Serving the Omni-Channel Customer: from Self-Service to Agent-Assisted

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Welcome

In July of 2013, Aspect completed its acquisition of Voxeo. Aspect and Voxeo share a common vision of making it easy for you to engage with your customers, regardless of the communication channel. Each company brings skills and assets that make the other stronger, and as a result make the combined entity more impactful.

The acquisition was an important move for Aspect as part of its larger strategy to enable remarkable, omni-channel customer experiences – self-service or agent-assisted, in the cloud or on-premise. The combined solutions empower customers to remove communication and workflow barriers, automate business processes and increase productivity.

The Voxeo acquisition significantly enhances Aspect’s ability to support deployment versatility with a global infrastructure, while adding a market-leading IVR and multi-channel self-service platform to the company’s solution portfolio. IVR remains highly important in the customer engagement mix as mobile customers expect to move between channels seamlessly. A modern platform with a track record of market-leading innovation ensures a solution that meets customer needs today and in the future.

Voxeo’s track record of innovation in the self-service space and strong customer focus resulted in “Strong Positive” ratings from Gartner in 2011 and 2012. In the 2013 Gartner MarketScope for IVR Systems and Voice Portals report, analysts Jay Lassman and Bern Elliott write:

“Because of its market acceptance, Aspect has determined that the Voxeo CXP and Prophecy platforms, which we rated “Strong Positive” in 2011 and 2012, will be Aspect’s IVR platform. Since we previously rated Aspect as “Promising,” our “Positive” rating for the combined company reflects our opinion it will take time for Aspect to fully transition to the Voxeo offers.”

We are pleased to report that in August 2013, less than two months after Aspect’s acquisition of Voxeo closed, the company showcased a working demonstration of Voxeo’s IVR and mobile solutions integrated with Aspect’s interaction management platform. Aspect and Voxeo customers alike already benefit from seamless integration from multi-channel self-service to agent-assisted service.
Are you considering a new or upgraded IVR solution? Gartner suggests that companies faced with IVR decisions do one of three things:

1. Remain with existing vendor solutions to extend and preserve investments

2. Consolidate IVR investments with broader contact center infrastructure investments to simplify integration and vendor relationships.

3. Choose an alternate vendor with innovative IVR solutions that are likely to align with new buying preferences as a strategy for adapting to changing customer demographics.

Aspect uniquely enables companies to both consolidate their investments and enjoy forward-looking, best-in-class technologies that make it easier to engage your customers, regardless of the channel. We look forward to learning more about your business and how we can work together to create remarkable customer experiences.

Warm Regards,

John Amein
VP Product Management, Aspect
MarketScope for IVR Systems and Enterprise Voice Portals

Mobile device use is the leading driver of new interactive voice response applications. Our highest rated vendors are developing applications that personalize customer self-service for smartphone and tablet users. Vendors also offer new tools to help IT leaders optimize their IVR investments.

What You Need to Know
Interactive voice response (IVR) and voice portal platforms are valuable technologies for improving the return on contact center investments. These systems enable enterprises to reduce their reliance on contact center agents to resolve customer service issues. Leading companies require their customer service operations to increase their use of automation and offer greater levels of personalization in customer self-service, and continuously increase self-service utilization and call completion rates. Companies also use IVR for data-directed routing to increase the level of personalization offered in routing calls to live assistance. For example, leading companies are reconnecting repeat callers to the agent with whom they most recently spoke.

All the vendors’ products reviewed in this MarketScope are mature and offer solutions that can satisfy most requirements. The real challenge lies in finding a cost-effective IVR platform that will satisfy the enterprise’s specific requirements for improving customer service. IT personnel can narrow their list of suitable vendors by choosing from the following goals and strategies:

- Remain with existing vendor solutions to extend and preserve investments.
- Consolidate IVR investments with broader contact center infrastructure investments to simplify integration and vendor relationships.
- Choose an alternate vendor with innovative IVR solutions that are likely to align with new buying preferences as a strategy for adapting to changing customer demographics.

This research will help developers facilitate the vendor selection task.

