

Hotline Committee Report to Board of Trustees

Members of the committee past + present

Benni F (member until 1/11/11), Chuck B, David M, Doug E, Gary S (until 7/19/11), Irwin S, Jim H, Matt C (until 12/29/10), Michelle J, Paul S, Richard C, Roger L, Sharon W

National Hotline System Requirements

1. The Hotline should have a single number to dial and give the caller the option to be directed to another area if needed
2. Caller should be able to speak to a live volunteer 24/7
3. This number should be able for anyone to speak to a live volunteer outside of their local area by rolling to the next closest area after all volunteers in the specified time slots have attempted to be contacted
4. The options should be universal in all areas
5. Gamblers Anonymous should own the exclusive rights to this national hotline number and should be utilized in reference on all GA printed & communicative advisory areas
6. Uniform pricing structure on a per minute basis with accommodations for areas with special needs

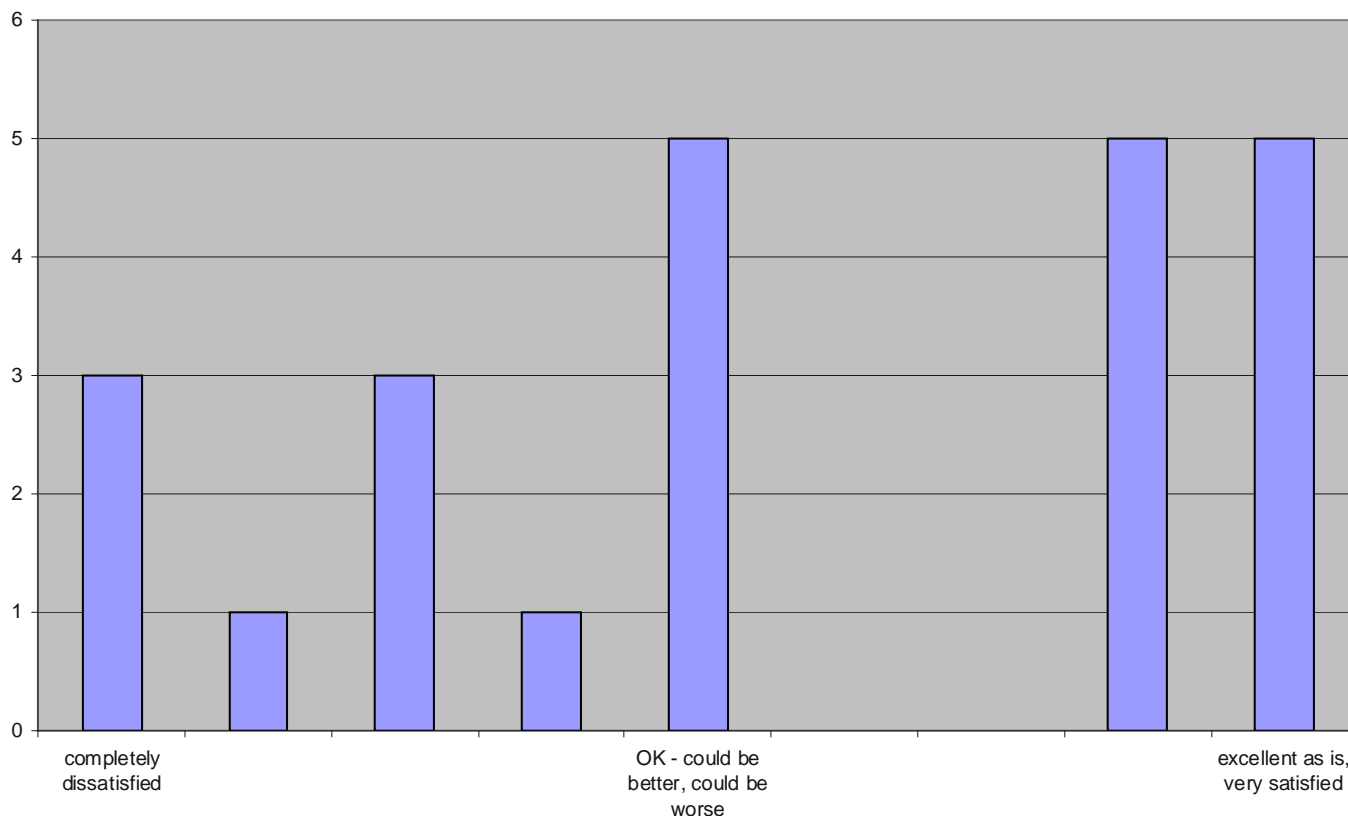
Hotline coordinator survey results

30 areas responded, 23 of which are using Erlang as their current vendor, 7 of which are not

Satisfaction with Erlang

Satisfaction ratings for Erlang was divided. Erlang received an average rating of 5.6 out of 9. the ratings along with the comments show that opinion is strongly and decidedly mixed regarding satisfaction with Erlang.

