

CX **MARKET GUIDE**

2022

Essential Insights for
Tech Professionals

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It's Time for CX to Take Center Stage

“CX becomes crucial for brands to survive, and to avoid disintermediation, irrelevancy, blandness, and/or cluelessness about customer sentiment.”

Every year, various CX publications, analysts, and vendors release articles listing an assortment of predictions for the year ahead. The most striking? In 2022, Forrester takes the prize for this headline-stealing statement.

Yet not every brand that claims to buy into CX will survive. After all, it is one thing to have created an ageing customer journey map - which lies still gathering dust - it is another to actively engage in customer experience management and supercharge customer sentiment.

Delivering on a strategy that achieves precisely that is challenging. Indeed, there are many subsets of CX to get to grips with. Nevertheless, as we approach a critical era for CX, it becomes ever more essential for brands to understand these and how they are evolving.

A Critical Era for Customer Experience

The first phase of CX getting its foot into the door of company conversations is coming to its climax; most brands now claim to be “experience-driven”.

Unfortunately, this phase was far from seamless, and the field still has its doubters. Failed initiatives – stemming from big technology-led ideas – often came in over-budget, delayed, and simmered down to a half-baked version of the original intent.

Of course, there are many success stories. Yet, big buck initiatives that fail to meet lofty expectations are no rarity, underlining the unfortunate truth that execution remains the most significant blocker to CX success.

CX can no longer be led by external agencies creating customer journey maps with little consultation with business departments. Strategies must become operationally useful, driving a cross-functional culture and focus.

Yes, the pandemic played its part in causing companies to rush transformation projects. But, deeper cross-functional collaboration, mutual priorities, metrics, and focuses, alongside an evolving c-suite mentality, must now take precedent.

Companies that achieve this may well take a step forward from the competition in an increasingly experience-driven reality, where gaining an edge is critical.

Staring Further Into the CX Crystal Ball

Alongside the increasing need for collaborative CX, many more trends are shaping the future of the field. Indeed, evolutions in technologies, journey optimization techniques, and digital engagement are coming increasingly to the fore.

Staying on top of each of the ripples in the CX ocean is a herculean task. However, particular developments – like the recent rise of hyper-personalization – will gain momentum and develop into immense waves that turn the tide of business strategy.

Fortunately, our industry experts keep their fingers on the pulse, constantly assessing the current state of essential CX subsets, including the contact centre, CRM, feedback and much more.

We have packaged their fascinating insights into one convenient market guide, pinpointing critical shifts in CX thinking across each of these exciting areas and more. Alongside our CX Awards and CX Summit, this guide goes beyond tips and titbits to provide powerful information to revitalize your CX strategy and propel CX world of tomorrow.

We are thrilled to share it with you!



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Customer Experience

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CX, or Customer Experience, is one of the most important considerations for any business in today's customer-obsessed world.

Identified as the top strategic priority for emerging and growing brands, "CX" is an umbrella term encompassing everything you do to engage, support, and satisfy the needs of your target audience.

As customer expectations continue to evolve, companies have grown increasingly reliant on a range of tools to help them navigate the CX landscape. Today's CX strategies can include everything from helpdesk software and live chat tools to CRM systems for tracking relationships from one end of the customer journey to the other.

The Trends Shaping CX in 2022

As the understanding of customers and their needs in a changing marketplace continues to evolve, the CX landscape is transforming with it. The CX management market is currently growing at a rate of 15.3% per year, as companies invest more



time and money into tools capable of eliminating bad customer experience and ensuring brand loyalty.

Many of the trends shaping the CX environment in 2022 have been accelerated by the pandemic, and a shift to a more digitally-focused relationship between brands and consumers. Some of the most significant opportunities we're seeing right now include:

- **The Rise of CCaaS:**

Now more than ever, companies are realizing how important it is to have the right CX tools available to users in the cloud. Customer service teams and agents need to be able to deliver meaningful interactions wherever they are, across multiple channels, without disruption. CCaaS solutions allow for this end-to-end omnichannel experience, while empowering hybrid teams to work from anywhere. The cloud-based environment also opens the door for quick access to new innovations, from self-service tools to AI and back-end collaboration tools for agent experience.

- **Hyper-personalisation:**

Companies are now capable of collecting more data about the customer journey than ever before. With natural language processing tools, sentiment analysis, and extensive insights from intelligent tools, customers expect their favourite brands to use the information they collect to deliver hyper-personalised, meaningful experiences. To survive in this landscape, companies will need to ensure they not only have the right aligned environments for tracking customer interactions, but the tools required to extract insights from the vast amounts of data they deal with each day.

- **Immersive customer experience:**

New channels for customer interaction are emerging almost at a consistent pace in today's digital landscape. The days of voice-only customer service are gone, replaced with everything from live chat and SMS messaging to video conversations. As XR technology and 5G connections become increasingly commonplace, there will also be an opportunity for "immersive" customer experiences. In the future, enhanced CX experiences will include everything from virtual reality demonstrations to AR-enhanced customer service.

CX Tomorrow: Looking Ahead

Strong customer experience has long been an important factor determining which businesses survive and thrive in a competitive world. Moving forward, companies will need to work harder than ever to bridge the gap between their customers' expectations, and the experiences they can provide. Fortunately, the right technology can make a huge difference when it comes to connecting the dots.

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We Make CX Work



Genefa Murphy
Chief Marketing Officer
Five9

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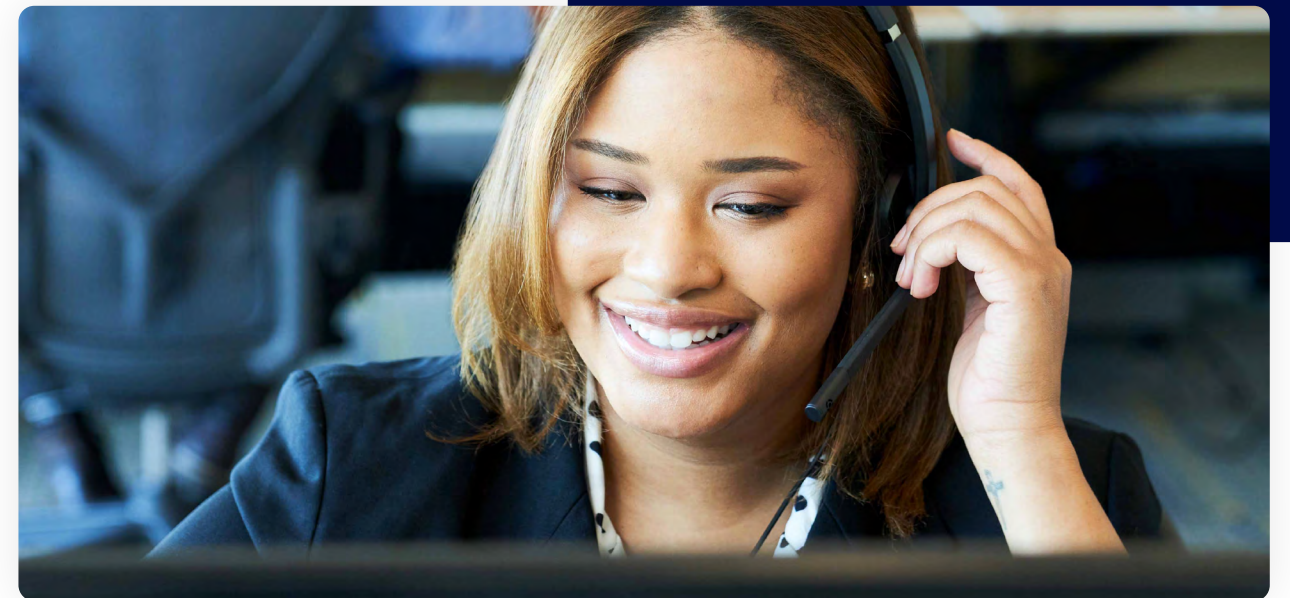
Your contact centre is mission critical to your business. It is the central point of customer engagements across all channels, and it's where you create and maintain valuable relationships between your customers and brand. Every engagement with your customers is a chance to build or break trust and loyalty.

Customer trust depends on the ability to consistently prove to your customers that they can rely on your brand, products, and — last but not least — people. Plus, according to the 2021 Five9 Customer Service Index survey, 72% of consumers are unlikely to continue doing business with a company after a poor customer service experience.

You need a contact centre solutions provider you can trust. Why Five9?

The Five9 Intelligent Cloud Contact Centre is your trusted solution to manage customer engagements across all your channels. The platform enables you to engage customers on their channel of choice, streamline your operations, and use the power of practical AI, automation, and cloud to increase business agility and exceed your customers' expectations.

Five9 is your trusted advisor that will help you reimagine your customer experience and realise tangible business results. Cloud contact centre software is our expertise, but our passion is our customer experience.



Your success is our success.

With thousands of successful customer implementations, including migrations from premises environments to the cloud, we know what it takes to build an excellent contact centre. Five9 has a reputation of providing the best professional services and customer service in the cloud contact centre industry. Five9 customers know the level of care they experience during the implementation process and the continued support they receive after their go-live ensures their success. This is reinforced by the industry high NPS scores they give us.

Born in the cloud and named for our dedication to reliability, we believe trust is the foundation for every partnership. Our customers depend on us to be transparent, secure, and reliable so they can successfully operate and grow their businesses.

The Five9 approach to implementation is to first define a solution based on your business goals and success criteria, to configure that solution, to train your staff, to validate that the solution meets your business requirements, and to then deploy the solution throughout your organisation. After deployment, we continuously fine-tune the solution to deliver optimal results.

Ultimately, we want to help you:

ENGAGE and delight your customers, whether using self-service or live agents, or across voice or digital channels. Provide your customers the convenience, flexibility, and satisfaction to switch between channels while maintaining context.

EMPOWER your agents with the tools, data, workflow and integration in one UI, enabling supervisors to motivate and performance-manage agents regardless of location. Offer agents a single consistent experience helps to minimise the learning curve and empower the business to focus on the customer — not the screen.

OPTIMISE with customers utilising surveys, responses or proactive notifications, and leverage that valuable feedback to continue to innovate. Deliver more predictable, consistent results by streamlining manual processes and repetitive human actions with automation that turns routine tasks into exceptional outcomes.

INTEGRATE the contact centre to the business utilising shared data, analytics, reports, insights, and the ability to look across the organisation to help make smarter and faster business decisions.

Five9 is here to support your team with the best intelligent cloud contact centre technology to make CX work and to deliver exceptional care with amazing results.

The Connected Contact Centre



Neil Titcomb
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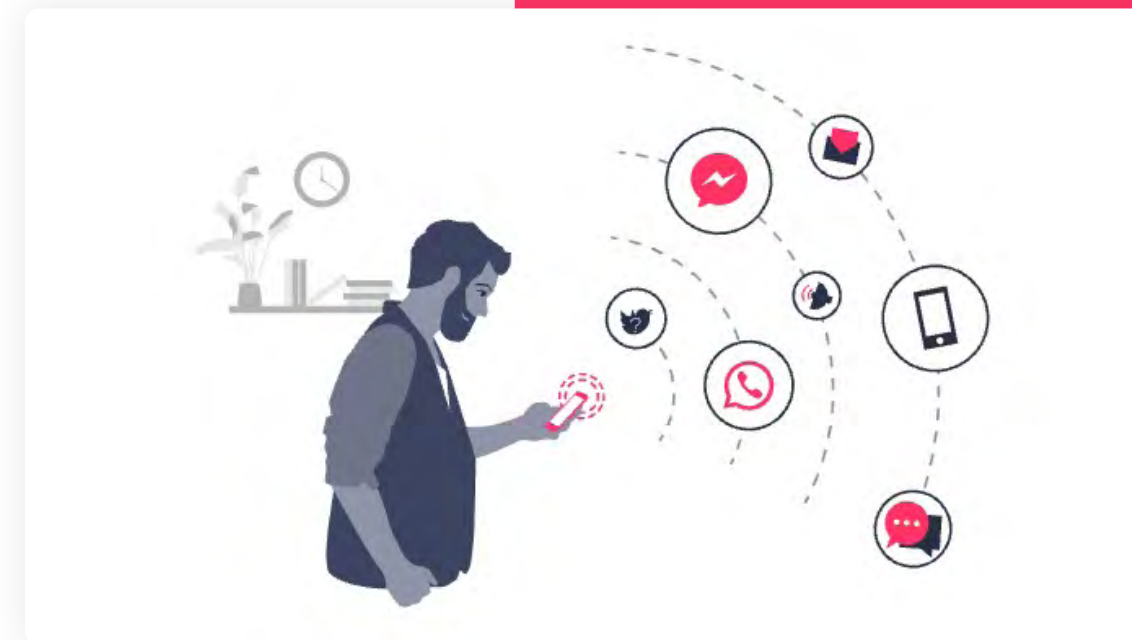
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Progress, change and new trends can make it seem like the customer experience conversation is entirely different year on year. However, it is never simply out with the old, in with the new. Contact centres should complement new with old, and technology with strategy. Some things work better together: **with AI, agents can become augmented agents**, customer satisfaction is linked to agent satisfaction, and convenience can be balanced with agent soft skills. In contact centres, authentic connections turn customers into brand ambassadors and jobs into careers.

Customer connection

Progress towards increased digitalisation, self-service and convenience should not lead to keeping customers at digital arm's length. **Empathy** shouldn't just be a frontline agent's skill but also displayed by organisations focusing on their customers' needs. Yes, there have been large leaps forward in digital services but a majority of customers still prefer a call. Why? It comes down to choice and connection. Customers are making choices based on what they feel comfortable with and the level of support they want.

When developed with an understanding of customer needs, digital services provide support and show customers they are valued. A well thought-out channel-less strategy does not



mean any interaction on any channel, as this could lead to a bewildering array of options, many of which may be unsuitable. By offering customers appropriate choices with clear benefits, these fully integrated interactions will foster trust, build loyalty and focus agents' soft skills where they will bring the most added value.

Agent connection

To maintain engagement and counteract increased turnover, agents need to feel connected and invested in the work environment. Hybrid work, upskilling and the support that comes from their team can work in synergy with the right challenges. By asking agents questions about their priorities, businesses can maximise satisfaction based on individual motivations. Communication and supervision can create an environment of teamwork, coaching and, ultimately, a sense of belonging. Technology can further help support these efforts for example with workforce management tools to balance complex staffing equations, or advanced routing rules.

Business connections

Organisations feel pressured to modernise, digitalise and optimise but this does not have

to be a solo journey. No one knows how your customers or business works better than you but you can benefit from the perspective and experience of technology providers.

A word of caution: by looking for a solution that does everything in the name of simplicity, you risk of ending up with a jack-of-all-trades solution that doesn't truly master all the challenges facing contact centres. The good news is connection also exists between solutions.

Today, you can leverage best-in-class technology which can easily be integrated with your customer relationship management (CRM) systems, unified communications (UC) and your other business tools via a single interface, providing you with integrated histories and analytics. Business performance benefits from this powerful teamwork, because when you have the right connections, there's no need to compromise on quality.

Find out more, get in touch with Odigo

The Great Customer Resignation: Is poor data and tech losing you loyalty?



James Frampton
SVP and GM EMEA
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With the Coronavirus pandemic changing the face of business almost overnight, there's a lot that's been out of business leaders' hands over the last couple of years. During uncertainty, it's important to double down on the areas you can control and ensure your customer service and experience are as refined as possible. Many industries have seen their growth curtailed. Customer retention has become critical to survival. Companies with a leaky bucket and no pipeline will quickly fold.

Experience sits at the heart of loyalty, underpinned by technology and the proper use of customer data. Customers need to be met with empathy, where they are, and with the exact services and products they want. The pandemic has accelerated many technologies and CX trends, including the continued rise of self-service and increasing digital transformation, as more of our economy has been forced online.

Technology First

In a world driven by convenience and speed, technology plays a pivotal role in ensuring consumers can access products or services quickly and easily. Consumers will go elsewhere if these systems aren't fit for their purpose.



Businesses are facing the Great Customer Resignation while being held back by sub-standard systems. CX and CRM technology are fundamental to business success. When used effectively, they can drive engagement and deliver a customer journey that nurtures brand loyalty. Yet, many businesses are selling themselves short by not equipping themselves with sufficient data about their customers or utilising this data properly.

SugarCRM spoke to 1,600 sales and marketing decision makers in organisations all around the world to determine the causes of poor customer experiences that impact customer churn, satisfaction, and retention. The findings are presented in **SugarCRM's 2022 CRM Impact Report**. According to our report, 61% of sales leaders are fatigued and frustrated with the CRM admin burden placed on their teams, taking them away from valuable customer-facing activities.

Bridging the Data Gap

We live in a world where data is king. Yet businesses are still allowing key gaps in their data to impact their processes and delivery of a great customer experience.

To stay competitive and drive improvement, businesses must consolidate their processes

across all sales touch-points and offer a holistic view of customer data across the entire organisation. However, nearly half (45%) of those surveyed state they are unable to access the same view of customer data across marketing, sales, and service, leaving front-line staff with an inaccurate view of customers. This lack of consolidation and a holistic approach allows customers to fall through the cracks.

By ensuring systems are married up and incorporating a complete historical record of every change event in the customer journey, organisations can create a high-definition customer experience (HD-CX) that not only allows them to track but crucially provide their customer with a seamless journey. By unlocking this potential, businesses can directly impact their customer lifeline value, identify and eliminate churn, and positively impact their sales and all-important bottom line.

The pandemic has brought about many societal shifts, and customer expectations are just one area that has been significantly affected. Now, more than ever, businesses must adapt to survive. Those that fail to connect with their customers will not.

Visit SugarCRM's website to find out more.

Secure the Work at Home Revolution and Eliminate Hardware Costs

THINSCALE



Andrew McNeile
Chief Customer Officer
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As we transition out of the pandemic, many contact centers and BPOs are continuing with remote or hybrid working. Traditionally minded executives may want a wholesale return to the office, but innovative business leaders recognise that a remote workforce presents a better financial operating model. With more focus than ever on ESG, it's better for the planet too. However, it's not without its challenges, particularly in terms of device management, logistics and security.

Addressing agent demand for remote working

Agents are demanding flexible working options, but a remote workforce presents several dilemmas. Where are we going to find enough devices to meet headcount requirements amidst the ongoing hardware shortage, and at what price per unit? Can we guarantee that devices will be shipped to our new employees on-time, and how much is it going to cost us? And how many of our devices will we recover from agents who churn, particularly those day 1 no-shows?

Eliminating hardware and shipping costs

To address these concerns, contact centers are turning to BYOD (Bring Your Own Device), which enables agents to



use their personal machines for work. It's an approach that's been adopted globally, with nine of the world's top 10 BPOs all benefiting from it.

The BYOD model can reduce CapEx costs by \$600-1000 per agent by eliminating the costs of the hardware, shipping, and device loss and recovery. Some contact centers choose BYOD for the initial hiring and onboarding phase to reduce the number of devices sent to employees who churn pre-production.

How to optimise and secure your remote workforce

Central to a successful remote/hybrid policy, is total endpoint and network security, no matter where the employee is located or what device they use to access corporate resources.

ThinScale provides device management and security software for a remote/hybrid contact center workforce. We have led the way in terms of enabling secure BYOD at scale, and we also provide comprehensive solutions for securing and managing corporate devices.

Our solutions make work from anywhere simple, secure, flexible, and cost-effective.

Working with 9 of the top 10 BPOs and leading contact centers globally, ThinScale's light-touch software enables them to protect their agents' corporate and personal devices at home and on-site.

Our software is fully PCI, HIPPA, GDPR and CCPA compliant, ensuring the safety of your corporate and customer data.

ThinScale's products are easy to deploy and enable contact centers to hire and onboard remote agents, using their personal devices or corporate devices, in a matter of days. HR and TA managers can quickly assess the suitability of a candidate's device prior to recruitment within minutes using our Validation Tool. IT departments can automate device updating and re-imaging, with full control over access policies and network security through a central management console. And they never have to worry about sourcing or recovering devices ever again.

We're proud to partner with the world's most innovative contact center leaders, helping them to maximise the benefits of the remote working revolution.

Analytics

The global business analytics software market is expected to reach a value of \$120.27 billion by 2027.

For years, companies have relied on reporting and analytics tools to help drive better decision-making and outcomes. Analytics can be instrumental in the CX environment.

Increasingly, today's customers are demanding personalised, convenient, and contextual service from companies across multiple channels. The only way to deliver the kind of interactions clients require is to develop a deeper understanding of the audience using analytics and reporting tools. Fortunately for CX teams, analytics solutions are becoming more advanced by the year.

The Trends Shaping Analytics in 2022

CX analytics can include everything from tools capable of tracking the customer journey to call recording tools with AI sentiment analysis. Much of the innovation happening in the analytics industry today comes from the implementation of intelligent tools for natural language processing and understanding.



However, we're also seeing a rise in the number of tools designed to give business leaders a better understanding of the voice of the customer by connecting insights from multiple avenues and communication modalities. Some of the trends driving analytics in 2022 include:

- **Integrations and data alignment:**
To access a comprehensive view of your customer, you need to be able to collect information about their interactions with your brand across multiple channels and environments. Integrations and open tools for analytics make it easier to collect and align data from various environments, including the contact centre, CRM technology, and help desk.
- **Voice of the Customer analytics:**
Voice of the customer analytics involves looking beyond what the customer says to understand everything from consumer intent to their sentiment towards a specific company. Increasingly, we're gaining deeper insights into our target audience by combining everything from qualitative surveys to in-depth sentiment analysis conducted by AI tools.
- **Speech technologies:**
Speech technologies like natural language processing and natural language understanding are becoming increasingly intelligent. Today, these tools can instantly recognise the sentiment in a customer's voice or pinpoint keywords in a conversation to alert a supervisor when a discussion seems to be going

poorly. Speech technologies are even making it easier for businesses to understand the common questions customers ask on the path to purchase.

Analytics Tomorrow: Looking Ahead

CX analytics are essential for helping businesses to understand their target audience. In today's digital-first landscape, companies can collect vast amounts of data from conversations between customers and chatbots, discussions in the contact centre, and even message-based analytics.

To thrive in the years ahead, companies will need to determine how to align all of their analytical tools for a single source of truth when it comes to customer data. At the same time, it will be crucial to ensure any analytical strategies in place within a business environment don't put customers' privacy or security at risk.

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Re-Igniting the Value of Voice Calls



Hilary King
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Voice calls have always had a role to play in the connection between companies and their customers. But with the rise of instant messaging and video chat in recent years, many businesses have forgotten about the advantages of voice calls.

But is a current shift changing all of that?

As we return to the office following the pandemic, many businesses have experienced a massive increase in call volumes.

Call Volume and Duration is Going Up

In times of crisis or change, people crave more personalised, authentic interactions. We rely on phone calls to provide a quick connection to another human being. More importantly, phone calls serve our need to be heard and understood.

The quantity of calls that people make has gone up, while the length of those conversations is starting to increase. People are staying on the phone for longer than ever.



Advantages of Voice Calls

The advantages for business revolve around the ability to **create deeper connections with customers**. Here are some of the main reasons why customers still rely on voice calls.

- Simplicity

Text messaging, chat and video conferencing are great, but more customers are returning to the phone as their primary method of engaging with companies. The inclusivity of phone calls ensures that anyone can interact with a business in a way that feels natural to them.

- Speed

Unlike other forms of communication, phone calls lead to instant answers. There's no delay in communication as you don't have to wait for someone to read and reply to a message. IVR systems can route customers to the right person straight away, while integrated systems ensure those agents have access to comprehensive customer data.

- Emotional connections

An often-overlooked advantage is that voice calls offer the potential for emotional exchanges between companies and customers. Customers frequently turn to service centres in a state of

panic or frustration. A conversation with an understanding agent who says the right thing in the right tone of voice can ease the situation. This can do more to build your relationship with your customers than countless instant messages or texts.

Leveraging Calling Data to Make Business Decisions

It's easy to overlook the advantages of voice calls for business in a world where new communication tools are appearing all the time. The key to making the most of your telephony solution is ensuring that you invest in systems that support these meaningful voice-centred relationships. To understand what's really going on in your business, you need a clear way to visualise and leverage your calling data.

That's where call analytics solutions come in. **Real-time dashboards and reports** can give you a view of what's happening right now in your organisation, enabling you to take a proactive approach to fixing problems, driving sales, and unlocking opportunities.

Remember, the communication landscape may be changing, but it's still built on a foundation of voice, and with the right tools, you can make informed decisions about the strategies that will grow your business.

Transforming the Customer Experience with Analytics

AVAYA

Experiences That Matter



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While the need to create a comprehensive customer experience has been a priority for a long time, the last two years have accelerated business' timelines. Mainly driven by customers expecting more, businesses have had to ensure that customer experience strategy is up to scratch.

According to a new study from IDG and Avaya, companies understand the benefits of a stellar customer experience. The problem is that many do not have a cohesive strategy based on best-in-class analytics technology.

Haphazard strategies abound

Findings showed that over half of companies globally perceive themselves as doing a good job with their customer experience efforts. Fifty-nine percent say they're offering "good" customer experiences, while 60% say they have "good" customer interactions. However, while companies trust the power of technology, most are making do with just basic tools. Ninety-seven percent have email, 94% have social and phone, 84% have text chat, 57% have Messenger and 45% have video chat. Less standard tools include chat bots (42%) and virtual assistants (36%).



Those offering good customer experience use:

- SMS (61%)
- Messenger platforms (64%)
- Video chat (53%)

But only 60% of those surveyed say they have a cohesive customer experience strategy. Despite strong self-ratings, the US (50%) and the UK (50%) are lagging behind in having a cohesive customer interaction strategy versus both India (76%) and the Middle East and North Africa (74%).

