

Contact Center 202X

The Pandemic has changed everything for Contact Centers, the businesses that operate them, the technologies used to drive them, and the individuals who work in them.

Our Previous Reality

While the world has shifted for many individuals, families and businesses in the last 18 months, it could be said that Contact Centers have potentially been faced with the most all-encompassing challenges.

Contact Centers are, in essence, service organizations. They exist to support and assist others. Prior to the Pandemic, most Contact Centers were large operational business units, housed in expansive office buildings, leveraged significant investments in on premise technologies, and had large numbers of team members. In order to provide support beyond traditional business hours and during peak times, many Contact Centers maintained partnerships with customer service outsourcing companies. Historically, these "outsourcers" were based outside of the United States.

Contact Centers were often a secondary support organization, fielding inquiries, questions and complaints that customers were not able to handle through their local store.

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The New Reality

The change has been nothing short of seismic. Many organizations refer to the term "Digital Transformation" to represent a new way of approaching business through integrated and intelligent automation, technologies and processes. The challenges of implementing Digital Transformation pales in comparison to the havoc brought on by the Pandemic for Contact Centers.

Consider the following realities with the Pandemic:

- Local stores closed, sending all customer service interactions to Contact Centers
- Large Operational (onsite) Contact Centers either saw drastically reduced hours and onsite staff, or closed
- Contact Center Agents were re-established with WFH tools and infrastructure
- Outsourcers outside the US shut down as WFH was not viable
- Contact Center Strategic Realignment to Digital Service Delivery
- Contact Center Technologies shifted to the Cloud
- Increased relevance of Self-Service (IVR, Conversational Natural Language, Digital)

Ultimately, the Pandemic created:

- 1 Higher volume of service and support inquiries for Contact Centers
- 2 Reduced access to outsourcers to handle service and support inquiries
- 3 A new WFH paradigm which required new processes, new management methods, new technology solutions and an onslaught of new challenges for employees

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Customer Service has Permanently Changed

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Infographic

GLOBAL PANDEMIC PRESSURES

- local stores close
- shift to work from home
- interactions go virtual
- increase demand for customer support

COVID-19 dramatically altered societal interactions and behaviors. Businesses were forced to send employees home, stores closed, face-to-face interactions were restricted.

IMMEDIATE CC PANDEMIC IMPACTS

- reduce onsite employees
- establish / scale wfh employees
- non-domestic outsourcers close
- manage the surge in volume
- re-think strategy....Digital Service Delivery
- re-think strategy....Self Service
- scale virtual communication
- scale use of cloud tech
- re-think security / compliance
- re-think workflows / UX

Contact Centers were faced with immediate challenges to business operations, support and survival.

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THE SEISMIC EVOLUTION FOR CC

<p>Management</p> <p>Strategize: Digital</p> <p>Strategize: Self Service</p> <p>Evolve the way we manage virtually.</p> <p>Evolve how we maintain a sense of team.</p>	<p>Employees</p> <p>Do I have the physical space and connectivity to work at home?</p> <p>How to work at home productively.</p> <p>How to balance business and personal.</p> <p>How to get the support that I need?</p>	<p>Workflows</p> <p>Re-imagine for a disparate workforce.</p> <p>Re-deploy to cloud-based solutions.</p> <p>Consider Automation and AI.</p> <p>Consider Self Service.</p>	<p>Business Partners</p> <p>Re-absorbing volumes due to diminished reliance on Outsourcers.</p> <p>Developing new relationships with greater mobile workforce capacities.</p> <p>Look to outside experts for help.</p>
<p>Volumes</p> <p>Increased number of inquiries and calls.</p> <p>Customer inquiries not meeting standard business work hours.</p> <p>People asking for service when they want service.</p>	<p>Security</p> <p>Extending enterprise security to WFH.</p> <p>Extending enterprise security to Cloud.</p> <p>Protecting customer data and company IP in an extended network driven by WFH.</p>	<p>Budget</p> <p>Develop and implement cloud migration, WFH and digital strategies.</p> <p>Develop the business case for the implementation and adoption of new technologies.</p> <p>Migrate to managed services.</p>	<p>Tech Infrastructure</p> <p>Enabling an enterprise experience through WFH.</p> <p>Maintaining digital and voice quality for WFH.</p> <p>Increasing utilization of Cloud.</p> <p>Increase automation.</p>
<p>Brand</p> <p>Increase the focus on the customer journey and the user experience, as the Contact Center becomes the focal point for customer, prospect and partner interaction. When face-to-face, or live interactions are reduced, virtual interactions gain increased importance on customer loyalty, customer satisfaction and brand reputation.</p>			

The Pandemic has heightened our awareness of the criticality of an available technology infrastructure, or capacity.

WFH has proven to be productive beyond our wildest dreams.

Employees have become accustomed to not commuting to work.

Workflow efficiencies and automation has proved to be critically important.

An integrated, intelligent digital strategy aligned with cloud solutions have risen to the forefront.

Seamless, customer focused self-service applications are in high demand and must be included in an integrated digital experience.

Customers, prospects and partners are now basing their opinion of a brand upon virtual experiences.