CCW

CUSTOMER CONTACT WEEK DIGITAL

CCW Market Study

THE FUTURE OF THE CONTACT CENTER IN 2019

# FUTURE OF THE CONTACT CENTER: RESTORING A PAST VISION

It may be a popular cliche, but the term "back to the basics" does not accurately reflect the mindset we have toward the contact center. There is nothing basic about how organizations will interact with customers in the months and years ahead. They will use new technologies, engage in new channels, and assess performance against new metrics.

These new innovations and initiatives will not, however, obscure an emphasis on one of the most fundamental truths associated with the contact center. The goal, above all, is to make meaningful connections with customers.

In revealing their visions, priorities and plans for 2019, customer contact leaders reveal a lingering passion for the human touch. They will leverage new technology to augment—not eliminate—human connections. They will drive agents to become partners rather than providers. They will evaluate customers as multi-faceted, emotion-heavy individuals rather than random buyers.
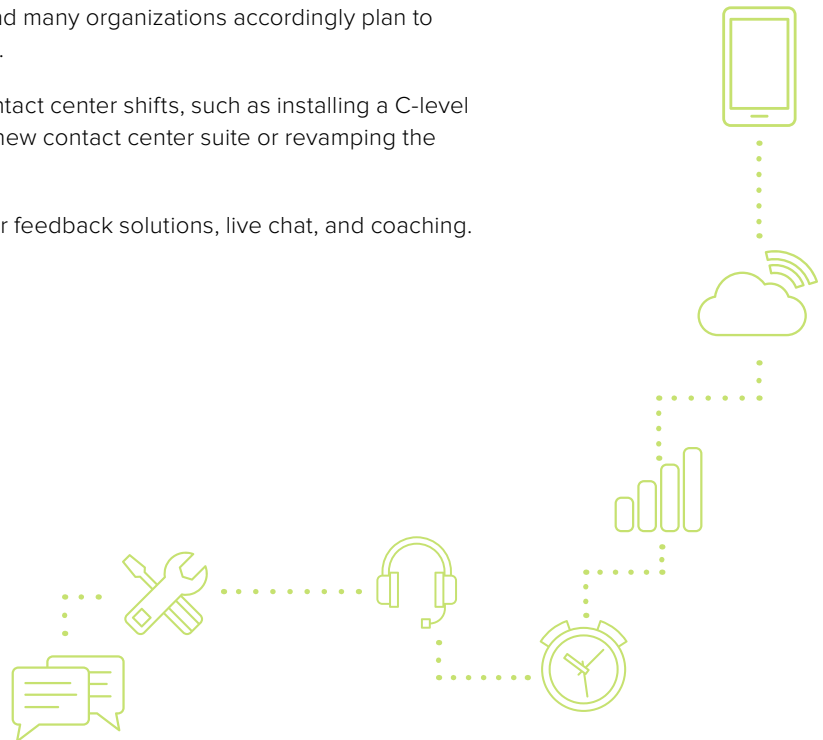
CCW Digital's Market Study on the Future of the Contact Center explores this research, ultimately revealing that the best way forward is to make sure the heart of customer centricity is not left in the past.

After detailing visions, strategic priorities, agent engagement initiatives and investment plans for 2019, this study dives deeply into a variety of technologies, best practices and case studies that can make a human-centric contact center a reality.
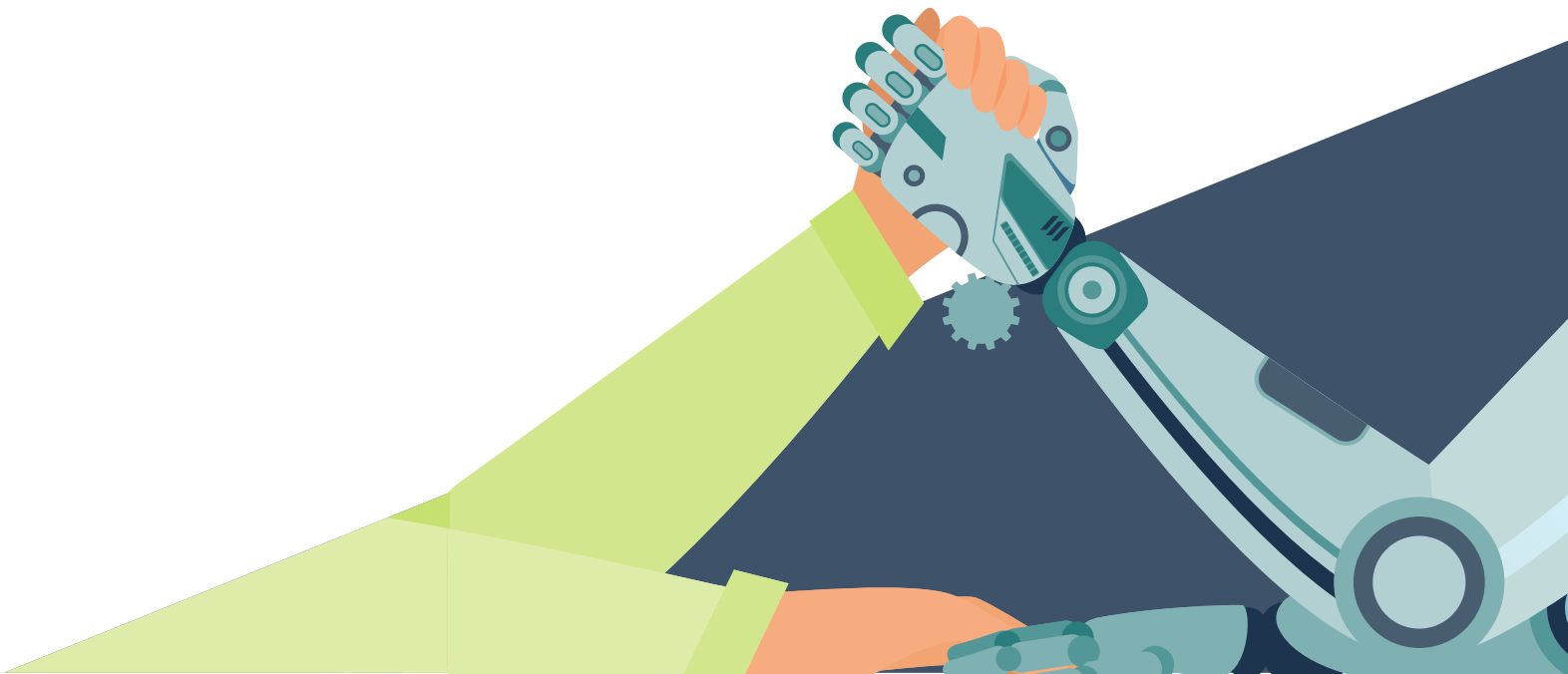
KEY FINDINGS

1 Customer satisfaction will remain a pivotal contact center metric. 73% of organizations believe CSAT should be on the quality scorecard.

2 Despite the hype surrounding self-service technology, 64% of organizations believe customers should have easy access to a live agent.

3 Organizations reiterate that artificial intelligence should complement, rather than replace, human agents.

4 In a summer 2018 CCW survey, consumers said that they prefer "easy" experiences to "personalized" ones. Organizations, interestingly, believe that increasing personalization is more important than reducing customer effort.

5 Less than one-third of organizations believe in "right-channeling" customers to a more efficient touch point.

6 Increasing digital engagement capabilities is the #1 priority for 2019.

7 Other top priorities include improving the knowledge base, journey mapping and orchestration, coaching agents on "human" factors and using AI for process automation.

8 "Empowerment" to provide unique resolutions to customers represents a top agent experience priority.

9 Reducing agent effort is also a concern, and many organizations accordingly plan to update their workspace tools and systems.

10 Few organizations are planning radical contact center shifts, such as installing a C-level customer experience team, investing in a new contact center suite or revamping the outsourcing strategy.

11 Popular investment areas include customer feedback solutions, live chat, and coaching.

METHODOLOGY & DEMOGRAPHICS

To collect data for the Market Study on the Future of the Contact Center, CCW Digital surveyed customer experience, contact center, marketing, customer care, IT, and operations professionals in August, September and October 2018.

Example respondent job titles included vice president of market operations, guest care manager, director of call center operations, global customer experience director, EVP operations, director of customer experience design, service design manager, chief operations office, vice president of call center operations, senior vice president of marketing and the customer experience, vice president of member experience, and senior vice president of customer service and marketing.

The respondent pool encompasses a wide range of organizations, including a substantial number of large enterprises. 59% of respondent organizations generate over $1 billion in revenue, and 57% employee over 1000 individuals. Sixty-seven percent of respondent organizations have multiple contact center sites.

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Brian Cantor is the principal analyst and director for CCW Digital, the global online community and research hub for customer contact professionals. In his role, Brian leads all customer experience, contact center, technology and employee engagement research initiatives for CCW Digital's series of reports. CCW Digital's articles, special reports, commentaries, infographics, executive interviews, webinars and online events reach a community of over 150,000.

A passionate advocate for customer centricity, Brian regularly speaks on major CX conference agendas. He also advises organizations on customer experience and business development strategies.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Not every organization develops comprehensive, long-term blueprints for its customer contact strategy.

All organizations, however, have some form of vision for their contact center. They have at least a rough sense of what they are trying to achieve. They know the general purpose behind their customer experience initiatives, and they have an idea of what success entails.

No matter how thorough, that vision will ultimately *define* customer contact strategy in 2019 and beyond. It will be the calibration point for most, if not all, decisions related to people, processes and technology.

To properly understand and evaluate strategic priorities for the future, it is consequently imperative to consider the vision organizations are setting for the customer contact function.
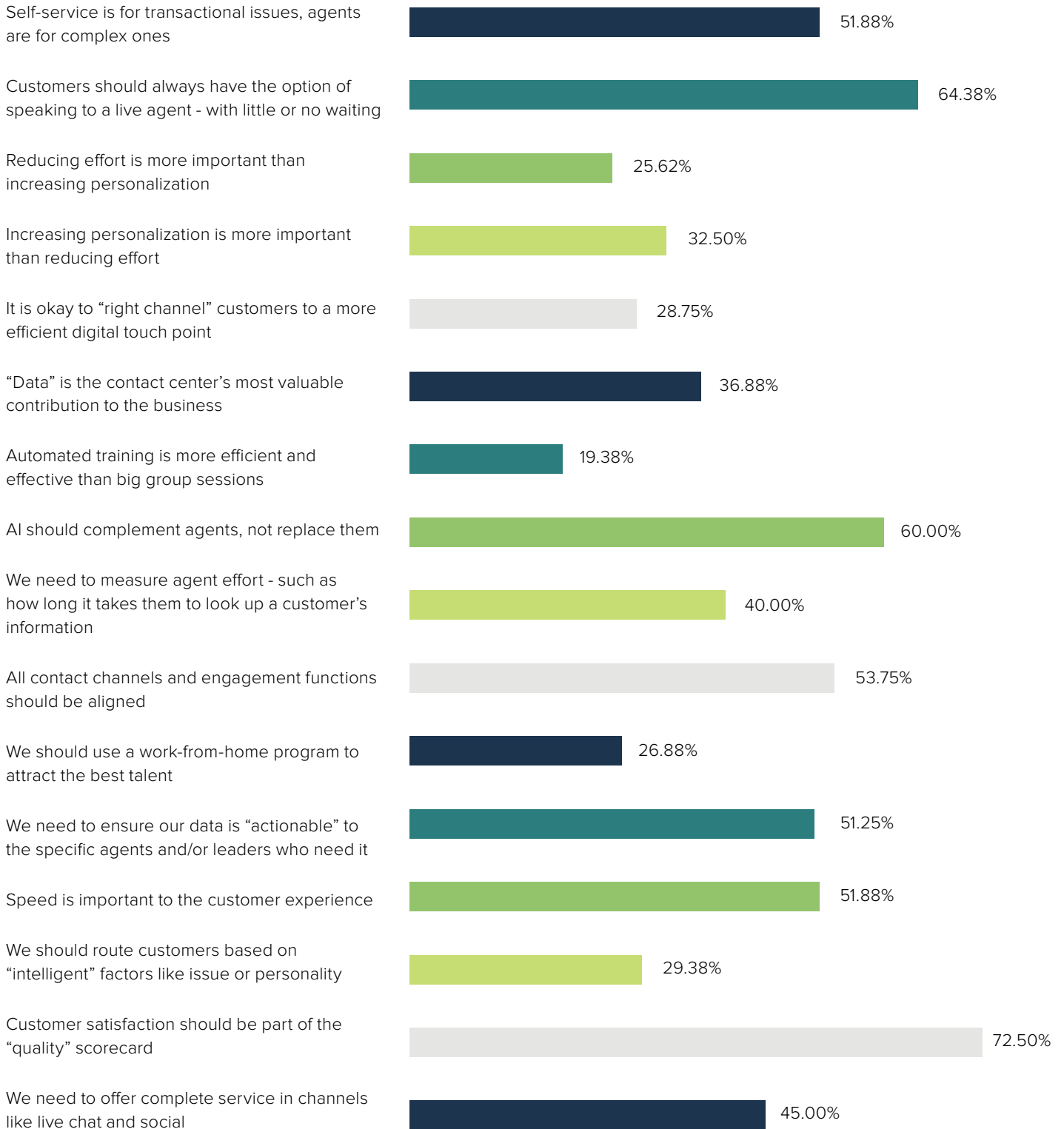
For many organizations, the vision includes a firm commitment to driving customer satisfaction. Supported by 73% of respondents, the notion that "customer

satisfaction warrants a place on the quality scorecard" represents the most popular perspective.

Other comparatively popular visions for the contact center include the belief that customers should always have easy access to a live agent (64%), the notion that artificial intelligence should complement rather than replace human agents (60%), the importance of aligning all contact channels and engagement functions (54%), the dichotomy that self-service is for transactional matters while agents are for complex ones (52%), and the sense that speed is important to the customer experience (52%).

Comparatively unpopular statements regarding the customer contact landscape include the belief that automated training is more efficient and effective than classroom sessions (19%), the ideology that reducing effort trumps increasing personalization (25%), the notion of leveraging work-from-home to attract the best talent (26%), the strategy of right-channeling customers for efficiency purposes (29%), and the commitment to routing based on factors like issue or personality (30%).

WHICH OF THESE STATEMENTS ALIGN WITH YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE CONTACT CENTER?

Self-service is for transactional issues, agents are for complex ones — 51.88%

Customers should always have the option of speaking to a live agent - with little or no waiting — 64.38%

Reducing effort is more important than increasing personalization — 25.62%

Increasing personalization is more important than reducing effort — 32.50%

It is okay to "right channel" customers to a more efficient digital touch point — 28.75%

"Data" is the contact center's most valuable contribution to the business — 36.88%

Automated training is more efficient and effective than big group sessions — 19.38%

AI should complement agents, not replace them — 60.00%

We need to measure agent effort - such as how long it takes them to look up a customer's information — 40.00%

All contact channels and engagement functions should be aligned — 53.75%

We should use a work-from-home program to attract the best talent — 26.88%

We need to ensure our data is "actionable" to the specific agents and/or leaders who need it — 51.25%

Speed is important to the customer experience — 51.88%

We should route customers based on "intelligent" factors like issue or personality — 29.38%

Customer satisfaction should be part of the "quality" scorecard — 72.50%

We need to offer complete service in channels like live chat and social — 45.00%

Organizations Value Speed But Are Cautious About Chasing "Efficiency"

Ahead of 2018, customer contact executives professed a resounding commitment to reducing customer effort. CCW Digital research, in fact, revealed reducing effort as the #1 customer experience priority for 2018.

Consumers have also demonstrated their own support for a frictionless experience. According to the CCW Digital Market Study on the Customer Experience, consumers prefer low-effort experiences to highly personal ones by a factor of 2-to-1.

Given these previous findings, the data for this year's Market Study is intriguing, if not outright surprising. With 2019 approaching, many organizations generally believe that personalization is as important as (if not more important than) reducing effort. Only 25% accept the notion that reducing effort trumps increasing personalization, and 33% believe increasing personalization is more important than reducing effort.

This perspective on reducing effort aligns with a lukewarm reaction to the idea of efficiency. In articulating their customer contact visions for 2019, many organizations shied away from efficiency-minded concepts.

Four-fifths of organizations prefer group training sessions to automated coaching tools. Nearly 70% are averse to right-channeling customers to create more efficient interactions. Organizations also demonstrate continued reverence for offering live agent assistance.

These organizations, it should be noted, are not downplaying the importance of speed. They believe speed is important to the customer experience, and they understand the importance of aligning contact channels to help customers more smoothly navigate the journey.

The issue, therefore, seems to be skepticism that efficiency-minded efforts may come at the expense of the customer experience. They may believe in reducing effort or leveraging digital channels, but they do not want such pursuits to impact the quality of the engagement journey. They do not want to force customers into ill-suited digital environments strictly in the name of "reducing effort." They do not want to eliminate group training purely for "efficiency" purposes.

The Human Touch Remains Paramount

Driving this skepticism toward efficiency is a renewed emphasis on the human touch.

By professing a widespread commitment to offering live agent support, leveraging live agents for complex matters, adding customer satisfaction to the quality scorecard and employing actionable analytics, organizations are ultimately professing their interest in making connections. They want to make each "moment of truth" as meaningful as possible.

Unsurprisingly, the idea of reducing *agent effort* (40%) is more popular than the idea of emphasizing customer effort (25%). Whereas an emphasis on customer effort may conjure up negative images about forcing customers to use digital channels, reducing agent effort empowers agents to spend less time *preparing* and more time actually connecting with customers.

Indeed, the human connection is the ultimate goal.
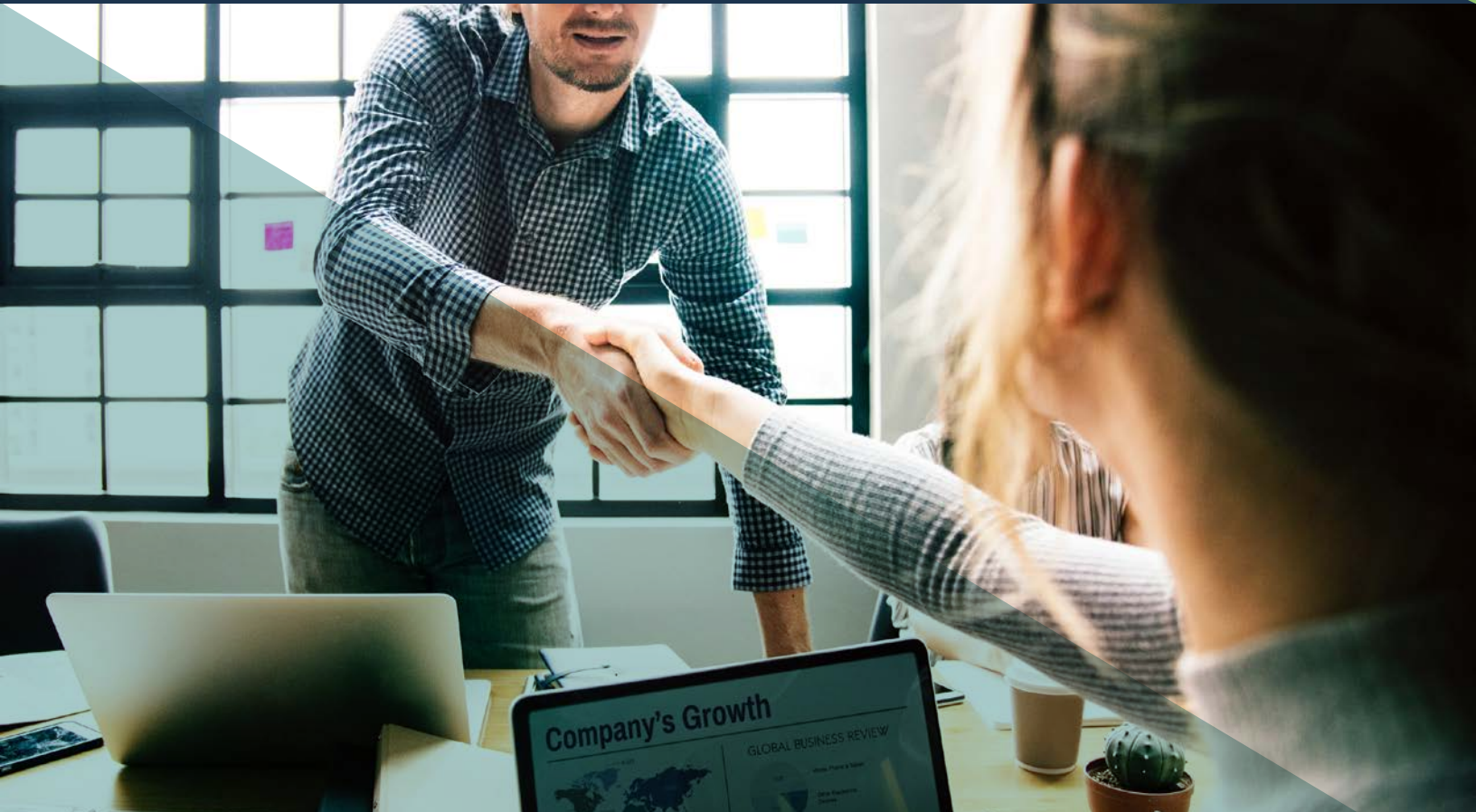
EXECUTIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2019

Setting a vision for the customer contact function is important. Taking meaningful action to realize that vision is far more important.

