Automating Customer Contact Centers to Gain Agility and Analytic Insights

Virtual Contact Centers Drive Cost Reductions, Strategic Flexibility

Note: This paper was originally written for a U.S. audience and has not been localised with spelling for the UK.
VIRTUAL CONTACT CENTERS DRIVE COST REDUCTIONS, STRATEGIC FLEXIBILITY

An ever-present requirement to cut the costs and complexity of disparate telephony platforms, combined with a desire to meld integrated voice recognition (IVR) and Automated Call Distribution (ACD) to rapidly deploy contact centers with minimal upfront investment is driving the growth of virtual contact centers (VCCs).

The high cost of traditional ACDs and associated infrastructure, along with ongoing maintenance charges has put pressure on organizations to find alternatives to those costly, aging platforms. Plus, many traditional ACD platforms offer, at best, limited ability to change or update contact center applications, a growing number of organizations are actively seeking ways to alleviate cost and ongoing maintenance headaches.

This is why so many organizations are turning to Virtual Contact Centers, or VCCs. A virtual contact center is a cloud-based, on-demand contact center that replaces complex and disparate physical telephony platforms. A VCC can seamlessly combine Integrated Voice Response (IVR) with advanced Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) features to rapidly deploy contact center services, with minimal upfront investment.

Since no physical infrastructure is needed, a VCC delivers greater mobility, enabling the dynamic management of the contact center at any time, from any location. For example, a VCC allows contact center supervisors to coach new agents from a headquarters location, or check on call volumes and response times from their smartphones. The mobility achieved by using a VCC allows supervisors and contact center agents greater flexibility to continue working, and properly managing agents to meet ongoing service goals.

### KEY BENEFITS OF CONTACT CENTER AUTOMATION

“Which types of deployment models is your firm interested in using in the future for contact center(s), whether you use it today or not?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deployment Model</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SELF-MAINTAINED</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS-A-SERVICE</td>
<td>23% (Growth from 2% to 23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANAGED (ON-PREMISE)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOSTED</td>
<td>17% (Growth from 4% to 17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTSOURCED</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DON'T KNOW</td>
<td>4%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2011 Forrester Research
Base: 293 North American and European networks and telecom decision-makers responsible for contact centers
By replacing capital investments with an ongoing operational expense, the cost saving organizations achieve from on-demand VCC services frees resources to enhance the customer experience, by reducing the wait times for live agents, for example.

Driven by the advent of cloud computing, advanced analytics, multichannel engagement, and a growing acceptance of on-demand IVR solutions, VCCs are being implemented to lower costs and streamline customer services. According to market research firm Ovum, early adopters report virtual contact centers have helped reduce costs and deliver greater visibility into customer service operations, generating analytic insights that enhance decision-making and agility. Increasingly, consumers expect mobile, dynamic management of customer services, available for their use at any time, from any location. To keep costs under control, organizations must learn to leverage automation, especially to optimize labor costs. Leveraging VCC solutions, organizations gain the ability to monitor contact center operations from any location.

In fact, automation is key to building strong customer loyalty. The experience provided by any organization’s ‘front door’ customer services dictate how customers feel. Advances such as skills-based routing can ensure customer calls are routed to the right agents, the first time, improving ‘first call resolution’ results. Making a lasting impression on customers who reach out by phone can dramatically impact bottom line results. Having a solution to handle automated call routing, along with the proper tools to help give customers a personalized experience, is crucial to growing bottom line revenue, along with brand loyalty.
WHY CHOOSE A VIRTUAL CONTACT CENTER?

Before we begin, let's discuss the contact center market.

The total U.S. market for hosted contact center applications, including IVR, ACD, outbound customer contact and chat services is expected to reach nearly $3 billion by 2017, according to Frost & Sullivan's research. And hosted IVR services, which make up a large portion of the VCC market, will grow from $780.8 million in 2013 to $1.084 billion in 2017, a compound annual growth rate of 8.8%.

When examining how best to streamline customer services, VCCs make good business sense for the following reasons:

• A pay-as-you-go model for deployment brings a swift return on the investment

• There's no hardware and/or software to maintain

• In the cloud, it's easy to integrate with outside systems

• New channels are easy to add

• Agents are happier, able to work from anywhere, even using mobile devices

• Customer service operations can be fully monitored, from any location

• By adding proactive outbound contact center technologies, organizations can turn a traditional cost center into a revenue/profit generator

VIRTUAL CONTACT CENTER COMPONENTS

A full-featured, virtual contact center can offer inbound IVR, outbound IVR, ACD, mobile voice, advanced analytics, mobile/multichannel support, all provided by an on-demand, cloud-based service. For small and midsized enterprises, the elements that make up a ‘best-in-class’ virtual contact center hinge on the organization’s ability to leverage virtualization. Best practices dictate the service should be virtual, and the solution should be accessible from any location using any mix of mobile device endpoints, at any time, on-demand.

