

Harland Clarke Webcast 10/16/17**When Call Volume Spikes****TRANSCRIPT**

Moderator Stephen Nikitas, Senior Strategy Director, Harland Clarke

Presenter Ron Hasbrooke, Business Development Executive, Harland Clarke

Presenter Janet Sthele, Director of Client Strategy and Sales, Harland Clarke

Presenter Terri Panhans, Vice President, Harland Clarke

Eric: The Consumer Bankers Association is pleased to welcome you to today's webinar, When Call Volume Spikes, need-to-know insight for a strong service strategy, presented by Harland Clarke. My name is Eric, and it is my pleasure to be the facilitator for today's event.

I would like to formally welcome the participants joining us today. Please note, today's call is being recorded, and all participant lines will be muted during the broadcast. If you experience technical difficulties with the web portion of today's program, please email cba@commpartners.com or send a message in the chat box. If you are listening to the program over the phone, and you need assistance at any time today, please press *0, and an operator will assist you. The presentation will last up to 60 minutes and will include question and answer opportunities at the end of the program. You may submit a question at any time by typing it into the chat box in the lower left corner of the screen and clicking on the Send button.

I would like to direct your attention to the Links box, located to the left of the screen, where resources are located for you to view, save, or print. Simply click on the link of your choice, and a separate web browser window will open. This will not interfere with your viewing of the program. Today's presentation includes two live polling questions. When you see a poll appear on your screen, simply click on the box next to the answer of your choice. Your answer is not viewable by any other attendees. As a reminder, the views expressed in this webinar are those of our presenters and do not represent the views of CBA or its members.

It is now my pleasure to introduce the moderator for today's webinar, Stephen Nikitas, Senior Strategy Director with Harland Clarke.

Stephen: Great. Thank you very much, Eric, and good afternoon, everybody. Over the course of the next 60 minutes, those of you on the phone today

attending today's presentation are going to learn everything and anything about how important a role contact center services can provide to your financial institution and how you can continue to provide strong service to your account holders.

Now, let's go to the next slide and take a look at today's presenters. On this particular slide, I'm going to start with myself. As you heard, I am today's moderator. My name is Stephen Nikitas. I am a Senior Strategy Director with Harland Clarke. In that role, I help financial institutions to understand how Harland Clarke products and services can continue to help them grow and prosper. I am honored today to be joined by three colleagues who possess lots of contact center services experience. Ron, if you'd be kind enough to start. Would you introduce yourself to today's guests?

Ron: You bet. Thanks, Steve. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Ron Hasbrooke. I'm in Business Development with Harland Clarke for our Contact Center Solutions, and I've been with the company for just about 10 years total. I returned back in February after having been in some operations, some CX leadership roles for a number of years with some big, high-balling centers, and I am thrilled to be on the call today, very much so looking forward to sharing some learnings with the audience, and hopefully after the call having the opportunity down the line to talk with some of you and learn from you as well.

Stephen: Thanks for that. Thanks, everybody, for being on, and I think, Janet, you're up next.

Janet: Yes. Good afternoon. I'm Janet Sthele, Director of the Strategy and Sales, specific for our Contact Center Solutions. In a nutshell, what that means is I spend a lot of my time talking with our clients, understanding their needs, what they might be going through, and then conversely speaking to our capabilities and how that might be something that works to fill some of the needs that they have out in the marketplace. Terri?

Terri: Great. Thank you, Janet. I am Terri Panhans. I've been with Harland Clarke for just over 24 years and have spent all of my career in our Contact Center group but with various roles. I've spent really a good portion of my career in the operations side with oversight of two of our contact centers and have spent the last five years with oversight of our

sales and marketing efforts of the solutions that we provide to our clients to help them meet or exceed their goals. All four of us couldn't be more excited to be with you all for this hour and hope that you find it very valuable. Eric, if we could go to the next slide then.

I just want to give you all an idea of what we plan to cover with you as far as the agenda today but first just to provide you with just a bit of background on Harland Clarke. We currently operate three contact centers, and we have extensive financial services industry experience. Initially, that was built on providing the inbound and outbound check call support that many of you are probably familiar with and, in fact, may only know us in that way.

Over the past several years we've expanded on that support and in 2016 put just over 20 million contacts throughout our site and really springboarding on the great payments and check legacy that we have to start to offer and include inbound and outbound support, both B-to-B and B-to-C capabilities that really are focused on and built out of dialogue with our clients and focused to assist them with their acquisition, their growth, and their retention efforts.

That's where we're focused today, and through that we want to cover inbound events and accountholder expectations through those events. We want to share some information around laying the foundation for excellent accountholder service and then to also provide you really with a playbook or building blocks in those practices for contact center readiness. Again, these are just best practices that we've gleaned through the experience that we've had supporting our clients that we felt would be interesting and hopefully useful to you as you plan for any events. We'll walk through the ramp-up, the deployment or the go-live, and then also the postmortem analysis for you today.

So with that, Steve, I'm going to turn it back over to you.