The earlier investigation into the vision for the contact center uncovers key objectives and aspirations, but it does not confirm any action steps. It does not reveal the type of transformation organizations will make in 2019, let alone provide any insight into whether the transformation will be successful.

To gain a true window into the future of the contact center, it is consequently important to explore strategic plans for 2019. Which issues will organizations tackle? Which initiatives, quite simply, will constitute executive priorities?

The most widespread priority involves increasing investment into digital channels. Nearly 47% of organizations say they plan to expand their digital capabilities in 2019.

Other popular priorities for 2019 include improving the knowledge base (44%), customer journey mapping and orchestration (39%), coaching agents on making "connections" (37%), and using artificial intelligence for process automation (36%).

In sharing their visions for the future of the contact center, organizations demonstrated a clear passion for increasing the human touch. They clearly believe in maximizing the connections they make at each moment of truth.

Each of the investment priorities aligns with this vision.

The interest in improving digital channels coincides with the goal of adding a human factor to historically "low-touch" environments. Few organizations offer a "full service" experience within their digital channels, and many are looking to change that reality. They want to inject deeper engagement into their digital channels, making them more personal, more conversational, more resolute and, ultimately, more valuable.
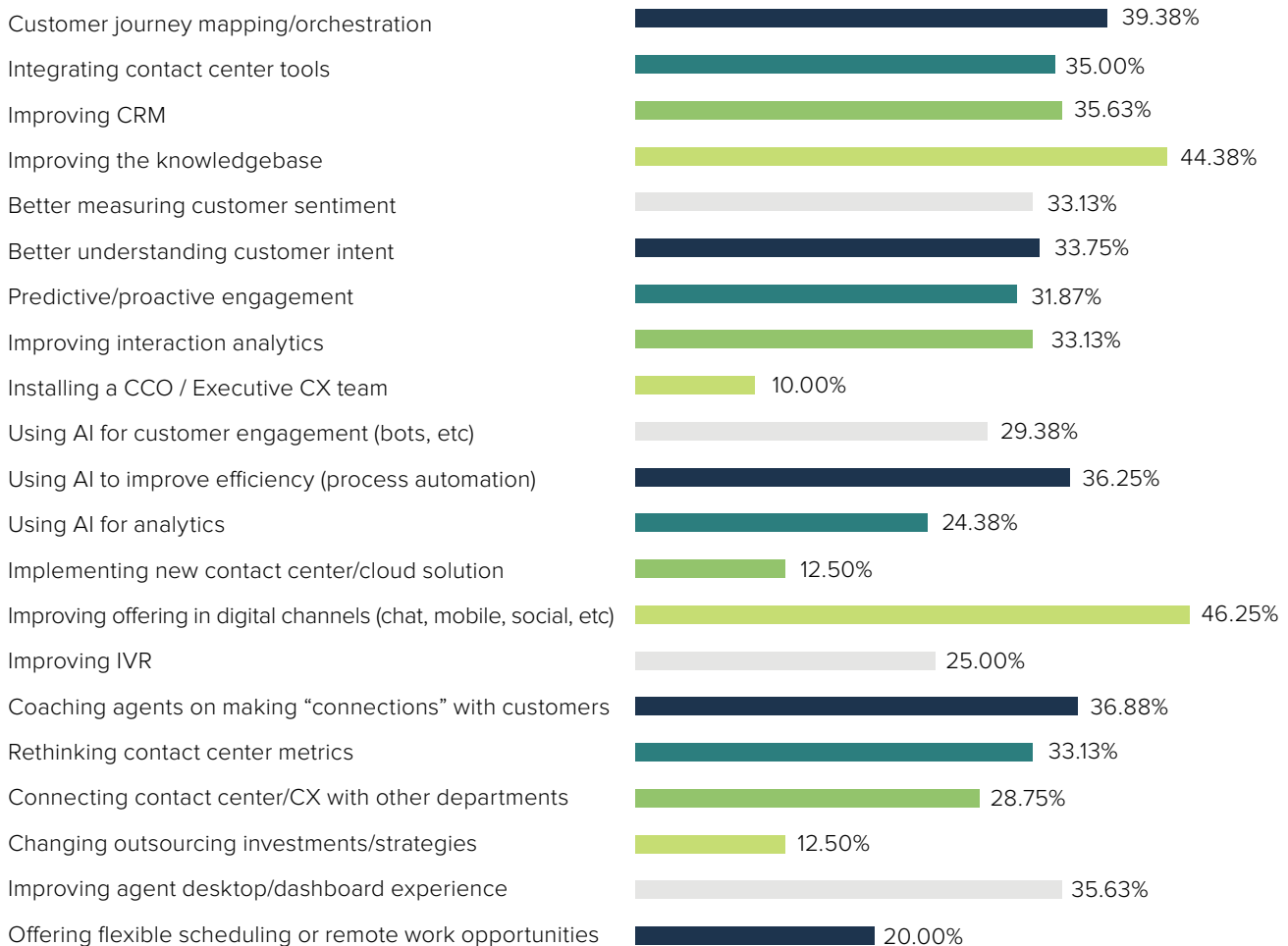
By improving the knowledge base and automating processes, organizations will empower agents to more meaningfully engage with customers. With access to a more intuitive, powerful knowledge base, agents can quickly gain the information they need to delight customers. With artificial intelligence removing rote, back-office tasks from their plates, agents can spend more time engaging in those delightful conversations.

To strengthen those conversations, organizations will predictably incorporate the "connection" into their coaching and training curricula. Rather than focusing exclusively on system and process training, these organizations will make agents better at actually communicating with customers.

Not merely consistent with the emphasis on the human touch, this endeavor also aligns with the belief that customer service warrants a place on the quality scorecard. Incorporating the "connection" into coaching communicates the message that the goal is not merely to serve customers; it is to satisfy them.

Through journey mapping, organizations can anticipate customer behaviors and intentions. Through orchestration, these organizations can help agents communicate the right message in the right place in the right time. Ultimately, the moments will be more magical, and the satisfaction score will be more impressive.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING INITIATIVES WILL BE PRIORITIES FOR YOUR CONTACT CENTER/CX TEAM IN 2019?

Initiative	Percentage
Customer journey mapping/orchestration	39.38%
Integrating contact center tools	35.00%
Improving CRM	35.63%
Improving the knowledgebase	44.38%
Better measuring customer sentiment	33.13%
Better understanding customer intent	33.75%
Predictive/proactive engagement	31.87%
Improving interaction analytics	33.13%
Installing a CCO / Executive CX team	10.00%
Using AI for customer engagement (bots, etc)	29.38%
Using AI to improve efficiency (process automation)	36.25%
Using AI for analytics	24.38%
Implementing new contact center/cloud solution	12.50%
Improving offering in digital channels (chat, mobile, social, etc)	46.25%
Improving IVR	25.00%
Coaching agents on making "connections" with customers	36.88%
Rethinking contact center metrics	33.13%
Connecting contact center/CX with other departments	28.75%
Changing outsourcing investments/strategies	12.50%
Improving agent desktop/dashboard experience	35.63%
Offering flexible scheduling or remote work opportunities	20.00%

Agent Tools Are Important

Of the five most common focuses for 2019, only the knowledge base constitutes an agent "tool."

Agent tools are not, however, a low-profile focus for 2019. Although they may be just short of the Top 5, other aspects of the day-to-day agent experience are indeed top-of-mind for 2019.

Thirty-six percent of organizations aim to improve agent desktop and CRM experiences in 2019, tying them as the #6 priority for 2019. Integrating contact center tools (#8, 35%) also constitutes a comparatively popular focuses for 2019.

Clearly, organizations are looking to empower agents to make connections in 2019. The real question is how they will create that empowerment. Will they focus more heavily on data, training or technology?

Little Interest In Big Transformations

The preface to this section discusses the idea of making a transformation. It questions how organizations will *transform* to turn their visions into realities.

In looking at executive priorities for 2019, the word *transformation* may overstate the changes organizations plan to make.

While they will *enhance* their digital channels, agent tools, coaching strategies and customer intelligence initiatives, organizations are not generally planning to overhaul their overall customer experience function.

Only 10%, as an example, plan to install an executive-level customer experience presence (such as a chief customer officer or steering committee). Fewer than 13% plan to implement a new contact center suite or change their approach toward outsourcing. Only 20% will consider flexible scheduling or remote work opportunities.

Supported by 10 and 20% of organizations, these big picture transformations are not completely off the radar. Some organizations wholeheartedly accept the need for a major transformation.

It is also important to note that many of these transformations will contribute to the other, more granular priorities for 2019. A new contact center solution, as an example, may improve channel or agent desktop capabilities. Changing the approach to outsourcing or remote work, meanwhile, may have ramifications for agent training and the ability to emphasize "connections."

To achieve some of their more microscopic goals, many organizations consequently *should* consider revamping their overall contact center framework.

Still, as it currently stands, the average contact center plans to address its needs issue-by-issue.

THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE

In their commentaries on the vision for the contact center, organizations stress the importance of the human touch. Technology may be changing the way organizations communicate with their customers, but it is not changing the belief that humanity belongs at the center of those conversations.

Agents, obviously, play an integral role in this human-minded approach to the contact center. As the individuals directly communicating with customers, they ultimately create moments of humanity within the experience. They determine whether the brand connects with—or merely serves—its customers.

To unlock the human touch, customer-centric organizations will undoubtedly seek to create happy, engaged, productive agents. The agent experience is clearly integral to the future of the contact center.

What is less universal is how organizations will aim to improve the agent experience. There is, after all, no true consensus regarding the factors that carry the greatest impact.

There are, however, some factors that seem more relevant than others.

According to 24% of organizations, empowering agents to offer custom or unique resolutions to customers has the biggest impact on their experience.

Twenty-two percent believe the effort associated with internal tools carries the biggest agent experience ramifications, and 13% ascribe prime importance to coaching and training.

Opportunities for advancement (13%) and sense of community (7%) are the next-highest-ranking factors.

Although the lack of a consensus may be frustrating to those seeking a silver bullet for the agent experience, it ultimately communicates an important reality. There is no such silver bullet. There is no singular way to transform unhappy, disengaged, poor-performing agents into perfect, content ambassadors for an organization.

It takes a combination of endeavors—from emphasizing a customer-centric culture, to offering intuitive tools, to improving training, to helping agents grow in their careers, to everything in between—to cultivate the happy, productive agents who create happy, loyal customers.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING HAS THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON THE AGENT/EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE?
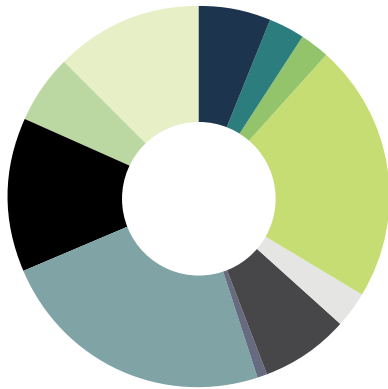
6.25% Compensation

3.13% Ability to work remotely/from home

2.50% Quality of the work environment (office space, hardware, etc)

21.88% Effort/frustration associated with contact center tools (CRM, knowledge, dashboards, etc)

3.13% Scheduling/shift options

7.50% Sense of community

0.63% Use of scripts

23.75% Empowerment to offer custom/unique resolutions to customers

13.13% Training/coaching

5.63% Clarity/logic of performance and metrics

12.50% Opportunity for advancement
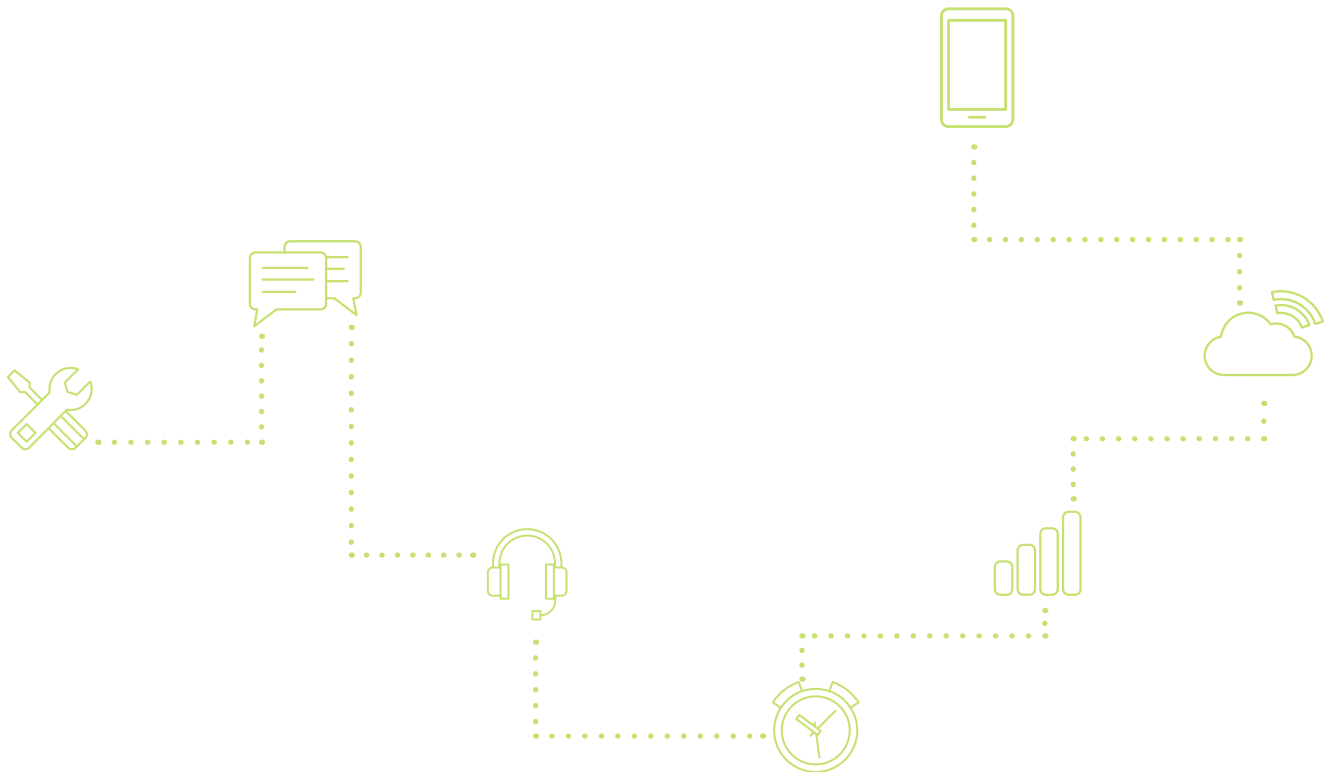
POPULAR INVESTMENT AREAS FOR 2019

The executive priorities breakdown gives insight into which issues organizations plan to tackle in 2019.

The priorities do not, however, provide a crystal-clear window into the specific mechanisms through which they will achieve those goals.

A portrait of the future of the contact center requires that dimension. It requires a sense of how organizations will *invest* into their customer experience visions.
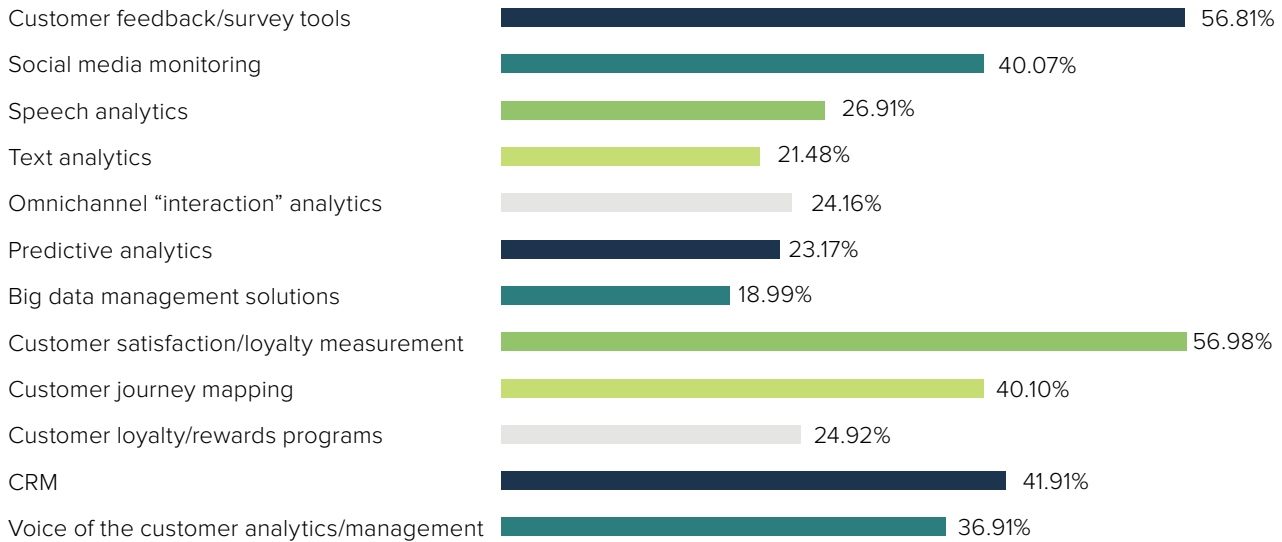
Customer Relationship And Intelligence Investments

Nearly three-quarters of organizations believe customer satisfaction warrants a place on the quality scorecard. Many of those organizations will invest in making that vision a reality.

Fifty-seven percent plan to invest in customer satisfaction and loyalty measurement this year, making it the top customer relationship and intelligence priority.

Other leading priorities include customer feedback and surveying tools (57%), CRM solutions (42%), customer journey mapping (40%), and social media monitoring tools (40%).

