



Customer Engagement is Ripe for Change
Is Your IT Team Ready to Enable Digital Transformation?

A Frost & Sullivan White Paper

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INTRODUCTION

If you work in IT, you're familiar with the buzz surrounding Digital Transformation. And let's face it, it's not just hype: new digital technology is definitely changing how business gets done—both in the back office and around the customer experience.

Indeed, smart companies are realizing that if they don't focus on improving the customer journey by leveraging advanced, omnichannel capabilities to gather, analyze and act on customer intelligence in real time, they will lose business—and fast.

Clearly, the time to act is now. But are you prepared to support and enable the changes that your organization must make in order to realize the benefits new technology and processes can provide?

Frost & Sullivan research shows that a cloud-based approach to the contact center can help companies enable digital transformation quickly and cost effectively, allowing them to nimbly embrace the new way of working with employees, partners and customers. A cloud-based solution will let your agents and managers get up and running on new technology quickly and easily, without a large up-front capital investment. Then, as their needs change and grow, you can layer on additional functionality as soon as your agents need it. Support and training are available 24/7, anywhere in the world. Integration with leading CRM platforms comes out of the box, and open APIs ensure you can link to custom apps and build the features you need with your internal IT staff, or by leveraging the services of your provider. And flexible, scalable solutions make it easy to add or remove agents as needed, so you can support seasonal variations and corporate growth.

Worried about security and compliance? Cloud-based offerings are probably safer than your own data center, and they are always up to date on the latest reporting requirements, because that's their core business. Reliability and redundancy are built into the business model, too, so you get excellent disaster recovery and business continuity with every engagement, ensuring your agents can stay working even in the event of natural or man-made disruptions.

The time is now to work with your colleagues to transform the contact center and redefine the customer experience.

WHY YOU MUST SUPPORT DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE CONTACT CENTER

You know it, even without the constant reminder from your colleagues in the contact center: in an always-on global marketplace, where every device is always connected and instant gratification is the norm, customers expect more. They want fast access to information and immediate problem resolution on any device, from any location and at any time. Meanwhile, social media is changing the ways in which people communicate with one another and with the companies they do business with. Like it or not, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and other social sites are part of the contact center, whether customers use them to get information and support, or, more critically, to post praise or complaints.

What does this mean for IT? First and foremost, you must enable the right technology to allow your company's agents and back-office employees to deliver a customized experience during each and every interaction—regardless of the device or application in use. Today's customers expect businesses to know everything about their relationship

with the organization—whether it expands over weeks, months or years, and whether the interactions took place online, on the phone or in an app. This means you, in IT, need to make sure the contact center has access to everything from basic information (account numbers and payment histories) to customer preferences, needs and even life events. Then, you have to make it easy for agents to see, analyze and act on that information. All the while, they should be able to interact with the customer on any device and deliver the same, consistent experience across them all.

An omnichannel contact center can address these challenges by offering a platform that presents a single view of the customer, regardless of her current point of contact—mobile, web, phone or social media (and, yes, even in-person visits to a brick-and-mortar location). The goal is to give agents a 360-degree view that offers relevant information on the entire customer relationship, allowing the company to offer a personalized experience each and every time it interacts with a given customer. Advanced data analytics can help ensure each visitor is treated as a unique individual and offered information on products and specials that truly meet his or her needs. Extensibility and integration with back-office applications like CRM and SCM software let other employees support the customer service effort and ensures every contact leverages a complete picture of the relationship. Detailed reporting can aid with management, compliance and training.

FOUR-STEP GUIDE TO MEETING YOUR USERS' NEEDS

Change is always difficult, but it is especially challenging when IT is tasked with supporting a transformation that gets to the heart of the business. The customer experience is mission critical for any organization; mess with it at your peril. So what's a forward-thinking IT executive to do? Start by taking four key steps: analyze needs, assess infrastructure, identify gaps and plan for action.

Work with LOB Colleagues to Identify Process Changes and Goals.