Insight from Analytics drive results

It's crucial for companies to truly understand their customers and how to properly segment their customer base. Companies are often collecting the right data, but they aren't using that data to improve customer experience on an ongoing basis. The issue is not being able to combine the tools seamlessly.

Overall, 40% of companies surveyed globally do not have the right tools for proper customer insight development. This is most prevalent in the UK where only 46% have the right customer analytics tools, followed by 49% of survey respondents in the Netherlands and 52% in Singapore.

Companies cite similar barriers when it comes to customer insights, and they say that data issues are a major obstacle. Companies single out the following data-related challenges when it comes to the customer experience:

- Data accuracy/quality (40%)
- Hard to integrate data in real time from multiple sources (34%)
- Data exists in siloed systems (32%)
- Lack real-time analytics platform (24%)
- Right data is not being collected (23%)

A total experience strategy is key

The most successful companies empower associates with newer tools and platforms that simplify, support, and transform customer experience. Companies with more complete analytics tools find they tend to have better customer outcomes and 71% with good experiences have the right tools.

Click here to see inside the **Avaya cloud-powered contact centre** to explore the analytics, desktop, service capabilities and more that can help you deliver a total experience for both employees and customers.

How AI-Powered Conversation Analytics Drives Positive Customer Experience



Frank Sherlock
VP of International
CallMiner

Today’s organisations understand that delivering the best customer experience (CX) and service is a critical driver for loyalty and retention, competitive differentiation, and revenue growth. But many still haven’t invested in or fully leveraged the tools needed to benchmark current CX, identify trends and areas of improvement across a customer base, or illuminate future customer interaction expectations. The adoption of AI-powered conversation analytics is a key step in being able to achieve these goals.

Conversation analytics – which analyses customer interactions across speech and text channels – creates the foundation for organisations to capture solicited and unsolicited customer feedback and drive the insights needed to understand what customers want and need. These capabilities are now table stakes. The most powerful and comprehensive conversation analytics platforms are also leveraging AI to quickly, accurately, and predictively impact awareness and outcomes within the contact centre and beyond.

One of the reasons AI is making significant improvements to CX is because it complements the contact centre technologies, like conversation analytics, and processes that organisations already have in place. It enables organisations to get more



value from the data they gather, and customer engagements can go from reactive to proactive.

For example, AI-enabled self-service options make it easier for customers to find solutions to their questions without speaking directly to an agent. But because AI is best suited for repeatable, simple tasks, like checking an account balance, there will be plenty of instances where a customer issue is too complex for AI and a human agent will need to handle.

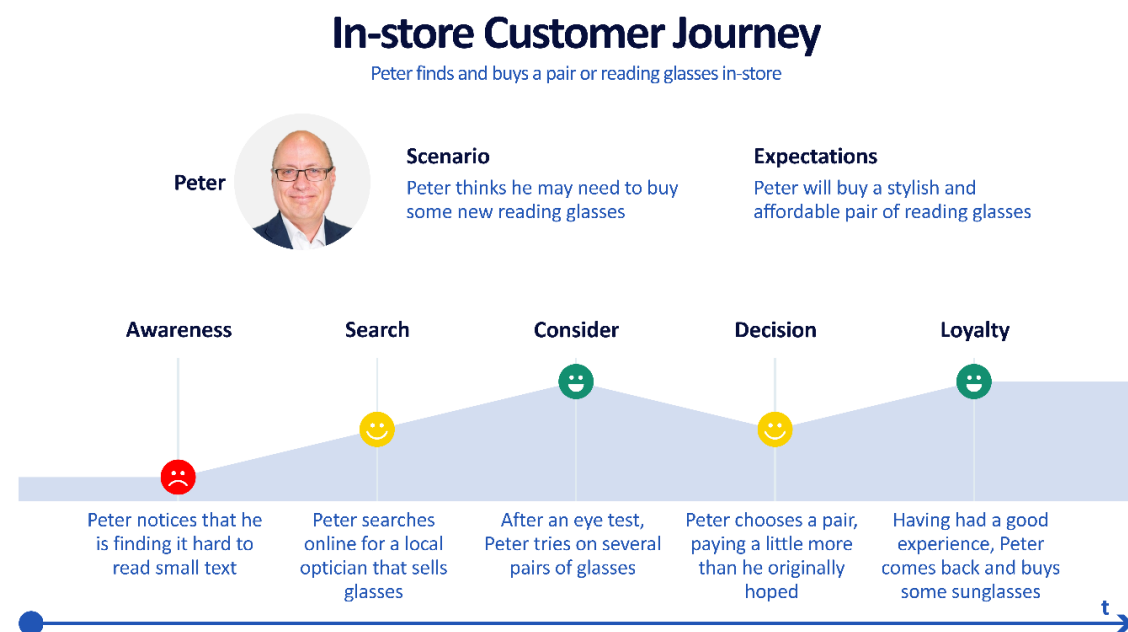
In these instances, AI-powered conversation analytics can help agents in **real time, through alerts and next-best guidance**. This means agents proactively informed if they are speaking with a vulnerable customer, whose personal circumstances should be considered, or if the customer’s issue should be elevated to a supervisor early on – ultimately driving improved outcomes for both the customer and organisation. These tools make it possible for brands to gain more insights into their customer interactions and serve customers in new ways, driving improved CX.

The benefits generated from AI-powered conversation analytics have the potential to make enterprise-wide impact as well. By extracting data gathered in the contact centre, brands can not only gain a complete picture of agent behaviour; they can identify anomalies in performance and productivity. For example, what if you could identify if a previously top performing agent has inexplicably started to consistently underperform – or that performance is down collectively across the agent base? These insights can help organisations determine whether new training or workplace development strategies are needed, potentially preventing agents from leaving their jobs. Supporting employees and increasing retention has direct bottom-line benefits.

AI-powered conversation analytics represents the future of CX – organisations that adopt this technology now will have a leg-up on the competition when it comes to understanding customers more deeply and more effectively delivering the experiences that customers demand. And that leg-up is critical to success in CX and in business.

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Customer Journey Mapping and Analysis

In this short blog, I want to describe some of the latest thinking around customer journey mapping and customer journey analysis.

A customer journey map is the visual representation of the interactions a customer has with an organisation. Customer journey analysis is the process of gathering and analysing data about a customer journey, so companies can take actions that improve the experience and end outcome.

Customer Journey Mapping

Journey mapping typically describes a linear sequence of steps towards a specific goal, such as 'awareness, searching, consideration, decision, delivery, use, loyalty', and 'advocacy'. The journey map describes what the customer does (see above).

But the lives of customers are rarely linear; they can start, stop, rewind, abandon or switch between journeys. Neither are they consistent in their channel preferences, often choosing to self-serve for routine transactions but wanting to speak with a real person when it looks complex, or they are upset.

So, customer journey maps have grown in sophistication from a simple process description, focused on the 'frontstage' (the direct touchpoints between the customer and the company) and now often include the 'backstage' (the things that happen that the customer doesn't directly experience), as well as accountabilities.

They also reflect that the journey starts well before the first interaction (e.g., at the awareness stage), where customers begin to form their expectations. Such expectations influence how customers evaluate an experience and the multiple journeys they make over their lifetime.

Finally, some organisations are also using journey maps to identify where a customer has control and where they can decide which path to follow or action to take.

Customer Journey Analysis

Many early journey maps described an ideal 'happy journey' the way the organisation thought a journey should play out. However, it quickly became apparent that customers often had other ideas, and their motivations were not always logical or predictable.

So, journey analytics can take two forms. The first is to analyse the mechanics of the journey; does it work the way it is supposed to? Where are the pinch points? Etc. The second form is analysing the drivers and motivations of customers; why they decided to behave in the way that they did.

By using analytics to understand what customers value and why, companies can begin to predict what a customer will do next and how they can optimise the outcome.

In Conclusion

Customer journey maps primarily describe what happens, whereas customer journey analysis explains why.

Through journey analysis, companies can seek first to understand why customers behave the way they do. Then, they may begin to predict what they will do next if circumstances continue before modelling the impact of



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an·thro·lytics

influencing the drivers of behaviour and ultimately choosing the next steps that deliver the optimum outcome for both the customer and organisation.

It is clear; action without analysis is anarchy, analysis without action is academic. Combining both is where companies will achieve a competitive advantage in the 'next normal' for customer experience.

About the Author

Peter combines data and behavioural sciences to lead transformation in the field of Customer Experience Management. Over the last five years, he been using Predictive Behavioural Analytics to understand why customers do what they do, what they are likely to do next, and how businesses should respond.

Establishing your own pathway to the AI-Driven Contact Centre



Matthew Jones
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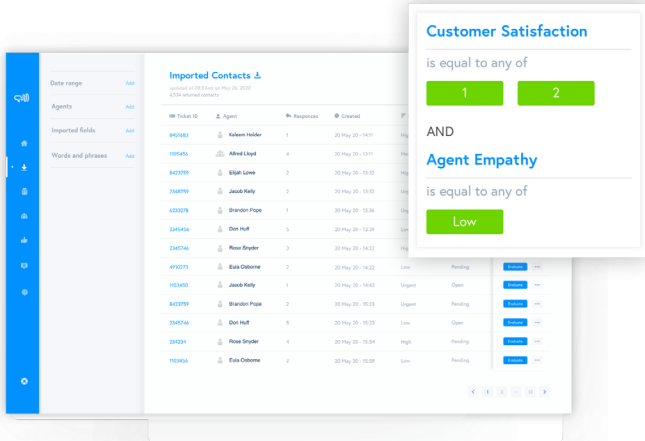
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When thousands of Chinese railroad workers migrated to the U.S in the 1800s, they brought Snake Oil. Back then, the ancient medicinal substance had a very different reputation. The labourers were clear about what Snake Oil was (omega-3 fats refined from Chinese water snakes), what it could treat (highly effective for arthritis), and how to use it (rubbing it onto the joints).

But soon, seedy local profiteers began pedalling knock-off versions with spectacular ‘fix all’ claims.

‘It’s good for everything an ointment should be good for,’ the packing claimed. Included on the list of things it could supposedly cure were frostbites, bruises, sore throats, kidney problems, and snake bites. It wasn’t long till those claims were proven to be overblown. The ointment fell out of widespread use, but the term Snake Oil lives on today to refer to deceptive marketing.



If you’ve been observing the analytics hype in contact centre space for some time, then the history of snake oil might sound somewhat familiar. Despite being the flavour of the month, conversation analytics is far from new. Our founders at **EvaluAgent** remember its earliest applications in QA more than fifteen years ago. But analytics has suddenly resurged with a bold claim to fame.

Some of the hype is justified. Ever since the technology giants adopted voice recognition software, the accuracy has come on leaps and bounds. As such, it’s become more affordable and with more use cases (thanks, Alexa).

The problem is that speech analytics is now celebrated as a fix-all remedy for contact centre performance, a replacement for your insights or coaching teams, and a way to automatically performance manage your highly valuable contact centre agent. The fact is, neither is true – and you’re right to be suspicious. Like the original snake oil, analytics is valuable in specific applications... provided that vendors are clear on what those are and have a common-sense approach to implementing the technology.

Instead of selling snake oil, EvaluAgent has built what we refer to as

Smart Quality; blending AI with the best bits of traditional QA to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Quality Assurance teams to help your employees flourish.

With traditional QA, you’re stuck between an inefficient tick-box exercise rife with selection bias or an impersonal automated approach. Either approach risks devaluing QA inside your business and demotivating your agents. To offer a standout CX, your QA software needs to identify where agents are struggling and provide the tools to drive improvements in these areas. That’s what EvaluAgent’s Smart Quality approach to QA is.

Smart Quality uses the latest technology to help QA teams evaluate fast and fairly, whilst enabling team leaders to drive real improvement via a host of people-centric coaching and feedback features.

As well as a vastly more efficient QA process, Smart Quality creates super-agents capable of delighting customers leading to higher CSAT scores, improved First Contact Resolution and lower operational costs within fast-growing businesses.

Advanced Analytics To Turn Customer Data Into Business Value



Gary Bennett
VP UKI/MEA/Northern
Europe
Enghouse Interactive

enghouse
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Today's world is built on information, with 74 zettabytes (74 trillion gigabytes) of data created in 2021 alone, according to Statista. Being able to tap into and analyse these growing volumes of information is crucial, enabling organisations to improve the experience offered to each and every customer.

Analysing all the interactions customers have with a business, across all channels, delivers enormous benefits. Research from McKinsey found companies that have applied advanced analytics in their contact centre have been able to reduce average handle time by up to 40 percent, increase self-service containment rates by 5 to 20 percent and cut employee costs by up to \$5 million.

Essentially understanding what is happening across all of your customer interactions enables you to find and fix issues, improve the performance of your systems and processes, deliver targeted training to grow your agents and uncover new opportunities for growth. And with the average contact centre seeing growing volumes of interactions, companies can deploy AI and Natural Language Processing (NLP) to scale their analytics to cover all channels, both in real-time and for longer term analysis.



At **Enghouse Interactive** we offer a range of advanced analytics solutions that enable you to transform your interaction data into business value:

Quality management

Enghouse's **Quality Management Suite** (QMS) provides recording and coaching solutions for customer interactions across voice, email, chat, SMS and other channels. It captures the entire interaction between agents and customers including speech-to-text transcription. QMS ensures consistent and correct use of systems, identifies training opportunities, and removes barriers to employee productivity.

Vocal Coach

Enghouse's innovative Vocal Coach solution monitors and improves live conversations. The solution acts as a virtual coach, automatically providing live feedback while calls are in progress to agents and team leaders about what is being said and how. By analysing factors such as the phrases used, speech clarity, frequency of interruptions and more, it can pinpoint issues, rising stress levels and provides practical help, either directly or by bringing in a supervisor. Vocal Coach also ensures compliance by confirming

that agents are adhering to scripts and that mandatory phrases are covered, avoiding future legal disputes.

Agent evaluation

On average, fewer than 5% of customer interactions are ever evaluated due to the time and effort required. This means contact centres miss out on valuable business intelligence and learning opportunities.

Enghouse SmartQuality uses AI and NLP to automatically evaluate customer interactions – across all channels. This ensures that supervisors get a complete picture of agent performance so they can give fair, accurate feedback and pinpoint opportunities for coaching and improvement.

Voice of the Customer (VoC)

Most organisations run regular customer feedback surveys. However, these give an incomplete picture of what customers want. Enghouse's Vecko VoC solution uses embedded AI to extract actionable insights from digital customer interactions to spot opportunities and issues that don't show up on surveys. Vecko helps companies identify the "why" hidden in NPS and CSAT feedback to deliver a better overall customer experience.

Hammer Your Contact Center to Remove the Risk of Change



Mark Kowal
Director of Product
Marketing
Hammer

hammer.com

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Modern contact centers strive to keep pace with ever-changing business needs and customer expectations. As a result, quickly deploying contact center technologies is the norm. Solutions involve multiple vendors, legacy software, and advanced technologies. What is intended to simplify things for the customer doesn't?

80% of companies claim they deliver a superior customer experience, yet only 8% of their customers agree.

Why the disconnect?

End customers expect to use multiple channels and advanced contact center features. Even when implemented perfectly, these options can negatively impact the customer experience by:

- Posing a significant risk to the stability and performance of your system
- Putting enormous pressure on technical teams to implement these changes, especially with aggressive deployment timeframes
- Challenging QA resources to test the solution in ways they are not prepared for due to staffing issues, technological solutions, or lack of experience

Hammer – The Solution that makes Customer Experience work

Every contact center continually faces these risks and challenges. They remain even after deployment because systems constantly change, increasing customer risk. But what if this risk could be hammered away, leaving you confident that your system will work even when subjected to internal and external pressures outside of your plan?

Hammer Cloud Platform proves that contact center changes can be implemented with confidence. Our testing tools pre-empt significant problems by delivering



expert validation of expected real-world performance starting with the call and continuing until it completes with an agent.

Hammer predicts the real-world behavior of complex IP-based environments. Our integrated voice, video, and data testing offer insight into the application's quality as customers experience it, enabling you to overcome the complexity inherent in today's sophisticated, hybrid communication environments.

Assurance

Hammer engagements provide agility, significantly reducing deployment and upgrade risk ensuring new capabilities are delivered faster and more reliably.

Service

Dedicated technical support with the flexibility to assist you as you develop your CX strategy in today's unique and complex market conditions.

Flexibility

Hammer is platform agnostic with on-premise, hybrid, and cloud subscription-based options to meet the demands of today's CX market.

Accurate End-to-End User Experience Testing

The Hammer Cloud Platform is focused on customer experience as an effortless and

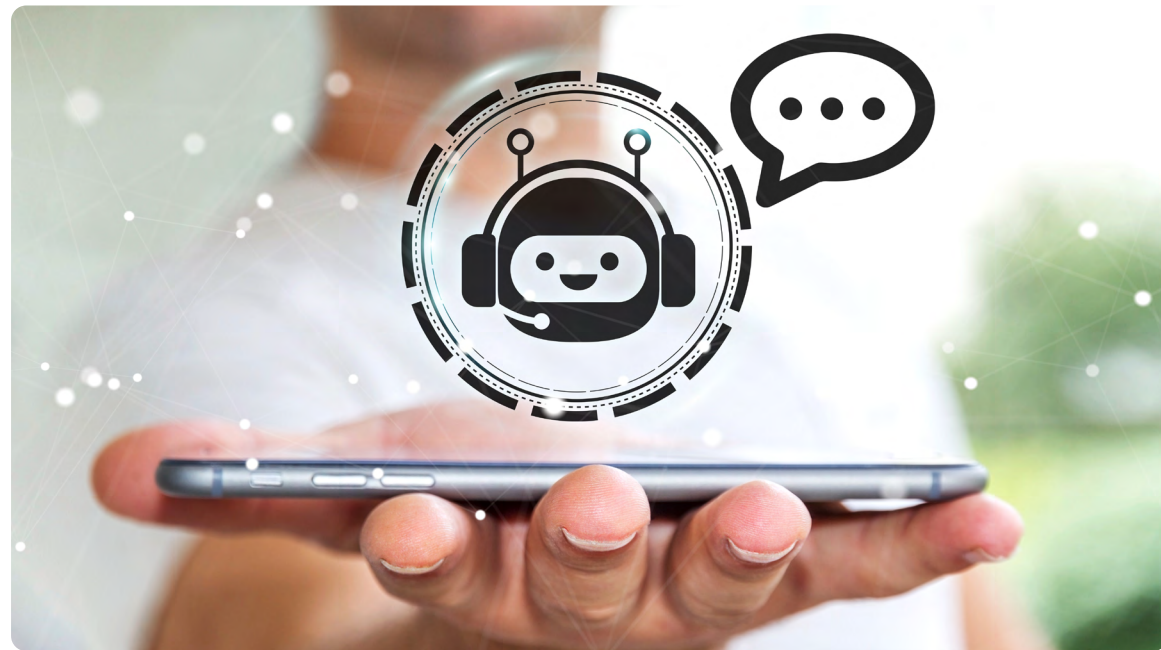
fully automated self-service testing platform, helping operational and DevOps teams to quickly detect and measure:

- Performance issues, including capacity limitations
- Human-triggered configuration errors
- IVR defects
- Carrier routing issues
- Application server and backend host latency
- CTI data and routing errors

We achieve these by automating Discovery, QA, Regression, Load, and ongoing activity and monitoring efforts across the entire software development lifecycle.

The Hammer Cloud Platform offers a comprehensive suite of SaaS-based technology that enables test case design and test automation:

- Hammer Voice Explorer: Dynamic IVR discovery and automated test creation
- Hammer On-Demand QA: Functional, regression, and systems integration testing
- Hammer On-Demand Performance: Load, smoke, and disaster recovery testing
- Hammer VoiceWatch: Ongoing production monitoring and alerting
- Hammer RTC Virtual Agents: Enables complete end-to-end testing of both CTI and CRM functions
- Hammer Ohm: Automated voice quality testing and monitoring for work-from-home environments



How AI and Analytics Are Changing CX

I am sitting wondering if this is the last IVR I will ever design. Yes, I was 66 this year, but it is not about me. I continue to evolve 😊

I am designing unified voice and chatbots instead of IVRs. They work better, and they deliver an enhanced experience.

No more press 1 to be patronised or press 2 for details of our broken website and lousy music for 20 minutes.

For the last three years, chat, AI, chatbots, and messaging apps have changed what is possible and customer behaviour.

So here is my view on AI changing customer experiences.

Firstly, it is accelerating the shift in customer expectations. I can now create bots to answer

queries across every channel in a matter of moments, supporting the needs of the modern, autonomous customer.

Alongside this, I can predict the conversation length, the chance I might need to transfer to an agent, the possible upsell, the probability of success, and program the bot to respond in 20 languages.

I would explain what else these technologies can do, but that would require thousands of words.

Yet, many of these capabilities come from supplementing bot technologies with analytics. Doing so also allows contact centres to assess the success of automated channels and drive insights into their impact on CX.

Analytics software has many other benefits, particularly in enhancing Voice of the Customer (VoC) programmes, enabling contact centres to better detect customer journey pain points.

By marrying the technology with a bot, the contact centre can also enhance agent performance by providing automated performance feedback through a “virtual helper”.

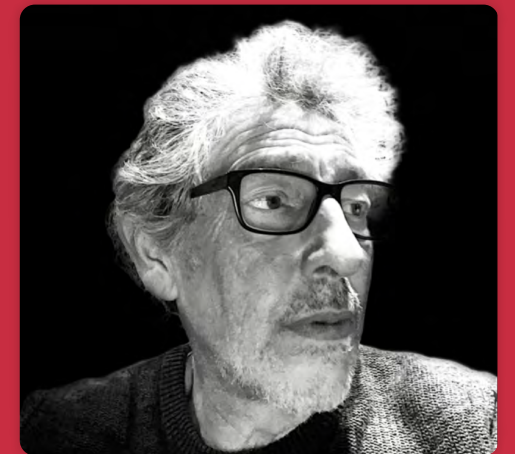
Such innovation paves the way for the next significant shift in CX – a final farewell to the metrics and practices of a different age. Prediction-based algorithms will change all our roles.

As such, the future Target Operating Model (TOM) for the contact centre of tomorrow will likely hinge on the following functionalities:

- ➔ Customer preference-based multi-channel + simultaneous contact
- ➔ AI routed (No IVR)
- ➔ Digital-first but including voice
- ➔ Hyper-empowered Agents
- ➔ Predictive algorithms
- ➔ Workforce management
- ➔ CRM and data lakes across siloes
- ➔ Analytics and adaptive AI
- ➔ A singular focus delivered to each moment of contact

Sure, there are many different AI types on this list enabling contact centres to add to their bottom line. But don't try to do it all at once. Experiment and fail.

Also, remember that many of these technologies will address the cracks that the last generation of CX only covered over. Consequently, they will require a fundamental shift in CX thinking. So, training and engagement will become a much greater focus.



Morris Pentel

CX / EX Consultant
Engineer, Designer, and
Programme Management



Lastly, but most importantly, the next generation of CX is about insights and predictive analytics. According to many research sources, this is to be a central focus for many companies over the next three years, striving to increase intelligence to power new, exciting experiences.

Bio

Morris Pentel is Emeritus Chair and Founder Customer Experience Foundation. He currently works as a Senior Consultant Orange Business Services, specializing in CX design.

* Please note these are my personal views and in no way represent the views of any organisation I am associated with. (It's just me.)

The Right Metrics for Meaningful Customer Interactions



Robert Schoenfield
COO
Krisp

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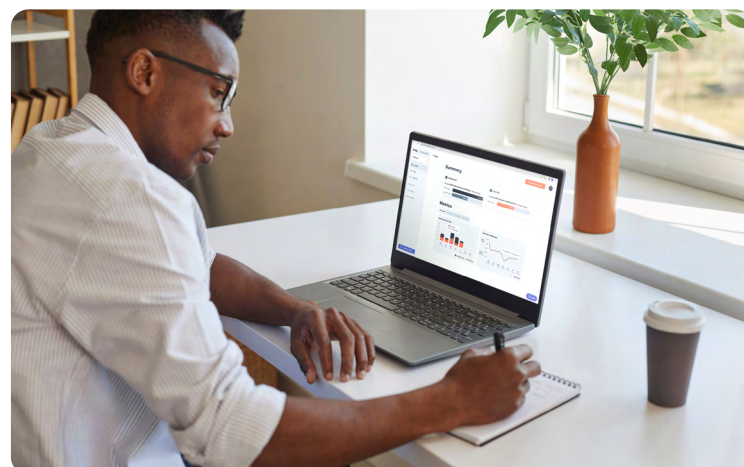
GET IN TOUCH >

You probably know that **Krisp's bread and butter is noise cancellation**. This is what made us a household name among BPOs and contact centers during the pandemic. And while noise cancellation is still what we do better than any other player in the market today, we didn't want to hang our hat on that alone. Helping agents eliminate background noise was just the beginning; we also wanted to give them a way to lead more successful customer interactions.

To do this, customer service teams need access to real-time metrics to understand the effectiveness of their customer conversations and what steps can be taken to fix issues that negatively impact the customer experience. Fortunately, the team at Krisp is rolling out new features to give customer service teams a real-time pulse on those interactions.

The benefits of Krisp 'Call Insights'

If you're already using Krisp across your organization, all of these features will automatically be accessible to you. However, the big question is: How can agents and supervisors use this information to their advantage?



Talk Time

What this feature does: Keeps track of how much time call participants spend talking during an interaction.

