

Future proof contact centre solutions today



Balancing call centre
productivity and business
objectives.

For further information contact:

rostrvm solutions
Dukes Court
Dukes Street
Woking
Surrey
GU21 5RT
United Kingdom

rostrvm solutions

Telephone : +44 01483 744500
e-mail: enquiries@rostrvm.com
www.rostrvm.com



Copyright © 2002 -2003 Rostrvm Solutions Limited

The copyright in this work is vested in Rostrvm Solutions Limited and the document is issued in confidence for the purpose only for which it is supplied. It must not be reproduced in whole or in part or used for tendering or manufacturing purposes except under an agreement or with the consent in writing of Rostrvm Solutions Limited and then only on the condition that this notice is included in any such reproduction. No information as to the contents or subject matter of this document or any part thereof arising directly or indirectly therefrom shall be given orally or in writing or communicated in any manner whatsoever to any third party being an individual firm or employee thereof without the prior consent in writing of Rostrvm Solutions Limited.

rostrvm ®, **CLIPboard** ®, **rostrvm CallManager** ®, **rostrvm AdVisor** ®, **rostrvm OutBound** ®, **rostrvm CallDirector** ®, **rostrvm CallBroker** ®, **rostrvm ControlCentre** ®, **rostrvm InterAct** ®, **rostrvm AuditLog** ®, **rostrvm ReportWriter** ®, **rostrvm SuperVisor** ®, and **rostrvm InterFace** ® are registered trade marks of Rostrvm Solutions Limited.

rostrvm CLIPboard patent Rostrvm Solutions Limited (registration number 2290193)

rostrvm solutions,
Dukes Court,
Duke Street,
Woking, Surrey GU21 5RT
ENGLAND

All rights reserved. First edition printed 2003.



Background

The Call Centre has become central to many business operations. Resulting from this increasing importance, the operational challenges facing the Call Centre Manager are changing. Traditional call centre metrics still apply and most operations are targeted to meet one or more of the following indicators:

- service level (x% of calls in y seconds)
- number of calls answered per agent per period
- average speed to answer
- average talk time
- number of calls made per agent per hour
- call abandonment rate

Increasingly operational metrics are becoming only one element of the performance mix; business outcomes – the quantity, quality and value of contacts have become a key indicator of how successfully a call centre is operating. Balancing the drive for improved business outcomes with the needs to maximise efficiency and minimise expenditure can be very difficult.

Reconciling these potentially conflicting drivers requires all parts of the call centre to be effectively managed and staffed. This means having sufficient agents to maintain a high quality of service whilst taking measures to ensure agents are productively focussed upon meeting business objectives.

This white paper discusses the issues surrounding the use of call blending technologies to meet these complex operational and business aims.

Call Centres aren't fair!

In the perfect call centre all callers would be answered quickly and call centre agents would be productive all the time. Unfortunately the fundamental characteristics of 'real world' call centres do not permit perfection to happen!

If calls are to be answered quickly then there must be call centre agents available, apparently unproductively, waiting to take the call. Conversely if all agents are busy on calls then it is inevitable that any calls that arrive will queue waiting for an agent to be available.



What is call blending?

Many organisations use their call centres for multiple functions, simultaneously running a range of different inbound and/or outbound campaigns. One method of reducing unproductive time is to introduce call blending; if there are no calls for an agent's primary task, then assign some other work to that agent. For example it is possible to provide sales agents with outbound marketing campaign work to undertake during quiet periods for inbound calls.

Some call centres take steps to move key multi-skilled agents between campaigns at certain times of the day in order to try and smooth out some of the peaks and troughs that occur during the day on different campaigns. Others attempt to react to call traffic conditions as they happen, asking agents to log in and out of campaigns as team leaders identify operational problems.

However procedures for managing valuable call centre resources based upon forecasts and/or intervention by people are labour intensive and very difficult to do to a consistently high standard.

Software control of call blending is more accurate, reduces costs and optimises productivity, but each call centre must consider the disadvantages of particular blending methods.

A case study

For the purposes of this paper we will consider the hypothetical case of a call centre handling inbound sales calls and outbound telemarketing campaigns.

