

### RCI®

#### Connecting Operations and Finance Drives Optimal Contact Center Planning

*With more than three million subscribing members worldwide and over 3,700 affiliated resorts, RCI is the global leader in vacation exchange. RCI has approximately 1,100 phone agents across six contact centers. With this network, RCI agents answer or place over 10 million calls annually welcoming new members, making reservations for vacation properties all over the globe, and confirming vacation exchanges for its subscribers.*

#### About RCI

RCI's contact center network is unique in that most of its contact center agents are cross-trained both to handle inbound service calls and to place outbound calls offering timeshare vacation alternatives to its members.

Determining the most appropriate mix of inbound and outbound activities is crucial as each customer contact has time-critical revenue implications for RCI. In addition, due to the key role that RCI's call centers play in the company's business model, nearly every contact center decision must be evaluated for its revenue implications.

#### Strategic Business Challenge

In the contact center industry, there has long been a huge gap between financial and operational analysis. Typically, finance and operations organizations exist in their own silos, with information being passed only at set intervals and only during budget season.

Previously, as in the rest of the contact center industry, RCI had separated its analysis functions along similar lines; both Finance and Operations had developed their own stand-alone spreadsheet applications for contact center planning purposes.

While these teams sometimes collaborated on planning projects, for the most part, plans were passed between the groups: Operations' analysis was focused on the operational service performance, while Finance's analysis was focused on costs.

Add to the mix the fact that that RCI operates a blended inbound and outbound vacation planning function, and that each call drives company revenue, and the analytic issues become complex and strategic.

"Clearly this was not ideal," said Ed Skelton, Director of Resource Planning and Management at RCI. "While it is interesting to understand the service repercussions of hiring plans, we could not quickly, easily, or accurately bridge the gap between expected staffing levels and their associated revenues and costs. We felt that we were leaving money on the table, because we could not quickly understand how moving personnel from inbound to outbound calls, or vice versa, would impact our finances."

The Operations team was responsible for creating long-term hiring plans and call volume forecasts, and they wrestled to align their plans with the plans of the Financial team. "A common obstacle we faced was having our Operations' hiring forecast plan sync up with Finance's hiring forecast plan," said Skelton. "Often, we would be working on the same analysis, only coming to different conclusions."

In addition, RCI struggled to accurately forecast the financial impacts that changes in contact center drivers such as call volumes and handle times would have. While RCI's planners could predict how these changes would affect the Company's service goals, they couldn't accurately attach dollars to these types of changes.

"Never mind providing critical what-if analysis," said David Olson, CenterBridge Administrator. "Iterating between Operations and Finance took so long that we were hard-pressed to get our budget plan completed."

RCI's planners also did not have the ability to compare plans to actual center performance and to easily provide operational variance analysis.

## Business Solution

After evaluating the alternatives of either building a new planning system in-house, engaging consultants for custom development, or using a commercially available contact center planning application, RCI chose Bay Bridge Decision Technologies' CenterBridge™ solution.

"We found CenterBridge to be a perfect fit for our planning needs," Skelton said. "The application accounts for both operational and financial metrics used by the two separate teams so that plans created in CenterBridge always align."

RCI found that CenterBridge was the only application available that combined the operational and financial planning functions. CenterBridge enables users at RCI to create various scenarios modeling changes to contact center drivers and see the financial impact of those changes. For example, CenterBridge users can increase or decrease the average handle time forecast to see how that change would impact average cost per call with the click of a button.

"We found that we were no longer arguing about methodologies, instead, any debate was about planning and scenario assumptions," said Olson.

RCI's Operational and Financial teams regularly use CenterBridge to test potential future scenarios to understand the impact that marketing campaigns, changes in vacation trends, or different mixes of inbound and outbound calling will affect service quality and costs.

## Business Case (ROI)

RCI has realized benefits from CenterBridge in two key areas: improved contact center planning effectiveness and reduced agent staffing cost.

First, budgets created in CenterBridge incorporate all plan drivers including call volume, financials, and workforce allocation. Variance analysis reports show exactly where and why plans were not achieved and the financial impact of each plan driver variance. In addition, CenterBridge enables RCI to combine the workforce capacity planning role and the contact center financial analyst role into one role of "Capacity Planning Analyst."

Second, RCI saw a four percent reduction in agent staffing as a result of CenterBridge's more accurate staffing requirements estimation and hiring planning methods. CenterBridge's customized contact center models and optimization approaches create hiring, overtime, and leave plans for RCI that provide precisely timed, least-cost hiring plans that have resulted in significant agent headcount savings.

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