



Bridging the Digital Divide



HOW TO GET STARTED WITH
TALK2ONE IN YOUR COMMUNITY



The Social and Economic Benefits of the Talk2One Service

Access to information and the ability to communicate freely should be considered as basic human rights for all Canadians, regardless of their social status or ability to pay. The Talk2One service effectively bridges this “digital divide” by providing its members with a personal voice mail box that cannot be blocked for non-payment, one hour a month of long distance time anywhere in North America and access to locally generated, social-based, information-on-demand.

Research has shown that over 10% of OW (Ontario Works) recipients do not have a reliable phone or point of contact with this figure increasing significantly for the homeless, seniors on a fixed income, the working poor or women and youth at risk. For those on social assistance the cost of a regular phone can be prohibitive, payment can often be sporadic or the need for total security is imperative. By comparison, on top of their regular service fees, Bell charges \$8.95 for a voice mail service and \$.40/minute for long distance calls representing a monthly value to Talk2One members of \$32.95.

At no cost to them, local support agencies now have a one-stop method of making group announcements while case workers can securely reach hard to reach clients avoiding the “churn” experienced when someone gives a relative’s or friend’s number, is transient or completely displaced. Leaving a message on the Talk2One system reverses the role of responsibility as it is now up to the member to pick up their messages rather than the case worker trying to chase them down. If someone on OW does not have a reliable point of contact how can a potential employer reach them? If a group of tenants has been displaced by fire how can support agencies keep in touch with everyone quickly and easily? If someone is illiterate or their first language is not English how can they access social-based information that is easy for them to understand?



The service is easy to use and accessible from *any telephone, any time*, as well as at corporate sponsored Talk2Stations located in underserved areas of the community. Call volume reports and user profiles are generated in real time and with its survey capability; this interactive medium allows members to give direct feedback so their needs can be better served. As part of a cost avoidance strategy, Talk2One offers its members, local support agencies as well as the Regional, Provincial and Federal Governments a tangible SROI (Social Return On Investment).

Not only does the cost effective Talk2One system save time and increase the level of efficiency for support agencies, there are definite economic benefits for the community when a Talk2One member finds a job, secures permanent housing or doesn’t miss their court date. The cost to support a homeless person is estimated by the Government at \$4,583/month; ensuring that someone does not miss their court date could mean a monthly savings of \$3,720 for an adult and \$7,917 for a young offender.

While it is difficult to claim that staying connected to society has a direct affect on a person’s well being, or reduces the financial burden on the community, nevertheless there are many instances of Talk2One members getting jobs, finding housing and keeping in touch with their family and friends which would not have been possible otherwise.



As an interactive medium with survey capability, the Talk2One service is able to reach and respond directly to the needs and demands of its members in Niagara, Durham and the City of Toronto's Streets to Homes initiative. Here is what people have to say about the service:

"I was at the ODSP office yesterday (my youngest son is autistic) – there were several people just outside the building talking – and I realized they were talking about your service. One of them was saying that he was having trouble as he didn't have a phone or a reliable method to communicate and get things done – one of the other people produced one of your cards – and – with about three others – raved about the service – encouraging the fellow to go and apply. Just thought you'd like to know ..."

One of our Talk2One members connected with his sister, who lives in the US, after 32 years of separation. He has no fixed address or phone number but is now communicating with his family on a regular basis.

"My name is Gab and I am a Streets to Homes worker in Toronto. I have recently learned about the Talk 2 One cards and they are a great idea for many of the people for whom I work. I have come across one barrier that is a big one for many of my clients. Most of the young people I work with are only French speaking, so because they cannot understand the menu options when picking up or leaving a message they find it very difficult to use the Talk 2 One cards. I was wondering if Talk 2 One was planning on adding a French component to their messaging system. This would be of great use to many members of our community. Thank you for taking the time to read this email."

(Talk2One has just launched its French service and Spanish will be available shortly)

"Without your services many of our graduates would not have the ability to directly communicate with employers. Many of our graduates have secured interviews and employment offers through the use of TALK2ONE.

(Mr. Les Hambly – ED - Skills for Success Niagara)

A new member needed to communicate with his buddy in Sudbury but had no phone and could not be reached. Within 5 minutes of registering he called him, gave them his measurements for a tux and was the best man at the wedding on the weekend!

"We have now incorporated "Talk 2 One" in our daily operation. As part of our intake, we've added "Talk 2 One" to a checklist of essentials. We believe that the client experiences a sense of independence as they are responsible to check their own messages as opposed to relying on staff at The Hope Centre. Our clients have expressed gratitude and appreciate The Hope Centre's ability to offer them "Talk 2 One". They have been able to utilize the program to their benefit in regards to seeking housing and employment, keeping in touch with case managers from various social services agencies, doctors, and family members. We look forward to the continued partnership between "Talk 2 One" and The Hope Centre as an effective and beneficial program. We congratulate "Talk 2 One" for their continued efforts and ongoing hard work."

