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BETTER SELF-SERVICE OPTIONS, TRAINED AGENTS ON THE CARDS IN CONTACT CENTRES

Agent capability the most important factor that impacts customer satisfaction

Johannesburg, South Africa – 22 June 2011 - Consumers around the globe engaging with contact centres can look forward to better self-service options and highly trained agents who will resolve their complex enquiries faster. That's according to research results published in Dimension Data's *2011 Global Contact Centre Benchmarking Report*. Released today, the Report reveals that the top focus for organisations worldwide is on improving their customers' experience.

Of the 546 contact centres surveyed across 66 countries, some 60% of organisations said they placed more importance on the customer experience over cost reduction, with nearly 41% reporting they recognised the value of providing customer choice via multiple self-service channels.

Andrew McNair, Dimension Data's Head of Global Benchmarking says service improvement in contact centres is the top commercial driver across all regions. "Organisations are investing more on recruiting and training agents compared to the results in the 2009 Report - up 50% and 40% respectively on our 2009 results. In addition, spend on motivational and social events grew by 37% over the past two years. As a result, contact centre agents at the front line are being better equipped to deal with complex enquiries," he says and points out that this signals a growing maturity in the global contact centre industry.

The 2011 Report also reveals that 84% of organisations are measuring consumer satisfaction with the contact centre delivery - up from 64% in 2009 - with agent capability to resolve queries being the single most important factor that either improves or deteriorates the impact on customer satisfaction. "Consumers are more comfortable than ever with interactive voice response (IVR) engagement and self-

service options. At the same time, we're seeing more organisations promoting that consumers can speak to a 'live' agent. They're recognising the value of well-trained agents as a key service differentiator."

McNair says efforts to boost self-service process effectiveness are also receiving similar investment leaving much room for optimism as 84% of businesses respond to their current offering as being behind or at best equal to the competition.

"In line with global trends, we expect to see more growth in the number of transaction volumes on the Internet. Web self-service is the most popular and widely provided self-serve channel, ahead of IVR and speech recognition systems, yet still falls 50% short of projected volumes. Contact centres have assumed a wider responsibility and the speed of evolution is presenting a challenge for organisations around measurement, with some contact centres reporting they were unsure of the proportion of consumers using each channel. However, there are still challenges around management of these and other emerging channels where customer satisfaction is currently not yet being measured in a third of those participants polled."

Meanwhile, the results showed increased focus on integrating systems to provide a more consistent customer experience. Over a quarter of web and telephony systems are now integrated to provide more detailed customer profile information.

"We assess an organisation's ability to deliver a consistent customer experience across multiple channels by their ability to have a single view of a customer. This year's results show a 40% increase in the number of businesses that are getting this right, which is good news for customers. Following a transition period we anticipate significant improvements in consumer experience as the effect of better skills, better training and better information take hold," he concludes.

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About Dimension Data

Founded in 1983, Dimension Data plc is an ICT services and solutions provider that uses its technology expertise, global service delivery capability, and entrepreneurial spirit to accelerate the business ambitions of its clients. Dimension Data is a member of the NTT Group. www.dimensiondata.com

About the Global Contact Centre Benchmarking Report

First published in the UK in 1997 by Merchants, Dimension Data's specialist contact centre outsourcing and operations division, this year's edition is the twelfth in a series of the industry-renowned

benchmarking reports. This year's Report has drawn the widest level of participation over 12 years, contains balanced global and industry representation from 546 contact centres located across 66 countries on five continents, and is an invaluable reference for all contact centre professionals. It provides managers with a set of best practice standards and benchmarks, including staffing and training, performance metrics, technology usage, budgets and development plans. The Report is researched and published by Dimension Data and includes a benchmarking portal for use by participants and partners. For more information about the Report, please go to www.dimensiondata.com/microsites/ccbenchmarking