In the last few years, it has become increasingly popular for many organizations to leverage a cloud-based service to keep pace with customers who now regularly use mobile technologies, smart phones and social media networks.

As customers leverage a wider array of communications channels, besides telephones, organizations and most industry suppliers have also been forced to adjust to include support for customers who wish to use email, the web, mobile technologies, social media and texting to access support services. Additionally, customers expect to use multiple channels to interact with the brand and a VCC enables companies to quickly add additional channels and innovate the customer engagement. You want to be where your customers are.
Organizations must be prepared to support the channels customers prefer and be where customers are by supporting the channels they like to use, whether by text messaging, social media, mobile tablet device and/or smart phone. Multichannel support enables organizations to fully embrace each customer’s personal preferences for interacting with the organization, which is often referred to as Preference Management.

Finally, advanced analytics make up another important VCC component. Analytic tools are used to help better understand every ‘end-to-end’ customer experience, and allow an organization to make iterative changes to capitalize on ebbs and flows in daily operations and enable continuous improvements in customer services.

**Top VCC Benefits**

- Measurable and meaningful return on investment
- On-demand system allows for speedy deployment
- Scale up easily as requirements change to grow with your business when outbound capabilities are added, VCCs can turn a cost center into a profit center
- Enables talent acquisition not limited by geography
- Allows agents to work from home to aid their work-life balance and help organizations keep talented agents happier
- Robust, one-stop deployment

**VCC ADVANTAGES**

By investing in an ‘on-demand’ VCC service, versus a physical, premise-based platform, customers gain fast, easy deployment of contact center applications by leveraging the resources of a cloud-based service. VCC services allow organizations to scale operations quickly, to handle growing demand or traffic spikes, without failure or the need for additional investments.

Primary advantages of a VCC service include:

- Deliver results in days to weeks, versus months or years
  - An OpEx versus CapEx model drives demonstrable ROI
  - Proven improvements can be made in customer experience, cost reductions
- Build sophisticated services, using point-and-click tools
- Powerful analytics enhance decision-making
  - Generate data from daily operations to prove outcomes
  - Analyze data to drive continuous improvements
VCC AT WORK

There are multiple scenarios in which VCCs are well suited to assist organizations in streamlining support services. For examples, VCCs are often used for:

- Customer support
- Internal help desk services
- Volunteer or remote agent environments
- Outsourced call center services
- Inbound sales organizations

Highlighted below are a few customer examples to highlight VCCs at work.

A Checklist of Best-In-Class VCC Features

It's best to ensure an on-demand VCC solution delivers the following key features:

- A web-based monitor that can be accessed from anywhere, along with a mobile app that enables administrators to track contact center operations from any location
- CTI or screen pops, to ensure agents don’t waste time asking customers to repeat information previously entered into the IVR
- Intelligent routing to ensure the call gets to the most appropriate agent and ensure a first call resolution
- Live, quality control monitoring of customer calls, including the ability to whisper to agents for coaching purposes, or step in if a conversation reaches an escalation point
- Call recording, for training purposes
- Workforce management integrations to ensure customers are served in a timely manner and agents are properly utilized during work hours
- Out-of-box integration with CRM platforms to immediately leverage customer information, without the need for costly custom software integration efforts
- Advanced analytics that track the customer’s experience from start to finish, and deliver a 360-degree view of each customer. Analytics should measure the success of any automation effort, and determine which customer profiles respond to automation, using insights to fine-tune application performance
- Proactive outbound notifications that deliver key information organizations need to know, and perhaps prevent inbound calls, reducing contact center costs

Weighing VCC Features

Key features to look for when weighing on-demand, virtual contact center services, include:

- Instant setup
- Instant provisioning
- Instant scalability
- Real-time changes to call flow, routing, skills
- Technical resources NOT required
- Regular software upgrades
- Web, browser-based operations

Positive CX

Happy Customer

Profitable Company

More Purchases

USING AUTOMATION TO DELIGHT CUSTOMER
A Professional Services Firm
A Midwest professional services firm struggled to deliver application management services, which help clients optimize their primary operations and drive down costs. The professional services firm implemented an on-demand VCC service, and used the time and money saved to focus on ramping up new business opportunities both in the U.S., and internationally. A functioning IVR and contact center service was set up in less than 30 days. The firm saved nearly $1 million in hardware and software costs by implementing the on-demand VCC solution.

An International Call Center Business
An expanding international call center service company needed to accept customer calls from around the world, using call center agents who were remotely located. The organization didn’t want to invest in costly ACD hardware.

To resolve its challenges, this company opted for a VCC solution that now allows remote agents to receive calls and manage contact center operations using iPads, no matter where they are working at any given moment. It’s estimated the company avoided an estimated $700,000 in upfront ACD hardware and software costs. Instead, the business was able to easily expand international operations, without a drawn-out, expensive traditional contact center investment.

