

# A Call to Compete Upward

By Gail O'Connor



I recently conducted a market survey in my area and was disappointed to discover that progress being made to benefit the telephone answering service industry had been thwarted. To my dismay, I discovered giant leaps and bounds in a backward direction. I was shocked to discover that base rates and other services that we rely on to make a profit have been dramatically reduced or eliminated all together.

Gone were the twenty-eight-day billing cycles, holiday charges, email, fax, relay charges, and so forth. I sense fear all over the place, but what exactly are we afraid of? The recession could benefit our industry, as our services are obviously less expensive

than hiring a secretary. I can count on one hand the number of clients who have stopped using my service due to the economy; customers recognize our value, especially in a slow economy.

I just do not understand why we don't compete "upward" so that everyone benefits. Our operators deserve raises, bonuses, and better compensation. Our vendors have increased their costs as well. It seems that the very fees we require to "band" together to charge our clients, have been eliminated to "one-up" the competition. We all suffer when rates and other charges are reduced or eliminated. If this continues, we are going to underprice our services to the point where no one will profit, and it will be the end of an

industry. I wonder if this trend is localized or nationwide. It is almost embarrassing that this is the standard of our worth.

I plan to remain competitive and keep my rates as they stand. I believe that customers appreciate quality above all else.

I am not a "discount" answering service, and I refuse to participate in undermining my call center's worth. ☛

*Gail O'Connor is the owner of The Telephone Secretary in Fullerton, CA.*

Connections Magazine Presents



By the  
TAS Industry  
For the  
TAS Industry

Buy

Sell

Learn

Succeed



## Infinity Intelligent Series Demo Movies:

- Messaging - Simplifies difficult client instructions and makes the message-taking process as easy as filling in a form.
- Contact-Based Architecture - Presents dispatch steps specific to each contact, increasing efficiency and reducing errors.
- Dispatching - Dispatching is what it's all about!



# The PINetwork Annual Convention Overview

By Phyllis H. Shaw

**P**INetwork held its annual convention March 15-17, 2010, at the Cottonwoods Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona. This year's agenda was packed, with a combination of presentations from Professional Teledata as well as from many of our users. There were several interactive sessions, with both presenters and attendees participating in the discussions.

As part of his introductory comments, Jim Graham took a stroll down memory lane, highlighting the progression of the PIN group over the years – complete with pictures. This was the group's fifteenth annual conference, and many founding members were present.

Professional Teledata previewed some of their new features. Pinnacle dashboard

shows a customized snapshot of what is happening in real time in an operation. Highlights also included Real-Time Traffic and Enhanced ACD Monitor presentations. Members shared reports that they have developed for a variety of purposes, including tracking employee statistics and performance. There was a discussion of what Pinnacle and Switch data members are currently analyzing.

The Disaster Recovery presentation covered various stages and levels of disaster recovery – from the most basic steps right through colocation. The discussion covered everything from system backups and spare parts to complete colocation of offices and everything in between.

A financial case study was presented. This took the group through the many different financial aspects of our businesses. Financial spreadsheets were shared so participants could put in their own financial information. There was also a panel discussion on employee scheduling. Panelists and members demonstrated how they use various employee-scheduling modules, as well as some creative methods they developed on their own.

The group was treated to a site visit to Contact One Call Center in Tucson, followed by a real western BBQ hosted by Judy Wood and her family. The sprawling family ranch was the perfect setting for

games, entertainment, good food, and fun. Some went horseback riding, while others tested their skill at various games. A few adventurous souls explored the desert on ATVs. The menu featured an assortment of appetizers and several BBQ selections (chicken, pork, and beef), topped off by a variety of homemade desserts. After dinner, we gathered around a campfire and were entertained with cowboy songs and dancing. Jeff delighted us with some of his cowboy poems. A great time was had by everyone! ☞

*Phyllis Shaw of Business & Professional Exchange is the past president of PINetwork.*

## MedCom Helps Vision Impaired

**S**pring is in the air, and that means it's time for a little spring-cleaning. The staff at MedCom Professional Services, Inc., with offices in Levittown, Allentown, and New Holland, Pennsylvania, took their spring-cleaning to a new level. They swept their offices and homes for used computer equipment and donated it to the Susquehanna Association for the Blind and Vision Impaired in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

"It's a win-win-win situation all around," MedCom's executive vice president Tom Sheridan said about the donation. "I had just said that we had a lot of stuff in the storeroom that we need to get rid of, and they called looking for donations."

