

RESEARCH BRIEF

Calabrio ONE Personalizes the User Experience, Continues to Push the Web 2.0 Envelope

Summary

Calabrio, Inc., of Minneapolis, MN, has announced a new release of its Web 2.0-based Calabrio ONE® enterprise software suite which draws upon the proven techniques of the social web in order to deliver a workforce optimization user experience similar to that of a social media site. This latest release adds a more personalized user experience to Calabrio ONE with a consistent look and feel between all workforce optimization (WFO) applications and a dashboard that can be customized to fit the needs of the individual user.

Also introduced is version 8.6 of Calabrio Call Recording, Calabrio Quality Management and Calabrio Workforce Management. New features include a speech energy bar, which provides a visual dashboard illustration of verbal communications including a timeline, comments, and metadata tagging, all of which provide additional context to evaluations. The energy bar provides energy analytics to identify areas of talk-over and silence, allowing evaluators to quickly flag potential service issues.

The Web 2.0 framework of version 8.6 of Calabrio Call Recording, Calabrio Quality Management and Calabrio Workforce Management also supports agent hot desking or hoteling as well as extension mobility for non-agents, which frees any user from having to use a particular location or device. Also new is the ability to hyperlink to any third-party application such as training and e-learning.

The View From The Saddle

This announcement builds upon Calabrio's 2010 release of Calabrio One, the contact center industry's first software-based WFO suite in a Web 2.0 framework (see Saddletree Research Update of March 29, 2010 entitled "Calabrio One: Workforce Optimization Meets Web 2.0"). The 2010 Calabrio One announcement set the foundation for the development and evolution of Calabrio's Web 2.0-based WFO strategy. This announcement represents the next phase of that evolution.

Calabrio has persevered in refining the first release of Calabrio One with the goal of streamlining the user experience within the context of a WFO suite that is flexible, familiar and appealing to users while lowering the total cost of ownership and speeding applications development. While this sounds like a tall order, working within the parameters of the Web 2.0 framework makes it entirely possible.

Saddletree Research believes the next generation of contact center agents and the customers they serve will expect a customer service experience that will strongly resemble the social media experience of today. This expectation is validated by the results of the 2010 survey of contact center end-users undertaken by Saddletree Research in conjunction with the National Association of Call Centers (NACC) at The University of Southern Mississippi.

In this most recent survey, respondents were asked if they were currently monitoring social media applications in the contact center or if they intended to do so in the future. It is interesting to note that in the previous survey conducted in 2009, none of the respondents were actively monitoring social media applications and only 13 percent stated that they intended to start monitoring social media in 2010. The 2010 survey revealed that 18 percent of respondents were already actively monitoring social media, surpassing the 13 percent who stated that they intended to do so in 2010. More importantly, an additional 18 percent of respondents stated that they planned to incorporate social media into their contact center in 2011 while another 27 percent plan on incorporating it within the next three years.

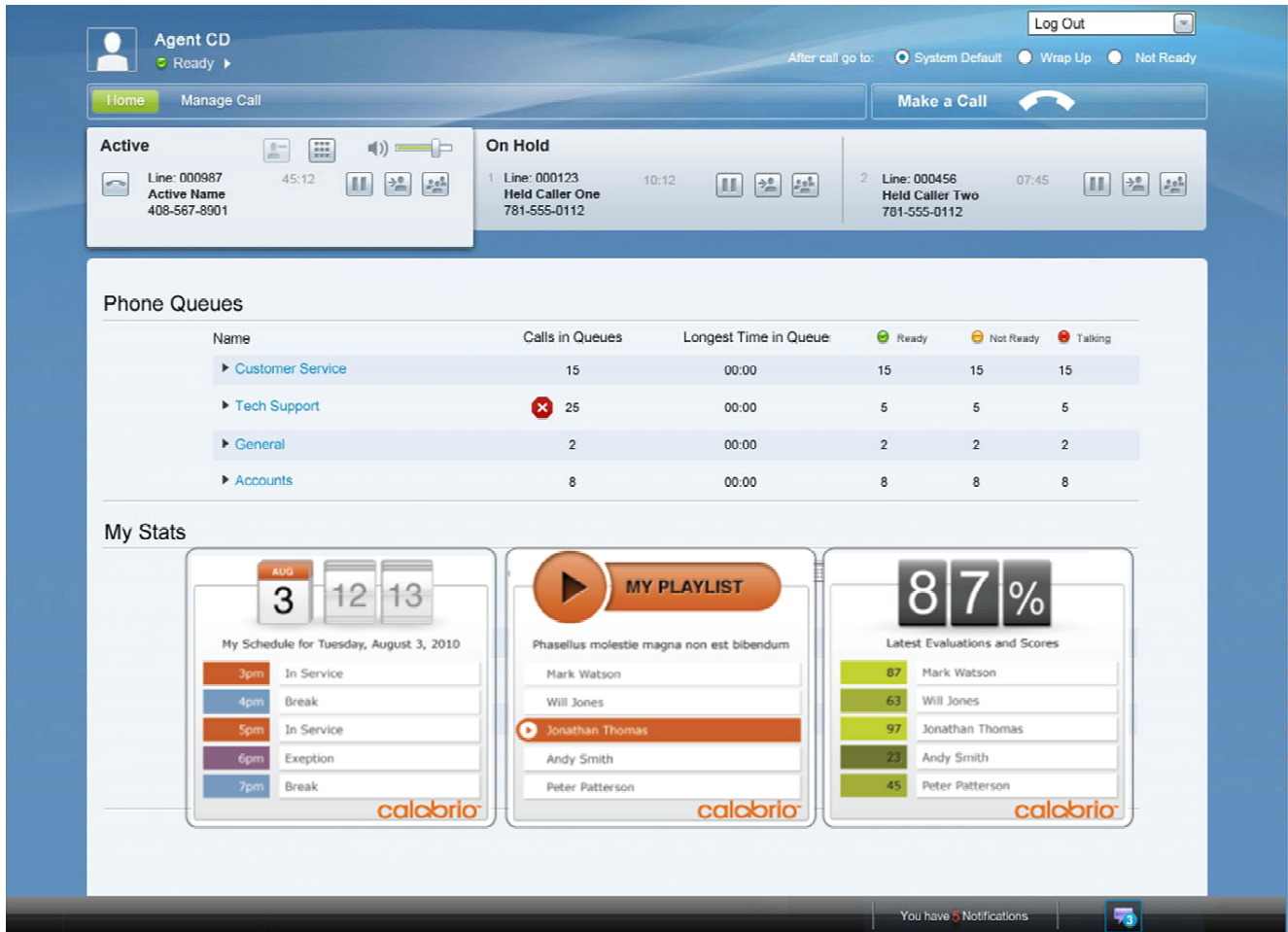
These survey results, combined with empirical evidence of the current popularity of social media applications, make it clear that Web 2.0 is destined to play a major role in the next generation contact center, as well it should. Web 2.0 applications offer several advantages over traditional contact center software. Web 2.0 offers a flexible user experience that is intuitive and open to personalization. It offers lower ownership costs and support overhead since it is less hardware dependent, applications development is fast and relatively easy, and its mobility is unmatched. Calabrio has managed to capture all of these assets in Calabrio ONE.