If there is a central theme to the investment priorities, it is the idea of gaining a multi-faceted understanding of customers as people. Organizations will leverage satisfaction measurement mechanisms, feedback tools and social media monitoring solutions to understand how customers feel about the service they are experiencing. They will also leverage journey mapping to track how customers behave and CRM solutions to turn their insights into relationships.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP AND INTELLIGENCE CATEGORIES ARE URGENT INVESTMENT PRIORITIES?

Category	Percentage
Customer feedback/survey tools	56.81%
Social media monitoring	40.07%
Speech analytics	26.91%
Text analytics	21.48%
Omnichannel "interaction" analytics	24.16%
Predictive analytics	23.17%
Big data management solutions	18.99%
Customer satisfaction/loyalty measurement	56.98%
Customer journey mapping	40.10%
Customer loyalty/rewards programs	24.92%
CRM	41.91%
Voice of the customer analytics/management	36.91%

Channel Investments

Unifying contact channels represents a key part of the vision for the future of the contact center. Improving capabilities within digital channels represents the top strategic initiative for 2019.

Collectively, these speak to a continued belief in the omnichannel approach to the customer experience. Organizations aim to ensure that customers are receiving the same, great commitment to customer centricity no matter where they interact—or how frequently they switch channels.

To realize this vision of an omnichannel experience, organizations will naturally need to make investments into specific channels, as well as their overall customer contact framework.

The top investment area for 2019 will be the voice channel. Nearly 60% view investments into live agent telephony as a priority.

Other top focuses include live chat (49%), email (47%), virtual queue solutions (42%), and social media engagement (38%).

The data aligns with the reality of the contact center.

Although organizations are committed to *improving* digital channels, they are still primarily *interacting* in the

voice environment. Conditioning bias notwithstanding, customers continue to resoundingly declare voice their preferred option for receiving customer service. Voice, moreover, remains one of the only channels in which the majority of organizations offer a full-service experience. Voice is still an integral part of the contact center, and organizations have no choice but to view it as an investment priority.
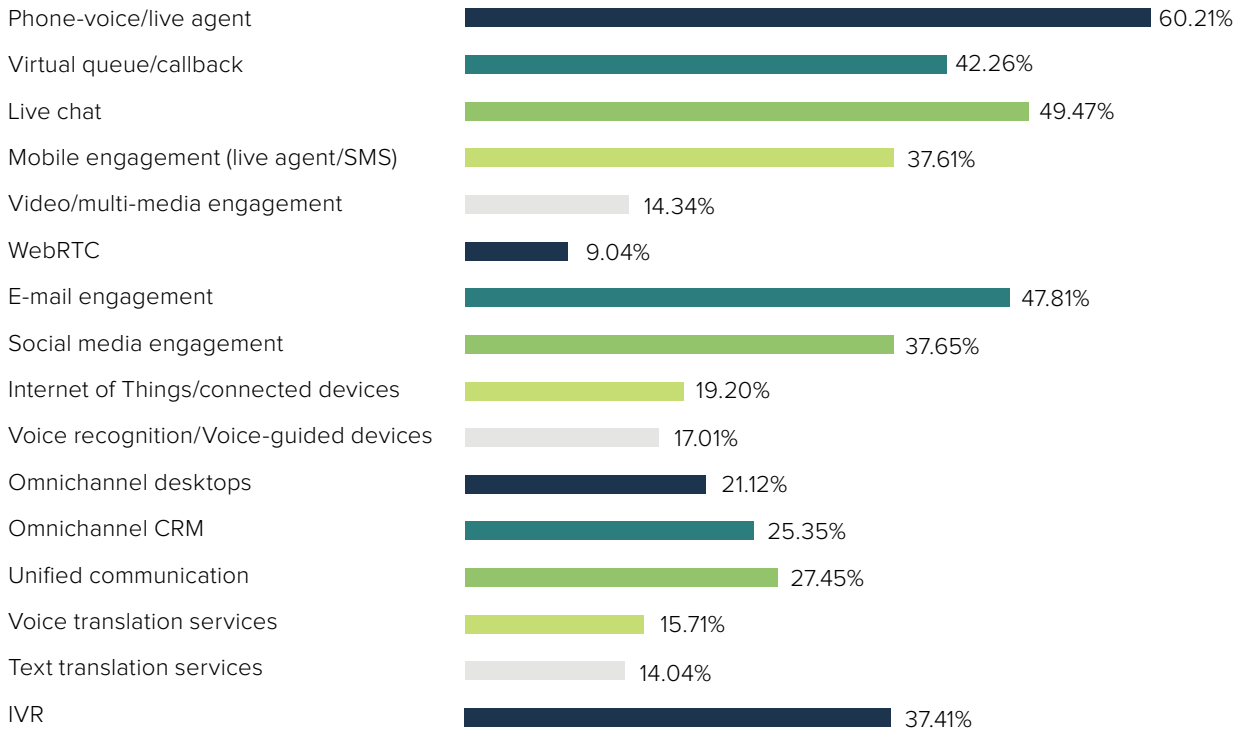
That does not, however, mean they must run voice exactly how they have in the past. Organizations are heavily interested in solutions for managing the call queue, consistent with their belief that customers should have easy access to live agents.

The notion of supporting "conventional" channels also explains why email continues to register as an investment focus.

Live chat is attracting attention as the intersection between offering human engagement and support for the digital world. An organization with a robust live chat offering can simultaneously connect with customers *and* support their growing familiarity with text-based, digital communication.

Not simply a popular contact channel, social media offers great insight into customer sentiment and behavior. By investing more heavily into social engagement, organizations can better support and learn about their customers.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CONTACT CHANNEL CATEGORIES ARE URGENT INVESTMENT PRIORITIES?

Contact Channel Category	Percentage
Phone-voice/live agent	60.21%
Virtual queue/callback	42.26%
Live chat	49.47%
Mobile engagement (live agent/SMS)	37.61%
Video/multi-media engagement	14.34%
WebRTC	9.04%
E-mail engagement	47.81%
Social media engagement	37.65%
Internet of Things/connected devices	19.20%
Voice recognition/Voice-guided devices	17.01%
Omnichannel desktops	21.12%
Omnichannel CRM	25.35%
Unified communication	27.45%
Voice translation services	15.71%
Text translation services	14.04%
IVR	37.41%

Workforce Empowerment Investments

Maintaining the human touch remains a vital focus for contact centers, which means investment into agent empowerment is utterly essential. An organization cannot successfully connect with customers if it does not empower those responsible for making the connections.

In their pursuit of agent empowerment, organizations will prioritize investment into learning.

A 2019 investment focus for 61% of organizations, training represents the top investment priority. Coaching narrowly follows; it is on the immediate radar for 60%.

Other key investment areas include quality monitoring (59%), workforce management solutions (53%), and scheduling and forecasting tools (51%).

Training and coaching typically command considerable investment attention, and that interest will remain alive and well in 2019. In addition to continuing to meet basic training needs, organizations will use 2019 to incorporate the "connection" into their training curricula.

Quality monitoring is not simply a fundamental part of the contact center but of particular relevance as organizations emphasize satisfaction measurement. They will need new processes, if not new tools, to actualize their new vision for quality.

Organizations recognize agent effort as an important experience concern and numerous agent tools as key strategic priorities for 2019. Their interest in prioritizing workforce management solutions is, consequently, rather intuitive.

As they aim to orchestrate journeys, reduce wait times and create more meaningful moments of truth with customers, organizations will need to better optimize their resources. Scheduling and forecasting solutions will ensure agents are available to connect with customers as needed.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CUSTOMER WORKFORCE EMPOWERMENT CATEGORIES ARE URGENT INVESTMENT PRIORITIES?

Category	Percentage
Outsourcing	17.50%
Training	60.82%
Coaching	60.31%
Learning Management Systems/eLearning	44.41%
Recruiting	45.66%
Agent desktops	35.51%
Dashboards	50.69%
Interaction recording/monitoring	47.64%
Quality monitoring/management	59.45%
Workforce management	52.52%
Remote/at-home agent support	33.68%
Knowledge management	48.88%
Gamification	19.93%
Corporate wellness	31.98%
Scheduling/forecasting	51.13%
Workspace/equipment	35.38%
Collaborative co-browsing/real-time assistance	28.37%
Routing solutions	33.80%
Dialing solutions	24.65%

PRACTICALITY GUIDE

Customer experience case studies, expert tips and practical exercises that you can bring back to the office.

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MAKING CONTACT CENTER TECHNOLOGY WORK FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS

What is good for the customer is good for the business, but what is good for the business is not necessarily good for the customer.

When it comes to technology, far too many customer contact leaders overlook this reality. They pursue technology with ample buzz, impressive functionality, and clear business benefits.

Unfortunately, these benefits do not trickle down to the customer. Many technology initiatives actually add complexity and frustration to the journey, exacerbating problems they are supposed to be solving.

As 2019 arrives, it is time to break from this cycle. It is time to put the customer at the center of your technology investment strategy. This briefing will help empower the transformation.
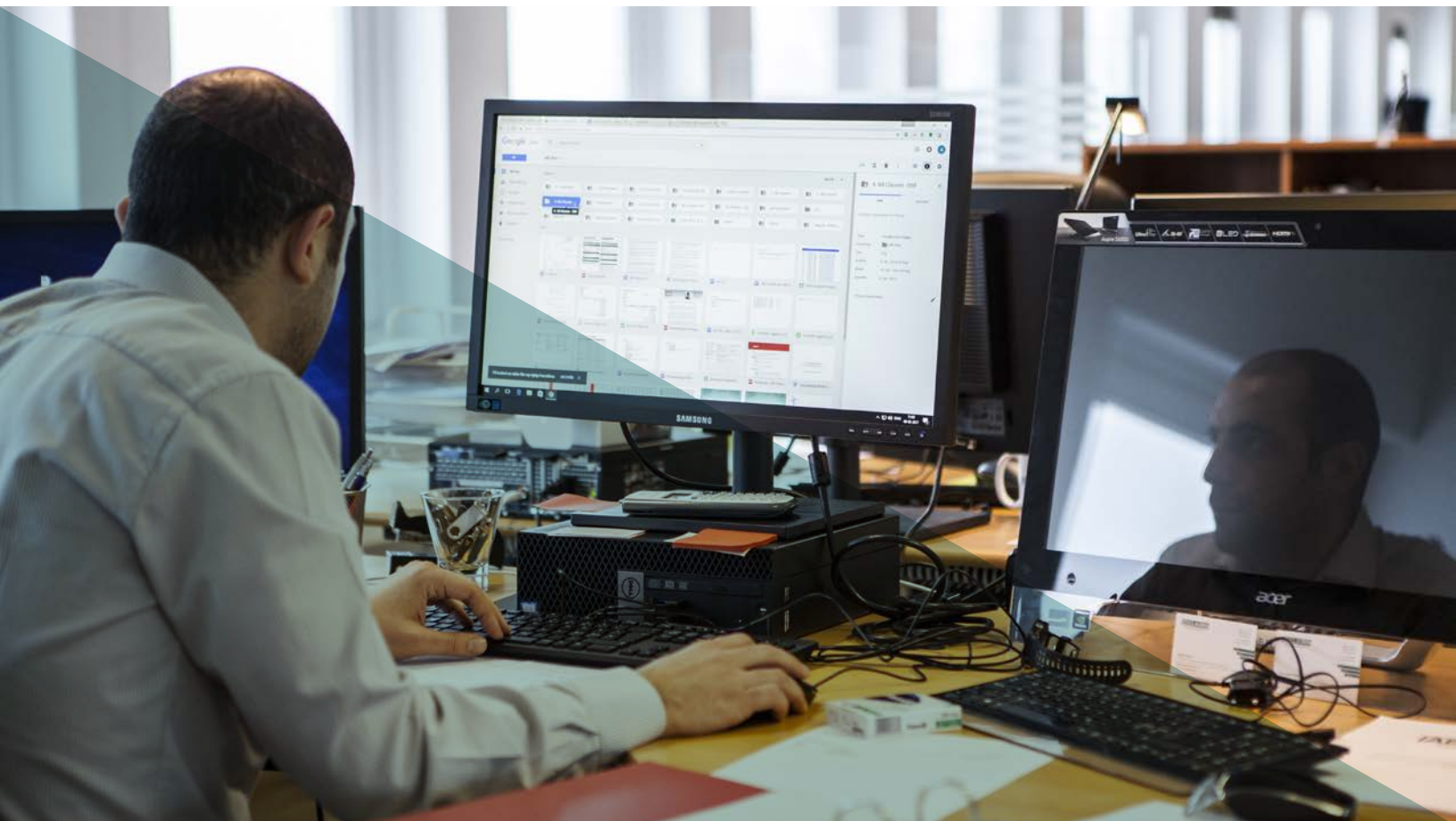
Common Technology Mistakes

Organizations are not necessarily selecting the wrong type of technology. In theory, the solutions they are purchasing and the transformations they are pursuing *should* create better experiences for customers.

The issue concerns the strategy behind the initiatives. By not placing the customer at the center of their pursuits, these organizations struggle with the execution. They implement the technology in the wrong way or at the wrong time, and the customer experience suffers.

Several common examples epitomize this problem.

Digital channels without concern for the journey

Concepts like "the omnichannel revolution" and "digital transformation" may not be new, but they continue to elude many organizations.

Organizations are not correctly integrating and optimizing their channels. They are not creating singular, consistent experiences that maximize customer value across all touch points.

Some continue to treat digital channels as "bonuses" and thus do not allow customers to address meaningful issues without calling. Some force customers to start in digital channels even when they would prefer to call. Some manage their channels in isolation, preventing customers and data from moving between media.

Few are successfully *leveraging* digital channels to create a more valuable customer experience journey.

"Customers want to be able to communicate with companies via many channels wherever they are," explains Ted Hunting of Bright Pattern. "Digital transformation where voice and digital channels work as one seamless conversation across all channels is a top priority for 2019."

Fragmented, antiquated technology

Within many organizations, the customer contact platform epitomizes the idea of fragmentation. Individual systems do not speak to each other, preventing agents from getting the information they need and robbing customers of the seamless experience they desire.

An ongoing problem, this fragmentation is on the verge of becoming far more debilitating in the months and years ahead. Spanning more functions and locations, the contact center is becoming more structurally fragmented. This will only exacerbate the technology integration problem.

"Silos are the single biggest impediment to a great customer experience and companies that operate from technology that is siloed will not win," declares Hunting. "A nimble cloud approach with microservice based architecture for the future is key."
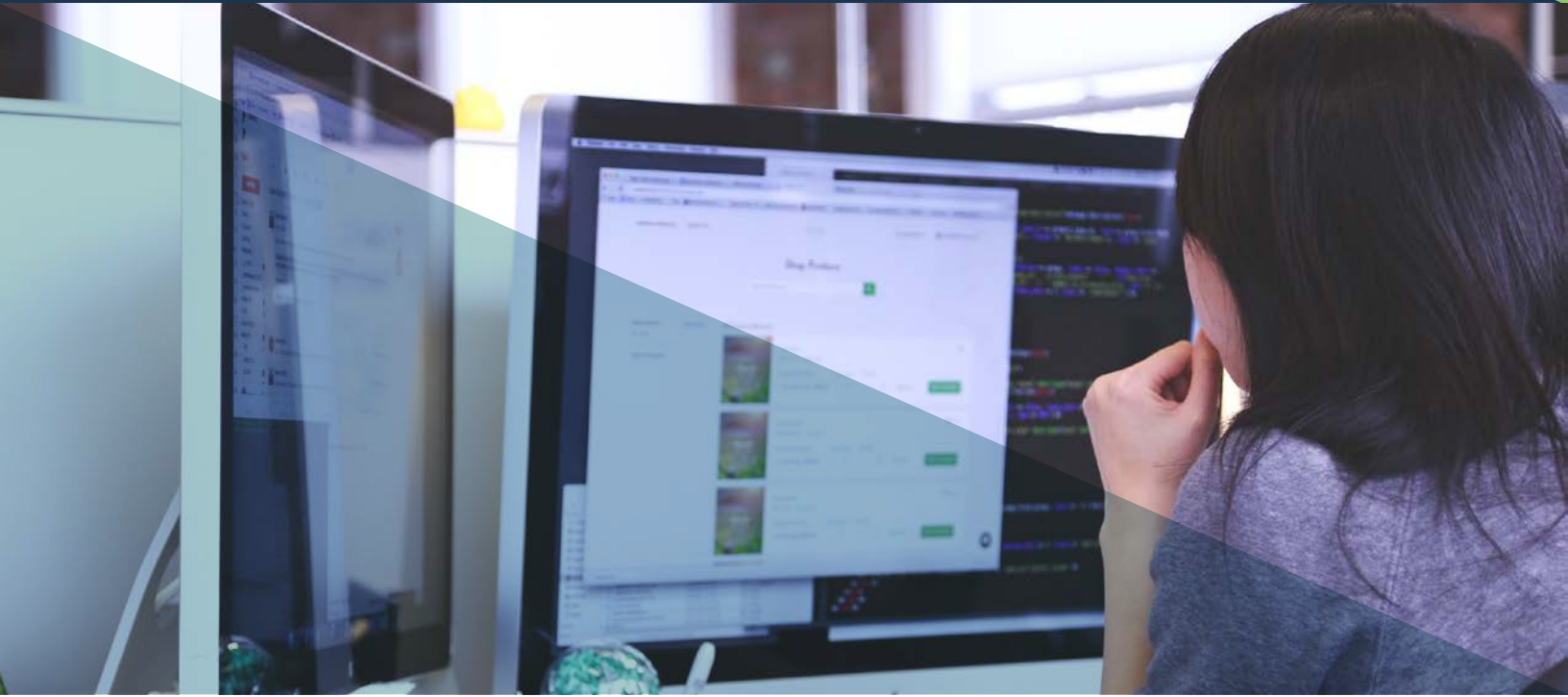
Bots without clear concern for the customer

When companies race to implement technology rather than elevate the experience, the customer suffers.

The reckless pursuit of bots and other AI-driven technology underscores this phenomenon.

"One mistake made this year by contact centers was jumping too quickly on the bot bandwagon and doing so without ensuring the bot was not siloed and instead connected to their other channels," says Hunting. "Many companies did not consider CSAT and the best use cases for bots."

Bots are supposed to represent the customer-centric *alternative* to the anti-customer self-service platforms of the past. Unfortunately, the misguided approach to bot investment has undermined that objective. By chasing the technology rather than the outcome, organizations have implemented bots that either come across as shiny but hollow toys or actually harm the customer experience.

Ineffective analytics solutions

Most organizations understand the value of customer analytics solutions, but few organizations are truly harnessing the power.

The true value of analytics is the ability to dive deeply into interactions. It is to extract the types of insights that cannot be properly articulated in a traditional feedback survey.

Instead of pursuing that opportunity, organizations are merely looking at surface-level data. They are using analytics tools to analyze more customers than they can with surveys rather than to analyze customers *differently* than they can with surveys.