Steve:

Fantastic, and thank you very much, Terri. That brings us to our first of two survey questions for everyone today, and, Eric, on our next slide, we have our survey question. We're curious. What kind of an inbound event if your financial institution planning for, either between now and the end of the year or maybe in 2018? Feel free to select more than one answer if there's more than one event taking place at your financial institution.

There are no right or wrong answers of course, and it looks like, based on the responses that we've gotten so far, we've got a mix of activity, ranging from digital or mobile banking conversion to what looks like we've got a merger and acquisition campaign going on out there. We've got a whole lot of activities going on that I see on this particular slide. So with that, everybody, thank you very much for responding to this particular survey and giving us an idea for what's going on at your institution. Eric, let's go to the next slide if we could.

On our next slide, no matter the event, whether you're going to experience predictable spikes in call volumes, whether they are planned for properly, we can see a significant increase in hold times. Those hold times obviously can frustrate accountholders and put customer satisfaction at your financial institution at risk. However, if those increases in call volumes because of entity-wide events that you have going on at your financial institutions are managed effectively, then those inbound events can really be valuable opportunities to widen customer reach, increase overall customer engagement, and, when all is said and done, strengthen the loyalty among your existing accountholders. Terri, anything else you'd like to add on this particular slide?

Terri:

Sure, Steve. I think you've hit it right on the head. I think that we all know that many transactions today are handled in a self-service manner, and that's great. For those types of transactions that can drive those efficiencies and certainly drive that customer satisfaction with that great experience, but we also know and as consumers we know, if we're in and we're completing a transaction or attempting to in a self-service manner, and for some reason something doesn't look right – it's not what we expected. It's not the norm that we normally see through that. Nine times out of ten, we're going to want to pick up the phone or get in touch with someone, a live agent way, to get that resolved and to hang up and know that it was resolved, and everything is good. Let's go to the next slide, Eric.

As we talk about account holder services – and I want to share. There was a great article that I read recently in the Harvard Business Review, and it really resonated with me. It was entitled *To Change Your Strategy, First Change How You Think*, and it really was about anyone that wants to build a destructed business model. The business model itself is only one

part of that equation. Equally important is the mental model, how your team, how you, how your organization views what you do and how you do it, and then certainly the measurement model for both. There was a great statement about Herb Kelleher, who was one of the cofounders of Southwest Airlines, and what he was known to tell his employees is that “we are in the service business, and it’s only incidental that we fly airplanes. Other carriers fly airplanes that carry people. Southwest serves people using airplanes.”

I read that, and again it meant so much to me. I shared it with my team and really challenged that. It doesn’t matter really the type of organization we are. What we really are is a service provider, and I think in this world today what is going to differentiate us all is really that. That’s how our account holders – that’s how our clients, our customers – that’s really how they view, and if you ask them to define their relationship with you, that’s how they’re going to define it.

How do you lay that foundation for a strong account holder service strategy? Certainly, it needs to be seamless for the account holder. The ease of doing business is so important. That helps to build that loyalty through every touchpoint, be it issue resolution, through email, chat, calls, whatever the channel, and then through that just boosting that confidence that they have in you and then certainly leading to retention. Certainly, running the business volumes that you deal with every day, again, no matter what the touchpoint or channel may be, is still important, but change events can be a real opportunity to showcase your service and differentiate yourself in the marketplace, because a lot of times account holders, customers that would have never reached out to you, are going to during that time. To be ready and to make that touchpoint not something that you’re just handling but actually be an opportunity to build that loyalty and confidence, it is just paramount.

Steve, we’ve got another polling question, so I’ll try back later.

Steve:

We’ve got another polling question on our next slide, Terri, so thank you very much. On this particular slide, you were kind enough to already tell us what kind of events you are planning for, so our question on this slide – and you can only pick one answer on this one, unfortunately – how prepared is your contact center for an event that could more than double the normal weekly call volumes at your financial institution? Let me give

everybody a moment here to respond, and it looks like so far the early responses coming in are everyone or the majority of you on the phone today feel like you are somewhat unprepared for that type of an event. Well, you've certainly come to the right place at the right time then to learn how you can get prepared for that event. Ron, would you take the reins of this presentation and tell our attendants how they can be better prepared going forward?

Ron:

Thanks, Steve, and I'd say not a surprise that everyone on the phone isn't feeling perfectly prepared for the next big event that's going to spike volumes. I think those of you in the audience who are yourselves in leadership roles in centers know that being well prepared for everything in a contact center is almost laughable. There are just so many variables that can impact volumes, and there are so many times when volumes spike unexpectedly and for reasons that are almost impossible to predict or plan for.

Sometimes even after the fact, it's hard to explain what it was that drove the spike. You get situations where maybe there's a new story on TV about a big breach, there's an error on a statement mailing that nobody caught until after it dropped in the mail, or sometimes, for some odd reason, everybody decides to call in on a Wednesday afternoon, and you have no idea why. All of a sudden, you're in a situation where you're scrambling and trying to figure out how to manage the queues. Those things happen. They're tough to plan for. It's just part of the contact center world, and you deal with them, but sometimes you do know that a spike is going to happen, and you do know why.

