Three Keys for a Successful Move to a Cloud Contact Center

Insights for Businesses Considering a Move to the Cloud

Introduction

Today's digital revolution has fueled higher customer expectations for the experience you create. Nowhere is that more clear than in the contact center.

Successful customer engagement is now about delivering connected, seamless customer experience (CX) across multiple journeys and channels. Whether your customers connect by phone, email, social, web chat, text, mobile applications, video, or another channel, you are positioned to build lasting relationships when you offer immediate, informed, and responsive communication.

Increasingly, businesses are evaluating and shifting to cloud-based contact center solutions because they're able to deliver great customer experiences and offer competitive differentiation based on service, all with a business-friendly pricing model.

The business and operational benefits of a cloud contact center are numerous and compelling. Your organization can deploy a contact center quickly, run it with minimal IT involvement or capital investment—and actually lower your operating costs. The strength of a cloud infrastructure's unique call routing capabilities let you take advantage of a geographically distributed agent workforce. It empowers agents to engage more efficiently with customers than ever before and improves CX across the range of customer interactions.

Whether your organization is just starting to think about moving to a cloud contact center or considering upgrading to a more robust offering, this white paper describes factors to consider when moving to the cloud, including:

1. How to build a business justification to convince your organization to make the switch.

2. Tips on what to expect during the transition.

3. How to create a realistic post-deployment assessment after the first 90 days.

This is a blueprint to ensure a successful move to a cloud contact center—from discovery to post-deployment.

Challenges Driving Businesses to a Cloud Contact Center

If you're in charge of customer service, you may find this common scenario. You're:

- Managing disparate support applications across the service organization
- Struggling to manage multiple vendors and technology platforms
- Dealing with ad-hoc, disconnected customer communications

It's no wonder your business day can end up with one headache after another.

Legacy, outdated ACD systems or pooled sets of phones mixed with outdated platforms simply can't keep up with the demands of a growing company or customer base—particularly in today's rapidly changing digital world.

This pattern can have a negative impact on your team's morale and productivity. Your agents are probably dealing with long hold times, resulting in customers who may already be unhappy by the time agents pick up the call. And if the call wasn't routed correctly, the agent might be unable to help the customer. This annoys the customer further, and frustrates an agent who wants to help customers. Your supervisors—and you—have to deal with too many complaints and escalations.

From a business perspective, this cycle results in missed opportunities: potential customers hang up in frustration before you can help, or current customers switch to a competitor after hitting their threshold for irritation.

When running a small or medium business, you face unique business challenges in implementing or upgrading your customer support capabilities while maintaining costs and dealing with growth. A common approach to improving your customer service may include hiring more staff or temps—but that's costly. And if more agents are still unhappy, you still end up struggling with high turnover and unhappy customers.

It's tough enough just running a business, but with a rapidly growing one, these difficulties can escalate rapidly. A cloud-based contact center can address your customer service challenges and set you up for success.

Contact Centers Trends Lead to the Cloud

Digital technology is transforming the global contact center industry. According to the 2016 Dimension Data Global Contact Centre Benchmarking Report, four out of five organizations recognize CX—and the contact center—as a unique competitive differentiator.

In fact, digital volumes handled by contact centers are on track to exceed phone interactions by the end of 2016. Growth in almost every digital channel (such as chat and email) contrasts with a 12% reduction in phone interactions handled by contact centers. CX now ranks as the top reason for offering digital service channels, even ahead of cost.

SearchCIO.com reports public cloud spending will grow at 19.4% per year in the future. The market will grow from about $70 billion in 2015 to more than $141 billion by 2019, according to recent IDC research.[1] Small and medium business will contribute to 40% of this total, or $61 billion, in 2019.

Some of the verticals moving rapidly to cloud contact center technology include banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI); IT and telecom; healthcare; and retail. The tech vertical is expected to have the highest percentage conversion to cloud contact centers by 2020, according to Markets and Markets, while travel and hospitality, healthcare, and transportation and logistics are the emerging verticals.[2]

No matter what your industry, connecting with your customers is your best bet to hold off competitors. Offering a multi-channel cloud contact center is the best way to establish a solid customer engagement strategy so your business communicates with customers over their preferred channels. Let's turn to how to start your move to the cloud.

