

VIRTUAL CONTACT CENTRE DELIVERS DRAMATIC CUSTOMER SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS FOR THOMAS COOK

Submitted by: Gray Associates

Friday, 20 June 2003

Aspect Communications Corporation (Nasdaq: ASPT), the leading provider of enterprise customer contact solutions, today announces that a virtual contact centre created for travel specialist Thomas Cook has halved 'time to answer' for around two-thirds of customers calling the company, increased the percentage of calls it handles successfully from 89% to 96% and slashed the number of its UK customers abandoning calls while holding for a contact centre representative by a massive 250,000 a year.

Thomas Cook estimates that its investment in the Aspect solution paid for itself in less than six months.

The virtual contact centre, which cost around £500,000, was completed by Aspect in late 2002 and has seen Thomas Cook's four existing UK contact centres combined into a single virtual operation. The Aspect Enterprise Contact Server technology makes decisions on which of the company's four contact centres is best equipped to handle calls based on dialled numbers, the identity of callers and business rules defined by Thomas Cook.

If callers are identified as people that have booked with Thomas Cook before, the technology is able to send their calls to the same agents that dealt with them before. If callers are identified as people that abandoned while waiting in a call queue - or as regular customers - their calls can be given priority.

If calls queuing at a Thomas Cook call centre go unanswered for a period of time, the Aspect Enterprise Contact Server will intelligently transfer them to another centre if it calculates calls can be answered quicker elsewhere. The Aspect technology can view all customer contacts - emails as well as calls - at all the company's sites and make 'Best Place' routing decisions in real time.

The four Thomas Cook sites - based in Peterborough, Falkirk, Bradford and Birmingham currently employ around 1000 agents and handle between 50,000 and 80,000 calls a week.

"The virtual contact centre has been a great success with results exceeding our expectations " said Simon Priestley, Head of Capacity and Yield at Thomas Cook. "The holiday business is extremely competitive and we are always seeking out new ways to get closer to our customers. Technology such as the virtual contact centre can play a major role in helping us achieve this aim".

The decision to use Aspect followed a comprehensive review of all virtual contact centre technologies on the market. "We've been an Aspect customer since 1991 and have enjoyed a very positive working relationship over this period" states Priestley. "The Aspect solution compared favourably with competitive products and was an obvious choice for Thomas Cook because it meant we didn't have to duplicate existing contact centre resources".

Following a two month competitive product review process, the project was completed in a mere 9 weeks - and this included a 3 week testing period!

"We are extremely proud to be associated with this prestigious and successful project" said Paul Tollan, Managing Director of Aspect Communications UK Ltd. "Despite its complexity, the implementation team worked impressively to deliver the project on time, on budget and working effectively".

The implementation of the virtual contact centre is key to Thomas Cook's vision for the future. As Paul De Laat, Director of Customer Strategy, Thomas Cook explains, the company is committed to delivering completely seamless customer service across all channels, and across all its businesses. "Customers will only have to tell us something once, and we will remember it. A customer will be able to browse for skiing holidays, say, on his PC at work, pick up the saved search results on his home PC, show some pictures of chalets and piste maps to his family on interactive TV, and then pick up the phone - or even walk into a shop - to book or pay. And call centres should be waiting to respond to customers at peak times for this kind of activity - in the evening - with a live voice to help them over that last hurdle."

About Aspect Communications

Aspect Communications Corporation is the leading provider of business communications solutions that help companies improve customer satisfaction, reduce operating costs, gather market intelligence and increase revenue. Aspect is a trusted mission-critical partner with more than two-thirds of the Fortune 50, daily managing more than 3 million customer sales and service professionals worldwide. Aspect is the only company that provides the mission-critical software platform, development environment and applications that seamlessly integrate voice-over-IP, traditional telephony, e-mail, voicemail, Web, fax and wireless business communications, while guaranteeing investment protection in a company's front-office, back-office, Internet and telephony infrastructures. Aspect's leadership in business communications solutions is based on more than 17 years of experience and more than 8,000 implementations deployed worldwide. The company is headquartered in San Jose, California, with offices around the world as well as an extensive global network of systems integrators, independent software vendors and distribution partners. Aspect's UK offices are in Stockley Park, Uxbridge, Middlesex and can be reached on 0800 ASPECT (i.e. 0800 277328).

About Thomas Cook

Thomas Cook UK & Ireland is one of the UK's largest travel companies, employing around 11,000 staff. The company's principal operations include 643 high street shops selling travel and foreign exchange, 110 separate bureaux de change, seven Thomas Cook travel warehouses, four call centres, Thomas Cook TV and thomascook.com, one of the most popular UK travel websites. In addition, Thomas Cook has more than ten tour operating brands including: Thomas Cook, JMC, Sunset, Thomas Cook Signature, Club 18-30, Cultura, Neilson, Blue Sky Holidays Direct, Sunworld Ireland and Style Holidays. The company also operates Thomas Cook Airlines, the UK's second largest leisure airline.

###

Cautionary Note Regarding Forward-looking Statements: All statements in this release that involve Aspect's forecasts, beliefs, projections, expectations, strategies and intentions are forward-looking

statements within the meaning of the safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These forward-looking statements, which are based on information available to Aspect at the time of this release, are not guarantees of future results; rather, they are subject to risks and uncertainties that may cause actual results to differ materially from those set forth in this release. These risks and uncertainties include, but are not limited to, the uncertainty of demand for Aspect products; the anticipated customer benefits from Aspect products; increased competition and technological changes in the markets in which Aspect competes; Aspect's abilities to manage growth; intense competition for qualified employees; and the risks detailed from time to time in the company's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, including Aspect's annual report on Form 10-K and Aspect's quarterly reports on Form 10-Q. Aspect assumes no obligation to update information concerning its expectations.

Aspect, the Aspect logo and the phrases and marks relating to other Aspect products and services discussed in this press release constitute one or both of the following: (1) registered trademarks and/or service marks of Aspect Communications Corporation in the United States and/or other countries or (2) intellectual property subject to protection under common law principles. All other names and marks mentioned in this document are properties of their respective owners.

For further information please contact:

Anita Marsh
Aspect Communications
+44 (0)20 8589 1037
anita.marsh@aspect.com

Michael Gray
Gray Associates
(For Aspect Communications)
Tel: +44 (0)208 744 9168
michael@grayassociates.co.uk

Thomas Cook Press Office
Tel: +44 (0)1733 417271
Press.office@thomascook.com