In a lot of situations, you may even know at exactly what day and hour that spike is likely to happen. Examples are situations where you've got a big direct mailing piece that's going out to a majority of your account holders with a great offer, or there's a newsletter or statement announcement about change in rates or fees. You're doing a card reissue perhaps, a conversion for an online banking or mobile banking platform, making big changes to your core or IVR. Those are all events where you know that there's a go-live date associated with them, and you know that they're likely going to put a big spike in your call volumes. Those are things we can plant a flag on the calendar and know that you've got some time, hopefully enough time, to try to get ready for them.

What Janet and I are going to try to do over the next eight or nine slides is talk about planning for those types of events, the ones that you've got some time to get ready for. What we'll try to do is share some of the things that we'd recommend you try to have on your project plan. Having a project plan is important, obviously, for readiness and to get yourself in the best position possible to achieve the kind of service level goals that you have for your account holders, and certainly components of what we talk about will no doubt be on everybody's planet, radar, forecasting volume as an example.

What we'll try to do here is share some of the best practices on each of these items and look to help you develop a plan that will best get you ready and importantly, ideally, help you accurately forecast something that can be even a little bit trickier to get your arms around than volumes, which is the budget requirements. An easy mistake to make going into a big, planned spike event is to think only about the cost of extra reps, and a good project plan is one that's going to not only help you get ready for the event but should also help guide all of the other resource and budget requirements that are typically associated, which, in our experience, are usually equal if not greater than the cost of some of the extra hours that you may need to put on the phone.

We always recommend three buckets or categories of important planning components. Those include the ramp-up, the go-live, and the post-event analysis and that you try to spend equal amounts of prep time in each of those three buckets when you're putting together your road map. What I will do is talk first about that ramp-up category, share some tips and best practices associated with each of those items, and then I'll hand off to Janet, who will go over the go-live and post-event analysis components.

If I could have the next slide, Eric. Let's take a look at the first in the ramp-up category, which is project management and planning. This really comes down to putting together your project plan and your road map for getting ready for that event. What's important here is to start early and get leadership oversight.

A quick example. A few weeks ago, I had an opportunity to go down to South Carolina for a quick meeting with a contact center team that was getting ready for an upcoming acquisition, in which they were going to be converting some of those new account holders onto their system. They've

got about 80 or 90 reps in their center. The acquisition was going to impact about 30,000 account holders, which, in overall relationship to the size of the bank, is relatively small. This is a bank that will be close to \$15 billion in assets, and nothing was really scheduled to happen for any of those account holders until four or five months from now. We had 20 of their leaders around a conference table, about 20 reps. It was 20 senior leaders within that institution. They brought folks from workforce management, from training, from IT, tel-comm, digital banking, operations, customer service, plus the EBP, who had overall responsibility for the acquisition project.

Those folks were in a room, heavy down, for two and a half hours, focused on just one component, which was how do we get the contact center ready to handle the spike in call volumes, and the purpose of that meeting for two and a half hours was just to begin scoping out what elements would need to go in the project plan, what that road map would look like, and where we would plant flags as important, critical due dates to get items.

Now, is that typical for everyone to have that many executives involved? No. Does it mean you need to get started on any event four to five months in advance? No, but what it should be is somewhat aspirational, and it highlights how much focus some organizations put on getting ready for change events and ensuring that they're trying to deliver a great customer experience to their account holders. By the end of that meeting, we had gone through each of those three buckets. We had pegged who the important sub-teams, important contacts, would be for each of the key components, and now the team has started off to the races on getting ready for this big event.

As far as project planning, here are the keys. Get started as early as possible. When Harland Clarke partners with an FI to support a big change event, we usually want to kick off planning about eight to nine weeks ahead of go-live, and earlier is better, get an executive sponsor, who is going to have visibility to that road map, who will know what the must-hit targets are and really can help keep that project on-task to help maintain urgency and accountability over the different components, and then lastly I'd say triple the test plan. Microsoft Project is a great application for this,

but it doesn't need to be overly sophisticated. An Excel spreadsheet will work. A Word document will work.

The important thing is to document what the important elements are in each of those three categories, get some due dates on them, and then make sure you're thinking through what some of the contingent reliance points are. For example, you have to finish your software testing and piloting before you start building out the training plan for representatives. Keep that project plan updated as a living, breathing document, and make sure that you're paying attention to the impact any delays might have on one area or another.

Eric, if I could have the next slide. Next up is everyone's favorite part, forecasting the volumes, trying to figure out how many calls are likely to come in during that change event and what the staffing requirements are likely going to be here. This is a category where, thankfully, there are a lot of good tools out there to help with forecasting. Most of the workforce management applications that you'll see provide some great functionality and allow you to estimate really down to interval levels what volumes may look like, what the associated staffing levels will be required to hit service levels. Even if you don't have the latest and greatest workforce management technology, tried and true tools like an Erlang calculator online can get you pretty close on these things.