Why this matters: When customers call to ask questions or get help, it's important to give them the space to be heard. While agents may end up being the more "active" participant on the call in order to resolve a customer's issues, they now have visual cues, via the Krisp widget, to help them lead a more balanced, two-way dialogue that gets customers closer to issue resolution and drives greater customer satisfaction.

Call Insights

What this feature does: Measures how many minutes are spent on calls (per day), the average duration of those calls, what calling apps are used, and the number of calls made (per hour/per day). This information can be reported at the agent, team, and organizational levels.

Why this matters: Although BPOs and contact centers typically have tools for collecting some of this information, Call Insights adds a new layer of

data granularity. For organizations that haven't extended Krisp Noise Cancellation across all customer service teams, for example, this data can be joined to other datasets — such as customer satisfaction scores (CSAT) — to get comparative data on the impact that 'calls with Krisp' versus 'calls without Krisp' can have on customer satisfaction, issue resolution, call time, and beyond.

Noise Insights

What this feature does: Provides metrics on the amount of noise being filtered by Krisp (in minutes) across all Krisp users.

Why this matters: Leaders within BPOs and contact centers want to know their investment in noise cancellation is being put to good use. But more importantly, Noise Insights will give agents a valuable visual reference to remind them that Krisp is working behind the scenes, giving them added peace of mind that their customer conversations are noise-free at all times.

Six benefits of Real-time Voice Interaction Analytics



Jonathan Allan
CMO
Puzzel

puzzel.com

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Many contact centres use speech analytics to uncover insights on how to improve their customer service. However, while these insights are useful for improving future calls, they aren't much help to agents during calls. That's where Real-time Voice Interaction Analytics comes in.

What is Real-time Voice Interaction Analytics?

Real-time Voice Interaction Analytics provides agents with helpful insights and suggested answers to customer questions during live calls. It works by listening to conversations and extracting the keywords, context and customer sentiment to suggest the best possible answers contained in your knowledgebase, chatbot solution or historical call transcripts.

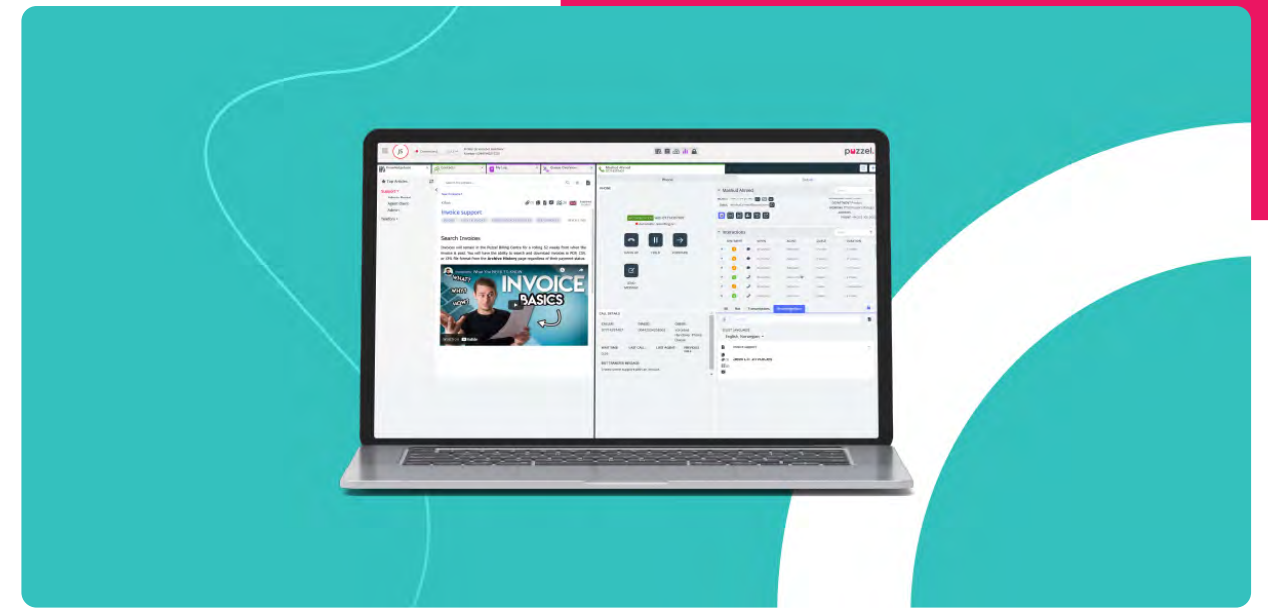
Benefits for customers

Customers today want to be served fast. They don't want to wait in long call queues or on hold while agents search for the right answers to their questions. And they want to be shown empathy.

Real-time Voice Interaction Analytics helps you meet these needs by:

Speeding up handling times: Agents don't have to go hunting for the right information or answers to customer questions in your internal systems. Instead, these are automatically presented to them based on live analysis of the customer's dialogue. This removes the need to put callers on hold and speeds up resolution times.

Tracking the customer's mood: Real-time Voice Interaction Analytics can detect whether a caller is feeling positive, neutral or negative based on their speech. This



information is presented to the agent via a live graph, enabling them to adjust their language or approach to improve the outcome of calls.

Benefits for agents

Over the last decade, the demands on contact centre agents have grown enormously. Not only are there more channels to handle, but enquiries are also becoming more complex as simpler tasks are increasingly handled by chatbots.

Real-time Voice Interaction Analytics supports busy agents by:

Reducing agent effort: Agents are given the live direction they need to answer customer enquiries quickly and accurately. This reduces effort, minimises errors, and results in more confident and competent teams.

Supporting new hires: Real-time analytics are particularly useful for new hires who are still learning and may not know answers to customer questions by heart. They can learn on the job and ramp up quickly, saving managers time on training and onboarding.

Benefits for your business

Seventy-nine per cent of customers say the experience a business provides is as important as **its products or services**. The quality of your customer service can therefore be a powerful differentiator for your brand.

Real-time Voice Interaction Analytics improves customer experiences by:

Increasing first-time resolutions: Real-time analytics reduces the need for costly call-backs by presenting agents with the right information they need to solve enquiries during calls. This increases your first-time resolution rate and customer satisfaction.

Reducing running costs: With faster handling times and a higher first-contact resolution rate, your agents will be able to serve more customers per shift. Shorter ramp-up times for new hires will also help reduce your operational costs.

Visit us at puzzel.com to learn more.

Crafting a Total Experience Strategy for Businesses



Gaurav Johar
Practice Head -
Conversational AI
Quantiphi



Kanishk Mehta
Senior Client
Solutions Partner
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quantiphi.com

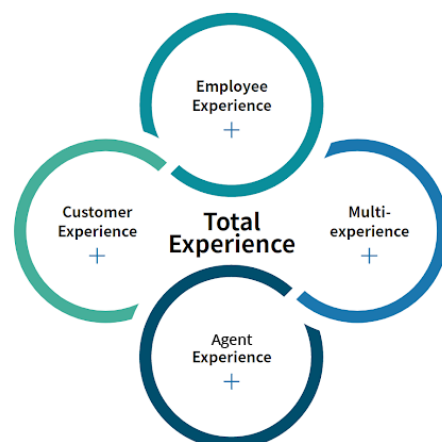
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A study by Gartner revealed that by 2026, over half of larger enterprises would need to switch to Total Experience (TX) within their business models to achieve world-class customer and employee advocacy levels. TX is a strategy for modern enterprises that combines and addresses various siloed experiences like User Experience (UX), Customer Experience (CX), Employee Experience (EX), Customer Service Agents Experience (AX), and Multi Experience (MX). Over the next few years, a comprehensive TX strategy would provide a competitive edge by driving insight-based actions across customer touchpoints.

Several organizational initiatives result in multiple new siloed technologies. The lack of integration among multiple siloed platforms leads to complexity and a broken experience. Hence reducing the visibility over internal processes and customer interactions. This lack of visibility paralyzes organizations for taking appropriate measures.

Building blocks of total experience strategy

Choosing composable architecture over a siloed approach: Organizations should adopt composable platforms that provide multiple solutions in one place and enable insights into the end-to-end customer journeys. A platform that manages channel integrations and connects virtual agents to these channels. It should also connect virtual agents to applications like salesforce for fulfillment. Also, provides detailed analytics, & enables feedback mechanisms for continuous improvement.



Enabling self service for all stakeholders:

Whether it is employee, customer, or agent self-service, self-service is the need of the hour. Empowering with information and guidelines to all ecosystem stakeholders, we enable independent, faster, and more intelligent services at disposal for end customers. Organizations must deploy intelligent Assistive AI that enables:

- Self-service for employees
- Drive customers to reach resolutions by themselves
- Facilitate agents to answer queries more effectively

Industry-specific hyper-personalization:

Personalization of interactions varies as per industry context. And business context is crucial in communication with customers for every sector. A recent McKinsey survey of senior marketing leaders revealed only 15 percent of CMOs believe their company is on the right track with personalization. Organizations need to utilize **industry prebuilt templates** for faster implementation and reducing time to market.

Continuous improvement via feedback:

Improving both upstream and downstream interactions across employee, agent & customer will help build advocacy and trust. For example: introducing a Voice of Employee, Customer & Agent to periodically collect feedback and keep optimizing the overall experience.

Quantiphi, with an AI-first digital engineering approach, believes in the above four step philosophy to empower organizations to enable their total experience strategy.

We leverage AI-led industry-focused products and accelerators for faster and more effective experience transformation and also facilitate tracking via performance metrics. With 400+ Conversational AI professionals who have worked on more than 200+ engagements, our in-house expertise allowed us to create a platform that helps design, develop, deploy and manage end-to-end total experience transformation solutions. Our time-tested HPNS approach of taking AI POCs to production environments ensures enterprise-grade total experience solutions for your businesses.

Quantiphi's solution suite offers the following primary benefits:

- Speed** – Significant reduction in time spent in the development and go-to-market
- Cost-sensitive** – Accelerators and in-house platforms reduce time & cost
- Quality** – With industry-focused and effectively designed virtual agents helps achieve maximum customer satisfaction

Reach out or write to our experts to understand ways to incorporate total experience strategy for your business.

Contact Centre

Sponsored by **odigo**

The contact centre is the front line of communication between consumers and companies.

With the right contact centre environment, companies can build comprehensive strategies for serving their target audience, answering questions, and making critical sales.

However, the contact centres we used to know are far from the environments we need today. The current contact centre should be an omnichannel, cloud-based environment, enriched by artificial intelligence, video, and automation. The market for Contact Centre as a service alone is expected to reach a value of around \$10.06 billion by 2027

The Trends Shaping the Contact Centre in 2022

The modern contact centre is shifting to become a more comprehensive “engagement centre” for modern audiences. Modern contact centres are intelligent and agile, built to support customer-obsessed brands in delivering meaningful experiences across various channels.



In recent years the rapid acceleration into the cloud has allowed the contact centre to become a much more flexible and powerful environment, ready to adapt to suit the needs of businesses and customers as they change. In this cloud CCaaS landscape, brands create everything from hybrid environments for CX, to state-of-the-art sales and marketing campaigns. Some of the trends driving the evolution of the contact centre in 2022 include:

- **AI and automation:** AI has made its way into virtually every part of the contact centre, automating self-service strategies and enabling employees to more easily access information about customers. The same technology can collect valuable data about customers to predict future needs and help strengthen the workforce’s efficiency. AI will become an essential partner in the contact centre experience.
- **Omnichannel engagement:** The way customers connect with companies is evolving, with a greater focus on things like digital channels and video. Increasingly, we’re seeing companies look for new avenues of communication outside of the standard phone call, from messaging and SMS to social media, and perhaps one day extended reality.
- **Integrations and flexibility:** The CCaaS environment provides exceptional flexibility to companies who need to build the perfect contact centre based on their own unique needs. Today’s open environments allow for everything from contact centres built

on Microsoft Teams to tools integrated with CRM and helpdesk technology for an end-to-end customer view.

Contact Centres Tomorrow: Looking Ahead

Customer expectations are higher than ever, and today’s clients won’t easily forgive brands who fail to demonstrate their commitment to putting their needs first. Your contact centre is your opportunity to prove yourself to your target audience, showing them empathy, efficiency, and a commitment to personalised experiences.

As technology continues to evolve and the interactions companies have with customers continue to change, we may even see the arrival of new avenues in the contact centre. Already, certain companies are beginning to experiment with adding extended reality to their contact centre ecosystem, alongside video and text.

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Unlocking the Full Potential of Voice for the Optimal Contact Centre Experience



Andy Elliot
VP Global Marketing
AudioCodes

audiocodes.com

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Over the past couple of years, it's fair to say that the contact centre market has experienced a revolution. Driven initially by global pandemic-enforced lockdowns, customer traffic to contact centres has reached new heights. This, in turn, has spurred the rapid adoption of new technologies to keep up with these trends.

But despite the increasing popularity of digital channels for getting in touch with enterprises, one thing remains as true as ever. And that is, quite simply, that the vast majority of customers still prefer to communicate with contact centres using voice. In fact, Metrigy put that number as high as 85% in research released in 2021.

So it's pretty clear, then, that delivering innovative solutions for the voice communication channel is of paramount importance for achieving an optimal customer experience.

Now You're Talking

When it comes to creating such solutions, AudioCodes is right at the front of the pack. Thanks to our proven track record of close to three decades in the voice arena, hundreds of contact centres worldwide already trust us to help make their customer service dreams a reality. But what's the best way to put voice communication centrestage, where it belongs?



AudioCodes Live CX is a portfolio of solutions for innovating and modernising contact centres with a modular suite of voice and video solutions to deliver an unbeatable customer experience. These solutions include:

- **SIP Trunk Connectivity (BYOC)** – Forms an effective demarcation point between the contact centre's VoIP network and the service provider's SIP trunk, performing SIP protocol mediation and media handling while securing the enterprise VoIP network.
- **Microsoft Teams Direct Routing Integration** – Enables the integration of Microsoft Teams with the contact centre infrastructure for voice collaboration between agents and Microsoft Teams users within the same organisation.
- **Connectivity to Third-Party Applications** – Out-of-the-box integration with many voice applications, including voice biometrics, recording, analytics, voice activated credit card processing and much more.
- **Work from Anywhere** – Based on AudioCodes' WebRTC technology, this solution allows an agent to work from any remote location via a web browser without installing plugins or downloading an application.

- **Click-to-Call** – Leverages WebRTC technology to enable customers to initiate VoIP calls over the internet directly from the company's website or mobile application and continue browsing undisturbed.
- **Enabling Conversational AI** – The **VoiceAI Connect solution** creates a communication hub between the contact centre and any bot framework and cognitive speech service to support virtually all voice-bot use cases such as virtual agents or agent assist.

Making It Easy

Because we want to bring these cutting-edge solutions to as wide a market as possible, AudioCodes is proud to partner with the leading names in contact centre solutions, including Genesys, Avaya, Anywhere365 and others.

And to make getting started even easier, AudioCodes offers a range of different consumption models, from full SaaS solutions to flexible professional services. Our experts can help to design, plan, deploy and operate the solutions, letting enterprises focus on what's important – staying ahead of the competition by providing excellent customer service.

A “Total Experience” Approach Can Transform the Customer Experience

AVAYA

Experiences That Matter



Paul Lang

Senior Director, Contact
Centre Solutions Marketing
Avaya

avaya.com

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A new study from IDG and Avaya shows that companies today generally believe in the importance of customer experience (CX) that the majority of global companies (89%) say customer experience is an intrinsic part of their brand value and 83% say creating the best possible experience for customers is everybody's responsibility. Almost all have a dedicated customer experience function that is typically headed by a director-level or above title. This was highest in the US and India (98%), Canada (96%) and Middle East and North Africa (88%).

The importance of CX is backed-up by **PwC**, which says that organisations that get it right garner a 16% price premium on products and services while increasing loyalty. On the flipside, 32% of consumers will walk away from a brand they love after just one bad experience.

Total it up

Today's very competitive economy is based on experiences. It's therefore essential to have a cohesive strategy that's end-to-end and empowers employees



to serve customers with the best possible experience irrespective of how the customer wants to connect with the company. This type of cohesive strategy unites all aspects of an experience, including the customer experience, employee experience (EX), user experience (UX), and multiexperience (MX). The combination of all these is total experience (TX). To succeed, enterprises today need a total experience approach to supporting customers that's supported by best-in-class technology.

A total experience strategy is key

Most companies (83%) say addressing customer needs means giving them memorable and personal brand experiences in the moment and that to achieve this, it's crucial to empower employees to feel accountable for customer outcomes (82%). A total experience strategy here could include tools such as web chat, email, text messaging, chatbots, intelligent routing, composable employee desktops and phone support.

In addition to deploying multiple modes of communication, it's important for companies to make customer experience seamless no matter what technology is being used.

Customers often get frustrated if they call in with an issue and are passed on from one representative to another and must keep explaining their problem multiple times.

Once companies understand how their customers prefer to communicate with them, they can choose the best tools for their employees to use with them. Empowering employees with tools that simplify support can transform customer experience and doing so is critical to true customer-centricity. Of those surveyed, 43% believe that empowering employees to feel accountable for customer outcomes is crucial, while 42% concur that user experience is the result of how tech, data and humans interact.

The bottom line

For companies to succeed, they must prioritise a cohesive total experience approach to customer service that makes use of the right technology. Companies that embrace this approach are well-positioned for growth. To learn more about how Avaya OneCloud™ CCaaS can help you deliver a total experience, **visit our website** to watch a demonstration.

A Contact Center that Unifies the Agent Workflow and Simplifies Operations is Essential to Exceeding the Needs of the Intelligent Consumer



Venky Balasubramanian
Founder & CEO
Plivo

contacto.com

GET IN TOUCH >

The business-critical role assumed by Contact Centers has been driven by mounting customer expectations and requires more personalized touchpoints and faster issue resolution.

Consumers and the technologies they use are increasingly intelligent and require smarter solutions as we enter the next chapter of the unified Contact Center.

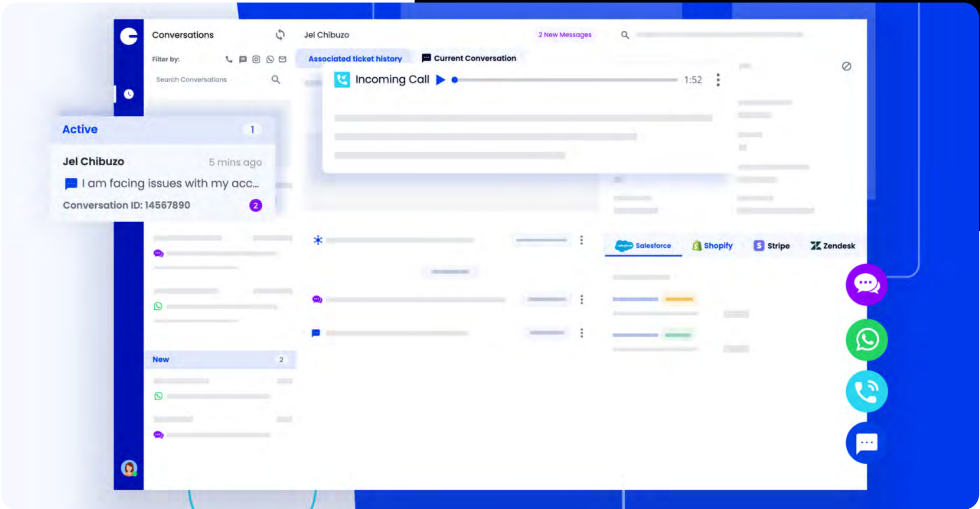
In the past couple of years, businesses have adopted modules from legacy vendors that promised features like AI, automations, self service, and native analytics within their existing solutions. They thought they were purchasing the future, only to realize three things:

- Simplicity and flexibility are key with customer experience technology. Plugging in a module doesn't necessarily equate to a personalized customer experience.
- Contextual agent experience is more important than ever to build customer loyalty.
- Voice as a channel contains incremental costs across every CCaaS provider, and it adds up quickly.

While the Contact Center space is approaching maturity, it won't truly arrive until we accept as an industry certain methodologies and tech prerequisites for the platforms that power the customer service experience.

Contact Center software must serve as the primary hub of a modern CX tech stack

Contact Center software needs to provide an intuitive experience for agents and a seamless experience for customers.



A single platform that can adapt and be customized is essential. Noncustomizable tools with certain nonnative features are a nonstarter.

Verticalization of the Contact Center

Mid-year 2021, communications API industry veteran Plivo launched a powerful yet simple Contact Center platform — with fully native communication channels and analytics — to address the maturity gaps in an established and fast-evolving space. Plivo's engineering team built a unified platform to manage the entire CX workflow, optimized the add-on costs of voice communications, and integrated it with the other complementary CX tools in your existing tech stack, all powered by Plivo's communications API platform.

The result is **Contacto**, a fully native platform that integrates with tools like Salesforce, Shopify, Zendesk, Kustomer, Servicenow, and more. Contacto was architected to drive customer loyalty and reduce complexity, while ensuring that agents have a simple and seamless experience with their workflows. With common pain points in the customer experience as its focal point, Contacto was built to level up CCaaS technology using real-world CX gaps as the North Star. These include:

- Customer experience, on their terms: Meet your customers on the channels and devices they demand.
- Unified agent desktop experience: One platform manages all interactions with continual context available so your customers don't have to repeat themselves — ever.
- Simple configuration and drag-and-drop workflow builder: Build powerful no-code workflows that keep your agents moving forward and your customers happy.

Contacto, Powered by Plivo

The Contacto Contact Center experience is the next chapter in Plivo's rich history. Contacto is built on Plivo's Premium Communications Platform, which has been proven for scale over the last 10 years with billions of API requests each month. It natively supports voice and emerging channels like in-app chat, WhatsApp, and social media and has prebuilt integrations with existing applications like Salesforce, Zendesk, Shopify, Kustomer, and more.

We are glad to be here, and we can't wait to bring the Contact Center space to maturity with the help of our amazing customers and our strong foundation in scaling the Plivo API platform globally in 190+ countries.

AI Tools for the New Age Contact Centre



Martin Taylor
Deputy CEO
and Co-Founder
Content Guru

contentguru.com

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the modern contact centre as we know it. A full 87.5% of people now believe that human-to-bot interactions will increase over the next decade. Customer Experience (CX) is now the key differentiator between businesses, and AI is fast becoming an essential part of any business's CX improvement strategy.

But when faced with a whole host of cutting-edge AI tools and techniques at their fingertips, it can be tough for contact centre leaders to discern what technology will benefit them most. With this in mind, here are three fool-proof ways for AI to improve CX in the contact centre.

Incorporate AI NLP in the IVR

As the first point of contact for customers trying to reach an organisation over the phone, it is crucial that IVR menus are adapted to the needs of the caller. AI-powered Natural Language Processing (NLP) allows callers to input data or navigate an IVR menu using speech, reducing customer effort and making CX smoother. NLP can be applied not only at the top of call but throughout – with stereo audio breakout enabling instant analysis of data from both caller and agent. Integrations with knowledge management systems



then feed agents a continual stream of approved information to help them solve complex issues quickly and effectively. This cuts into the average 10% of call time spent looking up information.

Machine Learning and Machine Agents

Machine Learning is a branch of AI that enables applications to make improved decisions based on data insights, with minimal human intervention. This technology learns from historical customer interactions to make contact routing more accurate with experience. This means that routing is no longer confined to departments, but can be pinpointed to the individual or system most suited to providing the customer service outcome.

Content Guru's storm® Machine Agents™, powering chatbots, leverage machine learning and NLP to interpret customer intent and respond in a human-like way. This is highly advantageous when high contact volumes occur and available customer service advisors remain limited. Much like most humans, Machine Agents have the ability to learn from experience and improve

on a continual basis. With this technology, self-service interactions become more personalised than ever, and provide further opportunities for customer feedback and conversation, in turn helping increase brand loyalty.

Machine Agents can also make use of Image Recognition (IR) technology, a type of AI that sees objects and information in pictures and makes automated decision-support recommendations based on this. IR enables contact centres to speed up or automate some decisions, or flag images that require the close attention of a human eye.

An Innovative Solution

brain® is Content Guru's AI toolkit, which can be deployed alongside the **storm** Contact Centre-as-a-Service solution to enhance communications infrastructure through applying cutting-edge, AI-driven capabilities. brain brings together the latest exciting AI technology in an accessible form, providing customers across the globe a highly intelligent AI-powered solution, tailored to meet their individual requirements and objectives.



Improving FCR In the Contact Centre

We can obsess about metrics in the contact centre, from Average handling time (AHT) to service level, but what really matters to customers? Get it right the first time!

Generally speaking, customers are willing to wait for a minute or two, as long as we get things right at the first attempt.

Easier said than done; I hear you shout. If it were that easy, we would be doing it already, and perhaps customer satisfaction would not lag. Of course, this is true. But there are quick fixes to increase FCR through workforce optimisation (WFO). Here are three excellent examples.

1. Omnichannel Contact

When COVID struck, contact centres rushed to the cloud. Doing so kept the lights on, yet many had to temporarily downgrade their capabilities, moving away from customized on-premise technology.

While contact centres can build these back in the cloud and improve them, it takes time to organise the ideal omnichannel ecosystem where context follows the customer. Without this, agents often lack the information to handle calls at the first attempt. Even if they do, it will likely take much longer than it should.

Alongside this, contact centres are also building on their digital proposition to keep pace with disruptors. Rushing the process of developing self-service and online solutions is not conducive to excellent CX, often leading to escalations and low FCR rates. By instead taking a more systematic approach, tackling the most common queries first, contact centres can develop a better omnichannel automation strategy.

2. Reconsider KPIs

Agents are sometimes quick to close tickets or customer queries because a target looms over their heads. AHT targets are an excellent example, encouraging agents to rush through customer conversations, a behaviour that does not bode well for FCR.

