

► **Growth Comes To Sound Communications**

It seems like only yesterday that we dedicated and moved into our corporate headquarters, The Jackson Building...but in fact, it's been nearly four years. Those years have been full of hard work, great customers, and solid growth for us. So we're pleased to announce that renovation of The Jackson Building is set to begin before the end of 2005.

Renovation plans include expansion of the southwest side of the building which will house an expanded training center and additional offices. The expansion will also allow us to reallocate existing



space for an expanded parts and components department, enhanced technical lab, and more.

Sound Communications currently services hundreds of voice and video recording installations in some 28 states.

More than half of our team members dedicate at least half of their time to technical support. Our renovation is specifically designed to make their jobs easier...and our service to you even better than before.

Our growth is directly due to our great clients. From all of us here at Sound Communications, thanks!



A Vietnam-Era Veteran-Owned Small Business

3440 Park Street
Grove City, OH 43123

► **Introducing RecordIAB from UIQ Solutions:
See Page Two**

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In This Issue

- New From UIQ: RecordIAB
- Concerto + Aspect
- New from Sound: Customer Survey

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► **Workforce Relationship Management Is Here!**



Your contact center is a vital link between your organization and its customers, so it only makes sense to develop your workforce with that connection in mind. That's why we're excited to announce **ContactPoint: Workforce Relationship Management**.

ContactPoint can integrate with Mercom's call center suite and is designed to help you develop a highly-qualified contact center staff by means of three integrated modules: **Recruiter**, **Assessor** and **Trainer**.

Recruiter is a total solution for recruiting the *right* agents the *first* time. The module enables call center managers to build competency profiles which provide a fair, objective, and accurate means of assessing candidates.

The **Recruiter** module can help save both time and money by systematizing key business functions:

- managing a vacancy/ recruit database
- administering interview profiles
- managing recruit information

Assessor simplifies the process of employee evaluation, creating an assessment mechanism that is fair, objective, and most importantly, not left up to chance.

The **Assessor** module supports job-based competency and expectation assessments as well as free-form assessments and questionnaires. The latter can be unscored and used for reporting only (e.g. in exit interviews).

Training is crucial to the success of your call center, yet can be cumbersome and time-consuming to manage. The **Trainer** module brings efficiency to your training program by:

- managing training resources
- managing trainers and students
- registering and scheduling training courses
- managing training results

Your workforce is an asset that likely accounts for up to 70% of your contact center costs. With **ContactPoint**, you have the tools you need to make that asset provide a greater return.

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► Put Meetings On The Record



Designed especially for meetings and hearings, RecordABLE is a complete audio management solution for two- or four-channel applications. Shown above is the portable, laptop-based RecordABLE stand-alone version (fixed and networked solutions are also available).

RecordABLE's advantages include:

- Instant playback and review of audio, even while recording
- Customized, dynamic speaker labels
- Speaker information can be entered before recording begins to speed annotation
- Quick Start Mode lets you begin recording with three mouse clicks
- Accepts multimedia attachments

In addition to legal settings, RecordABLE offers a great recording solution for:

- Corporate meetings
- Commission, tribunal and board hearings
- Workshops and seminars

To learn more about innovative ways to benefit your organization with digital recording, contact us today.



► RecordIAB: Total Audio Management In A Single, Compact Solution

As a certified reseller for industry-leader VIQ Solutions, Sound Communications is excited to announce the release of **RecordIAB**, an innovative 8-channel digital recording console.

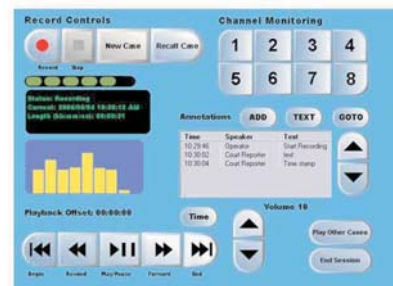
RecordIAB lets users record, play back, and store digital audio, all from a single, compact, self-contained unit. **RecordIAB** is ideally suited for applications requiring a product that is both feature-rich and simple to use.

RecordIAB is also ideal for new and/or less experienced recording technologists. Setup is simply a matter of connecting up to 8 microphones and the power cord; in other words, "plug and play." More sophisticated features can be added as the operator's skill set evolves.

With easy-to-use, tape recorder-style controls (as shown above), **RecordIAB** is also a good solution for users replacing analog tape systems. **RecordIAB** comes with more than 7,800

hours of internal storage and can simultaneously burn audio to CD or DVD. That's a vast improvement over cumbersome, perishable tapes.

