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Analyze This, with TelStrat

 By [Eric Barkin](#) - Posted Apr 2, 2009

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Early this week, Texas-based TelStrat added Engage Analyze, a speech analytics component, to its larger Engage Contact Center solution suite.

Engage has an installed base of more than 1,600 contact centers and distributes through a number of major carriers in North America, Europe, and Asia. When the company launched Engage last year, it had always intended to include an analytics package in the offering, but held off, waiting to develop its customer base for the initial suite first. As it has met those goals, it saw increasing demand for analytics and released Engage Analyze to the portfolio to meet that demand.

The new offering indexes and mines words and phrases from recorded calls using a phonetics-based engine licensed from an unnamed partner. By leveraging a phonetic engine rather than a traditional dictionary and grammar, TelStrat suggests there are a number of advantages.

"One of the things we looked at in the overall marketplace was the different approaches that were available: the speech-to-text approach, the [large vocabulary conversational speech recognition] kind of approach, and the phonetic approach," says Ed Templeman, director of marketing at TelStrat. "We saw advantages in the phonetic approach as far as flexibility in being able to deal with quickly changing terms in the marketplace."

Users don't have to devote resources to updating vocabularies, Templeman suggests, because they are not dependent on a fixed vocabulary that would need to be updated to include new marketing words or the names of new competitors, etc. He also asserts that the speed of search and indexing is "really phenomenal when you compare them to the traditional approaches." Moreover, from a business intelligence standpoint, he says there is greater potential for more accurate conclusions.

"You're not doing a sample of overall call volume. If you want you can do up to 100 percent monitoring of calls and have very, very valid conclusions as opposed to something that might be loosely based on a statistical analysis," Templeman adds.



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So far, the lion's share of TelStrat's business has come from medium- to large-sized call centers. The company is hoping to see some business from smaller firms, though.

"The nice thing about this product is it's cost-effective all the way down to small call centers," says Kevin Smith, president of TelStrat.

According to Smith, even if they're not buying yet, smaller companies are starting to show some interest that may develop into sales down the line.

"They're starting to shop and we want to have the solution for them as the smaller guys get ready to buy," he says.

Reaching out to smaller firms may be key to keeping TelStrat's growth numbers climbing. As with most firms facing the recession, the growth rate has gone down in the past few months after the company posted strong gains in 2008.

"What we see mostly is people dragging their feet on making the buying decision, so some of the deals are spreading out further than they used to," Smith says. "We don't see many people just walking away, though."

"We have a very high value solution. We have the features that everyone wants. When people start shopping more, it'll work to our favor," he adds.

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