Curtis Dignard and Domenic Chininea – HOPE Centre Community Coaches



Getting Started with Talk2One

STEP 1

As a for-profit business, Talk2One does not charge social agencies or members for this service but rather contracts with the Region for system capacity, at a fixed monthly rate, that can be expanded to meet demand. Usually the Department of Community and Social services overseeing the local OW and ODSP programs should be approached however it is possible that several agencies could apply for a collaborative Trillium Fund grant in order to implement the service as an agency driven initiative.

STEP 2

Next we establish what capacity is required which begins at 500 or 1,000 memberships and can be increased in blocks of 250 or 500 according to demand. Larger regions will want to begin with 1,000 memberships. Using the LICO numbers as a basic rule of thumb, in the example illustrated below we arrive at a potential capacity of 3,938 people living below the poverty line with no reliable phone:

- Sample Region CMA population = 561,258 (2006)
- Work persons above 15+ years = 418,835
- 9.4 % below LICO = 39,371
- 10% with no phone = **3,938** - OW stats confirm that 10%+of their clients do not list a phone
- 1,000 capacity X \$4.00 = \$4,000 monthly fixed cost
- Capacity increases in blocks of 500
- Price does not include HST

STEP 3

Based on the capacity estimate we suggest a minimum of 5 agencies for a 500 member capacity or 10 agencies for a 1,000 member service each of which will be asked to issuing 100 cards to potential members. It is important that the participating agencies recognize the labour reduction and increased efficiencies of issuing cards to their hard to serve clients. The registration process is not difficult or time consuming as the new member simply fills in the form, the case worker shows them how to change their PIN and voice message and then faxes the form to Talk2One. There are few administration responsibilities and no "systems" to learn.

To speak to someone using the service on a regular basis please feel free to contact the following:

Toby Druce, Founder, Reframed Technology 647-460-8234
YMCA Employment Services (St.Catharines) - Norm Dent or Jeff Hamilton 905-684-3500
Project Share (Niagara Falls) - Eric Hansen 905-357-5121
Hope Centre (Welland) - Curtis Dignard 905-788-0744

STEP 4

Once a contractual agreement is in place, Talk2One will conduct introduction presentations to selected agencies in order to answer any questions and to establish the content and functionality requirements for each region. Talk2One will prepare a "needs analysis" and implementation schedule and is responsible for distributing membership cards and all data entry. If there is a 211 or 311 service in your area they should also be asked to attend any presentations.

STEP 5

Once a contractual agreement is in place, Talk2One will conduct staff orientation and training for the participating agencies and distribute registration forms and marketing material as needed. Support is available during business hours by calling our toll free number. 1-866-700-1666.



About Us

Premise: Access to information and the ability to communicate at will are basic human rights.

Mission: To ensure that no Canadian citizen is denied the right to stay connected to social services agencies, employment and housing opportunities, community-based information and to family and friends regardless of their social status, literacy / language skills or ability to pay.

Goals and Objectives:

- Provide people at risk with basic voice mail, long distance and access to social-based information that will assist in their quest to become self reliant.
- To reduce staff workloads and costs in trying to reach and stay connected to hard-to-serve clients.

Overview: Talk2One is a social-based business providing information management solutions by way of the universal network of the telephone to Government and not-for-profit organizations helping those in need and at risk in the community.

• History to Date

Fully operational for one year, having processed 77,231 calls in that time period, the proprietary operating system has proven robust and problem free. Working with over 50 Niagara, Durham and Toronto social agencies serving the homeless as well as those on social assistance or at risk; many members are finding jobs, housing opportunities and reconnecting to the community.

• Security

The system is completely secure and cannot be access by anyone other than the member. Fully PIN protected, the system uses proprietary software and operates over a fully redundant, national server.

• Homeless and hard to serve

While the service is for all members of the community needing social assistance, our primary target audience is the hard-to-serve community particularly those that are homeless, transient or infirmed.

• Community Host

Registration for this service only takes place at a participating social agency. As such we are seeking the support of key agencies in any Region including a "host" agency to provide guidance and local knowledge.

• Contact

Talk2One Ltd.

129 Church St.
St.Catharines, ON
L2R 3E2

905-346-4646

Toll Free – 1-866-700-1666

David Robertson - Ex. 222 Rick Tarajos - Ex. 225 Bertha Power - Ex. 221

www.talk2one.net



Member services

- **Voice Mail**

Members receive a secure voice mail box that can never be cut off due to non-payment. Accessible from any phone at any time, the member number is permanent and can always be reactivated if expired.