MarketScope
Most vendors in this MarketScope have shifted from proprietary IVR environments to systems that support three key standards:

- **Voice Extensible Markup Language (VXML)** — an Internet standard protocol that encourages enterprises to use hardware and firmware that is independent of a specific application server. This approach leads to an ecosystem of applications from different developers that enterprises can deploy on a range of vendor platforms without the need for complete rewrites. Enterprises using VXML can shift their computer telephony integration (CTI) apps to voice portal architecture for voice response platforms, which is similar to Web application architecture. The portal approach enables companies to facilitate the creation of voice and Web applications that share the same underlying business software modules.

- **Media Resource Control Protocol (MRCP)** — an Internet standard for interfacing IVR platforms with speech engine applications such as those that support automatic speech recognition (ASR) and text-to-speech (TTS) functionality.

- **Session Initiation Protocol (SIP)** — allows for more flexible call routing and control, and is often less expensive than the other two options. SIP is becoming the preferred method for establishing multimedia sessions.

The distinction between the traditional vertically integrated IVR architecture and the disaggregated VXML portal architecture has become less critical in the vendor selection process. The generic term for this type of service is still IVR, even though the vendors are capable of supporting integrated vertical IVR and disaggregated voice portal configurations, which is important for long-term planning and investment protection.
In today's market, customers are seeking critical capabilities in IVR products and services from two different perspectives:

- Technology — In addition to traditional dual-tone multifrequency (DTMF), there is now integration of customer contact channels (e.g., voice, Web, social media and mobile devices), the integration of self-service with agent-assisted service and the ability to use speech recognition for UI improvements, as well as a trend toward implementing natural language speech recognition.

- Administrative — Application development tools, flexible reporting and comprehensive analytics are available.

**Market/Market Segment Description**

Voice response platforms provide voice access to information and applications and can perform complex call routing based on information provided by the caller. The IVR market is mature, and all vendors presented in this research support key standards. In previous years, Gartner identified two distinct classifications of voice response platforms: IVR platforms and voice portal platforms. Today, virtually all IVR apps are based on the VXML standard, with the market using these terms interchangeably.

**Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

To be included in this MarketScope, solution providers must:

- Offer commercially available, on-premises IVR solutions for customer self-service applications that, at a minimum, use DTMF and speech recognition technologies.

- Have sufficient sales and operational presence to support their market objectives.

- Provide evidence of an ability to generate significant interest from leading client segments.

- Provide three references for enterprise on-premises IVR products.

Each vendor was asked to provide three customer references, which enabled us to gauge customer satisfaction in areas that included:

- Installation

- Training

- Documentation

- Service/Support

- System Administration

- System Performance

- System Reliability

This research does not include service providers and network operators that only offer hosted and managed voice response technologies. However, some of the reviewed vendors offer hosted and on-premises products.

**Rating for Overall Market/Market Segment**

**Overall Market Rating: Positive**

Our outlook for this market is Positive for two reasons:

- Organizations within the private and public sectors are continuing their investments in IVR.

- The market is composed of a relatively unvarying group of IVR vendors that offer mature technologies and reliable performance year over year.

Vendors continue to develop (or introduce) new technologies that trigger trends and offer new applications that enhance customer service, help desk capabilities and business process management. Vendors that add analytics to their capabilities often gain a competitive advantage, particularly when companies that use IVR strive to optimize call routing to best match their customers’ requirements. It is important to monitor how different IVR providers execute their go-to-market strategies. An attractive and innovative portfolio doesn’t automatically equate with broad market adoption, as product functionality is only one part of a successful marketing mix. For example, trends in the market that seem tangential to customer service, such as the increased use of mobile devices, are resulting in new applications that enhance self-service functionality, as well as the mobile device user customer experience.
Table 1. Evaluation Criteria

