

Meeting customer expectations will prove major focus for contact centres in 2006

Sabio, the innovative contact centre services and solutions company, has announced that 'Meeting Customer Expectations' will be the key issue for contact centres in 2006. According to Sabio's Founding Director, Adam Faulkner: "we're going to see a significant shift next year with contact centres moving their focus from internal functionality to enabling the processes that can actually help them to meet their customer expectations. The last two years particularly, with the growth of the self-service culture, have seen a dramatic change in how UK consumers want to communicate with organisations. We're predicting that those organisations that understand and address this shift will have a real opportunity to differentiate their services during 2006 and beyond.

"Meeting customer expectations is all about doing the basic things right. "As consumers we all - quite reasonably - expect easy and quick access to an organisation and its services; we want an efficient, comfortable and complete service, and we would like that service to be consistent across all the different channels we use, whether it's voice, web, e-mail or SMS," added Adam Faulkner. "We also want a comfortable interaction - none of us want to think too hard when we're dealing with a contact centre - and, as we're all increasingly conditioned to expect better service levels, we want our transactions to be accurate and completed quickly." If customers are to be left feeling valued, important and in control of their interactions, it's important that all of an organisation's different contact centre technology and processes are aligned to help enable a joined-up services culture. Sabio believes that 2006 will see an increased emphasis on Service Personalisation approaches that combine different elements to create contact centre call flow processes based around each individual caller. For example, recognising the customer who's calling could involve the use of sophisticated speech technology, or providing close integration with a company's CRM solution might prove a key requirement for effective first call resolution. For 2006, Sabio has identified the key technologies that it believes will prove essential in helping organisations move towards such a user-centred approach:

- **Speech** – the latest speech technology is making it possible for organisations to replace frustrating auto-attendant systems with an intelligent speech front-end. Using speech recognition can speed customer authentication, while speech solutions can provide a rapid solution for transactional customer enquiries
- **Virtualisation** – the growth in IP networks and Voice over IP makes virtualisation an increasingly sensible choice for many contact centre operations, particularly multi-site operations in sectors such as banking who are looking to optimise their contact centre and branch-based resources. 2006 will see organisations focusing on the roll-out of virtualised solutions, and looking at key issues such as 'what resources do we put on the network' and 'what physically stays within the contact centre'
- **Workforce Optimisation** – many organisations have already successfully invested in separate productivity solutions such as workforce management, call recording, quality monitoring, e-learning and performance management tools. It's clear that the optimum value from these tools is exploited when they are integrated into broader Workforce Optimisation (WFO) solutions, and we're expecting more organisations to focus on WFO to help improve customer service during 2006
- **Predictive Analytics** – once an organisation has successfully staffed its contact centres and is processing calls effectively, it can focus its efforts on improving customer satisfaction. During 2006 Sabio expects a growing number of organisations to use Predictive Analytics techniques to predict customer needs and preferences in real-time, and route calls to the most appropriate or best-qualified agent

Sabio works with leading organisations such as Homeserve, Sky and Scottish and Southern Energy, helping them to make real improvements to their overall customer service experience. Homeserve, for example, has invested in an innovative end-to-end contact centre solution to provide a 'joined-up' customer service approach. The solution combines the virtualisation of its three contact centre sites, the use of speech recognition technology, and a complete workforce optimisation strategy. According to Homeserve's Head of Operations, Dean Cutler: "We had to invest in the latest contact centre systems and applications in order to drive change in how we served our growing customer base."