Call Shaper

nobelbiz
Contact Center Technology

Why Outbound Calls Don't always connect...

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Introduction

At first glance, making outbound calls in a contact center appears to be simple. However, telecom experts within a company delivering the services know various factors impacting one's ability to make calls efficiently and have them connect.

This document will discuss the significant factors carriers consider regarding the nature of outbound traffic. We will look at the challenges posed by different types of traffic, telecom-related challenges within the carrier networks, and how to optimize your ability to deliver high-quality outbound calls with high completion rates.

THE PROBLEM...

Contact Centers making outbound calls expect their calls to connect but not every carrier is equipped or willing to provide service that meets their business needs. As we will see, not all outbound traffic is equal in the eyes of a carrier. This is why choosing the right carrier can be difficult if you don't have high-quality call stats.

Understanding Outbound Calling in a Call or Contact Center Environment

The four KPIs carriers use to measure the quality of outbound calls

1. Short Duration Calls (SDC) percentage.

- Short Duration Calls Percentage represents the percent of calls that are 6 seconds or below. From a carrier's perspective, the lower the SDC, the better.
- What are the main drivers of a high SDC? AMD (Answer Machine Detection) increase your SDC Making calls to people who are not expecting your call and have no interest in speaking to you Not leaving a Voice Mail
- Why is SDC important? The carrier uses many network resources with very little to be billed. This means spending finite resources on calls that are not profitable No carrier wants large amounts of short duration calls Carriers can have stiff penalties for having too high an SDC percentage

Understanding Outbound Calling in a Call or Contact Center Environment

The four KPIs carriers use to measure the quality of outbound calls Continued…

2. Average Call Length or Average Call Duration (ACL/ACD).

This is the total talk time across all the traffic types divided by the number of connected calls. From a carrier's perspective, the longer the calls, the better.

- Drivers of high Average Call Length Outbound calls that are expected Leaving Voice Mails on outbound calls Outbound calls to people who want to talk to you
- Why is ACL important? Longer calls mean network capacity consumed by billable events that generate good profit

3. The Percent of Tier 1 Calls

This is the percent of calls made to or from the most populated areas in the country. From a carrier's perspective, the higher the percentage, the better.

- Drivers of a higher Tier 1 percentage Calls to the Major cities in the United States Low to no calls to rural or low population destinations.
- Why is this important? Calls to rural areas are more expensive, and calls to major population centers are less expensive.

Understanding Outbound Calling in a Call or Contact Center Environment

The four KPIs carriers use to measure the quality of outbound calls Continued...

4. ASR Answer Seizure Ratio (ASR)

ASR is the percentage of telephone calls that are answered. From a carrier's perspective, the higher the ASR, the better !

- **Drivers of low ASR are:**

-Human or automated processes that hang up the call BEFORE a person or machine answers the call.
-Invalid Numbers
-Numbers that are out of service

- **Why is ASR important?**

-Calls that don’t connect can’t be billed by the carrier that initiates them... which means thenetwork capacity is consumed without the ability to bill for it.

How do Carriers make money?

Carriers make money on the usage. They are usually charging a per-minute fee. There is a finite amount of telecom network capacity to make or take calls, and maximizing each call attempt with the ability to charge for it is ideal for a carrier. If you make a call through a carrier's network, the carrier can begin to charge you when the call connects. Carriers can put in rules to make sure you don't make too many calls they can't charge. They can also penalize you in some way if you have too many non-billable or low-billable calls.

BAD TRAFFIC: Suppose the nature of your calling is high in short duration calls, low in average call length and/or low Tier 1 traffic. If so, from a carrier's perspective, the cost of doing business with you will increase, and the contract will become resource-consuming without the ability to bill and make a profit.

"GOOD" TRAFFIC: Reversely, if your calls are long and to/from Tier 1 destinations, your traffic is highly sought after by a carrier. Knowing your telecom stats and where your profile fits in the scheme of great vs. poor traffic allows you to be a more educated consumer and gives you the ability to negotiate with the providers for the best rates and quality.

Three Common Issues experienced when making outbound calls on a carrier NOT designed for contact center traffic

- **Calls Not Connecting**
- **Dead Air On Calls**
- **Ringing on Calls that were answered**
- **Calls that seem to ring too many times**

Most of these issues are due to:

1. False Answer Supervision (FAS)

FAS occurs when an outbound call receives answer supervision (is picked up) without terminating to its intended destination. These types of calls incur billing but may give the impression that the call is still in progress (caller hears ring tone upon answering). Or a false belief is made regarding its disposition such that the caller is led to believe that they've reached a wrong party, perhaps a voicemail box, or maybe just dead air

2. Post Dial Delay (PDD)

PDD is the time between call initiation and the receipt of progress tone indicating the call is ringing at the far end, awaiting pick-up.

3. Call Per Second Limits (CPS)

CPS limits are put in place for a variety of reasons which include:

- limiting capacity to maximize network use,
- distribution to preserve network integrity,
- to protect carrier relationships or downstream equipment.

MINIMIZE FAS AND PDD

The unfortunate aspect of dealing with FAS and PDD at the carrier level is a lack of visibility to the problem. A FAS call appears as a regular call; the only indication of a problem is the agent experience. Because the rural routes that the FAS typically takes belong to micro-telcos that are part of NECA pools, even large carriers need to hand the calls to them.