The things that we see often creating some challenges around forecasting volumes are two key things I'd ask you to focus in on. One is thinking long and hard about days and hours of operation. Sometimes, when you've got a big event coming in, an initial idea gets thrown out to simply expand your hours, open a little bit earlier, stay open a little bit later, expand when the contact center is open on the weekend, as an attempt to spread that volume out so that you're not as busy at 9:00 on a Monday. What we see, however, is that a good portion of account holders are sort of accustomed to what your standard hours are, and those extra hours may not see the volumes that you'd expect. A lot of folks won't ship into those different intervals that you make available.

Further, if you expand those hours, you're likely then trying to stretch out the same number of people over more hours, which puts you in a situation where you can be short-staffed during certain times or ending up having to pay a lot of overtime to get those people spread out over

extended hours, so keep an eye on what your operating hours are. It's not always the case that expanding them is going to make a significant difference on the volume that you're likely going to see in your peak intervals.

The other thing is, reach out and leverage any partnerships, any other FIs which you've got relationships with that have been through those events for a double-check on some of your forecasts. We do a lot of work with online banking conversions and have gotten it down pretty close to a science now, where we can look at the number of end users that are going through a conversion and, looking at a number of things that are unique to your financial institution, estimate how many of them are likely to pick up the phone and when they're likely to make a call. You can do the same thing with card reissues, with acquisitions and conversions. Reach out. Gather some of that data. Don't rely just on ballpark estimates, because it's likely to go up by 20%.

The third kind of big thing to keep in mind is that you're likely to see some significant changes in your handle time and find changes that you know can swing wildly the amount of staff that you're likely going to need to handle a certain amount of call volume. Most credit unions and banks with just general customer service calls will see average handle times in sort of the two- to four-minute time, but what's going to be driving that spike – as an example, an online banking conversion – those average handle times for that increase in calls can go up to six, seven, eight, even sometimes nine minutes. If you're expecting 50% more calls but those calls are coming in at a much longer average handle time than you typically need, you'll be in a lot of trouble if you only staff up by 50%, because you're not going to get through as many calls, obviously.

Then, lastly, and really this one is critical when it comes down to forecasting call volume staffing requirements, is that you keep in mind additional supervisory requirements. Most contact centers run with rep-to-supe ratios of somewhere from 12:1 to 18:1. If you're going into a big event, and you're adding additional reps, or even if your existing reps are going to be much busier than usual, your supervisors are likely going to be slammed as well.

If you're adding some staff, having a bunch of inexperienced or new representatives on the phone makes it even tougher on the supervisors at a point in time when they're really needing extra experience and expertise to deal with questions and escalations on calls. We always recommend you back down your ratio of reps-to-supervisors a bit during a spike event and go significantly down if you're in a situation where you're bringing on a lot of new, temps, or people from outside the contact center who aren't necessarily accustomed to dealing with issues on the phone.

Three more items to cover in the ramp-up section. If you could give me the next slide, we'll talk about tel-comm. On the tel-comm side, we typically look at planning and putting together project components that look to key in on how you're going to route calls and how you're going to leverage your IVR as part of that event. Here's a few best practices we can share or maybe lesser known ideas to try to avoid catastrophes during a big spike event and help make for the best experience possible for your customers.

First, and we always recommend you do this as quickly as possible after you've built out your call volume forecast, is try to look closely at your line capacity during those peak intervals, and do so with an eye not only to what your inbound volume is likely going to be but what some of the transfer volume is likely to be and what impact that's going to have on your line capacity. If you're going to partner with a third party, you're going to have likely some of your calls transferring out. There will be a percentage that may be transferring back in. Depending on what kind of protocols you put in place around warm or soft transfers, you can end up with a situation real quickly during a spike event where you're capping out available line capacity and run into situations where customers are getting a SIT tone or a busy signal when they're trying to call in.

The other big thing in terms of looking at tel-comm ahead of the big event is looking to leverage your IVR effectively. Some pieces of advice there – there's great functionality now around using estimated wait time messages, auto-callback kind of features. A lot of IVRs have that. Many financial institutions may not have implemented them, and in some situations we see placing new features in the function as part of that prep for a spike event. One recommendation is, if you're going to do so, test it

out well in advance, run it for a week, and make sure that everything is working the way that you expect it to. The last thing you want to do is be in a spike event and have something not working correctly on an auto-callback or an estimated wait time kind of feature.

I would also recommend that you leverage new messaging at the top of the IVR if you're coming up on something that's going to do a 200-300% increase in your call volume. Explain why your hold times may be longer than usual, and don't assume that account holders may have read any information that you were sending out ahead of time in preparation. Communicate it as part of your IVR message out. Then, in particular, if you're changing some of the selection options, it's always a good idea to force a listen before selections can be made to help those account holders that may be accustomed to always pressing zero, or they're used to pressing three or somebody's extension. Give them a chance to listen to the message, particularly if you made a change in the selections that they've made.

Then, if you're partnering with an organization to help you augment some of the staff, look to see whether you can mirror with that organization's IVR any on hold messaging, any hold music that customers may experience, so that from a customer's or an account holder's perspective, when a call comes out of your system and into a partner's system, that that experience is seamless for them and there's no easy potential for abandons and the like.

Then lastly, if partnering, look for flexibility in how calls get handled and that you have a way to trombone back if wait times are exceeded and that you can do so at the beginning of a potential wait time as opposed to at the end.