Also, consider the FCR measure in itself. Is it truly accurate? For example, measuring repeat calls is sometimes not an accurate reflection, as the customer could phone back about a different issue. As such, it distorts the results, and the actions taken in respect to changing FCR rates may not have the intended impact.

3. Bolster Agent Training

Another quick win when trying to improve FCR rates starts with people. How often does the contact centre fail to resolve something the first time because agents lack the necessary training?

Consider the frequent scenario of dealing with demanding customers. In such a situation, diffusing customer tension is an invaluable skill, helping us avoid customer queries escalating unnecessarily and empowering people to do the right thing the first time for customers. But few agents receive high-quality training to prepare them for these tense interactions.

Even the simplest of tips, such as letting the customer vent, acknowledging the problem, and showing empathy, make all the difference in calming the customer and boosting the chances of FCR.

Final Thoughts

To further enhance FCR, contact centres can start thinking about turning to the latest and greatest in AI technology. Yet, sometimes, reverting to basics can really help. Walking the customer journey, being clear on processes, analysing data, and building agent skillsets ultimately makes for a much more efficient operation. As a result, FCR



Garry Gormley

Owner/Founder
FAB Solutions



rates soar, customer satisfaction grows, agents are happier, and the bottom line looks much healthier.

Bio

Garry Gormley is the Owner and Founder of FAB Solutions, a contact centre experience consultancy that helps contact centre operational teams improve CX through process improvement, outsourcing, and use of technology. With nearly 20 years in the contact centre industry, he understands the dynamics and moving parts of the contact centre and what impacts customer experience first-hand. Having spent most of his working career in the contact centre industry, supporting and leading critical projects around Quality Assurance, regulatory change, Sales transformation and people development, Garry has built up a significant profile within the contact centre space.

Avoid the Risks of a Contact Centre Cloud Migration



Chris O'Brien
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As more enterprises embrace the need for full-scale digital transformation, contact centre cloud migrations have accelerated. Recent data from **Gartner Research** suggests that at least half of contact centres will have migrated to the cloud at some point this year. Additionally, the latest **AVANT 6-12 Report** forecasts that the CCaaS market, which currently represents \$3 billion in sales worldwide, will account for \$10.5 billion by 2027. Most IT decision-makers surveyed were planning to migrate by mid-2022, if they hadn't already started the process.

As workforces have transitioned to remote or hybrid models and enhanced digitally driven methods of delivering customer experience in the wake of the pandemic, these changes have become essential. The cloud no longer seems optional — it's the 21st-century way of doing business.

Although the benefits of cloud migration are clear for many organisations, the barriers to a successful migration are often less apparent. Too many companies are quick to undertake a migration project without engaging all teams who will be impacted, or without assessing the full range of considerations required for a smooth transition.

Those who enter the process unprepared are likely to encounter problems that can add unplanned weeks or months to the process. Common issues that occur during contact centre migrations include:

- Missing data caused by incomplete system mapping and documentation
- Inefficient and/or incomplete testing processes that fail to pinpoint critical errors
- Security concerns in safeguarding protected customer and employee data
- Interruptions to the customer journey resulting in poor customer experiences



These roadblocks often lead to inertia among leadership, further slowing the process and resulting in overspend. A report by McKinsey and Company noted that companies spend 14% more overall on cloud migration than anticipated, and this often results in scaling back or not completing a full migration.

In addition to increased costs associated with extended timelines, businesses should consider the costly impact of damage to customer experiences during the migration period. Systems supporting customer interactions on both the legacy and new cloud platforms need to be continually tested and monitored — before, during, and after the transition.

Despite the potential risks, companies that plan well and work with key partners are setting themselves up for a successful transition, in addition to fully realising the benefits of operating from the cloud.

Ultimately, cloud migration for your contact centre should be part of a larger digital transformation mindset and implementation within your organisation. The goal is to deliver a flawless customer journey. Simply moving

contact centre technology to the cloud won't accomplish that on its own; it requires a detail-oriented view of systemic changes, supportive processes, and the right technology partners to help ensure better customer experiences throughout the migration process and beyond.

No matter which cloud contact centre platform you select for your migration, Cyara helps you make a seamless transition. Our system documents your IVR setup from the outset so you can build out a new and fully realized customer journey in the cloud.

We support this journey with AI-infused desktop technologies for agents, and we automate testing and system monitoring so you can efficiently deliver high-quality CX and launch updates more quickly. An efficient, automated testing process—one that's implemented throughout the development cycle — is particularly important.

With these measures in place, companies that work with Cyara see cloud migration that's up to twice as fast as those that don't. Not only that, but they see development cycles shortened by 40% to 70%, thanks to efficient testing and monitoring.

Making Omnichannel Customer Service Seamless & Efficient



Gary Bennett
VP UKI/MEA/Northern
Europe
Enghouse Interactive

enghouse
interactive.co.uk

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The customer journey has never been more complex, spanning multiple channels and consumer devices. Fifteen years ago, the average consumer used two touchpoints when making a purchase – now they use almost six, according to Marketing Week. This explosion in channels is driven by changing customer requirements and the fact that different channels have different strengths. For example, online self-service delivers instant answers, video provides the ability to show a faulty product, while email delivers a written audit trail, and the telephone brings personal, conversational help.

Take the example of a consumer buying a holiday. They might start their research on their mobile, ask some basic questions via self-service and then escalate to chat or the phone to get more detailed answers to their queries. Finally, they may switch to a PC with its larger screen to do a final comparison and make their booking.

The entire omnichannel process therefore has to be seamless, consistent and joined-up if you are to keep your customers happy. They don't want to have to repeat themselves or endlessly rekey information. And this isn't just about digital channels – Forrester research found that 45% of consumers expect shop staff to know about online products and promotions.



The benefits of an effective omnichannel approach are clear - fail to provide the experience that consumers want, and they'll leave, hitting your bottom line. Research by Omnisend found consumers that make contact through three or more channels are 250% more likely to buy and go on to spend 13% more per order.

Yet delivering a joined-up experience at scale, balancing resources and integrating systems can be difficult. In fact, 87% of consumers say that companies need to focus more on delivering a seamless experience. How do you achieve this?

The Route To An Omnichannel Customer Experience

At Enghouse Interactive we focus on delivering technology and expertise that maximises the value of every customer interaction, across every channel. Our integrated **suite of solutions**, supported by a full range of deployment methods, includes omnichannel contact centre, self-service, attendant operator consoles, knowledge management, call billing and reporting, video, and quality management. All these solutions

are modular enabling you to add additional functionality as and when your requirements and budget dictate.

With integrations into industry-leading CRM and back office applications your agents can get a 360° view of the customer and previous interactions to help resolve enquiries first time, every time. Powerful, intuitive reporting and quality management puts you in control of measuring and improving the quality of omnichannel service.

Enghouse's solutions are platform independent and certified with a range of industry-leading systems including Cisco, Avaya, NEC and Microsoft Teams, helping to drive collaboration, consistency and higher customer satisfaction.

Our technology ensures that you have the right capabilities in place to successfully deliver an omnichannel customer experience every time, and across multiple channels from voice and IVR to chatbots, self-service, email, web chat and social media. Whatever your specific omnichannel challenges, we can help to connect people, processes, and systems to deliver a seamless, efficient, and joined-up experience.

Establishing your Own Pathway to the AI-Driven Contact Centre



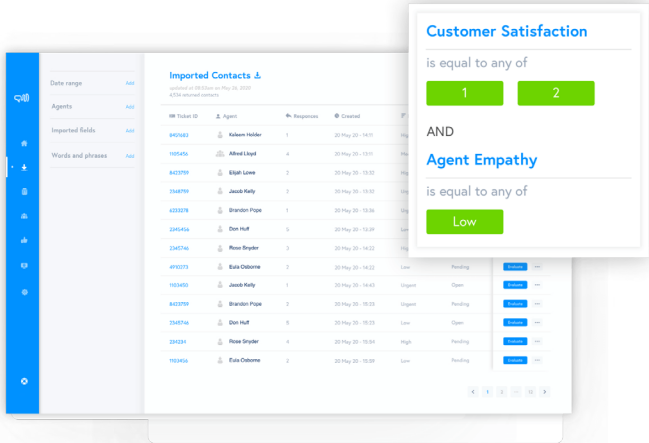
Matthew Jones
Head of Go-To-Market
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Quality Assurance and Performance Management are two hot topics within the Contact Centre today as leaders grapple to retain their best agents and have greater oversight of customer conversations. Many Heads of Quality Assurance and Contact Centres have a strategic vision for the future of their Quality Assurance function, but often lack an operationally approved roadmap for how to get there. As a result, many make the mistake of trying to shoot for the moon at their first attempt. Often, this results in expensive projects with the “Analytics elite” at the expense of front-line teams.

At EvaluAgent we believe confusion and uncertainty shouldn't be a rite of passage in the contact centre quality assurance (QA) journey... With a noisy market and constantly evolving technology which is often oversold, figuring out what QA features your centre needs to thrive today vs. making sure it's fit for purpose in the future becomes a throbbing headache.



Instead, we believe everyone is on their own journey when it comes to QA and Performance Improvement. Some organisations have just started building their first team, whereas others are looking at ways it can scale. In fact, I'm sure we've all wondered where we are on our QA journey at one point or another. What should I be focusing on to ensure my business flourishes? How can I engage my agents? How can I increase coverage to have greater visibility as to what is happening in my contact centre?

Because we were founded by former QA leaders, we know how hard it is to consistently deliver great customer service in an environment of metrics, optimisation and repetition. We understand the frustrations of having to manage complex spreadsheets, interpret unwieldy management reports, and the struggle of using software that doesn't really work. We want to turn Quality Management into more than a tick-box exercise and help make contact centres home to a great customer experience.

EvaluAgent's Smart Quality software blends AI with the best bits of traditional QA to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of

Quality Assurance teams. Automating admin and streamlining workflows, this smarter approach empowers teams to evaluate more interactions, quickly identify areas for improvement and hold meaningful coaching conversations in a single platform.

We've developed an interactive tool called **Maturity** where you can quickly find out where you are on your QA journey, understand how we can help and get personalised advice from the experts on how to take your QA to the next level. You'll be able to get clearer insight to enable you to take better steps.

If you manage a contact centre, then you already know the power of feedback. The best centres are built on it – customers giving feedback, agents receiving feedback, and teams sharing feedback with each other. Now with our Maturity tool you can get personalised feedback on your QA activities, making it simpler than ever to understand where you are and what to do next.

Hammer - Automated CX Assurance for Contact Centers



Jeff Reedy

Vice President, Product
Hammer

hammer.com

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Modern contact centers strive to keep pace with ever-changing business needs and customer expectations with constant low-risk and high-velocity transformation. As a result, deploying next generation contact center technologies has become the norm to enhance or improve customer service standards. This often involves multiple vendors, legacy and advanced technologies aimed at reducing unnecessary calls, increasing self-service and proactive service, or repositioning live assistance. Yet, despite this, a disconnect exists as 80% of companies suggest they deliver a superior customer experience and only 8% of their customers agree.

De-risk and accelerate change cycles of next-gen CCaaS deployments

We know that positive CX interactions reduce customer churn and drive business growth. Consumers expect to use channels of choice that work as intended. Yet, a single business or technology-driven change:

- Can pose a significant risk to the stability and performance of your communication technologies
- Places enormous pressure on technical teams to deliver these changes, especially with aggressive deployment timeframes
- Increases the importance of maintaining control over quality assurance

Instead, de-risk and accelerate change cycles of next-generation CCaaS deployments with automated end-to-end testing.

Hammer - Making customer experience work

The **Hammer Cloud platform** provides the proof you need to implement technology changes with confidence. Our testing solutions pre-empt significant problems by delivering expert, end-to-end validation of expected real-world performance. We offer the most comprehensive, flexible and scalable pre-deployment testing capabilities



to predict the behaviour of complex IP-based environments in the real world. Our integrated voice, video and data testing offers insight into the quality of the application as customers experience it, enabling you to overcome the complexity inherent in today's sophisticated, hybrid communication environments.

Assurance

Hammer engagements provide agility, significantly reducing deployment and upgrade risk ensuring new capabilities are delivered faster and more reliably.

Service

Dedicated technical support with the flexibility to assist you as you develop your CX strategy in today's unique market conditions

Flexibility

Hammer is platform agnostic with on-premise, hybrid and cloud subscription-based options to meet the demands of today's CX market.

The Hammer platform, true end-to-end user experience testing

The Hammer Cloud Platform is 100% focused on customer experience. It's an easy-to-use, fully automated self-service testing platform for voice applications and contact center systems, helping operational and DevOps teams to quickly detect and measure:

- Performance issues, including capacity limitations
- Human-triggered configuration errors
- IVR defects
- Carrier routing issues
- Application server and backend host latency
- CTI data and routing errors

We achieve these by automating Discovery, QA, Regression, Load and ongoing active Monitoring efforts across the entire software development lifecycle.

The Hammer Cloud Platform offers a comprehensive suite of SaaS-based technology that enables test case design and test automation:

- Hammer Voice Explorer: Dynamic IVR discovery and automated test creation
- Hammer On Demand QA: Functional, Regression and systems integration testing
- Hammer On Demand Performance: Load, smoke and disaster recovery testing
- Hammer VoiceWatch: Ongoing Production Monitoring and alerting
- Hammer RTC Virtual Agents: Enables full end-to-end testing of both CTI and CRM functions
- Hammer Ohm: Automated voice quality testing and monitoring for work-from-home environments



2022

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#BigCXUpdate

The logo for CX Awards 2023. It features the text "CX AWARDS" in white, bold, sans-serif font, with "2023" in a smaller white font below it, all enclosed within a dark blue diamond shape with a thin red border. The background of the entire right half of the image is dark blue with scattered red triangles and dots.

CX
AWARDS
—2023—

COMING SOON

awards.cxtoday.com

4 Tips for Leading Effective Customer Conversations



Robert Schoenfield
COO
Krisp

krisp.ai

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Customer experience evolved massively during the pandemic. This forced many businesses, including contact centers, to take a digital-first approach to customer service.

With customer conversations now happening across multiple channels and platforms — from email and chatbots to social media and beyond — there's a lot of choice around how, when, and where customers can get support. Sure, this has streamlined the customer service experience, but it has also made those experiences feel less personal.

We found that many consumers were not simply looking for the fastest possible way to resolve their issues. Faced with lockdowns and feelings of isolation, they just wanted to hear a helpful voice on the other end of the line. This required customer service agents to lead those conversations with empathy — the key ingredient for effective customer conversations today.

Building blocks for stronger customer interactions

The expectation for a human-like touch across the entire customer journey has recently emerged. The question is, how can customer service teams rise to the challenge?



1. Create human-centric customer experiences

Creating experiences that see the world through your customers' eyes is essential. We have to remember that customer service interactions aren't merely transactions — even though the end goal is to solve a customer's issue. They are dialogues with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Customer service agents must guide customers on that journey. Simply shifting to a more human-oriented (versus solutions-oriented) mindset can make a huge difference.

2. Improve onboarding and soft skills training

Just as it takes time to master hard skills, many soft skills, including empathy, must be practiced over and over again to become second nature. That's why contact centers must invest in effective onboarding and ongoing learning to provide agents with the right soft skills training — from day one — along with 24/7 access to valuable learning resources to help them become more effective communicators. This is even more important in a remote work environment, as it ensures greater consistency around the customer experience.

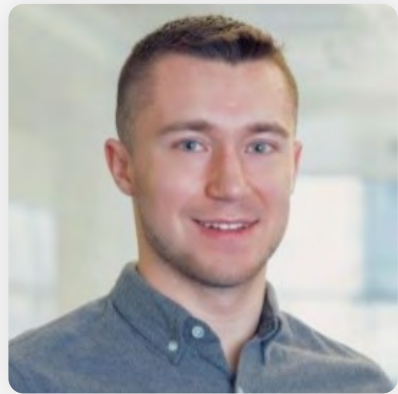
3. Focus on the right metrics

Customer service is typically measured via metrics such as the number of contacts, customer satisfaction scores (CSAT), Net Promoter Scores (NPS), first call resolutions, etc. While CSAT, for example, is a great way to understand how satisfied customers are, it doesn't tell you how a customer felt during an interaction — which is critical for understanding the real business impact that a human approach to customer service can have on satisfaction, engagement, and trust.

4. Build an infrastructure that supports remote work

Contact centers have had to leverage technology to keep their workforce productive. One of the biggest challenges faced by customer service agents, however, was background noise at home. That's why solutions like **Krisp AI-powered noise cancellation** — compatible with all softphones and headsets that contact centers use today — became a game-changer in this new work environment. It has helped agents lead more personal, secure, trustworthy, and stress-free customer conversations, without worrying about any of the distractions swirling around them.

A CX Odyssey: Predictions and Trends for 2022... and Beyond!



Justin Sheil

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If the past two years have taught us anything, it's that the customer service landscape can be turned upside down overnight and challenge the industry as a whole in ways that were previously unimaginable. The rapid shifts over the last two years have caused businesses to grapple with challenging circumstances.

Consumer behavior has also changed dramatically, forcing brands to pivot or get left behind entirely. Businesses continued to focus on online operations and map out how to deal with new Gen Z behaviors, changing consumer preferences in channels, and a greater desire for self service.

According to our customer service retail report, 90% of consumers would not shop with a retailer again if they provided bad customer service. For brands this means there is very little room for error.

We talked to brands and customer service leaders to understand what they expect to stick, shift and change in 2022 and... beyond!



Digitization of the World as We Know It

Over the course of the past two years, consumers and brands alike learned that they can purchase nearly anything digitally, from groceries to telemedicine. In other words, it's the digitization of the world as we know it. Research indicates 85% of consumers plan to continue to shop online more often even after the pandemic subsides. Combine that with the fact that younger generations prefer digital-first methods, and it's clear that brands need to be doubling down on optimizing their digital experiences.

According to Matt Idema, VP of Business Messaging at Meta, "We all experimented more with digital channels during the pandemic, and that's not going to go back to where it was prior to the pandemic. There is going to be some increased level of expectation from customers that your business is able to service them both in person and digitally".

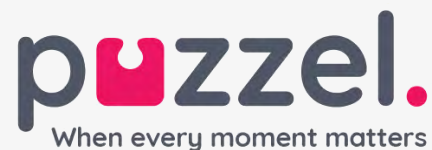
Brands need to ensure they are preparing for new channels and preferences to service consumers virtually. For example, clothing

brands need to have a plan to replicate fitting and sizing experiences that allows consumers to purchase with confidence in lieu of being able to actually try the product on in a physical store. For furniture and home decor brands, this might mean implementing augmented reality tools to allow customers to visualize a piece of furniture in their home virtually without ever stopping into a showroom.

Furthermore, the metaverse is on the horizon if it's not here already. With it being touted as the successor to the internet, the metaverse is sure to bring massive amounts of disruption to how brands develop relationships with their customers. With individual users interacting within their own 3-D digital universe, the metaverse can create experiences that are significantly more personalized and engaging, allowing brands to create the authentic, sustainable customer relationships they need to succeed.

Check out the full e-book to learn about five additional customer service trends that will make or break your business in 2022 and beyond.

Hybrid Experiences



Jonathan Allan
CMO
Puzzel

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Blending the best of physical and digital customer care

Discover why 75% of global executives are investing in hybrid experiences this year^[1] and why your business should be too.

Covid-19 has changed the way we live, work and shop. Everyday activities that once took place in person – from GP appointments to work meetings and grocery shopping – can now take place online. This has given rise to a new hybrid way of life, where we can connect with, work and share experiences with others no matter where we are.

What are hybrid experiences?

For businesses, this new way of life has created new ways to serve customers. Contact centres and customer service teams can now blend the best components of their physical and digital customer care to create highly efficient, personalised, and empathetic customer service experiences both in-store and online. Imagine, for example, that you want to upgrade your coffee machine; like most consumers today^[2], you begin your search online and check out the latest models on your favourite brand's website. After a few scrolls, a chatbot pops up: "Hi there! Would you like to see these models in action?" You accept and receive a live video call from a customer service agent who walks you through the products and helps you determine the best model for you.

Satisfied, you end the call and head straight to checkout. In just a few clicks, you've purchased your new machine and a new flavour of coffee pods recommended to you based on your previous

purchases. You've also opted in to receive monthly reminders on WhatsApp to top up your stock. This is the power of hybrid experiences and the future of customer service.

"Puzzel helps brands to deliver exceptional customer experiences by combining people and technology. We automate when it makes sense and enable your people in the moments that matter, to help you build customer relationships for life."
Frederic Laziou, Puzzel CEO

Three tips for delivering hybrid experiences

Orchestrate your channels

Hybrid experiences require a mix of live and self-service channels that connect and work seamlessly together.

When channels don't connect, customers can get stuck in loops and data gets lost in silos. So make sure your channels are well orchestrated so customers and information can move freely between them.

Avoid technology traps

Don't fall into the trap of thinking you need every technology under the sun to deliver great hybrid experiences.

Research shows the average contact centre agent uses 8.2 different systems and tools to resolve customer enquiries every day^[3]. So, consider what technologies are crucial for your customers' success and how they can be integrated and unified to streamline your agent experience.

Test, learn and refine

Experiment, learn fast and adapt your hybrid customer service strategy to find the best solution for your customers, agents and business. Make decisions based on data, not gut feel, and listen to feedback.

Discover how Puzzel can help you deliver exceptional hybrid experiences.

Visit us at puzzel.com

^[1] Deloitte

^[2] Salesforce

^[3] Gartner



Crafting a Total Experience Strategy for Businesses



Gaurav Johar
Practice Head -
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Kanishk Mehta
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Solutions Partner
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quantiphi.com

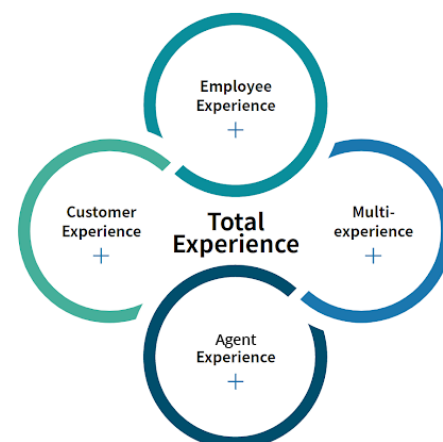
GET IN TOUCH >

A study by Gartner revealed that by 2026, over half of larger enterprises would need to switch to Total Experience (TX) within their business models to achieve world-class customer and employee advocacy levels. TX is a strategy for modern enterprises that combines and addresses various siloed experiences like User Experience (UX), Customer Experience (CX), Employee Experience (EX), Customer Service Agents Experience (AX), and Multi Experience (MX). Over the next few years, a comprehensive TX strategy would provide a competitive edge by driving insight-based actions across customer touchpoints.

Several organizational initiatives result in multiple new siloed technologies. The lack of integration among multiple siloed platforms leads to complexity and a broken experience. Hence, reducing the visibility over internal processes and customer interactions. This lack of visibility paralyzes organizations for taking appropriate measures.

Building blocks of total experience strategy

Choosing composable architecture over a siloed approach: Organizations should adopt composable platforms that provide multiple solutions in one place and enable insights into the end-to-end customer journey. A platform that manages channel integrations and connects virtual agents to these channels should also connect virtual agents to applications like salesforce for fulfillment. Also, they should provide detailed analytics, & enable feedback mechanisms for continuous improvement.



Enabling self-service for all stakeholders:

Whether it is employee, customer, or agent, self-service is the need of the hour. We enable independent, faster, and more intelligent services for end customers by empowering ecosystem stakeholders with information and guidelines. Organizations must deploy intelligent Assistive AI that enables:

- Self-service for employees
- Drive customers to reach resolutions by themselves
- Facilitate agents to answer queries more effectively

Industry-specific hyper-personalization:

Personalization of interactions varies as per industry context. Business context is crucial in communications with customers for every sector. A recent McKinsey survey of senior marketing leaders revealed only 15 percent of CMOs believe their company is on the right track with personalization. Organizations need to utilize **industry prebuilt templates** for faster implementation and reducing time to market.

