# Overview

Customer-centric organizations are increasingly extending customer service operations beyond the boundaries of the traditional contact center. By transforming knowledge workers across the enterprise into on-demand experts, contact centers are able to more effectively meet the challenges of increasing productivity, improving the customer experience, and contributing to the enterprise’s bottom line.

From a technology perspective, this shift is being enabled by both the increasing ubiquity of Unified Communications (UC) platforms in large enterprises and, in some cases, the convergence of enterprise networks to IP-based infrastructure. Having either UC or IP in place expands the range of possible business models. For example, knowledge workers can often be most effectively incorporated into the contact center on a part-time basis, without formally becoming a customer service agent. Presence of enterprise knowledge workers supplied by UC platforms provides a crucial asset needed to link workers from diverse back office departments into the front office point of service operations by facilitating effective routing of real-time communication and collaboration across sites and functions.

Presence indicates whether an enterprise UC user is available on the network and able to communicate with colleagues and, possibly, agents and customers. Presence has been the cornerstone of contact center routing for many years in the form of agent-state — an agent’s logged in status. In the contact center setting, enterprise UC user presence capabilities can give agents real-time access to subject matter experts, back/branch office workers, and field sales in much the same way that agent-state is used within the contact center.

A study by Datamonitor, completed in May 2008, states, “The next step for contact centers is to integrate presence applications into their business processes so that they can increase their chances of ‘first call resolution’ by ensuring that contact center agents have access to their colleagues who have the requisite knowledge needed to address any customer queries.”

As enterprises roll out presence capabilities to knowledge workers, industry observers are predicting that integration into the contact center will follow suit, with the standard two-to-three year lag in adoption. This is generating optimism that presence will enable enhanced efficiency and effectiveness across the enterprise. According to the Yankee Group: “Presence management integration in the contact center will lead the way in terms of ROI, expense reduction, real improvement in both customer and agent satisfaction and retention levels, as well as in the all important customer service metric — first contact resolution (FCR).”

---

**REALIZING THE PROMISE OF PRESENCE IN THE CONTACT CENTER**

**PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRESENCE MANAGEMENT AND EXPERT INTEGRATION VIA UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS**

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence in the Contact Center</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unified Communications: Change and Continuity</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Benefits</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved First Call Resolution</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Agent Productivity and Satisfaction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimized In-Store/Branch Worker Productivity</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced Customer Satisfaction</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Practices</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligent Routing with Auction Preview</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating Presence into the Desktop for Contact Center to Enterprise Transfers</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements for Full-Featured Customer Service in the Enterprise</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updating Case Status and Call Notes</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferring Customers Back into the Contact Center</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, in order to realize these powerful business benefits, steps must be taken to effectively meld workflow between the contact center and enterprise knowledge workers, while simultaneously taking into account the differing habits, behaviors, and responsibilities of enterprise workers as opposed to agents.

To achieve this, it’s important to be aware that there are two distinct modes for using presence to link the contact center and the enterprise. The first could be termed “peer-to-peer expert/mentor collaboration,” while the second could be termed “intelligent expert routing.” While both modes provide significant potential business benefits, our long experience at Genesys demonstrates that intelligent enterprise routing is the preferred method for maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of both enterprise knowledge workers and contact center agents.

This paper provides an overview of presence technology in the contact center and describes the business benefits of this technology in the customer service realm. It then explores possible use cases for when agents should be able to reach into the back office using presence, and details the challenges of integrating knowledge workers into customer service operations. We conclude by outlining our plans here at Genesys to integrate the presence and advanced communications capabilities provided by UC platforms deployed in the enterprise, into contact center operations. This last section will describe our approach, which is encompassed in a new solution offering, called Genesys UC Connect.

Presence in the Contact Center

In considering presence integration into the contact center, it’s useful to first review the two modes of presence in the customer service realm — one which is widely available today, the second which will be available in the near future. The first mode can be termed “Expert/Mentor Collaboration.” In this mode, an agent uses capabilities similar to those provided by desktop collaboration clients to view the presence of information workers in the back office and initiate contact via chat or phone. While this method has the virtue of being intuitive, as it resembles an IM “buddy list,” it can potentially impact the productivity of knowledge workers outside the contact centers when they are contacted on an ad hoc basis, without coordinating a flow between customer service tasks and other responsibilities. Also, without a routing mechanism to automate the selection of the most appropriate resource, and then to instantaneously route that interaction accordingly, this method cannot streamline the ad-hoc decision making process and remove its inherent latency.

