ECS - Business Continuity Planning

A successful *Business Continuity* (BC) or *Disaster Recovery* (DR) plan can be heavily attributed to proper planning, stakeholder awareness, and system capabilities. When deploying a cloud based Call Center, it is imperative to incorporate the different situations that are encountered into a Business Continuity or Disaster Recovery plan. Consideration should be given to where queued calls will be sent, including alternative locations, queues, or agents. Because Evolve IP queues calls in the cloud, it is far more likely that local conditions (where agents reside and are presented calls) will drive which BC/DR processes or procedures are implemented. Some of the events that require a defined BC/DR process include:

- Power failures
- Inclement weather (Snowstorms, Hurricanes, Flooding)
- Carrier Access (last mile) outages
- Other network interruptions (ISP, Carriers, equipment failures, etc)

Business Continuity Considerations

Routing Best Practices

- Callbacks. The native Callback feature included with ECS is the best solution to handle high volume and / or low Agent staffing periods. We highly encourage the use of Callbacks to minimize caller frustration, reduce abandons, and shift caller demand to when an Agent is available.
- Check Busy or Idle Agents. This Interaction Handling Flow Activity can be leveraged to build routing logic based upon Agent availability. If all Agents are Busy or Unavailable, the customer can be notified to set their expectations and offer a Callback. If there is an Agent available, this step can be skipped.
- Avoid Voicemail! Although Voicemail may seem like a viable option to handle peak periods, it actually will make the situation worse. A contact center that can't handle the inbound call volume is equally unequipped to place outbound calls in an effort to reach the party that left a Voicemail. This is further exacerbated since it often takes multiple outbound calls to reach the original caller. In practice, the vast majority of contact centers find Voicemail actually creates added frustration for the caller AND the Agents.
- Leverage a Routing Channel. Many clients have implemented a Routing Channel that serves as the "front door" to the contact center. By directing all incoming calls to a single Routing Channel, it becomes very easy to add emergency messaging that can be activated easily by the contact center leadership. Similarly, the Routing Channel empowers the contact center leadership to activate emergency routing plans that are pre-built. These routing plans can be anything that will serve as a "relief valve" for the contact center such as closing portions of the contact center to maximize limited staff, routing calls to a third-party contact center, or forcing callers into a Callback.

Work From Home Agents

Empowering Agents to work from home is a common approach to deal with situations where the office is unavailable or inaccessible due to other conditions. Agents can easily work from home and the approach depends on how each contact center implemented ECS. There are two ECS delivery models - Unified and Overlay. Each Contact Center is configured for one of these models.

Unified Contact Center

For clients that have deployed ECS along with Evolve IP's PBX or Unified Communications solutions (UCaaS), there are a few solutions including the Anywhere and Remote Office features. These capabilities allow Agents to route calls to any 10-digit DID (like a mobile phone or landline) and continue operating seamlessly. For those UCaaS clients that have deployed UC-One, this application also includes a native softphone. Agents can operate from anywhere with an Internet connected device and headset when leveraging a softphone. Please see the Working From Home article for more details.

Overlay Contact Center

For clients that deploy ECS without Evolve IP's PBX or Unified Communications solutions (UCaaS), there are a few solutions including the "Change Extension" feature and the native softphone in both the Agent and Supervisor applications. If given permission, an Agent can activate the Change Extension feature to route calls to any 10-digit DID (like a mobile phone or landline) and continue operating seamlessly. The ECS Agent application also includes a native softphone. Agents can operate from anywhere with an Internet connected device and headset when leveraging a softphone.

Resources

Creating / Modifying ECS Agents

Check Busy or Idle Agents Activity

ECS Agent - User Guide