Continuous improvement via feedback:

Improving both upstream and downstream interactions across employee, agent & customer will help build advocacy and trust. For example: introducing a Voice of Employee, Customer & Agent to periodically collect feedback and keep optimizing the overall experience. Quantiphi, with an AI-first digital engineering

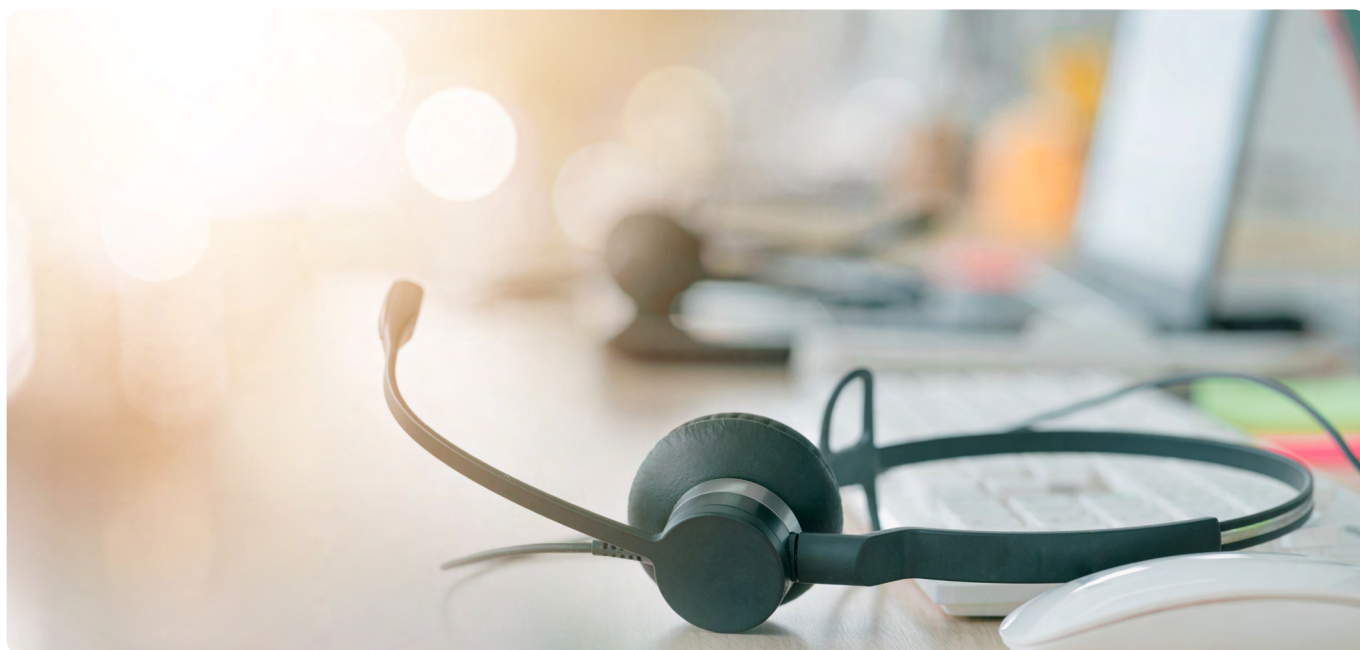
approach, believes in the four-step philosophy to empower organizations to enable their total experience strategy.

We leverage AI-led industry-focused products and accelerators for faster and more effective experience transformation and also facilitate tracking via performance metrics. With 400+ Conversational AI professionals who have worked on more than 200+ engagements, our in-house expertise allowed us to create a platform that helps design, develop, deploy and manage end-to-end total experience transformation solutions. Our time-tested HPNS approach of taking AI POCs to production environments ensures enterprise-grade total experience solutions for your businesses.

Quantiphi's solution suite offers the following primary benefits:

Speed – Significant reduction in time spent in the development and go-to-market
Cost-sensitive – Accelerators and in-house platforms reduce time & cost
Quality – With industry-focused and effectively designed virtual agents helps achieve maximum customer satisfaction

Reach out or write to our experts to understand ways to incorporate total experience strategy for your business.



The Changing Role of the Contact Centre In CX?

The perceived value of the contact centre differs from one company to the next.

At one end, many view the function as a cost, with little to no investment in technology, disjointed customer journeys, and non-existent employee welfare. Yet, at the other, many see the value that contact centres can offer, delivering consistent service and supporting personal growth and development.

Unfortunately, too many are stuck in the middle. Nevertheless, many more companies are evolving their thinking to the latter, perhaps due to two critical trends.

First, customer expectations have risen, with one-dimensional, slow service, and broken journeys no longer accepted by the modern consumer. The result is increasing pressure on organisations and agents to improve.

Second, employee expectations have also evolved. Poor onboarding, minimal training, broken systems and old-school “carrot and stick” management no longer cut the mustard.

These trends are ushering in a new era for the contact centre and a new level of CX. As such, self-service propositions are expanding, and channel choices are evolving.

With additional automation across these channels, queries that reach agents grow more complex. They require a new level of skill, capability, and empowerment. Therefore, operations must equip agents with the technology, processes and skills to resolve a range of difficult customer contacts.

After all, if customer experiences are essentially effortless, the contacts that filter through

are likely driven by unexpected frustrations. Building a better support framework will enable contact centres to engage in service recovery to rejuvenate CX.

On the effortless CX theme, contact centres can also contribute through proactive customer support - alongside self-service and virtual assistant implementations. By anticipating customer wants and needs, operations can inform, adjust, and optimise customer behaviour to increase chances of customer success.

Such a strategy is data-driven, enabling contact centres to develop hyper-personalised, slick experiences. Yet, there are many more use cases for harnessing the power of data, including automated quality and compliance, pop-up knowledge articles, and next best actions.

The underdeveloped “cost” contact centre will likely miss out on each initiative, falling behind the curve in meeting increasing customer and employee expectations. Instead, they press ahead with poorly embedded technology and manual workarounds. What’s more, poor data capture, slow extraction, and outdated analysis will contribute to disappointing performance.

With this lack of customer data to inform CX strategies, journeys become disjointed, adding to customer frustration, which leads to an agent job that no one wants. Employees may “vote with their feet” and not stand to be abused by angry customers; they simply won’t want to work in this environment.

Back to the original question, what is the changing role of the contact centre in customer experience? The contact centre can become an environment for learning and driving improvement.

The true heartbeat for any customer-focused organisation is setting and delivering the right strategic objectives. These must centre around modern customers, which - according



Phil Anderson

Director
The Forum



to McKinsey & Company: “Believe they can get whatever they want, whenever they want, within minutes.”

Supporting agents to deliver these experiences is also a critical consideration as contact centres become an increasingly crucial cog to raise standards in customer experience.

Bio

Beginning a career in contact centres in 1999, Phil went onto work as a resource planning analyst and specialist sales manager. After completing two years of studying for an advanced certificate in resource planning, winning contact centre innovation of the year award, and also becoming one of the first winners of the planning hero award, Phil started working for The Forum. Now the Director, he helps numerous businesses raise their standards in customer operations.

Beyond Average Handle Time (AHT) - Creating Mission Critical Contact Centers



Greg Zweig

Director of
Solutions Marketing
Ribbon Communications

rbbn.com

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In 1748 Benjamin Franklin famously wrote “time is money” in a book called *The American Instructor*, aimed at tradespeople. Franklin probably would have made an excellent contact center manager because where the phrase “time is money” is highly applicable. Lost productivity in a contact center adds up to increased labor costs, longer time to serve and potentially lower customer satisfaction. The larger the contact center, the more money is at risk.

For several decades contact center applications have focused on extracting minutes and then seconds out of transactions, first with just calls and now with omnichannel engagements. While that effort continues, many **large contact centers** have also learned that they need a foundational layer, or core, below their agent application to manage call routing and security. The scope of large contact centers continues to expand, making them more mission critical for many organizations and sadly a larger target for bad actors seeking to benefit from business disruption.

Over the past 15 years Ribbon has become a leading provider to contact centers, helping them scale and securing their networks. You might be thinking “Ribbon?! Aren’t they a vendor for carriers or an SBC company for Teams and Zoom? What is their role in contact centers?”

Ribbon’s connection to contact centers is tied to our carrier heritage. One of our first marquee contact center accounts was a big bank, with nearly 7,000 trunks (in those days a mix of mostly TDM and some IP). The bank’s contact center environment had grown so large that most enterprise contact center applications couldn’t effectively manage routing all of that traffic, particularly between centers. The bank recognized that they needed carrier grade services with carrier scale, resiliency, and security.



What that big bank learned, and similar large customers have since realized (Ribbon now counts over half of the top ten largest banks in the USA as customers, the biggest airlines, tech companies, insurance companies and more) is that they need a foundational element that operates below the contact center application layer. Contact center managers now recognize that their agent applications are architecturally optimized for customer experience, not large-scale routing, and security tasks. It’s more effective to abstract those tasks away from the agent application, turning those duties over to Ribbon’s “agnostic core”.

Ribbon’s agnostic core is a centralized **routing and security environment** that can handle massive amounts of call traffic. It uses a carrier grade high availability design coupled with multiple layers of redundancy customized to the organization’s needs, so it’s robust enough to shield centers from overloads and thwart today’s aggressive denial of security attacks, or similar disruptions.

With multiple layers of intelligent routing including DNIS, ANI, time of day, route congestion, etc., Ribbon’s core can shift traffic between sites or queues, including that

between multiple brands of contact center software, hence the reference to ‘agnostic’. That vendor independence makes it easier to execute an individual site upgrade or migrate to a new agent application, without disrupting organization-wide engagement. It also affords organizations greater freedom to negotiate for new technology or vendors, vs being held captive to legacy choices.

Unfortunately, as we noted prior, contact center managers now find their centers under more frequent and sophisticated attacks. Our analytics tools fight fire with fire, using machine learning to look for patterns and watch for known bad actors. Ribbon tools can automatically take action to respond to unauthorized network access, cyberattacks, denial of service attacks, fraud attempts, and network quality incidents.

In summary, we may not be the first brand you think of in the contact center space, yet we like to think we are one of the most important, working behind the scenes, enabling hundreds of thousands of secure engagements every day, assuring that no time is wasted. Hopefully, Franklin would approve.

The Convergence of the Contact Centre (CC), AI & Automation and CRM...

and why all eyes are on contact centre specialists



Tim Pickard

Chief Marketing Officer
Sabio Group

sabiogroup.com

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In recent years, there's been an explosion in digital interactions – through websites, social media channels and chatbots – with consumers stuck at home and brands embracing technology to enhance customer experiences.

Instigated by Covid-19, brand and consumer interactions have continued to increase during the last two years, as new and improved channels such as live chat, virtual assistants and knowledge-based bots find their place in the CX landscape.

But as those interactions become overwhelming, it's sparked the beginning of the next big movement in our industry – the convergence of the contact centre (CC), Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Automation and customer relationship management (CRM) spaces.

What does this mean for the contact centre & CC software vendors?

The alignment of CC, AI & Automation and CRM will evolve the CX landscape, enabling brands with the technology and data required to provide a unified, end-to-end customer engagement experience.

For contact centre technology vendors, it's now an extremely hot industry. The CC is no longer seen as a cost centre. Instead it's positioned front and centre of any CX strategy.

Market leaders and new, digital natives - each with millions of customers and managing overwhelming interactions - are now looking to the contact centre as the differentiator in CX, with the likes of Salesforce, Microsoft and Amazon intently watching developments.



Salesforce, the world's number one CRM provider, recently led a \$500m+ investment into Genesys, a leading provider of CC and CX software solutions. In a similar vein, also involving Salesforce, last year it completed the acquisition of Slack in a deal worth \$27.7 billion.

How Sabio is positioned in this new landscape

As individual components, all three of CC, AI & Automation and CRM are vitally important to achieving quality CX. But their integration creates a customer engagement 'sweet spot' that not many can offer their customers. On the flip side, there are not many vendors that have the capabilities and expertise within all those areas either.

But I'm pleased to say that Sabio is one that does have this capability.

Sabio is a global reaching digital CX transformation and CC technology specialist with major operations in the UK, Spain, France, Netherlands, Malaysia and Singapore.

With over 20 years' experience in helping clients optimise CC and CX performance,

Sabio specialise in cloud migration and AI/Automation, helping clients access the benefits available. Our clients are a mix of high-growth digital natives and large established enterprises seeking to transform their customer interaction and operations through digital processes, automation and business insights.

Sabio delivers solutions that seamlessly combine digital and human interactions to support outstanding CX. This is achieved through the adoption of our own technologies, as well as integrating with innovative, market leading tech from world-class partners in the industry such as Avaya, Genesys, Verint, Twilio, Google, Amazon and Salesforce.

Why Sabio?

**Sabio Service Advisor
Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Optimizing Call Centers with Conversation Intelligence



Surbhi Rathore
CEO and Co-Founder
Symbal.ai

symbal.ai

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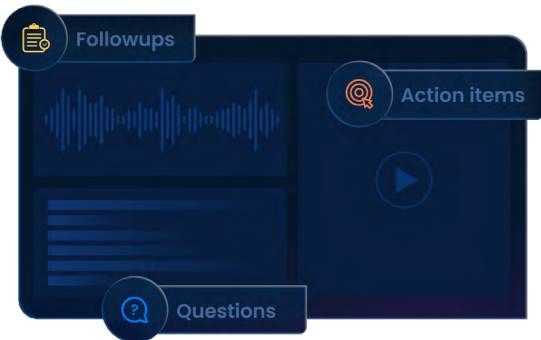
Whether businesses see contact centers as customer support or an expert help desk, the ability to effectively optimize conversations to reduce session handling times and improve customer experience are top priorities. Call center agents are the front line for many companies, solutions capable of analyzing conversations at scale and providing insights are critical.

Enhance customer conversations

Conversation Intelligence (CI) is artificial intelligence trained to surface contextual insights from natural (unstructured) human conversations. It doesn't just recognize but also understands what is being said in conversations.

CI solutions optimize customer interactions and reduce session time by enhancing transcription capabilities and supporting agents with key contextual insights (intelligence) such as questions asked, customer intent, and topics discussed. These insights are automatically detected to present agents with relevant answers and suggested response actions. Agents are presented with summaries, action items, and follow-ups, making it more efficient to manage customer sessions at scale.

Agent efficiency increases with automatic pre-filled call and chat dispositions and contextually adding dimensions to session logs. CI enables call centers to access structured information from call metadata or chat statistics, agent productivity, and frequently surfaced issues.



Benefits of integrating CI

- Better-equipped agents to improve customer experiences
- Faster issue resolution from automated real-time actions
- Conversation data and intelligence for agent training
- Visibility into common customer issues and requests

Don't build, but find the right CI provider

CI platforms, like Symbal.ai, provides solutions to achieve the following:

Real-time agent assists for voice, chat, emails, and video:

- Ingest real-time conversations by integrating CI with SIP/PSTN interfaces for your call center product or the Call Telephony Integration (CTI) interface.
- Transcriptions to help agents get a better understanding of the conversations in real-time
- Extract real-time topics, to recommend relevant knowledge-base articles linked to topics being discussion to help the agent access the right information instantly

Post-session agent dashboards:

- Auto detection of follow-ups and action items, post session, can automatically add follow-up appointments for the customer or agents

- Action items and topics can be used to provide recommendations for increasing customer satisfaction

Aggregated support intelligence:

- Analyze full conversations with contextual understanding across all emails, chats and voice call interactions connected to the same customer
- Aggregate conversations across all customers to understand sentiments across touchpoints, repeated topics, issues or upgrade requests, and preferred channels of conversation. All this information is available per conversation or across aggregate conversations.

About the Symbal.ai CI Platform

Symbal.ai provides a CI platform, capable of analyzing conversations across video, audio and text. It leverages proprietary machine learning (ML) algorithms that analyze customer care conversations, surfacing accurate insights and analytics in real-time.

Symbal.ai is capable of analyzing any natural human-to-human conversation across any customer use case. No upfront ML training is required, making it quick and easy to deploy. Those interested can sign up for a **developer account**, and process up to 1000 minutes of conversations for free per month.

How Plug-and-Play AI is Transforming Contact Centers



Jay Gupta
Product Marketing
Director AI & Automation
Talkdesk

[talkdesk.com](https://www.talkdesk.com)

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Customer service agents are the lifeblood of contact centers. Their soft skills, practical knowledge, creativity, and experience position them as the frontline experts. As organizations adopt digital-first strategies, they are opening up their customer base and introducing more ways to assist customers. However this has led to increased customer contact volumes, and traditional contact center tools are struggling to manage agent workload and scale high-quality customer service across all channels.

The power of AI in contact centers

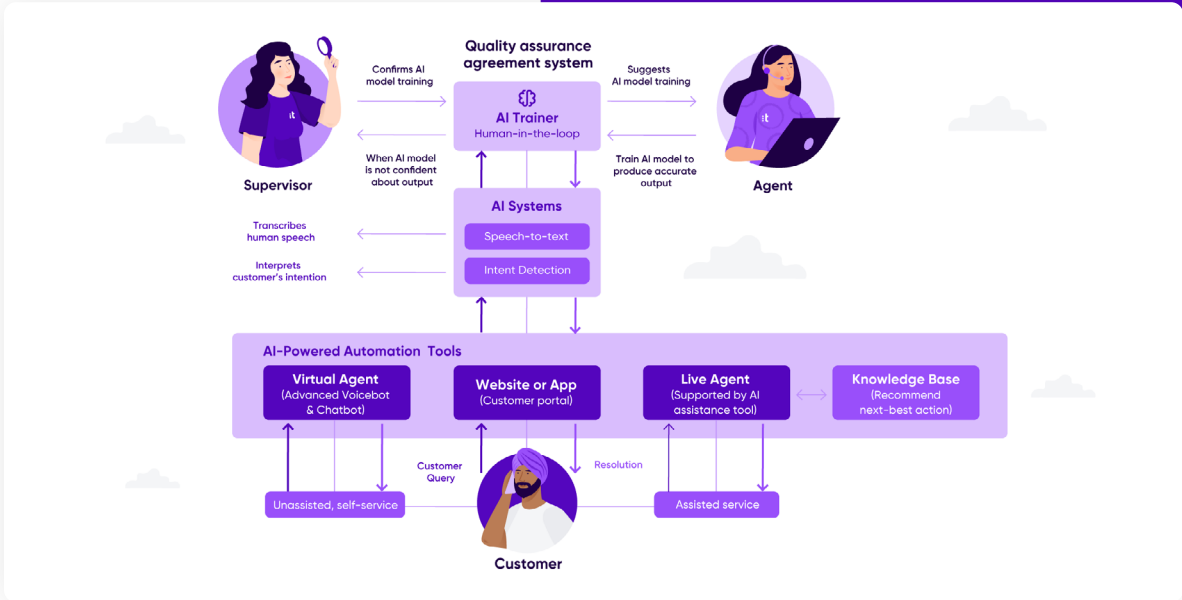
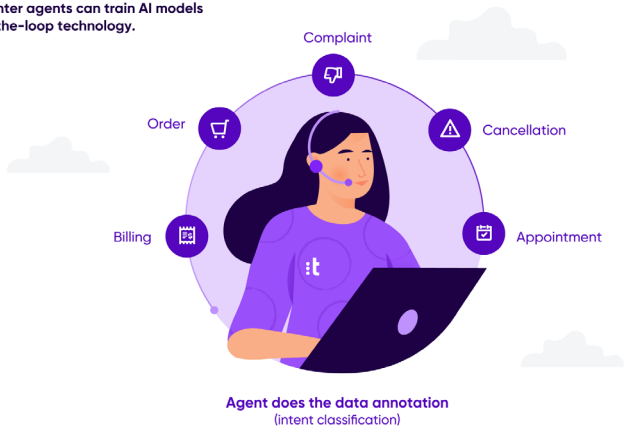
Contrary to popular fears, AI will redefine - not replace - the role of the agents. By intelligently automating repetitive, costly, and low-value tasks, agents can focus on higher-value tasks that offer more value to organizations.

Embracing AI means riding on its accuracy

AI model accuracy can decrease over time. It's the biggest reason why many technology giants like Facebook, Uber, and Amazon have teams of in-house data scientists - to maintain the predictive power of AI models.

However, data scientists are scarce, expensive, and out of reach for most organizations. Alternative options - like professional services—are just as costly. But there is a solution: human-in-the-loop technology.

How contact center agents can train AI models with human-in-the-loop technology.



What is human-in-the-loop technology?

Human-in-the-loop is a branch of Artificial Intelligence that leverages human expertise to train AI models. Humans can fine-tune and test AI models in-house, reducing the dependency on data scientists or professional services to solve simple accuracy problems.

How does Talkdesk use human-in-the-loop technology?

Talkdesk **AI Trainer** uses human-in-the-loop technology to enable non-technical staff to fine-tune AI models and maintain high levels of accuracy in AI-powered automation, with no code, just clicks.

AI Trainer provides contact centers with the tools to:

- Maintain high levels of AI accuracy.
- Operationalize AI training into the agents' everyday workflow.
- Enable continuous AI training without data scientists.

How does AI Trainer improve the accuracy of AI-powered automation?

Occasionally, an AI model is not confident about how to answer a customer query correctly. With Talkdesk AI Trainer, agents, and supervisors can review customer intents and transcriptions and provide a correct output for similar future queries, fine-tuning the accuracy of AI-powered tools.

Making AI success in the contact center: the road from investment to ROI

Human-in-the-loop technology enables contact centers staff to easily identify and correct repeating customer issues by training the underlying AI model before more customers experience the same problems.

- The main benefits of human-in-the-loop technology for contact centers include:
- Resolving cases faster by improving the accuracy and confidence of automations.
 - Optimising the cost per case by allocating tasks more efficiently between automated tools and manual agent effort.
 - Increasing CSAT and NPS scores with faster resolution times.

Conclusion

True conversational AI is around the corner, and a **delightful customer journey with AI** is now at the reach of any business. Companies no longer need to worry about a lack of in-house technical skills or budget constraints to deploy and operationalize AI.

With human-in-the-loop technology, the democratization of AI in the contact center will translate into endless possibilities and - most importantly - create a better customer experience.

The Five Foundational Competencies of Exceptional Customer-Focused Businesses



You're hearing a lot about customer experience – and how great ones come from businesses that embrace customer-friendly digital messaging channels, self-service options like chatbots that can provide instant answers, and proactive communications that anticipate needs before they even arise.

But how does a business adapt to provide both custom in-the-moment answers using digital expertise, and still make human agents available for more critical, high touch conversations?

And when a customer does speak to a human agent, how do you continuously enable the agent to provide answers quickly and accurately with the collaborative wisdom of AI-powered tools or by collaborating real time with anyone in the enterprise, so that they never feel alone or stuck?

Finally, how do you learn from that entire interaction, before a single phone call is placed to the contact center, and make it faster and more straightforward for the next customer, constantly delighting every customer that arrives at your virtual front door?

Let's look at five key attributes of a customer experience solution that empowers companies to provide exceptional interactions across the entire customer journey.

Listen: gather and create rich customer profiles

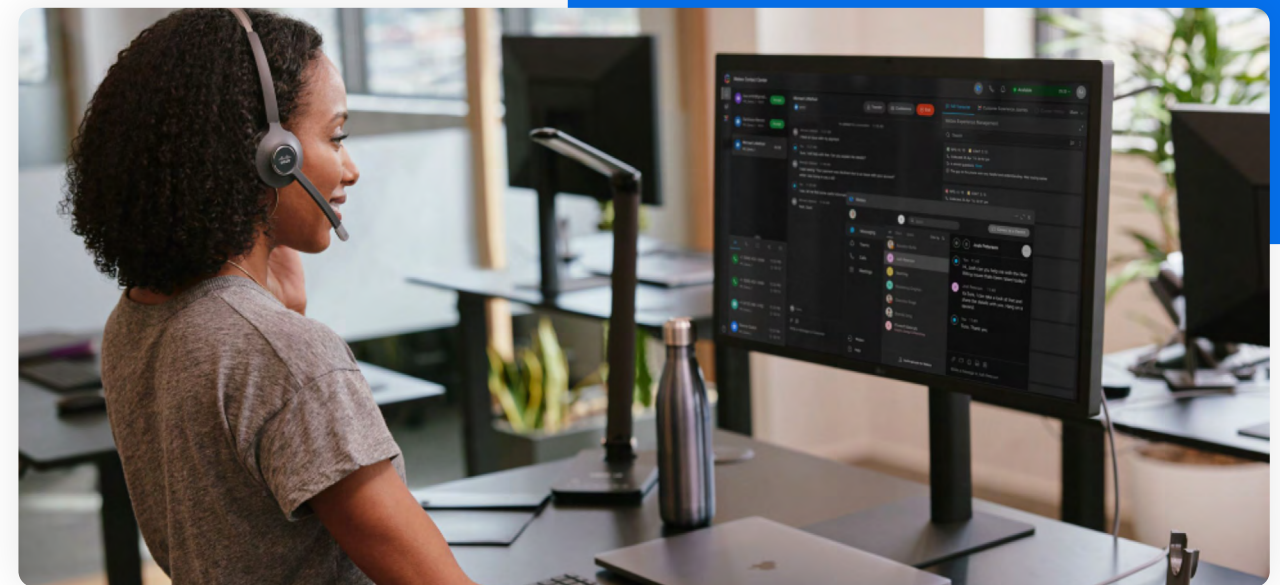
Listening means understanding your customers interactions and activities, so you can proactively identify issues before they become problems, which decreases customer calls. And if the customer calls in, your agents know exactly what they need and how to solve it.



Courtenay Godshall
Head of Product Marketing
Webex Customer
Experience solutions

webex.com

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Engage: connect with customers how, when, and where they want

Today's consumers love messaging as a preferred way of communicating with each other. They now expect that same ease when communicating with businesses. Since digital interactions have increased by an estimated 40% for the average business, support for text/SMS, chat, and social media is essential.

With the new **Webex Contact Center**, customers can connect through the channels of their choice. For customers who prefer self-service, they should have 24/7 access to virtual agents.

Augment: leverage AI and collaboration to create super agents

Solving a customer's problem is fundamentally an internal and external collaboration task. With Webex Contact Center combined with the Webex collaboration suite of calling, messaging, and meetings, agents can leverage the support of cross-department, cross-functional subject matter experts – all with a common goal of providing delightful customer experiences – the first time, every time.

Learn: use insights to predict and optimize customer experiences

Your agents should be fully empowered with context about how your customers are experiencing your brand – allowing them to personalize their interaction accordingly during the interaction.

Customer experience journey context displayed on the agent desktop and customer experience analytics reports capture customer feedback trends to allow for proactive, closed-loop response.

Adapt: flexibility to automate customer journeys with no or low code

Use low-code tools to automate and orchestrate new customer journeys at scale. Cloud communications platform as a service (CPaaS), such as **Webex Connect**, integrate communication channels and existing back-end business systems together to enable the orchestration and automation of all customer interactions.

With empowering customer experience technology, such as contact center, communications platform, and collaboration tools from Webex, your business can create engaging, memorable customer experiences.