The second mode is one we will term “intelligent enterprise routing.” In this mode, the rules and routing practices governing contact center interactions are extended as customer queries and agent-initiated consults are forwarded into the enterprise. This has the advantage of providing a way to manage, monitor, and automate the flow of interactions, even as they travel outside of the conventional contact center. As we’ll cover later in this paper, intelligent enterprise routing also has the potential to protect the productivity of highly paid information workers and ensure that their incorporation into the contact center is both effective and sustainable.

The benefit of intelligent enterprise routing is that it allows the unique processes of the contact center to be harmonized with the rest of the enterprise. Well-run contact centers operate according to rules established by intelligent routing engines, and for enterprise experts to be effectively linked to the contact center, these rules should be extended. Many contact centers may also decide that it is not optimal for agents to contact experts on an ad-hoc basis. To account for these concerns, Genesys can gather various knowledge workers and their associated presence into groups according to skill sets that the enterprise wants to make available to the contact center. This means that agents will never need to know the names of experts in various fields. They will also never see the names of the experts themselves, only that there are resources available in the desired area of expertise. Refer to Figure 2 for an example of how this looks on the agent desktop.
Unified Communications: Change and Continuity

Presence has always been available in the contact center, in that the supervisor dashboard and routing engine have access to an agent's logged in status (agent-state). However, in the past this capability has been limited to traditional agents who are logged in all the time. Unified communications (UC) platforms provide presence and collaboration capabilities, as well as multi-modal connectivity, across the enterprise.

Presence lies at the heart of UC. It has even been called the dial tone of the future. While UC has various competing definitions, it is useful to remember the key benefit of the technology, which Gartner states as reducing the “human latency in processes.” At Genesys, our intent is not to become a UC provider. We do not intend to develop competing presence engines and UC clients for the enterprise; rather, Genesys will integrate with leading UC platforms such as IBM Sametime and Microsoft OCS, where advantageous. Through this approach, Genesys can leverage the capabilities and footprint of existing UC platforms deployed within the enterprise, and then augment and enhance the capabilities of these platforms in a way that improves customer service.

It is important to remember that the contact center is a separate application area from UC, and that many industry professionals and analysts, including Gartner, believe this distinction will remain firm for the next several years. However, UC has the potential to enable improvements in contact center operations, particularly for those extending connectivity to knowledge workers not traditionally linked to real-time customer care interactions. Presence will serve as the glue that links these capabilities together.

Finally, in predicting the adoption of presence, it is useful to consider the demographic and likely skill set of the typical agent over the next ten years. For the so-called “millennials,” who have been raised using digital technology, communicating via IM and presence is second nature. Recent research indicates that 67% of end-users surveyed use IM at home and work, but only 35% of companies formally offer this as a corporate tool today. Hence, the Yankee Group is predicting a progression of presence deployment in the contact center: first agent-to-agent, followed by agent-to-enterprise experts and, finally, agent-to-consumers via outbound systems capable of detecting presence. Figure 1 depicts this progression.

Figure 1: The Phased Rollout of IM, PM, and Collaboration in the Contact Center
Business Benefits

As we’ve all seen recently with UC, it’s one thing to provide a set of innovative and useful capabilities, and it’s another to apply those capabilities in a way that delivers clear business value. Because ROI on UC is most strongly realized when its incorporated into the contact center, Genesys can prove to be an extremely valuable resource in providing guidance and best practices due to our unique balance of leadership and expertise in contact center software, plus a long history in unified communications with our GETS product. GETS — released in 2005, the year the term UC first started gaining traction — was the original Remote Call Control integration into Microsoft LCS; therefore, one could argue that Genesys has been in the UC market since its inception.

In the quest to provide business value, we’ve looked first to our customers and aim to answer their questions and concerns through Genesys UC Connect. The benefits and best practices below are the result of direct engagement with existing customers and our long history and experience with both UC and contact centers.

Improved First Call Resolution

By allowing the agent to access experts based on their presence, and then click-to-initiate a voice or IM session, presence management can help the agent access the information required to successfully resolve the customer inquiry in a single call. This reduces traditional escalation, call backs, and the need for the customer to call the contact center multiple times about the same issue.

In one example, a customer calls a wireless provider with a question regarding a charge on her monthly statement. The agent lacks access to the necessary information to answer the query, but scans the network to find a billing specialist online to answer the question. The billing specialist then assists the customer by joining the call or IMing with the agent, thereby eliminating the need for a return call.