About a third of the twenty or so

computers, valued at around \$1,000, came from employees' homes, while others came from MedCom's offices, Sheridan said. The SABVI picks up donations of twenty or more computers; in addition, they provide donors with certification that all data on the donated equipment's hard drives is destroyed.

"The program appealed to me because it not only helped the SABVI, but it also recycles computer equipment in a responsible way," Sheridan said, adding that the office equipment MedCom donated was about four or five years old and still in working condition. Some only needed new operating systems.

"SABVI is excited to offer this new service to businesses throughout our service area,"

*(Continued on page 3)*

### Drive Revenue & Profit with Startel's CMC and CPS Systems

**Skills-based Routing** - Route calls to the right agent every time

**Web portal** - Provide your customers with the ability to access their data via the internet

**Statistics** - Increase revenue by accurately billing for connect time, agent time, maintenance time, transactions and other billable items

**Customized Reports** - CMC's report generator provides you with the flexibility to customize reports that will satisfy your customers most challenging reporting requirements

**One Number** - Startel's translation tables save you money by using fewer DID numbers

**Intelligent Features** - Intelligent dispatch can increase your operational efficiency up to 67%

For more information on the full line of Startel's "Intelligent" features, contact Startel at 1-800-782-7835 ext. 738, or sales@startelcorp.com



[www.startelcorp.com](http://www.startelcorp.com)



(Continued from page 2)

said Dennis Steiner, president/CEO of SABVI. "Not only are we able to increase employment opportunities for the blind, but we will be providing a much-needed service to our community. We are very happy to be working with MedCom and are fortunate that they have chosen SABVI as a partner."

For more than eighty years, the Susquehanna Association for the Blind and Vision Impaired has been helping to restore autonomy and independence to the lives of Pennsylvania residents who are blind and vision impaired. Through generous donations from area residents and the support of businesses throughout the community, SABVI assists the blind and vision impaired to take back their independence and improve their lives.

**Alston Tascom's Universal Communicator FR-500**

Alston Tascom will unveil the Tascom FR-500 communicator system at the upcoming ATSI 2010 Convention in May. When triggered, the system will phone a call center's customer base to inform them of new features, notify them of a system upgrade, deliver a progress report on system issues, or other relevant information. This autonomous service works on any call center platform or on stand-alone basis. Once the initial contact persons have been reached on each team, the system moves on to call other teams until the response unit is completely manned. The FR-500 communicates over SIP trunks, PRI, or analog lines.

**Abby Leibowitz Named to Forty under 40 List**

Abby Leibowitz, executive vice president of Call Experts in Charleston, South Carolina, was named to the 2010 class of "Forty under 40" by the *Charleston Regional Business Journal*. The twenty-six-year-old oversees the answering service's finances, legal framework, organizational structure, and operation of each department. She also ensures that the company's growth remains on track. Founded in 1982, one of the company's goals has been to help local charities, providing free answering service to several local nonprofits. Leibowitz noted that Call Experts "facilitates most of the behind-the-scenes communication throughout the Lowcountry."

**CenturiSoft Releases CenturiMessenger 5.0**

CenturiSoft announced CenturiMessenger 5.0. Its features include a "survey" box and multiple holiday scheduling. The emphasis of the release was mostly on enhancements and improvements to delivery and notification through various mediums. Interconnection to Skype is also included. Various additional features and improved scalability to 600 ports has been added to the update (up from the prior limit of 400). "Our larger customers have needed larger system scalability, and we have been able to deliver on that need," remarked John Pope, president of CenturiSoft

(Continued on page 4)

1351 Vintage Pl., Chino, CA 91710  
866-2-TASCOM • 866-282-7266  
Fax 909-517-3670  
info@alstontascom.com

# Alston Tascom

**Evolution Hosted VoIP System**

- Limited Cash Outlay
- Small Service BIG Features
- No Maintenance or Upgrade Fee
- Complete Privacy of Client Base

**A Hosted System is the Solution for Your Office!**

"Alston Tascom, worked diligently to make the hosted system work. Wayne Scaggs and his team should be very proud of their accomplishments. The hosted system will not only connect to remote agents here in the USA but anywhere in the world. It took pure perseverance to make this happen."