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market Understanding</td>
<td>Ability of the vendor to understand buyers' wants and needs, and to translate those into products and services. Vendors that show the highest degree of vision listen to and understand buyers' wants and needs, and can shape or enhance those with their added vision.</td>
<td>Standard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing Strategy</td>
<td>A clear, differentiated set of messages consistently communicated throughout the organization and externalized through the website, advertising, customer programs and positioning statements.</td>
<td>Standard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sales Strategy</td>
<td>The strategy for selling products that uses the appropriate network of direct and indirect sales, marketing, service and communication affiliates that extend the scope and depth of market reach, skills, expertise, technologies, services and the customer base.</td>
<td>Standard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offering (Product) Strategy</td>
<td>The vendor's approach to product development and delivery that emphasizes differentiation, functionality, methodology and feature sets as they map to current and future requirements.</td>
<td>Standard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Model</td>
<td>The soundness and logic of the vendor's underlying business proposition.</td>
<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>The vendor's innovative ability to meet the specific needs of individual market segments, including vertical markets.</td>
<td>Standard</td>
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<td>Overall Viability (Business Unit, Financial, Strategy, Organization)</td>
<td>Viability includes an assessment of the overall organization's financial health, the financial and practical success of the business unit, and the likelihood that the individual business unit will continue investing in and offering the product, and will advance the state of the art within the organization's portfolio of products.</td>
<td>High</td>
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Source: Gartner (August 2013)

RATING

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<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Avaya</th>
<th>Cisco</th>
<th>Convergys</th>
<th>Enghouse Interactive</th>
<th>Genesys</th>
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As of 9 August 2013

Source: Gartner (August 2013)
Vendor Product/Service Analysis

Aspect

On 26 July 2013, Aspect announced it had acquired Voxeo, a provider of cloud, hybrid and on-premises-based IVR deployments, as well as industry-leading IVR and multichannel self-service capabilities. (Due to the acquisition, Voxeo is no longer listed on this Vendor Rating research.) Aspect gains Voxeo’s good record of year-over-year growth driven by the continued proliferation of mobile devices and consumer preference for the convenience of mobile self-service applications. Voxeo delivers additional value, such as automating user authentication and supporting location-based services, to further enhance the customer experience and drive efficiencies.

Voxeo benefits from the addition of Aspect’s large installed contact center base, worldwide coverage and a much larger sales force, which includes global coverage through direct and indirect sales. Specifically, transactions in North America are predominantly direct sales; and transactions in Asia/Pacific, the Middle East and Latin America are mostly indirect sales. In Europe and Africa, Aspect sells through a mix of direct and indirect channels.

Prophecy is Voxeo’s voice portal platform that works via standard phone lines or SIP and includes browsers, call recording, inbound as well as outbound IVR, conferencing, bundled English ASR and TTS. Voxeo Designer enables basic graphical development and support for third-party ASR and TTS through MRCP. Voxeo CXP (formerly VoiceObjects) is Voxeo’s self-service application development, deployment, analytics and management suite. Voxeo CXP unifies customer self-service across multiple channels of mobile interaction, including voice, SMS, mobile Web, native smartphone apps, chat and social media. Voxeo CXP provides a consistent customer experience across channels, while also efficiently using IT infrastructure and investments via modular, reusable component support for business logic, back-end integrations, service flow, dialogue management, personalization and analytics. CXP Pro combines the full Voxeo CXP suite, including analytics and Eclipse integration, with the Prophecy voice portal platform.

Advice to Clients: Organizations with complex requirements should consider Aspect products, including the ability to use Voxeo CXP with their non-Voxeo voice portal platforms, such as Aspect, Avaya, Cisco and Genesys. On-premises-based and hosted services also provide customers with flexible IVR deployment options.

Where possible, Aspect and Voxeo customers should continue working with their respective established tools and expect there likely will be strong porting options between platforms. Because of its market acceptance, Aspect has determined that the Voxeo CXP and Prophecy platforms, which we rated “Strong Positive” in 2011 and 2012, will be Aspect’s IVR platform. Since we previously rated Aspect as “Promising,” our “Positive” rating for the combined company reflects our opinion it will take time for Aspect to fully transition to the Voxeo offers. Therefore, we advise caution regarding significant future investments until there are clear road maps for new application development. Aspect Unified IP (UIP) customers need to understand UIP’s product life cycle before going ahead with new investments. On the other hand, CXP interoperates with Aspect today, thus is already compatible with legacy Aspect installations.