As shown at left, **RecordIAB** incorporates an intuitive and user-friendly touchscreen. The unit also accommodates an external keyboard, mouse and monitor for added flexibility.



David Outhwaite, President and CEO of VIQ Solutions, says this about the new product: "**RecordIAB** offers users a complete, easy-to-use digital recording and audio management system in one convenient

package. It is a fast, easy, cost-effective way for users to move to a digital recording system and is an important addition to the VIQ product suite."

To learn more about any of the audio management and digital recording products from VIQ Solutions (available on state term schedule in Ohio), just give us a call!



► Welcome These New Members To The Sound Communications Team



Alex Mikhalyuk Systems Specialist

Alex joined Sound Communications this summer after having been

employed at NiSource Corporation, Qwest Communications and DeVry University. He holds a BS in Computer Information Systems from DeVry.

Alex's personal interests include computers, videography (he has videotaped several weddings), music, tennis and volleyball.

While Alex currently lives with his family in Dublin, he was born in Minsk, Belarus, a former Soviet Union country located between Russia and Poland.



Brandon Hughes Systems Specialist

Before joining the team at Sound Communications this summer,

Brandon owned his own computer consulting business called New Vision Solutions. He primarily worked with database design for small companies, but also performed hardware and software installations and upgrades.

Like Alex, Brandon is a graduate of DeVry University in Columbus with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Information Systems.

When not working, most of Brandon's extra time is spent with his two beautiful daughters, one who is three, and the other who entered the world just three weeks ago. Brandon lives on the north side of Columbus near Dublin.



Chuck Usher Senior Account Executive

Chuck has been in the digital recording market for the past eight years,

selling digital solutions to Fortune 500 companies throughout the Southeast. He spent the last four years with etalk Corporation, but got his start in the market with Dictaphone, selling mainly to the government sector.

Chuck resides in Lebanon, Tennessee with his wife Dawn and their two children, Averi and Aidan. When not working, Chuck enjoys spending time with his family as well as a little fishing and hunting.

Chuck will focus on working with both new and existing Sound Communications' clients in Tennessee and Kentucky.

As we welcome these new faces to the Sound Communications family, we say good-bye to Sales Engineer Chris Williams. Chris and his family have relocated to San Diego, CA. We wish them well.

► Six Things You Might Not Know About Sound

So you've been a Sound Communications client for years...but how much do you **really** know about us? Read on to find out!

1. Our staff has more than 75 years of combined experience in computers and telephony.
2. In addition to English, our team members are fluent in Spanish, Thai, Russian, Belarussian, and Somali, and can communicate the basics in Arabic, French and American Sign Language as well!
3. Sound Communications was founded in 1983, making us one of the few digital recording companies over 20 years old.
4. We are proud to be a Vietnam-era Veteran-owned and operated small business enterprise.
5. Our corporate headquarters has been dedicated as The Jackson Building in memory of longtime employee Jack VanHorn, who passed away in 1998.
6. Our management includes not only the traditional CEO, CFO and CTO, but two CCOs: Chief Canine Officers. The positions are currently filled by Golden Retrievers Dandi and Casey (no word yet on official titles for our two office cats, Boomer and Annie!)

Aspect/Concerto Merger

On September 23, 2005, Concerto Software® and Aspect® Communications announced completion of their merger. The new entity will now operate as Aspect Software™.

Aspect Software brings together more than 30 years of contact center expertise and innovation with a robust, market-leading product portfolio that includes:

- Predictive dialers
- Automatic call distributors (ACDs)
- Unified contact center systems
- Self-service interactive voice response (IVR) systems
- Workforce management applications and
- Performance analytics solutions

Aspect Software will continue to evolve and support all of its major product lines, build tighter integrations among its products and provide evolutionary methods for customers to adopt new and emerging technologies.

Each day, companies around the globe conduct more than 125 million customer interactions using Aspect's flexible, reliable solutions. Sound Communications is proud to be a Channel Partner for the new Aspect Software. Ask us for more information on how Aspect's products can benefit your contact center.



▶ Aspect's RightForce™: Delivering Real, Measurable Business Value

The most valuable asset of any contact center is its agents. Helping you maximize that asset is a primary driver behind our Channel Partnership with Aspect Software™... and one reason we're excited to feature

Aspect products like RightForce™. RightForce™ Workforce Management is an enterprise-wide application that addresses a diversity of staff scheduling needs, allowing efficient response to multiple customer demand sources. You can forecast and schedule employees based on inbound/outbound call volume, email, web, fax, walk-ins, or any other contact center related enterprise-staffing requirement.