A Cloud Marketing Provider
A leading cloud-based marketing software provider that delivers marketing automation tools wanted to help its call center agents move away from the use of screen prompts or posted numbers to more quickly identify customers and ask relevant questions. There was also a need to provide IVR services that would leverage automation and provide more detailed metrics to help better track customer support calls.

To avoid a costly capital expense, the company implemented an on-demand VCC to leverage skills-based routing and more quickly route inbound calls from customers to the most appropriately trained agents to deal with each customer’s individual situations. Later, cloud-based CTI integration tools were added to further streamline customer service calls. The company has automated functions such as case creation, lookup and incoming caller info directly to contact center agents, using screen popping.

In total, case deflection has improved by 22%, as the company gained the ability to reduce the number of cases that must escalate through higher tiers of support services. In addition, as more calls were directed to the appropriate call center agents who could resolve customer queries, the number of customer cases logged each month, which is a 28% decrease in case-related calls, per customer.

IN CONCLUSION: VCC FUTURES
For now it’s clear on-demand VCCs deliver a strong mix of technologies that can help organizations in a wide range of industries to streamline customer services and keep costs under control. Organizations must look for solutions that will provide their customers with a consistent experience across multiple communication channels, meet customer service requirements, and be agile enough to adjust to changing business requirements.

As VCCs evolve, organizations should look for enhanced features and functionality to aid in automating more and more costly customer services to create greater agent efficiencies. It’s a good idea to seek more and better multichannel support, including:

VCC USAGE VARIATIONS

- Customer Support
- Internal Helpdesk
- Volunteer Remote Agents
- Outscored Call Center
• Mobile integration featuring the use of virtual assistants, two-way, conversational SMS texting
• Preference management tools that will allow customers to select preferred methods for receiving messages
• Post-call proactive notifications, to update customers on the status of a back-ordered product or trouble ticket

Organizations should also seek greater integration of social media into customer services. Done the right way, social media integration will enable customers to share positive experiences in key social networks.

WHY GENESYS

Genesys’ on-demand offering, Virtual Contact Center, supports call routing and queuing, integrated speech-enabled IVR, best-in-class business intelligence and reporting, recording, and call monitoring. Genesys Cloud differentiates itself through the speed and ease with which applications can be designed, deployed, and maintained.

Genesys is a global leader in on-demand, multichannel customer experience management (CEM) solutions. Genesys – a leader in the Gartner Contact Center Infrastructure Market – is the world’s leading provider of customer service and contact software, with more than 2,000 customers in 80 countries. Genesys’s VCC is a cloud-based offering that seamlessly integrates with inbound and outbound solutions, creating a comprehensive and scalable Customer Experience (CX) platform. Genesys strives to enable organizations to quickly deliver a complete multichannel experience to small, medium and large enterprises that puts the Customer Experience (CX) first, to delight customers and build stronger brand loyalty. Genesys envisions a world in which business users in enterprises of all sizes can easily conceive, deploy, measure and continuously improve all of their customer interactions in the cloud.

When examining VCCs, solutions may vary widely. Only Genesys offers a full array of services including everything from end-to-end reporting, to enterprise routing, centralized queues and the ability for agents and supervisors to work from any location.

Perhaps this is why more than 1,000 organizations worldwide already turn to Genesys, including nine of the top ten pharmaceutical giants and eight of the top ten retailers, banks and manufacturers. These organizations have placed trust in Genesys as a secure, reliable platform to deliver superior customer service, and gain a greater competitive edge.

Outstanding Design – build complex customer service apps using point and click tools. Gain the ability to build custom IVR services that meet the organization’s exacting requirements.

Accelerate the deployment of customer services – deliver results in days or weeks. Specialized tools allow for quick and easy alterations to call flows to meet dynamic needs. Also, leverage complex routing logic based on CRM information or data entered by callers into the IVR.

Gain rapid, iterative improvements through analytics – use end-to-end customer experience and automation tracking, as well as the ability to blend ACD metrics with IVR metrics to gain deeper insights for decision-making.

Web services that easily integrate with any CRM solution – trigger outbound notifications based on CRM information, via the VCC.

Highly accessible, cloud-based, mobile solution – OpEx vs. CapEx model drives demonstrable ROI, and generates greater flexibility in operations, management, along with the scalability to meet fluctuating customer service demands.

Genesys Cloud Differentiators

The following features set Genesys Cloud’s VCC apart:

Genesys is a leading provider of cloud-based Customer Experience Management (CEM) solutions for Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and Contact Centers. These solutions enable mid-market and enterprise organizations to quickly deploy voice, SMS, chat, mobile, and Business Intelligence (BI) applications that all put the Customer Experience (CX) First. Genesys’ solutions are built on an on-demand, software-as-a-service (SaaS) platform, and require no investment in hardware, software, or human resources. More than 800 customers worldwide turn to Genesys’ CEM solutions to delight their customers and their bottom line. For more information, visit us at www.genesyslab.com/uk/cloud.