

Why Does This Vendor Turn Clients Away?



Denise Lee Yohn, CONTRIBUTOR

I write about brand leadership. [FULL BIO](#) ✓

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There's nothing normal about **Voxpro**, a customer contact service provider owned by **TELUS International**. For one thing, its offices in Cork, Ireland, look more like a design agency than the cubicle farms that come to mind when picturing a remote contact center.



Image Credit: Miki Barlok

Voxpro attracts Millennial employees by only taking on clients that meet its strict criteria.

For another, Voxpro says its mission is to "deliver beautiful customer experience," which according to its **Chief Commercial Officer Brian Hannon** means that it is focused on appealing to customers' emotional needs rather than rational or practical needs and it is concerned with "how customers define an experience rather than your own view," because beauty is in the eye of the beholder. And then there's how

Voxpro refers to its clients, which include Airbnb, Google, and Nest, as "partners" -- and how it doesn't add these partners to its client roster, but rather it welcomes them into "the network."

Voxpro's most unusual characteristic, though, is its regular practice of turning down potential clients. Voxpro is unapologetically quite particular about the kinds of clients it works for. Hannon explains that "typically, organizations like to attract customers in. We like to screen customers out, as well as attract them in."

Voxpro only takes on clients that meet four criteria: they're scaling their business; they have a propensity to outsource; they have "enough funding to survive other leaders in the market," in Hannon's words; and they have a customer experience (CX) orientation to their business. In fact, on that last point, Voxpro only wants clients who "have a need to be the best in the world at what they do in customer experience," says Hannon. "We don't like to work with companies who just want to be average in that space."

Case in point: [Airbnb](#). Hannon explains that Airbnb is not looking to be a five-star provider; it's looking for "six, seven, eight-star service." So it's a perfect match for Voxpro who is striving to go "well-beyond the levels of normal service." Hannon goes on to say, "We don't want to just have good customer service or great customer service. We want to think about it completely differently, and change the whole realm of customer experience."

Such stringent client requirements might seem like a barrier to growth for a service provider, but they actually produce many advantages for Voxpro. First, they make the company a more attractive employer to contact centers' primary prospective staffers, Millennials, because their performance is evaluated in more positive ways. Clients who are as focused on CX as Voxpro's tend to favor performance measurements such as Net Promoter Score, customer satisfaction, and advocacy over traditional productivity and efficiency metrics. Hannon reports that this is a "huge factor in how [Millennials] make a decision to go with one company or another."

These measurements also make existing employees happier, which produces lower attrition and higher engagement -- and that in turn adds value to Voxpro's clients by improving the company's delivery of more knowledge, greater quality, and better solutions. And clients who benefit from these advantages advocate for Voxpro and refer new clients.

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Voxpro benefits even further because it's found that clients who meet its criteria are also less driven by cost and more likely to fund higher value added services. Moreover, it made the company an attractive acquisition target to TELUS, which subscribes to a similar culture value chain philosophy. So turning away clients actually produces a virtuous upward cycle for Voxpro and explains, at least in part, the company's 70% compound annual growth rate for the last four years.

Voxpro's success illuminates the importance of values and culture alignment throughout a company's ecosystem. While the value of internal alignment within an organization is generally understood by most business leaders, fewer place such a high priority on ensuring that alignment extends to partners, customers, and other external stakeholders. Being willing to tell some customers that "we're not for you" is a particularly critical practice for B2B companies such as Voxpro because their ecosystems are so highly dependent upon people and performance expectations and gaps between people vary widely.

Ultimately Hannon believes Voxpro's approach makes it a more attractive vendor. He describes what happens when potential clients visit his company's locations, saying, "You can feel the culture, you can feel the energy in the environment. It's similar to their own operation. Some of the reason that exists is because these companies are scaling really, really quickly and we ourselves are growing."

Denise Lee Yohn is a brand expert, speaker, and author of [What Great Brands Do](#) and [FUSION: How Integrating Brand and Culture Powers the World's Greatest Companies](#).