RightForce's internet-based architecture reduces total cost of ownership and makes information easier to access. The solution is entirely scalable and enables you to create forecasts, schedules and reports from multiple sources and locations.

RightForce supports integration with most leading ACDs and predictive dialers, reducing complexity and operational costs. From budgeting to long-range demand forecasting to detailed staff planning, RightForce provides the tools you need.

For small to medium-sized contact centers with fewer than 100 agents, RightForce Express offers the same extensive capabilities as RightForce.

Key Features

- Define multiple demand sources and work groups for single site or multi-site locations
- View graphical reporting information, along with standard report formats through a browser-based interface
- Review results at group and individual levels
- Manage change for both current and future days
- Track schedule adherence both historically and in real-time

Business Benefits

- Manage and balance multiple types of demand for inbound, outbound, blended and multi-channel environments
- Optimize your staff and resource base against current and future requirements
- Increase productivity through efficient enterprise work-flow modeling
- Increase right party contacts, enabling increased up-sell/cross-sell opportunity
- Provide interaction tools that empower agents to participate in the process
- Analyze performance and event information in real-time or historical formats



▶ Digital Video Recording Q&A With Roger Huston



We've gathered a few of the common questions we're asked about DVR, and presented them to our resident guru, Roger Huston. Roger joined us as a fulltime Systems and Video Specialist earlier this year.

Why do you recommend removeable hard disk drives as a recording medium?

We find standard Windows hard drives, or HDDs, to be the most economical and expandable option for most recording applications. Keep in mind that most courts require the original recorded medium as evidence. A copy of the video, burned to DVD, may be declared inadmissible. Our SCI-DVR systems use HDDs in removeable trays, making them easy to replace.

Does this mean I have to save all the video I ever record?

No. For the most part, SCI-DVR systems are set up to record in serial mode, with new video recorded over the oldest recorded video when space is filled. Important events can be marked "never recycle" to ensure they are always available for later viewing. This can be triggered to happen automatically...for example, whenever an alarm goes off.

Should I be concerned about security while accessing my system via the Internet?

Security is always a concern when the Internet is involved. SCI-DVR systems use MPEG4 compression for streaming video across the Internet. This is in contrast to many other systems, which use the completely "hackable" JPEG format.

Can I change the way I'm recording to fit my business patterns?

In many cases, the answer is yes. For example, during the day you may want to record all activity in a particular hallway. At night, when the building is supposedly empty, you might only want to record if motion is detected. SCI-DVR systems allow this flexibility.

Do I have to pay for a static IP address to access my system from home?

Not with SCI-DVR. While most other DVR systems offer limited or no IP tracking ability, your SCI-DVR system can be set up to track a dynamic IP address at a minimal cost. Depending on your Internet service provider, this can save you hundreds of dollars a year.

Note: If you have questions on any of our products, call or send them to gina@soundcommunications.com for this new feature.

▶ Digital Video Recording In Action



- Did you know that SCI-DVR systems can interface with motion detectors, access control doors, lighting, POS (point of sale) systems, and more? In fact, such an integration was recently used to apprehend an embezzler at a fast food restaurant. DVR was keyed to the POS register, and all video linked to refunds was viewed. The first two recordings showed customers receiving their money back...the third showed the assistant manager pocketing a fraudulent refund.
- Attention law enforcement and public safety professionals: Ask us about our new SCI-DVR solution for in-car digital recording. This affordable, Linux-based system supports up to four channels/cameras.
- Sound Communications would like to thank the Fairfield County (OH) Sheriff's Office for selecting us to provide digital video surveillance and recording in their jail... and for their kind words about our work to the NENA email discussion list, 911TALK!

▶ Mining Calls For Data: Word Spotting

Word spotting has been touted as a powerful tool to analyze recorded customer calls. But while word spotting is useful for some applications, this technique also has significant drawbacks.

Simply put, word spotting is the practice of flagging calls by a specific word. It can be useful in classifying calls into general groups...for example, all "billing" related calls. However, word spotting does not reduce the effort required to listen to calls, nor does it identify what the listener really wants to know.