Rating: Positive

Avaya

Avaya Aura Experience Portal is Avaya’s software platform for orchestration and support of a wide range of multichannel self-service and routing applications, including mobile, voice, video, email, outbound and SMS text. Experience Portal integrates with telephony, speech, multimedia and Web services programming languages, as well as other open industry standards. The platform is integral to Avaya’s Cloud, managed services, midmarket and virtualized environment offers.

Avaya Aura Orchestration Designer is a free-of-charge Eclipse-based application development environment for creation of multichannel self-service and agent workflows. Orchestration Designer is the latest major release of Avaya Dialog Designer and the former Nortel Enterprise Solutions (NES) Service Creation Environment (SCE) for the contact center. It supports creation of self-service applications for Experience Portal, legacy Avaya platforms and NES IVR platforms, as well as agent workflows for Avaya Aura Contact Center.

Orchestration Designer includes functions to create self-service applications that use Java and Voice XML (VXML). The tool enables developers to simulate complex call control, voice dialogue and communication-enabled business process applications from within the environment without having to deploy it on a live platform.
Avaya has a very large direct and indirect global sales channel supported by the company's contact center and IVR consultants, sales specialists and sales engineering personnel. Key global growth areas during 2012 and 2013 include the U.S., Canada, Asia/Pacific and EMEA. Experience Portal port shipments are up from 27% to well over 100% across all regions. Likewise, Avaya has won significant global expansion for major customers. Furthermore, Avaya's market understanding comes from its deep-rooted presence in the contact center and IVR markets. The company also has excellent references from its large customer base, which includes many global companies.

Although the company has refinanced some of its previously near-term debt, which extends the servicing window by several years, customers continue to express concern regarding the company's long-term financial stability. Reversing its recent overall record of declining revenue is very important if the company will improve its ability to win new customers.

**Advice to Clients:** Consider Avaya for complex midsize and large-scale multichannel IVR technologies. Avaya Aura customers should invest in Experience Portal self-service solutions. Enterprises with legacy Avaya or NES platforms should work with Avaya to develop road maps specific to their organizations. Dialog Designer VoiceXML applications written for Interactive Response, Voice Portal or Media Processing Server are supported in Orchestration Designer and portable to Experience Portal.

**Rating: Positive**

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**Cisco**

Cisco Unified Customer Voice Portal (CVP) provides voice browser, application server and service-creation capabilities, as well as reporting and centralized management and provisioning in an enterprise voice portal implementation. CVP can be deployed stand-alone in conjunction with third-party automatic call distributor (ACD) systems or with Cisco Unified Contact Center Enterprise. CVP is a VXML-compliant offering composed of Cisco IOS gateways, providing VXML 2.0/2.1-compliant browsing, a VXML server, a Java Platform, Enterprise Edition (Java EE) application environment, and a call server component that provides SIP call control and CTI interoperability. New CVP features include access to Cisco Remote Expert solutions and MRCP v.2. MRCP allows CVP to make and release connections to ASR and TTS resources. Furthermore, CVP is part of Cisco's Packaged Contact Center Enterprise offering, which provides a pre-integrated contact center solution for up to 1,000 agents. Features introduced since Gartner's 2012 IVR and voice portal MarketScope include:

- Video in queue, which allows a video caller to view a video prompt and navigate a video menu using DTMF keys while in queue for a video agent.
- CVP platform upgrades, including Windows, Informix and VMware version upgrades, as well as UTF-8, which allows CVP to support all current TTS languages offered by the speech vendors.

Cisco Internet Protocol (IP) IVR functionality is available as part of Cisco Unified Contact Center Express, or as an optional component of Unified Contact Center Enterprise. New IP IVR features include increased scalability for up to 400 ports per server, support for specific non-Cisco hardware in virtualized environments, support for virtualization features like V Motion, and booting from storage area networks (SANs).