They are also overlooking another key opportunity: leveraging analytics to provide agents with actionable, predictive insight in key moments of truth.
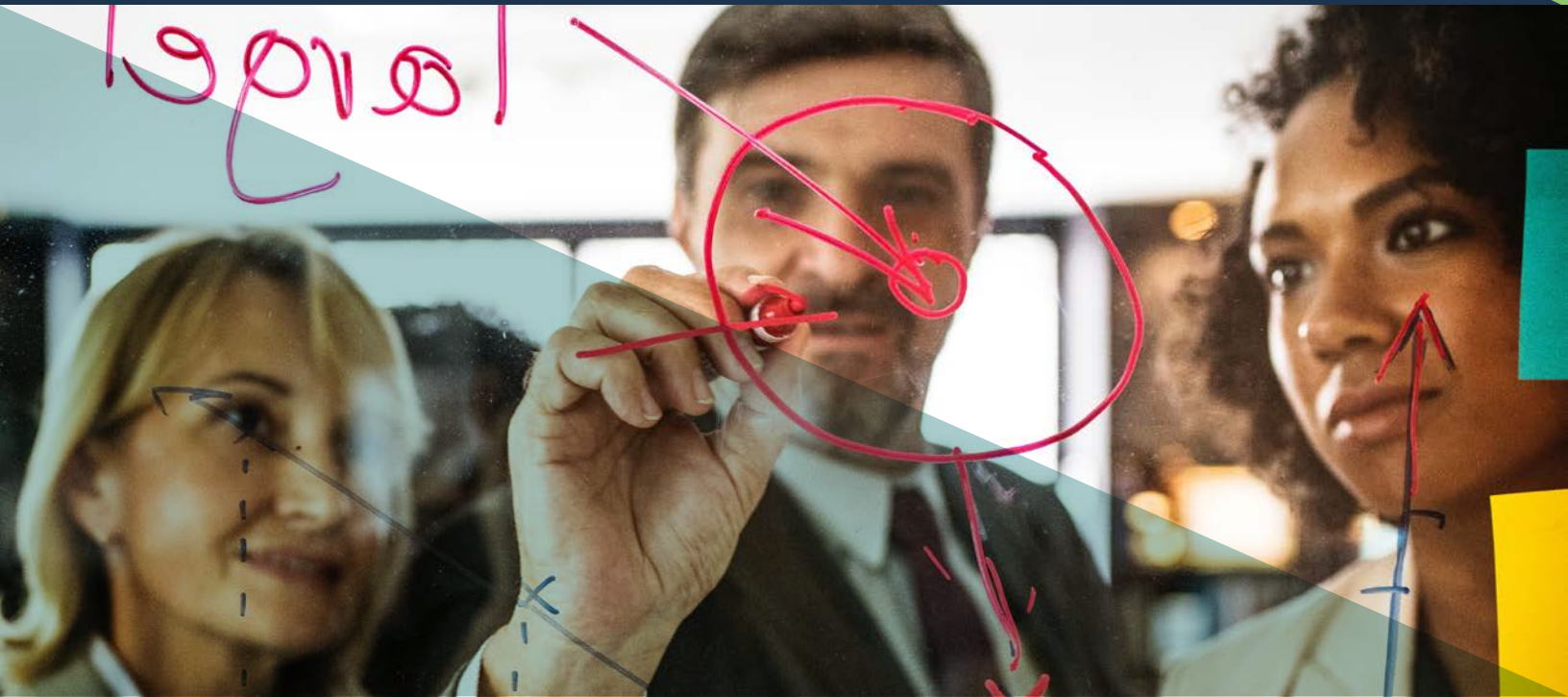
Transformation for 2019

The call to make technology work for customers is not directed at vendors. It is an imperative for technology buyers.

Instead of sourcing technology based purely on capabilities or functionality, these organizations will want to consider the impact on agents, customers and other key stakeholders.

Upon selecting and implementing technology, these organizations will want to calibrate the systems toward particular customer experience goals. They require a clear, customer-centric vision for success.

As they have their own customer experience objectives, all organizations will benefit from establishing a specific customer experience roadmap. There are, however, some universal recommendations that will help all organizations more successfully purchase and manage contact center technology.

Digital channels based on choice and outcome

Why are customers gravitating toward certain channels? Why does it make sense to deliver a particular experience within those channels?

By focusing on those questions, the organization will turn digital engagement into a source of value rather than a cause of disconnect and inefficiency.

They will ensure customers can get the experience they want in the channel they prefer. They will also have the power to map typical transitions between channels, and in turn eliminate any gaps or fragments in the process. They will finally deliver the elusive "seamless omnichannel experience."

"Customers want to have access to their preferred channels—whether old fashioned email or newer channels like Facebook Messenger—and want to be treated personally across all channels," says Hunting.

As organizations gain more behavior about how customers are engaging in certain channels, they can also better orchestrate their customer experience journeys. They can directly and indirectly educate customers on which channels they should be using for certain purposes. The customer will receive the best possible outcome, while the organization will optimize its productivity.

Consider the agent experience when selecting tools

What happens behind-the-scenes impacts what happens on the stage. Nowhere is this concept truer than in the customer contact environment.

When the organization makes life easy for its agents, it markedly improves contact center performance. Agents who can readily access relevant data and systems are able to more swiftly and successfully provide personalized communication and worthwhile resolutions. Customers will experience an easier *and* more valuable agent experience.

Not simply about day-to-day productivity, contact center tools greatly impact agent sentiment and agent satisfaction. Easier systems make agents happier and more loyal to the organization.

Mindful of the importance between the agent and customer experience, leading organizations will account for the voice of the agent when making technology decisions.

Deeper, more sentiment-driven analytics

As they consider ways to more efficiently orchestrate the engagement journey, more successfully resolve problems on the first contact, and more meaningfully connect with customers, leading organizations are demanding more robust customer intelligence.

They are not simply looking for surface-level customer feedback and insights. They want to dive deep into each interaction. What issues specifically contribute to customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction? What does it take to turn a satisfied customer into a loyal one, or an unsatisfied customer into an appreciative one?

Any tool that can provide truly actionable analytics to the right stakeholders and the right time warrants a place on the customer contact radar. The best tools, however, pay specific mind to customer intent and sentiment. What does the customer want to achieve, and how do they feel about their journey toward achieving it?

"Companies that have a full view of each customer's journey history, with agents who have key information at their fingertips, and business rules automated into the contact center operation to ensure customers get to the right resource at the right time," adds Hunting.

Unified contact center platform

The contact center landscape now accounts for additional contact channels. It involves collaboration and interfacing with a variety of different departments across numerous physical sites. It also includes teams of agents who work remotely.

Customer-centric organizations will not let this new vision create new sources of frustration and fragmentation. They accept that a unified customer contact solution is more important than ever.

A singular tool empowers an organization to create consistent agent and customer experiences across these disparate touch points. It, more importantly, fosters optimal degrees of collaboration and workforce planning. Rather than solving problems in isolation, all team members will have a complete window into the customer contact function—and thus an opportunity to contribute productively to the overall experience.

Purposeful automation

Rather than chasing bots, customer-centric organizations are chasing *purposeful* automation.

They are identifying front-end tools that actually produce better experiences for customers. Their evaluation criterion is not whether a bot *can* theoretically handle a particular customer interaction but whether it can do so in a way that creates actual value for the customer.

Within the contact center, they are determining how automation can meaningfully optimize agent performance. They are not automating whatever processes they can; they are automating processes with the specific goal of empowering agents to more meaningfully connect with customers.

They may achieve that goal by help agents better manage their time. They may achieve that goal by providing agents with more actionable intelligence about the customers are serving. The point is that they never lose sight of the goal.

Case Studies: The Rewards of Customer-Centric Technology

A customer-centric approach to technology may be *rare,* but it is not a fantasy. Many organizations are putting the customer at the center of their technology initiatives.

These organizations are already reaping the rewards of their efforts.

Bright Pattern has assisted several organizations in making the transformation; highlights of their stories follow.

Challenge

Republic Wireless Contact Center Challenges

For its first several years, Republic Wireless stayed out of customer support calls altogether. The company didn't want to expose a 1-800 number and did as much as possible through digital channels. Customer service agents used Zendesk to help members whose needs were not met by web self-service. And "most of the time, 99% of the time," that approach worked, says Sean Rivers, Director of Operations Technology.

But as the company grew, it recognized that agents needed to be able to get on the phone with members when it made sense. For all their convenience, digital channels could generate back-and-forth that did not serve the goal of helping customers efficiently. Further, Republic Wireless believed that not all issues were equal in terms of the type of support required. To put this belief into practice, it had to offer members a choice of options. At the same time, it needed to keep costs in check and not incur the expense of hundreds of agents.

Rivers had to achieve what seemed, at least at first glance, two incompatible goals: meet customers where they are, and stay out of the call center game. Bright Pattern's cloud contact center solution gave agents the power to help customers across more channels without the need for CapEx-intensive facilities and equipment.

Solution

Republic Wireless decided to innovate by offering scheduled services. This was a big step, one it was willing to take only with a partner who had the flexibility to enable this innovation while integrating with existing digital channels. Bright Pattern had the flexible call routing capability that was at the top of Republic Wireless's requirements list. And its software would easily integrate with Republic's Zendesk ticketing platform, which was the other major must-have. "Without flexible call routing capability, without the integration with Zendesk, we would not have started. We would not have been out there making calls," says Rivers.

Republic Wireless and Bright Pattern started with outbound calling, where agents could schedule phone appointments with members. But, says, Rivers, "We learned that scheduling appointments doesn't work very well. We'd call and no one would answer. That was the mother of invention, figuring out a way we could invite people to a call."

As its needs evolved, Bright Pattern helped roll out invitation to call. Members could contact Republic Wireless at a time convenient for them. At first, says Rivers, this support method was used only to troubleshoot. But the company's goal always has been to get to the member with the right kind of help, right when it's needed. Rivers explains that Republic Wireless has moved from issue-based support to member-based support: "Sometimes we have members who are less technical or have trouble expressing themselves in writing, so we invite them to a call. Invitation to call has been the big capability we use. Bright Pattern has been really helpful in giving our members and agents more power to solve issues together."

Impact

- Achieving over 95% customer satisfaction rate, without a traditional call center

- Seamless integration with Republic Wireless's existing Zendesk ticketing platform

- Ability to support hundreds of thousands of members with just 140 agents

- A custom yet flexible approach that empowers Republic Wireless to respond quickly to changing needs

Challenge

Omni Interaction Contact Center Challenges

The spread of alternate communication is disrupting everything, especially customer support. Consumers now expect companies to meet them on their preferred channel, whether that is voice, email, text, or Twitter. However, a very small number of companies can easily transition to a full and flexible omnichannel model.

Companies may also hesitate to embrace a virtual workforce model due to concerns about how to oversee the work performance of remote agents, or how to provide secure but reliable access to their customer data and knowledge base.

To help its clients successfully transition to its visionary model, Omni Interactions needed three parts: the right cloud-based technology, the right tools for agents, and the right partners to put it all together.

"We looked at several cloud-based companies that offered omnichannel services, and Bright Pattern was the only one to provide everything we need to support our Fortune 1000 clients and our at-home agents in a scalable, reliable, and super easy-to-use package," said Rob Duncan, CEO, Omni Interactions.

Solution

With its distributed agent model, Omni Interactions needed a cloud-based platform that was reliable, scalable, and easily adaptable to work with diverse enterprise clients. Uptime and availability are essential. "Unreliability is not an option," notes Duncan. "We count on Bright Pattern to provide a reliable cloud infrastructure, so that our clients can depend on us."

Bright Pattern's superior cloud architecture is built for security and stability. Because it easily scales from 5 to 10,000 agents, Omni Interactions can offer virtual contact centers that flex up and down with clients' needs. With a broad set of APIs for customization and enterprise integration, the Bright Pattern platform enables Omni Interactions to connect its At-Home agents seamlessly and securely with clients' enterprise apps and CRMs.

At-Home agents log in through a secure virtual desktop and have access to all the tools that would be available in a "brick-and-mortar" or enterprise embedded contact center, including the CRM and knowledge base. The agents see customer information in context, which helps accelerate resolution. All information is captured and consolidated in a timely fashion.

Because these agents work remotely, it's critical that they have built-in tools to communicate with their managers, team leaders, and other colleagues for oversight and support. With a real-time chat feature, team leaders can assist immediately if an agent needs help to move a call to resolution, so the agents, though working remotely, are never working "alone."

"We looked at several cloud-based companies that offered omnichannel services, and Bright Pattern was the only one to provide everything we need to support our Fortune 1000 clients and our at-home agents in a scalable, reliable, and super easy-to-use package." Rob Duncan CEO, Omni Interactions

Impact

With the Bright Pattern platform, Omni Interactions has an ideal solution for Fortune 1000 companies looking to transform their traditional contact centers with true omnichannel capabilities. As Omni Interactions keeps adding agents, new clients, and new channels for those clients, Bright Pattern technology is easy to implement and easy for both At-Home agents and operations managers to use. It's an all-in-one solution that is designed and engineered to give Omni Interactions what it needs.

"Bright Pattern makes it very easy for us to deliver the omnichannel experience that our clients are looking for," said Rob Duncan, CEO, Omni Interactions.

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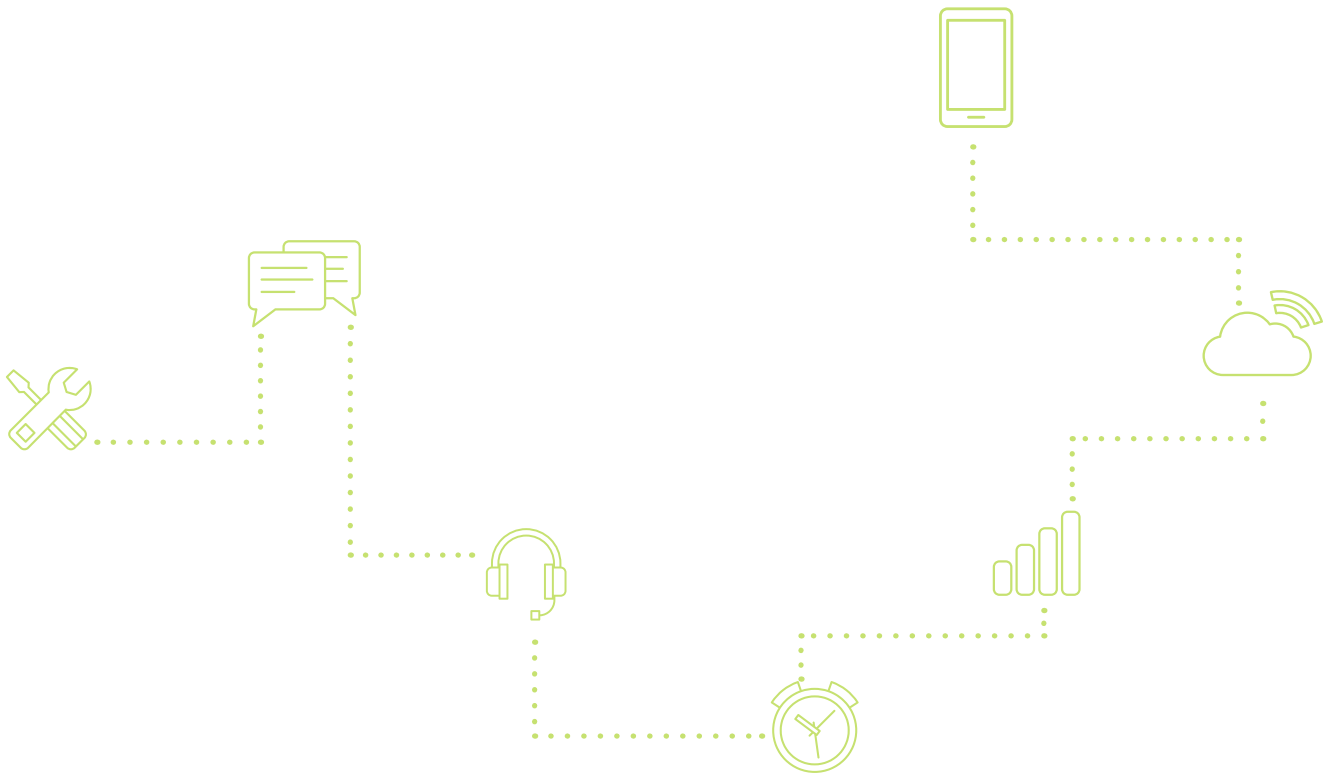
ELEVATING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT TO DRIVE MORE INTELLIGENT CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

When it comes to customer contact strategy, the solution so often becomes the problem.

Instead of helping customers quickly resolve their own issues, self-service platforms often create confusion, delay and frustration. Instead of empowering them to meaningfully engage with customers, training often conditions agents to focus on impersonal scripts, policies and numbers.

Knowledge management solutions make for a particularly noteworthy example.

By providing agents with easy access to knowledge about products, processes and customers, knowledge management solutions *should* provide agents with a fast-track to meaningful engagement. Instead of bombarding customers with repetitive interrogation questions or asking customers to wait as they think about the situation, agents should be able to provide answers, deliver resolutions, and make connections.

Unfortunately, the knowledge management solution often becomes a pain point within the customer contact operation. Rather than *arming* agents with actionable knowledge and intelligence, these tools subject agents to the burden of slow, convoluted, frustrating investigation.

In some cases, the challenge is one of technology. The knowledge management tool does not meet the standard required by today's customer contact function.

In other cases, the challenge is one of strategy. The organization may have a powerful tool, but it does know how to *leverage* the solution as part of its overall engagement strategy.

Either way, the agent and customer experiences suffer.

In identifying knowledge management as one of their top customer contact priorities for 2019, organizations surely understand the significance of this challenge. They may not, however, know how to right their knowledge management course.

This briefing serves as a roadmap for that change. It reveals the key goals of a knowledge management initiative, before tackling solutions to common knowledge management challenges. It closes with real-life case studies confirming the impact of a particular knowledge management solution.

A New Standard For Knowledge Management

As we are in the era of customer centricity, there is a very simple way to evaluate the relevance and impact of a customer contact solution.

Will it help create a more customer-centric experience?

When leveraged correctly, a knowledge management solution will most certainly pass that muster.

It empowers organizations to provide the fast, frictionless, accurate, resolute interactions that today's customers are vehemently demanding. It fuels a more productive, more customer-centric customer contact function. Agents become happier, customers become more loyal, and the business thrives.

To ensure your knowledge management tool is living up to this agent-centric and customer-centric promise, it is important to hold it accountable for several key outcomes.

Reduced time to agent proficiency

Time is money, which means lengthy, convoluted and ultimately ineffective training programs are very costly for today's contact centers.

A great knowledge management solution reduces this cost through two lenses.

First, it provides agents with ready access to information about the organization, its products, its processes, and its customers. This robust, actionable intelligence allows even a fairly unseasoned, inexperienced agent to successfully support and connect with customers.

A great knowledge management tool is also easy to use, which eliminates the need for lengthy "systems training."

More efficiency

Time agents spend fumbling through systems and databases is type they cannot spend productively engaging with customers.

By streamlining the process, a great knowledge management tool eliminates this costly, inefficient backend work. The systems will become an asset—not a liability—for agents who are tasked with meaningfully supporting customers.

Increased first contact resolution

Customers identify first contact resolution as their #1 priority when interacting with organizations.

"[Unfortunately], first contact resolution continues to be a challenge across all channels as the contact center struggles with the dynamic complexity of responding to a rapidly changing marketplace and it's evolving needs," explains Perrotta.

Great knowledge management solutions empower organizations to meet this crucial demand. With access to the right information at the right time, agents stand a great chance of quickly delivering the outcome customers truly want and need.

Improved handling of complexity

As customers to turn self-service for transactional matters, they will primarily turn to agents for complex issues. Of course, as they become more comfortable with self-service tools, they will also expect these platforms to handle more meaningful issues.

The takeaway is simple: self-service platforms *and agents* will need to handle more unique, nuanced, complex issues.

Knowledge management tools provide a springboard for overcoming this hurdle. With detailed, yet digestible insights about past customer inquiries, relevant product issues and effective solutions and responses, a great knowledge management

solution helps agents and systems more confidently navigate tricky interactions. No longer married to the script they memorized or the programming with which they were coded, these agents and systems can become the support partners customers need.