Two more items under the ramp up and what we'll do now is turn next to communicating with account holders and staff in advance. Eric, if I could have the next slide, please?

All right, two areas that you want to be thinking about in advance as relates to communication, and these two areas of have very different levels of impact, but both are very important. Communicating with your account holders about the upcoming event and communicating with your

internal staff, and here are some best practice suggestions for both of those groups.

Whether you're reaching out and talking about the event to your staff or your account holders, you want to start early, communicate frequently, and you want to use multiple channels. With your account holders, website, email, direct mail, statements, newsletters, splash pages, as many channels as you can leverage, get out with a consistent message, and that message should really focus on here's what to expect; here's the change that's happening; here's the difference that you will experience as a result; and here's what will be better. Here's the benefit statement from the account holder's perspective.

Then, we always recommend you also include sort of a countdown. Start with your communications by saying, this change is happening at the end of the year, and then refresh it and say coming next quarter, coming next month, coming next week, coming tomorrow, so that the message change changes and you're getting it out there through as many channels and as early as you potentially can.

Lastly, and in particular with respect to account holders, just expect that many won't read any of it. No matter how great you are with your messaging, how many channels you use, there's going to be a good percentage of account holders who will call in the day of an event and not have seen any of it or been aware. What you're doing with those communications is trying to minimize the percentage that fall in that bucket.

With staff, really, it's the same thing. Get messages out early. Build them into some of the planning around team meetings, any internal communications that go out. Really focus, particularly with your customer-facing staff, helping them get a clear understanding of how the changes are going to impact the account holders. Anything that you can do to sort of put them in an account holder's shoes and have them understand that change and that experience is going to deliver value when they're engaging with those customers during the change event.

Make sure that they're able to articulate and are very clear in their own heads on what the benefit statement is associated with that change. A lot of customers react negatively to change regardless of what it is, and

being prepared when they run into that to be understanding, consoling, apologize, but to pivot very quickly to being able to communicate how this represents some benefits to the account holders is important as well.

Then lastly, with staff, if you're looking at a big event, and you know what date it is, and you know you're likely going to need to put some blackout dates on the calendar with regards to PTO, or you're going to require overtime in order to get the coverage support that you need, that's one of those changes you want to get out and communicate to staff as early as you possibly can. It's a great way to add a little bit of extra capacity in the center if you need it. What you don't want to do is communicate that late after people have already made plans and run into a situation where you're already dealing with some morale challenges based on the increase in volume and you're compounding it with schedule changes.

Okay, last up under the ramp up component is taking a look at training, if I could have the next slide, Eric?

In the training bucket, there's a few things here to key in on, which is good as it relates to getting reps ready for a big change event. First, and somewhat obviously, if you're augmenting staff in any way, remember that you likely have at least two distinct groups of representatives for which you need to develop a training plan. One group is your existing contact center reps, and the second are going to be all those who may be new to the role and part of your staff augmentation plan. It's important for that second group to think about the most common questions and call types your experienced staff are already skilled for and what the institutional knowledge that those existing reps have built up; how your systems work, how your phones work, what your rules are around not ready, and RAP, and disposition codes. Get all of that put together and identified as things that's going to be critical for anybody who's augmenting the staff and hasn't been in that role individually in the past. That's your one curriculum.

Your second is this. The change that's going to be driving this volume is going to be an event like a mobile banking conversion or an online banking conversion. Don't assume that all of your reps have used that platform, mobile banking as an example, in the past. You want to build in time as part of your training curriculum to make sure that they're used to

the technology, have played around with it, and are comfortable with it before the phones start ringing as part of the change event; if it's a mailing, that they've had a chance to take a look at the letter; if it's a statement or card reissue, that they've got that level of familiarity that's required so that you don't have the situation where you've got two people on the phone at the same time trying to learn about a particular feature, your rep and the customer.

The other big protocol that we'd recommend from a training perspective is leverage as often as you can opportunities to role-play. If it's a conversion event that's ahead of you, think through what the most typical questions that you're going to be getting. Why can't I log in? Why are my Quicken accounts not updating? It's telling me my browser's incompatible. How do I upgrade my browser? Scope those out well ahead of time and build into your training curriculum an opportunity not just to speak to what those will be but to give the representatives an opportunity to role play before the calls happen. Give them that opportunity again also to experience what the customers are going to be experiencing from their own shoes.

That brings us to some tips around planning for the actual go-live date. For that discussion, I'll ask Eric for the next slide, and hand off to Janet.

Janet:

Absolutely. So now, we move into the implementation phase, after you spent all that time preparing. What are some things to consider as you go live?

First, let's think about the representatives, the folks who that are going to be taking that increase in the phone call, and how can you do what we would call that plus one on every call or make that experience unique. Also, one thing you might want to stress is just make sure that everyone tries to handle that individual call like it's their first call. To the customer, it is. That's their first time they've likely called in with their question, their concern, their issue. Just always try to be cognizant of that and handle your first call just like you would the last call. Very elementary, but sometimes, in these scenarios when things are getting a little crazy, it might be something easily forgotten.

