

West's Virtual ACD – A Cost-Effective, Next Generation Business Unit Recovery Solution





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Overview

West's Virtual ACD (VACD) is a unified call management platform which delivers voice and data services to geographically distributed workforces, anywhere in the world. It offers companies a highly flexible, redundant, "always-on" Business Unit Recovery solution at a lower cost than traditional BCP alternatives. In addition, this solution improves workforce quality and increases call-handling capacity without the need for investing in costly "Hotsite" or "Warm-site" facilities or additional infrastructure and operational overhead.

Furthermore, the West VACD allows companies to aggregate multiple business unit resources into a more efficient and coordinated processing entity with integrated network redundancy and complete end-to-end enterprise reporting (both real-time and historical). It provides consolidated call management infrastructure to help companies manage multiple customer call center and/or Business Unit Recovery sites as well as supporting remote or at-home workforces, all in a single solution. As an extension of West's Interactive Voice Response (IVR) platform, the VACD provides fully integrated, state-of-the-art call center and IVR technologies, including speech/TTS, all in a single product rather than through "piece-meal" technology components.

Virtual ACD Features

The Virtual ACD provides clients with not only the unified call delivery platform, but also with the PC desktop, including soft phone functions, along with the tools needed to successfully manage an incident from a Business Unit Recovery perspective. The following is a brief description of the product features provided in this VACD solution:

Unified, Multi-Workforce Call Management

The VACD unifies Business Unit and Contact Center-based staff into a single unified workforce. Regardless of the person's geographical location, or whether they are working individually, in a small group / satellite office, or in a contact center environment, all staff are considered a single resource by the West VACD platform. When a call arrives on the VACD platform, it makes a determination as to the type of service that is needed to process the call. If IVR interaction with the caller is required, the IVR application will be initiated, prior to transferring the caller to the appropriate individual(s). At this point, the full suite of West's IVR capabilities are available including, but not limited to, Advanced Speech Recognition (ASR), Text-to-Speech (TTS), ANI reverse match (name and address lookup), and many others. Once the front-end IVR interaction is completed, the caller is then directed to the person most qualified to process the call, based on client defined business rules. Once the agent is identified, the VACD uses the employee's data address and telephone number (Direct Inward Dial – DID) to direct the voice and data to the appropriate destination. Using this information, the VACD "pops" the appropriate application onto the employee's terminal, sends any required data to the person, and routes the phone call to their telephone number. The employee is now connected to the caller with the correct service application needed to process the call. For reference, an overview of the VACD architecture and general voice / data flow is attached in "EXHIBIT A".

Intelligent Call Routing

The West VACD routes incoming calls to the most qualified person using its intelligent call routing capability, made possible by the Employee Information System (EIS) and the West platform switching capability. West's intelligent call routing is based upon a fully configurable, multi-parameter database, which includes scheduled work times (if applicable), Employee ID / location information, training/certification, skill group, performance data, contact information and site/group allocations. Other parameters, specific to a client's application, can also be integrated into the EIS framework, as needed. While not required for intelligent call routing, the West VACD is also able to integrate with existing client Intelligent Call Management (ICM) infrastructure on both a pre and post route basis.



PC Desktop Environment

A JAVA Employee Desktop Environment (JADE) is also provided with the West VACD solution. This environment is a thin client application that is required at the employee's PC to allow the West VACD platform to identify and authenticate the employee and their PC as a possible termination point. The desktop is configurable and provides four basic functions:

- Employee authentication (ensures secure access to application and backend software and data)
- Soft phone functionality (i.e. login/logout, make available, make busy, hold, transfer, conference, etc.)
- Integration and access to client/3rd party systems within a single, secure, Citrix based desktop environment
- Scripting support for consistent and efficient caller experience and call dispositioning

Client/3rd Party Backend Databases and Data Uploads

The West system is fully capable of integrating with client and/or 3rd party backend databases, as required to allow CTI from those backend databases to the employee desktop. The West platform supports well over 300 such interfaces currently and can support interfaces of any kind, using any transaction layer required including XML, TCP/IP, SNA, MQ, Tuxedo, and others. This function is critical as a part of the BCP process to ensure West has the connectivity required to a company's "mission critical" systems and data, in the event a disaster is declared and the West VACD is utilized to process calls and data transactions. West also supports regular database uploads from our clients in the absence of, or in addition to, a backend real-time interface for data access.