For a network-based IVR platform in front of legacy vendor switches, Cisco offers CVP with Cisco Unified Intelligent Contact Management Enterprise. The latter is an application server that supports customer interactions by phone, Web, text chat or email message, and provides centralized management control over customer contacts.

Cisco's Hosted Collaboration Solution for Contact Center provides contact center features and includes CVP IVR.

**Advice to Clients:** Users of Cisco Unified Communication Manager or those that have Cisco network infrastructures should consider Cisco IVR products. Users of non-Cisco telephony and contact center platforms should consider Cisco's IVR offerings by first validating interoperability with respective core platforms from other vendors. It's also important to choose your Cisco IVR dealer from among Cisco's Authorized Technology Partners. This authorization ensures that the dealer can offer required IVR Cisco certifications and expertise. CVP is often sold in conjunction with Cisco contact center and unified communications solutions. Although CVP can be a stand-alone IVR that does not require other Cisco components, it's important for prospective buyers to corroborate the dealer's expertise supporting similar implementations. Furthermore, in new deployments, Cisco typically uses CVP to convert customers to Cisco's broader portfolio of products.

**Rating: Positive**

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**Convergys**

Convergys offers Intelligent Voice Portal as either an on-premises platform with an optional managed service or a hosted offering. Hosted offerings include dedicated platform and services, as well as on-demand SaaS alternatives. In addition to its hosted services solutions, Convergys has more than 1,000 on-premises clients utilizing its Intelligent Voice Portal — a platform for the development, delivery and management of dynamic speech and multimodal self-service solutions. Convergys Intelligent Voice Portal provides application enrichment services, system management, reporting and analytics tools, and a development tool suite.

Convergys business analytics can perform in-depth analysis prior to an engagement to identify hot spots and determine ROI calculations. This offering allows Convergys to analyze not only the IVR, but also the full call flow through agent interactions to identify areas needing refinement. In addition, Convergys provides a unique postcontact survey that enables companies to capture their customers’ perceptions immediately following an interaction. The tool is intended to reduce Convergys’ customer attrition by proactively recommending alternate solution deployments. References give Convergys high satisfaction ratings and consider its IVR offerings to be competitively priced.

In addition to Convergys’ Interaction Composer, which serves as the foundation for the development of multimodal services and back-office integration, Convergys created FastPath. Customers can use FastPath to substantially accelerate time-to-market for new applications. The development tool features an intuitive Visio-like environment to validate the design, highlight potential issues, and generate documentation and recording lists. After generating the application, including code and grammar, a test plan and test cases, FastPath automatically executes the test cases.

Convergys Interaction Composer serves as the foundation for the development of multimodal services and back-office integration. The company’s product suite includes Intelligent Self-Service for inbound interactions, Intelligent Notification for outbound interactions and Intelligent Assisted Service for a seamless self-service application to agent-supported customer experiences. Additional capabilities include Convergys Mobile Care, which enables contact center functionality with smartphone applications. The company offers an innovative monitoring tool that enables customers to contain costs based on analyses and can also use recommendations provided by Convergys professional services organization. Direct sales staff and channel partners cover most major global markets by selling on-premises-based perpetual licenses, right-to-use subscription licenses and managed services, as well as dedicated and shared hosted offerings.

**Advice to Clients:** Consider Convergys when requirements call for an IVR platform that’s automatic call distribution (ACD)-independent, open and scalable. Convergys is strong in applying business analytics to understanding and improving the customer’s experience, and to help organizations reduce costs. Convergys-hosted IVR products can complement the company’s enterprise-based products. The company offers a range of analytics that enable Convergys customers to leverage their customer data and apply enterprise policies to enhance the overall interaction. The company is an industry-leading provider of customer management contact center business process outsourcing (BPO). It enables businesses to delegate IT-intensive activities that link an organization with its customers.

**Rating: Positive**

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**Enghouse Interactive**

Enghouse Interactive is the master company name for several previously independent brands (Arc, Datapulse, Trio, Telrex, Syntellect, Zeacom and CosmoCom), which are owned by parent company Enghouse Systems.