The other thing that they can do on those phone calls is reinforce the benefits of the change. Again, Terri spoke earlier about taking the

opportunity to reinforce your brand, speak to the positive about the change. I think customers might have a tendency to lose sight of that. Again, change is hard for a lot of people, so take the opportunity on that phone call. Remind them of the benefits. Remind them of the positives that they're going to see as a result of this change.

The second portion of that would be thinking from a quality assurance perspective, particularly if you've added folks to your team, whether they're contact center temporaries, it's an outsourcing provider. Maybe it's folks you've moved over from other areas of your organization. Have a finger on the pulse of what are the customers saying. How are you able to capture their comments that they might be sharing with you, whether they're good or they're bad? It's just great to have that information documented for programs that you may have coming up in the future.

Also keep in mind the training impact, so you've planned for everything, prepared. Sometimes things don't always go 100% of the way they were planned, especially if there's changes that are being introduced, but you might find yourselves in scenarios where you've got to do some last minute retraining or there might be things that oh, this isn't working out how I designed this morning or perhaps, to Ron's point, we just found out this mail piece has dropped and there's incorrect information or something that might have been in there. Be cognizant and be prepared to do some very last minute training on how you can get the information out very quickly.

I think also, from the quality assurance perspective, is make sure you've got folks out there that are staying on top of your social media and monitoring the feedback that you're getting out there. In today's society, that is a very quick channel that folks are going to go to. Obviously, it's going to be the good extremes, whether it's a really, really, really good experience or a really, really, poor – more apt if it's a poor experience or a poor situation. Make sure if you don't have folks that monitor that today, I would have somebody in place that's doing that or perhaps even adding to the folks that are monitoring those channels and being able to capture and address the comments that you might be getting through those channels.

The next slide, we'll talk a little bit about leadership support, so again, particularly if you are adding on, you have additional people that don't

normally support. It's very helpful to make sure your leadership is out there. They're visible. Everybody knows who is within leadership. Again, if you've got new folks who are helping to support your change event, making sure that they're readily available if hands are going up, things like that. Talk about being able to communicate quickly with the team there, especially if there are those changes that we just talked about that you're having to readjust last minute, so make sure that you're able to get out there and touch your team very, very quickly with some of the last minute information that you might need to share with them.

Also, a consideration is a staffing modification. Ron talked a little bit about sometimes folks will adjust their standard hours of operation, maybe you've extended them or you're opening early, something to that effect. Your call volumes are going to fluctuate and sometimes, it's going to fluctuate very, very quickly, whether that's up or down, and being sure that you've got those secondary plans in place to be able to adjust your staffing and your schedule to align to those volume changes. I think, Eric, we're actually moving on to the internal communications slide, so one more slide up.

This would be ones you'd think about from an internal perspective. How are you communicating with your team, particularly if you've got teams supporting in multiple locations or different areas within your organization? A great tool, if you've got it available, is to use an instant messaging type tool. We're big fans of that and often have multiple ones running. You might have one that includes just your leadership because there might be certain things that you are addressing or asking in there. Second to that is the one that is a much more encompassing one. That would include your representatives, the folks actually on the phones; folks representing training; definitely operational leadership. If you've got a quality assurance team, they should be included on that. That's a great tool. If somebody has a question – especially if you've got a larger group, I can't find my supervisor or what have you – they can drop those questions in to an instant messaging that's being monitored by a much larger group and they can address those questions very, very quickly.

Also, if there is a procedure change that needs to be taken out there or there's a system issue – this is a known issue and here is your workaround. Communicate that through that channel very quickly and

then come back and make updates to any training tools that they might be utilizing. If you don't have an instant message, a second option might be literally putting up big boards within the center where you're being able to write updates or changes there. You might need to have a couple, again, if you've got a bigger group out there, but again, it's just something that's very, very quick, very easy for a group to see and read, or be able to acknowledge while they're handling the phone calls.

We'd also suggest doing some daily huddles. That could be internal. It could, again, again be with a couple groups, particularly the first day, or two, or even up to three after that event's taking place. Again, huddles would be for some things to share that are much less important. There's going to be certain things that need to be talked out immediately, in the moment. Then, you'll definitely have some things that just say okay, it's the end of the day. Let's regroup. Where are we at? What adjustments do we need to make going into the next day? Here are some known issues. Has that all been communicated? Or here's some new questions that we've been asked and answers that we've developed for them. Again, it just gives you that moment to pause and say okay, let's recap for today and plan as we go into tomorrow.

Same thing with the weekly status call when the status call could include a much – maybe that includes folks at the executive leadership level that you've been meeting internally every day, team meetings, huddles, and those types of things. Then, you're gathering that information so when your larger team groups at the end of the week, you've got some great information to take forward. Also, bring forward all those customer comments that you might've been capturing through whatever that channel might be, but include all of that information in those weekly status calls that are taking place once. Your change has been live.