Greater insights for improvement

Along with providing data to help the engagement experience, effective knowledge management solutions generate insights about the engagement experience.

These insights help organizations determine which issues are most common, which responses and solutions are most effective, and which situations and customers create the most confusion and pause for agents. Collectively, this data empowers the organization to deliver a great experience.

Capitalizing on the Knowledge Management Opportunity

The benefits of a great knowledge management solution are clearly significant, but it is important to remember the introduction to this piece. When it comes to the contact center, promising solutions end up becoming debilitating problems.

Knowledge management solutions are not immune to that reality. Whereas they should be driving more frictionless, personalized interactions, they often produce frustrating delays and inaccuracies.

There are, however, ways to avoid the common pitfalls—and enjoy the technology's full potential.

Structure knowledge through the eyes of the agent

When criticizing self-service tools, thought leaders note that businesses do not *think like customers* when programming the menus. Customers, accordingly, struggle to find the answers for which they are looking.

The same problem plaques internal knowledge bases. Organizations build their knowledge platforms based on a static understanding of their products, policies and procedures. They do not think about how *agents* will interpret and search for particular topics.

To elevate knowledge management, it is imperative to consider the agent perspective. What kinds of questions will the agent receive, and how will the agent attempt to find the answers in the knowledge base? By structuring information in an agent-centric manner, the organization improves efficiency.

Granted, a great knowledge management tool also features a robust, natural search engine that allows agents to quickly navigate through even the most convoluted knowledge bases. This does not mean organizations can ignore the data rebuild, but it does mean agents can perform *while* the organization is reclassifying its data.

Leverage automation to help agents more quickly find answers

No matter how clean the knowledge base and how robust the search engine, human error will always come into play. Agents may not search for answers in an intuitive, predictable manner, which means they may spend undue time finding knowledge.

Automation technology mitigates this issue. By flagging common issues and anticipating what information the agent is seeking, an AI-driven knowledge management system effectively serves as a tour guide. It takes care of the knowledge-gathering process, allowing agents to focus on connecting.

Use analytics to identify points of frustration and inefficiency

The knowledge management tool is one piece of the overall data strategy puzzle. It is consequently crucial to determine whether it actually creating a more intelligent contact center.

With robust analytics, organizations can understand the impact of their knowledge management solution. They can assess factors like accuracy, agent frustration, and time-to-knowledge to determine whether the solution is helping or hurting the experience.

"KM can now leverage massive amounts of data and aggregate, transform, and assess trends through analytics and AI," details Perrotta. "This enables a new opportunity to create task lists and notify admins when content is going out of date, when agents are not finding what they need, and when content is being abandoned."

Automate the data maintenance process

The typical organization has knowledge and training material in a variety of formats, scattered across a variety of systems and departments. Manually inputting this material into the knowledge base represents one of the most taxing contact center efficiencies.

"Maintenance of knowledge management platforms is a major challenge for most organizations," says Sedarius Tekara Perrotta of Shelf. "The HR allocation, processes, and time necessary to keep information accurate, up-to-date and trusted is in direct competition with the tactical daily firefighting that is part of operating a contact center."

Modern tools alleviate this problem. They instantly extract knowledge from existing files, providing organizations with an up-to-date system that is comprehensive and scalable. These tools also leverage automation and AI rules to recommend (if not make) improvements to the database.

Integrate with existing contact center tools

A knowledge management system theoretically helps agents obtain valuable information. But where does it get that information? And how does it empower agents to actually use it?

By integrating the knowledge tool with other contact center systems, the organization answers those questions. Through connections to CRM systems, product databases and customer analytics, the knowledge management system can aggregate the most relevant, timely data possible. Through hooks to popular contact center solutions, agents can seamlessly communicate the information they discover with the customers they are serving.

"Seeing platforms such as; IVRs, ACDs, self-service, chatbots and KM as standalone solutions is a mistake and massive lost opportunity," explains Perrotta. "The data from these systems can provide levels of insight and intelligence never before possible and can impact critical contact center metrics.

"An integrated approach to these technologies should be a backbone of contact center cloud strategy and a source of long-term competitive advantage."

Knowledge In Practice: Case Studies

The benefits are appealing, the capabilities are available, and the action steps are logical. It is hard to deny the feasibility of an effective knowledge management tool.

It is, of course, also hard to argue that knowledge management has historically been a source of pain within organizations.

Naturally, some organizations will be skeptical about the supposed benefits. That skepticism is unwarranted.

By adopting the appropriate mindset and leveraging the Shelf platform, many organizations have achieved demonstrable, lasting improvement.

This brief concludes by highlighting two of those success stories.

Problem

A leading research company cannot script its calls—the range of questions is too great.

Its existing knowledge management approach was inefficient. A team of 6 had to manually turn thousands of documents into knowledge articles, and then process 6,000-7,000 change requests per year.

The system's search platform, moreover, was subject to a 16-24 hour delay. Agents consequently did not know whether they were looking at up-to-date information.

Solution

Using Shelf, the company eliminated some of the inefficiencies.

For starters, Shelf extracts information from documents and instantly adds it to the knowledge base. Employees do not have to manually create knowledge articles.

All the updates are in real-time, and the platform features a very robust search engine.

Result

Agents can more quickly find accurate information, leading to huge increases in productivity. The company reports time savings of 22-28 hours per agent per month.

Armed with better information, agents are also creating a better experience. First contact resolution has increased, and escalation has fallen.

Problem

A financial services company did not have a formal knowledge base in place.

To support its rapid growth, the organization leveraged outsourced call center providers.

The organization, consequently, had agents spread across different locations and sites without access to a single, consistent source of knowledge.

Solution

The company leveraged Shelf to build a knowledge base around its many, complex policies.

Shelf's faceted search capability empowered agents to quickly sift through the different policies and procedures and find the right information.

The platform also allowed the company to upload its multimedia knowledge content, which includes PDFs, web text and videos.

Result

Thanks to the strong search capabilities, agents can more quickly navigate the knowledge base and more efficiently support customers.

Shelf's scalability is also allowing to expand the scope of its knowledge offering. In addition to rolling the knowledge base out to different departments, the company is creating a self-service knowledge base for customers.

Tethr®

RETHINKING CUSTOMER CENTRICITY: MEANINGFULLY *LISTEN* BEFORE YOU MEANINGFULLY ENGAGE

In our everyday lives, we routinely discuss the hazards of assumptions. We repeatedly stress the importance of listening before talking.

Why, then, do we forget these principles when building our customer contact strategies?

Instead of thinking *like* customers, we think *for* them. We make guesses about what they are trying to achieve when navigating our experience journey. We speculate about which aspects of the experience they deem most important.

We may care about our customers and value their satisfaction, but if we make these unilateral decisions, we most certainly cannot call ourselves customer-centric.

To earn such a label, we need to commit to viewing the experience through our customers' eyes. By renewing our commitment to the voice of the customer, refining our customer listening strategies and revamping our data analysis techniques, we can gain this customer-driven perspective. We can understand who are customers really are, why they are really connecting, and how they really feel about the process.

This briefing will help you cultivate that more valuable, more actionable form of customer intelligence. It will emphasize a more meaningful approach to customer listening, which will in turn drive a more legitimate form of customer centricity.

Why Listening Matters

Listening to customers is certainly not a *new* concept. Thanks to recent marketplace shifts, it has nonetheless become exponentially more vital to a successful customer contact operation.

Competing on the customer experience

It may be a cliché, but it is unabashedly true: today's organizations are competing on the customer experience. According to CCW Digital research, nearly 88% of customers will pay more for a better experience in at least some situations. Nearly 42% will pay more regardless of product type.

Aware of this reality, customers are demanding better experiences. Many organizations, meanwhile, are working to create those better experiences.

This creates pressure for *all organizations* to create stronger experiences. A successful customer listening strategy will greatly help in that endeavor.

Embracing the contact center as a data hub

As the direct link between the organization and its customers, the contact center stands to generate powerful, actionable data about the quality of the customer experience. Referred to as the contact center's greatest export, this data can prove pivotal when attempting to improve processes, products, training and brand messaging.

The contact center can only make this transformative impact, however, if it is collecting valuable data. If the insights are too surface-level, biased or inconsequential, they will be of no use to the overall business. Worse, they will cost the contact center its "buy-in" from the executive team.

Growth of omnichannel communication

The omnichannel revolution is introducing more touch points at which organizations can connect with customers.

Glass half-empty organizations will focus on the resulting burden: they now have to anticipate customer behavior—and optimize engagement – in additional channels.

Glass half-full organizations will focus on the opportunity: they now have more opportunities to connect with—and learn about—their customers.

Customer listening is relevant to either perspective. An organization that better understands its customers can more readily optimize its communication across all touch points, while also determining if certain issues are better suited for certain channels. An organization that prioritizes customer listening will additionally be able to gather actionable, transformative insights from all high- and low-touch interactions.

Renewed commitment to self-service

Customers are increasingly seeking web self-service opportunities, and organizations are increasingly working to meet the demand. They are investing heavily into AI-driven self-service platforms, including bots and artificial assistants. They are also working to optimize their IVR solutions.

Since self-service interactions are by definition not guided by a live agent, the need for precision is exponentially more important. There is no human to "improvise" if the customer asks an unexpected question; the platform can either support the inquiry or produce a dead-end. By robustly analyzing conversations, an organization will understand the issues, communication preferences and other expectations associated with self-service interactions. It can consequently create self-service platforms that actually allow customers to solve problems.

Rise of complex engagement

As customers turn to self-service for transactional matters, they will primarily rely on agents for challenging, complex matters. To rise to the occasion, agents will require more than generic scripts and conventional "screen pops."

"The shift to self-service channels for simple requests leaves the most complex interactions for the contact center, necessitating a wholesale shift in how contact centers manage their people," says Matt Dixon of Tethr. "The old 'factory floor' model of agent scripting, handle time metrics and checklist-driven quality assurance has given way to a new model much more akin to a knowledge work environment in which reps are encouraged to use their judgment, harness the knowledge of their peers and collaborate to come up with solutions to complex customer issues."

A powerful analytics solution will provide agents with this necessary data and context. Particularly strong solutions will go one step further and *predict* how particular agent interactions will impact the experience.

Turning Up The Volume: A Customer-Centric Approach to Listening

The benefits of customer listening are exciting, but they are certainly not automatic.

Truly successful customer listening initiatives require a customer-centric design. They ask the business to establish the appropriate vision and objectives. With a firm sense of how the organization will listen to customers—and why the resulting insights are so important—the organization can calibrate its execution. It will ensure it is leveraging the voice of the customer to make its own communication more resonant and relevant.

A customer-centric design is also critical to properly evaluating customer intelligence solutions. When an organization knows the specific business objectives it aims to achieve and how it will leverage voice data to do it, it can determine the optimal balance between technology and human input.

When formulating its listening strategy, organizations will want to consider some key principles.

Establish Goals, Not Boxes

It is imperative to approach customer listening with an open mind. No organization should ever be incapable of recognizing and adapting to unexpected findings.

From a strategic standpoint, however, an organization will want to take an incremental approach to listening. If the questions it asks are too broad or the goals it sets are too ambitious, it will struggle to gain actionable intelligence. It will not know precisely which factors are impacting the experience and will thus be unable to take the appropriate courses of action.

As a consequence, it will be unable to generate the "proof of concept" needed to secure buy-in from internal doubters.

"Progressive leaders are laser focused on a few discrete business goals and work to put a few wins on the board before broadening analysis to other areas," says Dixon. "These focus points are very tactical – measures such as what are driving repeat contacts, what phrases prompt customers to signal churn intention, or how to reduce larger outside-the-contact-center business expenses like service truck rolls."

Eliminate False Positives, Elevate The Data Standard

Within the business world, all functions are expected to "put their money where their mouth is." This requirement is particularly important for contact centers, which have historically faced skepticism from the business.

When constructing a listening strategy, it is thus imperative to exercise analytical rigor.

From eliminating biases in the data collection process, to mandating a statistically significant sample size, to avoiding assumptions when making outcomes, to questioning (but not outright ignoring) outliers, to emphasizing predictive intelligence, the best customer listening approaches and solutions are predicated on credibility. When the data is credible, the organization can accurately determine the types of conversations it should be having—and the types of action it should be taking.

"The technology now exists for call center leaders to significantly increase the analytic rigor and insight precision," says Dixon. " In this world, Customer Service can be a source of competitive differentiation and a primary source of insight into customer preferences and behavior."

Emphasize The Why

Customer-minded organizations pay close attention to *what* is happening within their customer experiences. They map customer journeys, read survey feedback and monitor performance metrics.

Customer-centric organizations pay more attention to the *why* behind their customer experience journey. Why are customers really interacting? Why do customers feel the way they do about a particular experience? Why is the organization generating particular CSAT or Net Promoter Scores?

Whereas what-minded organizations know how they are performing, why-centric organizations know what they need to improve. This information is more actionable—and compelling.

Intelligent Analytics

Many contact centers rely heavily on traditional feedback surveys, but astute leaders know the best information is often that which goes unsaid. Customers may voice extreme happiness or frustration, but they will rarely provide commentary around their indifference. They may, moreover, fail to detail all the factors that are contributing to their positive or negative sentiment.

With AI-driven interaction analytics, an organization can mine for the rich data buried beneath the conversational surface.

Granted, technology is not an independently sufficient answer. True success comes when organizations combine the power of AI-driven analytics with human design.

"The best AI-based speech analytics platform in the world—no matter the cloud platform used, the robustness of the technology roadmap or the bevy of APIs available—is incapable of producing meaningful insights without people who know how to train AI and interpret the results," declares Dixon.

Drive Communication

Customer listening is an undeniably pivotal concern in the era of customer centricity, but it is ultimately a means to an end.

The real objective is to drive meaningful transformation in both the customer contact function and overall business.

"[It is] to use the data to address questions they've struggled to answer, despite spending untold amounts of time, money and resources to move the needle – things like what phrases are actually correlated to a rep influencing a higher NPS score, understanding causal relationships in order to prescribing needs, and spotting new market potential in a way that drives significant enterprise value," declares Dixon.

Effective solutions ultimately help organizations more meaningfully understand and engage with their customers.

One important barometer for success includes the ability to more resonantly engage with customers.

It is important to understand engagement within this context. The goal is not to merely tell agents what to say but empower them to *determine* what a particular customer wants and needs to hear.

"The 'telling' approach is all about QA automation, and force feeding screen pops to reps with specific scripts telling them what to say," says Dixon. "In our view, this is not only represents a dubious and questionable return on investment; it ends up damaging the employee experience and, moreover, presupposes you know what to automate in the first place."

With vivid insight into their customers and predictive intelligence about how certain comments and behaviors will resonate, these agents are in position to deliver true customer centricity. They will not be thinking for customers but like customers.

Customer-Centric Listening Boosts Engagement Quality: Case Studies

By rooting the customer experience in the true voice of the customer rather than the assumptions of the executive boardroom, a revamped approach to listening elevates engagement quality. Agents will have a far clearer window into what they should be communicating, which greatly increases the odds of generating satisfaction and loyalty in each moment of truth.

By strengthening the credibility of customer insights, a revamped approach to listening also transforms the contact center into a more valuable business partner. As it helps drive positive change, it will surely receive more leeway and support from past skeptics.

When coupled with the right intelligence platform, the aforementioned best practices will help organizations unlock these valuable benefits.

Tethr represents a particularly powerful listening platform, and real-world case studies confirm the value.

Need

A major pain point for all credit unions is the fact that members prefer to call for help versus using self-service channels to solve a problem, and **BCU** is no exception. But with millions of unstructured data points coming into the call center, it was impossible to pinpoint exactly why members were choosing to call rather than self serve. BCU needed to dive deeper into the everyday conversations occurring with their members to surface this critical insight. Unfortunately, BCU was not able capable of capturing the meaningful data from these conversations necessary to generated the insights they needed with their current tools.

Solution

BCU leveraged Tethr to gain a clearer perspective into why members were calling instead of using self-service channels. Key actions:

• Quantify and measure the impact of its servicing competencies within each member interaction.

• Gather the data required to understand the member journey.

• Stop relying on the practice of manual evaluation processes.

Results

• Cut call monitoring time of QA staff by 80%, giving the team more time to understand, analyze and surface insights with the data generated.

• Boosted both member-specific and agent-specific insights by 3,000%. In doing so, BCU now can show measurable improvements in service quality through an automated quality review process. This is already helping cross-functional departments answer the questions of "what" and "how much", which are key priorities for the business.

• Built a foundation for the BCU steering committee to identify the top 10 opportunities for making critical business decisions. Some include areas of risk / compliance, fee policies, new member experience and developing lines of products in the pipeline.

Need

As TruGreen entered its peak season and a new sales management team came on board, the company looked for ways to increase effectiveness of its sales agents and become a best-in-class call center organization:

- Elevate all sales agents to "top performer" status
- Recruit/select the right sales agents
- Create less time-consuming, more targeted sales training
- Accurately measure success of special offers & marketing campaigns
- Improve sale effectiveness and conversion rate
- Reduce the cost per sale
- Create consistency in sales process

Solution

TruGreen turned to Tethr to record, transcribe and analyze phone calls, with the goal of improving their sales agent effectiveness and, ultimately, increasing sales and the value of each customer relationship.

Results

- Increased second-year representative return by 25%
- Improved call conversion by 10%
- Increased sales retention rates by 7% - a record high
- 11% increase in commission dollars for representatives
- Reinvesting the 60+ hours a month once spent on diagnosing sales issues, into taking action that directly improve sales results

CALABRIO

THE CHALLENGES OF OMNICHANNEL: WHY SO MANY CONTACT CENTERS STRUGGLE WITH DIGITAL SELF SERVICE

Introduction

Customers want digital self-service options, such as chat and text messaging, and a company's ability to deliver directly impacts retention. A recent **report** found that 59 percent of consumers and 71 percent of business buyers said self-service availability affects brand loyalty.

Digital channel interactions are on the road to becoming more common than voice interactions, leaving companies across all industries scrambling to offer new customer communication channel options. And companies *with the strongest omnichannel customer engagement strategies retain an average of 89 percent of their customers, compared to 33 percent for companies with weak omnichannel execution.*

It's clear that digital self-service is key to continued success, but simply having a strategy is not enough. More than 1,000 marketing and customer experience leaders in the U.S. and U.K. were surveyed to determine if internal processes enable companies to deliver the experience promised to customers. This report from customer engagement and analytics software provider Calabrio reveals key findings and missed opportunities in digital customer communication strategies.