Or, take an example from the insurance industry. Often a customer calls into the contact center to check on the status of a claim, only to find that the agent lacks current information on how the claim process is progressing. The agent can do nothing more than transfer the customer to the claims specialist working in the back office who has the correct information, or offer a callback. In many cases, when the customer is transferred, the specialist is not available, and the customer has to leave a voice mail. The subsequent result is that the claims agent has to make several attempts to contact the customer, often to the find that the customer, in turn, is no longer available. This process serves to frustrate the customer, and to decrease worker and business process efficiency.

Rather than require the customer to wait for a callback, presence management can allow the agent to access a back office claims specialist in real time and quickly provide the customer with the claim status information. The customer gets an immediate answer, and is confident that the insurer is competently processing the claim. As we will explain later in the paper, by using the intelligent expert routing mode, productivity would be further enhanced by ensuring that claims agents are utilized in the most efficient manner.

Improved Agent Productivity and Satisfaction

When a contact center agent is handling a customer inquiry and lacks the necessary information to respond to the query, he or she is faced with a dilemma. Short of offering the customer a callback from a more senior agent, the only options are calling a co-worker to the station to assist or contacting a supervisor. With presence management linking the agent to enterprise experts, these options are significantly increased and improved.

Once an agent is empowered to contact an expert “mentor” via presence awareness, the agent’s productivity and, correspondingly, his or her level of satisfaction, are likely to increase. The impact of improved agent productivity and retention on a company’s bottom line cannot be underestimated because studies have shown that agents represent 71% of overall contact center costs, a figure that has remained virtually unchanged in the past 10 years.
Optimized In-Store/Branch Worker Productivity

For retail organizations that provide in-store and over-the-phone customer service, presence can help optimize efficiencies by allowing workers in the retail store to indicate when they are available to assist customers via phone, IM, and even video. Take the example of a bank. By transforming branch office workers into on-demand agents for both consults with agents and overflow from the contact center in the event of unforecasted traffic spikes, the need for traditional agents is reduced. The peak busy periods for branch office employees is different than those within the contact center. By linking UC and presence to the customer service operation, a very dynamic and widely dispersed customer care force becomes available, on-demand.

Customers also benefit from the ability to contact workers in their local store when making purchases or receiving post-sales service. When a worker steps away from his or her monitor to help a customer in person, his/her presence will “time-out” and display his/her status as “away.” Alternatively, he or she could switch the presence status to “off.” Genesys also provides an auction mechanism that ensures real-time availability before forwarding an interaction, which is described later in this paper.

Enhanced Customer Satisfaction

Polls of contact center managers and industry analysts find strong consensus that first call resolution has a profound impact on customer satisfaction, in addition to enhancing agent productivity and effectiveness.

Take the example of the investment industry. A customer calls into a brokerage firm contact center and requests detailed information on an investment option that exceeds the knowledge of the frontline agent. Without presence, the agent may be required to end the call, find the information, send it to the customer via e-mail, and then request a specialist to follow-up with a call. This may result in lost business when the customer becomes annoyed with the process, and decides not to sign up for the investment option.

Conversely, presence allows the contact center agent to check the availability of investment experts and then either invite that person to join the call, or to participate via IM. Such an arrangement has the advantage of improving the customer experience and increasing sales closure rates.

Presence offers the contact center a real opportunity to achieve improvements in the areas of first call resolution, customer satisfaction, agent productivity, and the streamlined processes outlined above. The erosion of barriers between the contact center and other departments is creating the need to optimize interactions between the front line and the back office, and to extend the intelligent routing capabilities of the contact center into other areas of the enterprise.

Best Practices

Despite the promise of presence management technology, there are several workflow and process barriers to its effective integration into the contact center.

First, there is a danger that knowledge workers will become aggravated and less productive as a result of more frequent interruptions from agents. Given that the salaries of knowledge workers are substantially higher than those of contact center agents, the need to protect knowledge worker productivity, and therefore anonymity, cannot be ignored. The next thing to consider is the nature of presence in the enterprise versus presence in the contact center. When agents arrive at work, they log in, put themselves in a ready state, and are expected to remain attentive and available to take interactions at any time, until they leave the office, or go on a scheduled break, and manually change their agent-state accordingly.
Enterprise information workers, on the other hand arrive at work, start their computers and UC platforms, and are then largely free to manage their time as they choose. When an information worker gets up from their desk to talk to a colleague, get a cup of coffee, eat lunch, use the restroom, etc., their presence may or may not immediately change to show they are unavailable to take a real-time interaction. Therefore, presence — as provided and maintained by leading UC platforms — is not sufficient to enable effective and sustainable routing from the contact center. There must be an additional mechanism in place to ensure that targeted enterprise resources are available in real time.

