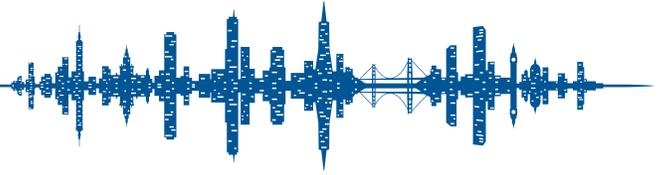


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White Paper Series **Part Three: Decide**  
Making the business case for going wireless

# Cutting the Cord

The Manager's Guide to Wireless  
Voice in the Contact Center

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# Cutting the Cord

## The Manager's Guide to Wireless Voice in the Contact Center

- The upgrade from corded to wireless headsets boils down to a nickel a day.
- Estimating the ROI of wireless headsets includes calculations on productivity, employee retention, additional revenue and customer satisfaction.
- Each organization's individual figures vary, but it is possible to build a business case around the costs and benefits of the upgrade to wireless voice in the contact center.



## OVERVIEW

Now that you've familiarized yourself with the business and technical contexts for Wireless Voice, how do you assess the costs and benefits of deploying it in your own contact center?

These costs and benefits touch on many elements of the business, so to make your case, you must demonstrate the value of the investment to multiple audiences.

- Marketing focuses on the ongoing conversation between the organization and the customer, and the degree of satisfaction that comes out of that conversation.
- Senior management wants to know how the technology leads to gains in productivity and revenue.
- Finance is responsible for cost savings, the service-life of assets and allocation of expenses among cost centers.
- IT is concerned with the deployment of new devices and their maintenance over time.
- Human Resources seeks to avoid ergonomic problems among employees and will be interested in how Wireless Voice reduces stress and strain.

Taken in isolation, the value of Wireless Voice to some of these groups may seem minor, but it is important to that particular group. And, the whole of this value is greater than the sum of the parts, potentially adding up to a compelling overall business case.

[Part One of this series, Discover](#), described the benefits and competitive advantages of using Wireless Voice in the contact center, and [Part Two, Consider](#), provided an overview of the technology. This final part of the series takes you through an assessment of the return on investment (ROI) on bringing Wireless Voice into your own organization. Contact center managers, IT helpdesk leads and customer service supervisors can use the calculations and example dollar figures in this paper – adding or substituting their own organization-specific numbers as appropriate – to make the business case by comparing costs to benefits.



## HOW DO I ASSESS THE COST OF WIRELESS VOICE IN MY CONTACT CENTER?

The case for Wireless Voice revolves around its ROI. To assess the cost of wireless headsets, compare them first against corded headsets, which most contact centers already have in place when they are looking into wireless technology.

### Assumptions

It is always best to present a worst-case business justification to which there can only be upside, rather than an optimistic one which can be readily challenged.

Accordingly, to generate the working assumption we are using figures below based on the full list price of representative models at the time of writing and assuming the need to replace the battery once in every headset's assumed life.

In practice, choosing a specific model may cause costs to be slightly higher or lower; any discounts will, of course, lower costs.

#### Cost of corded headset per year: \$29<sup>1</sup>

Purchase Cost	\$100
÷ Assumed years of life	3.5
= Annual cost of corded	\$29

Corded headsets are cheaper than wireless due to their lack of sophistication, but they are actually more prone to damage and wear because the cord itself is a vulnerable physical component that wireless does not have. Thus, wireless headsets, despite their greater sophistication, are mechanically simpler and typically enjoy a longer lifespan than corded headsets.

<sup>1</sup>All currency given in US Dollars. Prices, salaries, etc. are representative of market figures as of publication date.



A contact center manager can expect that upgrading from corded to wireless headsets will cost approximately a nickel a day.

**Cost of wireless system per year: \$48**

Purchase Cost of system (base + headset)	\$330
+ New headset after 6 years \$180	\$180
+ New batteries during life of system x 2	\$70
= Total	\$580
÷ Assumed years of life	12
= Annual cost of wireless	\$48

Wireless headsets are more expensive than cordless headsets but they last longer. They have no cord and the battery is replaceable. Even if the headset itself needs to be replaced, the base remains in service.

**Cost-delta: 5¢ a day**

Annual cost of wireless	\$48
- Annual cost of corded	\$29
= Delta	\$20
÷ Days per year	365
= Delta per day	\$.05

So, a contact center manager can expect that upgrading from corded to wireless headsets will cost approximately a nickel a day.

We carry this assumption forward in calculating the offsetting benefits of the upgrade to wireless.

**HOW DO I ASSESS THE BENEFITS?**

The benefits of having agents go wireless are of interest not only to the contact center, but also to groups as varied as Human Resources, Marketing, Finance, IT and senior management.

The following models are purely illustrative calculations and are deliberately conservative as previously noted. Readers should apply their own figures, which will vary significantly among organizations.

**Productivity**

Consider the amount of money that an agent costs the contact center per minute, and how many of those minutes the agent could spend being more productive with a wireless headset than with a corded headset.

Base Pay, Contact Center Agent	\$50,000
Loaded Pay (+40% burden, benefits)	\$70,000
Minutes of Work per Year (46 weeks x 5 workdays x 8 hours x 60)	110,400
ROI per minute	12x



Assuming that upgrading to wireless costs a nickel a day per headset, **saving just one minute of one agent's productive time per day immediately represents greater than a 12x ROI**. Assuming several minutes saved, the ROI can be many factors higher.

