is where selecting a "right-sized" contact center can make a difference. If outsourced agents are dealing directly with your account holders, they must be an extension of your own thoughtful customer service — and therefore a consistent extension of your brand. If not, your account holder relationships are at risk.

Niche contact centers have important advantages over call center giants. When assessing a contact center partner, consider the benefits a more specialized organization can provide:

Focused Attention. It's easy to get lost in a big organization. Working with a right-sized partner puts you at the top of the priority list. Look for a dedicated team of call specialists working on your project. This allows the call specialists to mirror and match the service philosophy, presentation and professionalism of your own internal customer service standards.

Also, beware of rough hand-offs from sales to implementation. Sometimes important details slip through the cracks. Look for a single point of contact — a project manager who serves as your advocate for the duration, from set-up and training to measurement and reporting.

Quick Reaction Time. Big can be slow. You need an organization that can help your institution communicate with customers fast. These nimble capabilities make an enormous difference when you need to get a program up and running quickly, as in the case of a merger or acquisition. Agility is also important when you need to communicate with account holders in case of a security breach, systems upgrade or regulatory change. By getting your message out accurately and efficiently, account holders feel appreciated. Keeping them informed means keeping their trust.

Flexible Staffing. Another benefit to being nimble is being able to staff up and down quickly to accommodate individual project capacity needs. If your program is of short duration or requires a substantial number of agents for a quick burst of capacity, larger call center giants may not be interested in accommodating these fluctuating needs.

The right partner will be capable of changing staffing requirements without sacrificing quality or sabotaging value.

Customized Messaging. Even the most carefully planned customer care programs feel commoditized when executed poorly. The goal should be to protect and promote your brand with every interaction.

Your partner should be willing to do the hard work up front to produce customized programs to your exact specifications and needs. This includes customized training, verbiage and scripts, IVR messaging and quality assurance. Note: Be sure that your partner is willing and has a process to adapt, finesse and rework scripts and responses as circumstances change — mid-program if necessary.

Industry-Specific Experience. Obviously, you want to work with an experienced call center partner. But what kind of experience should you look for?

Industry experience is essential. Look for an organization that's specialized and focused — a partner that's committed to your industry and its challenges. This ensures that everyone on your outsourced call center team will be well versed in the language you use, in the issues your institution is facing and the best practices for addressing them.

Meticulous Execution. Smaller organizations are often better listeners. They don't make assumptions. They don't have layers of management diluting your message as it goes up and down the chain of command.

Plus, the performance stakes are higher — they have to get it right because they don't have the luxury of a big organization to back a failure.

Be sure your partner is committed to the fundamentals — that they are listening to your goals, following a proven process and meeting your specific needs.

The bottom line? Size matters. Choosing an outsourced contact center partner is a big decision, and it's important to work with a nimble group that's able to serve as an extension of your brand and is fully committed to your success.

Harland Clarke's highly regarded Contact Center Solutions organization has earned its outstanding reputation by partnering with financial institution clients to further their goals. We invite you to get to know us and explore how we can help you enhance your service, sales, marketing and operational communications.

For more information, contact us at [1.800.351.3843](tel:1.800.351.3843) or contacthc@harlandclarke.com.

¹Forrester Research, Inc. "Want Loyalty? Improve Your Call Center Customer Experience," May 13, 2011