While some companies may be a step ahead, the findings revealed that many organizations are still in the infancy of fully deploying effective strategies to provide digital self-service. Why? They're not laying the groundwork internally. Omnichannel offerings go beyond simply adding new communication channels, and there's a difference between providing service and providing the *best possible* service.
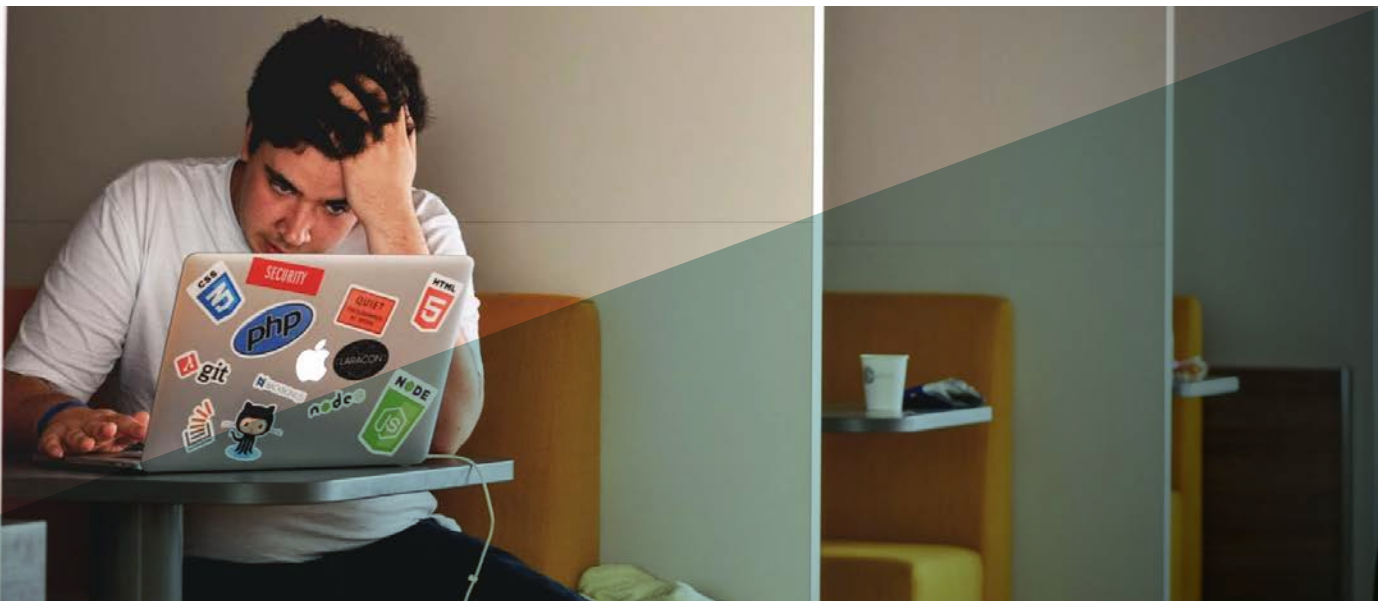
Section 1: A Lack of Infrastructure Equals a Lackluster Experience

It's no secret that companies want to provide a seamless, quality experience across all channels. In fact, 93 percent think it's important. However, there's a breakdown in execution. Only 45 percent of companies think they are very effective at providing that experience.

So what's going on?

While it's true that some businesses are taking steps in the right direction—half have changed the way they hire customer service staff due to the increased number of channels—that's just the beginning. Many are facing even bigger barriers, and it's compromising the customer experience.

The Trifecta of Trouble: Why Companies Are Missing the Mark

- 42% say employees are not being trained consistently across all channels or that training is ad-hoc
- 39% say they don't have the ability to combine customer interaction data from all channels
- 38% cite lack of budget

Even though a consistent customer experience is still out of reach, many organizations continue to add customer communication channels; that's compounding the problem because they don't always have the right internal strategies in place.

Channel Chaos: Is Adding a Channel So Easy That Companies Are Skipping the Strategy?

- 58% have a set process to follow and find it easy to add a new channel
- 20% don't find it straight forward and say it's a bit of a guessing game
- 18% have no set formal process to follow

Setting up a channel can be done so quickly that many companies are doing so without first developing a strategy. If the right internal omnichannel framework isn't in place and organizations are adding channels without understanding the customer-facing implications, they're going to fail. To eliminate hurdles, it's time to take a step back and reevaluate internal processes before moving forward.

As digital channels become customers' preferred method of service, companies can't afford to let internal barriers prevent them from reaching their customer experience potential. To meet expectations, they must align technology, data sources and people.
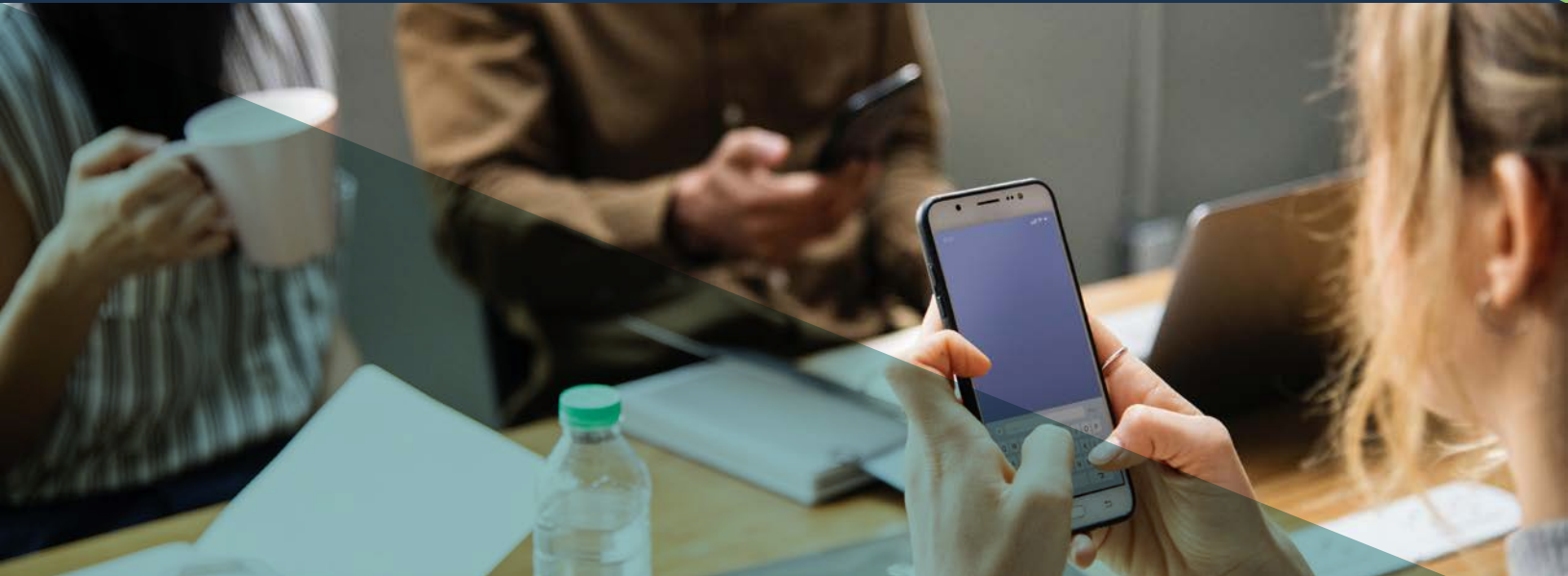
Section 2: Companies and Customers Must Be on the Same Journey

The customer journey is complex. It can start online or offline, move between any number of channels and doesn't end once a purchase is made. As customers move through each step, companies must determine how to build brand loyalty to increase retention. And that means the process should be seamless and cater to the needs of customers in every step.

Do organizations truly understand customer communication preferences, or are they treating each channel as a one-size-fits-all solution? The answer is revealing: 44 percent say they offer four or more channels to communicate with their brand, but 58 percent admit they think their customers only use two or three. If organizations don't know which channels their customers are using, how can they implement the right options?

To drive loyalty and retention, omnichannel strategies must reflect the journey customers *want* to take. And to get there, businesses must go straight to the source.

Adding a New Channel: The Balancing Act

While 49 percent say direct feedback from customers is the reason behind adding a new channel, there are numerous other influential drivers:

- 42% say it is driven by a decision from a senior decision maker
- 30% say it is from data or analytics
- 29% say it is from industry and media discussion
- 12% say it is from pressure from stakeholders

And there's another problem: 43 percent believe that customer forums and surveys give them a good understanding of how customers view their ability to provide a consistent, seamless, quality experience. Not only that, another report revealed that the C-suite primarily **relies** on ratings and reviews (49 percent) and social media (40 percent) to understand what customers want.

However, this isn't the most accurate source of information. Ratings and reviews and social media typically highlight the extremes—customers are either very happy or angry. It's time to look beyond the obvious and start uncovering how customers really feel.

Get To The Data That Matters

The contact center is a hub of data that spans across channels—voice, text, email, social, chatbot and more—yet many companies only analyze phone conversations. In an omnichannel world, that limits the voice of the customer to a phone call.

The contact center is the one department that touches every communications channel and can act as a centralized source for all customer data. While the majority of contact centers measure quality and consistency in phone calls, many aren't applying those quality assurance (QA) methods to other channels. With the help of analytics, companies can scale QA across all channels, allowing them to analyze 100 percent of conversations. When organizations move beyond manual QA methods, they can provide the experience that customers want—no matter where they are.

Section 3: Mind the Gap: U.S. Companies are Ahead of the U.K. with Internal Practices and Processes

To be effective, omnichannel strategies require the right mix of people, processes and technology. While self-service options enable customers to communicate with companies in entirely new ways, they must be met by customer service representatives who are equipped and trained to interact on a specific channel. Not only that, if companies aren't turning the plethora of customer interaction data into insights that drive business decisions, they're missing out.

When compared to companies in the U.S., the U.K. is lagging behind, and it's because they're not capturing and using cross-channel data.

Data is one of the biggest benefits of digital self-service. Customers are interacting across email, chat, social and more, giving companies the opportunity to understand behavior patterns and preferences. Without that information, it's impossible to make changes that can impact customer loyalty—and the bottom line.

Missed Connections: Compared to the U.S., U.K. Businesses Aren't Leveraging Cross-Channel Insights

- 56% of U.S. companies use customer interaction data from all channels to make business decisions
- Only 45% of U.K. companies can say the same

When organizations understand how customers are behaving on digital channels, they can hire specialized support staff to help them. Without insights, hiring and training practices typically aren't modified to support today's consumer.

Only 55 percent of U.S. companies have changed the way they hire customer service staff due to an increased number of channels offered to customers. In the U.K., only 44 percent of companies have made hiring adjustments to accommodate digital self-service options. In the U.S., 59 percent of companies have specialized or skills-based customer service agents for specific channels, versus blended customer service agents. Only 50 percent of U.K. companies have adopted this strategy.

As digital self-service becomes imperative to building customer loyalty, organizations must implement comprehensive channel options to keep up. By turning omnichannel data into insights, companies can hire and train agents to ensure that their customers are in good hands.
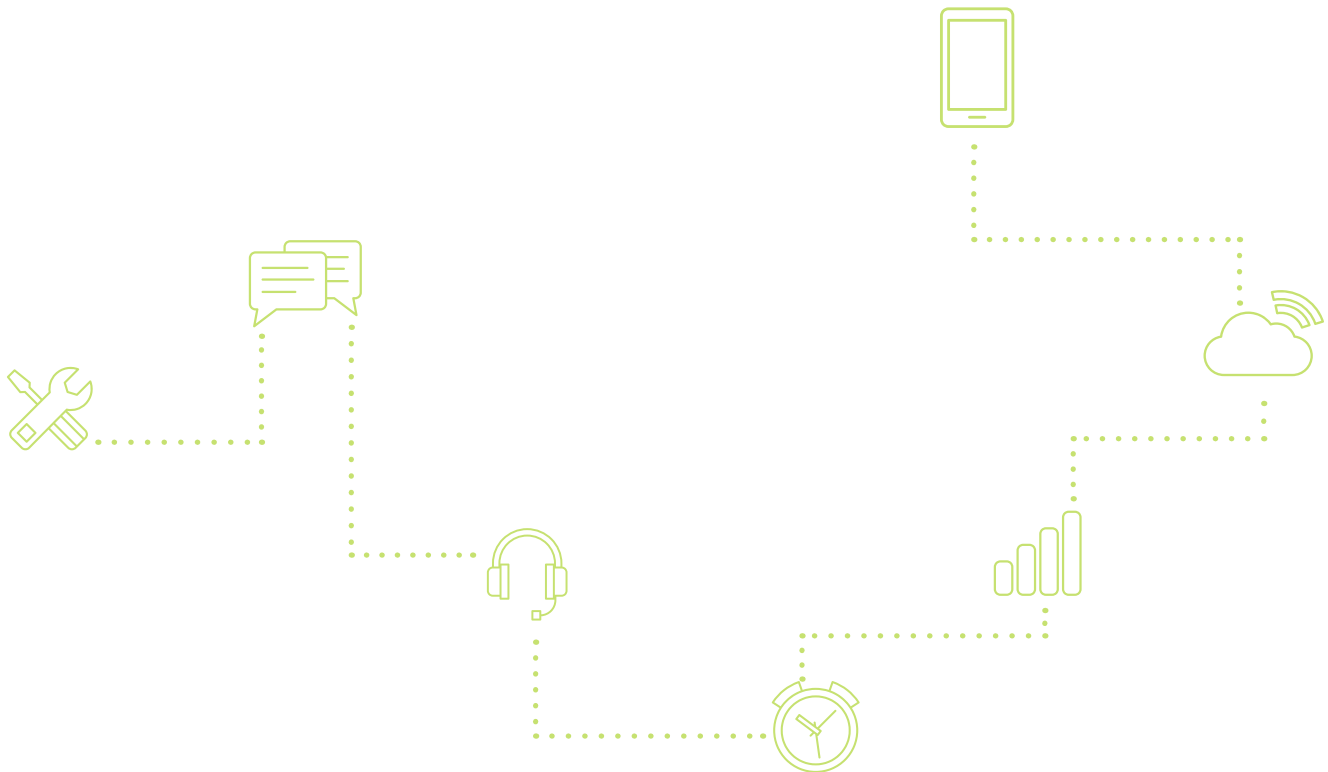
NICE®

CASE STUDY: HOW THE RESULTS COMPANY REDUCED HANDLE TIME & INCREASED CALL QUALITY

"Robotic Automation is essentially the complete package – so you can analyze, optimize and continuously improve." **On The NICE Solution** - Richard Carter, Director of Automation, The Results Companies

About The Results Companies

The Results Companies is a global business process outsourcer, providing inbound and outbound customer experience solutions for Fortune 500 companies. The company provides a full range of services, including customer service, acquisition, enrollment, retention, membership support services and transaction processing, as well as outbound sales and retention campaigns.

The Results Companies serves its worldwide clients with 26 contact centers in several locations in the United States, Mexico and the Philippines. These award-winning centers provide innovative, customer-focused contact solutions, supported by a multilingual staff of over 18,000 agents (out of over 22,000 total employees). Annual contact volume across The Results Companies contact centers is approximately 90 million interactions of all kinds.

The Challenge

Within a period of just five years, The Results Companies grew tremendously, both in clients and company size. Every growth spurt has the potential to cause issues with processes that do not keep up with the increasing pressure, because they were designed for a much lighter load. Naturally, this is especially true for processes that are primarily manual. One of the areas in which the rapid changes were felt was in employee onboarding and off boarding, especially due to the nature of The Results

Companies' business model. Call center employees are dedicated to working with specific clients, which means that the demand for staff can change based on either internal contact center decisions or client needs. Management of onboarding and offboarding, therefore, must account for an employee joining or leaving The Results Companies, as well as for an employee getting assigned to or reassigned among specific clients. This creates added complexity, as each client has their own requirements regarding these processes, alongside The Results Companies' own protocols. An especially sensitive issue arises when an employee ceases handling a client's services, as there are both technical and security vulnerabilities until the employee's access permissions and email accounts are revoked. Therefore, clients need to know immediately about staff changes for reasons of business security.

The Results Companies had a full-time staff of about 12 people in Mexico handling all onboarding and offboarding across the company. They were using homegrown solutions that were heavily manual and required constant updating. It was quickly becoming apparent that the increasing workload also increased vulnerabilities in several key aspects of onboarding and offboarding management, such as speed of service, accuracy, compliance with varying standards, and human error.

As the company grew so fast, there was a need for improvements that would overcome the challenges posed by exponential complexity.

⚒ The Solution

The Results Companies team determined that automation was the optimal solution for streamlining processes that had become too cumbersome or unstable due to the company's rapid expansion. The most prudent immediate course of action was to begin by automating an internal process.

The Results Companies decided to automate the onboarding and offboarding of employees. This meant designing robots for instant removal of agent access across all systems the agent had been using and for adding agents where necessary. The robots would have to have sufficiently robust customizable functionality to handle an array of specific requirements and systems.

For maximum benefit, it was determined that the solution would be unattended automation of the selected processes. Similarly, scalability and sustainability were important, considering the company's growth trajectory. The automation team did not want to be forced to revamp the robots or call in the vendor every time changes were needed.

💡 NICE Was the Natural Choice

NICE Robotic Automation met all those requirements. In addition, The Results Companies had six years of positive prior experience with NICE Workforce Management, and recognized NICE's commitment to its customers and its supportive approach.

Deployment was easy, according to the Director of Automation for The Results Companies, Richard Carter. NICE provided a roadmap of clear steps up front, with which we determined processes for automation and NICE created the robots to match.

> "It was by far the easiest and cleanest install I've ever done," Richard said. "And I've done at least four installs with robotic process automation software."

Great Results at The Results Companies

Implementation of NICE Robotic Automation had an instant and direct impact. The onboarding and off boarding processes, which took an hour each time using the previous system, are now accomplished essentially instantly. Scaled out to the entire clientele, robotic automation could therefore save The Results Companies a full month in processing time

NICE Robotic Automation has also ensured full accuracy across the relevant systems in the targeted processes. Human error in routine and repeated data entry has been eliminated.

Robots need no work breaks, nor are they limited by time zone, so on- and offboarding services are now 24/7. As the robotic process automation ensures instant and complete offboarding for employees, The Results Companies' customers are more secure. The automation is completely compliant with their business security needs, as well as with internal protocols of The Results Companies.

As robots are handling the user on- and offboarding, records of these events are easily tracked. This consistency also contributes to better analysis of relevant employee data. Automation has allowed The Results Companies to grow its personnel. Free of the routine aspects of their tasks, they can focus better on customer needs and on managerial tasks. What begins to emerge, Richard said, is that there are "diamonds in the rough all over the place" among the staff.

We're Committed to the Journey

As certain processes are handled with smaller teams, company management has seen the efficacy of automation. This has raised awareness that any routine process can be automated, given the right allocation of resources and business intelligence.

The Results Companies is likely to scale out its current automations to all major clients. The company is also in the process of preparing to improve employee productivity with attended automation across thousands of desktops. As part of this process, the company, as a NICE Workforce Management customer, is using NICE Desktop Analytics to help define the necessary automation and for desktop management to ensure consistent use after automation.

"Employees are hungry for automation," Richard said. "And it's a journey we are committed to succeeding at." The Results Companies has an overall vision known as "CX 360", which calls for blending all available data and breaking down siloed information. Strong data analysts will become more important, including for sifting the data and identifying what processes can be automated. Robotic process automation, therefore, is essentially the completion of a package — analysis, optimization and continuous improvement.

eGain®
Trusted by Leaders™

MAKING NEXT-GEN CONTACT CENTER AGENTS SUCCESSFUL IN THE DIGITAL ERA

Next-Gen Defined

For the purpose of this article, we are defining "next-gen" as millennials (born between 1980 and 1995) and Generation Z (born between 1996 and 2000.) These two are the primary generational groups that are, or will shortly be, a big part of the frontline workforce in the customer service contact center.

Next-Gen Drives Digital

It is no secret that the next-gen is digital. You ask them what the capital of Burkina Faso is, and unlike older geography nerds (myself included) who will blurt out "Ouagadougou," they will just look it up online. Gen Z is a more extreme version of millennials in these aspects—while millennials grew up digital, Gen Z was literally born digital, holding a silicon tablet! They might not even have a clue about what an AAA map is, thanks to today's GPS systems. They are used to instant gratification. They expect things to be bought and stuff to be done at the push of a button (their GPS device, the Amazon Dash button, or the Staples Easy button) or at the yell of an order (Alexa and the like). However, today's customer service contact center is often ill-equipped to handle digital consumers and digital agents.