Three Keys to Cloud Success

The three keys to help your organization justify a move, set expectations, and refine on a successful move to a cloud contact center are:

1. Build a convincing business justification.
2. Set realistic expectations.
3. Assess and refine after 90 days.

Key 1: Build a Convincing Business Justification

To convince your organization's decision makers that moving to a cloud contact center is critical to your success, the best place to start is by building a solid justification. By addressing your business challenges with relevant proof points, you can build a case that explains how a scalable, cloud-based infrastructure can be simple to maintain, yet improve operations and business performance.

Assess Your Current Environment and Consider the Cloud

Some questions you should consider as you assess your needs are:

- What systems comprise your existing contact center solution?
- Does your contact center integrate with your CRM system? If not, should it integrate?
- How robust is your IVR? Does it have routing capabilities and personalization features?
- Does your current system deliver a flexible, scalable solution that can support geographically dispersed agents and always-on availability?

As you answer questions about your existing system, consider the value of contact center capabilities delivered from the cloud, including CX, resource load balancing, minimal IT support, and financial flexibility. Consider how these factors affect your environment.

Value of Customer Experience

You can't overestimate the impact improving the customer experience your business delivers. It leads to happier customers, better net promoter scores (NPS) and customer satisfaction (CSAT) scores. Improving customer relationships will make your agents more productive and happier and increase revenue.

Financial Flexibility

Cloud contact center solutions effectively transfer costs from the capital expenditure budgets to operational expenses, making them easier to budget. A cloud contact center requires minimal upfront costs (phones, limited routing and other hardware) and can free scarce working capital. You pay only for what you need, when you need it.

Resource Load Balancing

With a cloud contact center, you can re-allocate capital resources to other areas, as needed. Your need for dedicated IT support will likely drop significantly, freeing up your IT staff to focus on other valuable initiatives.

Ease of Entry

Conduct a cloud contact center trial to get first-hand knowledge of how it will work with your business. If you choose a vendor that offers a team to assist with best practices and deployment, you'll have cloud CX experts to guide the transition.

In developing your business justification, keep in mind that many of your competitors have already moved—or are making the move—to the cloud. If you don't have additional channels and routing strategies to support your CX strategy, you risk losing your customers to the competition. The good news is that you can always start small and grow your cloud capabilities as quickly as necessary.

Key 2: Set Expectations

Expect great things when your cloud contact center goes live.

Moving to the cloud may feel intimidating at first, but with a vendor to guide you, the transition can be seamless. Your vendor should be able to train your agents and supervisors to understand the how the solution works, how to set up and change routing rules, and how to support multiple channels.

Within the first 30 days you'll see improvements in employee and customer satisfaction, increased usability from a single dashboard, increased productivity, and more.

More Effective Agents and Supervisors = Happier Customers

Cloud contact centers are known for producing higher agent satisfaction rates, lower agent turnover, a higher ratio of trained, skills-based agents, and cost-savings through operational efficiencies.

Behind the scenes, a cloud contact center delivers powerful agent management and supervisor controls through an agent desktop, web browser, or other devices. Supervisors gain insight into agent performance with call monitoring tools that allow agent coaching and the ability to intervene on difficult calls. These tools also deliver real-time and historical metrics and reports, enabling better planning and reporting.

More satisfied and knowledgeable employees lead to better customer service and improved customer experience. This results in happier customers who are more likely to spend more with your business and remain loyal.

A Single Browser–Based View of the Customer

In addition to the operational benefits of the cloud, with a cloud-based contact center, you can also gain the advantage of a complete, single browser-based view of the customer journey.

A single view removes the inefficiencies of agents switching among multiple, siloed applications. This reduces customer frustration because agents can quickly access important information without requiring repeated responses from the customer.

Agent access to customer information is on-demand, always on, and easily accessible in a single dashboard. Your agents won't have to put a customer on hold to look up information to address simple requests.

Increased Productivity

Beyond simply replacing legacy ACD systems, you'll see other technical advancements that can drive productivity with a cloud contact center. A good cloud-based customer experience platform uses a robust IVR on the front end of calls, so a significant portion of calls are completed without the need to speak with an agent, saving your business valuable time and energy.

When the caller does need an agent, a cloud contact center can route to the best agent available to solve the problem, and agents will have the caller's information in front of them. This raises the first call resolution rate and delivers significant improvements in productivity and CX.

Key 3: Assess and Refine After 90 Days

After 90 days, you'll be in a position to fully understand how your cloud contact center platform is performing. Agents will be used to the platform and supervisors will have a good sample size of the interaction types you're experiencing. You'll begin to notice the immediate improvements summarized earlier, including lower average handle time (AHT), fewer transfers, and less idle time for your agents, and happier customers.

