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RingCentral 3rd Special Edition

Next-Gen Cloud Contact Centers

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Increase customer satisfaction and engagement

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Lawrence Miller

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by Lawrence Miller

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Introduction

Customer expectations are constantly evolving. Today's consumers expect outstanding on-demand service from the organizations they do business with, using the channels they prefer (including voice, video, text, and intelligent virtual agents [IVAs]), with agents that are professional, knowledgeable, and empowered to help them. Remote and hybrid work structures are creating new opportunities and challenges for businesses to keep up with demand and consistently deliver an exceptional customer experience.

Meanwhile, technological capabilities continue to evolve, increasing capacity and scalability. Artificial intelligence (AI) gives businesses the power to achieve levels of responsiveness and personalization they've never had before.

In this book, you find out how a next-gen cloud contact center can help your organization deliver the experiences your customers demand, what a modern cloud contact center looks like, and how you can implement the contact center of the future in your organization today.

About This Book

Next-Gen Cloud Contact Centers For Dummies, RingCentral 3rd Special Edition, consists of six chapters that explore the following:

- » The evolution of the contact center, different use cases, and the benefits of a next-gen cloud contact center (Chapter 1)
- » The changing world of work, communication, and collaboration (Chapter 2)
- » Next-gen cloud contact center technologies (Chapter 3)
- » The value of analytics for your contact center (Chapter 4)
- » How to get started with a next-gen cloud contact center (Chapter 5)
- » Key takeaways of your next-gen cloud contact center (Chapter 6)

Each chapter is written to stand on its own, so if you see a topic that piques your interest feel free to jump ahead to that chapter. You can read this book in any order that suits you (though I don't recommend upside down or backward).

Foolish Assumptions

It has been said that most assumptions have outlived their usefulness, but I assume a few things nonetheless!

Mainly, I assume that you are an IT decision maker or contact center manager and you're evaluating business communications solutions for your organization's contact center. Beyond an understanding of your business requirements and a basic awareness of cloud computing and other key technology trends and challenges, I don't assume any deep technical knowledge. As such, this book is written primarily for nontechnical readers.

Icons Used in This Book

Throughout this book, I occasionally use special icons to call attention to important information. Here's what to expect:



REMEMBER

This icon points out important information you should commit to your nonvolatile memory or your noggin!



TIP

Tips are appreciated, but never expected, and I sure hope you'll appreciate these useful nuggets of information.

Beyond the Book

There's only so much I can cover in this short book, so if you find yourself at the end of it wondering, "Where can I learn more?," just go to www.ringcentral.com.

- » Looking at the changing nature of the contact center
- » Recognizing different business use cases for contact centers
- » Realizing the benefits of a next-generation cloud contact center

Chapter 1

Defining the Next-Gen Cloud Contact Center

In this chapter, you find out how traditional call centers have changed and why you need a next-gen cloud contact center, different contact center use cases, and the benefits of the next-gen cloud contact center.

Looking at the Evolution of Cloud Contact Centers

In the not-too-distant past, on-premises call centers were a necessary fixture of practically any business, large or small, in every industry. Whether staffed by a handful of employees who simultaneously performed a number of other job responsibilities or by hundreds of full-time call center agents in large cubicle farms, call centers were an important part of the customer journey. Many of these traditional call centers slowly began implementing new communications capabilities and channels, such as email and chat, to become contact centers offering customers a choice in how they interacted with the business.

Today, contact centers have become the center of all customer interactions for many businesses. Legacy call centers and contact centers with limited capabilities are unable to support evolving customer needs. Successful businesses require a new breed of contact center. The next-gen cloud contact center integrates unified communications (UC), contact center software, artificial intelligence (AI), and backend business systems to bring business experts and contact center agents — regardless of where they're located — together across every channel to deliver superior customer experiences.



REMEMBER

Unified communications is the integration of team messaging, video meetings, and phone. UC also includes text messaging and fax capabilities. UC solutions are also tightly integrated with productivity tools such as email, file/desktop sharing, document storage, and more.



REMEMBER

The next-gen cloud contact center leverages the agility and flexibility of the public cloud to deliver the digital experiences that modern customers demand.

