

Drive Success With an Intelligent Contact Center

Advanced customer experience technologies can significantly upgrade customer experiences, leading to increased revenue and loyalty; more importantly, failing to keep up means missing the opportunity to not only better serve your customer, but save money in the bargain.

By [Steve Pollema](#)

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It's no secret that a company's ability to satisfy its customers is closely tied to its [financial success](#). However, organizations often hesitate to implement modern contact center technology for reasons ranging from corporate inertia to an unwillingness to make the required financial investments to a lack of awareness of how detrimental an outdated call center can be to its success.

Transformative customer experience solutions must cut across traditional organizational silos (marketing, sales, service, supply chain, IT, etc.). Therefore, any CX strategy and technology initiative needs strong executive sponsorship and a dedicated cross-functional team to be successful.

While these aren't easy hurdles to clear, they're worth the effort—advanced CX technologies can significantly upgrade customer experiences, leading to increased revenue and loyalty. More importantly, failing to keep up with technological advancements means missing the opportunity to not only better serve your customer, but to also save money doing so.

Let Technology Give You a Boost

Traditional contact centers are outdated because customers expect more options and instant access. Modern consumers use mobile devices and the web, particularly social media, to contact businesses when and how they want. Rather than just provide a phone number to call, technology allows customers to initiate contact through their chosen channels.

Along those lines, technology facilitates a seamless customer journey from one transaction to the next. Data appearing in the UK Satisfaction Index indicates that [58 percent](#) of customers still make contact using a single communication channel, though many use two or more. Regardless of how a customer contacts a company, agents should have a history of all interactions with that customer available so they can seamlessly pick up where the last touch point ended.

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Technology also enables companies to create personalized experiences for customers, helping agents anticipate customer needs while connecting with individual buyers. Twitter—a great example of a means for delivering this kind of personalized interaction—recently launched a custom profile option in its direct messages feature that gives companies the ability to instantly engage with their tweeting customers.

Instead of a standard company photo or name, agent pictures and names appear. Even better, recent research has found that when companies engage with their customers on Twitter, [77 percent](#) are more likely to recommend a brand, 22 percent are more likely to be satisfied, and 19 percent are more likely to feel they've reached a suitable resolution.

To improve the perception of a face-to-face interaction between human beings, let innovative technology improve the interaction. Even a small technological change can make a big difference.

Upgrade the Customer Experience

[Designing an intelligent contact center](#) can give you a competitive advantage. Here's how to implement technology to improve loyalty and revenue:

1. Use CRM to personalize. Traditionally, companies essentially wasted their consumer data. Even if companies maintained giant storehouses of information, the representatives dealing with customers couldn't access it with the proper context, so the information did nothing to educate the agent or enhance the customer experience.

To provide insightful, personalized service, representatives need access to this data so every transaction is viewed within the context of the ones preceding it. Customer relationship management solutions give context to transactions, empowering associates to deliver a personalized customer experience.



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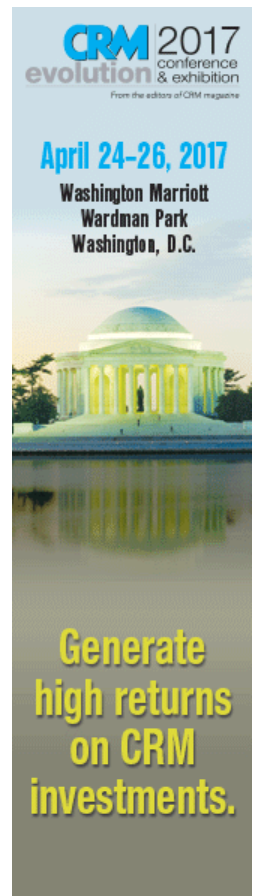
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Moreover, CRM works to connect back-office systems and shared knowledge bases for a customer-centric corporate culture. Every employee becomes a customer service professional for a brand-differentiating customer experience; that's important, considering [87 percent](#) of respondents in a Zendesk study wished brands provided consistent, harmonious experiences.

2. Let data analytics tools do the heavy lifting. Have you ever explained your issue to an agent, been put on hold, and then transferred, only to repeat the process with *another* representative? Or switched from an online chat session to a phone call, where you had to start at the top-level menu of an IVR? Repetitive customer service experiences frustrate [89 percent](#) of buyers, according to Accenture's Global Consumer Pulse Survey.

Advanced data analytics tools can help capture, analyze, and use data in real time to connect these interactions and personalize treatment throughout the process. Artificial intelligence can be leveraged throughout this process to handle some of the customer interactions (e.g., chatbots) or guide agents in their responses.

3. Find—and utilize—the channels your customers prefer. Use technology to connect more easily with your customers. People are on their smartphones and tablets all day long, meaning companies have ample opportunity to connect with customers through their preferred channels.

While voice will likely be the preferred method for complex, time-critical customer issues, brands with strong omnichannel options cultivate a more engaged customer. In fact, according to research by the Northridge Group, streamlined omnichannel journeys retain [89 percent](#) of buyers.

These alternative channels are typically much less expensive, too. You're not only allowing your customers to be served in their preferred forum, but you're also lessening your company's financial load.

While many companies are slow to adopt call center technology, the benefits are immense, even when relatively small measures are implemented. With improved technology, customers will be able to access your support team with ease and enjoy refined, personalized service.

Their satisfaction will translate to better results in customer satisfaction and loyalty, likely even decreasing your cost per transaction. With little to lose (and so much to gain), what are you waiting for?

Senior vice president [Steve Pollema](#) oversees [TeleTech's Customer Technology Services division](#), which focuses on helping its clients deliver exceptional [customer experiences](#) by providing on-premises and cloud-based CX solutions. With more than 30 years of experience in systems integration and management consulting, Pollema has significant client-focused experience in large-scale system development and maintenance, program management, and business planning and development. He previously worked at eLoyalty, Whittman-Hart, MarchFirst, and Accenture.

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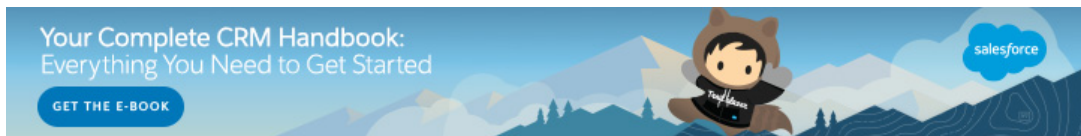


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