Smarter Self-Service is a Double-Edged Sword

The next-gen consumer demands smarter self-service. In a survey[1] of 5000 consumers by Forrester Consulting, sponsored by eGain, 31% of them cited the inability of websites to answer their questions as one of their top three pain points. The good news is that self-service systems are getting smarter thanks to Moore's law and sustained research in knowledge management (KM) and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies (eGain's innovation in this domain included). Even IoT is fast becoming IoIT—Internet of Intelligent Things. The not-so-good news here is that phone agents, store associates, and branch office workers will mainly get complex customer questions. It is also worth noting that escalations to agents happen only after the consumer has tried self-service in vain, which means the consumer is frustrated when they get to a human, making the voice frontline even more difficult for the agent!

Next-Gen Consumers Are Less Forgiving of "Ignorance"

The aforementioned survey also found that next-gen consumers are less forgiving than older consumers when it comes to agents' lack of knowledge (40% vs 24%) or when different agents give different answers to the same question (48% vs 33%). These pain points were mirrored by agents themselves in a 2017 eGain-SurveyMonkey survey[2]. Agents pointed to the difficulty of finding the right answers as their biggest challenge to providing good customer service when the customer was on the line (26% of those surveyed). That was followed with discrepancy of answers from disparate systems (25%), hopping across applications (20%), and keeping up with new information and changes to information (14%).

But Training Is Not Next-Gen Agents' Cup of Latté!

Absorbing information and expertise through training requires agents to pay sustained attention over hours or days. While millennials have a short attention span of 12 seconds, Gen Z has a "gnat" attention span of 8 seconds (Source: Sparks & Honey)! Gen Z does not like formal training either—65% of them like to just learn on their jobs, according to research by Capita. They bring these traits and preferences to the workplace, adding another challenge to contact center leaders, many of them still relying on traditional methods to onboard agents.

First, it is a huge challenge for training organizations to account for all the service scenarios that the agent will encounter. Moreover, material shared in training sessions becomes obsolete in no time thanks to rapid changes in the business or the industry the company is in. Despite all the training, agents are still expected to read through voluminous documents to figure out answers, rules, logic, and steps in processes, when the customer is on the line. This puts undue pressure on them since the temperature of the conversation goes up as the customer starts to get impatient.

While daunting, the challenges we have discussed are surmountable. Here are steps that our Global 500 clients have taken to make their next-gen agents successful in the brave new smarter digital world.

Three Steps To Mission Possible

1. Reinvent The Agent Desktop For The Digital Era

Many contact centers still impose on agents an antiquated desktop that is geared for the voice channel with inadequate digital engagement capabilities. They need to revamp the desktop for digital sooner than later.

Containment: Make sure the desktop offers deep capabilities to support digital channels such as chat, SMS, messaging, cobrowse, social, email, etc. However, these touchpoints should be unified through a platform so that the customer gets a connected experience and the agent has complete context (e.g., no asking the mother's maiden name 10 times during one multichannel interaction).

Convenience: Contextual knowledge for customer questions, and AI for process guidance to walk the agent through next best steps (or the next compliant step in the case of regulated processes) should be available at the push of a button, just like the GPS that these agents are used to. Our next-gen agent desktop--eGain Adviser(tm)--offers not only this feature, but also one-click access to in-band collaboration with peers and SMEs for real-time internal help for the agent, and ability for agents to suggest answers to add to the knowledge base.

Context: Make the 360-customer view hyper-relevant. Information that is most important to the customer question in hand —and not the irrelevant, albeit valid, information— should be prominently shown. In fact, eGain Adviser desktop morphs the agent workspace to declutter the desktop focusing it situationally at the task on hand.

2. Hire And Manage Right

Hire for attitude and alignment with brand personality than for aptitude. While agents with the best aptitude and attitude exist (we call them "models"), they tend to be the exception rather than the rule. Of course, they are a model for the team, and should be retained and motivated to do even better. "Maverick" agents have good aptitude and less-than-desirable attitude. Sometimes, they tend to improvise and not follow process, creating compliance challenges in regulated industries. In fact, our clients find that even models and mavericks do better when our tools are used than without. "Makeover" agents (those that have good attitude but limited aptitude) do well when the tools do the heavy-lifting for aptitude. Make sure you align your metrics with your brand intent. For example, a brand like Nordstrom wouldn't want to compromise high-touch CX, their brand essence, with a metric like Average Handle Time (AHT) where the agent is hell-bent on disposing the customer as quickly as possible.

3. Inspire And Incentivize

Industry research indicates that Gen Z workers care deeply about a higher purpose for their jobs—2x and 1.5x over boomers and millennials, respectively. As Gen Z takes over the frontline, this will continue to gain importance. Contact center leaders should incorporate this in vision and mission statements, presentations at team meetings, performance reviews, etc. Along with lofty issues, next-gen also wants you to show them the money. After all, they have grown up through one or more of difficult events such as the dot com bust, 9/11, the Great Recession. Make sure to include financial incentives to motivate these workers.

A Final Word

You can make next-gen contact center agents successful with next-gen tools for the agent desktop, push-button access to knowledge-enabled answers and AI-enabled process guidance, and next-gen management practices.

[1] http://www.egain.com/company/news/press_releases/lack-knowledge-among-agents-biggest-pain-point-customer-service-according-new-consumer-survey/

[2] http://www.egain.com/company/news/press_releases/finding-answers-customer-questions-biggest-hurdle-contact-center-agents-study-finds/

SOCIAL MEDIA ISN'T JUST A SERVICE CHANNEL—
IT'S A POWERFUL SALES CHANNEL

In contact centers, there used to be just one method of contact: the phone. But over the past 20 years, digital channels have become an increasingly popular method of customer service. In fact, research shows that there is an average of nine channel options in the contact center.[1]

But there's one channel that shouldn't be overlooked—social media. Over half of contact centers today are using social media for service-based functionality. And it's not hard to see why—there are more than 3 billion active social media users worldwide,[2] sending 500 million tweets alone every day.[3]

If a customer wants to voice their grievances with a company, they turn to social media, and expect an agent to help. Millennials in particular are on the lookout for help on social media—55 percent use social media to ask a customer service question, and 65 percent think it's an effective channel for customer service.[4]

But social media is also an effective channel for sales. When customers share their unhappiness with a company, they're not just looking to get their problem resolved—they're often on the lookout for a new company who can provide a better experience. And they expect it quickly: two in three customers expect a response on social media in 24 hours or less.

Agents are trained to quickly reply to customer service requests on social media, but if they solely focus on service, they're only responding to half of customer engagement. They're missing out on the sales opportunities that are present. In fact, one social listening company estimates that there are 44,000 consumer requests for shopping assistance each month (i.e. "Can anyone recommend…" or "Where can I buy…").

Of all those requests, 26,000 go unanswered.[5]

But companies don't have to miss out on these opportunities! Half of contact centers are already using social media for sales and marketing. And, when asked what channels are most commonly used to initiate contact with customers for sales, 22 percent of businesses said they use social media.

Will your company be next? Read on to find out how to take advantage of the social opportunity.

Use the 3 "A's"

Many times, when customers mention a brand on social media, they're either lauding or lamenting that company's product or service. But it can be difficult for agents to identify which conversations they should be a part of. Over 40 percent of digital assisted-service agents, like those who use social media, are unable to identify sales opportunities.

That's where the 3 A's come in: automation, artificial intelligence and analytics.

Automation

Automation is becoming more prevalent in customer service interactions, but it's also a key part of social sales. Over 30 percent of contact centers have automated processes in place for digital assisted-service channels like social media, helping to identify sales opportunities based on certain triggers. Customers may have complaints about different things on social media, so automation and bots can assist agents with common tasks.

For instance, if an agent working for a cable company replies it's a shame that a competitor disappointed a customer, the agent can then follow up with an automated response promoting an offer for their company. The customer gets specialized service, and the agent doesn't have to craft a new message with the offer.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence helps agents identify patterns and trends and data—and be prepared to act on the opportunity. If a customer's social media profile is connected to a company's CRM, artificial intelligence can run predictive models to check propensity to churn, buy, or recommend. Once agents have that information, they can reach out proactively with a targeted offer to encourage the customer to stick around.

Analytics

Artificial intelligence helps predict customer intent, but analytics dig into customer sentiment. Almost a third (32.7 percent) of contact centers mine social media for sentiment, preference and habits. Here's an example: if a competitor experiences an outage, analytics can identify that there are more tweets than usual about that competitor, and they're all coming from a certain area with negative sentiment (i.e. "I hate that provider A's service just went down!"). Agents can then respond to customers who are unhappy with their service.

It's important to remember that every social media user can be a potential customer, and if there's an agent to step in and save the day, they might be more likely to switch to your brand. In fact, 56 percent of customers will stop doing business with a company after a poor service experience.

So what kind of messages should agents look out for on social media? There are four main types, and they all have one thing in common: a customer who is ready to act.

Take Note, Then Take Action

With so many tweets, posts and comments being published every day, there's no way for agents to keep track of every single one. But with the 3 A's, agents can identify customers who are ready to buy in four distinct scenarios:

Direct Sales Mentions

In this scenario, customers are already ready to buy your product or service. In fact, they might mention your brand directly and ask what you have to offer them. If a customer tweets, "I'm in the market for a new cable company," text analytics can track mentions of your brand, a phrase like "cable company," and then agents can intervene with an offer. (A little personality doesn't hurt, either!)

Comparison Shoppers

In this scenario, a customer mentions two, three, or even four brands because they're not sure which product or service they need. Text analytics can monitor for mentions of your brand alongside other competitors, or even just competitors' names—that way you can be sure your company is part of the conversation, even if you're not mentioned.

It's important for agents to be the first with an authentic response—it's easy for customers to tell when companies are using the same response for every customer. Being the first to answer, and having an offer ready, can help seal the deal.

Competitor Churn

In this scenario, a customer is complaining about a competitor's product or service. They might tweet at or mention your company to see if you can help them. Text analytics can scan for negative sentiment surrounding your competitors, letting you identify when customers are most likely to switch.

For example, if a customer tweets, "I have been on the phone with customer service four times in the past week," agents can intervene with a response such as, "Time to try something new! We'll cover your cost to switch to brand A."

Referrals

In this scenario, someone is referring your product or service to a third-party comparison shopper. They might also be coming to the aid of a customer who is sharing a bad experience they've had with a brand.

Text analytics can monitor for positive sentiment surrounding your brand. If a customer is referring your product or service to another potential customer, agents can echo that sentiment with a message such as, "That person is completely right! We've got the lowest cost per month and the most availability. Check out our plan for new customers."

By having agents ready to respond with an offer, especially when customers are most receptive, agents can become a reliable revenue driver for your organization.

What Agents Need to Succeed

For agents to succeed at social media engagement, they already have what they need to get started: a human touch. But they also need a platform that can organize the kind of messages that come in, and sift through social posts with a focus on sales queues. CRM integration can provide a more complete view of past customer interactions across channels, and specifically provide more context into customers' positive or negative comments on social media.

Agents should also have the ability to transition to other channels from within the same platform that they use to respond to social media requests. Over half of companies today have a single system that processes customer interactions on digital-assisted channels like social media.

Moving seamlessly between channels is a must-have. If a conversation needs to be taken off of social media and moved to a more formal channel, like Apple Business Chat, agents should be able to transition between channels from a single platform so they don't lose context. And if a conversation was initiated by a bot and passed to a live agent, agents should be able to see the whole comment thread so they can seamlessly pick up the conversation. Visibility between channels progresses the conversation without frustrating the customer, as the entire conversation is documented within a CRM.

Notably, a platform should let agents respond to any digital customer service inquiries from the same platform—they can be monitoring for new opportunities while ensuring that existing customers don't become former customers.

The Next Steps

Contact centers will always be a popular channel for customer service, and that won't change in the near future. What can and should change is how contact centers are using social media. Instead of using social media solely to resolve customer complaints, agents can initiate sales interactions, delivering twice as much value from a single digital channel.

So where will your business take social media? Are you content to have it be just a service channel—or are you sold on the sales opportunity?

[1] Dimension Data, "2016 Global Contact Centre Benchmarking Report"

[2] Brandwatch, "121 Amazing Social Media Statistics and Facts"

[3] Internet Live Stats, "Twitter Usage Statistics"

[4] Microsoft, "2017 State of Global Customer Service Report"

[5] Brand24, "The State of Social Selling"

Appian

THE FUTURE OF THE CONTACT CENTER

In the age of digital transformation, technology is evolving at an astonishing rate. However, the technology used in contact centers hasn't kept pace, which can have serious implications on CX. According to a recent CX study by CCW Digital :

• Fewer than 25% of businesses can handle complex interactions in digital channels

• Only 3% of customers are "extremely happy" with the experiences they receive

• 54% of customers consider switching to a competitor based on a bad customer experience

These statistics amplify the importance of embracing modern contact center technology that makes it easier to automate, orchestrate, and integrate massive amounts of data, processes, and systems into a single, customer-centric view.

The most successful contact centers incorporate a variety of smart technologies to elevate customer experience, including:

• Artificial intelligence (AI) to provide context-based "next best actions" to agents

• Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to eliminate error-prone manual processes.

• Dynamic Case Management to provide a holistic view of customers and understand who they are and what they need now, and in the future

• Enterprise Low-Code to build custom solutions fast

• Omni-channel capabilities to provide seamless customer interactions

Intelligent Automation – The Contact Center Secret Weapon

How many manual processes do you think your agents perform on a daily basis? Ten, twenty, hundreds? If you quantify those tasks in time, it's possible that your agents are spending hours every work week (or even every day!) engaging in mundane, repetitive, error-prone tasks. Misuse of agents' time on these tasks can be a major hindrance to organizational goals for transforming customer experiences and engaging with people to resolve their issues. Intelligent organizations understand the real value agents bring to the table: interacting with customers!

By our very nature, humans are problem-solvers. Agents should be in an environment where they help solve complex inquiries driven by AI guidance that's based on data and machine learning. Simply put, intelligent automation puts agents in the driver's seat of customer engagement. Intelligent automation combines the speed and power of business process management (BPM), machine learning, RPA, and integrations with low-code development to exceed your business goals, optimize customer experiences, and create an army of incredible agents.

Business Process Management (BPM) – Centralize. Orchestrate. Collaborate.

BPM isn't new technology, but how you intelligently incorporate your core and new business processes into your contact center can be the difference between success and failure.

Picture a single customer interaction, something as simple as updating contact information. How many different systems need to be informed? There's your customer relationship management (CRM) system, which is hopefully tied to your agent desktop. What about your invoice and billing systems? Is there a warehouse that has its own separate database? Is there a process that updates that system? Does that process consist of someone writing the new contact information on a piece of paper and walking it over to someone who may or may not actually key in the update?

Something as unassuming as not updating customer contact information across all relevant systems can lead to nightmare scenarios for customer experience. Intelligently designing, executing, managing, and optimizing processes that start in your contact center, but have far reaching organizational implications, is paramount.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) – Freedom for Agents

Automate routine tasks. Eliminate errors. Two powerful goals that many (not just leaders in the contact center) would love to achieve. RPA enables you to automate high-volume, repetitive tasks and integrate chatbots, freeing agents to spend more time assisting customers with higher-value or more complex interactions.

If we take the contact information example, those updates can be fully automated across the enterprise, giving agents and back-office employees confidence that they are working with a single version of the truth, eliminating errors and poor service.

Bots should handle almost any task that can be automated, and should pass exceptions to people as necessary, helping create concierge-level services and experiences that define what it means to work with your organization. The time and equated cost savings alone should be enough of a driver for organizations to automate more within their contact centers, but the real value lies in the transformation of customer engagement—building lasting relationships and brand loyalty.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) – Create Even Better Agents

When we talk about AI, many believe this means replacing people. To be clear: AI isn't meant to replace agents. AI is designed to extend the ability of agents to provide even better levels of service and care.

If we put ourselves in the shoes of an agent who works for a large retailer, the amount of product knowledge alone would be too much to provide a reasonable level of service. How often are customers transferred from agent to agent because they don't have the specific level of understanding about a product or service to handle the initial request? If that same agent is

provided with AI-driven "next best action" recommendations or knowledge base articles that are automatically suggested from the context of the interaction, the agent can provide the exact service needed.

AI enables agents to be more efficient—to provide knowledge, service, and experiences that deliver CX like never before. AI can be used in extraordinary ways, including sentiment analysis to understand a person's mood, or machine learning to recommend products or services based on customer history. The best part about AI is that it is easy to get started with pre-trained machine learning models and out-of-the-box services that integrate with your contact center processes and solutions.

Data and Systems Integrations – Unify Your Systems

The common threads throughout the intelligent automation narrative are data and systems. Undoubtedly, your company holds a tremendous amount of data in disparate systems throughout your organization. Disjointed data without insights doesn't hold much value and many are hard-pressed to find meaningful applications for it. Even cohesive data with insights holds minimal value, if there are no actions that follow.

In order to feed machine learning and other AI services that deliver recommendations (actions) to agents, you must integrate data and systems across the enterprise. In order to automate processes and tasks (actions) to reduce errors and save time, systems need to be able to share appropriate data with each other.

With your data and systems working together, not only can you intelligently automate your contact center, you can build a complete picture of each customer. This empowers agents to fully understand who their customers are to help anticipate needs, provide relevant offers and services, and give them the experiences they crave.

Dynamic Case Management – An Actual Customer View

It's likely your organization already has a few solutions that give you a "360-degree view" of your customers. The problem is that "complete" isn't necessarily complete. That's because most solutions aren't capable of integrating their contact center, CRM, and back-office systems together, leaving behind data siloes and the continued use of point solutions. Agents should have the ability to pull information from (and write to) any system necessary to resolve a customer inquiry on the first interaction.

Increasingly, customers have the expectation that the agent they're connected with should be able to fully solve their problem or provide the information they need. Using multiple systems to engage with a customer or transferring to other agents wastes time and provides a poor experience. Agents need the ability to resolve the inquiry right then and there, no matter what data or system is needed to do so.

Dynamic case management provides agents with a single, consistent customer view and supports high-end problem solving for complex interactions. Unifying the interactions among people, processes, data, and content, case management provides a powerful interface that allows agents to reach resolution faster and provide accurate information.

Whether a contact center is handling disputes, finance processing, service requests, incident management, client advisory, constituent response, or other case types, dynamic case management helps organizations deliver support more efficiently.

Enterprise Low-code – The Fastest Time to Value

Think about the current solutions your contact center employs. How long did each take to implement? How long did it take to configure them to support your specific processes? In their current state, are you confident that they're maximizing your ROI? If you needed to update them (if it's even possible), how long would that take?

If you didn't want to make the updates, or if the solutions were too rigid to adapt, you could always build a bespoke solution. But custom code can take even longer than updating what you have.

The challenge with both of those paths is the speed in which organizational needs and customer expectations shift. Contact centers need the ability to be as agile and fluid with their solutions as their customer base and markets demand.

What happens when a new regulation is passed and processes need to be altered to stay in compliance? What about when a hot new social media application becomes the number one communication channel of choice? These possibilities are all too real, and how fast you can adapt to changes influences your chances for success.

Enterprise low-code offers contact centers the unique ability to develop solutions that are tailor-made for your organization, fast. And when requirements or needs evolve, you can modify your solutions with ease.

Omni-channel Communications – Any Channel, Any Time

Whether it is a fully self-service or an agent-assisted experience, customers use a variety of communication channels to interact with companies. While voice remains the number one method of engagement, channels like email, chat, text, and co-browsing are becoming more popular.

