

RE-ENGINEERING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



Cisco and Intel® partnering in innovation



Industry experts describe the changing nature of customer service and how cloud-based contact centers are helping deliver frictionless experiences.

Blame it on the e-commerce pioneers. With products arriving on your doorstep after a few simple clicks of a mouse or mobile device, they have forever changed consumer expectations.

“Online retailers have led the way,” explains Steve Pollema, president of eLoyalty, a TeleTech company and premier provider of customer experience solutions. “When you think about a company like Amazon, they are so different because they don’t make products and they don’t set prices. Their differentiation is squarely based on a frictionless customer experience.”

- Organizations in every industry—from healthcare to financial services to government—are now working to enhance the ways they engage and support their customers.
- But the game, and those who are playing, have changed.

MISGUIDED EFFORTS, EMPOWERED CONSUMERS

For decades, contact centers have been built and managed with efficiency and cost reduction in mind. And that has led to frustrating experiences for customers, many of whom have been forced to navigate automated voice systems and wait on hold, only to find themselves on the line with an agent who can’t help. These experiences, combined with the ubiquity of online information, have provoked consumers to take matters into their own hands.

“Customers want the ability to control their experience, and they want fast resolutions,” says Peter Quinlan, vice president of unified contact center products at Tata Communications, a global provider

of communications technologies and services. “They want to solve a problem themselves online and will try to get as far as they can before they call for help.”

“Ten years ago, the contact center was the high-wire act. Now it’s the safety net,” Pollema adds. “But it’s still vastly important, especially for complex or high-value transactions, or in cases where a customer hits a roadblock.”

In these cases, the contact center agent needs to know the customer and their situation.

“Customers don’t want to start over and explain their situation multiple times. It’s one thing to give them a wide variety of channels or choices, but if the channels don’t link up anywhere, it can be extremely frustrating,” says Quinlan. “Stitching together all of the channels and offering a holistic experience is arguably more important than offering a wide range of choices.”

Click to chat, for example, is only beneficial if the agent on the other end can jump into the customer’s situation midstream and offer fast help.

“The agent needs to know who I am, what I’m hoping to do, and what I’ve done up to this point,” Pollema insists. “It’s a matter of continuing a process instead of starting the process over, and that requires knowledge, anticipation, and the ability to integrate multiple channels in ways that provide contextual relevance.”

HOW THE CLOUD HELPS

eLoyalty and Tata Communications offer Cisco Powered™ hosted contact center and collaboration services. According to Pollema and Quinlan, the cloud has been a key enabler of seamless, omnichannel customer experiences.

“In the past, technologies and people were largely siloed,” Pollema notes. “The website was driven by the marketing team, the contact center was orchestrated by services or operations teams, and mobile apps were the domain of the IT team. The cloud helps break down those silos.”

“It was hard enough stitching together voice, and now you have voice, web, video, chat, co-browsing, and on-demand experts who may be in different locations,” Quinlan adds. “With the cloud, companies can take advantage of these capabilities quickly, without the time, effort, and cost of implementing and integrating them.”

- All of it comes with an economic model one would expect from the cloud, featuring CapEx avoidance, seat-based pricing, and the ability to ramp up and down as needed.
- A full-featured contact center with more than 1000 seats can be built in and delivered from the cloud in less than two months, which would have been implausible just a few short years ago.

TURNING PROBLEMS INTO OPPORTUNITIES

Legacy contact centers and automated voice systems don't just frustrate customers. They also miss valuable opportunities.

“Every problem in the contact center is an occasion to help your customer, to build and reinforce a relationship, and to instill more confidence and loyalty in the brand,” says Quinlan.

- He cites a global financial services company that had the same loyalty scores for ages and tried a variety of things to move the needle.
- It wasn't until the company re-engineered its customer experience practices that the scores went up—by double digits.

“Is cost reduction the most important metric for a contact center? Not when you see results like that,” Quinlan claims. “This is a c-level business decision, not a technology decision. How do you want to build your brand? How are you going to support your customers? How are you going to create differentiation and loyalty? The cloud simplifies the discussion and the answers.”

“Companies need to take a step back and make sure the customer experience is a high priority, and they need to break down silos and align their organization accordingly,” Pollema adds. “Those that do invariably achieve their goals faster and have more satisfied customers.”

LEARN MORE

For more on eLoyalty's integrated cloud offerings, visit eloyalty.com/cloud-differentiated-features.shtml.

To learn more about Tata Communications' hosted contact center, visit tatacommunications.com/ig.



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