

The SME guide to contact centers

The key aspects to consider when adopting a contact center solution

Introduction: Keeping your customers happy

There is one question common to all businesses, regardless of size, industry or background - how do you keep your customers happy and engaged?

In today's digital economy, customers want their interactions to be quick and their problems to be solved right away, on whichever channel they most prefer - whether that is chat, voice or email.

Thankfully, in recent years contact center have evolved to be able to deliver all of this and more. They play a vital role in the way businesses handle inbound and outbound communications: the contact center is the first point of contact, the indispensable link between a business and its customers.



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Unfortunately, too often these solutions still seem like an unattainable option for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs).

With so many alternatives out there - many too simple to keep up with the growing requirements of customers, but also too complex to deploy and manage, or simply too expensive to implement - it's hard for smaller businesses to cut through the noise and choose the right contact center solution for their business.

This eGuide highlights:



Why it's time to move to a cloud contact center



The importance of an omnichannel solution



How to help your agents and your business succeed

The future is CCaaS

In the past, contact centers have been perceived as expensive and complicated to run, often just adding more complexity to a business and negatively impacting customer experience.

Cost, lengthy deployment processes and convoluted platforms have turned contact centres into cumbersome and unnecessary solutions for many SMEs - often overwhelmed by disparate systems, emails inboxes, or just various voice channels.

However, as customer expectations have evolved to be more digitally focused, on-premise, siloed customer service solutions are simply not enough anymore.

For businesses to succeed in this new era, it's time to embrace the modern cloud-delivered, customer experience-focused contact centre - but this shift doesn't need to turn into an expensive headache.

Enter Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS).

CCaaS is a cloud software deployment model that enables organisations to implement the technology they need to meet customer requirements, while reducing IT, integration, and support costs.

Cloud contact centers make interactions through various mediums accessible from virtually anywhere, with minimum capital expenditure, lower initial acquisition costs and flexible contracts.

CCaaS is a great choice for smaller businesses that do not have dedicated IT resources to support the infrastructure, as it can be easily deployed and managed - without compromising on advanced and evolving feature sets.

New features and upgrades are quickly implemented by the provider through the cloud, guaranteeing that your agents always have the best solution at their disposal and that your customers get the best possible experience.

Finally, CCaaS allows your agents to work from anywhere, supporting your remote working needs without having to worry about business continuity.

The same features and tools are accessible by everyone, everywhere - your employees will only need a reliable internet connection and a browser.

Give your customers the experience they deserve

Whichever contact center solution your business decides to employ, one thing is certain - customer experience should be a priority.

But it's not easy to get it right now that customers want everything at their fingertips; all their problems solved, all their questions answered, in a matter of minutes.

If ten years ago a phone line would've been enough to communicate with your customers, nowadays email, chats and social media play a critical role in giving them the experience they expect and demand from any business.

But having a contact center that integrates all those channels is not enough either if those same channels don't first communicate with each other.

Your customers want to be able to contact you from any channel knowing that their experience will be as seamless and quick as possible - they need to be able to go from a phone call to instant messaging in a matter of seconds, without having to start their conversation all over again.

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Time and convenience are the best things you can offer them - omnichannel is the way to do just that.

Omnichannel contact centers allow your business to offer different communication channels that are integrated and connected to ensure seamless customer experience. The contact center becomes the center of all your customer interactions, ensuring that no opportunities are missed and that customers get their issues resolved as quickly and conveniently as possible, on their channels of choice.

But an omnichannel environment doesn't just keep your customers happy, it also improves your contact centre's productivity and success.

How much time do your agents spend retrieving customer information, triaging problems, and routing to the right department?

With an omnichannel contact center, agents can easily access all the information they need about any customer interaction, regardless of the customer's preferred channel of communications.

In a matter of seconds, your agents can find out who that specific customer has spoken to before, on what channel, when and what about.

This not only saves time and resources, but it also provides valuable insight into customers historical data to improve your overall customer experience.

With a solution that provides all the right information, you can prioritise your VIP customers and make sure those who need it most get the best experience possible.

Let's not forget that although omnichannel and advanced queue management provide a better and quicker experience, customers aren't always able to wait in a queue to speak to an agent.

A modern cloud contact center can offer the caller the option of a call back if the wait time is too long, with the possibility of selected time slots to provide more flexibility.



Happy agents equal happy customers

While customer satisfaction is certainly a priority, and omnichannel the first step to achieving it, your contact centers will need to make sure someone else is also happy and satisfied - your agents.

After all, happy agents equal happy customers.

Yet many businesses overlook the importance of an efficient contact centre solution to help agents do their job more productively and without unnecessary stress.



Everything your agent needs, in one easy-to-use platform

We've all experienced the frustration of using disparate solutions to do our job, navigating through an abundance of interfaces, information, and communications channels.

A contact center solution doesn't have to add that stress to the working day of your agent.

Providing your agents with a single, omnichannel interface, where all your information and intelligence sits in one place for them to access at any time, improves your first contact resolution - the ability to deal with your customers' issues during the first call or contact.

A good contact centre solution will perfectly integrate with your back-office, providing agents with the ability to easily access information from, or route calls to, different departments within the business.

Support your agents, wherever they are

In recent years, remote working has grown in popularity, and has suddenly become a necessity due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Allowing your agents to work from anywhere doesn't have to be complicated with the right platform.

As well as being easy to deploy and use, a cloud contact centre can include many features that will help you support your remote agents during their working day.

For example, the right solution will provide agent coaching tools and agents scripts, so that your new remote hires have all the support they need to achieve a first contact resolution.

Supervisors can also jump into agent calls and help as needed, all from the comfort of their home.



Set your agents up for success

Your contact centre doesn't only need to support an omnichannel environment and remote working, it also needs to be intelligent, providing the necessary information and reporting features.

Intelligent routing for both voice and email connects your customer interactions to the agent they last spoke to, or the best one based on skills - not only solving issues more quickly, but also matching your agents to the customer they can help the most.

However, to have all the information necessary for an agent to be successful, your contact centre should also easily integrate with a CRM and provide advanced reporting features.

Especially for smaller businesses, reporting is always a key concern and one that is often too expensive to deal with.

While a contact centre that integrates with the most popular CRM is ideal for bigger businesses, SMEs should look for one that has a CRM and reporting features built into it - removing the need to acquire a third-party solution to get your customer contextual history and behaviour.

Conclusion

As customer behaviours and expectations change and evolve, SMEs can't afford to rely on obsolete, on-premise call and contact centre solutions anymore.

A cloud contact centre is the right choice to provide your customers with the speed, convenience, and knowledge they expect and demand. Just like larger contact centres, smaller ones can meet and exceed the growing requirements of customers - without compromising on ease of use and affordability.

As you navigate through the plethora of options out there, it's important to put your customer and agent satisfaction at the top of your list.

An intelligent, omnichannel solution will keep your customers happy and will help your agents meet their targets, without additional stress.

Finally, you should choose a resilient platform with a strong service-level agreement (SLA) - one that is easy to deploy, manage and use, and that will guarantee you're always available when your customers need it the most.

**A cloud contact center is your
chance to thrive.**

Ready to make the move to a cloud contact center? Contact UK IT Networks today and we'll help you choose the right solution for your business.

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