For example, if a call center wanted to identify when customers were interested in purchasing and conducted a search on the word *buy*, word spotting could not differentiate between the statements *"I wouldn't buy that product; it's too expensive"* and *"I would buy that product if it were on sale."*

When it comes to mining data, topic identification will yield more meaningful information than simple word spotting. Topic identification can accurately identify call subjects and classify and score every customer conversation. This powerful new technology is used in Mercom's integrated CallMiner Analytics Suite.

Note: This article was excerpted from Speech Analytics Best Practices. To receive a complimentary copy of the complete white paper, contact: gina@soundcommunications.com



▶ Are You Ready For Disaster To Strike?



"Call centers are fundamental to the life of a company. They play a mission-critical role and must be available to customers soon after a company crisis..."

This statement appeared in a Gartner report by R. Witty, B. Elliot and E. Kolsky...and we couldn't agree more. Recent events, coupled with legislation such as Sarbanes-Oxley, clearly demonstrate that companies must take a closer look at how they provide back-up for their contact centers.

"Disaster" is a broad term that could range from facility disaster (complete destruction of your call center) to facility downtime (e.g. a weather-related power outage) to security breaches (resulting in loss or compromise of data).

Planning to recover from (or even prevent) a disaster is complex and involves both technology and processes.

For example, let's say you're using Audiolog to record all calls.

The Audiolog offers redundant, hot-swappable hard drives, and your archives are stored off-site. In case of catastrophe, you've set up a small remote center to handle your calls. Are all your bases covered?

Not necessarily. Your archived calls may be safe, and your current calls may be answered. But if your Audiolog is in the center that's destroyed, you have no back-up for the recording technology itself...and no way to record calls coming in to your back-up center.

Fortunately, there are cost-effective ways to address these issues, and make sure your call recording needs are completely covered in your business continuity planning. Our sales engineers will be happy to help you review your call recording technology and processes to make sure you're really ready if disaster should strike. Contact us for more information.



▶ Automated Customer Surveys: Do They Have A Place In Your Business?

If you've made a phone call, used the Internet, or even visited a local restaurant lately, chances are you've been asked to take a survey. If everyone else is doing it, should your business be doing it, too?

As with most new technologies, implementation decisions should be based on the potential value the technology brings to your business. Here are some ways in which automated customer surveys, done in conjunction with your existing inbound/outbound calls, have added value for many.

Reduce Costs

Traditional survey methods tend to be costly: follow-up calls, follow-up postcards, hosted surveys, etc. Automated surveys can be integrated with your existing contact handling procedures quickly, easily and at a much lower cost than other methods.

Convert & Upsell

Automated surveys generate fresh information. The caller is answering questions about a specific experience while that experience is fresh in their minds. This gives you much more timely, actionable intelligence. In a contact center concerned with sales, such intelligence can help refine

contact-handling procedures and scripts in a way that converts more shoppers to buyers, and increases the average sale. Even a small increase per sale can make a difference in your bottom line.

Retain Customers

Again, because the data provided by an automated survey is fresh, it is of much greater value in increasing customer satisfaction and retention. Consider the example of an agent who is unfriendly or unhelpful. Would you rather learn that today...or weeks later from a follow-up postcard? Acting on fresh information gives you a much better chance of saving the customer relationship.

Retain Employees

Turnover is a problem for most call centers, and a significant number of employees cite "lack of training" as their reason for leaving a job. Automated surveys, especially used in conjunction with a formal agent evaluation platform like Mercom Interaction Quality (MIQ), can be extremely effective in spotting employees who need additional training and coaching. Being proactive in meeting these training needs can help increase employee satisfaction, performance and retention.

▶ Surveyor: Your Customer Survey Solution

If the possibilities presented in the article at left are intriguing, you'll be glad to learn about another new offering: **Surveyor**. Mercom has worked with Contact Point to ensure both **Surveyor** and **ContactPoint Workforce Relationship Management** (see page 1) can easily integrate with Audiolog, MIQ, and other Mercom products.

Surveyor provides a flexible scripted format for automated surveys. The actual content of formatted script survey questions can be modified as new business needs dictate, and new automated surveys can be implemented. Administrators also have the ability to create more complex scripts, utilizing branching techniques, for survey building.

Surveyor uses the Applications Platform (AP) as its base software architecture, taking it beyond the IVR software used by many automated surveys. AP allows for optional integration with other forms of computer and telephony data. It can even connect directly to the PSTN or a telephone system using standard analog channels.

This option supports various T1 and E1 digital connections. High-density T1 cards may place as many as 96 connecting ports on a single board configuration, providing dramatic savings in time and cost. Ask us about putting **Surveyor** to work for you.