

**Connecting  
customer journeys:**  
An executive Q&A  
with Emirates Airline



## Connecting customer journeys: Executive Q&A with Emirates Airline

### **Karen Bell-Wright**

Senior Vice President for Retail and Contact Centers Worldwide

Karen's role is to develop the global customer contact strategy for Emirates. Her responsibilities include operational management of the contact centres, retail performance, call management, manpower planning, performance target setting (quality and revenue), as well as staff training and development, improving technology and managing costs. Karen also manages the customer engagement for the Emirates frequent flyer program (Skywards) and the direct support for the highest tier members of the Emirates loyalty program, (IO).

Prior to working for Emirates, Karen worked within the IT sector for HP, Compaq and Lotus Development.

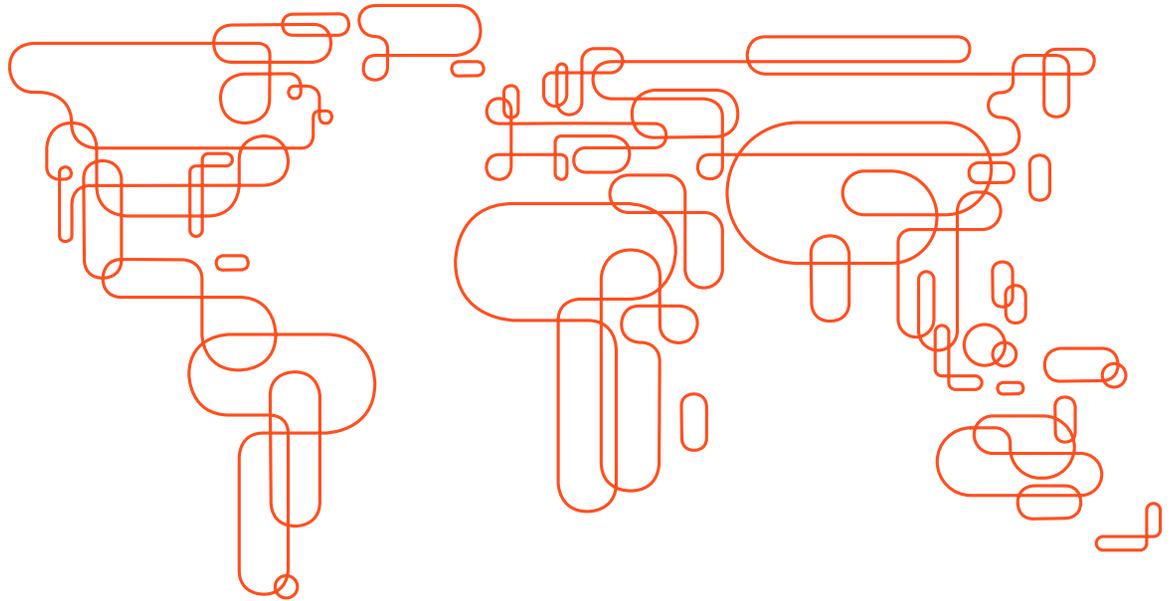
## Tell us about Emirates Airline

### Emirates is one of the most global airlines in the world today.

Customer experience is very important to Emirates, and it's driven at the senior management level within the company. I think this is best reflected by the strategic investments that the company makes. We have one of the most modern fleets in the world. We constantly introduce new enhancements for our customers, including showers, spas and lounges on the A380. We also have over 1,600 channels on our entertainment system.

But, most importantly, we invest in our people and in our technology. We spend a great deal of time talking about customer experience with our teams, and they're very knowledgeable on what we need to deliver at every touchpoint.

If you were to travel on an Emirates flight today, you would get a differentiated experience from other carriers.



**“We have over 50,000 employees. Our airline is very cosmopolitan. We have over 170 nationalities represented in our group, speaking more than 200 languages.”**

## What role does customer experience play in the overall Emirates Airline business strategy?

**“Customer experience” is a common concept for everyone.**

Emirates has been working with a customer journey map for many years. It's important that everyone knows their role and what the customer expects at each touchpoint across the journey. If you think about this from a traveler's perspective, they start with reservations, and they go to check in, and then they get on board. That's a customer journey within itself and there are variables and levers that you need to manage to deliver the right experience.

There's also the journey that customers take when interacting with the contact center, which is my main area of focus. Our biggest challenge is consistency, and it's the area that we work on the most. We're a global brand and our customers expect the same level of experience everywhere.

With the Genesys Customer Experience Platform, we're able to support 44 countries in 17 languages. We have about 2,200 agents that work around the globe across six contact centers. We handle 10 million calls, one million emails, and thousands of social interactions per year. We recently launched web chat and the number of interactions is already in the thousands.