Finally, there are potential issues when rolling out uniform clients to distinct types of desktops. UC clients, as they stand today, are designed for information worker collaboration. As such, they include directory search, IM, and presence for every worker by name. However, contact centers need to view presence related to skill sets, and perhaps not to have access to expert names and direct extensions, lest agents become dependent on certain experts and those experts become over used. On the other hand, contact center clients/desktops are much more detailed, tend to be highly customized, and are designed to fit a customer service workflow. A truly effective solution must, therefore, take advantage of existing clients that are tailored for the contact center and the enterprise respectively.

**Intelligent Routing with Auction Preview**

In order for presence integration to be effective, intelligent routing (the rules and practices developed to effectively merge the flow of calls within the contact center), must be extended to govern the flow of calls/requests into the enterprise/back office. The workflow requirements are different in the contact center versus the enterprise overall, and there is a need for rules and routing functions to govern when experts will take time away from their other duties to handle customer service inquiries. Contact center routing engines should, for example, provide a mechanism to reliably ensure the real-time availability of back office experts and route accordingly.

- Agents should be able to access experts through predefined areas of expertise. As shown in Figure 2, this allows an agent to view presence and get access to someone in an area of expertise, without knowing exactly who that expert is. This protects information worker identity while taking the guess work out of involving experts, thereby using Genesys routing to automate the selection of the correct resources.

- With intelligent routing extended into the back office, a business rules engine could evaluate escalation rules, occupancy rates of applicable mentors/experts, and unique customer data to execute escalation to the expert level in the most efficient and beneficial fashion. This means that such things as capacity rules, customer segment, past performance of back office resource, media of preference, number of interactions fielded in a given period of time, and so on, can all be leveraged to optimize intelligent routing to the back office.

This technology is already widely used to govern escalations within contact center environments, and should be leveraged to get the most out of each minute an enterprise/information worker spends assisting customers.

The power of presence increases exponentially in relation to the number of employees using it. This means that salary differences are not the only reason to use intelligent routing to facilitate contact center links into the enterprise. Information workers must be integrated via carefully planned rules so that they will not choose to display their presence status as “busy” or “away” to avoid interruptions. There should also be a mechanism that effectively offers interactions to multiple back office resources simultaneously and allows them to accept or decline the interaction. There are many ways these rules and practices could take shape in order to allow expert integration to enable business process optimization.
The list below provides various examples of how business processes could be optimized using platforms and technology readily available today.

To protect the productivity of knowledge workers:

• Develop pools of experts based on unique skills in specific categories (for example, underwriting, legal, claims processing, billing, and technical support).

• Only the department or area of expertise would be visible to the agent. Enterprise worker names and contact information would be protected, and routing to the back office executed by the contact center routing engine.

• Routing lists could have drill-down capabilities related to language proficiencies, preferred media for contact, estimated time to availability for an expert in an area where all are currently busy, etc.

• An auction mechanism should be available that can offer real-time interactions to all back office resources that are “Available” according to UC platform presence. The information workers can then accept or decline the interaction. Because the interactions preview is sent to multiple resources simultaneously, this auction mechanism helps to automatically ensure real-time availability while using UC presence as a starting point for identifying available agents.

These are just a few examples of how Genesys contact center routing and clients will be leveraged to enable optimized access to enterprise back offices. An example of how this implementation will look to the contact center agent is provided in the figure below, though the exact user interface will vary in different enterprises. In this example, you are looking at the Genesys Agent Desktop. Of course, any custom or leading CRM platform can be enabled with this capability using Genesys Software Development Kits (SDK).

Figure 2: Interaction Workspace with UC Presence and Click-to-Connect Capability Integrated
Integrating Presence into the Desktop for Contact Center to Enterprise Transfers

On a technical level, there is the need to integrate presence into the desktop in the least intrusive manner. Enterprise information workers have a very different type of desktop than contact center agents. Whereas enterprise workers use personalized desktops designed to maximize both individual creativity and dynamic collaboration with known colleagues, contact center agents log on to any given station customized for handling customer contacts. IT departments servicing the enterprise and contact center are frequently separate organizations. Even when they are a single entity, the rules they use to protect the security and stability of employee workstations differ greatly in relation to the enterprise and contact center, respectively.