- **Long Distance**

Each month members receive one hour of long distance time to call anywhere in North America. Extra time is available upon request including bonus minutes which are awarded from time to time.

- **Information-on-demand**

Both dynamic and static information is available on local support agencies including announcements for special events, FAQs, legal and general information.

- **Live operator break out**

Members may speak directly to a 211 certified information and referral specialist, access a toll free numbers or contact someone at a local agency at any time.

- **Alerts**

Group announcements can be broadcast to all members including emergency and medical announcements as well as the steps to be taken or options available.

- **Opportunities**

Reach members waiting for housing, looking for a job or needing sustained re-enforcement to support those dealing with anger, addictions or personal crisis.

- **Automatic Call back**

Members may make multiple calls without hanging up. No need to write down the number or pay fifty cents for another call if they are using a public phone booth.

- **Outcomes based training**

Under development are a series of measurable training programs to provide support with financial literacy, self-improvement, nutrition, hygiene, including legal advice.

- **Language and literacy**

The system serves the needs of those with literacy issues and provides multiple language services for those whose first language is not English (French now available Spanish services under development)



Agency services

- **One stop service**

Support agencies now have a one-stop method of providing information and keeping in touch with their clients with just a phone call.

- **No costs, no software and little training**

There is no direct cost to the agencies or members. Participating agencies do not require any software or equipment, training is minimal and support is available on line.

- **Simple registration**

It only takes a minute to have the client fill in the registration form, the agency keeps the original and simply faxes in the completed form to Talk2One for processing. There is no administration or maintenance required other than helping the member change their PIN and record a greeting.

- **Reduce “churn”**

Every extra phone call trying to reach someone that cannot be reached costs money and wastes time. Using the Talk2One service as the common communication link ensures that messages will always be delivered.

- **Reverses the burden of responsibility**

The case workers’ responsibility ends with leaving a message and not chasing people down. Once a message is left it is up to the member to act on it.

- **Survey enabled - “Voice of the Poor”**

As an interactive medium, the Talk2One survey process allows members to give input and express their concerns enabling improved services to suit the needs of the community.

Training and support

Talk2One will ensure that all staff is trained and supported. After an initial orientation and training seminar, support is available via telephone and on our web site.

- Access to client database
- Web-based training and support
- Regular scheduled “webinars”
- Facebook link
- Call activity reports
- Marketing and support material available on web site



Government services

- **Region-centric implementation**

Each region is assessed using the local LICO numbers as a rough guideline to establish the overall capacity required. The Region, at its own discretion, is free to decide at what level to begin and can add to the capacity as demand increases.

- **No risk or development fees – expands on demand**

Talk2One has taken the risk of developing and refining the service which can be expanded as demand increases based on blocks of capacity. Prices are fixed with no variables to deal with. Depending on the LICO numbers, Regions may take blocks of 500 or 1,000 capacity to start and add further blocks of 500 as demand dictates.

- **Pool of Capacity – fixed costs**

Rather than charging by individual membership, which can vary from month to month, Talk2One's rates are set based on line capacity or the number of people that can access the system simultaneously over a fixed time period. It is expected that people will be exiting the system once they are stable thus leaving room for others to use the service.

- **Fully measurable results**

All activity in the system is measurable including call volumes, client profiles, member surveys identifying trends and demands from the membership. This kind of proof of performance helps justify the service and allows for changes to be made to meet changing conditions.

- **Tangible method of fighting poverty**

Many ideas have been suggested and tried as ways to reduce poverty. While not the silver bullet everyone is looking for, the Talk2One service does offer a tangible and measurable tool to fight poverty.

- **Universal applications including rural and remote communities**

Talk2One services can be set anywhere there are telephone connections available. This fully redundant system has a national footprint and operates using the same platform as the major Telcos.