The virtual, multichannel contact center environment is working very well for us today, and it's delivering the type of experience that our customers expect from Emirates Airline.



44

Countries



17

Languages



2,200

Agents



6

Contact centers



10,000,000

Calls

## What are the key challenges facing Emirates Airline today?



### **Since 2012, we've launched more than 30 new destinations.**

This past year alone, we've started flights to Erbil and Sialkot, as well as Stockholm and Boston. It's important that we start on day one with a very, very powerful brand presence and very strong customer engagement. Our people have to be knowledgeable, and need all the tools required to do the job at hand.

When it comes to managing multichannel interactions, the business principles are the same. The reporting is the same. The quality measures are the same. That gives our customers an opportunity to have consistency of service, but it also helps us with speed to market. By using the Genesys Customer Experience Platform, we've been able to roll out these channels very quickly. We're not recreating our strategy every single time we have a new channel.

Our agents also know what to expect when they move from one channel to another. When we're looking at reports and setting up reports in a new channel, it's always based on the same philosophy. If we look at customer recognition, or prioritization of interactions, the strategy and approach is always the same, because it's a common Genesys platform. That's really helped us to reach these new destinations with a high level of service very quickly.

**“We've created a virtualized, multichannel contact center environment. As we fly to new destinations, we immediately connect those destinations into our virtual contact center.”**

## How is Emirates Airline managing its growth across touchpoints and channels?

### There are many elements to managing our growth.

We've implemented a platform that can roll out globally, is scalable and easy to deploy, because we're moving at such a quick pace.

From an agent engagement perspective, it has to have a common interface, regardless of channel. We need a staff member working in a voice channel to be able to quickly move to email or web chat, staying within the look and feel of that environment. It has to be seamless for them. We want to make the job as easy as possible for our teams.

When it comes to reporting, it also has to be seamless and consistent. So what we're looking for is a common reporting mechanism that works seamlessly across the channels. Customer history also is quite critical, and it's really important to understand where they started from, and how often they've called us. It's clear that if a customer has called us multiple times that there could be a problem or something that we need to address.

From a vendor perspective, we looked for somebody that has the same mindset as us, the same customer focus that we have, and that can support us globally. Genesys has been able to provide that. I think it's also important to recognize that, as new channels come up, that the vendor has to be there with us. They have to have a mature enough model, understand the multichannel environment, and really work at the same pace with us to deliver what we need, when we need it.



## What have been the benefits?

### There have been many benefits with our virtualized platform.

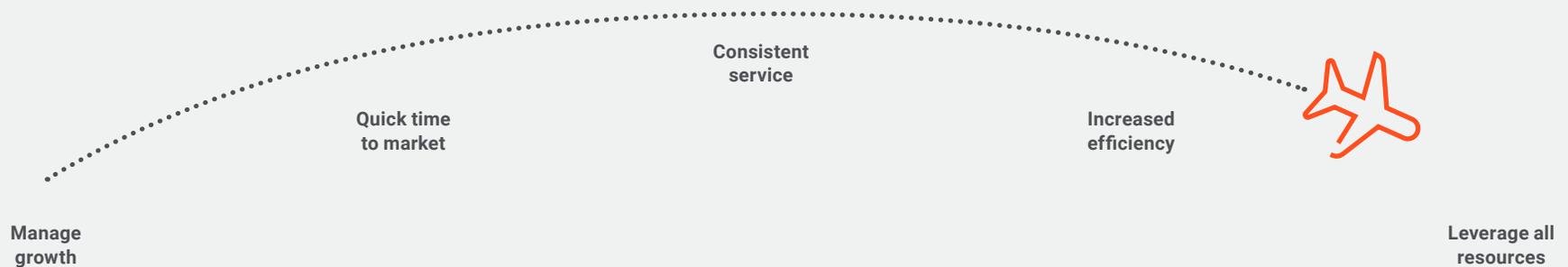
First and foremost, we've been able to manage our growth. As we move into new destinations, we're able to react quickly to those markets. We're able to offer consistency of service, regardless of where people are interacting with us. We're able to become much more efficient with a virtualized environment. We can manage our peaks and

troughs much more effectively. Instead of working with isolated contact centers, we're able to leverage all of the resources that we have. We also get a great deal of benefit out of understanding our customer engagements, and learning from customers around the globe by working in one virtual team.