At Genesys, we know that our customers often spend many months, and sometimes millions of dollars, carefully customizing agent desktops to best serve their unique business processes and customer needs. It is extremely important to leverage and protect that investment when incorporating new capabilities such as presence and collaboration. This means integrating UC presence relative to knowledge workers and click-to-contact capabilities directly into agent desktops, rather than deploying redundant software on top of them.

Business productivity tools, such as Microsoft Office or Lotus Notes, are typically not available to contact center agents, as they detract from agent productivity metrics. Deploying enterprise collaboration clients on agent desktops would also give them direct, name-based access to highly-paid enterprise information workers. Information workers who are frequently interrupted may choose to show themselves as perpetually “busy,” or even go into “Do not Disturb—DND” mode, effectively negating the value of and investment in presence for both the back office and the contact center.

For these reasons, the recommended approach is to integrate the ability to access information workers/experts directly into the currently available platforms designed for enterprise and agent desktops, respectively.

Enterprise collaboration platforms, such as Microsoft Communicator and IBM Lotus Sametime, provide presence statistics. This allows Genesys contact center software to simply subscribe to the presence states of a defined set of experts and display them to the agent according to the best practices described in the bullets above (see Figure 2).

The next step is to provide the auction mechanism described previously. This auction preview will automatically send an Interaction Preview to all enterprise workers that are available according to Communicator and/or Sametime Presence (see Figures 3 and 4). The first enterprise worker that accepts the interaction will receive the related IM or Voice call and the previews will disappear from all other enterprise worker desktops.

The call context/attached data that typically follow calls as they are forwarded around a contact center can also be added to and forwarded on to an expert. This “attached data” could appear natively within the collaboration platform deployed on the desktop. An example of how this might look to an expert using Microsoft Communicator and IBM Sametime are shown in Figures 3 and 4.

The amount of attached data/call context information that can be forwarded in an interaction preview, as opposed to what is forwarded after the interaction is accepted, will ideally be provisionable by the enterprise according to the amount of information they want available to the enterprise worker and when they want it to be viewed.

For example, call notes could be forwarded as part of the interaction or after the interaction has been accepted. Enterprise workers must also be able to make changes to case status and call notes just as a contact center worker would. Genesys software will accommodate this requirement by offering an interface within the UC platform being used, which allows the enterprise UC user to make changes and update the case history in the contact center database. Examples of what this looks like are provided in the following section.
Requirements for Full-Featured Customer Service in the Enterprise

The majority of vendors in the UC space that are developing solutions to integrate UC and presence with the contact center only talk about one leg of the customer service chain. In many cases, initiating transfers and consults with enterprise information workers is only the beginning. If enterprise UC users are ever going to fully service customers themselves, or take transfers where the agent drops off the call to serve other customers, three sets of capabilities must be enabled:

- View and update (read/write) case status and call notes
- Ability to transfer customers back into the contact center
- Standard contact center reporting

Updating Case Status and Call Notes

The ability to read and write to the database used in the contact center to track customer case status and resolutions must be provided if enterprise UC users are going to service customers on their own. Though this capability could be provided directly within the UC client, our research with existing customers shows that the most desired approach is to provide automated access to the standard CRM application used in other parts of the enterprise, including the contact center.

Genesys UC Connect can use various pieces of customer information to query a 3rd party CRM database used to track customer interactions, find the customer profile, and offer the enterprise UC user the ability to simply click-to-launch a Web browser, pointing directly to the Web-based CRM client. With advanced features like auto-login, the CRM application can open directly on the customer’s profile, or even the active case, associated within a transferred interaction.

With this capability, enterprise UC users can update case status and call notes and track the customer call from start to finish, just as if the interaction never left the contact center.
Transferring Customers Back into the Contact Center

As mentioned above, the great promise of UC applications linked to the contact center is improved customer service and increased first call resolution rates resulting from direct customer access to skilled personnel. Yet, once a customer has a difficult issue resolved, the probability increases that they will want to then complete any number of more standard, typical tasks via this method.