The next slide, we'll talk a little bit moving into the post-event analysis. Everybody is, typically, very relieved once you get to the end. Oh, we did it. We made it. We came through the other side. Everybody always comes through the other side regardless of how daunting it may seem going into the event. Again, we're huge proponents of doing some sort of end-of-program review. Did you capture everything that happened in this change event? It's very helpful to have that going forward, if you do something similar or if you go, I remember when we did X, Y, and Z and

we had some problem with the IDR, or the phones, or what have you. What was that and how did we solve that?

Documenting that and documenting it, probably within two weeks of conclusion of that program while everything is still pretty fresh, is just a huge key. Again, just that you've got that good information to look back on for some other change events that might come up. In that document, include information. How did you prepare for it? Use a task list. What were the tasks included on there? What were the decisions that were made? All of that stuff should have been captured, so include that in this recap document.

Include your results. How many calls did you get? What was the average handle time? Perhaps, how much above normal call volume was that, or what percent of the overall impact did customers happen to call in? Grab that type of information. Key learnings, a great idea to hold a debrief with your broad team. Send out a document that says hey, we're going to capture your key learnings. What went well from your perspective? You can put everybody on that workforce; training, operations, marketing. Get every group's perspective on that and say what was the good? What was the bad? Again, it helps to just improve for the future.

You really take from those key learnings and everything that said oh, there was an opportunity we missed, or this didn't work so well, or we didn't think about this. Then, you've got it documented. For the next one, again, you can go back and make those improvements and just continuing to get better at those processes. Invariably, there's always something to be learned and some things to improve on for future change events that you might be encountering. With that, Steve, I think we move on to the next slide there.

Stephen: We do, Janet. Janet and Ron, lots of great information so thank you all very, very much for all of that. We have now reached the question portion of today's presentation. We have about ten minutes left in today's session, but before we get to the questions that have been asked by our attendees – and as I look at the chat now, there are lots of questions that our attendees have put out there. Again, just a reminder, if any of you have a question that you'd like to ask, please plug it in to that chat box. Carrying in the vein of being proactive, I thought we could probably stop on this slide for a moment and have you respond to the

question of, “What should a financial institution look for in an outsource supplier when it comes to contact center’s support?”

Terri:

Sure. Thank you, Steve. Certainly, this is at a high level. We wanted to provide just a few bullet points that we think are important. Certainly, if you look for a provider, do they have financial services expertise? Do they have experience in working and a knowledge of the industry that we serve? How easy are they to do business with? If you’re working through any kind of change, or even if you’re looking for ongoing support for after-hours, or whatever it may be, you need someone who is easy to work with and is going to tailor solutions specifically to you, not try to be cookie cutter about it. That leads into the next one – how adaptable are they and flexible to your needs? Security focus, I probably don’t need to tell anyone on this call how important that is for this industry. Do they have a culture of operational excellence? Do they have a reputation of that? Do they have experience there and can show a track record? Lastly, and I think in so many ways most importantly, is how are they going to align with your staff, with your operation, and with your culture? They should be an extension of, and be viewed that way, and take that very seriously, and not take for granted that they are there to represent you and your brand and should do everything that is needed to do so.

Stephen:

Outstanding, very great. Thank you very much, Terri. I appreciate that. Let’s start going through the questions. Eric, if you’d go to the next slide if you don’t mind. Here’s our recap slide and our buttoning it up slide with contact information. Our first question that has come in is what recommendations do you have for managing handle times in order to have a positive impact on capacity? Janet, would you mind taking that question?

Janet:

Yes, definitely. I read this and I think of impact on capacity in two different functions. I’m not 100% positive which form they’re referencing but – and handle time is the tricky one because managing to it can get a little complicated because you do – we’re huge proponents of make sure you’re taking time with that customer. Again, they’re likely – very likely could be frustrated or have the sense that you made this change, I didn’t know it was coming, what have you. You want to be sensitive to it from a customer perspective. I wouldn’t say try to manage it to keeping it down

certainly as you probably do in daily workforce just manager outliers, from that perspective.

The second piece to that would be I don't know if you're managing it from a capacity in terms of a line capacity, and that, again, is another challenge. I think going in both trying to make an estimate of what do you anticipate handle times to be, both to drive what you need relative to your staffing. Second to that from a line capacity perspective, and again not knowing which one it's talking to, line capacity is just a really close relationship with your service provider asking what other things can they do. Can they increase your line for a period of time? If you're using another supplier or you're using transfers, can you do this transfer connect type feature where it allows you to disconnect that line at the point that it's transferred? I'm hoping that gives some direction regardless of which path they were thinking, whether it was from a people perspective or from a telephone perspective.

Stephen: Okay, great. Thank you very much, Janet. Terri, I think this one's for you. If you don't mind stepping back into the batter's box for a moment, that would be great. A little bit ago you mentioned security. Can you expand on that and share some of the security services that an outsourcer should be able to offer?

Terri: Sure, Stephen. That's a great question. I think making sure that they have and pay attention to, and have knowledge and expertise around, and are investing in information and physical security as well as a keen awareness around the regulatory considerations that we all need to be aware of and are able to deploy solutions around that. Their solutions should, at the very least, meet and in a lot of cases exceed, those of your own.