The company’s flagship IVR product is the Enghouse Interactive Communications Portal, a platform for creating and managing enterprise voice portals and other voice-enhanced communications technologies. The platform enables development of systems that incorporate telephony, voice, speech, database, email, Web and data communication technologies. It’s a standards-based platform with an integrated application development suite and management components for developing, deploying and managing voice and IP communications solutions. SCP v8, the latest release, includes more intuitive and robust administrative/reporting interfaces.
Voixyager Dynamic Application Discovery enables the automated testing of VXML applications that are either under development or are deployed, enabling application developers and testers to automatically test applications quickly and completely under working conditions. The Voixyager suite offers functionality for all phases of an application life cycle, including development, quality assurance, deployment and production.

Enghouse Interactive has direct regional sales teams and channel partners in the U.S., Canada, Europe and Asia/Pacific. Recently, the company focused on expanding its IVR market by more directly supporting a broad mix of channel partners, with attention on selling to small or midsize businesses (SMBs). These relationships have expanded the company’s footprint.

Advice to Clients: Since its original formation as Syntellect almost 30 years ago, the company has consistently proven its ability to remain successful in the IVR and voice portal market with product offerings that are more cost-effective than its competitors. The company gets satisfactory to good product scores from its customers. Although its reputation is strongest among midsize businesses, Enghouse Interactive can support competitively priced applications for large organizations, as well as for small and midsize telephony platforms from a wide range of telephony platform vendors. However, Enghouse Interactive’s lack of a consistent product offering set and presence across allographies makes it difficult for the company to meet the needs of large, global enterprises.

Rating: Promising

Genesys

In 2012, Alcatel-Lucent sold Genesys to Permira Funds and Technology Crossover Ventures for $1.5 billion. Today, Genesys operates as a stand-alone company focused on its IVR and contact center product portfolios. Genesys has long recognized that people now communicate using a variety of different channels, and that this trend is fundamentally changing how organizations interact with their customers. The company has a history of developing solutions that offer personalized customer communications and self-service alternatives through the Web, mobile, social media or any other available channel. Genesys Voice Platform (GVP) 8 personalizes the self-service experience and advances critical information for use during each step in a customer interaction.

Genesys Orchestration Server allows organizations to balance all interactions across all channels to ensure that every customer interaction is served by the best available resource. Conversation Manager oversees customer interaction information and provides rules intended to improve real-time responsiveness to customer needs.

Genesys Composer is an Eclipse-based development environment for self-service and assisted-service applications. Genesys continues to build on its multivendor support strategy by leveraging integrations and Genesys SIP Server to connect to other voice over IP (VoIP) environments. Genesys continues to deliver cloud-based solutions for customer service. GVP was built as a cloud-based offering available from hosting and service provider partners.

Genesys has acquired three hosted service providers:

- **Angel** — A provider of cloud-based solutions that enables midmarket and enterprise organizations to quickly deploy voice, SMS, chat, mobile and business intelligence applications.

- **LM Sistemas (which Genesys has rebranded Genesys Prime)** — A Brazilian-based IVR cloud-based service provider that offers highly customized, avatar-driven IVR services for very large customers.

- **SoundBite** — A company that delivers cloud-based proactive collections, payments and mobile marketing applications, as well as proactive customer service solutions to enterprises. The acquisition strengthens the Genesys cloud solutions portfolio, building on its acquisition of Angel for self-service and contact center solutions.

Genesys sales and technical support are available globally through direct and indirect channels, as well as from many prominent system integrators. The Genesys Partner Network provides collaborative planning and business support for over 400 global partner members. This combination enables Genesys and customers to review and assemble the right teams to meet their needs based on their skill sets and unique requirements. In addition, Genesys regional partners enable local coverage while providing a wide range of skill sets in country-specific languages.
Advice to Clients: Midsize to large organizations should evaluate Genesys and its product portfolio for IVR solutions that can interoperate within multivendor environments and be deployed with virtually any contact center infrastructures. Consider GVP IVR when requirements call for integrating live agent and self-service channels. Although customers sometimes cite Genesys’ offerings as expensive compared with competitors’ offerings, they consistently rate Genesys’ functionality and support as superior. New hosted offers have the potential to provide cost-effective options that can complement on-premises-based implementations.