CRM

Sponsored by  **sugarcrm**

As customer experience continues to thrive as the most critical factor in ensuring business success, the CRM is emerging as an essential engagement centre.

More than just a landscape for tracking customer information, the CRM is now a central tool for handling extensive CX plans and ensuring businesses can preserve high satisfaction levels.

As of 2019, the market for CRM technology was worth approximately \$41.93 billion. Since then, the demand for this technology has grown extensively. By 2027, experts say the market will be worth more than double, at \$93.39 billion.

The Trends Shaping CRMs in 2022

Increasingly, companies are learning that to connect with customers and preserve valuable relationships successfully, they must be able to understand the customer journey fully. The CRM has become an important entry point to understanding consumer expectations and pain points better. The CRM is essential to everything



from contact centre interactions to help desk discussions in this new environment.

Increasingly, the CRM is becoming more deeply entwined with various other tools throughout the business. It helps with omnichannel communications, sales, and customer success teams. Some of the trends driving the evolution of the CRM today include:

- **Artificial Intelligence:**
Artificial Intelligence built into the CRM can help detect customer sentiment in conversations and score potential leads. The same technology is ideal for understanding patterns in customer behaviour, pinpointing possible trends, and guiding employees towards the best action based on historical information.
- **Hyper Personalisation:**
Customers are demanding interactions specific to their unique needs. In this environment, companies must be able to provide highly unique and customised experiences. In-depth insights into the customer journey and individual user personas allow agents to deliver more personal experiences with help from the CRM.
- **CRM in CCaaS:**
While CRM technology has been a component in CCaaS for some time, it has recently begun to appear as a built-in feature of the contact centre. Moving ahead into 2022 and beyond, we may continue to see more CCaaS

and CRM vendors working together to build the ultimate “customer engagement” platform.

CRM: Looking Ahead

The CRM has always played an essential part in the management and understanding of customer interactions. Now that customers are expecting more from companies and approaching those brands in different environments, the CRM is more important than ever.

We’re likely to see an increase in the number of intelligent tools and systems designed to empower agents in delivering more meaningful and relevant experiences to customers. However, companies will need to be careful they’re walking the right line between customised experiences and experiences which might encroach on a customer’s perception of privacy.

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CRM and the Journey Towards Multiexperience



Experiences That Matter



Tvrtko Stosic
Consultant in
Avaya's international
specialists' group

[avaya.com](https://www.avaya.com)

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CRM is instrumental in the development of an Omnichannel. However, many businesses are incorrectly delegating tasks in their Omnichannel initiatives to the various CRM types. A true Omnichannel experience cannot be achieved without a clear understanding of different CRM dimensions and their specific roles and responsibilities.

To compound this, businesses often make the mistake of believing that Omnichannel represents the end state that will, by itself, decrease customer effort, provide superb CX and deliver consequent financial returns to companies. The truth is that Omnichannel is only a building block, a step towards an environment that will truly ensure effortless, meaningful, and memorable customer experiences.

Multiexperience

After so many years focused on Omnichannel, it is clear that numerous initiatives and investments are failing to meet expectations when it comes to improving CX. Companies seem to be experiencing “Omnichannel fatigue” and are disenchanted with its capabilities and results.



Companies must understand that Omnichannel is not enough to deliver superb CX. Integrating communication channels, touchpoints, customer data and business processes is necessary but will not by itself deliver superior CX.

A channel agnostic customer journey, or Multiexperience, is the key. Instead of focusing on channels, companies should work on bringing together all necessary experience enablers at every point of the customer journey. The very essence of superior CX is simply doing the right things for customers at every turn – and that's it.

Predictive analytics

How can you know which is the right thing for a specific customer at a particular moment in their journey? This is where analytical CRM steps in. With its predictive analytic capabilities, analytical CRM can use historical data to predict future outcomes. The result is an understanding of the specific wants and needs of any individual customer at a particular moment of their journey, accompanied by a proposal of the best action to take next. By allowing analytical CRM to orchestrate engagement via collaborative CRM, companies will be able to approach every customer in an individualised

manner. In this kind of engagement, everything is centred around interactions and experiences, while channels and touchpoints are in the background.

What's more, Communication Analytics solutions can help Analytical CRMs expand beyond their traditional information sources. Traditional data sources rarely contain as much information about customers' needs, emotions, perceptions, and experiences as the conversations that customers are having with contact centre agents across various channels.

Customer Experience

By applying the Multiexperience concept to existing Omnichannel infrastructures, companies will get optimal environments that will reduce the effort their customers need to connect and interact. These environments will ensure superior and memorable CX and the desired returns in terms of sales, retention, and acquisition.

Interested in learning more about the role that Avaya OneCloud CCaaS can play in creating your customer experiences? **Visit our website** to watch a demonstration.

Research Report: Solve the Customer Experience Trilemma

imi mobile

webex by CISCO imimobile is now part of Webex



Jay Patel
VP & GM of Webex,
CPaaS

imimobile.com

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Customer experience is a boardroom-level issue

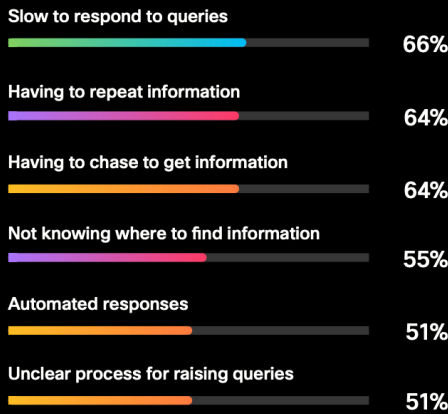
We spoke to over 2,000 consumers to understand what’s most important to them in their experiences with different brands. And we found that it’s not enough to do one thing well: businesses need to excel in every element of the CX trilemma to truly keep customers coming back.

Our research reviewed how customers feel about the way businesses interact with them – looking at the channels used, consumer preferences, and common challenges consumers face. However, one point came through very clearly across all the answers consumers gave us: great customer experiences aren’t just nice to have; they’re crucial for businesses looking to thrive and grow.

We discovered that 75% of consumers see good customer service as a reason to be a repeat customer with a business—making it just as important a factor as price (76%). Businesses can’t ignore this shift in consumer demand, and CX transformation initiatives need to



Factors of a poor customer service experience



Actions likely to take after a bad customer experience



become a boardroom-level discussion. Businesses need to act now by embracing the three areas of the CX trilemma - Resolution, Rapport, and Relevance.

Resolution: the 4 cornerstones of CX success

- Consumers want simple, consistent, fast, and convenient resolutions to their queries.
- 75% of consumers say they’d definitely return to a company in the future if it resolved their issues promptly.
- For ease of use, 82% of consumers prefer live chat or email whereas for speed 51% prefer video chat and 46% prefer to use messaging apps.

Rapport: creating the emotional connection

- The rapport and empathy between a business and its customers can make or break their experience.
- 64% say ‘having to repeat information to different teams and people’ can lead to a poor customer experience.
- After a bad experience, 64% of consumers stop buying products/services from that brand, and 51% say they complain to the company and seek compensation.

Relevance: communicate the way customers want

- 67% of consumers say relevant communications (recognizing previous interactions and preferences) are important to them.
- We found that consumer preferences for one-way or two-way communications changed dependent on the situation.
- Consumers want personalized experiences but 75% worry about how much personal data they share with a business.

Brands that want to deliver the best customer experiences need to focus on delivering rapid resolution, building rapport, and driving relevant experiences at every stage of the customer journey.

To solve the CX trilemma you have to excel in all three areas to deliver a comprehensive journey that offers every customer the experience they want, which can be enabled by solutions like Communications Platform as a Service (CPaaS). To get more insights, **download the full report here.**

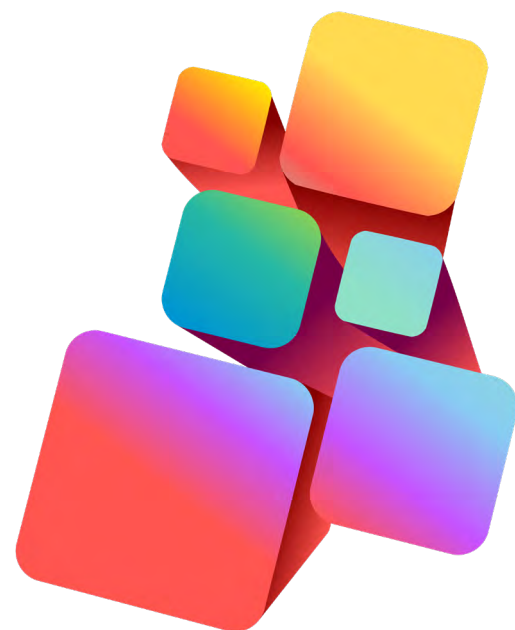
What the Future Holds for CX Organizations



Andrea Paul
Head of Research
Kustomer

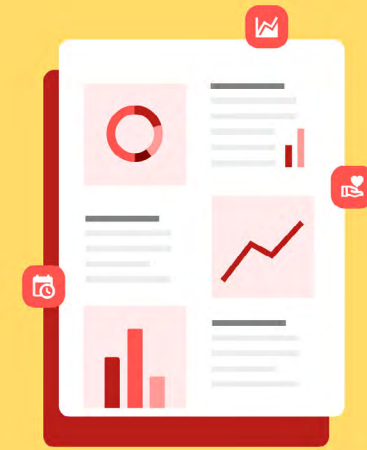
The future. It can be a mysterious thing. If the past is any indication, our whole worlds can be turned upside down in the blink of an eye. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that change has been happening at hyperspeed over the past two years, and these developments have made it clear that preparing for the future of CX is essential for business success. With 79% of CX professionals believing the role of customer service to fuel business growth will become more important over the next three years, delivering an exceptional experience is more important than ever.

In order to understand the direction that the customer experience is heading, we took out our crystal ball and tarot cards — in addition to surveying over 100 CX professionals — to predict how the world of CX will change over the next three years. What challenges need to be solved? Where will CX organizations be investing monetarily? What will be most important to achieve by 2025? And how will consumer preferences and dominant channels change over time? Read on to find out.



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The Top Priorities in CX

We asked CX professionals what challenges were most important for them to eliminate by 2025. Unsurprisingly, service organizations want to ensure their customers feel as though they are treated with respect, with personalized and seamless interactions at every touch point.

CX organizations hope to eliminate the following challenges within three years:

- Customers' need to repeat information (46%)
- Lack of personalization in customer interactions (34%)
- Customers' perception that their time is not valued (34%)
- Agents lack of context about customers (30%)
- Customer service being siloed from other departments (30%)
- Inability to gather customer feedback (27%)
- Inability to gather customer data (23%)
- Lack of a 360-degree view of the customer (21%)
- Inevitability of agent attrition (20%)

The top challenge that CX organizations want to solve is customers' need to repeat information. This reflects their current

biggest weakness, which is data scattered across too many systems, as well as lack of personalization.

To personalize a customer's experience, you have to know the customer — and that requires data. A platform that brings all the data about a customer into one place helps customer service agents understand the context of a customer's conversations and helps them deliver more efficient, proactive and relevant service. There's no need to waste the customer's or agent's time by asking for repeat information. Instead, that information is available at the click of a button, allowing the agent to personalize the customer's experience by giving fine-tuned advice, addressing problems proactively, and suggesting other products or services the customer might enjoy. The result? An efficient but personal interaction that builds a lifelong customer relationship.

Check out the full report for a plethora of additional data, including CX organizations biggest weaknesses, which channels will grow in popularity, where CX organizations are investing, the hyper-personalization differentiator, and industry breakdowns.

Centre Your Business Around Your Customers

Unlocking Customer Centric Growth using the World's #1 CRM



Omar Paul

Director of Delivery and
SVP Customer Success
makepositive
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Digital transformation is a critical need for businesses

As companies and cultures worldwide transition into a digital-first marketplace, seamless online customer experiences (CX) have become paramount for any business to thrive. Customers are no longer brand loyal and will go where they get the best experience. Having a powerful CRM (Customer Relationship Management) platform that's focused around digital has become an essential component of success in business today.

Why is Salesforce the World's #1 CRM?

Salesforce is a premier platform that allows businesses to build customer-centric relationships by enabling them to connect and interact with customers in a way that caters to their individual needs. Unlocking growth by implementing Salesforce ultimately empowers companies to manage relationships through the customer lifecycle, spanning marketing, sales, and customer service.

Salesforce has become the world's #1 CRM partially due to the power of having a single source of truth for every customer's data. This is Salesforce "Customer 360" - because it connects all customers across both online and offline data.

Why does this matter? It matters because the collected data can be utilised for specific strategies within each individual cloud. For example, if part of an organisation needs customer information for a specific purpose within marketing or sales, the goal becomes successful because everyone on those teams has access to the most accurate data.



Enhancing the Entire Customer Journey

At **makepositive**, we've completed more than 1,500 successful Salesforce projects. One of the things we've learned is the importance of focusing on the entire customer journey - from the first time they connect with you, to the first sale, follow-up service, and beyond. This means companies need to unite the front, middle, and back offices. This is something that Salesforce does exceptionally well by providing a single source of shared data.

Helping Employees Do Their Best Work

It's equally as imperative to improve the experiences of employees as those of customers. Employees are more willing than ever to switch companies when their needs are not being met and require new technologies to work from home in our digital-first world. Your technology needs to be capable enough to help them collaborate efficiently. When your customers and employees are happy, everyone wins.

The Transformation of B2B

While we often hear about digital transformation in the B2C world, it's equally important for B2B companies. B2B customers

have come to expect the quality of their business experiences to mirror their day-to-day consumer ones.

Leaders at our client, Gamma Telecom, saw how fragmented their internal systems were after several mergers and acquisitions - leading to an overly complicated sales process. After using makepositive to connect their disparate systems, **Gamma standardised process and reporting** — making it more intuitive for users and drive higher adherence to internal standards.

Take the First Step in Unlocking Customer-Centric Growth

To get maximum value from a Salesforce investment, you need a partner who can help shape a solution that fits the needs of your business. makepositive is a multi-award-winning Summit Salesforce consulting partner with a team of over 160 experts. We have a wealth of knowledge and experience across the entire Salesforce platform.

Our award-winning customer success approach and our years of experience ensure that your project will be safely and successfully delivered regardless of its size or complexity.

Feedback

Feedback is a critical tool for today's business leaders, but many companies are not taking advantage of its benefits.

Gathering feedback regularly is the ultimate way for companies to keep their fingers on the pulse of the customer experience landscape. If you want to earn your customer's loyalty and outshine the competition, you need to listen to them.

Customer feedback software solutions provide companies with a convenient way to access and collate information provided by their customers. These tools can offer everything from automated customer surveys to central analytics environments where teams can see potential trends in the feedback their customers have to offer.

The Trends Shaping Feedback in 2022

Nothing is more effective at guiding companies towards the best strategies for stronger CX than listening to the voice of the customer. Customer feedback tools make it quick and straightforward to collect customer data across various channels to ensure better CX. The more you understand your clients based on their feedback, the easier it is to retain them.



According to Gartner, around 80% of any company's revenue comes from only 20% of its customers. Knowing who those customers are and how they engage with your brand can help organisations pave the way for a more profitable future. Some of the trends influencing the feedback market today include:

- **Integrations with CX tools:**
As feedback emerges as a more vital part of the customer experience strategy, solutions for gathering insights appear within other tools. We're seeing solutions for sending surveys and forms to customers built into CRM software and help desk environments. These tools can even integrate with the modern contact centre.
- **Artificial intelligence:**
Artificial intelligence in the feedback landscape is becoming increasingly valuable. The right AI system can automatically detect sentiment in a customer's voice or in a piece of text used to give feedback to a company. These tools can also help immediately recognise patterns and trends in topics when customers provide feedback.
- **Automation:**
As companies struggle to stay ahead of the curve in a rapidly changing CX environment, automation can be extremely valuable to the feedback ecosystem. Automated solutions can send surveys and forms straight to your audience members for you without requiring any input from

employees. These tools can also help organise and filter feedback based on various factors.

Feedback Tomorrow: Looking Ahead

In a world where customers demand more meaningful and relevant experiences, companies will only continue to rely on feedback to understand their audience. Feedback tools will grow even more advanced in the years ahead, leveraging automation to ensure the rapid collection of data from multiple channels in the customer journey.

We'll also see the rise of more tools for understanding and evaluating the voice of the customer, from speech analytics tools to sentiment analysis solutions enabled through Natural Language Processing.

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The Best-Kept Secret for Remote Agents Needing to Eliminate Background Noise



Robert Schoenfield
COO
Krisp

krisp.ai

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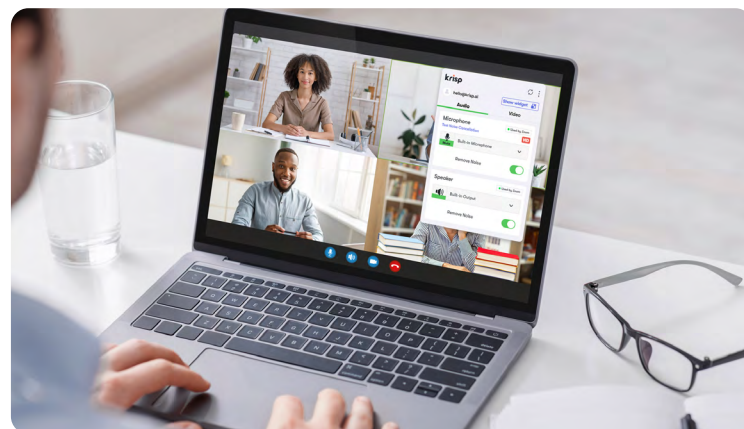
The shift to remote work created a number of challenges for BPOs and contact centers. While many were successful at quickly transitioning their agents to a work-from-home model, no one knew what the impact would be on the customer and agent experience at a time when entire households had to work, study, and live together for extended periods of time.

Many businesses helped agents create “noiseless environments” when working remotely by equipping them with the industry’s best noise-canceling headsets. But even the best hardware couldn’t keep background noise from creeping in. It actually became one of the biggest post-call complaints during this time, which quickly led to a decline in CSAT scores.

It soon became clear that removing background noise was not only critical for creating better customer experiences, but also for giving agents added peace of mind that their customer calls could go off without a hitch. But how could they do this effectively?

Krisp Noise Cancellation comes to the rescue

Long before the pandemic revved into high gear, Krisp was already busy developing an AI-powered noise cancellation solution that would not only rival but also



surpass other competitors in the market. As a refresher, **Krisp is an AI-powered noise cancellation** layer that sits between users and the microphones and speakers natively installed on their devices (headsets included). When installed on a device, agents can filter out all of the background noises happening within their environment with a single click.

It’s worth noting, however, that Krisp wasn’t created specifically with contact centers in mind. The pandemic simply accelerated the need for better noise cancellation technology that could be easily deployed across an entire remote agent workforce with minimal effort and cost.

That’s why Krisp soon became an essential element in an agent’s work-from-home toolkit, one that helped many agents become more confident, productive, and successful in their work.

Improving the customer and agent experience

Implementing Krisp has made a near-immediate impact on the customer

experience and both agent productivity and effectiveness. After talking to a number of IT leaders and customer service agents, we heard loud and clear that once they started using Krisp, complaints about background noise essentially became a non-issue. While this was the main KPI they were aiming for, what really ended up happening was that CSAT scores started to rebound as well.

True, there are a number of factors that play into customer satisfaction, but the undeniable correlation between background noise and customer satisfaction became abundantly clear, with Krisp playing a central role in helping to close this part of the customer experience gap.

On top of that, we also learned that agents started to feel more confident and a lot less stressed when working in noisy remote work or contact center environments. Equipped with Krisp, they knew they could provide their customers with safe, secure, and private interactions that enabled them to stay focused on truly helping customers resolve their questions or issues.

Helpdesk

Helpdesk software helps companies manage customer queries and concerns. However, in recent years, this technology has grown increasingly crucial.

The rise of omnichannel customer service and the increasingly complex landscape for CX means companies rely on helpdesk solutions to support agents and consumers alike.

Helpdesk technology brings all customer interactions from various avenues into a single, unified interface. This synergised environment is ideal for saving employees time and offering them access to more context when serving clients. Currently, the help desk software market is set to reach a value of \$11 billion by 2023.

The Trends Shaping Helpdesks in 2022

We've known that delivering exceptional customer experiences is the key to success for any brand for years. Unfortunately, meeting consumer expectations isn't as easy as it once was. In today's digitally-transforming landscape, customers have a range of ways to connect with companies, and they expect more from every interaction.



Helpdesks are one of many tools business leaders can use to get an edge in this complex landscape. Designed to help drive customer satisfaction, helpdesks offer a source of valuable information and guidance for agents while ensuring better outcomes for customers. Some of the trends influencing helpdesk in 2022 include:

- **Automation:**
Automation elements in helpdesks are excellent for improving agent productivity, particularly when customer service experts work from a range of distributed environments. The right tools can streamline workflows and eliminate the need for things like manual data entry. Automation systems can even immediately surface valuable information about a customer when an agent starts to resolve a ticket.
- **Self-service portals:**
Increasingly, as consumers search for ways to speed up their problem resolution experiences, self-service opportunities are growing more popular. Self-service portals built into help desks can allow clients to troubleshoot and address common issues independently, without the need for human interaction.
- **Analytics and insights:**
52% of brands say that technology helps them deliver better customer support operations. Helpdesks can assist with this by providing insights into the issues your customers face every day. When you know the

common problems your customers tend to deal with, you can create faster solutions for fixing those issues.

Helpdesks Tomorrow: Looking Ahead

As the customer journey evolves, helpdesks will maintain their position as a crucial part of the CX strategy. These tools help drive customer satisfaction, improve agent productivity, and streamline business operations to sustain SLAs better.

Statistics show that leveraging help desk software and big data can save companies up to 670 working hours per year, reduce the number of phone calls managed by the contact centre by 10%, and open up 25% of a brand's resources. As these tools become more efficient and intelligent, with greater access to automated workflows and AI analytics, their value will grow.

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Unleashing the Power of Virtual Agents for an Unbeatable Customer Experience



Andy Elliot
VP Global Marketing
AudioCodes

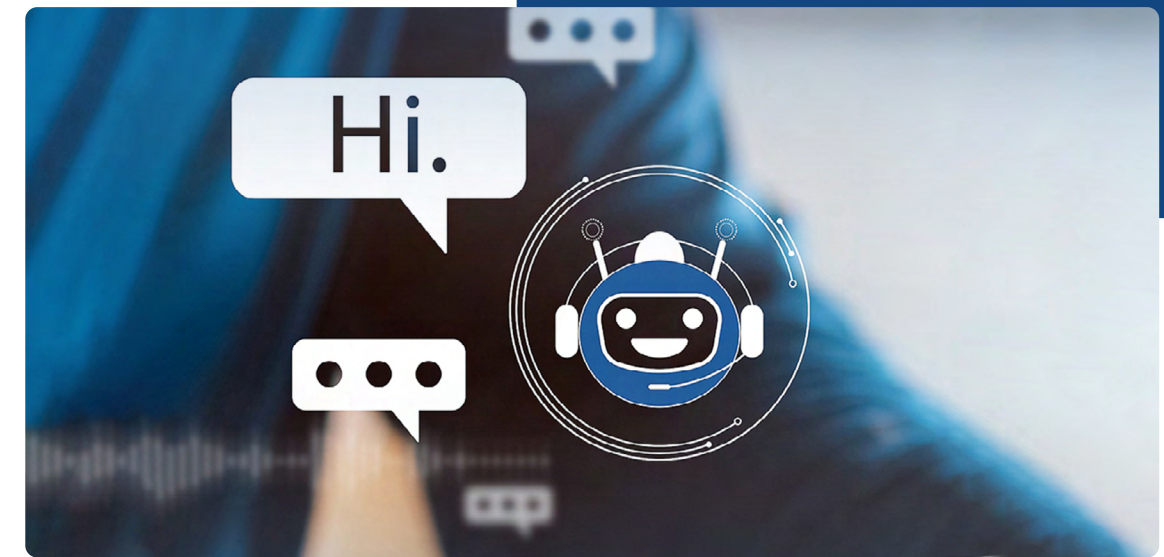
In our ultra-competitive digital economy, well-worn maxims like “the customer is king” have never been more relevant. Today’s consumers are quite literally spoilt for choice, with unparalleled amounts of information at their fingertips. As such, they quite rightly expect to receive a high level of service whenever they interact with a business, or they’ll simply take their custom elsewhere.

But beyond having to cater to super-knowledgeable (and fickle) consumers, organisations wanting to stay ahead of the pack also know that they need to strive for operational efficiency at every turn. As a result, smart enterprises are looking to reconcile these seemingly contradictory needs with technology solutions.

Talk Is (Or Should Be) Cheap

Customer interaction is mainly conducted with businesses via their contact centres in text and speech. The text automation part can be covered with chatbots, while the speech element has not yet been addressed by many contact centres – until now.

The virtual agent is a brand-new, comprehensive service for speech automation. Based on cutting-edge conversational AI and machine learning technologies, it is revolutionising the customer service industry by allowing natural speech



dialog between an organisation and its customers without the intervention of a human agent.

AudioCodes offers innovative **contact centre solutions** for organisations keen to ensure an unbeatable customer experience:

1. Conversational/smart IVR for enabling the replacement of old-school hierarchical IVR menus with a seamless free speech experience. Our solution uses natural language understanding (NLU) to ascertain the customers’ needs, flatten the menus and instantly route calls to a virtual or live agent. The solution saves time, is more accurate and significantly enhances the customer experience.