This means there will always be third-party carriers in the routing mix, often beyond the first hop where call hand-off takes place between your carrier and an upstream carrier, further obscuring where exactly such a problem occurs. Fortunately, carrier-specific PDD due to congestion is relatively easy to detect, as monitoring for increases in failed call attempts and a highly congested carrier will cause a spike in call time-outs. Invalid numbers that are part of unallocated carrier blocks would also not affect NobelBiz customers, as they do not maintain routes for such numbers and would reject call attempts to them immediately.

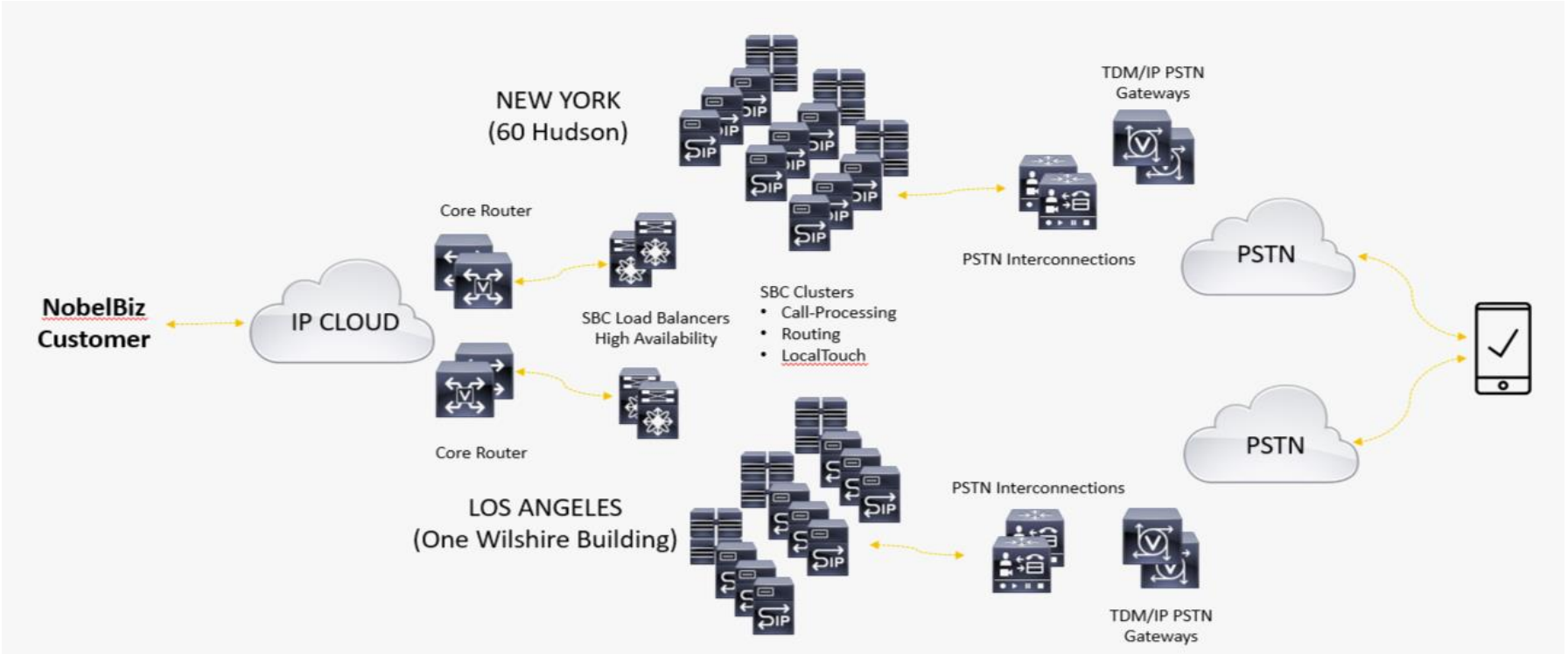
While the process of troubleshooting, in either case, requires timely feedback from end-users so that our partners at NobelBiz can trace back the affected calls to the particular trunk, the actual mitigation is to temporarily remove carriers from the route until those carriers can audit their routing and purge the invalid routes. Unfortunately, for the FAS problem, there is no permanent fix at this time. No carrier is free of it, though response time to detected issues helps minimize the impact of the problem. NobelBiz's ability to mitigate this issue lies with the depth of their routing table and the redundant nature of their network. As an inter-exchange carrier (IXC), NobelBiz is cross-connected to most of the major carriers in the country, which gives them several routes to each destination across our POPs (Points of Presence). Therefore, when a carrier-specific issue such as FAS is detected, NobelBiz's priority is to isolate that particular carrier from customer traffic and work through the problem with them after service to the customer is restored.

How NobelBiz provides CallShaper clients with a high call completion rate

- **NobelBiz's Purpose-built network is designed for call center traffic using secure top-notch data centers, backup power, diverse multi-data provider circuits in each facility, and clusters of redundant equipment**
- **Active management of many high-quality routes in place to distribute calls among top carriers**
- **Downstream carriers competing for your business delivering high uptime and excellent call quality**
- **The ability to immediately remove a carrier from route to minimize your downtime**
- **Maintain high-quality standards by firing providers who consistently don't perform**

NobelBiz Voice Carrier Network Design

- **Each Data Center is one of the most secure and core COLO's in the US with redundant:**
  - **Power**
  - **Equipment**
  - **Data Circuits**
  - **Downstream Providers.**



CONCLUSION

CallShaper is proud to be a partner with NobelBiz so we can provide our clients with Best-In-Class service that they demand. Contact Center focused providers like NobelBiz act as an extension of CallShaper and your company.

Service Providers who have purpose-built networks designed for contact center traffic will handle more types of calls and volumes while also maintaining high standards of quality.

CallShaper trusts NobleBiz to provide our clients with:

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