Understanding Different Use Cases

Businesses operate contact centers for a variety of use cases depending on their industry, business strategy, goals, and more. Here are some common contact center use cases:

» **Support teams:** Agents on support teams require excellent customer service skills to deal with customers who may be frustrated or highly agitated. Most support team interactions are *inbound* (that is, initiated by the customer) over a variety of channels — such as voice, email, and chat — although some contact may be outbound, such as in the case of a product recall or proactive customer service call. Support teams also require access to customer relationship management (CRM) software, enterprise resource planning (ERP), and online product catalogs/information, as well as knowledge bases, collaboration tools, and a variety of digital channels, among other tools.

CRM software is used to manage, improve, or facilitate sales, support, and related interactions with customers, prospects, and business partners.



REMEMBER

- » **Inside sales:** Inside sales representatives proactively contact potential and current customers to promote a company's products and/or services. Customers may be business-to-business (B2B), business-to-consumer (B2C), or a mix of both. Most outbound contacts from inside sales reps are voice-based, but they may include email and Short Message Service (SMS) text messages. Inside sales reps typically require contact center tools such as CRM software, ERP, order entry systems, and online product catalogs/information.
- » **Internal help desk:** Corporate IT departments typically operate a tier 1 help desk to provide technical support for the company's employees. Delivering an exceptional user experience is critical to minimize user frustration and maximize productivity. Integration with an Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL)-based ticketing system that includes asset management, a configuration management database (CMDB), and other key functionality is critical to empowering help desk agents to solve technical issues for your users.
- » **Marketing groups:** Like business development, marketing groups wear many hats and are often composed of inside sales, support teams, and business development professionals. They require access to all the same contact center tools as their counterparts, but they may also need access to mass marketing email services and a wide variety of digital inbound and outbound channels.

Recognizing the Benefits of a Next-Gen Cloud Contact Center

Forward-looking businesses can realize a number of significant business benefits with a next-gen cloud contact center. The following sections take a closer look at a few of these benefits.

Increasing customer satisfaction

A next-gen cloud contact center supports the broadest array of digital channels, so your customers use their preferred channels. Self-service capabilities that leverage advanced automation such

as intelligent virtual agents (IVAs), natural language processing (NLP), AI, and machine learning (ML) further empower your customers and increase customer satisfaction. Being able to seamlessly switch from a chat session to a phone call when needed further defines the customer experience. Finally, providing your agents with the omnichannel tools they need to get seamless access to information quickly and easily — whether through an online knowledge base or via chat with a subject matter expert — in a single pane of glass helps them help your customers.



REMEMBER

An IVA is an automated software application that can interact with people on voice and digital channels to provide answers or perform actions. *Omnichannel* refers to multiple channels (such as voice, SMS, email, and live chat) that are integrated to deliver a consistent customer experience.

Providing valuable business insights

A next-gen cloud contact center integrates with your UC platform and other backend business systems to tear down data siloes and deliver intelligent and actionable insights that help you optimize your contact center operations, maximize revenue, and deliver a superior customer experience.

Supporting a hybrid work approach

Modern contact center technology allows agents to work from anywhere, offering businesses and employees much more flexibility. The best contact center software provides a consistent experience for the agent regardless of whether they're working from the office or working remotely. It also provides all the necessary functionality for contact center leaders, so they can train, manage, and support their teams from anywhere.

Boosting agent productivity

Though many business owners and contact center managers worry about work getting done from home, increased productivity is often the biggest benefit of a remote team. For example, a study published in *MIT Sloan Management Review* found that 61 percent of workers said hybrid work has had a positive impact on productivity. Another study, the Gallup State of the American Workplace, found that remote workers report 21 percent higher engagement than on-site workers.



REMEMBER

Two-thirds of the cost of running a contact center is labor, including salaries, benefits, office space, and so on.

For some agents, the ability to find the best environment and schedule for their needs naturally leads to better work. For others, improved productivity is a way to pay back companies that allow them to work from home.

Reducing operating costs

Much of the costs associated with a business's overhead goes to maintaining physical locations. The biggest cost is real estate, but businesses also have to pay for utilities, furniture, office supplies, cleaning services, internet access, and more.

Eliminating the need to maintain a physical contact center or downsizing to a smaller one allows you to reduce operational costs to the tools and software you need to connect agents with customers. Plus, a remote setup can also benefit your employees' personal finance needs.

