

# CALL CENTRES CRUCIFYING COMPANY REPUTATION

Submitted by: Pirate Communications

Thursday, 22 January 2004

---

-Yet survey reveals 76 per cent of people would pay more for goods if they knew they could rely on better customer service!

A survey undertaken by Transversal ([www.transversal.com](http://www.transversal.com)), the provider of dynamic web self-service and knowledge management solutions, has revealed that consumer opinions of particular brands have decreased after contacting a call centre. Over half of the respondents (53 per cent) said their opinion had decreased with financial services companies, in particular, cited as the major culprits. However, First Direct bank was singled out for praise, by the 17 per cent of people whose opinion of a company had been enhanced by the call centre experience.

Contacting a call centre by phone was still the favoured medium for 83 per cent of respondents, with the remainder opting for e-mail. This indicates that very few organisations have established an effective way to deal with e-mail enquiries, despite the ease of communication it can offer to them and their customers.

Unsurprisingly, when asked about ways to improve call centres 57 per cent said: 'Employ agents who know more and are able to handle my call quickly', followed by 35 per cent saying: 'Reduce the number of automated menus'. Despite many companies outsourcing their call centre operations abroad, no one said 'Relocate them to India'!

Gerard Buckley, CEO of Transversal, said: "Customers are still banging on the same old drum and it's clear from this survey that organisations still have some way to go to satisfy them. Greater speed, knowledge and consistency of response are still seen as the key requirements for customers. The irony is, the technology exists that will make sure customers get the answers they need whether they're online or calling a call centre. The latest online customer service technologies can even provide call centre agents with intelligent answers to customer questions, any time agents are stuck for the answer."

Transversal has developed Metafaq™ to improve customer satisfaction and ease the burden of call and e-mail enquiries to call centres by automatically answering customers' questions online. Using Transversal's unique Memory Engine™ technology, Metafaq is able to understand complex sentence structure and process customer questions in the same way as human memory. Customers can simply type a question in their own words, just as they would ask an agent, to receive an immediate and relevant answer from a knowledgebase of information. By using the Metafaq system, it is actually quicker for customers to have their questions answered online than to contact the call centre.

Using Metafaq, customers such as Fujifilm have already reduced e-mail volumes to its call centres by 60 per cent and within one month of integration over 85 per cent of Sony PlayStation's online queries were being answered automatically.

Organisations are now also starting to deploy this technology within call centres, through Transversal's Intrafaq™ system. Agents unsure how to respond to a customer query simply input the question on screen, to get an immediate answer. The dynamic Q & A process that drives the system builds a knowledge resource that is totally in tune with the needs of customers. Raising the speed, quality and consistency of agent performance increases the number of calls that are successfully resolved in the first call – leading to increased customer satisfaction and retention.

An efficient call centre, with fewer missed sale opportunities, is more profitable. As Transversal's survey results show, 76 per cent of customers would pay more for a company's goods or services if they could rely on swift, accurate and knowledgeable service from its agents!

For more information go to [www.transversal.com](http://www.transversal.com)

-ENDS-

Notes to editors

Summary of survey results:

- 83% of respondents preferred to contact call centres via phone
  
- When asked how to improve call centres:
  - 57% said: 'Employ agents who know more and are able to handle my call more quickly'
  - 35% said: 'Reduce the number of automated menus'
  - 8% said: 'Better music when put on hold'
  - No one said relocate them to India

- 53% of respondents said that after contacting a call centre, their opinion of that particular brand had decreased, compared to only 17% saying it had been enhanced

- 95% of respondents said they would be more inclined to go back to a company which provides a helpful and knowledgeable service than one that doesn't

- 76% of respondents would pay more for a company's goods or services if they knew that they could rely on swift, accurate and knowledgeable service from its agents?

#### About Transversal

Founded in 1998 by two PhDs from Caltech and Cambridge University, Transversal is based in Cambridge, England. Transversal provides cost efficient, web-based customer support and information management solutions through its Metafaq™ products. Transversal aims to transform the Web from a passive information-sharing channel into an active knowledge-creation environment. To support this goal it has combined the sophisticated concept matching of its Memory Engine™ technology with a modular infrastructure for web-based communications and content management. Current customers include Sony, Direct Line, MFI, Fujifilm, TDK Systems, Hotcourses Systems, DfES, Proctor & Gamble and the British Army.

#### Further information

Press enquiries:

Alex Crawshaw / Ged Carroll / David Pincott

Pirate Communications

Tel. +44 (0)20 7760 7050

[alex@piratecomms.com](mailto:alex@piratecomms.com) / [ged@piratecomms.com](mailto:ged@piratecomms.com) / [david@piratecomms.com](mailto:david@piratecomms.com)

[www.piratecomms.com](http://www.piratecomms.com)

Sales and general information:

Dee Roche

Transversal

Tel. +44 (0)1223 723392

dee.roche@transversal.com

www.transversal.com