Erlang Rated 5.6 / 9

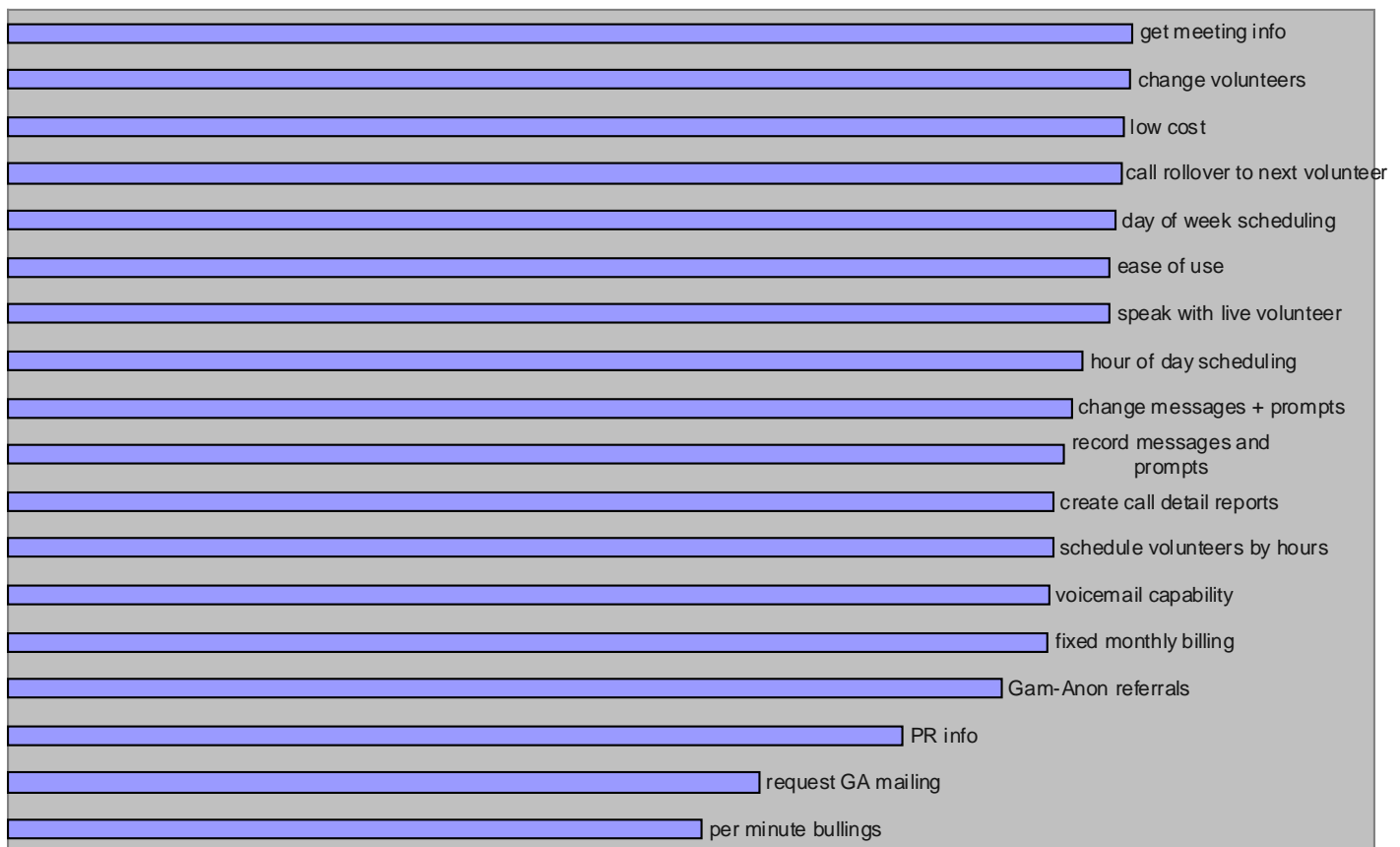


Comments on satisfaction with Erlang

1. Service response time is slow if at all Service far too expensive (\$100 per month) for about 20 calls Service has glitches and sometimes hotline calls go through to volunteer voicemail, which is not supposed to happen
2. system works well. more flexible reporting would help, letting users filter data and create reports.
3. System works fine 95% of the time. Missing features like temporarily disabling a meeting or putting a message out for a meeting. Customer support is abysmal.
4. Cannot reach anyone when have problems or need update.
5. Went live in 2007 and received first invoice from Erlang in June 2010, despite asking repeatedly for invoice since March 2010 when I took over as hotline coordinator. Trouble getting information from Erlang at different times when needed assistance with modifying meetings or logging into system (either online or back end thru phone number). We seem to get calls from all over the U.S. and not just our area. Reports are antiquated and difficult to determine total number of calls that came in vs. number of calls received. (Understand use the 1.0 minute from the volunteer call to determine if call was received, but definitely not user friendly.) Didn't realize that changing meeting location on webpage had no impact on what caller heard when calling in so not sure what the point of meeting information on webpage.
6. Our hotline is efficient and well run; no real issues in terms of maintenance. Our main concern would be caller wait time due to lack of active volunteers.
7. Many calls dropped. Some people taking calls have never received a call so the hotline is bypassing them somehow.
8. Volunteers are automatically logged on and off. Calls are automatically distributed. We have the ability to have many main back up volunteers to cover all shifts and times. For instance as the help line chair I am the 24/7 back up person to all volunteers but I can add anyone and as many as we wish to do the same. The reports are very simple and basic and while I would like more sophistication and details, they are more than adequate for what we are doing. I can track and watch the help line from my laptop or cell phone. We am very satisfied with the sole exception that we don't understand the pricing system. We believe we are paying a fair price but it is very hard to determine for certain.
9. I have been involved with the hotline from the beginning and have so many problems with Erlang which include: No response to issues, impossible to get sign-on for new committee people, and getting information. Thank goodness, I haven't had an issue for the past year to have to contact them.
10. As far as the hotline itself, it works great and calls are getting through. Unfortunately our provider has dropped off the face of the earth for the last 9 months and doesn't return calls or emails.
11. When i called the hot line i was put in contact with a person with in 1 minute. I was very pleased and it worked great for me.
12. currently being reviewed; may be changed
13. It serves the purpose, all though all calls come through to Indianapolis GA people because no other cities are taking hotline calls.