- **Does not link to any Government database**

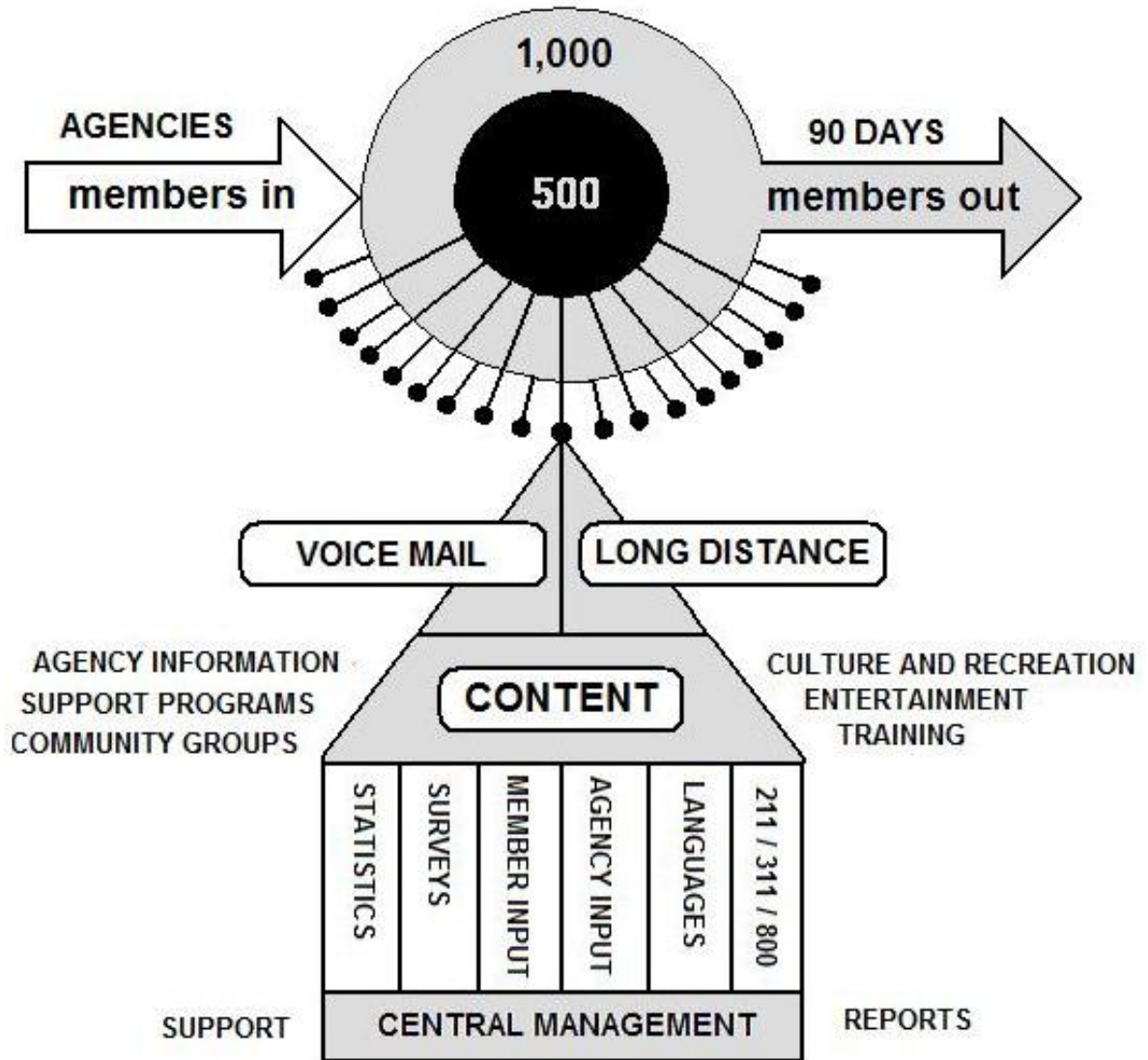
The Talk2One system does not require access to any existing Government or agency data base. Statistical data can be sent to Government departments and agencies on a monthly basis upon request.

- **Commercial General Liability Insurance**

The Talk2One service is covered by \$2M in general liability insurance protection and \$2M in Errors and Omissions insurance for each Region.

CAPACITY POOL

1,000 @ 5% = 50 lines req'd



Vertical applications

John Howard

Talk2One presented its services at the John Howard Society of Ontario AGM in which the benefits to persons just released back into society were clearly recognized. As a form of endorsement, the John Howard Society has asked us to work with their branches wherever the Talk2One service is available. We have also approached the Ministry of Community Safety and Corrections with a proposal for a Managed Assimilation Program (MAP) which provides basic communication links for ex-detainees and is under review at this time.

Red Cross

In emergency situations where someone is displaced due to fire, flood or other natural disaster, temporary membership cards can be distributed quickly and easily to the victims. This service allows everyone to access information about changing conditions and provides group and individual voice messaging.

Women and Children at risk

The Talk2One service is ideal for communicating with case workers and support groups when security is essential. Fully secure and untraceable, women and children at risk may use this service to understand their rights, take action that is positive but discreet and keep in touch with family and friends.

Talk2Station



The Talk2Station represents the final mile solution for anyone who cannot afford a phone call. Accessible 24/7 in underserved areas of the community, these highly visible stations are supported by paid advertising rather than a charitable donation. Once 100 members are registered in an area, Talk2One will seek the support of three local businesses to sponsor the stations on a two year contract at the rate of \$1,000/year.