- There are 2 types of inbound call High Value sales calls and Low Value Calls.
- The centre also undertakes outbound telemarketing campaigns to generate new business.
- Call lengths are relatively random in length ranging from 30 seconds to 20 minutes.

The centres primary aiming to achieve maximum revenue and must answer the High Value sales calls quickly. Secondly the centre is aiming to increase agent productivity by undertaking more telemarketing calls.

Business outcomes of different call blending techniques illustrate the differing implications of balancing potentially conflicting targets.



Reactive blending

Reactive call blending is the simplest technique for blending calls for different campaigns together, and is used to direct calls to call centre agents on a call-by-call basis. Extending the case study, we will consider the advantages and disadvantages of using call-by-call reactive blending to provide outbound calls to agents when there are no higher-priority, inbound calls waiting to be handled.

Advantages:

- easy to implement and works well for a number of simple scenarios, allowing multi-skilled agents to handle a range of different types of contact,
- provides a significant increase in efficiency, potentially yielding agent utilisation over 95%.
- outbound call volumes will increase.

Disadvantages:

- Inbound call queue lengths and queuing times will increase dramatically
- Call abandonment rates will increase
- High Value business will be lost

Business Rules blending

Business Rules blending, as offered by **rostrvm** ResourceBroker, is a more sophisticated method of deciding which types of calls each agent in the call centre should be focussed upon at any given time.

Business Rules blending does not simply consider individual calls; business rules blending considers operational conditions and business outcomes. Using our case study again we could extend the reactive blending described above by applying a business rule: outbound calls will not be made unless there is at least 1 agent available to accept any high value call.

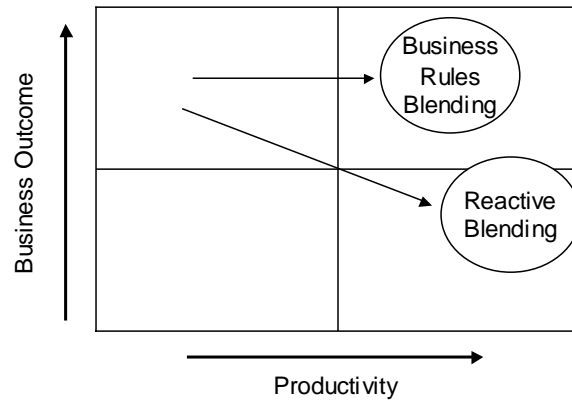
Advantages:

- high quality Inbound call handling service is maintained
- sales revenues are maintained
- provides a significant increase in efficiency, potentially yielding agent utilisation over 90%.
- outbound call volumes will increase.

Disadvantages:

- productivity and outbound volume gains are not as high as those delivered by simple Reactive blending

Summarizing this case study it is clear that Business Rules blending delivers increased productivity with support for business outcomes.



rostrvm ResourceBroker

rostrvm ResourceBroker allows a range of different performance criteria to be monitored for each of the campaigns in the call centre. These criteria are calculated in real-time allowing ResourceBroker to respond to changing call centre and business conditions as soon as they occur. Criteria that can be used in building blending rules include:

- the number of calls on a given ACD queue
- the length of time that the longest waiting call on a given ACD queue has been queued
- the number of calls which have a specified call outcome over a period of time
- the total value of calls over a period of time
- the percentage of agents in a given agent group who are busy handling calls
- the number of calls which have a given call outcome over a period of time
- the total number of calls handled in a campaign over a given period of time
- the start and end times for each campaign
- the minimum and maximum number of agents to be associated with each campaign



About rostrvm

Rostrvm Solutions is the UK's leading independent supplier of CTI Middleware and open Customer Interaction Management software applications for inbound & outbound call centres. rostrvm's solutions allow organisations to deliver personalised customer relationships, balancing the needs to

- optimise and integrate existing technology investments
- support operational processes
- achieve business objectives.

rostrvm has a proven track record of delivering inbound, outbound and CTI middleware solutions in partnership with major call switching platforms and enabling technologies such as IVRs, voice recorders and Customer Relationship Management IT infrastructures.