**Research/consultation** When an agent places a caller on hold to research the answer to a question or consult a colleague, the result is similarly unproductive time. Assuming 10 such calls a day, each involving a 60-second hold – which seems like much longer than 60 seconds to an impatient customer – and wireless headsets turn dead time into 10 productive minutes, for a 130x ROI.

**Stretching** An agent's ability to rise and stretch while on a call can play a big role in job satisfaction, which in turn plays a big role in employee turnover and attitude with customers. Being able to stand up on occasion energizes agents, affords them a change of pace and improves blood flow, which HR tends to regard favorably. With most corded headsets, this kind of pause requires an interruption in the conversation to disconnect, stretch (for, say, 30 seconds) and reconnect. Over six hours, two such interruptions per hour would add up to six minutes, during which the agent is unproductive and the caller is on hold. If connected over wireless, the agent turns that dead time into six productive minutes, a 60x ROI.

### EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Employee turnover is a way of life in the contact center. Agents know that wireless headsets exist, and they are keen to use them, so management's investment in wireless demonstrates that the organization cares about the staff. This sort of statement affects culture and morale, which can affect turnover.

We assume that it takes eight weeks to train a new agent, during which the agent is negligibly productive.

Loaded Pay (from above)	\$70,000
≈ Cost of Employee per Week	\$1,350
x Weeks of Training	8
≈ Cost of Each New Agent's Negligible Productivity during Training	\$10,800

To keep the calculation simple, this does not include the costs to hire and train the agent, which vary greatly among organizations but are significant in the overall ROI picture.



We assume a contact center of 200 agents and 40% attrition per year, with just one percent of agents choosing to stay because of better equipment.

Number of Agents	200
x Rate of Attrition per Year	40%
= Number of Agents Requiring Training per Year	80
Number of Agents Choosing to Stay (200 x assumed 1%)	2
x Savings on Negligible Productivity during Training (\$10,800 per new agent)	\$21,600
÷ Cost to Upgrade All Agents to Wireless Headsets (5¢ per day x 360 days x 200 agents)	\$3,600
ROI (1% increment in employee retention)	6x

Thus, if the wireless work environment contributes to as few as one percent of agents deciding to stay with the organization, then the contact center realizes better than a 6x ongoing ROI, which rises as more agents decide to stay and as the calculation takes into account the costs of on-boarding and training.

### ADDITIONAL REVENUE

Contact center agents who sell and generate revenue introduce yet another nickelnsion to the ROI picture. When these agents are trying to be convincing, they get more energy by standing up and moving about, in a way that is much more difficult when they are tethered to a phone. A motivated agent is a more effective agent, and customers are more likely to feel engaged in a smoothly flowing, uninterrupted conversation.

Consider this agent-revenue model:

Average Revenue Generated per Agent per Year	\$400,000
x Percent of Revenue Increase from Wireless	.5%
= Revenue Increase Attributable to Wireless	\$2000
÷ Cost to Upgrade Agent to Wireless (5¢ per day x 360 days)	\$20
ROI (.5% increase in revenue)	100x

So, with the conservatively low estimate of a one-half of one percent increase in revenue per agent due to wireless, the organization still realizes a 56x ongoing ROI.



The cost-delta between a wireless and a corded headset boils down to a nickel a day.

## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Most companies with sizable contact centers have analyzed customer satisfaction and worked out a way of quantifying it through such criteria as:

- Abandon rate
- Average handle-time (AHT)
- First-call resolution (FCR)
- Average revenue per call
- Caller survey responses
- Average time on hold

These criteria and their relative weights vary greatly from one organization to another, but they nonetheless add up to a ratio similar to productivity, employee retention and revenue. For example, a contact center that identified \$400,000 of additional revenue to greater customer satisfaction and attributed .5% of the increase to wireless headsets could use the agent-revenue model to again estimate ROI of over 100x.

## DESK PHONE PLUS PC CONNECTIVITY

Some contact center agents consume audio over the PC – e.g., for video conferencing, team meetings, self-paced training, second-channel escalations by voice – as well as through their desk phones. This often means duplicating headsets, since the PC-oriented headsets are incompatible with phone equipment, and vice versa, even though they perform the same function.

Additional value lies in eliminating this duplication with a single, more sophisticated wireless system that connects to both PC and desk phone. Depending on configuration, managers may find that the cost to purchase or upgrade to the single system will be lower than the savings realized by duplicating or applying a multipoint-hub corded headset. At the same time, the purchase will streamline agents' communication, reduce desktop clutter, and simplify inventory management, deployment and support.

[Part One of this series, Discover](#), includes other benefits that managers can use in building the business case for wireless headsets in the contact center.



## CONCLUSION

The cost-delta between a wireless and a corded headset boils down to a nickel a day.

The benefits of Wireless Voice in the contact center revolve around gains in productivity, employee retention, additional revenue, customer satisfaction, and the elimination of redundant equipment.

Having discovered and considered wireless headsets, you can use the calculations described in this paper to assess your own potential costs and benefits. If the business case looks promising, your best next step is to contact a trusted vendor or channel partner with the expertise to help you refine your proposal and pursue the case for Wireless Voice in your contact center.

## PAPERS IN THIS SERIES

Part One: Discover

[Use cases, basics and benefits of wireless headsets](#)

Part Two: Consider

[Technical, practical and cultural considerations](#)

**Part Three: Decide**

Making the business case for going wireless

For more in this series, visit our [Contact Center resources on Plantronics.com](#)

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