2. Intelligent virtual agents (IVAs) for taking over simple and repetitive tasks from live agents, reducing hold time and improving the customer experience while cutting operational costs. The solution replaces menu-driven IVR systems with open questions such as “How can I help you?”, and depending on the answer the IVA can schedule appointments, coordinate delivery collections, collect payments or provide information. It offers a high return on investment and delivers an exceptional customer experience.

3. Converting existing chatbots to voice-bots so that enterprises that have already invested in AI and NLU to create their own chatbots can go one step further and provide callers with the same powerful capabilities via voice communications too.

Putting the Customer in Pole Position

Here are just some of the reasons you should consider deploying these innovative voice-first solutions for contact centres:

- 24/7 immediate response with no holding time
- Natural and intuitive voice-driven calling experiences
- Support for voice and text in applications like WhatsApp and Messenger
- Transfer from virtual to human agent with relevant call data
- Personalised service based on the customer’s unique history
- Outbound calls for sales and customer service
- Ability to handle multiple requests in the same call

If staying ahead of the competition is important to you – and let’s face it, in this day and age it certainly should be – AudioCodes virtual agents might be exactly what you’re looking for.

audiocodes.com

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Loyalty

Loyalty is one of the most important assets a business can cultivate in today's experience-driven world.

According to surveys, the Global Loyalty Management market is set to reach a value of \$17.65 billion by 2028, as countless companies continue to invest in developing stronger, long-term relationships with their target audience.

Loyalty programs and systems can boost a company's chances of repeat purchases, set the stage for brand advocacy, and improve an organisation's revenue potential. According to Accenture, around 90% of companies say they already have a loyalty program in place.

The Trends Shaping Loyalty in 2022

While loyalty programs and methodologies are far from a new concept in 2022, they're becoming increasingly important to the modern business. Consumers are becoming increasingly discerning of the companies they do business with, particularly in a challenging economy. Loyalty programs can be crucial to ensuring long-term success and growth.



Loyalty programmes are projected to grow by around 80% over the next two years. What's more, roughly 63% of marketing teams are already using loyalty program platforms. Some of the trends shaping loyalty technology in 2022 include:

- **Hyper personalised experiences:**
Today's customers are increasingly looking to work with brands that understand their specific needs and pain points. No consumer wants to be treated like just another number. Loyalty software solutions adapt to this by allowing companies to segment their audience and offer deals and benefits relevant to specific customers.
- **Gamification:**
Similar to how competition and gamification can increase engagement in the employee landscape, these tools can also get consumers excited too. Gamification tools like the opportunity to swap your rewards for bigger prizes or spin a wheel of fortune every day as part of an interaction with a brand can help keep businesses top-of-mind with customers.
- **Frictionless experience:**
Now more than ever, business leaders' loyalty programs and solutions need to be as simple and accessible as possible for consumers. We live in a world where customers are used to accessing apps and smartphone tools daily. Loyalty programs need to feel simple, effective, and easy to understand.

Loyalty Tomorrow: Looking Ahead

The demand for customer loyalty won't be going anywhere in the years ahead. Regular recognition and bespoke rewards for customers who regularly interact with a brand are excellent for breeding repeat sales and lucrative spending behaviours. The right loyalty software can encourage better customer retention and referrals and reduce customer acquisition costs.

In the years ahead, we're likely to see new tools and services emerging within the loyalty environment to help companies offer hyper-personalised experiences, from geolocation tracking that delivers deals straight to the smartphone to AI-enhanced predictive analytics.

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Plivo's Next Phase of Growth — The Contact Center



Venky Balasubramanian
Founder & CEO
Plivo

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Contacto is an omnichannel Contact Center platform built on Plivo's Premium Communications Platform. A game changer for building customer loyalty? We'll let you decide.

We've all, at one time or another, spent much more time on a customer service call than we expected. Voice menus, long automated voice scripts with lots of options, and repeating yourself with every new agent you speak to—the struggle is real.

And we're repeatedly left wondering, "Why can't this experience be better?" Studies show these subpar experiences decrease customer retention.

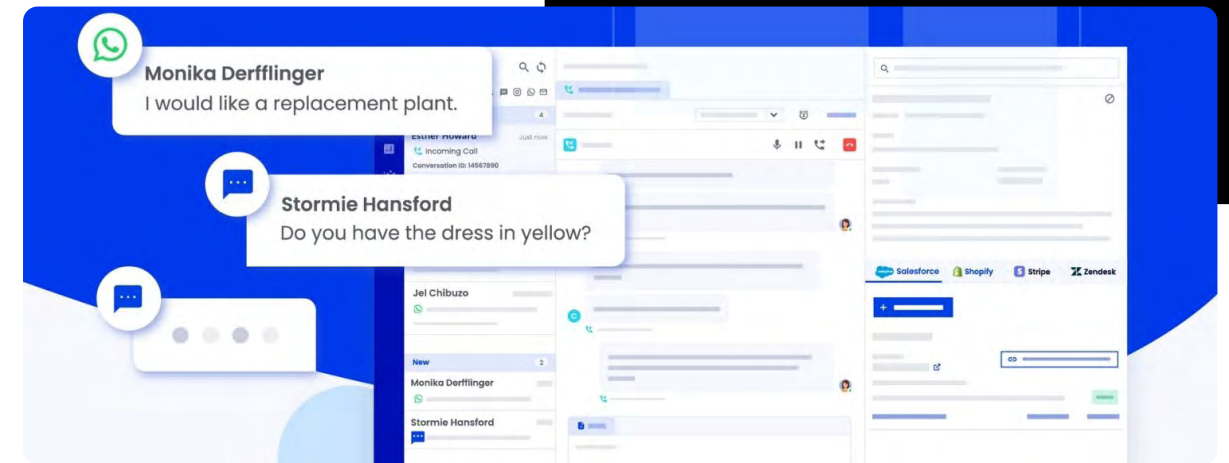
In the 2021 report "The future of customer conversation," Accenture wrote, "We're moving to a world where customers expect to engage with brands at any time, across multiple devices, channels, and touchpoints. Customers also expect interactions to be in tune with their personal preferences and schedules."

In today's mobile-first consumer world, customers want fast, flexible, and frictionless assistance. **That's why we built Contacto** — an omnichannel Contact Center platform combining traditional and emerging customer service channels with an easy-to-use interface and out-of-the-box customizability.

Contacto is built on Plivo's Premium Communications Platform that has been proven for scale over the last 10 years with billions of requests each month. It natively supports voice and emerging channels like in-app chat, WhatsApp, and social media, and it has prebuilt integrations with existing applications like Salesforce, Zendesk, Shopify, Kustomer, and more.

Why Contacto, and why now?

Plivo has long been focused on the back end of communications and building its voice and messaging API business.



But based on feedback from customers, we recognized an opportunity to package that back end into a vertical application for an underserved niche. Most businesses don't have the time or resources to build out a fully customized Contact Center for their customer service needs.

That's especially true for nimble businesses in the B2C retail and e-commerce space, where efficient, effective customer service is a deal-breaking competitive advantage. And customer expectations are very high.

We want to make it possible for every company of any size to provide customers with world-class customer service interactions.

Communication channels

Contacto comes with native, full-featured voice capabilities so there's no need to engage costly third-party vendors for enterprise-grade on-call features, excellent call quality, and high reliability.

Web and in-app chat embedded directly into a brand's application or website let customers interact with retailers while they shop and beyond.

Customers can choose messaging via SMS, MMS, or WhatsApp — the leading consumer chat app — and can utilize notifications to deliver proactive support updates.

Feature highlights

All agent activity in Contacto revolves around a unified agent desktop, where all communications channels are presented in a single simple interface.

That enables agents to:

- Respond to all incoming conversations from one screen
- View the customer's associated conversation timeline and interaction history
- Create and manage information in third-party systems without leaving Contacto

With all that information in one place, agents have the context they need to solve issues faster and create a more tailored experience for the customer.

Plivo's next phase of growth

With Contacto, Plivo is entering into its next evolution in the marketplace—offering not only best-in-class API products for technical teams but also cloud-based communications solutions with superior out-of-the-box functionality for B2C customer service teams.

As Plivo embarks on its next 10 years of growth, we look forward to continued innovation and evolution in how we provide customers with the solutions they want and need to succeed.

NPS Is Not Enough: Why Contact Centres Need a More Accurate Measure of CX



Elizabeth Magill
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Most businesses today are familiar with the Net Promoter Score (NPS), a simple way of measuring how likely your customers are to promote your business. Through a basic survey — usually delivered right after a customer completes a transaction — the customer is asked some variation of this question: “On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend our company?”

While the simplicity of the NPS lends to its appeal and widespread adoption, this can also create significant limitations, particularly when businesses use it as their sole or principle customer experience (CX) metric. Relying on it as a single source of truth can lead to some faulty assumptions and glaring holes in how you measure your CX.

In a study published by the [Harvard Business Review](#), the results showed discord between what customers said they were likely to do and what they actually did. Instead of merely asking how likely they were to promote a brand, the study also asked if they actually had recommended that brand or discouraged someone from choosing it.

In many cases, consumers’ stated attitudes did not align with their actions. For instance, although only 50% of the customers qualified as promoters according to the NPS question, 69% of them had actually promoted the brands in the survey.

Even more concerning is the NPS system’s inability to account for human complexity. Consider that 52% of people who had actively discouraged someone away from a brand had also actively promoted it to others. Why? Because consumers typically consider many factors when making recommendations to others.



Without any follow-up questions, it is impossible to glean clear insight into why customers answered the way they did. Therefore, even if the NPS provides a fairly accurate count of promoters vs. detractors, it offers no guidance on how to improve that ratio.

Surveys designed to assess particular aspects of customer experience — such as user interface, product feedback, or their experience with a service representative — can serve as an invaluable source of actionable CX insights, provided that customers are incentivized to answer in detail, and provided that they can accurately recall the specifics of their encounter when completing a survey after the fact.

To take CX analytics a step further, continuous, automated monitoring of customer interactions enables businesses to detect and intercept potential points of failure in the customer journey in real time.

For example:

- Where is poor call quality occurring among contact centre agents?
- Which IVR menus aren’t functioning correctly?
- When are chatbots failing to respond to web inquiries?
- Is there an issue causing customers’ calls to be dropped?

While NPS scores will continue to play an important role in assessing overall CX, they are becoming a smaller piece of an increasingly complex puzzle. With automated solutions for testing and monitoring customer journeys, businesses can uncover a wealth of CX data that will help them take customer experiences to the next level.



Excelling at Proactive Customer Experience

There are three paradigms of customer experience that businesses operate in: reactive, active, and proactive.

Ideally, in the interest of increasing loyalty, customer experiences will cover each paradigm. Yet, in reality, companies tend to be rooted in this reactive phase.

Reactive - Being Ahead of Potential Problems is Important, But It's Not CX Proactivity

There are many tactics deployed to support the customer. For instance, pre-delivery alerts reduce customer anxiety and the costs of redelivery. Another example is comprehensive FAQs on the company website.

Sure, these extra activities intervene to reduce customer pain within the experience. But these actions are often just papering over the root cause of the issue.

Is this proactive? I would argue not. When an organisation needs to respond to customer

uncertainties on what should have happened or what happens next, there is inadequate fulfilment in the experience. CX teams can eliminate these occurrences from customer journeys by establishing a customer-centric operating model.

Without this customer experience management, the organisation continues to add extra activities ahead of an issue, increasing cost to mitigate poor experience design.

Active - Staying In the Moment, Whilst Thinking Ahead

This paradigm is also an area where implemented initiatives are considered "proactive", but the reality is they are not.

For instance, when in conversation with a customer about a renewal, the call agent

notices the customer's regional phone code differs from the address provided. This could mean they have moved, and future correspondence won't arrive. Quick clarification leads to an updated match.

Alternatively, a customer has selected "know my location" on the app they use for courier delivery. The customer is 100 miles from home, and a package is due in three hours. The courier company sends a text asking: "Is it still convenient to deliver at this time?" By doing so, they mitigate a potential problem for the customer.

Such examples may seem proactive, but it is just good experience design.

Proactive - One Step Beyond

After two false starts, what does proactive CX really mean? From my experience in developing proactive CX programmes, it's the perpetual state of being in the customer's future before they get there. And the longer the vista, the more valuable it becomes.

In this B2B example, a customer purchases raw materials direct from the distributor and is conscious that their refining machinery needs replacing. But, aware of advancements in technology, there are various options. They do not know which best suits them. So, they use their judgement and take a calculated risk.

If their distributor has cultivated a long-term relationship mentality, they will spend time understanding future customer considerations that could impact business results. With this known insight captured, the distributor can leverage their expertise and talk to their customer about the best machinery to suit their raw materials, lowering the chances of the customer looking for a new supplier.

Being proactive requires agility and a commitment to listening to the customer's voice and understanding what's important to individual customers. This is the CX ecosystem model and is the difference between those

who employ CX for more sales and those who seek to progress the sector, where everyone wins.

Here is a good example. When a call agent finishes a routine call with a telecoms customer, they notice that previous calls between them only occur before midday and after 7pm. The call agent also notes that previous scripts contain commentary such as: "I work from midday," or, "When I get back from work, I'm cooking dinner until 7pm." The agent adds a block on the system, so outbound calls never come between this time.

Overall, proactivity means investigating and orientating the organisation to better support future implications of today's customer choices. This requires data integrity and appreciation of the lifetime value of customers.



Christopher Brooks
Global CX Consultant

LEXDEN

Sentiment Analysis: Why you should Pay Closer Attention to Customer Happiness



Jonathan Allan
CMO
Puzzel

puzzel.com

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Sentiment Analysis enables contact centre agents to measure and track customer happiness during service interactions.

Sometimes referred to as opinion mining, Sentiment Analysis works by quietly analysing conversations in real-time, picking up emotional cues from the customer's natural language to determine if they are feeling positive, negative or neutral. This not only helps agents to better attend to customers' emotive needs, but also to determine the next best actions to drive customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Top three benefits of Sentiment Analysis

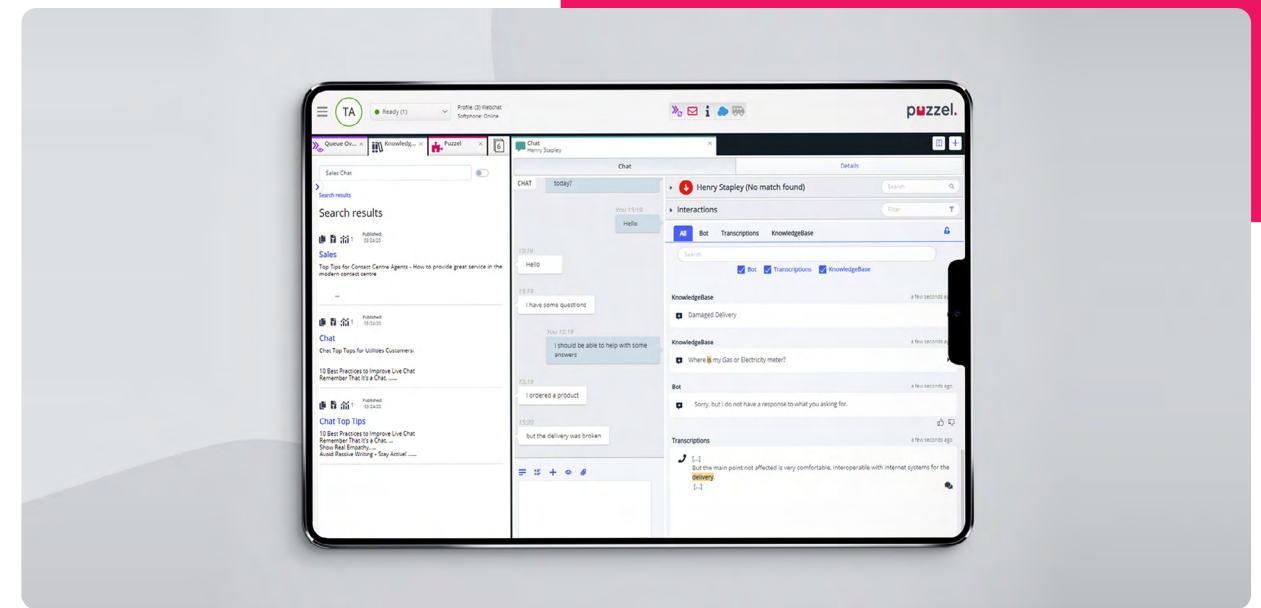
1. Pinpoint what makes your customers happy

Sentiment Analysis enables contact centre agents to identify the specific interactions and actions that delight customers and those that disappoint them. This feedback helps agents to understand how they can improve their skills and deliver more effective customer experiences in the future.

Sentiment Analysis can also help agents to predict and pre-empt when an enquiry may need to be escalated to a supervisor. With real-time graphical data available to them, agents can see when a customer's mood is slipping and when reinforcements need to be called in.

2. Track the customer relationship

Sentiment Analysis scores can be recorded in a customer's interaction history. This helps contact centre agents to track the relationship over time and can assist with predicting when a customer is likely to churn.



3. Tune in to your customers' emotions

Organisations tend to spend so much time perfecting the functional experience of their customer service – making sure customers get what they want in the fastest and easiest way possible – that the emotional experience gets neglected. And yet, research shows emotion plays such an important part in delivering successful service outcomes, driving deeper customer loyalty and higher lifetime spend.

Sentiment Analysis therefore helps agents to deliver more well-rounded customer experiences that address both the customer's functional and emotive needs. As the saying goes, people won't always remember what you do or what you say, but they will remember how you made them feel.

How does Puzzel's solution work?

Sentiment Analysis is a feature of Puzzel's Advanced Agent Assist.

Agent Assist is a widget within the Puzzel Agent Application that expertly guides agents through customer interactions, offering

helpful suggestions in real-time based on the customer's mood. It listens for key words, identifies issues and recognises different emotions to point agents in the right direction. This reduces agent effort, lowers handling time and drives up customer satisfaction.

Sentiment Analysis is displayed within the widget via a graphical sentiment indicator. When a customer initiates a conversation, this graph tracks the sentiment of each immediate interaction, as well as the overall sentiment of the entire interaction. It is important to capture both measurements to understand the customer's feelings in context.

Delighting your customers

Sentiment Analysis empowers your agents to deliver more effective, personalised customer experiences and drive customer loyalty.

Learn more about Puzzel Agent Assist at puzzel.com.

What does the Future of Customer Loyalty bring for the Contact Center

talkdesk[®]



David Gardner
VP, Research & Insights
Talkdesk

talkdesk.com

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As organizations arrive at some level of normalcy in adapting to a more digital world, they are beginning to look at different ways to build and maintain customer loyalty.

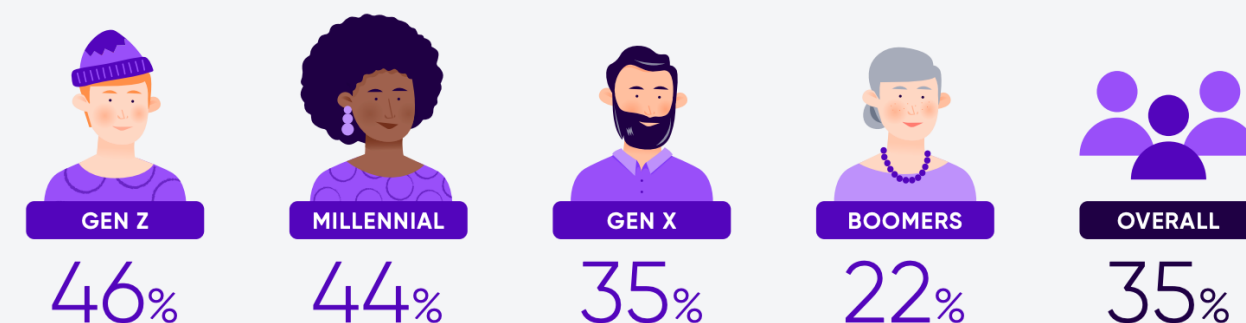
Talkdesk Research™ recently released The **future of customer loyalty**, a report exploring the evolving dynamics of customer loyalty, how to build and maintain loyalty across generations of customers, and the new role of the contact center. This report is based on three global quantitative online surveys of customer experience (CX) professionals and consumers.

The reality is clear: loyalty is hard to earn and easy to lose. Almost nine-in-ten (86%) of consumers are loyal to 5 or fewer companies, while one-in-two (49%) have stopped being loyal to a company because of a single bad experience in the past year.

The rise of the work-from-home lifestyle and the increasing demand for digital shopping experiences, combined with the evolving needs of consumers, is at the core of the changing dynamics in building and maintaining loyalty.

61% of consumers say that it is important to be able to transition easily across channels during a single service interaction.

Percent of consumers that have stopped using a company's services or products in the past year due to their stance on **social issues**:



Easy interactions and quick resolution drive loyalty today, while brand connection is becoming increasingly important.

The ability to resolve any customer service issue on first contact emerged in our research as a primary driver of consumer loyalty today. Easy and quick issue resolution is critical to building and maintaining customer loyalty. The challenge for many will be effectively doing so across a broadening array of channels being used within individual service interactions.

Looking to the horizon of loyalty, younger consumers are substantially more likely to decide whether to work with a company based on its position on social issues, sustainability, and diversity. Going forward, it won't be enough to deliver quick and easy issue resolution; customer service functions will also need to consider how to effectively represent the company within broader social contexts.

Agents are already expected to serve as brand ambassadors and will need to be equipped to speak to these evolving broader social conversations.

Contact centers and agents will become more strategic in creating loyal customers. The broadening importance of customer service in generating loyalty is leading organizations to transform contact centers into profit centers - a process that is already happening in many organizations.

As the contact center is recognized as more than a cost center, agents will become increasingly dedicated to revenue-generating activities, such as proactively contacting customers to capitalize on new opportunities to drive revenue and provide a memorable service experience.

As agents gain influence in customer loyalty, they'll become more central to the success of organizations, and leaders will need to prioritize engaging and retaining contact center employees.

To learn more about how organizations can transform contact centers to foster customer loyalty and agent engagement, make sure you **download the full report**.

Workforce Optimisation

Sponsored by **THINSCALE**

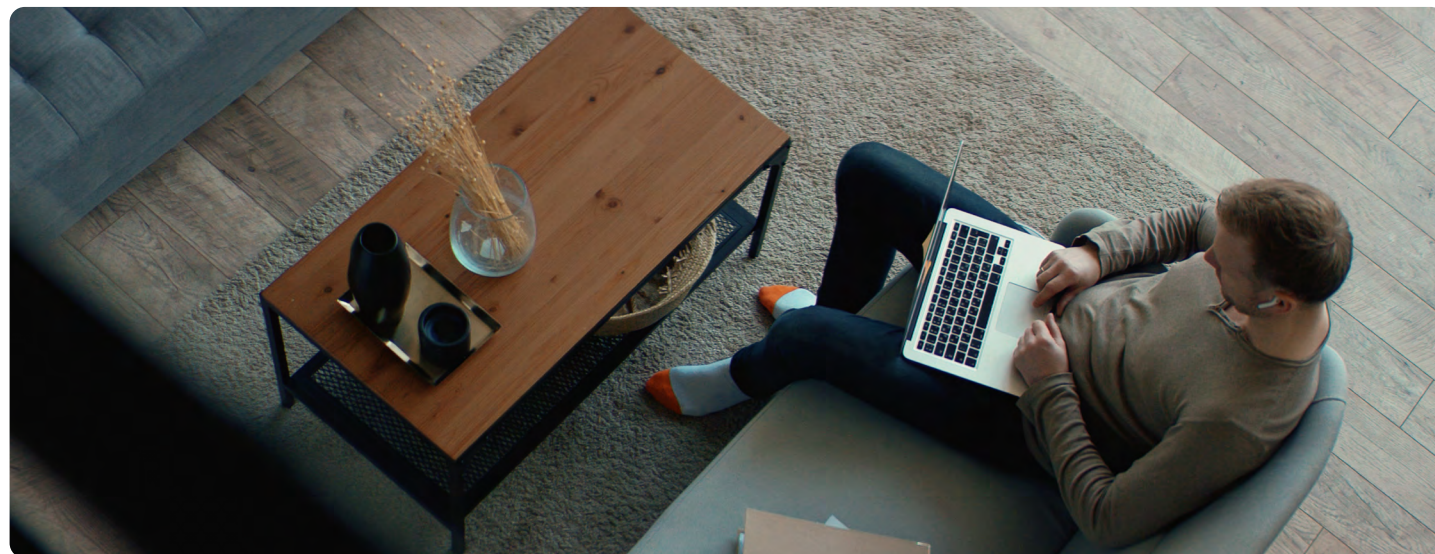
Workforce Optimisation (WFO) is emerging as a critical part of the CX technology stack.

Companies quickly discover that to deliver the best possible experiences to their customers, they must ensure their employees are correctly aligned, supported, and empowered.

WFO tools can help with this by assisting companies in ensuring they're utilising their contact centre resources as effectively as possible. WFO tools can help with everything from scheduling practices to tracking employee engagement, and they're becoming even more essential in an age of hybrid and flexible work.

The Trends Shaping WFO in 2022

As contact centres and CX teams continue to become increasingly distributed, WFO tools are becoming a must-have investment for many brands, thanks to the new age of hybrid work. We're even beginning to see these tools baked into CCaaS solutions from many leading brands to align more of the tools teams use daily.



Cloud-based WFO solutions that integrate with the UCaaS and CCaaS environment are likely to play a pivotal role in how management and supervisors track their employees in a hybrid landscape. Some of the most significant trends to watch out for in Workforce Optimisation software include:

- **Artificial Intelligence:**

AI is a powerful tool for supporting the modern workforce. In the WFO landscape, an AI assistant can automatically inform an employee what their options are when trying to switch a shift with a colleague. The same technology can suggest workforce schedules to business leaders based on historical information about peaks in customer service demand.