**Doris Primicerio**  
President  
A Courteous Communications  
Orlando, Florida

www.alstontascom.com

## Since moving to Pinnacle, growth comes more easily to Towne Answering Service

A PINNACLE GROWTH STORY

Since 1968, Towne has served a wide range of medical and commercial clients across southeastern Pennsylvania. When the time came to move to a new platform, Towne's leaders knew they had only one chance to get it right. They're glad they chose Pinnacle. According to Vice President Deb Crown, our support and advice made the conversion process just about seamless. In addition, the product's unique scripting power has improved front-line service, cut training time significantly, and helped Towne add new staff more easily than ever. Our cutting-edge turnkey solution can do the same for you. So get growing!

**CALL 800-344-9944 TO ARRANGE YOUR LIVE REMOTE DEMONSTRATION.**  
800.344.9944

Towne Answering Service, Souderton, PA  
Left to right: Charlie Crown, President  
Deb Crown, Vice President  
Nate Gelfert, Systems Administrator

**Professional Teledata**  
800.344.9944  
www.professionalteledata.com

25 years  
ESTABLISHED

**Professional Teledata Announces Pinnacle Dashboard Accessory Program**

Professional Teledata announced their Pinnacle Dashboard Accessory Program, which provides a real-time visual display of key system metrics, including ACD-queue status, agent status, message-delivery status, and call traffic. It provides an overall image of the key elements of call center load and performance. Custom color-coding allows managers to set graduated warning parameters for real-time performance issues such as long hold times, excessive calls on hold, long calls, etc. Further details may be displayed by clicking or "drilling down" on various components of the master screen. Dashboard also has a real-time traffic screen.

**A Better Connection Scores with Local Media Coverage**

Marcy Hewlett from A Better Connection notes that "every little bit of marketing helps." The Arizona-based business was recently contacted by The Arizona Republic. Eight years ago, during another economic downturn, the paper ran a story about the answering service's launch during challenging economic times. They felt that a follow-up during this recession was warranted. In addition to positive coverage for the answering service, it also mentioned that many of A Better Connection's twenty-seven employees work from home. That sparked employment interest. "We didn't even know they ran the story until...we started to get employment calls," Hewlett added.

**Outsource Call Centers:** Personalized Communications, providing call center outsourcing services to other answering services, contact Stan Gardner at 800-232-3321, sgardner@per-com.com, or www.per-com.com.

**Seeking Acquisitions:** You have dedicated a lifetime to building your company's reputation. Don't let your clients down just because you are selling the company. If it is time to sell, let us continue your tradition of excellence. Contact Nicholas at 888 422 7352 ext 1500 or Nicholas@call4health.com.

**New Equipment For Sale:** Voice logging recorders; easily record all conversations – just click and play. Call 574-848-5322 for Record/Play Tek, Inc., www.recordplaytek.com.

**Executive Recruiting:** Premier Executive Search Specialists: Search consultants to most of the top ten service agencies in the US and over 50 of the Fortune 500 companies. Small companies, too. All custom searches using a 25,000 resume file, plus extensive proactive calling. Dedicated tele-sales/customer service searches since 1981 – the first and the best. Contact R. L. Bencin & Associates at 440-526-6726, rlbencin@netzero.net, or www.RLBencin.com.

**Established Answering Service Seeks Acquisition:** Generous terms, a fair price, continue your legacy, retain your staff, and build on your reputation. Confidential. Call Michael Shooster at 800-261-3451.

**Seeking Acquisitions:** We pay cash for your TAS. We, ACCC, have been in business for 21 years. Confidential; call Doris 800-785-9436. References available.

**Seeking Acquisitions:** Reputable TAS, in business since 1967 and still owned by the founding family, seeks a small TAS acquisition in Eastern US. Ideally, you're billing under \$20K per month.


Smaller is better. We'll treat you right, AND your employees and customers. Let's talk. Contact Doug at 888-693-7935 or douganswerphone@gmail.com.

**New Equipment For Sale:** TAS equipment: in-house rental, leases or purchase; affordable for any TAS. Can be used with T1 (PRI) or small ISDN (BRI). Call Ray at 850-571-4521 or visit taseco.com

**Association:** CAM-X, the Canadian Call Management Association, represents telephone answering services across North America. Call Linda Osip at 905-309-0224 or visit www.camx.ca for more information.

**Association:** ATSI, the Association of TeleServices International, "Learning By Association," sharing ideas is what we're all about. Call Charlene at 866-896-ATSI or visit www.atsi.org for more information.

**Identifiers For Sale:** I have two (2) Americom Identifiers, video adapter, and two (2) memory cards for sale. All you need to expand your TAS or start a new location is the telco lines and an inexpensive phone system. Asking \$6,500 or best offer. Call 281-755-0776.

