



# On-line Shopping Without Networks: Taobao Cloud Contact Center Project

## Background

Taobao is a Chinese website for on-line shopping, similar to eBay and Amazon. Taobao facilitates Business-to-Customer (B2C) and Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C) retail by providing a platform for businesses and individual entrepreneurs to open online retail stores. By the end of 2011, Taobao had 3.7 million registered users and 8 million different commodities available online. About 60 million users visit the Taobao website each day, and 48,000 commodities are sold each minute. The rapid development of e-commerce and stiff competition between B2C websites, such as Amazon and 360buy, forced Taobao to design a new operational platform. Taobao plans to build a ubiquitous shopping access platform, integrating on-line, TV, mobile phone, and toll-free shopping, which will continue to enhance service capability by building a better communication bridge between sellers and buyers and retaining buyers with repeat-purchase loyalty.

## Key Challenges

The construction of Taobao Cloud Contact Center marks several firsts in the online shopping industry: for example, the first multi-party cooperative operation platform, initial integration with Taobao Mall (Tmall) services, and the industry's largest contact center. The following major challenges had to be considered during the planning phase for the Taobao project:

- **Seamless integration with Tmall system:** Taobao Cloud Contact Center had to be seamlessly integrated with the existing Tmall system to allow Tmall sellers to use a unified voice access code to communicate with buyers.
- **Large-capacity and high-reliability:** Tmall had about 40,000 sellers and planned to increase them to 80,000 agents, which required a large-scale contact center platform featuring high reliability and centralized management.
- **Multi-party co-operative operation:** An open Taobao Cloud Contact Center was required to allow easy integration with multiple Taobao Partners (TPs) and pipe providers.



## Solution

Focusing on Taobao's requirements, Huawei offered an industry-leading cloud contact center solution. In this solution, China Telecom would provide device hosting and basic voice services, Huawei would offer contact center services, and TPs would provide Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems. This solution provides the following Internet communication services for Taobao sellers:

- Toll-free "400" telephone numbers for each seller (similar to "800" numbers used in the United States)
- SMS-based sale models
- Integration with an order system to provide telephone ordering services

Taobao chose Huawei for the following reasons:

- **Software as a Service (SaaS) cloud contact center solution based on cutting-edge web technologies**

At present, Taobao's data center and service platform designs are based on industry-leading cloud technologies. By adopting the most advanced cloud computing and web technologies, Huawei provides Taobao with an SaaS cloud contact center solution, which offers ERP and CRM systems to meet Tmall sellers' on-demand self-service requirements.

- **Fully developed and field-proven Huawei products to ensure large system capacity and high system reliability**

To construct a large-capacity contact center platform, a series of Huawei Universal Access Platform (UAP) products were chosen. UAP products (UAP2100/3300/8100) enable a unified hardware platform, software platform, and service platform. This provides consistent services for customers with different capacity requirements, maximizes resource usage, and ensures long-term and stable operation of the Taobao Cloud Contact Center.

- **Highly compatible platform**

The Huawei-provided cloud contact center is equipped with an open service gateway that allows the cloud contact center to connect to third-party contact centers' specialized components, third-party service systems such as Office Automation (OA) and CRM, and third-party contact center platforms, quickening the response to Tmall user service requirements.

- **Innovative co-operative operation mode**

Taobao partners with TPs and pipe providers; therefore, Huawei proposed an innovative co-operative operation model: China Telecom (pipe provider) provides device hosting and basic voice services, Huawei offers contact center services, and TPs provide ERP and CRM systems. Profits are distributed based on the number of sold agents and sellers' call traffic, which achieves

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## Customer Benefits

The construction of the Taobao Cloud Contact Center brings the following social and economic benefits:

- **Multiple shopping scenarios**

When the Taobao Cloud Contact Center is constructed, each seller will be provided with a voice access number, starting with "400." Buyers can dial the number to order commodities in areas without Internet services.

- **Dynamic scalability and elasticity to meet growing customer requirements**

The hardware platform capacity can be smoothly expanded by inserting service and interface boards into the general service slots. In addition, the Taobao Cloud Contact Center provides massive agent resources and allows Taobao sellers to register and use contact center services at any time and manage these services independently.

- **Cost-effectiveness**

The multi-party co-operative operation model minimizes hardware investment, which cuts construction outlays and lowers maintenance costs. This model achieves a win-win scenario among Huawei, China Telecom, Taobao, and TPs. ■