Quality Assurance

West records 100% of all phone calls running through our VACD platform. This allows clients to conduct quality assurance analysis on as few or as many of the agent calls as they wish and ensures that regulatory issues are addressed. Recorded calls are made available to the client within 15 minutes of call completion and are presented via a web based interface that allows clients to query calls, by employee, by department, and/or by date, from anywhere in the world. This web interface not only allows users to listen to phone calls, but also allows them to save and/or e-mail specific calls via a secure URL, as they choose. Voice files are kept online for 30 days then backed up for restore.

Reporting

With the West VACD, the client is provided with consolidated, web based real-time reporting of all agent activity by logical groupings (i.e. by employee group, by department, etc.). The Employee Interaction Center (EIC) real-time reporting tool is updated every second and allows for drill down capability from the company level all the way down to the employee level. The fully configurable tool provides the ability to set service level thresholds, in real-time so that groups/employees crossing those thresholds can be immediately identified. All the data presented in this tool is also available in color coded, graphical format so that the data can be easily monitored at a glance. Finally, the EIC tool provides "drill down" access to recorded calls, by employee, for a specific day. West also provides a VACD Mapper reporting tool that shows employee and caller activity, by geographical location. This gives clients a real-time view of call origination and termination locations, which can be especially effective in a Business Unit Recovery situation.

How Does the West VACD Provide a Superior Virtual Business Unit Recovery Solution?

By nature of the West VACD architecture (see Exhibit A), this product is a perfect fit to support companies from a Business Unit Recovery perspective and is the "Next Generation" of advanced recovery planning. To truly understand the benefits this product can provide an organization from a BCP perspective, it is best to re-visit the business drivers that are motivating organizations to implement Virtual ACD (also known as "Network-Based, On Demand Contact Center") technologies for Business Unit Recovery purposes;



No Geographical Limitations – the West VACD is a “Network-Based” product, allowing for call and data delivery to an employee’s desktop **anywhere in the world**. The only requirement is a PC, an Internet connection (preferably broadband), and a business phone line (with DID number).

On Demand Platform Availability – West’s VACD solution is **always on** and ready to process voice and data transactions. The solution is highly flexible, redundant and convenient. There is no scheduling required for testing the platform. In fact, West strongly encourages testing on a regular basis.

Cap Ex to Op Ex – Companies **pay on a monthly basis** with minimal up-front costs required. This model is very attractive to those companies who have tight controls on cash flow and/or capital expenditures to implement their BCP recovery strategies. Plus, this solution can be implemented in a matter of weeks, not months.

Reduced Overall Support Costs – Companies are provided with “**best in class**” technologies without the on-going operational and maintenance costs of supporting both a primary and a backup BCP facility. In the traditional BCP model, a company will pay anywhere from 10 – 25% of the up-front cost in annual maintenance fees. West continually upgrades the Virtual ACD platform to stay in line with the newest and most reliable technologies at no incremental cost to our clients.

No Activation Fees – There are **no penalties or “activation fees”** charged at the time a company declares a disaster and begins utilizing the Virtual Business Unit Recovery platform. This is extremely beneficial as it doesn’t delay the decision making process if an event occurs. West’s platform runs on 5 world-class, West managed geographically redundant data centers to ensure platform availability and reliability.

Data Availability – West will work with your organization to ensure that any **critical system data is fully accessible** in the event of a disaster. This can be accomplished either by setting up a point-to-point interface between your company’s backend system or by uploading batch files to West’s local databases at regular intervals. With either option, all transactions delivered through our Virtual ACD will have access to this data source.

