



Choosing the Right Headset

A call center can spend millions on their new site, switch technology, computers and furniture; but without the right headset to tie the technology to the human interface, a call center will be at a disadvantage from day one.

Choosing the right headset for your organization involves planning and anticipating usage demands. However, the typical feeling is that any headset will do. This usually results when those doing the planning are not the people wearing the headsets.

Most people would never consider buying \$20 speakers to hook up to a \$5000 stereo system. You simply could not get the best results from inferior speakers and your investment would go to waste. Similarly, why spend so much time on optimizing your system and neglect to follow through with quality headsets? You will simply never see the full potential of your system.

When purchasing a headset, address issues such as:

- Ergonomics
- Component testing
- Whether it will be capable of adapting to any environment in your call center. Ensuring that the headset is comfortable, dependable and durable. Check for a sturdy cord and cables. In a typical day it is likely to be dropped, kicked or run over by chairs, or shoved in a drawer,so it must be able to handle the abuse. If the headset is uncomfortable, the user will be constantly adjusting it, which often leads to damage. Some models offer swiveling ear cushions, which may alleviate discomfort.
- Will you require "in-use" lights? These reduce the chance of interruptions form co-workers who do not realize that someone is on the telephone.

Customizing Headset Options to Work for You.

A common concern is how to reduce noise interference at the call center. The caller needs to feel like when they call you they are talking to just one person. One way to address the noise problem is to use a noise-canceling microphone, another way is to use ear cushions. Noise canceling microphones, like that shown on the VXI model at right, are well suited for call centers with a decibel level of 65 or higher - about as loud as a leaf blower or busy street. Many call centers are designed with sound-reducing floor plans, sound dampening material and acoustic designs, and so may not require use of noise canceling headsets. An omni directional, or voice tube-type microphone is less position sensitive, delivering high quality, clear sound even if the boom is not in the optimal position. Although voice tubes should be replaced every six months or so, they are still an economical choice as they are less susceptible to wire damage because of their design.



There are two options for over-the-head headsets, binaural to cover both ears, and monaural to cover one ear. Another is the single, over-the-ear headset. Some feel that the monaural product is better, as it allows agents to hear feedback from supervisors and learn from other agents. For call centers with high turnover, a convertible headset, such as the Plantronics model pictured above, which allows an agent to switch between over the head and over the ear, may be a good choice.

Call center agents should be asked for their input in choosing a headset style. Some will prefer the over-the-head model, while others will prefer the over-the-ear model. Most manufacturers make both. Cordless units, like the GN Netcom



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model shown right, are also becoming available, as are headsets in custom colors. Many of the sales people here at Main Resource use headsets, and it seems they each prefer a different model. If the agents are not consulted, headsets may suffer abuse or repeated attempts to adjust it comfortably, which often leads to damage.

Other Issues to Consider

What happens when the headset you purchased needs repair? It is wise to carefully examine your supplier's repair and replacement policies. Ask about the manufacturer's warranty. All headsets sold by Main Resource include a 2-year warranty. It is also a good idea to have a few extra headsets on hand. To extend the life of your headset, clean or replace the replaceable features such as the foam over the microphone and the earpiece every six months. In time the pieces become dirty and unsanitary and the quality of transmission will be reduced. With proper care, a typical headset will last from two to three years without major problems.

Consider establishing a Headset Service Station in your office. Here, inventory management would be maintained and agents could drop off a damaged headset to be sent out for service. Should you have a problem, Main Resource will advance sip headsets before the problem-units are received.

Main Resource is proud to carry the VXI, Plantronics, and GN Netcom lines of headsets. Please visit our [Headset Website](#) for more information.

Optimize the return on your investment by taking the time needed to find the headset with the options that will work for your company.