



Making your contact centre more flexible for customers & staff

How the cloud can drive up
customer engagement and let
staff work more flexibly.



Introduction

Let's face it – the pressure on your company to become more agile and provide better service is getting greater and greater. This is because your customers' expectations and demands have changed.

In today's connected world, customers are not just picking up the phone to call you about something; they are also trying to contact you via the web or social networks to find the answers they are looking for.

The contact centre is at the heart of many customer care operations. It is the bustling centre of communications and customer service. Most of your customers will end up contacting your organisation through one of these centres.

As customers' habits are changing, so are your colleagues'. Striving for better work-life balance, staff want to work when and where it suits them, not as it suits your organisation.

How is that done?

The cloud is the answer as it can bring the office to your employees and let customers choose when, how and where they want to contact you; day and night.

It also allows contact centres to acquire access to new technologies and channels with the ability to scale up as demand increases. As well as offering technological innovation, it also has the ability to ramp up the number of agents available when things get busy, then scale it back down when it gets quiet again.

So let's look more closely on how cloud-based contact centres are getting more popular, what their advantages are and what considerations are necessary when choosing the right solution that helps increase flexibility for your customers and agents.

Cloud contact centre adoption trends

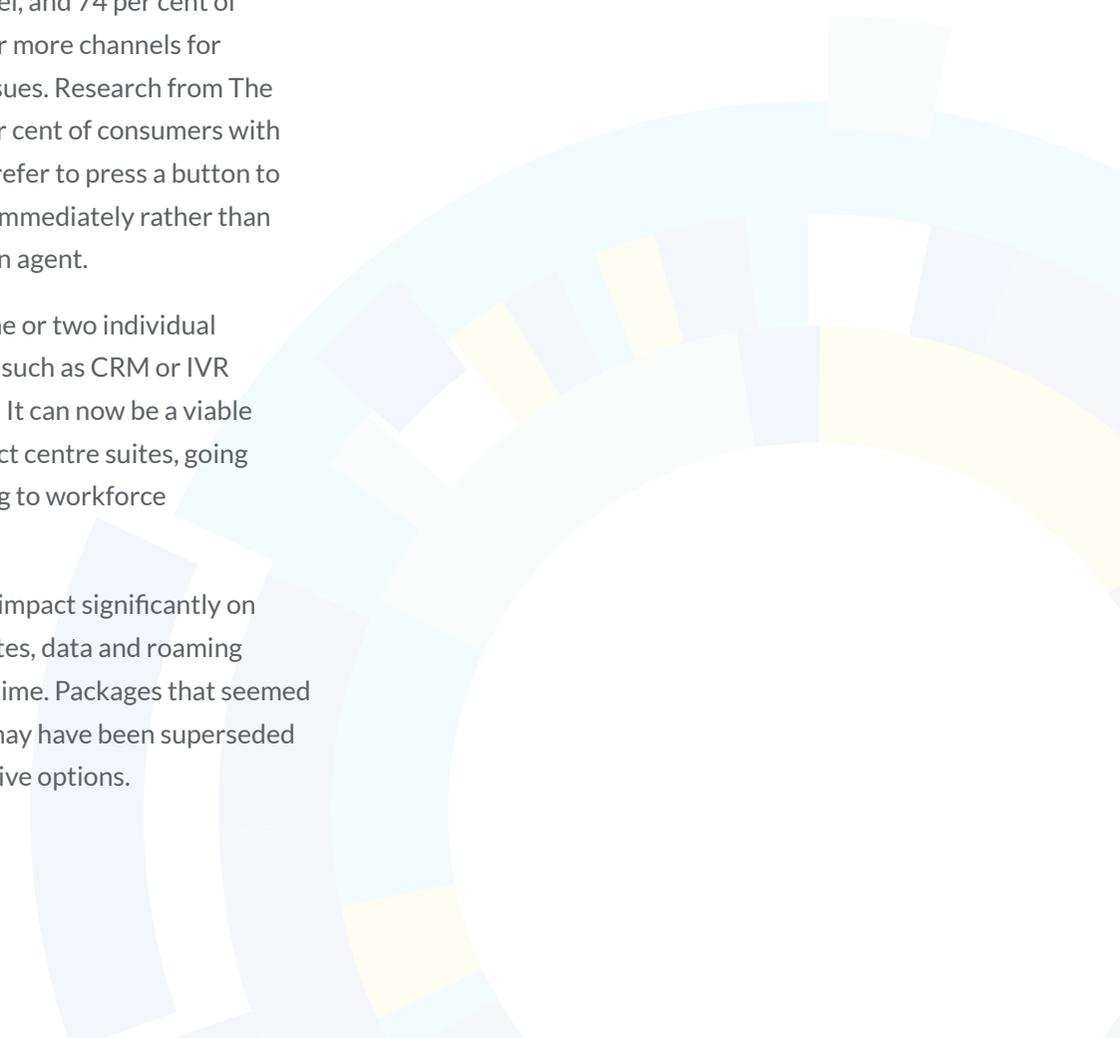
Cloud-based contact centres are getting increasingly popular. Why? Because over the last few years they have become more reliable, flexible and customisable. They provide firms with more than just the means to cut back on spending. In 2013, 62 per cent of organisations were already using cloudbased contact centre solutions – a number that is expected to grow by 25 per cent in 2015.

According to research by analyst firm Ovum, the number of agents using cloud contact centre technology is set to grow to over 1.5 million by 2018 - up from 961,000 in 2015.

