



digivoiceXE
By VoiceLogger

Savvy Buyers Ask Hard Questions

In the perfect call center, client retention is high, employee turnover is low, and profits soar. However, let's face it: perfection is a myth and competition in the call center industry today is tough. Organizations are shifting jobs overseas, reducing management layers, and making cutthroat deals to win clients. It's all about the bottom line, and now you face the daunting task of selecting a new quality monitoring and recording system. You know the net price must fall within this quarter's budget, but how will the system's setup cost, functionality, and growth potential impact profitability next quarter? What about six months from now? What about next year?

When you begin shopping around, you'll find that many manufacturers of recording equipment claim to have the best product with the most features at a great price. Bells and whistles are fine, as long as an item is genuinely useful and doesn't break the bank. (Remember that bottom line.) Some sellers may even pressure you to hurry and sign on the dotted line before the current "sales promotion" ends. Gimmicks may work for hawking stereos or cars, but don't risk your professional reputation by being bullied into a quick decision on something so critical to your business. Take your time and find the right recording system for your needs at a reasonable price.

Finding the right system boils down to asking questions. These are hard questions. It's not enough for a salesperson to assure you that XYZ Recorders will integrate with your system. "How will it integrate? Does it require add-on equipment? Is there an additional charge? Can our own IT personnel set it up?"

Functionality is another key in determining whether a system makes sense for you. Managers want practical software with web tools for administration, search, playback, evaluations and reporting combined into one simple format. With more complicated platforms, frustrating training issues frequently trickle down (and creep up) to all levels of an organization. Figure out how much money it costs your company for each hour an employee is in training, and then ask current users of the software how much training time they needed. "Can we learn the system in a half-day? One day? Will it take all week?"

Consider the mobility of your managers and structure of your organization, too. "Can a supervisor monitor calls from an offsite location? Can the CEO at corporate headquarters search for and listen to calls made at a field office?"

While you're at it, ask potential vendors whether their system will grow with your business and what it will take to keep you in the latest available version. A recorder for a 200-seat call center may be useless if your company mushrooms into 300 seats by next year. "How long are upgrades available? How much money should I expect to spend on second and third year support?" (Again, that bottom line.) "Can I purchase more licenses or additional hardware?"

Call centers share a mutual concern about the bottom line, yet each one has unique needs based on size, location, and clientele. Fine-tune your priorities by adding some of the following to your arsenal of questions for potential vendors.

By now, you may be wondering why we would furnish you with questions that we're sure you'll ask our competitors. It's simple really: we *want* you to be a savvy buyer. Because after you have a chance to shop around, you'll find VoiceLogger offers a superior system that can help you meet the bottom line – this quarter, and the one after that, and the one after that. We look forward to hearing from you.

Savvy Voice Logger Buyers Ask Hard Questions

The Basics

- Is the product just software or a software/hardware combination?
- Will the new recorder work with our existing computers and operating systems?
- Does it include everything or will we have to source other parts and pieces?

Installation

- Can an installation technician come when it's convenient for us?
- Does the product come with detailed installation instructions for our IT person?

Training and Support

- Will you send a professional to our site to conduct training sessions?
- How much time is required to train agents and managers?
- Is technical support available nights and weekends?
- Am I eligible for upgrades in the future? How long?
- Will you provide names of existing customers that I can call?
- How will your system grow with our business?

Integration

- Can I import existing user and/or customer information into your software?
- Can I export data to use with other applications?

Features

- Is it possible to monitor and/or quickly find recordings while traveling or from home?
- Does the system combine administration, search, playback, evaluations, and reporting within the same web-friendly environment?
- Can we randomly evaluate calls on templates we design?
- Will the system alert our IT personnel via email or pager if there is a problem?
- Besides searching by keywords that agents attach to recordings, can I create custom fields to use as search criteria?
- Can I compress and send multiple calls and data in one email?
- How often do I have to back up my system?
- Can I import a list of existing user names and/or account information?"

Security

- Are passwords encrypted when stored?
- Can I restrict access to certain information about a recording by making it private?
- Will I be able to force encryption and remove the ability to delete recordings?

Technical Stuff

- Do you have a client SDK?
- Is the database fully SQL compatible?
- Can you offer digital, analog, and T1/E1 interfaces in the same box?

The Bottom Line

- Does the system offer CTI functionality without breaking the bank?
- Can I see a demonstration of how the product works before I buy?
- Are payment arrangements flexible enough to accommodate a purchase order, credit card, or installments?