**IBM**

# Italian customer service centre pioneers multi-media concept


*Caltanet call centre, Rome*

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## Overview

- **Application**
  **Outsourced customer service centre operations**

- **Software**
  **WebSphere˚ Voice Response**
  **Genesys CallPath**

- **Hardware**
  **Two pSeries˚ servers**
  **One IBM Netfinity˚ fax server**

- **Services**
  **IBM Voice Systems specialists from the IBM Hursley Software Laboratory provide ongoing support and advice**

*The contact centre offshoot of a leading publisher launches Italy's first all-IBM multimedia service centre.'*

### Strategic step into new wave technology

Riding the crest of the new wave, Italy's Caltagirone Group has taken a strategic step into multimedia contact centres. It now offers both inbound call handing and outbound telemarketing as an outsourced facility for telecommunications companies, utilities and the financial services sector.

From its traditional base in construction, Caltagirone diversified into publishing during the 1990s, with the acquisition of two newspapers established over 100 years ago: Il Messaggero and Il Mattino.

In common with other major media owners worldwide, the group developed its print publishing arm to launch interactive online activities. In April 2000, it unveiled Caltanet, which offered a powerful Internet portal, giving users access to a wide range of news, entertainment, financial and retail information, as well as to Short Message Service (SMS) and e-mail services.

> *"We looked at several other possible suppliers and felt the IBM solution was the best for ensuring that we achieved our goal of a multimedia centre in a multi-client environment."*
>
> *– Andreas Biondi CRM manager Caltanet*

Caltanet's move into outsourced contact centres in 2001 was partly a natural development of its e-business initiative. But it was also a decision to exploit a sector of high growth potential – Customer Relationship Management (CRM). Although Italy has not been an international leader in outsourced contact centres, the launch of the Caltanet call centre coincided with an upsurge in market interest, keener competition and sectoral growth of about 20 per cent a year.

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## Incremental growth to mirror business volumes

Caltanet's IBM-based multi-channel teleservicing centre in Rome opened in February 2001 with sixty agent positions and a platform for incremental expansion to 2,000 – in line with its projected growth in its client base and in business volumes.

Says Andreas Biondi: "Most of our business is expected to come from telecommunications and financial companies. One of our first big jobs was a telemarketing campaign for a leading telecommunications group."

The centre is the first in Italy to combine IBM hardware and software in an integrated multimedia application. It enables all agents to handle calls equally well – whether they are received by telephone, fax, e-mail or Web chat – ensuring that an efficient, quality service is delivered upstream to client companies and downstream to their customers.

IBM servers and workstations provide the hardware backbone of the Caltanet centre, where all channels are brought together and handled either automatically or by a trained agent.

## Advanced voice processing facility

Not all inbound calls need agent intervention and the centre uses IBM WebSphere Voice Response to provide an interactive voice response facility. Caltanet plans to integrate two additional features of IBM WebSphere Voice Response into the contact centre at the end of 2001 – these will allow for recognition of spoken requests which enable calls to be routed quickly to the right point, and text-to-speech conversion so that calls may be answered without agent involvement. This voice-processing platform also offers advanced speech recognition and Voice XML for Web applications and its unified messaging system allows flexible message retrieval through a variety of devices.

IBM WebSphere Voice Response is regarded by Caltanet as an extremely powerful CRM tool, providing easy access to all customer data on a 24hours a day, seven days a week basis. Another advantage of IBM WebSphere Voice Response is that it facilitates enhanced voice and IVR application development, enabling easy-to-integrate Web and telephone self-service applications to be added. In addition, the scalable design of IBM WebSphere Voice Response means it can support thousands of networked telephone lines. This added versatility makes the product especially attractive in a multi-client service centre, where system requirements may change at short notice.

Caltanet also uses Genesys CallPath to provide advanced customer service through a powerful, flexible and open-ended computer-telephony solution. Through 'screen pops', CallPath provides an instant customer profile with each incoming call, giving the agent enough of an overview of the customer to deliver a high quality of service from the outset.

## Management data reflects performance

CallPath creates an integrated call centre management database, including call statistics and business information. Its analysis and reporting capabilities gauge how the centre is performing and some of the information is used to automate aspects of outbound calling.

In multi-site distributed call centres, CallPath also routes calls from busy sites to slower ones by monitoring the load at each centre. In addition to this inbound call routing, CallPath improves outbound calling by automatically placing calls for agents and screening out unsuccessful calls.

IBM WebSphere Voice Response completes the picture by integrating Web pages and the customer database. When customers visit a linked Web page, they can send requests directly to an agent – who can respond by chat window, voice callback or e-mail.

## About Caltanet

Caltanet, which is part of the Caltagirone Group, provides inbound and outbound multi-channel call centre services as well as a powerful Italian-language Web portal which offers news and entertainment services. The company plans to extend the portal in the future to offer more personalised services to its customers, including the provision of e-commerce facilities. For more information on Caltanet visit the Web site: www.caltanet.it.

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