Now is the right time for adjustments, if needed. Along with your vendor's CX expert guidance, consider which adjustments give your business the most benefit in the near term. This involves assessing your current inventory of customer service and support apps, interviewing your agents, reviewing how the business and contact center are working together, and considering future improvements.

Think about what else your business needs. Is it time to integrate with a CRM system? Do you need any other optional features? With a cloud contact center, it's easy to scale the number of agent seats or add on functionality as your business grows.

Some of the points to consider include:

- Will your business see benefits from adding workforce management for optimal agent scheduling? This includes agent self-service, time management and attendance, performance evaluation and management, forecasting and scheduling, and skills-based routing.
- How can you further improve your customer satisfaction? This could be accomplished by post-call surveys, coaching and training, or performance feedback.
- Do you take full advantage of the data from your contact center analytics platform? Consider data from contact center performance management, interactions, and contact center infra-structure.

Finally, check with your vendor for best practices they are seeing, or tips from how other companies have achieved success with a cloud-based customer experience platform.

The Cloud Fuels Growth at Plated

Plated is a food delivery service that makes it easy for customers to create healthy, chef-designed recipes at home. When increased media attention brought them an influx of new customers, the small team struggled to meet soaring call volume—resulting in unacceptable hold times and high abandonment rates. In addition, a lack of integration between the company's phone system and Zendesk (used to manage customer orders) led to disconnected workflows and less-than-perfect CX. The team also lacked real-time visibility into operational metrics.

Choosing a Genesys Solution

Plated chose Genesys for its ease of use and seamless integration with Zendesk. They selected the Genesys Self-Service solution and Premier Edition, including inbound IVR, ACD Contact Center, Zendesk CTI, and CX Analytics/Reporting.

Enhanced Customer Loyalty Leading to Massive Growth

By integrating Genesys with its existing Zendesk deployment, Plated gained new insight into call volume and staffing needs, while creating efficiencies that led to both happy agents and happy customers. This powerful combination of cloud-based solutions enabled Plated to enhance customer loyalty and drive massive growth.

Key benefits included:

- Slashed call abandonment rate by 80%
- Cut hold times by 90%
- Boosted customer satisfaction scores by 20%
- Improved agent satisfaction
- Increased positive customer sentiment on social media

Nick Taranto, Co-Founder and Co-CEO, Plated, said, "Success depends on our ability to scale to meet customers' expectations, and we have a great partner in Genesys, who can turn things around on a dime and support this growth."

Read the full Plated story to get more details about how a cloud contact center improved Plated business results.

SUMMARY

Businesses are turning to the cloud in growing numbers. A cloud contact center offers consistent, seamless, personalized experience that spans self-service and human-assisted interactions for compelling business benefits.

The three keys for moving to a cloud contact center offer a path forward for your organization when you know it's time but hesitate to get started.

Genesys has been a trusted advisor to businesses like yours, and can guide you through the steps to implementing a cloud contact center. Genesys Premier Edition is a cloud-based customer experience platform that deploys quickly, requires minimal IT involvement, no capital investment, and keeps operating costs in check.

Moving to a cloud contact center elevates your business and opens new doors for your customers. You'll communicate with customers in a way that produces better interactions and provides more insight. You'll give your agents and supervisors better tools to deliver superior support and business results.

Let Genesys help you surpass your competition by modernizing your contact center and achieving your customer experience goals.

Want to learn more? Download our eBook "The Virtual Contact Center" or sign up for a 30-day free trial of Premier Edition and start creating loyalty with every interaction.

NOTES

1. Elizabeth Sales, IDC: "SMBs will contribute to 40% of worldwide public cloud spending by 2019," article in SearchCIO.com.

2. Markets and Markets: "Cloud Based Contact Center Market worth 14.70 Billion USD by 2020."

About Genesys

Genesys, creator of the world's #1 Customer Experience Platform, empowers organizations to build exceptional customer relationships with personalized, omnichannel experiences across all journeys in the customer lifecycle. For over 25 years, we have put the customer at the center of all we do, and today, we continue to passionately believe that great customer experience drives great business outcomes. Trusted by over 4,700 customers in 120 countries, Genesys orchestrates over 25 billion interactions per year in the cloud and on premises.

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