Being flexible means serving customers regardless of how they contact you. Around 86 per cent of today's call centres are multi-channel, and 74 per cent of customers are using three or more channels for customer service-related issues. Research from The Harris Poll found that 44 per cent of consumers with texting capabilities would prefer to press a button to initiate a text conversation immediately rather than wait on hold to speak with an agent.

It is not just about adding one or two individual applications using the cloud such as CRM or IVR (interactive voice response). It can now be a viable proposition for entire contact centre suites, going from self-service and routing to workforce optimisation and analytics.

Having the wrong tariff can impact significantly on operating costs. Lines, minutes, data and roaming charges can all add up over time. Packages that seemed like good value at the time may have been superseded by more flexible, cost-effective options.



How can the cloud make my contact centre more flexible to customers and staff?

Moving to the cloud isn't just about moving from capex to opex. It can also offer quick deployment and access to the latest technology, translating to more flexibility for customers and staff.

It's scalable

A contact centre your customers can't reach is not flexible at all. The cloud can add scale dynamically. This means your customers never need to hear an engaged tone ever again. Contact centre managers can add extra staff to cope with seasonal call volumes on a pay-per-use basis. Agents can get up and running by using desktop tools available through the cloud. Staff can work for the contact centre on a more flexible temporary or part-time basis.

It can help make staffing more adaptable

Moving to the cloud means you are not limited by current ways of staffing your contact centre. The cloud makes it easier to provide technology to remote agents. This is the age of the virtual contact centre where agents are located in different geographical areas but operate as a single, fully integrated, seamless contact centre operation.

By using a cloud-based contact centre, one can cut down on facility costs, overheads and staff churn. A virtual contact centre in the cloud means staff can work from home - the ultimate flexibility.

For the contact centre, anything that reduces the top frustrations of staff (high stress, low pay, poor work-life balance) will result in happier staff and ultimately happy customers who are engaged by motivated employees.

Using remote staff also enables contact centres to access specialist skill sets. Using performance tools to assess staff knowledge will ensure the right balance of skills is in place within the contact centre.

If it is a challenge to find the right agents with the appropriate skills close to the main contact centre location, having a virtual contact centre staffed with knowledgeable people regardless of location could be the right option.

If you want to improve business results and gain a competitive edge, the cloud can also provide new features and functions to enable customers to contact your organisation in the way they want.

The beauty of the cloud is that it allows you to flexibly add new features without having to go through a forklift upgrade. This cuts down risk as new features can be rolled out, tested and fine tuned.

You can add channels such as text message, chat and social media as well as more sophisticated IVR technology to help improve your customers' experience and slash costs through call avoidance.

Making the move from multi-channel to omnichannel

Adding extra channels is the goal of being an omnichannel-focused contact centre. It renders your contact centre more flexible to the ever-increasing demands of your customers.

But these channels cannot exist in siloes. Omnichannel is multi-channel taken to the next level of flexibility; the channels are integrated with each other.

Omnichannel increases flexibility for the customer as it lets them start an enquiry in one channel and then change to another if desired. What starts as a tweet can continue as a text message or phone call, all while keeping the relevant context across channels.

What channels should I add?

Not every channel has to be used. The organisation may find that after a survey of customers they only need offer voice, text and social media, but going omnichannel guarantees responsiveness, service levels and quality received on each channel and across channels is high.

What are the key factors in selecting a flexible contact centre platform and vendor?

Before starting on a project to implement a flexible cloud-based contact centre, organisations need to take stock of existing infrastructure. This means identifying all hardware, routing, applications and the existing personnel needed.

Organisations must then decide what capabilities are needed to run a contact centre, identify applications that need replacing and make a list of features that could be “nice-to-have”.

How do I choose the right partner?

When choosing a partner, organisations need to look at the bigger picture. Many providers have years of experience in implementing contact centres for customers. But also essential is having expertise in agent performance and understanding the needs of verticals and cross-enterprise processes.

You and your provider must work as a team. They need to be bought into the planning process in order to determine your goals and understand the available options.

The partnership needs to be close so that infrastructure such as CRM and other technologies are closely integrated. You should also work with carriers to integrate telephony and SIP to the cloud-based contact centre. When implementing a cloud-based contact centre to gain flexibility for customers and staff, the key is to know what changes are necessary.

Conclusion

When implementing a cloud-based contact centre to gain flexibility for customers and staff, the key is to know what changes are necessary.

Your company will need to work with partners to add flexibility to a contact centre operation by using the cloud. This also means increasing collaboration and input from customer service, IT, sales and marketing to maximise the value of a flexible cloud contact centre.

Organisations that follow this guideline will be in a better position to implement an improved customer service strategy that leads to a superior customer experience.

About babble

At babble, we bring businesses and communications technology together in unexpected ways – to make them more accessible, more responsive and more effective.

We work primarily with large and mid-sized UK enterprises and are a recognised leaders in the deployment of UCaaS and CCaaS solutions.

What makes us different is that we are not just fanatical about the technology we work with, but also the endless possibilities that these solutions creates for our customers.

This is why we start by making sure we get under the skin of your business issues and ambitions, as well as your employees' and customers' expectations. By doing this we can bring the technology and the business possibilities together and offer you a choice of uniquely joined-up communications solutions that achieve exactly what you need... in ways you probably never imagined.

And that's how we make you business brilliant.





babble cloud limited
Bury House
31 Bury Street London
EC3A 5AR

For more information, contact the babble team

Web: www.babble.cloud
Tel. 0800 440 2100