14. We have been with Erlang for over 7 years, of which 5+ of those years I have been the Administrative coordinator. I have always had prompt service with Steve Zimmers and our area is extremely pleased with the ease of the database scheduling, the notification for messages left for the Administrator, and overall ease of making changes to agents and meetings, by phone or by computer. I would highly recommend the services of Erlang for any area's hotline.
15. I have only had one complaint about the wait time, all in all things seems to go pretty smoothly
16. I havent had any major problems, however if I do have problems it could take some time for a return call. Nobody ever answers, strickly a voicemail based customer service company. In fact, I spoek to Steve and said I would like to visit the office where this system is mounted, and he always has an excuse that he will be out of town on that day. It appears as though its a basement ran business.
17. We are very pleased with Erlang Communications, Inc, Steve has always been very supportive in every situation we have needed help!

Feature importance as ranked by 30 areas

most important: meeting info, changing volunteers, low cost



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Open-ended survey comments

1. I've only been responsible for the hotline in our area for the past 17 or 18 months. During that time contact with Erlang has been a challenge. I've attempted to email and call, only to be ignored. I am a fairly computer literate person, but find the reports a challenge to read and interpret. I would like to see some clear direction from the Hotline Committee after the upcoming national conference. I like the idea of a national hotline for the entire country, but clearly what we have now doesn't seem to be working.
2. The hotline is efficient and well maintained; the website, however, is a completely different issue....
3. The functionality of Erlang has been good. The cost has been \$300/month for San Diego. We believe the rate should be <\$100 based on a cursory analysis of other vendors. Erlang was asked to reduce our rate to \$125 but did not respond.
4. I have been very satisfied so far and have had any questions answered by e-mail or phone. The system was much easier to use than I anticipated when I took over as Help Line Chair for our area. If you are able to change carriers, provide better customer service, a better price and more features and with the simplicity of use that we have now we are all for it. The rollover, automated log on and off and 24/7 back up are essential to my managing the help line and volunteers.
5. It would be good if we could provide additional meeting information on the meeting list...Gam-anon, open, closed, additional meeting location at site.
6. I realize this is an anonymity program, however to not have at least some kind of contact information for area meetings leaves the Hotline Program severely handicapped in getting services to people looking for meetings and accuracy of the meeting locations. We receive calls for the entire state of Indiana and there is nothing in place to be able to periodically check that

Meetings still exist. I believe that what is on the ISO website and meetings listed must be accurate to the best degree. We have had people call the hotline, and information given to them on the GA meetings available has been incorrect. People are showing up at meetings that are no longer in existence. ISO and Hotline Co-Ordinator can not remove meetings no longer available if there is no way to know about meeting changes. I believe the Reputation and Credibility of GA is at risk.

