

Taming Your Telephony Infrastructure

Why is it so hard to keep up with your contact center infrastructure?

Many centers spend far too much time and money trying to make sure their communications infrastructure is running properly. Often, they face an incredibly complex, tangled web of systems and vendors.

How can you be sure your call center is running at peak performance without blowing your budget on IT resources? What's the right testing or monitoring approach? Let's take a closer look.

IT Testing and IT Monitoring: What's the Difference?

These terms may seem similar, but there are key differences between them.

Testing is an active process. Through scripts and applications, you can stress the system, performing a large number of transactions within a specified period of time. Testing can reveal issues and errors during the test ... but you can't test at all times. New issues may crop up when you aren't testing. Another challenge is the incomplete nature of a type of testing called "element management." In element management, each individual component, or element, is tested. Without a complete view, element management can yield inaccurate results.

A test doesn't care what systems are running on the back end — applications could be in the cloud, hosted by a third party, or run locally. These components could otherwise be inaccessible to test individually. As such, the test will find any component of the system that results in a failure. The trouble, however, is that the test may reveal a failure, but may not indicate the ultimate source of it. It shows *what* happened, but not *why*.

Monitoring takes a different approach. It's passive, looking for alerts and anomalies while watching the system operate under normal conditions.

While less disruptive, monitoring won't reveal a problem until one actually happens. Moreover, you can watch only for conditions that you already know about. A pre-defined set of alerts is created to fire under certain conditions, showing the administrator exactly what issue has caused it. As opposed to testing, monitoring alerts are very specific.



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Executive Perspective

Additional Approaches with Questionable Results

Clearly, both testing and monitoring have pros and cons and are critical to your telephony infrastructure. While organizations may augment monitoring and testing with other approaches to help maintain the availability and stability of their IT infrastructures, many of these require an extreme investment of resources for very little benefit. For instance:

Walking the Floor — In certain industries, compliance regulations dictate that every call across each phone must be recorded. Because of the lack of holistic monitoring and visibility across all devices, administrators resort to literally walking the floor of the call center, testing device and audio quality line- by-line.

Diagnosing without Data — When testing reveals a problem, administrators may only know the result – certain calls aren't being recorded, or perhaps certain terminals aren't receiving calls. Unfortunately, without any additional information, the IT team may resort to examining every component of the system to diagnose the cause of the problem.

Outdated Tests — Sometimes, the IT department may write detailed test scripts to ensure the health of the environment. But in complex organizations, things are constantly in a state of change. Users come and leave the company, change roles, and get new devices. Software is upgraded and configurations are changed. Test scripts are almost immediately out of date, and more time is wasted.

Load Testing — Traditional load testing simulates a mass number of transactions to stress the system. The trouble is that load tests don't actually simulate reality. In real life, there are many different types of interactions across your networks and devices, not just the same transaction again and again.

Automation for Better Results

So, how can you oversee your telephony infrastructure wisely? An effective approach is to combine testing and monitoring, and to power your processes with intelligent automation. Verint® Automated Verification™ can perform automated, end-to-end monitoring checks for alerts across all of your contact center applications, databases, ACD, recorder, and other software — even the handsets themselves. If an alert is triggered, its auto-discovery process can determine which part of the environment needs to be tested. The application takes parameters from the auto-discovery to simulate the precise conditions that created the alert.

This holistic approach offers a complete view of your infrastructure, as well as in-depth analysis to help your IT staff find and resolve issues that may compromise telephony services. You can decrease time to resolution and reduce costs while enhancing operational efficiency and compliance. Contact us to learn more.

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