

## Virtual Call Center

**W**hen the C.O.P.D. Information Line was created in 2007, the COPD Foundation had no idea its philosophy and operating model were going to be emulated. Just a group of friends—a group that’s growing—who wanted to volunteer to help others go through what they’ve experienced. They did this because they felt it was the right thing to do. They felt the responsibility of being active in the COPD community so they could not stand back if they could help just a few. And they did this without any reward in mind.

“When you are blessed to have workers who are not only passionate about their cause, but the work it involves, how can you not succeed?” says Bill Clark, Director of Outreach Programs for the COPD Foundation. “Our associates are motivated, educated and empowered, and above all, they have a strong desire to reach out to others.”

Recently, a group of private citizens in Florida came together to create an organization dedicated to improving the lives of disabled veterans and other disabled Americans.

Virtual Training Systems (VTS) is a not-for-profit organization based in Miami, Florida that was created to address this very need. Linda Walsh, President and CEO of VTS founded the organization in an effort to support the disabled community.

“Imagine having the absolute need and desire to return to the workforce, but you lack specific skills to apply for a job. These individuals want to be productive, but they don’t know how. The online training that VTS provides boosts the confidence of our candidates and prepares them to go back to work with the necessary skills to support themselves and their families,” says Walsh.

The positive impact of VTS on the lives of disabled individuals is best described by Edna Lopez, Esq., Chairman of the Board of VTS: “Our training gives them the confidence to pursue productive jobs with the knowledge that they can add tremendous value to a company’s bottom line. Today’s economic environment is pushing companies to look for significant ways to improve their profitability. Disabled individuals need to know that they can be a

key driver of this improvement.”

VTS was organized exclusively to provide these free online training skills to disabled and economically disadvantaged Americans nationwide. The COPD Foundation is a founding charity of VTS because the VTS story began with the C.O.P.D. Information Line.

Due to the success of the C.O.P.D. Information Line, the initial educational program for VTS was an e-learning job skills platform offering call center agent training powered by industry leader Knowlagent—an on-demand call center solution software for hiring, communications, training, and coaching, used by some of the largest third-party call centers in the world. The VTS call center agent training provides basic customer service and sales training that will qualify the candidates for a contact center support professional position.

Walsh takes no salary, as she feels compelled to donate her time to this worthy cause. “It is our duty to give of ourselves in some philanthropic capacity. There is nothing more rewarding than to know that you have helped someone achieve a goal that they so richly deserve and I am grateful to be able to help.” For more information about VTS, visit [www.vtsystems.org](http://www.vtsystems.org). ■

The C.O.P.D. Information Line volunteer associates feel rewarded by the service they provide to their community; help us by volunteering!

If you ...

- Are a present or former caregiver for an individual with COPD,
- Have a high-speed Internet connection and Windows XP, and
- Can volunteer to offer help to other COPDers a few hours each week,

call the C.O.P.D. Information Line at 1-866-316-COPD (2673) to find out how you can become a volunteer. Make a difference in the COPD community!