

Contactual Helps Labor Ready Respond Around the Clock, Around the World

Executive Summary



Company: Labor Ready (www.laborready.com)

Business: Temporary, “on demand” staffing for transportation, warehousing, hospitality, landscaping, construction, light manufacturing, retail, and wholesale businesses.

Challenges:

- High costs and low efficiency from a proliferation of answering services
- Lack of visibility into activity and service levels of 887 branches
- 24/7 availability for customers resulted in unbalanced workload and high turnover for overloaded staff

Solution: A new call center using Contactual OnDemand Contact Center for centralized call routing to local offices, and consolidated call monitoring and reporting.

Benefits:

- Lowered costs and increased call center efficiency – handled 1.1 million calls made by only 52 agents
- Visibility into call patterns, volumes, client needs and service levels
- Reduced employee turnover while providing 24/7 customer service

When an overnight snowfall threatens to halt traffic, municipalities from Seattle to Scotland know they can turn to international temporary staffing company Labor Ready to get extra employees on the job in time to clear roads for the morning commute. **Contactual OnDemand Contact Center** is at the heart of the Seattle-based company’s 24/7 customer service, allowing the company to deliver personal service for clients across the globe from a single call center in Tacoma, WA.

Putting Workers on the Job, 24/7

Operating in North America and the UK, the \$1.2 billion company supplies temporary employees for more than 300,000 business and government agencies in a variety of industries. The company places more than 600,000 workers annually through its 887 branch locations.

“Our customers expect that whenever they have unexpected needs - a tornado or other natural disaster or an unanticipated large order to fill - they can call anytime and get those workers on the job immediately,” says Siobhan Hanna, who is the Director of Labor Ready’s call center.

The problem was, while customers could call in 24/7, the company had no systematic way of handling the calls. Calls went directly to the cell phones of branch managers and customer service representatives – effectively keeping those people on call round the clock. As a result, the company was experiencing high turnover in the field, with staff complaining that they were “never off,” reports Hanna.

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Fast Track to a Contact Center

It wasn't that the company didn't provide help for the field in handling calls. In fact, throughout its branch offices Labor Ready had 94 different answering services, each with varying levels of customer service and cost.

"It was clear that we needed a central call center," Hanna says.

The company had attempted to build a call center in the past but quickly learned that it takes more than equipment. "We thought that it was just a matter of buying a great phone system," explains Hanna. "The process management quickly became overwhelming."

With the lessons learned from that experience, Labor Ready identified the key requirements for a new system. In addition to call management software and good reporting tools, the company was looking for a system that was easy to use and install.

"It needed to work as efficiently as possible," says Hanna. "We needed a quick solution, we were looking for a Web-based system and one that worked with our existing phone system. And the vendor had to be able to meet an aggressive rollout schedule."

A "Transparent" Implementation

Contactual was able to meet all of Labor Ready's requirements. But what sealed the deal for Labor Ready was the attention they received from the Contactual team.

"In talking with them, the sales reps were easy to work with," reports Hanna. "They asked us a lot of questions and explained clearly how they could deliver what we needed. Our product is people – it's not a traditional call center. The folks at Contactual take time to understand your business model and they are ready to stretch to meet your needs."

After signing the deal in August, 2003, Labor Ready was able to set up its call center operations and start routing calls from branch offices in October. In 2005, Labor Ready's call center handled 1.1 million calls with only 52 agents.

The Contactual team was "just great," reports Hanna. "Implementation was painless," she says. "The whole process was 'cookie-cutter' simple. The change was transparent."



New Levels of Service, New Opportunities, Lower Costs

"The Contactual foundation enabled new levels of service, control and visibility," Hanna reports. "Our customers are able to call any branch 24/7, 365 days a year," she explains. "If branch staff is unavailable or gone for the evening the calls roll over seamlessly to our call center where agents are ready to handle any issues."

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The call center proved its value during the 2005 hurricane season.

“During Hurricane Katrina we lost connection with many of our local branches,” explains Hanna. “The corporate call center was able to field calls for these branches and coordinate jobs between our customers and field personnel. We could not have accomplished this without the centralized system. Contactual is the key to keeping our service operational.”

The new system also opened up opportunities to increase business. “One thing Contactual provides is visibility of calling patterns and volume throughout the day,” explains Hanna. “We found out that we were missing a lot of calls during the day – not just after hours. It was a great opportunity to provide much better service for customers.”

As service went up, costs took a corresponding dive. “We were able to get much better rates on our toll free lines,” says Hanna.

“Thumbs Up” from Employees

Most important, the Contactual Contact Center has improved the quality-of-life for Labor Ready field employees. “It’s easier to hire qualified employees,” says Hanna, “It’s easier to keep employees, too – they know they’re going to be able to sleep at night. We know from feedback from our operations team that they love the service.”

Going forward, Labor Ready anticipates that Contactual will be a key partner in reaching the company’s goal of doubling its business within five years. “Contactual is a key part of our customer relationship management,” says Hanna. “They have enabled us to deliver our promise of 24/7 service to our valued customers.”



About Contactual

Contactual is an award-winning Contact Center solution for businesses that want to cost-effectively serve their customers. It is designed for organizations, outsourcers, and service providers. Because it is delivered via the Internet, customers can have their customer service, help desk and technical support centers up and running in a few days, with no capital outlay.

The Contactual OnDemand Contact Center solutions fully integrates with all the communications channels people use to reach companies – whether by phone, VoIP, voicemail, email or over the Web. Contactual unifies customer contacts into one routing, queuing and tracking system; ensuring customers receive the attention they deserve, regardless of how they choose to communicate.

Contactual has earned numerous awards, including, most recently, the 2005 Global Excellence in Technology Award from Frost & Sullivan and the 2005 Innovation Award from TMC Labs’ Customer Interaction Magazine.

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