*Getting someone to buy your business isn't that hard...*  
 You want someone who will *advertise*, screen prospective buyers and have them *sign non-disclosures*. You then want them to draft up the "Letter of Intent", act as the Escrow Agent and finally provide YOU with the "Asset Purchase Agreement" all the while protecting YOUR interest. And in between you want *advice* from someone who has done this before... someone who is an *expert in the industry*.  
**You have just read about the services of TAS Marketing!**  
**INTERESTED?**  
 tas@tasmarketing.com  
www.tasmarketing.com  
 A FULL SERVICE BROKERAGE FIRM **800-369 6126**

IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES...



**SZETO TECHNOLOGIES**

**TURN-KEY LINUX BASED TAS SYSTEMS & CALL CENTER SWITCH**

Imagine 22 years of collective ideas & recommendations from tas business owners

+  
 Customized solutions to meet your unique business requirements  
 ...all in one system

**www.szeto.ca 888-421-3737**

**ARE YOU CONSIDERING SELLING?**

Have a confidential conversation with us first  
**TOP MULTIPLES PAID**  
 for both large and small operations

MAP Communications, Inc., is a well known and reputable nationwide call center that is expanding and looking to acquire inbound call centers and answering services for cash. In many cases everything can remain in place including your location, your equipment and most importantly your dedicated employees!

Our Employee-Owned Company strives to be the industry benchmark and we would welcome your business and employees as our newest team members. References from past acquisitions are available upon request.



Please contact: Grant Sibley, CFO  
 (800) 955-9888 gsibley@mapcommunications.com  
 www.mapcommunications.com

## Garage Sale

TAS Trader is providing this "garage sale" listing section to help you find a home for old and obsolete, but still working equipment. This will also free up storage space and keep harmful electronics out of the landfill.

Tadiran PRI-23IPX boards (fits newer IPX 500/800 wall/rack mount chassis). Two available at \$450.00 each. Call Charlie at 215-723-4316.

Amtelco EVE Genesis 7.5 mainframe, 2 Maxtor disk drives, 9 replacement boards for CDU and switch, 4 power supplies, 6 monitors, 5 Amtelco keyboards, Panasonic 1080i printer. Call MDXchange for prices: 915-407-7500.

Tascom Legacy with dual distributors, 12 hard drives at least 3-4 formatted and tested, extra controllers, 2 sets of spares, 2 899's, pc software and 2 gateways, DID Link software, plus lots of extras. \$5k OBO 800-340-4350.

Infinity Voicemail, Amtelco EVE systems and parts, Startel parts, Infinity parts, and Cad Com parts. Call Rick Yocum, RLY Associates, 800-841-0841.

Alphamates (10), Quickpagers (7), Wordsenders (18). \$25 each or best offer plus s&h. All equipment as is. Call Robin Edwards at 804-353-5566 or redwards@helloinc.com.

Glenayre equipment for sale: Paging system GL3000 & GL3960; all functional. New hard drive and 5 full workstations monitor and keyboard. Interested buyers call to discuss pricing; will sell open stock as needed. Call Alert answering service 203-387-8332.

To list your old equipment for sale there is a \$50 onetime fee. If you are willing to give it away, then your ad will be free. Go to [www.tastrader.com/advertise](http://www.tastrader.com/advertise) and place your ad today for our next issue.

Highly Affordable  
**Business Stimulus Package**

**OnviCenter**  
Workforce Optimization & Automation Products

**OnviSource** 800.311.3025  
Connecting People to Business [www.onvisource.com](http://www.onvisource.com)

**TAS Scheduler** 1.866.803.2212  
CALL CENTER EMPLOYEE SCHEDULING MADE EASY

Easy to use! Ask our customers who are using, Pinnacle, Telescan, Amtelco, Startel, Onvisource \$2495.00

Forecast your scheduling needs • Schedules lunches and breaks • Time of Request, Vacation, On/Call • Computer optimization

[www.tasscheduler.com](http://www.tasscheduler.com)

**Your Submissions Make TAS Trader Possible!**  
Please send you TAS news and articles for the next issue of TAS Trader. Email them to [peter@TAStrader.com](mailto:peter@TAStrader.com). The deadline for the June issue is June 4.