Let’s take the example of a financial services customer service operation. Suppose that a high-value customer calls the contact center looking to resolve a billing issue, and either the contact center agents are all occupied, or the servicing agent that does field the call lacks the necessary expertise to wholly resolve the issue, necessitating a transfer to a back or branch office billing expert. Once the expert settles the customer’s issue, perhaps the customer then wants to execute more typical tasks, such as ordering checks or checking account balances. In a best case scenario, we could even imagine that the customer is so thrilled with the level of support they received, that they want to open a new account.

All of these tasks are exactly what contact centers are designed to facilitate. Rather than stranding a customer with a back office worker who doesn’t have the ability to help them, you must provide the capability to transfer that call back into the contact center.

Figure 6 shows UC clients with contact center queues/touch points as “buddies” in their UC client buddy list. This represents the ability, supported by Genesys UC Connect, to not only transfer a call back into the contact center, but to do so with a high level of service. The expert has access to various queues within the contact center, which means they can transfer customers directly into the most appropriate queue, rather than sending them into the top level queue and forcing them to navigate the IVR, enter information, and/or work through the touch tone menu all over again.
As you can see in the figure above, the enterprise UC user also sees the estimated wait time associated with the appropriate queue. Agents can, therefore, give the customer the option of a transfer, while also telling them how long they will be on hold before speaking with an agent. The customer can then decide whether they want to accept the transfer, call back at another time, or use the IVR to schedule a call back when it is convenient for them.

The ability to transfer customers back into the contact center with this level of service effectively completes the customer chain of communication, while freeing the highly-paid enterprise UC user to focus on other tasks.

### Reporting

Reporting is the final area that must be considered. Reporting is a mission critical facet of many customer service operations. Enterprises considering linking their UC platform to the contact center must ensure that the vendor they choose can support adequate levels of reporting. Companies across all industries — including financial services, banking, health care providers, airlines, insurance agencies, and retailers — all have the need to track, record, and report on customer service interactions. While the unique reporting needs of each of these industries can differ greatly, they all require a certain level of reporting.

Because Genesys UC Connect leverages all the established functionality and sophistication of the Genesys contact center suite of solutions, it can report on interactions fielded by back and branch office UC users with the same level of detail and customization opportunities as interactions fielded by agents in the contact center.
Conclusion

UC presents an opportunity for enterprises to improve the way they interact with their customers that should not be missed. Therefore, looking to the future, Genesys sees UC platforms and clients as the next-generation endpoint we need to support. In order to provide this support, Genesys will take the same strategy we took in the past with proprietary PBX protocols and the associated desktop hardphones — abstracting those protocols to deliver a consistent set of functionality regardless of infrastructure composition. This means that Genesys will apply our open systems approach to UC platforms and clients, integrating with the various vendor offerings in which our customers have come to find value, rather than applying the single-vendor-for-all-UC approach taken by many others in the UC space.

At Genesys, we believe that our expertise, unique technological capabilities, and dynamic customer engagement solutions — including Genesys UC Connect — will make us a catalyst for the adoption of UC in customer service operations. Genesys UC Connect empowers customer service providers by giving them access to their entire enterprise. The integration strategy we’ve outlined in this paper will provide multiple benefits, including leveraging existing worker knowledge (minimizing training) and software assets, while increasing the speed with which both sides of the divide can begin to use UC capabilities and incorporate them into their workflow.

The advantage of this strategy is that it will allow for the most effective use of resources by mitigating the dangers of lost productivity and reticence to use presence on the expert side, while preventing agents from developing a dependence on particular experts. This also conforms to the current mode of operation for IT departments managing these solutions, because it allows them to use familiar software and decreases deployment time, while functionally increasing their ability to address technical difficulties.

Presence management has the potential to enable significant improvements in customer service delivery by allowing experts across the enterprise to intervene in the service process in real time. By providing enhanced access to information and expertise at the precise moment customers require service, presence capabilities have a direct impact on improving the customer experience, increasing first call resolution rates, and transforming service centers into revenue centers. Agent productivity and satisfaction improve as frontline employees gain expanded access to information and support. Finally, overall enterprise effectiveness improves as formerly disjointed processes operate according to a well-coordinated flow.

Evolving to this optimized stage requires harmonizing the routing flow and business rules of the contact center with the requirements of knowledge workers in other areas of the enterprise. This involves extending the routing rules established within the contact center to govern interactions between customers and agents, so that they also apply to interactions between agents and enterprise information workers.

By extending the capabilities already available today, customer care contact centers can improve their performance as measured on current metrics, and also improve business processes to enhance overall organizational effectiveness. In so doing, they are better able to serve as a source of sustainable strategic advantage and competitive differentiation.