Some things to think about from a physical security perspective, are they in a paperless environment? Do they have cameras? If they do, where is the location of the cameras? What are their badge in and out procedures? From an info-security, do they have lockdown access to printers for their agents who are on the floor or to other external internet sites that should not be accessed? Do they have blockers so that things like cell phones and personal belongings can be secured so they're not taken onto the floor? From a regulatory perspective, are they – do they stay up-to-date on things like do not call and all of the regs that

need to be taken into account for so that everything, whatever program it is, stays compliant throughout?

Stephen: Great. Thank you very much, Terri. Terri, here's another one for you if you don't mind. What comments have you heard from clients who decided not to outsource?

Terri: That's another great question, Stephen, and I think the resounding theme that we hear is first and foremost that they underestimated the degree of the impact. What they realize is a lot of times the program was a burden, not only just on the contact center, but just kind of had a ripple effect onto a lot of the branches with folks coming in having questions, that kind of thing. They also realize that the impact in the contact center was not just around the volume as it pertains to whatever was going on, a conversion or whatever, but it impacted the general queue. They had account holders who were confused and frustrated that they were seeing, for whatever reason, a longer hold time than what they would expect as they were calling in and just doing their general questions if you will. That's what we, by in large, see. Obviously, some of that can vary based on the size and different things, but I would say that's probably the theme that we hear when we do follow-up with clients.

Stephen: Okay. Ron, you talked about staffing during your presentation. I'm going to throw this question out to you if you don't mind. Ron, what consideration should come into play when evaluating the use of branch staff for high volume call events?

Ron: Yeah, Steve, that's a good question. It's a strategy that a lot of FIs take when they're getting ready for a big change event and they know the volumes going to spike. They'll look to see if they've got some additional resources in the branches to be able to handle some of the call volume. I'd say that can be a very good path to go down in a number of situations. If the branches are low traffic and you've got people in there who aren't going to be critically needed in the branches and have some good institutional knowledge to handle phone volume, that's a great way to pad the capacity in a contact center, a little bit.

I think the things I would caution people about are one, if they're trying to route calls to the branch as sort of an overflow channel from the center, it's very, very difficult to line up when you're going to have a peak

interval in the center with when you've got peak traffic in the branch. Often times, those two things happen at the same time. You may not have a level of capacity that you anticipate if you're simply routing calls to branch personnel because the branches get busy. Sometimes those events that spike call volume are also spiking foot traffic in the branch.

The other thing is if you're pulling branch staff into the center and putting them in front the terminal and putting headsets on them, that's a very, very different work environment. You may be able to get volunteers; I would just caution to be careful around expectations and the impact of burnout. I've heard stories where they get the number of volunteers, and then day two, day three, they've got people calling in sick or saying I can't do this anymore because the work is so different from what they're accustomed to. It can be a good strategy, you just got to weigh the pros and cons and be careful about what degree you leverage it and really how much volume you're likely going to be able to offset.

Stephen:

Great stuff. Thank you very much, Ron. That brings us close to the top of the hour. A quick reminder, I think we've got time for a quick answer here if you don't mind. I know many of you have been asking for copies of the slides and the presentation. A copy of the presentation, a recording of the presentation will be made available to everyone on the phone today within a week of today's telecast. Be on the lookout for that, and also be on the lookout for an article that Terri has authored that I think you'll all find very interesting.

We've got probably about 30 seconds for this last question and I don't know who should answer it, but here's the question. What recommendations do you have for a scenario where you've taken every precaution to prepare for increased call volumes, but an unforeseen event occurs and the call center becomes overwhelmed?

Janet:

This is Janet. I will give my thoughts on what to do there. I think part of what Ron was addressing with the branch personnel, if you got folks that you can pull in for instances just like that, kind of an emergency – I would definitely say when you're planning, come up for a plan B, say we think we're going to need X amount of staff. I'll also add to that to say I'm a big – I always say over-estimate. It's certainly easier to drop back on the number of people you need than to go out and try to find them and pull

them in. That would be my first recommendation, is shoot high and then pull back.

If you're not in that situation and you don't have that ability, look from internal areas who you might be able to pull in. Second to that, you can always refer back to over time, withholding – if you do team meetings, maybe forego that team meeting that day, that couple of days, moving around lunches and breaks to try to get and work through those unanticipated peak times. Our contact information, too, is going to be out there, so if you had a question and we didn't address it, we're here.

Stephen: Alright. Thank you guys very much. Ron, Janet, Terri, great job. Folks on the phone, be on the lookout for an email with today's presentation attached to it, along with an article about contact centers and how they can help your financial institution continue to provide top-notch service. All that information will be out to you within a week, along with contact information so that you can get in touch with Ron, Terri, or Janet if you have any further questions. With that, Eric, I'm going to kick it back to you and let you wrap up.

Eric: Thank you very much. With that, we will conclude today's program. This session has been recorded and will be available within three to five business days. You may access the recorded archives by using the same login information you used for today's live webinar. Feel free to share the recording link with your colleagues. On behalf of the Consumer Bankers Association, thank you to all of our speakers, and of course, all of today's participants. Have a good afternoon. Thank you, you may now disconnect.