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Call Center Provider Direct Interactions Creates Home-Based Jobs for Military Families and Americans With Disabilities Using 8x8's Cloud Contact Center Solution

More Than 200 Agents in 25 States Use 8x8 Virtual Contact Center to Provide Customer Support for Tech Companies and City Governments

SAN JOSE, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- 8x8, Inc. (NASDAQ:EGHT), a provider of cloud-based unified communications, contact center and collaboration services, today announced that Direct Interactions, a Seattle-based outsourced call center provider, is utilizing its cloud-based Virtual Contact Center solution to create home-based employment opportunities for disabled veterans and military families.

The idea behind Direct Interactions' socially responsible mission came from co-founder and President Matt Storey. He and his business partner, CEO Jonas Nicholson, had set up a number of offshore call centers in the 1990s and realized the same technology could empower Americans with disabilities and military families by enabling them to work from home.

"I wanted to prove that with the right technology and opportunities, I could compete as a knowledge worker in today's economy," said Tom Gonzalez, seven year veteran of the Navy SEALs. "With Direct Interactions, I am part of team solving problems for customers and setting an example that just because a person had a disability, it doesn't mean we can't excel in the modern workforce."

Direct Interactions' 200 agents work from home, providing customer support for technology companies, city governments and organizations interested in demonstrating their commitment to corporate social responsibility.

Nicholson noted that the company's work-from-home model gives it many competitive advantages. "Because our agents work from home, we can recruit top talent nationwide and be selective about whom we hire," he said. "Another advantage is that our agents stick around longer than the average call center rep. The average turnover rate is around 50 percent, but with our agents it's less than 10 percent."

Over the next three years, Nicholson plans to expand its workforce to 1000 agents nationwide. At the same time, Nicholson hopes other companies will be inspired by Direct Interactions, which has been recognized by the State of Washington and various nonprofits for its efforts in creating jobs for people with disabilities.

"Working from home is a winning trend, and so is hiring people with disabilities," said Nicholson. "We would like to see more companies copy us, and are happy to advise anyone interested in using 8x8 technology to build a more inclusive workforce. 8x8's reliability and superior voice quality make them a great technology partner."

"Profitability is not the only driver behind today's businesses," noted 8x8 CEO Vik Verma. "Being a good corporate citizen is increasingly important to executives, employees, customers and shareholders alike. Using 8x8's cloud-based Virtual Contact Center, companies can remove barriers to employment and create opportunities for disabled and disadvantaged people by allowing them to work almost anywhere."

To support its highly distributed model, Direct Interactions relies on 8x8 Virtual Contact Center technology to centrally route calls to agents' homes without sacrificing call quality. In addition, 8x8 provides online tools that make it easy for agents to manage customer interactions efficiently and deliver a high-quality customer experience.

"One of the biggest challenges of the home agent model is finding ways to help the supervisors monitor customer interactions," said Nicholson. "8x8 provides tools that let them listen to calls, record calls, and run reports so they can tell when agents need more training."

Although many of the company's home-based agents are disabled, they don't require any special equipment to use 8x8 Virtual Contact Center technology.

"Early on, one of our key requirements was that our contact center had to be compatible with a screen reader because many of our agents have visual impairments," said Nicholson. "8x8 was more than accommodating in enabling our agents to use their own technology to read what's on the screen and navigate the contact center functions. Basically, our agents just need a

phone, a computer and a high-speed Internet connection. The rest of our 8x8 contact center is in the cloud."

As contact center experts, Nicholson and his business partner have implemented dozens of "mini" 8x8 contact centers for clients over the years, including CRM integrations. This can take from a few hours to a couple of days, depending on the complexity of the deployment.

"We've integrated 8x8 with Salesforce.com. The advantage of Virtual Contact Center integrating with a CRM is that we reduce the average call-handling time and put account information right at the agent's fingertips," said Nicholson. "Customers appreciate it when the agent doesn't have to spend time looking them up and already knows who they are."

About 8x8, Inc.

8x8, Inc. (NASDAQ:EGHT) is the trusted provider of secure and reliable cloud-based unified communications and virtual contact center solutions to more than 40,000 small, midsize and distributed enterprise organizations operating in over 40 countries across six continents. 8x8's out-of-the-box cloud solutions replace traditional on-premise PBX hardware and software-based systems with a flexible and scalable Software as a Service (SaaS) alternative, encompassing cloud business phone service, contact center solutions, and web conferencing. For additional information, visit www.8x8.com, or www.8x8.com/UK or connect with 8x8 on Google+, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

About Direct Interactions Inc.

Direct Interactions delivers customer interaction solutions that utilize staff that work from home. The "home-sourcing" model is a cost effective alternative to offshore and conventional call centers. Direct Interactions utilizes innovative technology and rewarding business practices to reduce the costs of operations and gain a competitive advantage for our clients. By providing the most worker-friendly environment possible, Direct Interactions is able to attract the highest caliber talent.

Direct Interactions is a proud member of the WSBLN, and the Neurological Vocational Services Unit at Harborview Medical Center and the University of Washington Medical Center. More information is available by contacting Direct Interactions at (866) 773 3622 or visiting www.directinteractions.com.

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