The only way to ensure your technology investments will meet the needs of the business is to work closely with the business process owners to determine what's working and what's not, and where the road to improvement lies. What complaints are they getting from customers most often? What information do agents wish they had, and what would they do with it to improve the customer experience? Where are agents least likely to be able to help customers, and how do they want to alleviate that frustration? Only by understanding the needs of the people on the front lines can you hope to effectively transform the business for the better.

Benchmark your Current Infrastructure.

Once you know where you want to go, it's important to understand where you are. Take a full assessment of every piece of technology that's used to support the customer: infrastructure, networks, hardware, software, endpoints, apps—all should be catalogued and evaluated. What's nearing end of life and will soon need replacement? How many different applications do you have that do the same thing? Where are the overlaps in ostensibly disparate products? And, perhaps most important, what tools are agents and other employees using on their own (i.e., without IT support) and why?

Locate the Technology Gaps.

Now that you know what you have and what you need, merge the data to see where to fill in the gaps. Do you currently have the ability to support an omnichannel contact center? If not, what specific capabilities are missing? If so, are all the points of contact integrated, so that customers (and agents) get a seamless experience whether they connect via phone, PC or mobile device? What about data analytics—what kinds of information are you receiving, and where is it being processed, analyzed and stored? Is the reporting as robust as you'd like? Do you have the desired level of integration with any back-office applications (and personnel) that also touch the customer?

Make a Plan for Action.

As with any IT initiative, success is in the planning. In conjunction with your business counterparts, decide how to prioritize any new initiatives and investments, carefully mapping out the technology you'll need to buy or upgrade and the business processes you'll need to change—and in what order (these two efforts should go hand in hand). Identify the criteria you'll use to evaluate new technology. Locate the funding and other resources you'll need to implement, including training for IT staff and end users. Create and follow a timeline for deployment. Make sure you have a way to measure results, and be prepared to mix things up if the results don't meet expectations.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRANSFORMATION

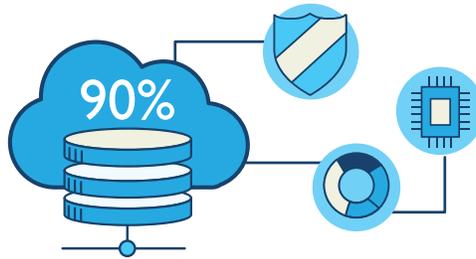
1. Assign a leader to help drive a customer-centric culture across the organization.
2. Be clear about the value of each channel. Your customers will want to engage on different channels for different reasons—make sure you know what they are, and how you will meet those needs.
3. Consider a single solution. A common platform makes integration—and sharing information—easy.
4. Staff appropriately. New channels and advanced data analytics may initially increase staffing needs. But the benefits—improved satisfaction and higher revenues—will quickly outpace the costs.
5. Train agents on the new systems. They need to know how to use the tech, but they also must be prepared for the cultural changes that come with it

THE CLOUD CAN GET YOU THERE

To enable digital transformation in the contact center, IT executives must advocate for and acquire a complete suite of communications and contact center applications and services. The goal is to provide a scalable, flexible and feature-rich platform that will help your company optimize customer service on any channel of choice, in real time and anywhere in the world.

To make this a reality, many companies are looking to the cloud, a model that offers a variety of benefits: quick and easy deployment, an operational versus capital cost payment model, built-in business continuity/disaster recovery, up or down scalability, flexibility, simpler management and support, and access to new capabilities as soon as they are needed.

A recent Frost & Sullivan survey of almost 2,000 IT decision makers from around the world showed that 90% of companies have deployed at least some of their enterprise IT applications in the cloud, with the largest group moving as much as 50% of their business applications off their premises. The contact center is often one of the first areas to experience this transition: 36% of organizations have already moved their customer-focused apps to the cloud, and 50% more expect to do so within the next three years. Respondents report immediate benefits from the move, including easier data storage, greater flexibility and access to advanced features and capabilities.



