Description: For more than three decades, workforce management (WFM) has been an indispensable tool for contact centers. WFM solutions have a long history and proven track record of delivering productivity improvements, but there has been little in the way of innovation in these products for many years. It looks like 2015 is going to be a turning point for the WFM sector, however. The market is finally waking up, due to new opportunities in back-office operating areas and branches and the ability to more easily deliver the solution to smaller companies via the cloud.

Although early adoption of WFM in the back office and branches has been slow, these parts of the collective enterprise employ millions of workers, and there is significant opportunity for users to leverage the benefits WFM delivers. In addition, the cloud is helping to make WFM functionality accessible to contact centers and operating areas of all sizes, which is expanding the addressable market for these valuable solutions. These factors are combining to initiate an overdue wave of vendor investments and research and development (R&D), which is attracting the attention of enterprises that are eager for improvements to mission-critical WFM applications.

2014 was a strong year for the WFM market, given its maturity, albeit not quite as good as 2013. The WFM sector grew by 11.2%, an increase of 900,556 seats. NICE, Verint and Aspect continue to lead the WFM market with a combined 60% share, but many smaller and emerging competitors are gaining traction notably some hailing from outside of the United States.

WFM solutions are intended to reduce servicing, sales and processing costs through better agent/employee utilization, since agents are the most expensive resource in most enterprises. These solutions provide forecasting capabilities - some are now using new simulation modeling in addition to the traditional algorithms - so organizations can best anticipate the number of agents they need. They also offer scheduling tools, the best of which empower employees to make and change their own schedules (to the extent permitted by management). And now, vendors are innovating and retrofitting their front-office WFM solutions to take advantage of what DMG estimates to be a back-office WFM opportunity that is 2.6 times larger than the contact center sector.

Solutions from larger competitors continue to be the most advanced, but emerging players are seeing growing adoption due to their flexibility, newer functionality and ease of use. Users are clamoring for better, more accurate WFM solutions, and no longer feel tied to their incumbent vendors, since there are so many options available. The entire vendor community - especially the newer competitors - is striving to make WFM solutions more appealing by investing in R&D features to meet back-office and branch needs, as well as improving user interfaces and enhancing omni-channel capabilities.

As has been the case for a few years, prospects can purchase a WFM solution in a variety of ways: as a stand-alone product, as part of a workforce optimization (WFO) suite, or from their automatic call distributor (ACD) vendor. The functionality, price, ease of use and benefits vary greatly. DMG advises buyers to conduct thorough due diligence before choosing a WFM technology provider, specifically studying the detailed differences between solutions designed for the front and back office.

DMG expects WFM revenue to grow by 13% in 2015 and 2016, and 12% in 2017 and 2018. The primary drivers of this growth will be further development of the back-office and branch opportunity, increasing adoption of cloud-based solutions by small and mid-sized businesses, and the replacement cycle of outdated WFM solutions with newer, easier-to-use applications.

The 2015 - 2016 edition of the Contact Center Workforce Management Product and Market Report provides a detailed review of nine leading and contending WFM vendors. The vendors covered in-depth in this Report are: Calabrio, Interactive Intelligence, NICE/IEX, Noble Systems, Teleopti and Verint. Three solutions - inContact, Intradiem and WorkFlex - are covered at a high level.

Report Highlights:
- Growth is strong, and 2015 may be a breakout year: The WFM market grew by 11.2% in 2014, an increase of 900,556 seats. While this is a slower increase than in 2013, it is still a strong showing for a sector that is highly penetrated. 2015 has the potential to see those numbers go up relatively significantly if vendors are able to open up the back-office and branch opportunity, and also take advantage of the upgrade cycle.
- Innovation is coming back to this mature market: Vendors are finally waking up to the importance of making investments in their outdated solutions. End users in front and back-office operating areas are demanding new and improved user interfaces and functionality. Look for investments in the cloud, back office and branch capabilities, and new functionality, like using simulations for forecasting. R&D investments are strong, especially by the smaller emerging players who intend to give the bigger vendors a run for their money.
- Back-office/branch opportunities are invigorating the market: With more than 2.6 times the number of contact center employees, the back-office opportunity represents a significant growth opportunity for the WFM sector. DMG expects WFM revenue to grow by 13% in 2015 and 2016, and 12% in 2017 and 2018. With more small and medium-sized companies investing in cloud-based solutions and many organizations updating WFM applications that have been in place for a decade or more, there is the possibility for growth beyond even these predictions.

Key Reasons to Buy This Report:

- Overview of the enterprise WFM market segments
- Examination of the core, value-added and optional functional components that comprise top WFO suites, including the defining characteristics and capabilities of each module and a high-level comparative analysis of the WFM suite capabilities of the nine featured solution providers
- Review of service delivery options available for WFM solutions, and the advantages and drawbacks of each
- Discussion of new WFM functionality that has recently been introduced and is planned to be delivered in the next 12 - 18 months
- A look at the trends and challenges that are driving investments by enterprises and WFM vendors
- Focus on how WFM is being applied to address the top market, business and servicing trends, including multi-channel WFM and agent engagement and empowerment
- A critique of WFM intra-day management capabilities and the reasons why they are not doing the job
- Review of the challenges involved in accurate forecasting
- Discussion of how real-time adherence capabilities keep staffing levels and agent performance on track
- Analysis of the emerging back-office and branch capabilities of the six featured WFM suite providers
- WFM market activity and market share analysis, adoption rate, and four-year projections for 2015 - 2018
- Review of the WFM competitive landscape
- Company snapshots and product overviews for the six featured WFM vendors, including high-level functional and technical summary
- Analysis of ROI and the benefits enterprises should expect to realize from a successful WFM implementation
- Implementation analysis, including vendor best practices, maintenance and support policies, workshops, training and professional services
- Comprehensive vendor satisfaction survey results that measure and rank vendor approval ratings across 24 product components and 11 vendor categories
- Vendor pricing analysis for 75-, 300- and 500-seat on-premise, cloud-based, and managed service WFM implementations
- In-depth, side-by-side comparative analyses of the key functional and technical capabilities of the six leading and contending WFM vendors covered in detail in this Report
- Company reports for the nine leading and contending vendors, analyzing their products, functionality and future product development plans
- Comprehensive WFM Vendor Directory, featuring contact center and back-office WFM competitors

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