Highly Competitive Pricing – With the VACD model, **companies pay only for what they use**, or for what they plan to use in the event of an outage or disaster. This model is ideal from the BCP perspective, as companies don’t have to expend large cap ex dollars to implement a critical business unit “Hotsite” solution, yet they have the technology on standby when they need it. No maintenance or platform overhead is required and it can be tested anytime. The table below indicates the pricing elements of the West Virtual Business Unit Recovery solution as compared to other traditional providers in the BCP market:

Pricing Element:	West Virtual Business Unit Recovery Solution	Traditional BCP/DR Provider
Monthly Subscription Fee	YES - minimal compared to traditional solution	YES
Testing Fee	NO - provided usage does not exceed monthly subscription fee	YES - for more than standard contract hours
Declaration Fee	NO	YES
Daily Usage Fee (upon activation)	YES - only for call processing minutes used	YES - per seat, whether processing calls or not
Special Service Fees	YES - unique per client	YES - unique per client



Below are some examples of how West's Virtual Business Unit Recovery Solution can be utilized:

West Fully Managed "Hotsite" Solution

Scenario: Your company determines that a viable brick and mortar in-house or a commercially hosted business unit recovery strategy is too costly and logistically unmanageable. A disaster strikes making it impossible for your staff to manage customer interactions.

Action: West has over 5,500 work at home agents across all 50 states in the U.S. plus an additional 20,000+ registrants on-hand, who can be utilized to support your business. West will train and certify a portion of this remote workforce to support your transaction processing needs, in the event of a disaster. When an incident occurs impacting your primary site's critical functions, notify West, engage our Virtual Business Unit Recovery solution and let our trained work at home agents handle your critical call volumes.

Result: Your company can seamlessly route call traffic to West's remote workforce as well as to any of your employees to ensure minimal impact to critical business functions until your site is fully restored.

Temporary Loss of Critical Business Functions

Scenario: A short term outage (electrical, telecommunications, power supply, HVAC, etc.) impacts your company's processing of critical functions or use of facility, but access to customer data files is not impacted.

Action: Activate the West VACD solution to allow designated employees to work from home or from a short term recovery facility (i.e. satellite facility) within reasonable commuting distance. Pre-established connectivity between the West platform and your company's backend systems/databases allows employees to access the same systems they would access from the primary facility. If the backend system is unavailable, previously loaded batch file updates of critical data to West's platform would allow employees to access this critical data directly from West's platform until the primary facility is restored.

Result: When the outage is over, employees are able to return to the primary facility in a timely manner with minimal disruption to your company's service as well as to the employee's personal lives.

Loss of Facility

Scenario: Due to a localized incident or an area-wide disaster, your company loses access to its Business Unit and/or data processing facilities and requires activation of your business continuity plan.

Action: Activate the West Virtual Business Unit recovery solution and relocate the designated critical employees/functions to their homes or a recovery facility locally or within reasonable commuting distance. Employees can connect through the West Virtual ACD to another data center or "Hotsite" data center, anywhere on the continent to resume processing.

Result: Your employees and customers are not greatly impacted. In many cases, employees would be very reluctant to leave their families and homes for any length of time, especially in an area wide disaster situation. In addition to maintaining employee morale and family stability during stressful times, your company incurs minimal costs for travel, lodging, meals, etc.



High Call Volume Overflow:

Scenario: Your company experiences a large unexpected surge in customer traffic, for an extended period of time (i.e. a Wireless company taking calls during a blackout).

Action: Your company notifies (via e-mail, phone, SMS, or pager) a predetermined list of off-duty or temporary staff members from your organization who can work from home to help take calls during the spike period. These staff members get on-line to process calls during the spike period and then log off when no longer needed.

Result: Your company handles the call spike efficiently and effectively. Employee satisfaction is high as they didn't have to deal with customers who had experienced long queue times. Off duty or temporary staff satisfaction is high because they were able to work extra hours without having to commute to and from the facility. Customer satisfaction is high due to efficient call processing and minimal hold times.