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Source: Frost & Sullivan

Finally, while moving to a cloud-based model has numerous measurable advantages, it also offers an added bonus—one that many companies say is even more important to their long-term business success: transforming IT from a support center focused on tactical day-to-day operations into a revenue generator that can help shape the company’s strategic vision and then make it a reality. By letting the service provider handle deployment, updates and routine maintenance and support, as well as any unexpected problems, companies free up their IT staff to focus on delivering business value. Suddenly, IT can work with line-of-business managers and employees to improve processes, drive productivity, define differentiation and deliver a clear competitive advantage. Although this transition can be scary for IT staff, it is almost always welcome in the long run, leading to stronger job satisfaction, deeper loyalty to the organization and lower turnover rates.

When companies move their contact center operations to the cloud, IT’s role becomes more managerial in nature. Freed from having to work on individual trouble tickets, internal staff must nevertheless ensure that the provider is meeting the company’s needs. That means they must stay in close contact with the vendor partner(s), ensure all service-level agreements are being met and take immediate action when business needs change.

HOW TO SELECT A PROVIDER

Most leading contact center vendors offer a cloud-based model for their software. But not all solutions are created equal, and it's imperative to find a partner that offers the services you need and understands your business. Specifically, Frost & Sullivan recommends paying close attention to the following criteria:

1. A *single platform* makes it easy for agents and other users to learn and use the software, even as new features are added. It also enables a seamless customer experience across all channels, regions and timelines.
2. Service *reliability* should be guaranteed in a way that lets you know it's fail proof. Redundant data centers and Internet back-up will ensure your customers never experience a service outage, even if your contact center does.
3. Easy *integration* lets you leverage your back-office applications and get a 360-degree view of the customer. Make sure your provider integrates with your CRM and other back-office software, either out of the box or with easy-to-use APIs.
4. Fast, *simple deployment* is critical for getting new agents up and running, adding advanced features and updating existing ones, and expanding into new regions and markets.
5. *Flexible payment* options let you decide the best way to cover the costs of services. Make sure your provider can meet your financial needs and that they'll adapt as your business needs change.
6. Bullet-proof *security* is table stakes for any enterprise IT implementation, but it is especially important when you're dealing with customer data and proprietary analytics.
7. A robust *portfolio of features* and capabilities will allow you to arm your agents with the tools they need today and well into the future. Look closely at your provider's roadmap to confirm they are aligned with your vision.
8. An *agile development model* can make all the difference when outages hit. The method lets developers build an integrated suite of independent application services, making the entire system more reliable: when one service fails, the rest don't go down with it.

CALL TO ACTION

Are you enabling your company to deliver a seamless customer experience to all users, on any device and from anywhere in the world? If not, you'll almost certainly see the impact on loyalty and long-term revenues. An omnichannel contact center that delivers advanced functionality and actionable analytics is a must for organizations that want to transform customer interactions and deliver a seamless, personalized experience to every customer, every time. Organizations must get on board if they expect to compete in their own markets and grow into new ones.

As you look to enable the opportunities and address the challenges presented by digital transformation in the contact center, a cloud-based model may offer the best solution. It can help you meet your employees' and customers' needs quickly and cost effectively. It will offer reliable disaster recovery, scalability, flexibility and access to new features and functions as soon as you are ready for them. This will help your business become a leader in customer satisfaction and the industry overall.

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ABOUT CCT

CCT is leading the way in Omni-Channel customer engagement solutions. CCT helps companies communicate with existing contact channels and a new generation of customers, through web and mobile based interactions, such as Web RTC, chat, co browsing and video, ensuring their contact center agents adapt to the changing customer landscape, decreasing contact center costs and providing efficient relationships with their customers.

Visit: <http://cct-solutions.com/de/kontakt-support/kontakt-support>



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Genesys® powers 25 billion of the world's best customer experiences each year. Our success comes from connecting employee and customer conversations on any channel, every day. Over 10,000 companies in 100+ countries trust our #1 customer experience platform to drive great business outcomes and create lasting relationships. Visit us at www.genesys.com.

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