## TAS Conference Calendar

### May 11-15, 2010

ATSI Annual Convention and Expo  
Westin GasLamp Quarter, San Diego  
Contact: 866-896-2874 or [www.atsi.org](http://www.atsi.org)

### June 12-17, 2010

STA 8th Annual Conference at Sea Departing New Orleans  
Contact: 763-473-0210 or [www.sta-assoc.org](http://www.sta-assoc.org)

### June 22-24, 2010

WSTA Spring Supervisors Conference  
Hotel Monte Carlo – Las Vegas, NV  
More info: [Dan@CallConsult.net](mailto:Dan@CallConsult.net) or [www.WSTA.biz](http://www.WSTA.biz)

### September 22-24, 2010

TUNe Fall Annual Conference  
AmeriStar Resort & Casino, St Charles, MO  
More info: 763-473-0210, [Dan@CallConsult.net](mailto:Dan@CallConsult.net)  
[www.TUNeGroup.net](http://www.TUNeGroup.net)

### October 3-6, 2010

CAM-X and WSTA Joint Convention  
Hard Rock Hotel in Las Vegas, NV  
For more information, visit [www.camx.ca](http://www.camx.ca) and [www.wsta.biz](http://www.wsta.biz)

### October 11-13, 2010

ASTAA Fall Conference  
Sheraton Baltimore North - Towson MD  
Contact: 763-473-0210 or [www.ASTAA.org](http://www.ASTAA.org)

### October 25-27, 2010

GLTSA Fall Annual Meeting  
Hotel TBA – Chicago, IL  
Contact Dan L'Heureux at 763-473-0210  
[Dan@CallConsult.net](mailto:Dan@CallConsult.net) or [www.GLTSA.org](http://www.GLTSA.org)

### November 7-9, 2010

STA Fall Annual Meeting  
Hotel Monteleone, New Orleans, LA  
More info: 763-473-0210, [Dan@CallConsult.net](mailto:Dan@CallConsult.net)  
or [www.sta-assoc.org](http://www.sta-assoc.org)

## TAS Vendor and Supplier Listing

<b>Alston Tascom, Inc.</b> 866-282-7266, 909-517-3660 <a href="http://www.alstontascom.com">www.alstontascom.com</a>	<b>Startel</b> 800-782-7835 <a href="http://www.Startelcorp.com">www.Startelcorp.com</a>
<b>Amtelco</b> 800-356-9148, 608-838-4194 <a href="http://callcenter.amtelco.com">callcenter.amtelco.com</a>	<b>Szeto Technologies</b> 888-421-3737 <a href="http://www.szeto.ca">www.szeto.ca</a>
<b>MAP Communications</b> 800-955-9888 <a href="mailto:gsibley@mapcommunications.com">gsibley@mapcommunications.com</a>	<b>TAS Marketing</b> 800-369-6126 <a href="http://www.tasmarketing.com">www.tasmarketing.com</a>
<b>OnviSource</b> 800-311-3025 <a href="http://www.onvisource.com">www.onvisource.com</a>	<b>TAS Scheduler</b> 866-803-2212 <a href="http://www.tasscheduler.com">www.tasscheduler.com</a>
<b>Professional Teledata, Inc.</b> 800-344-9944 <a href="http://www.proteledata.com">www.proteledata.com</a>	

**TAStrader**  
[www.TAStrader.com](http://www.TAStrader.com)  
© 2010 by Peter DeHaan Publishing Inc.

**Publisher/Editor:** Peter DeHaan  
866-668-6695 or [peter@TAStrader.com](mailto:peter@TAStrader.com)  
**Advertising:** Valerie Port  
866-668-6694 or [valerie@TAStrader.com](mailto:valerie@TAStrader.com)  
**Layout/Design:** David Margolis  
866-668-6696 or [dave@TAStrader.com](mailto:dave@TAStrader.com)

**Ad and Article Submission Deadline**  
June Issue June 4, 2010  
July Issue July 2, 2010

**Subscriptions:** TAStrader is an advertiser supported publication and is free to individuals in the telephone answering service industry. Subscribe at [www.TAStrader.com](http://www.TAStrader.com)

Notice: Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of TAStrader, Peter DeHaan Publishing Inc, or its agents. The information contained herein is for informational purposes only and is not intended to provide legal, tax, or any other professional advice or counsel. Advertisers and their agents assume all liability for content, including text, representation, and illustration of any advertisement included in this publication as well as for any claims made against the publisher arising therefrom. The publisher reserves the right to reject any ad that is not in keeping with its standards and to add the word "advertisement" to any ad herein. The publisher makes no claims regarding the legality or condition of any goods or services advertised in this publication.