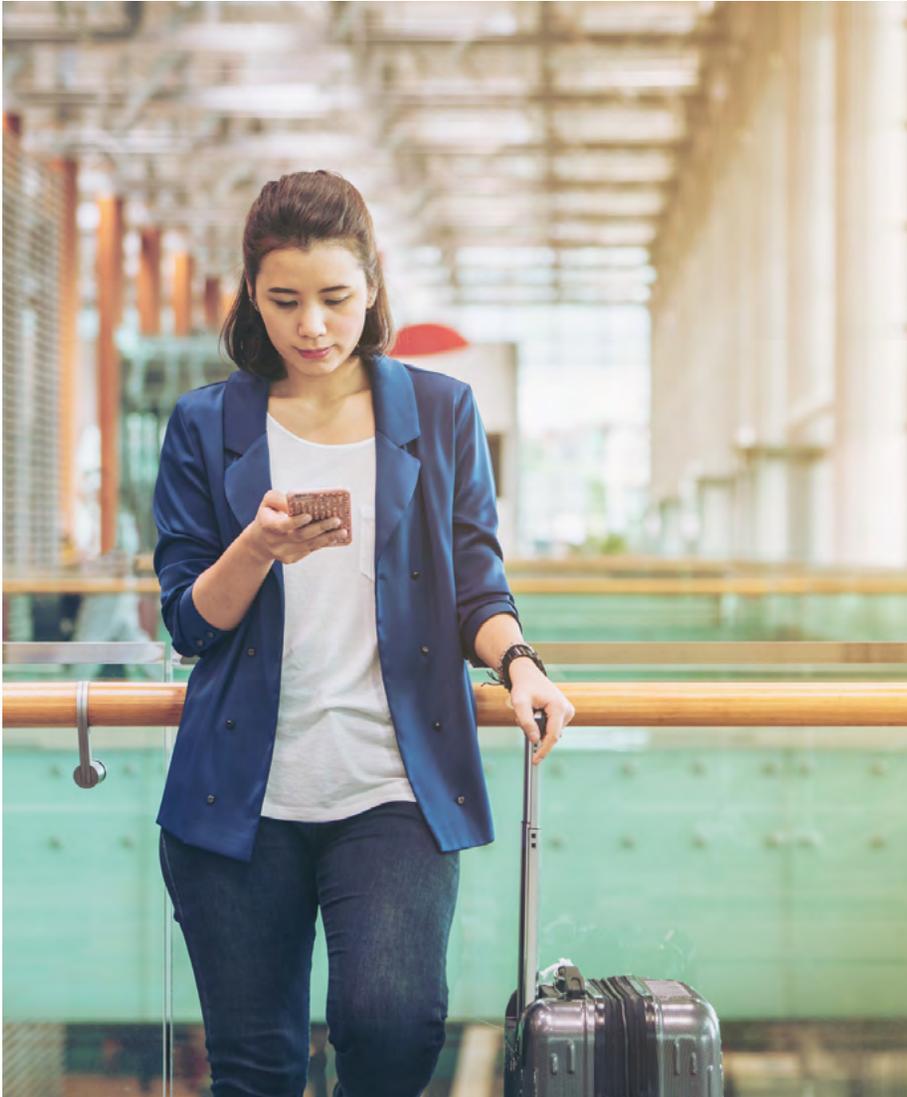
From a cost perspective, we've realized many benefits. In the past, we used to build reservation offices in every destination we served. Now that

isn't required. We're able to bring all of those customer touchpoints into a virtualized contact center. In the past year, we've avoided opening reservation offices in 17 new destinations. We're also able to take calls from highly populated markets and pull them into the virtual environment, saving resources in many of our smaller stations.

Finally, the overall quality of what we offer to our customer has improved greatly.



## Where are you next taking the Emirates Airline customer experience?



### **Our plans for the future are multifaceted.**

From a technology perspective, we're working more with social and in the mobile space.

From a customer experience perspective, we're looking at how we measure our effectiveness and how easy we are to work with. We'll also be working with other departments within Emirates to ensure that customer engagement with us is really seamless.

Most importantly, from a training perspective, we want to make sure that our teams are adequately equipped and happy with the training we deliver. We have a new customer experience training program that we've rolled out this past year. It's been quite successful and our staff really enjoy it.

One final point that's important is that we will be sharing this methodology with other divisions of the Emirates group. Emirates is made up of multiple departments and we want to make sure that everybody in the group is able to leverage the investments and success we've had with the platform today.

## Get on the path to managing customer journeys



## Learn more about the Genesys Customer Experience Platform

The Genesys Customer Experience Platform ensures that the experience you deliver aligns with the expectations of your customer and their current journey. By more effectively matching the workload and the required staffing levels for each customer journey, you can deliver consistent service levels over all touch points, channels and interactions.

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Genesys® powers more than 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 more than 100 countries trust our #1 customer experience platform to drive great business outcomes. Genesys on-premise and cloud solutions are built to be fluid, instinctive and profoundly empowering. Combining the best of technology and human ingenuity, we work the way you think.

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