Rating: Strong Positive

West

West offers Holly Voice Platform (HVP) for on-premises deployments through traditional software licensing or a managed on-premises model. This SIP-compliant, carrier-grade voice platform is used by West in its hosted services business. West targets midsize to large enterprises and service providers in the U.S., Europe and Asia/Pacific. HVP runs on commodity servers, but typically is deployed on infrastructures designed for high availability, including carrier-grade servers with dual power supplies, bonded networking and redundant array of independent disks (RAID) storage. Facilities often are geographically dispersed and feature connectivity with multiple carriers, an N+1 server count and emergency power sources.

West offers professional services to assist with deployment engineering. A typical midrange server can support 1,000 HVP ports. With multiple servers, enterprises can reach capacities upward of 100,000 ports. Enterprises can use Holly Management System to manage the ports from a central location, and can route calls for any application to any port when the system is distributed. Multitenancy capabilities allow tenants to have multiple groups, each with multiple applications. Each application is assigned a virtual IVR with parameters such as port capacity, speech recognition capabilities, call recording and logging. Holly CTI Gateway adds multivendor CTI integration that can be accessed securely from any IVR, website or smartphone.

West direct sales are handled globally by the West sales team. Channel partners pursue smaller opportunities and address specific geographic regions. In line with most vendors in this research, customers give West good ratings.

Advice to Clients: Consider West when requirements include the need for on-site and hosted self-service offerings, high capacity and high availability, as well as multitenancy capabilities, or an offering that can support an internally hosted service. Customers can also achieve cost savings when there is an opportunity to bundle West’s other communications products and services. Since HVP is used in the West hosting facility, customers can opt for a hybrid approach that blends an on-site infrastructure with cloud-based for traffic spikes, disaster preparedness and accelerated service launches.

Rating: Positive

Vendors Added or Dropped

We review and adjust our inclusion criteria for Magic Quadrants and MarketScopes as markets change. As a result of these adjustments, the mix of vendors in any Magic Quadrant or MarketScope may change over time. A vendor appearing in a Magic Quadrant or MarketScope one year and not the next does not necessarily indicate that we have changed our opinion of that vendor. This may be a reflection of a change in the market and, therefore, changed evaluation criteria, or a change of focus by a vendor.

Gartner MarketScope Defined

Gartner’s MarketScope provides specific guidance for users who are deploying, or have deployed, products or services. A Gartner MarketScope rating does not imply that the vendor meets all, few or none of the evaluation criteria. The Gartner MarketScope evaluation is based on a weighted evaluation of a vendor’s products in comparison with the evaluation criteria. Consider Gartner’s criteria as they apply to your specific requirements. Contact Gartner to discuss how this evaluation may affect your specific needs.
In the below table, the various ratings are defined:

**MarketScope Rating Framework**

**Strong Positive**
Is viewed as a provider of strategic products, services or solutions:

- Customers: Continue with planned investments.
- Potential customers: Consider this vendor a strong choice for strategic investments.

**Positive**
Demonstrates strength in specific areas, but execution in one or more areas may still be developing or inconsistent with other areas of performance:

- Customers: Continue planned investments.
- Potential customers: Consider this vendor a viable choice for strategic or tactical investments, while planning for known limitations.

**Promising**
Shows potential in specific areas; however, execution is inconsistent:

- Customers: Consider the short- and long-term impact of possible changes in status.
- Potential customers: Plan for and be aware of issues and opportunities related to the evolution and maturity of this vendor.

**Caution**
Faces challenges in one or more areas.

- Customers: Understand challenges in relevant areas, and develop contingency plans based on risk tolerance and possible business impact.
- Potential customers: Account for the vendor's challenges as part of due diligence.