- **Self-Service:**

With more employees working remotely and in distributed environments, self-service features built into the WFO landscape will be increasingly important. These tools should allow team members to change their shifts, make scheduling requests, and even set aside "focus time" in their schedule for specific projects. The same tools should also make it easier for individual employees to track their performance and set personal goals.

- **In-depth analytics:**

Analytical capabilities and reporting tools have always been a critical component of the WFO software landscape. However, the metrics companies track in the years ahead may evolve. For instance, there's an

increasing focus on agent experience and well-being in the workplace, leading companies to pay more attention to employee satisfaction or engagement levels.

Contact Centres Tomorrow: WFO Tomorrow: Looking Ahead

The WFO software environment is constantly evolving to suit the needs of a changing workforce. In recent years, we've seen several trends rise to the surface, from gamification and personalised metric dashboards to motivate teams to an increased spotlight on employee wellbeing.

In the future, companies will be looking to their WFO technology to improve the way they schedule and manage hybrid employees and provide insights into creating happier, more committed members of staff.

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Workforce Engagement in the Age of Hybrid Working

AVAYA

Experiences That Matter



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Remote and/or hybrid models are becoming the norm for millions of distributed agents worldwide – they are all looking for the right tools to get the job done. With agents using an average of 6-8 different tools (CRM, knowledge base, ERP) each having their own range of disconnected applications and features, what do contact centres need to provide to enable the delivery of effortless, memorable service in an irrevocably changed world of customer experience?

The solution is Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation, as they drive hybrid working employee and customer experience success. Here's what these powerful capabilities bring to the table:

Scheduling/Forecasting

The cost of unscheduled absenteeism can have a major impact on the bottom line. AI and automation can help simplify planning, forecasting, and scheduling to ensure the right people are doing the right things at the right time - every time. For example, AI can analyse data streams relevant to a business such as public holidays and weather patterns to create more accurate forecasts in a fraction of the time.



Remote Management

Whether employees are in-office, working from home, or working from anywhere else, AI and automation can improve employee performance and engagement with real-time performance feedback, mentoring and coaching. For example, real-time speech-based AI can be used to improve employee performance and detect employee sentiment based on key words or phrases spoken in customer conversations. Data automation can also help take the guesswork out of what's happening with your distributed workforce by delivering the right insight across processes and performance to quickly identify bottlenecks or training gaps.

Simplified Task Management

Contact centres need to provide an employee desktop that seamlessly delivers work schedules, employee toolsets, e-learning courses, performance metrics, relevant customer information, knowledgebase content, and customer journey touchpoints - all on one screen. AI and automation can then be used to further simplify task management. For example, if AI recognises that an agent has performed an action 20 times over the course of one hour, the technology can propose automating that action to improve productivity, customer availability, and job satisfaction.

Real-time Guidance for Next Best Action
AI-powered insights can supply real-time guidance to employees on how to respond, what to document, or even when to recommend additional information, products or services that have a high likelihood to be personally relevant to the customer. In this way, AI is fuelling a shift from the traditional contact centre to a marketing and sales hub through predictive customer data.

Workflow Automation

AI and automation reduce repetitive tasks, freeing up employees to handle more complex and rewarding work. For example, automatically logging information from a customer call to a related case in the CRM or pre-populating after call work notes or order forms based on speech-to-text transcription from the customer call. At Avaya, we have seen customers **reduce after call work by up to 65%** using these approaches.

The ways and means of how organizations engage their workforce to provide premier service to customers and their employees is going to significantly change in the years ahead. To learn more about the role that Avaya OneCloud CCaaS can play in creating your cloud-powered contact centre, **visit our website** to watch a demonstration.

Workforce Optimisation isn't all about savings – but it helps

CALABRIO™



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Today's contact centres juggle the complications and pressure to consistently meet customer and agent expectations while staying within budget. In the early days of technology workforce management (WFM) solutions replaced endless spreadsheets to track contact centre metrics. Today modern technologies such as machine learning and AI integrate with speech, text and desktop analytics, quality management, performance coaching and enterprise customer experience intelligence (CXI) to help management teams find solutions to their most challenging issues and budget woes.

Workforce Optimisation (WFO) can deliver immediate cost savings to your bottom line and here's how:

Money Saver #1: Reduced agent overstaffing and overtime expenses – by streamlining and automating scheduling using WFO software, a typical contact centre can reduce the amount of time it takes to forecast, schedule and manage service levels for multiple channels and locations by as much as 25%.

Using automation and historical data to deliver more accurate forecasts leads to less overstaffing and consequently reduced overtime and budget overspend.



Money Saver #2: Improved agent adherence – using WFO self-service functionality enables contact centre leaders to use a variety of capabilities to increase and encourage agent adherence. Empowering agents to actively participate in the scheduling process through self-service that solicits their preferred schedules, allows them to easily swap schedules or request time off and improves adherence. Analysts can set an auto-approval workflow framework using WFO and then let the system do the work – saving time and money in the process.

Money Saver #3: Reduced customer demand – by using interaction analytics to improve customer experience. Analytic capabilities are particularly important to enhance customer journeys. While capturing 100% of customer interactions to understand the mood, needs and wants of customers, they also identify the reasons why people keep calling back, driving up contact volumes and costs. Use analytics to make the relevant changes to reduce contact volumes, while consistently meeting customer expectations and staying within budget.

Money Saver #4: Save with shared customer experience intelligence (CXI) – too many organisations spend too much time and

energy searching for data that is right in front of them – at the very heart of the contact centre. The latest CXI dashboards, amplify voice-of-the customer (VOC) insights, then package and share them to give a multi-dimensional view of customer journeys that are relevant to specific departments and functions to save on duplicated efforts or costs.

Money Saver #5: Reduce agent churn in the midst of the “great resignation” - the pandemic has ushered in a new era where employees are reassessing the impact of their jobs on work/life balance, mental health and overall life goal fulfilment. WFO can help employees feel more valued by helping personalize coaching programs, giving agents control over their own schedules and the ability to monitor their own performance metrics. To find out more, download Calabrio's latest report **“Health of the Contact Centre 2021 – Agent Wellbeing + The Great Resignation”**.

If these money savers have given you food for thought, Calabrio has developed an **ROI calculator** to establish the return on investment possible from implementing its WFM solution.

Closing the Gap Between Workforce Management and CX

Workforce Management (WFM) is an essential component of any well-organised contact centre operation.

Yet it's still rare to see planners involved in the CX conversation. The general idea is that WFM provides efficiency. In contrast, other specialists offer insights to improve service experiences. Even when considering the employee experience, companies rarely consult WFM teams regarding CX strategies - even though scheduling and annual leave management are often critical problems.

At least, that's the situation I have repeatedly encountered when leading WFM teams across various companies and industries. Yet, it doesn't have to be like this.

Planning for Our Customers

WFM is about making an organisation more efficient – but planners often lack creativity when defining “what” they are efficient at doing. There are more efficient targets than answering 80% of calls answered in 20 seconds.

As an analyst at heart, I believe in the power of data. When I was lucky enough to work for data-rich organisations, I inevitably found myself

correlating customer survey results with the stats of the call that generated them. This isn't done often, and it takes time to clean the data, but the insight is worth it.

Our NPS dropped by almost 15 points in one organisation when customers waited more than 40 seconds. It dropped again when wait times exceeded two minutes. Answering in ten seconds or 30 made absolutely no difference to customers. So rather than planning for 80% in 20 seconds, why not aim for 90% in 40 seconds or 95% in two minutes? Aligning these planning targets to customer needs is the first step to improving experiences.

Service consistency is another cornerstone of CX, yet most companies are content with measuring SLA at a monthly level. That means planners can make up ground for a bad day by overservicing others, reducing consistency. Measuring SLA in this way makes it easier to hit the target while creating a significant blind spot in CX. Targeting the percentage of hours in which the average wait time was lower than 20 seconds is perhaps a better strategy.

Planning for Our Colleagues

WFM analysts control a bulk of very emotional factors about agent work, and I have made it a rule for the last decade to add employee engagement as an objective to all planners.

After all, doing our job right should foster a more engaging environment for colleagues. Thinking of colleagues first has resulted in some incredible innovations such as:

- Moving from monthly to annual schedules after proving that seasonal volatility was lower than attrition rates / new hires
- Introducing automation for shift swaps and annual leave (previously seen as a lower priority and loss of control)
- Removing unnecessary information logging, such as call reason codes or aux codes, which proved unreliable and just an extra task for colleagues.
- Providing WFM training in induction classes to explain how the team approaches scheduling decisions and ensures fairness.
- Introducing preference-based scheduling with a highly diverse choice of shift types
- Linking learning and development material into stats dashboards to propose training to help with specific metrics.

Planners can action all of the above with basic tools. It just requires a willingness to engage WFM specialists in the employee experience conversation.

Final Thoughts

I often joke that planners are “The Keepers of Truth”. After all, they work in a world of numbers where every action has to be backed by data, where they find the most efficient way to achieve objectives, where they constantly balance supply and demand to meet targets. All this applies even if the numbers relate to experience rather than volumes.



Bob Stella
Senior WFM Manager



As such, WFM is a powerful tool in the search for ideal experiences. Top industry players have recognised its potential by adding a seat at the decision table for these hugely influential people. There is no reason why everyone can't do the same.

About the author

Bob Stella is an Operational Effectiveness professional with 20 years' experience in WFM, Data & Insight, Change Management and L&D within the customer contact industry. Author of several articles on these subjects and a frequent speaker at industry events, he has built up his knowledge by consulting or working for several organisations from a small two-seater to large multilingual, multichannel multinationals.

How to Make the Most of Your Workforce Optimisation Strategy



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Pandemic-triggered homeworking arrangements kicked off a mass (and many would say overdue) transformation of contact centres from closely monitored and controlled “mill-style” environments. New-age distributed workplaces were forged in the fires of Covid. Weary customer contact foot soldiers eagerly consumed an unexpected bounty of work-life balance, flexible scheduling and unprecedented levels of trust and empowerment.

But while employees may be feeling more satisfied than ever, the rapid shift in working practices has made it increasingly difficult for organisations to manage their contact centre personnel effectively. Delivering the best possible customer service with the highest rate of efficiency depends on ensuring all agents are trained, supported, monitored, motivated and organised, wherever they are.

Only by employing a **bulletproof Workforce Optimisation (WFO) strategy** using cutting-edge technology can you improve employee performance and ensure customer demands are met in the most efficient way possible.

Bolt-on or Full-stack?

Typically, many contact centres have taken the ‘bolt on’ approach to building their WFO framework, using integrations with multiple vendors’ wares to add functionality bit-by-bit. But in today’s data-driven world where technology advances at pace, this approach makes it hard to keep up with the latest WFO advances. Deploying a full stack WFO solution within a single, vertically-integrated Contact Centre-as-a-Service (CCaaS) architecture provides the most effective route to delivering a more engaging experience for agents, supervisors, and customers alike.



Cutting-Edge WFO Technology

When choosing a solution, look for a provider that remains at the forefront of new WFO technology. Your full-stack solution should enable you to monitor agent interactions, script adherence, and caller sentiment in real-time to ensure you meet all quality goals, demonstrate compliance, and can create individually-tailored development plans for agents, as well as deliver the best customer experience possible.

Similarly, integrated knowledge management and support tools are essential for providing your agents with the information they need to deliver best-in-class customer service. This should include real-time access to customer histories and contextual data, together with automatic supervision that supplies ‘whisper-in’ prompts to help agents when handling trickier interactions.

To promote employee motivation, your WFO solution should enable smart scheduling based on agent skill-sets. **Artificially intelligent chatbots**, incorporated into scheduling, help deal with high-volume

repetitive tasks and FAQ-style queries, leaving human agents with time to focus on higher-value activities. Finally, agents need full support from supervisors, which can only be achieved through a solution that enables them to monitor every customer interaction, regardless of channel, and intervene or give guidance as soon as it is needed.

Choose Content Guru for Full-Stack and Full Functionality

Content Guru’s **storm**® WFO™ suite enables effective workforce optimisation by combining a variety of leading-edge tools in a single, straightforward interface. From intelligent scheduling and fully compliant reporting and recording; to knowledge management capabilities, quality monitoring and analytics technology, and even agent training, **storm** WFO has everything you need to deliver unmatched WFO and improve the customer service your employees deliver. And best of all, **storm** WFO is architecturally integral with **storm** CONTACT™, the leading CCaaS solution for enterprise and mission-critical customer experience.

Say Goodbye to the Mute Button Once and for All



Robert Schoenfield
COO
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Communicating via digital means, whether voice- or video-based, is simply not the same as communicating face-to-face. And although technology has recently advanced to make online interactions of any kind as seamless as possible, communicating in the digital world has its challenges. One of the biggest being the infamous mute button.

For customer service agents working from home during the pandemic — faced with all sorts of noisy distractions around them — the mute button has become an essential go-to tactic for minimizing disruptive noise during customer calls.

Unfortunately, when agents spend more time worrying about whether a customer can hear noise in the background and less time focused on delivering a stellar customer experience, they can't do their jobs effectively. Or they perpetually operate in fear, should they choose to leave the mute button unchecked, that customers will be annoyed by the noise and leave a negative post-call review that will cast a shadow on their success.

Whatever the case may be, background noise has become a thorn in the side of customers and agents alike and, unfortunately, can't be remedied by the mute button alone.



Krisp makes the mute button a moot point

Knowing that the mute button is only a makeshift solution for improving customer interactions, Krisp decided to leverage advanced artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to make it a distant memory. Here's how:

Bi-Directional Noise Cancellation

Krisp is an AI-powered noise cancellation layer that sits between users and the microphones and speakers natively installed on their devices. Headsets fall into this category, too. When installed on an agent's device, with a single click they can filter out the background noises happening within their environment, so their customers don't hear a single thing.

However, what makes Krisp even more unique is the promise of bi-directional noise cancellation. What this basically means is that the potentially disruptive sounds coming from the other end of the line, whether or not customers have a noise cancellation solution installed, also will be filtered out. The end result is much clearer call quality, where agents and

customers can hear each other's voices loud and clear — without any other noises getting in the way.

Voice Cancellation

Krisp has gone where noise cancellation hasn't gone before. In addition to filtering out background noises like magic, Krisp can be programmed to recognize an agent's voice pitch — high, medium, or low — to subsequently filter out competing voices that are not in the same pitch range. This is a gamechanger for agents working at home or in busy contact centers, where it can be easy for background conversations to be audible during customer calls.

Echo Cancellation

We've all had those moments where a room's acoustics — from home office setups to poorly sound-proofed offices — lend themselves to echoes and reverbs that often make it impossible to decipher what someone is saying on a call. Krisp corrects this to ensure an agent's natural HD voice quality, regardless of their environment.



How to Perfect Your Hybrid Working Strategy

Hybrid working consists of working from home (WFH) and working from the office (WFO). It sounds pretty simple, but the reality is that organising, managing and succeeding across these two very different environments is hugely challenging for customer service and contact centre teams - and their leaders.

Customer-facing teams have settled into WFH, with about a third of them loving it and the others either indifferent or not happy. In many environments, the generational differences are apparent, with millennials wanting to be in the office and older generations preferring a mix of home and office or to solely working from home.

Yet, when it comes to the office, things just aren't what they used to be, with the much-loved team spirit replaced with hotdesking, booking systems and half-empty workstations. Indeed, the customer culture DNA that many championed has at best been modified but, in many cases, destroyed.

Going forward, it's time to think about how WFH and WFO can work together. The "wait-and-see" approach to policy just doesn't work for employees. Many companies are experiencing attrition, absence, and inconsistent customer and employee engagement.

WFH and WFO Culture Is Now a Number One Priority

It is critical to be customer-centric to be successful in a service environment.

Start with three key questions:

1. How can we ensure that customer-centricity is in every home and office?

2. What changes are necessary for leading, communicating, and training staff to guarantee high productivity in the new environment?

3. How will teams participate in the customer-centric culture?

Team Managers Are the Bridge

Putting the policies and technologies in place to support hybrid working is a top priority for many organisations. However, the process of resetting team norms and practices to enable this new way of working tends to be overlooked.

The team manager is the central figure and the only person who can ensure hybrid working success. They are the head of the table and walk the walk; they motivate their teams like no one else can, and they are the bridge between home and office. This role can, and will, make or break the success of hybrid working.

Contact centres must create and implement a new framework that involves new organisational and leadership responsibilities and changes how employees work.

Ten areas need addressing to support successful WFH and WFO hybrid working, based on a detailed examination of all industry regulations currently available:

Ten Hybrid Working Standards

1. Hybrid Work Culture
2. Duty of Care
3. Mental Health & Well Being
4. Compliance & Security
5. Planning & Support
6. Environment & Accidents
7. Performance Management
8. Team Working
9. Communications
10. Leadership

These ten hybrid working standards allows leaders to consider how they protect themselves



Natalie Calvert
CX+EX Executive Coach

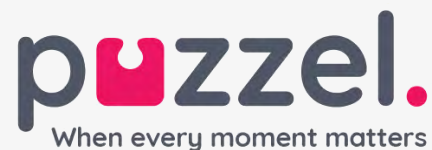
and their employees, managing the risks and opportunities associated with hybrid working. Also, this structure enables them to succeed and thrive in the new normal – at home and in the office.

Bio

Natalie is a highly respected multi award winning CX authority, leader, keynote speaker and executive coach with substantial international and board advisory experience in the corporate customer experience, service and sales environment across both private and public sectors.

She has delivered award winning strategic Customer Experience and Employee Experience change and implementation for over 100 organisations including some of the world's largest brands; O2, Royal Mail, Audi, LEGO, The Cabinet Office, M&S, Staples and BT.

Three Ways WFM can Reduce Agent Attrition



Jonathan Allan
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Agent attrition is one of the greatest challenges contact centres face today.

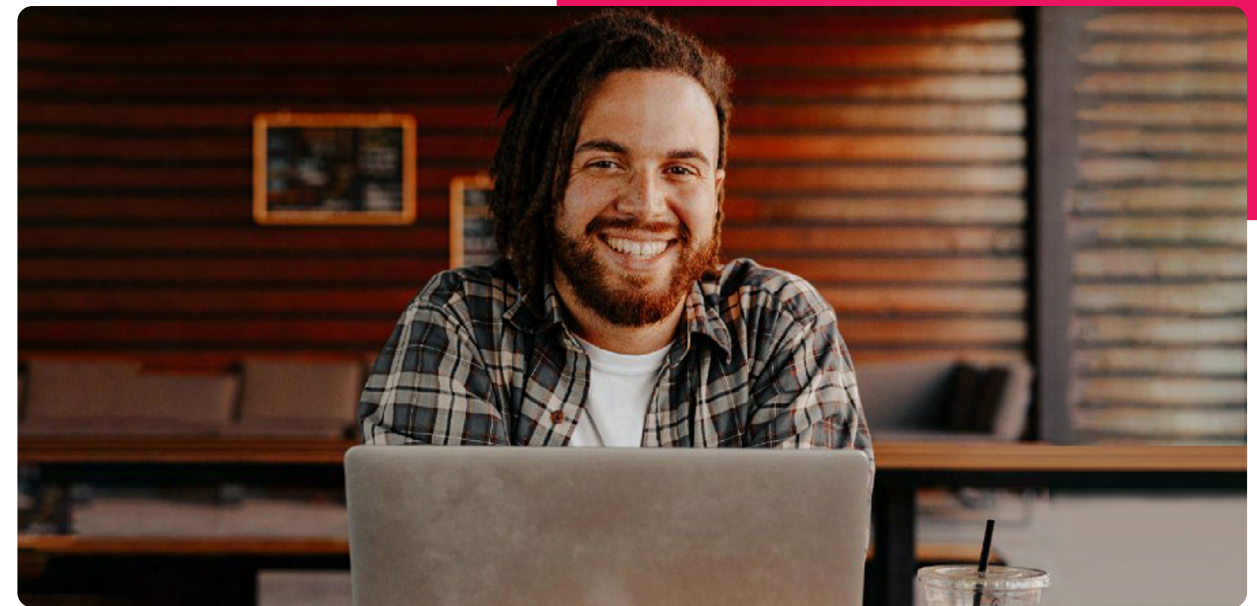
According to the Global Call Centre Research Network, the average contact centre loses around 20% of its staff every year ^[1]. This can be due to a number of reasons – agents can retire, move away, start families, choose to study full-time or simply decide contact centre work isn't for them.

But a large proportion of agents do leave their jobs or switch to a competitor because of poor working conditions. Some of the top reasons cited by exiting agents include excessive pressure or stress, low pay, high staff turnover, repetitive work, and a lack of promotion or career development opportunities.

Counting the cost of agent attrition

While occasional staff turnover can be beneficial for your business, frequent staff turnover can have serious consequences for your contact centre. These include:

- Inconsistent service levels for customers
- Low quality of service for customers
- High recruitment and training costs
- Increased stress and pressure for managers
- Low morale and motivation amongst agents
- Limited long-term progression for agents and the business



How WFM can improve agent satisfaction

A Workforce Management (WFM) solution can help you improve your agent experience through more effective resource management. Using historical data captured directly from your contact centre, you can accurately forecast customer demand and build schedules optimised to ensure the highest service levels for your customers, the best experience for your agents, and the lowest operational cost for your business.

Puzzel WFM can help you:

Reduce over- and understaffing: When your contact centre is properly staffed, your agents can focus on their work, deliver their best service, and achieve their targets. But when it's understaffed, they must juggle a higher workload and often assist in other areas where they may not have the necessary experience. This extra workload can lead to stress, mistakes, frustration and burnout. On the flip side, overstaffing can leave your agents scratching for jobs and customers to serve, which can lead to boredom and low morale.

Provide greater flexibility: Giving your agents more control over their schedules – by enabling them to submit their availability and shift preferences, trade shifts, and manage their holidays – provides them with greater job flexibility. It allows them to work around their personal commitments, which leads to greater work-life balance, wellbeing and satisfaction.

Make more time for employee engagement, training and development: With more accurate forecasts and deeper insights into contact volumes and AHT, you can identify the best times of day to engage with your agents without causing too much disruption for your customers. These times can be used to hold team-building exercises, training sessions and one-on-ones with agents to work on their career development.

Learn more about Puzzel WFM

A WFM solution is one of the most powerful tools you can have in your contact centre toolkit.

Visit us at puzzel.com to learn more.

^[1] Global Call Centre Research Network

Beyond Average Handle Time (AHT) - Creating Mission Critical Contact Centers



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In 1748 Benjamin Franklin famously wrote “time is money” in a book called *The American Instructor*, aimed at tradespeople. Franklin probably would have made an excellent contact center manager because where the phrase “time is money” is highly applicable. Lost productivity in a contact center adds up to increased labor costs, longer time to serve and potentially lower customer satisfaction. The larger the contact center, the more money is at risk.

For several decades contact center applications have focused on extracting minutes and then seconds out of transactions, first with just calls and now with omnichannel engagements. While that effort continues, many **large contact centers** have also learned that they need a foundational layer, or core, below their agent application to manage call routing and security. The scope of large contact centers continues to expand, making them more mission critical for many organizations and sadly a larger target for bad actors seeking to benefit from business disruption.

Over the past 15 years Ribbon has become a leading provider to contact centers, helping them scale and securing their networks. You might be thinking “Ribbon?! Aren’t they a vendor for carriers or as an SBC company for Teams and Zoom? What’s their role in contact centers?”

Ribbon’s connection to contact centers is tied to our carrier heritage. One of our first marquee contact center accounts was a big bank, with nearly 7,000 trunks (in those days a mix of mostly TDM and some IP). The bank’s contact center environment had grown so large that most enterprise contact center applications couldn’t effectively manage routing all of that traffic, particularly between centers. The bank recognized that they needed carrier grade services with carrier scale, resiliency, and security.



What that big bank learned, and similar large customers have since realized (Ribbon now counts over half of the top ten largest banks in the USA as customers, the biggest airlines, tech companies, insurance companies and more) is that they need a foundational element that operates below the contact center application layer. Contact center managers now recognize that their agent applications are architecturally optimized for customer experience, not large-scale routing, and security tasks. It’s more effective to abstract those tasks away from the agent application, turning those duties over to Ribbon’s “agnostic core”.

Ribbon’s agnostic core is a centralized **routing and security environment** that can handle massive amounts of call traffic. It uses a carrier grade high availability design coupled with multiple layers of redundancy customized to the organization’s needs, so it’s robust enough to shield centers from overloads and thwart today’s aggressive denial of security attacks, or similar disruptions.

With multiple layers of intelligent routing including DNIS, ANI, time of day, route congestion, etc., Ribbon’s core can shift traffic between sites or queues, including that

between multiple brands of contact center software, hence the reference to ‘agnostic’. That vendor independence makes it easier to execute an individual site upgrade or migrate to a new agent application, without disrupting organization-wide engagement. It also affords organizations greater freedom to negotiate for new technology or vendors, vs being held captive to legacy choices.

Unfortunately, as we noted prior, contact center managers now find their centers under more frequent and sophisticated attacks. Our analytics tools fight fire with fire, using machine learning to look for patterns and watch for known bad actors. Ribbon tools can automatically take action to respond to unauthorized network access, cyberattacks, denial of service attacks, fraud attempts, and network quality incidents.

In summary, we may not be the first brand you think of in the contact center space, yet we like to think we are one of the most important, working behind the scenes, enabling hundreds of thousands of secure engagements every day, assuring that no time is wasted. Hopefully, Franklin would approve.

We Make CX Work

Learn More at Five9.com/UK



The Intelligent Cloud
Contact Centre