ROI Considerations:

When designing your Business Unit Recovery solution, there are some key ROI factors to consider:

- What are the alternate facilities/brick and mortar costs owned or rented by your organization?
- What costs do you have relating to redundant technology components and integration requirements for both new and existing facilities (ACD, servers, licenses, workstation, and on-going maintenance contracts)?
- What contact center support staff requirements exist in maintaining both existing and backup locations (ACD, systems, desktop, and other maintenance support staff required to maintain "Hotsite" locations)?
- What location/logistic challenges would exist in the event a disaster is declared (Costs of getting the right people to the right places)?
- What are the employee notification/communication requirements for your organization?

These factors and many others all have a cost associated with them, which can add up to millions of dollars for your company. Many, if not all, of these costs could be significantly reduced or, in some cases, avoided completely by implementing a West Virtual Business Unit Recovery solution.

Additional West Business Unit Recovery Solutions

Below is a detailed overview of the other features and functionality that the West Virtual Business Unit Recovery solution provides:

Automated Notifications

West's Automated Notifications product allows for real-time notifications to critical staff and/or customers in the event of a disaster. Notification lists and employee/customer specific messaging can be pre-provisioned within the product to ensure the appropriate message and delivery methods are followed. Each employee eligible (as determined by an administrator) will have at least 5 fully configurable contact options and the system will attempt to contact the employee based on the hierarchy defined by each individual employee and the priority assigned to each contact option. Contact methods include:

- Voice (land line and/or wireless)
- E-mail
- Pager
- SMS (wireless data)



Reservationless Conferencing

With this service, each member of the Business Unit Recovery team will be assigned at least one “standing” conference bridge number. Depending on if the individual is the “Recovery Team Leader” or a member of one of more recovery teams, the employee will be provisioned as either a conference leader or a participant. The assignment of conference numbers is fully configurable by the “Team Leader” or Company Administrator.

Voice Message Board

The message board feature allows companies to post voice messages both internally, to their employees, and externally, to their clients in the event of a disaster or any other situation requiring this type of communication. Two numbers will be assigned to the client for each message board required. One number will allow the company representative(s) to call in and record a voice status message (either for internal Business Unit Recovery staff or for external clients/customers), which will then be posted in real-time. The other number will be for clients/customers to dial in and hear the most recent status on the issue and any other pertinent information related to the recovery effort.

Web Portal

A web based portal allows for single-point of access to all Virtual Business Unit Recovery solution features, tools, and reports. This portal allows companies to get both real-time and historical statistics relating to their incident and associated recovery efforts. An “Executive Dashboard” tool allows companies to adjust feature configurations and initiate specific pre-determined messages based on the outage scenario. It also provides a view into activities that are taking place related to the recovery effort including notification information, message board activity, conferencing activity, Business Unit Recovery staff location, call processing statistics, and much more.

Employee Information System (EIS)

The EIS system is the Business Unit Recovery staff’s provisioning interface and backend staff database. This system allows companies to provision the necessary information relating to all Business Unit Recovery teams. The EIS system includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Employee Name
- Employee ID
- E-mail Address
- Physical Address
- Phone Number(s)
- Wireless Text Message Address (SMS)
- Pager Number / Wireless Pager Address
- Recovery Team Assignment(s) and Escalation Staff

Summary

West’s Virtual Business Unit Recovery Solution powered by our Virtual ACD provides companies with a new and unique option when developing their Business Continuity Plan. West’s state-of-the-art “On Demand” platform availability gives companies a highly flexible, reliable and convenient solution that can reduce overall support costs and eliminate unnecessary capital expenditures.

As an industry leader for over 19 years, West Corporation has earned our reputation by delivering successful outsourced customer contact solutions to many of the nation’s leading companies. West’s solutions have provided companies with a higher level of care, increased revenue and significant cost savings.



EXHIBIT A: High Level West Virtual ACD Business Unit Recovery Architecture

