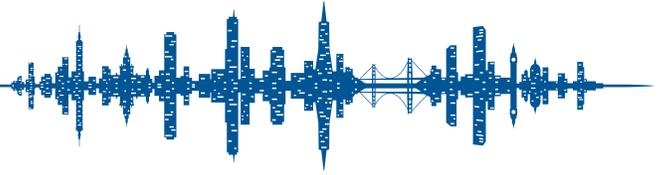


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White Paper Series **Part One: Discover**

Cutting the Cord

The Manager's Guide to Wireless
in the Contact Center

White Paper Series **Part One: Discover**

Cutting the Cord

The Manager's Guide to Wireless in the Contact Center

- Contact center agents who can leave their workstations without placing callers on hold can collaborate more effectively and keep customers more engaged.
- Wireless headsets permit this degree of mobility without changes to communication infrastructure or equipment.
- A well-researched deployment of wireless headsets in a contact center can improve customer satisfaction, boost agent productivity and help retain well-trained talent.



No matter how far technology evolves in the contact center, customers will never enjoy being put on hold.

OVERVIEW

The contact center agent is your ambassador to the customer. As your organization looks for ways to differentiate itself on price and features, there is always room to stand out by improving the experience for customers who call into your contact center.

Besides investing in training and equipment, successful contact centers are finding a new competitive edge: mobility. When agents are no longer tethered to their phone, they can leave the workstation, confer with experts, examine in-house samples and retrieve records without placing callers on hold. Coaches and supervisors can be more effective in more places at once. Agent mobility also pays dividends in customer satisfaction, team productivity, training effectiveness and agent motivation/retention.

This series of papers serves as a guide to contact center managers, IT helpdesk leads and customer service supervisors exploring the landscape of wireless headsets. Readers can use this paper, "Discover," to better understand the use cases, basics and benefits of upgrading from corded to wireless headsets.

WHY ARE WIRELESS HEADSETS ENTERING THE CONTACT CENTER?

"Hands-free" communication has long meant "corded communication," connecting the headset to desktop with wires. The quick-disconnecting headset is an improvement that allows agents to keep a caller on the line while consulting an expert or retrieving a file, but it still leaves the customer on hold. And no matter how far technology evolves in the contact center, customers will never enjoy being on hold.

With a wireless headset, contact center personnel can do their work based at their station just as before, but can now leave their desks whenever necessary to test, consult, or refer to resources elsewhere in the center while continuing the conversation with the customer.

Wireless headsets de-clutter the agent workstation, and eradicate the fluid spills, snagging and general inconvenience associated with cords.

Many large organizations have IT help desks with their own internal customer base. As these help desks handle potentially complex and unpredictable queries, they in particular benefit from mobility of supervisors and agents.

Wireless headsets have also become popular with contact centers for government information and non-emergency services (e.g., 311), where specialized agents deal with extraordinarily diverse inquiries.



Supervisor on wireless headset can join a call at agent's workstation on the fly

BASICS

The simplest wireless headsets connect to landline desk phones, transmitting and receiving a signal between the base and the headset. The base doubles as a charging cradle for the batteries inside the headset.

Talk-time depends on the demands of the user, the contact center environment and, ultimately, battery capacity. In normal use, batteries may provide 8-9 hours of talk-time. In more demanding situations, hot-swappable batteries can extend talk-time indefinitely, without affecting productivity or interrupting audio.



Over-the-head wireless headset in base/charging cradle

More sophisticated wireless headsets can also connect to computers for PC-based telephony using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). The headsets connect through the wireless base and USB to move audio over wired data networks and integrate with the softphone software provided by contact center system vendors. They can simultaneously support calls delivered through regular desk phones, PC-based VoIP, and cellular mobiles providing all the versatility contact centers could possibly require.

Such multiple connectivity lets agents use both deskphone and PC with the same headset, even joining the two. With the ever-increasing use of unified communication tools, training and reference material now being pushed to agents over the PC, and virtual team meetings being delivered by webinar for dispersed teams and home-based agents, this is a huge enabler.

Of course, without reasonable range, a wireless headset is of reduced value. While several factors determine the maximum distance from the base at which the headset can reliably deliver audio, the enterprise standard known as Digital Enhanced Cordless Telecommunications (DECT™) can support clear voice communication at up to 350 feet, or 110 meters. DECT was launched in 1987, has evolved ever since and is approved for use in most countries.



Convertible headset: over-the-ear, behind-the-head or over-the-head.

Because they sit as the final link between caller and agent, wireless headsets do not require any changes to communications infrastructure. They supplement existing telephony at the agent's workstation by replacing corded headsets.



In-office mobility boosts collaboration, customer satisfaction and overall productivity

BENEFITS

When contact center personnel are wireless, several benefits start to accrue to the organization's bottom line:

Customer satisfaction Customers enjoy a better experience and interaction with the organization. They are more engaged with the agent and no longer need to spend so much time on hold. Instead of interrupting the phone call, agents can maintain the conversation with customers while referring to equipment, conducting research or consulting with a trainer.

Agent productivity Agents themselves become more productive when they can move across the center to consult an expert, retrieve a file, refer to a product sample or test the equipment in question. The ability to continue a conversation and make progress on a caller's issue while away from the workstation goes a long way toward lowering average handle time (AHT) and improving First Call Resolution (FCR) – two of the most carefully watched statistics in any contact center.

Supervisor (trainers, coaches, managers) productivity Supervisors can move freely among agents in the call center and guide their work, joining calls on the fly without the need for Y cables and physical interruption.

Accelerate training Small groups of trainee agents can be simultaneously tapped into a live customer conversation using quick pairing to the agent's base, and then move on.

Agent retention/motivation The more productive agents can be, the more easily they are motivated and the less likely they are to leave. Giving employees the option of mobility is an investment in rewarding agents with the equipment they feel they deserve and in attracting and retaining the sought-after, high-caliber agents who now lead contact centers.



CONCLUSION

Customer engagement is important to the success of every business, and the relationship between contact center personnel and callers is at the heart of that engagement. Organizations looking for competitive advantage find that wireless headsets contribute to success in the contact center by giving agents, supervisors, trainers and coaches the physical mobility they need to perform their jobs more effectively.

Mobile agents are productive and motivated agents, characteristics which help generate loyalty among customers. They also tend to remain loyal to their employer, which builds internal expertise and efficiency.

PAPERS IN THIS SERIES

Part 1: Discover

Use cases, basics and benefits of wireless headsets

Part 2: Consider (Coming soon)

Technical, practical and cultural considerations

Part 3: Decide (Coming soon)

Making the business case for going wireless

For more in this series, visit our [Contact Center resources on Plantronics.com](#)

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