Regardless of channel, there's an expectation of seamless communication switching—a fluid transfer between channels with zero loss in information fidelity. If a customer starts with a chatbot, then moves to text, and then to voice, each interaction should be logged with the details readily available to an agent. This helps provide a better experience, with the agent understanding the history of the interactions, and the customer not relaying the same information multiple times.

Contact centers must be able to keep up with the communication channels that customers want to use. With the sheer quantity of choices customers have today, something seemingly as trivial as limited communication options could result in a loss of clients.

twilio

4 ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS FOR A MODERN CONTACT CENTER

CUSTOMIZE A BETTER CONTACT CENTER EXPERIENCE TO MEET THE CHANGING NEEDS OF BOTH YOUR CUSTOMERS AND AGENTS.

Cost-Effectively Deliver On Customer Expectations

Best-in-class contact centers are modernizing today with tomorrow's customer experience in mind. These businesses have made a clear choice not to repeat the mistakes of the past. No more getting locked into expensive contact center infrastructure that won't scale. No more struggling to adapt to evolving customer expectations. No more missing the next wave of digital innovation.

Modern businesses are putting the needs of the customer in the forefront as they transform their call centers into intuitive, omnichannel contact centers. And to do so, they have adopted cloud communications as part of their CX strategies.

Cloud platforms are enabling companies to build applications at unprecedented speed and flexibility. They're global, scalable, and cost-effective – they don't require massive budgets and lengthy installations. They also empower businesses to create contact centers uniquely designed for their customer and business requirements.

Your Recipe for Success

Businesses operating modern contact centers have many things in common—starting with the cloud—but the most important is this: they customize their communications to use the right channel to deliver the right information at the right time. How do they do this? The process begins with these four ingredients.

1. **PROGRAMMABILITY:** Easily customizing every step of the customer journey

2. **OMNICHANNEL:** Connecting in ways the customer prefers

3. **CONTEXTUAL INTELLIGENCE:** Creating proactive conversations through automation

4. **SCALABILITY:** Relying on a robust and secure cloud communications platform

US businesses lose $62 billion to poor customer experiences every year. — Forbes

Programmability:

Take control of your customer's journey

Programmability is paramount for a contact center's success, and unlimited customization is the key to creating an elevated customer experience. It gives you complete control to develop, manage, and optimize a communication experience that your customers and agents deserve.

Every aspect of your contact center should be easy to program and design, starting with intuitive, out-of-the-box cloud communication APIs that can be used by common web languages. By using this as your foundation, you'll have the freedom to customize without being locked into a vendor's limited blueprint, or restricted by the abilities of legacy telecommunications hardware.

To move rapidly, empower non-developers and others in the organization with flexible, enterprise-grade tools like visual builders and wizards. They should be simple to use so that CX supervisors, marketers, or any designated employee can easily master them to modify workflows, adapt routing logic, change messaging, and optimize user interface design. Quick adaptations on the front end will help your contact center be more responsive to customer needs and expectations.

The ideal contact center is never finished. You should be able to continually iterate within your platform to adjust to the ever-changing needs and desires of your customers. It should also be able to quickly add new channels and other technology, which isn't possible with a legacy platform without a costly (and often risky) upgrade project.

To build the ultimate contact center, your communications platform must be seamlessly integrated into your existing customer relationship management (CRM) or workforce optimization (WFO) solution. In this data-driven age, collecting and storing all customer data in one place is critical, as is making data accessible to multiple departments and agent groups. Your solution should also capture dynamic conversations as they happen to ensure that everyone has a single view of the customer.

*70% of large businesses have already moved at least one application or a portion of their infrastructure to the cloud.
— Computer World*

PROGRAMMABILITY-IN-ACTION: NATIONAL DEBT RELIEF
View the full case study here

Omnichannel:

Facilitate a seamless customer journey at every touchpoint

Forward-thinking enterprise organizations are transitioning from a "call center" mentality to an omnichannel one. In doing so, these businesses can deliver consistent and personalized customer messages across multiple channels—not just via inbound or outbound phone calls. They know that to effectively engage with their customers, they must be able to quickly pivot among popular and universal communication channels including voice, SMS, email, chat, social media messaging, video, and home assistant. Connecting with customers on the channel they prefer has proven to push satisfaction to all-time highs.

In fact, Aberdeen research has shown that companies who have implemented an omnichannel engagement solution achieve a 91% higher year-over-year increase in customer retention, compared to organizations who don't provide omnichannel options. With compelling statistics like this, providing an omnichannel experience should be a high priority for businesses, yet it's not that simple. A 2016 survey found that companies rank omnichannel as the second most significant challenge facing their contact center, after 'people and processes.' That's because many legacy systems require a lengthy configuration process and restrict integration with other platforms.

Savvy businesses know that cloud APIs offer new approaches to building contact centers that do not require expensive systems integration or a 'rip and replace' rebuild. Instead, these APIs provide the flexibility to augment iteratively and to create a better customer experience, feature by feature.

By leveraging the liberating flexibility of API technology, you can give your team the power to create better customer experiences. Today you may only need text messaging, but based on customer's demands, you may need to enable web chat, an IVR, or Facebook messenger. A recommended contact center solution is one that is feature-rich with communication apps, can be customized to your brand or business requirements, and anticipates more innovative communication apps to be added over time.

Having multiple communications channels for your customers is powerful, but giving them the ability to seamlessly switch between those channels brings your customer experience to a whole new level. With an omnichannel contact center, for example, a customer may begin on your website, initiate a chat session, then switch to a co-browse session with an agent while connecting via video or voice. This kind of seamless interaction across technologies creates the customer journey that companies should aim for today.

9 out of 10 consumers globally want to talk to businesses using messaging; but only 48% of businesses are equipped to do so. — Twilio Global Communications Report

OMNICHANNEL-IN-ACTION: CARFINANCE 247
View the full case study here
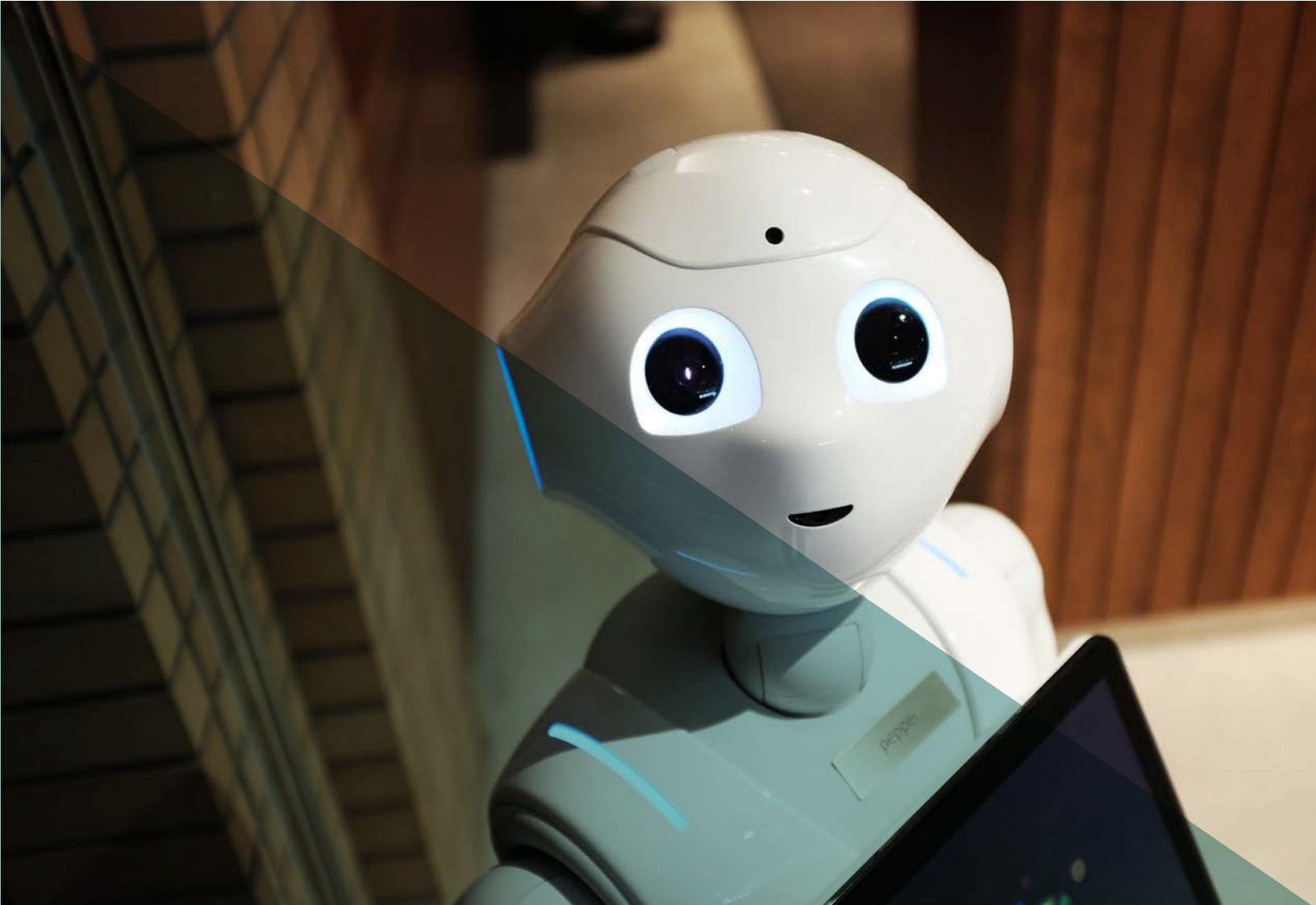
Contextual Intelligence:

Making customer communications more human by leveraging AI

The need to focus on the entire customer journey has caused innovative businesses to look to advanced artificial intelligence (AI) applications for real-time analysis and an interpreted understanding of customer intent. Contextual intelligence is being used to not only inform live agents so they can have more productive conversations while handling customer issues, it's also empowering a company's self-help tools, like IVRs, to better respond to customer needs in a more human fashion.

With context-driven experiences, businesses can provide customer service and sales agents with personal data, interaction history, and other aspects of the customer journey. The more an agent knows about who the customer is, what they're looking for, and what conversations they've already had, the easier it is to provide better, faster service. Context saves your customers from having to repeat themselves and ultimately contributes to superior experiences.

Proactive companies are leveraging natural language processing and sentiment analytics to create "conversational assistants" which automatically help customers get the real-time information they are seeking. By using these AI technologies to glean the context and actual intent of a customer's text or message, the "assistant" can take immediate action. Using a more natural, human-like response, it can either generate a ticket, appropriately reply via text, propose a callback from a live agent, or automatically route the user to a chat window for quick resolution.

With this contextual insight shared across all departments, the conversations your agents are having with your customers will be more personalized and consistent. Providing context to your contact center agents, however, isn't always as easy as it sounds. Transferring context from one communication channel to the next doesn't work with just any contact center technology: legacy and siloed software systems can't handle such hand-offs. An innovative cloud provider offering advanced artificial intelligence solutions can help you accelerate your transformation.

By 2020, the customer will manage 85% of an enterprise relationship without interacting with a human. — Gartner

CONTEXTUAL-INTELLIGENCE-IN-ACTION: SIMPLY BUSINESS
View the full case study here

Scale & Reliability

Focus on customer experience rather than communications infrastructure

Gartner predicts that by 2020, 30% of enterprises will embed communications into digital processes using APIs and modules from CPaaS (Communications Platform as a Service) vendors. That's a jump from less than 5% in 2017. Already ahead of the curve, today's more innovative contact centers have discovered how to create the ultimate customer engagement center by depending on a modern communications platform: one that is reliable, securely connected, and scalable.

Enterprises who may have previously opted for mature off-the-shelf solutions, bought from established vendors, now see software development—and CPaaS—as key to their digital differentiation. Since contact center APIs are cloud-based, they connect calls using geographically-distributed data centers around the world. Calls are optimally routed to reduce latency and to provide the highest quality throughput.

When you expand your reach to multiple countries and regions, cloud-based communications provide a deep local inventory of numbers and unrivaled reliability through global carrier connectivity. This level of reliability is difficult to find in premise-based contact center systems. Choosing a CPaaS provider also allows businesses to skip contract negotiations with carriers in each country and focus on refining the customer experience based on languages and regional preferences. Likewise, development teams are empowered to create applications that improve customer experience and agent efficiency agent efficiency rather than spending cycles on managing complex communications infrastructure.

In choosing a reputable, established provider, you also benefit from their understanding of what it takes to build a successful cloud-based contact center, one that offers greater reliability than most businesses can afford to implement independently. By moving communications away from legacy premise systems and into the realm of cloud-based APIs, you should look for a provider who can handle billions of interactions with a 99.99% service-level agreement (SLA).

Simply put, without the right platform, a modern contact center cannot thrive. Cloud adoption is not only shifting how enterprises develop products and services; it's empowering developers to add real-time communications features into applications without having to build backend infrastructure and interfaces. It's allowing business lines—from marketing and sales to operations and technology—to reimagine a better way to communicate with and service customers: on their terms.

By 2020, 30% of enterprises will embed communications into digital processes using APIs and modules from CPaaS vendors. — Gartner, Market Trends, 2018

SCALABILITY-IN-ACTION: ING
View the full case study here
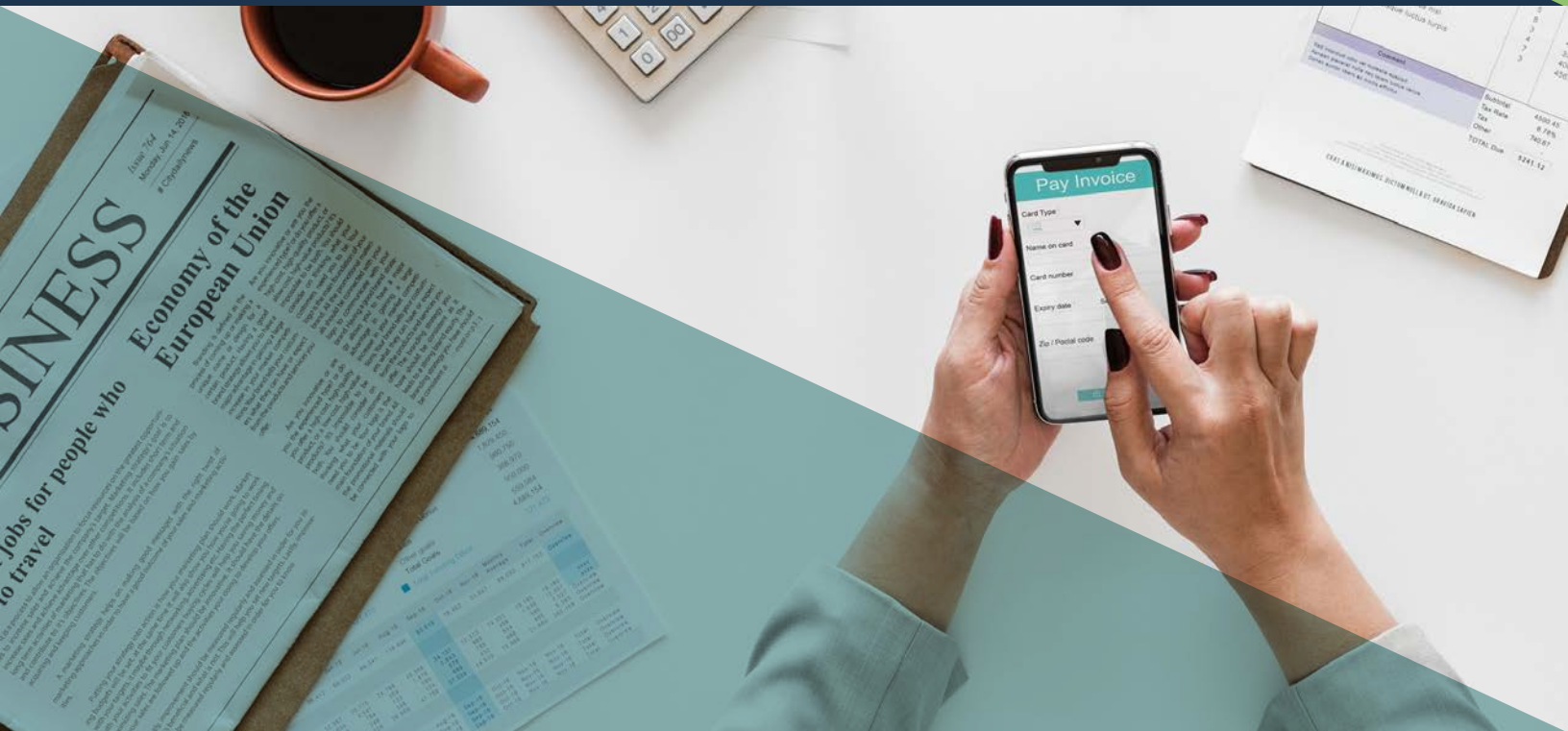
Summary

Every business is different, and so are their customer's needs. Likewise, there is no "one size fits all" when it comes to the ideal contact center. To create an ongoing superior customer experience, you must to be able to constantly adapt. When you're choosing the right contact center solution for your business, look for the four essential ingredients of a modern contact center:

- **Programmability: Easily customize every step of the customer journey, making changes as your needs evolve.**

- **Omnichannel: Connect with your customer on their preferred communication channel.**

- **Contextual Intelligence: Enable proactive and intuitive conversations using the latest in artificial intelligence.**

- **Scalability: Trust your platform infrastructure to scale with you reliably.**

First, your contact center should offer unlimited programmability so you can customize and change it as often as you like. Next, you must be accessible to your customers on all the channels they use, with integrated context for a seamless experience. Third, look for the latest in AI technology and natural language understanding so you can communicate intelligently with your customers and provide faster resolutions. And last, with your communications based in the cloud on a secure and elastic platform, you'll be able to focus on building unique communication experiences with your customers instead of dealing with the messiness of traditional telecommunication.

APPENDIX

CSg

📄 Engaging Customer Experiences

Digital disrupters have reset the bar and fundamentally changed how companies engage their customers. Earning and keeping customer loyalty is a growing challenge; one that requires customer journey orchestration. **Learn more here.**

📄 How To Succeed At Data-Driven Journey Orchestration

Almost 90 percent of customers think brands need to work harder at creating a seamless experience. But with disconnected communication channels and siloed departments, it's a problem that's hard to overcome.

Until now. Discover how journey mapping can move you from siloed customer communications to unified customer experiences—and help you engage customers throughout their journey. **Learn more here.**

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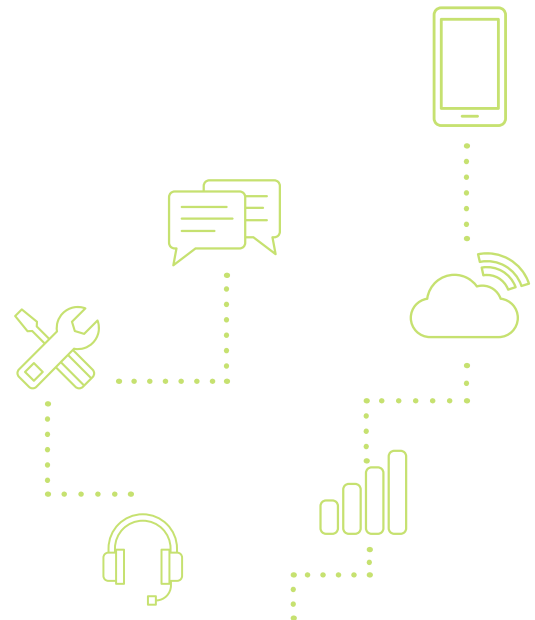**E:** Brian.Cantor@customermanagementpractice.com

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