7. We thought of joining the Hotline but language barrier would be a problem. Our clientele is mainly French speaking people

Vendor selection process

On our first call as a committee on 12/15/10 there was an open call for volunteers for the Vendor Selection Subcommittee (VSS). Bill W, Chuck B, David M, Jim H and Paul S volunteered to serve on the VSS. The VSS was tasked with the groundwork of researching, analyzing and narrowing the list of potential vendors for the Hotline. As part of its work the VSS digested and analysed countless pages of research, requested proposals and created comparisons with potential vendors including Erlang. The VSS reported regularly to the Hotline Committee at large regarding their work and the Hotline Committee as a whole voted before any actions were taken.

Hotline Committee findings

1. RingCentral meets or exceeds 5 of the 6 requirements (making the uniform per minute requirement moot by pricing so competitively) while Erlang fails to meet 5 of the 6 requirements for our National Hotline Service
2. Current vendor has control of the current number and will not release it to the Board of Trustees--this is despite being paid \$38,400 to set up the system
3. 28 Hotline Zones in 25 Areas are collectively paying about \$34,400 a year to the current vendor (additional areas did not respond to this question). the current vendor has broken up Area 11 into 4 Hotline Zones that are paying a total of \$360
 - a. Erlang has broken up Area 11 into 4 Hotline Zones that are paying a total of \$360
 - b. two Areas, 2K Calgary and 10 OH/Western PA, have not been asked to make payments to the current vendor until recently
 - c. the current vendor has recently begun to solicit payments from additional areas (\$1,100 for 22 months of service at \$50 per month from Area 2K)
 - d. current vendor has collected approximately \$200,000 from ISO and GA Areas collectively since December 2006
4. Opinion is strongly divided regarding both the level and quality of technical and customer support
5. Erlang is a one-man shop with no contingency plans, continuity plans and minimal redundancy
6. Many superior alternatives to the current vendor exist

Pros/Cons for Erlang

Pros	Cons
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Familiarity, 28 Hotline zones in 25 areas have worked with them 2. Easy scheduling 3. Predictable bill amounts (except Area 12) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highest charge to own Hotline number, \$18,000 plus additional requirements vs no cost for all others 2. Highest cost of all vendors considered by as much as \$33,000 per year 3. No per minute billing 4. Uneven customer and technical support, good for some regions, terrible for others 5. Lack of service depth, no apparent redundancy or survivability plans 6. Fragmentation of some Areas into smaller Hotline regions, resulting in additional cost and complexity

Pros/Cons for RingCentral

Pros	Cons
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Very inexpensive, annual savings of \$24,000 - \$33,000 over current vendor2. No setup cost--with referral bonuses, setup cost is actually negative (ie ISO will get 1 month of free service for every 4 Hotline Zones that enroll)3. Opportunity for Hotline regions & Areas to cooperate by creating Hotline Zones4. Easy contract terms, month-to-month with annual prepayment option and options for 1,000 minutes per month or unlimited monthly usage5. Excellent technical and customer support, 24/7 availability for both6. Easy to record and change prompts and messages7. Excellent reporting capabilities8. Feature-rich (Zone rollover, simultaneous ringing, voicemail. . .)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Scheduling algorithm is different from current vendor and not as intuitive to program or change2. Requires separate account for ISO3. Credit card billing only, no checks4. No per minute billing5. System complexity

Motion for Consideration by the Board of Trustees from the Hotline Committee

Implement a new National Hotline for Gamblers Anonymous utilizing RingCentral as the vendor, with a single number under the complete control of the Fellowship. A new Hotline Implementation Committee will be formed to support the rollout of the new number and service.

Hotline Committee Recommendation

Migrate to a new number controlled by Gamblers Anonymous and service with RingCentral over next 6 months, in two stages

New Hotline Implementation plan

Stage 1, November 2011 - February 2012

1. All areas to immediately back up volunteer data
2. November 2011 - produce training materials, Areas to volunteer for migrating in Stage 1
3. Migrate 8 Areas: 3A (San Diego), 8A (MN), 8B (Chicago), 12 (NJ), 14 (Long Island, NY), 15 (NYC), 16 (Upstate NY), 17 (CT) and other Areas that volunteer. Areas 12, 14, 15, 16 + 17 will comprise the New England Zone. Training to be done via web and teleconference (already successfully trialed)
4. Areas 3A, 8A and 8B to serve as Zone Pioneers to help in stage 2
5. support and training materials revised and updated for Stage 2

Stage 2, March 2012 - May 2012

1. Current number removed from all GA printed materials as of February 1
2. Organized around zone pioneers
3. Hotline Implementation Committee to update Board of Trustees at spring meeting in Boston