Saddletree Research believes that one of the underlying factors driving the demand for Web 2.0 and social media in the contact center is the probability that the next generation of workers will have certain level of expectation relative to workplace technology. Like the mobile devices they are accustomed to today, these workers will likely expect connectivity with familiar social media applications, the ability to access other applications as needed or appropriate, multi-modal access, simplicity in use, and flexibility in presentation. These expectations will be met and exceeded by Calabrio ONE.

Perhaps most striking of the assets that sets Calabrio ONE apart from other WFO offerings is its user interface which can be customized and personalized for each individual user whether agent or executive. Users have the option of choosing the most appropriate information, available in the form of configurable widgets, to be displayed on their desktop workspace. Unlike most other agent desktops, all applications offer the user a similar look and feel to the point where it is difficult to tell when one application ends and another begins. While this sort of similarity in appearance and ease of navigation between applications has been available for years in many other software applications; e.g., Microsoft Office, it is a rarity in the contact center industry.

An example of the flexibility of the Calabrio ONE desktop comes in the form of integration with Cisco's Finesse, a browser-based desktop application that is completely browser-based and implemented through a Web 2.0 interface. Through integration with Finesse, Cisco users would choose from a menu of widgets provided by Calabrio in order to incorporate WFO dashboards and functionalities within the agent and supervisor desktop experience as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Calabrio ONE Integrated with Cisco Finesse Desktop



Source: Calabrio

Calabrio ONE’s familiar look and feel, similar to that of a smart phone, combined with its Web 2.0 framework means that Calabrio ONE easily lends itself to mobile devices such as an Apple iPad, a Motorola Xoom or the aforementioned smart phone. Not only does this capability speak to the flexibility of Calabrio ONE, it speaks to Calabrio ONE’s potential to significantly improve workflows and training in the contact center. For example, using Calabrio ONE on a portable device, as illustrated on Figure 2 below, would allow a training supervisor to simply walk over to an agent, who would never have to leave his or her seat, to undertake a coaching session. This mobility also means a user can work from any location or from any supported device and still view the same desktop workspace as he or she would see in the contact center.

Figure 2: Calabrio ONE Integrated with a Portable Device



Source: Calabrio

Calabrio ONE's WFO suite will redefine the meaning of a seamless software suite for the contact center. The lines between the individual components of call recording, quality assurance, analytics, workforce management and performance management have, for all intents and purposes, disappeared in terms of the user experience. Moving between applications is fast and effortless thanks to the open platform characteristics of Calabrio ONE's Web 2.0 framework.

Calabrio ONE's speech energy bar adds a new dimension of efficiency in terms of providing a graphic rendition of a recorded conversation that allows supervisors to view important events such as transitions in conversation between the agent and the customer, energy analytics for talk-over, and periods of silence. Graphical representation also enables supervisors to review, mark, and add commentary where these important events occur and rapidly navigate to any part of a conversation for quality assurance purposes.

To say that Web 2.0 represents the future of the contact center would be an understatement. Saddletree Research believes Web 2.0 will be equally important to the entire enterprise as social media becomes an integral part of every organization's marketing and customer care strategy. On the customer care side, Calabrio has already established itself as both a thought leader and a product innovator relative to Web 2.0, including and beyond social media. Calabrio is a company that has a clear vision of the next generation of contact centers and possesses the wherewithal to act on that vision.

