



8x8, Inc.

Executive Brief: When Real-world Disasters Hit, Virtual Call Centers Help Businesses Stay Connected

Be the business that's still running.



The Champion
For Business
Communications

When Real-World Disasters Hit, Virtual Call Centers Help Businesses Stay Connected



“During Hurricane Sandy, none of our team members were able to make it into their respective local offices. However, most did have power and Internet at their homes. Our U.S. team members logged into 8x8 and had calls delivered to their mobile phones.”

Eric Gregware
Director, Ipreo

For call centers, natural disasters are a double-calamity: They often take an immense physical toll on the infrastructure that their teams rely on to carry out their most basic functions. And for companies that depend on call centers to take orders or provide support to their customers, local or regional disruptions can cause business to grind to a halt, as workers find roads impassable or conditions too threatening to risk a trip to the office.

But some businesses have discovered a way to handle calls from wherever their employees are, even as massive disruptions knock out other means of communication. As long as they have Internet access and one other device—which could be a cell phone, a softphone, an IP phone or a landline—they can stay accessible and reachable. Based on ultra-reliable voice over IP (VoIP) and delivered over the Cloud, 8x8 Virtual Contact Center not only powers their call centers in fair weather, but in foul. For these businesses, using cloud-based **call center software** has made the difference between a business that’s “dead in the water” and one that can adapt to the rapidly changing conditions as Nature rages all around.

Virtual Contact Center: An Operational Advantage

Typical of such stories is Ipreo’s. The company—a leading global provider of market intelligence and productivity solutions to capital markets and corporate professionals—supports more than 2,000 global clients ranging from major financial institutions to large-cap public companies.

“During Hurricane Sandy, none of our team members were able to make it into their respective local offices,” says Eric Gregware, Director at Ipreo. “However, most did have power and Internet at their homes. Our U.S. team members logged into 8x8 and had calls delivered to their mobile phones.”



“Even when employees’ homes were without power, they were able to go to a nearby Starbucks or Barnes & Noble and take customer calls. We even had an employee on vacation stuck in an airport because of canceled flights—and still taking live customer calls!”

James Mackie

Director of Customer Support,
The Clearing House

Gregware says that Ipreo managed to do more than just weather the storm; it kept its operations going at full speed throughout the storm, a competitive advantage for his firm. “All twelve of our global local customer service numbers were attended to, and our client support was 100 percent operational and available throughout the disaster,” says Gregware. “Our competitors could not say the same. It was a huge win for our customer service team.”

Taking Calls on Cell Phones and Laptops

Other companies have told similar stories. Among them is The Clearing House, which operates internationally to support more than 2,000 clients. More than two-thirds of its workers are local to the areas near Washington D.C. and New York City. The Clearing House had been using 8x8 Virtual Contact Center for about 18 months when Hurricane Sandy hit.

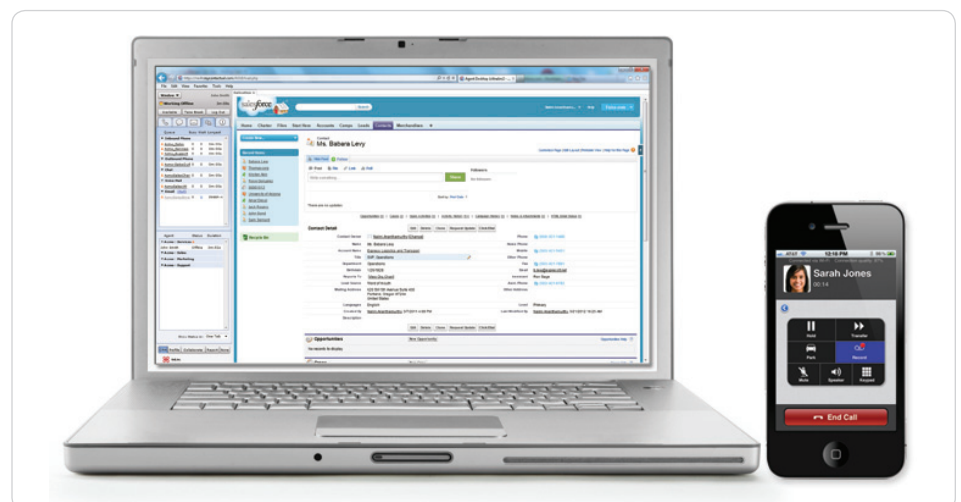
“We have a call center in the middle of New York City, and with the tremendous impact on all mass transportation, it was impossible for our call center employees to get into the office to help support our customers,” explains James Mackie, Director of Customer Support for The Clearing House.

“But they were able to provide service to customers by simply using their cell phones and laptops,” he says. “Even when employees’ homes were without power, they were able to go to a nearby Starbucks or Barnes & Noble and take customer calls. We even had an employee on vacation stuck in an airport because of canceled flights—and still taking live customer calls!”

The Ability to Work from Home Changes Everything

The 2012-2013 storm season has not been kind to New England, as Mara Dicenso recently related in an email to 8x8, a fact that might portend more long-term problems in the region. But that won’t stop Mara Dicenso and her Alliant team, who have found a way to ride out storms, doing business, warm and dry, in temporary locations.

“With Nor’easters, having the ability to work from home is a blessing for our call center,” explains Dicenso. “During one of these storms, a lot of our staff was without power, so I opened my home as a temporary call center. With the use of cell phones and PCs, we were able to support our business needs. I had the wood-burning stove going and served coffee. Our clients were happy, my staff was warm, and we were set to go. Technology is great!”



EXECUTIVE BRIEF

When Real-world Disasters Hit

Of course, the ability to route and answer calls no matter where agents are located isn't just appreciated during major disasters, especially in areas that regularly experience seasonal challenging conditions. Some people use the advantages of **VoIP call centers** to handle the normally tough weather that many regions experience every year.

As John Carroll, a Client Relationship Specialist at j2 recently said, "Living in the Northeast, it is great to have the mobility I need to work from home when the weather is bad." And, he says, that's not the only Virtual Contact Center feature he enjoys. "I also love having my voicemails forwarded to my email," he says.

Of course, when dealing with disaster, it helps if you've planned ahead. For helpful tips on preparing your business for man-made and natural disruptions, check out these slides from 8x8's recent webinar:

Prepare Now to Survive a Disaster Later at <http://sims.8x8.com/GetDocument.aspx?docid=710801>.



"With Nor'easters, having the ability to work from home is a blessing for our call center."

Mara Dicenso, Manager at Alliant

To learn more about 8x8, call 1-866-913-7684 or visit www.8x8.com



8x8, Inc.

NASDAQ: EIGHT
www.8x8.com



The Champion
For Business
Communications