**Strong Negative**
Has difficulty responding to problems in multiple areas.

- Customers: Execute risk mitigation plans and contingency options.
- Potential customers: Consider this vendor only for tactical investment with short-term, rapid payback.
The Relationship Revolution (Resistance is Futile!)

The shift to omni-channel communications has given customers limitless ways to make their voices heard - whenever, wherever and however they choose. This is both a challenge and an opportunity as the customer experience becomes critically important in a company’s ability to attract new customers, keep existing customers loyal and drive higher profits.

**The bottom line:** Companies that successfully adapt to changing consumer needs and expectations will have an enormous upside. Those that do not will find it harder and harder to compete.

Successfully Serving the Omni-Channel Customer

Engaging today’s omni-channel customer requires companies to have a strategy that maps to both their short-term requirements and long-term vision. The strategy must also balance the objective of enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty with the need to increase operational efficiencies for cost containment and savings. Having the right technology to transform these goals from conflicting to complementary is essential.

Customer Engagement Reference Architecture

A reference architecture can serve as a roadmap for success -- helping companies achieve their objectives in intelligent and affordable ways. Following is a high-level view of the technology components of a modern, omni-channel contact center architecture.

The reference architecture addresses current needs while outlining a path for the adoption of future capabilities. It also incorporates best practices in design, deployment and ongoing management of the customer experience.

![Customer Engagement Reference Architecture](image_url)
Fundamental principles of the reference architecture include:

**A complete, integrated solution stack.** A complete solution spans front office to back office to unify the three most important facets of modern contact center management – customer interaction, workforce optimization, and back-office optimization. By addressing all three areas with a tightly integrated solution, contact centers can seamlessly align people, processes and touch points to both enhance and streamline customer engagement.

**Unified self-service across multiple channels.** The IVR system of yesterday has given way to a multi-channel platform that facilitates a cohesive self-service experience across touchpoints. A “design once, deploy anywhere” architecture eliminates technology silos, streamlines development, eases ongoing maintenance and facilitates a consistent customer experience regardless of communication channel.

**Seamless transition between self-service and agent assisted.** A best-in-class platform ensures that all contextual data associated with self-service interactions are transferred to an agent when live assistance is needed. Doing so ensures agents are empowered and informed, and eliminates the frustration of customers having to provide information they’ve already entered.

**A future-proof architecture.** Protect your investment by ensuring your customer engagement architecture will evolve as technologies advance and customer preferences shift. Build your solutions on a platform with a history of supporting the latest industry standards and a track record of innovation. Also look for a flexible architecture that can grow with your needs and easily adapt to changing business requirements.

**Deployment flexibility.** More companies are considering cloud hosting as an opportunity to reduce capital expenditures, scale faster, improve reliability and more quickly adopt new capabilities. Build your customer engagement architecture around a platform that enables seamless transition between premises and cloud deployment models, as well as the ability to use a hybrid model that combine the benefits of both.

**Reporting and analytics.** Integrated, cross-channel analytics and reporting help contact centers fine-tune the customer experience, identify opportunities and increase ROI.

**Workforce optimization.** Improve productivity and reduce costs in your front- and back-office operations with workforce optimization. Ensure interactions are handled by the right agent at the right time with strategic workforce planning and scheduling, and achieve the best results with quality and performance management, recording, surveying, coaching, eLearning and analytics.

**Back office optimization.** Provide a view into how work is being executed – and measured against operational goals that align to customer service expectations. Back office software and services monitor work from any source and integrate with multiple CRM (Customer Relationship Management) and BPM (Business Process Management) environments.

**An API framework for easy integration with enterprise systems.** Insist on a versatile development platform that brings all the key elements (people, information, technology) together to improve the customer experience.

Aspect offers a broad portfolio of tightly integrated products and solutions. To learn how we can address the specific needs of your business, contact info@aspect.com.
About Aspect

By unifying contact center management, customer interaction management, workforce optimization, and back-office, Aspect’s fully-integrated solution helps contact centers seamlessly align people, processes and touch points to deliver remarkable customer experiences.

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