According to the McKinsey American Opportunity Survey, remote workers save an average of 72 minutes per day on commuting. Eliminating up to six hours a week (for a worker who commutes five days a week) in commute time can reduce your team's stress across the board, contributing to higher job satisfaction and productivity — and it helps the environment by lowering carbon emissions.

Reducing agent churn

Reducing agent churn has always been a challenge for contact centers. With the dramatic increase in customer inquiry volume at contact centers during and since the pandemic, it's not surprising that agents are more stressed out than ever. They want a more positive experience — one that offers them greater flexibility in where they work and when they work.

Cloud contact centers allow employees to work remotely, giving them the flexibility to work from home or wherever is most convenient. In its "Empower Employees With A Digital Workplace" study, Forrester found that 94 percent of global employees with a high employee experience (EX) index score plan to stay with their organization next year, compared with only 53 percent of employees with a low EX index score.

Additionally, it's easy to schedule agents with a cloud contact center solution, and it's just as easy to shift their schedules if necessary. Flexible scheduling also improves the employee experience, which boosts retention rates and reduces agent churn.

Finally, the Owl Labs “State of Remote Work 2023” report found that companies offering remote work see 40 percent less turnover compared to companies that do not offer remote work opportunities.

Widened talent pool of agents

When your agent search isn't limited by location or tied to a daily commute, you gain access to a more diverse talent base across the country — or even the world — that can revolutionize the quality, depth, and diversity of your team's abilities.

The flexibility and benefits you can offer with a remote position are also more attractive to the talent you want to attract. A study by FlexJobs and Global Workplace Analytics found that, on average, telecommuters earn \$4,200 more annually than on-site workers in the same position. Greater control over their work also leads to happier and more productive agents, which can then benefit your organization and your customers immensely.

- » Adapting to the new work normal
- » Enabling a “digital-first” customer experience
- » Leveraging unified communications capabilities in your contact center

Chapter 2

Taking Stock of the World Today

In this chapter, you get a look at the challenges and opportunities of remote work, the digital-first experience, and the business benefits of integrating unified communications as a service (UCaaS) and contact center as a service (CCaaS) capabilities.

Looking at Location-Agnostic Modes of Work

Work is constantly evolving. As technology advances, it helps determine how, where, and when we work. It changes employee and customer experience, shaping expectations in the process.

People are more digitally connected than ever before. Online shopping, remote learning, videoconferencing, cloud computing, and many other digital technologies allow us to stay connected to one another in important ways. These technologies enable businesses to survive and thrive as innovative ways to engage customers and empower employees emerge.

Modern customer engagement software helps businesses of all sizes make customer service a competitive differentiator. Many contact centers are now highly distributed, with hybrid work the prevailing model of operation. Preparing workforces to serve customers in this way demands new tools, tweaks to agents' skill sets, and different management skills.

Cloud-based contact center management platforms point the way forward. In the right hands, they have the potential to redefine the customer experience.

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY: THE OFFICE GURUS

The Office Gurus (TOG) offers fully customized inbound and outbound omnichannel contact center solutions for businesses in any industry. Already an omnichannel engagement platform customer of RingCentral, TOG more recently adopted RingCentral's contact center generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) capabilities.

Using the platform, TOG is able to efficiently manage any digital channel that a given client needs, whether that's SMS, chat, email, or all three. All those digital channels can be centralized in a single pane of glass and at the same time improve agents' effectiveness.

Customers reliably receive quick responses, from the right people, no matter how they make contact — which, of course, makes TOG clients happy. Not only does it improve customer engagement for clients, but it actually helps save them money.

Being able to offer clients of all sizes such a robust enterprise solution is a significant differentiator and allows TOG to provide support solutions that it couldn't provide on its own. Thanks to the platform's intelligent omnichannel capability, TOG offers clients more services, tailored to their businesses, and at a fraction of the cost they'd be paying with another enterprise contact center solution.

What's more, clients who switch to TOG after working with another outsourcing company are often shocked when they discover making simple changes won't take weeks or require them to open a ticket — those requests can be handled for them in minutes.

Going beyond Voice

Good businesses meet customers wherever they are, and these days, that's online. Today, more commerce takes place via an array of digital channels, giving customers frictionless ways to connect, pay, and, most of all, follow up. The means that customers choose may vary by audience and industry, but the common thread is that the options are more diverse than ever before and will continue to evolve. Flexibility now means adaptability for the future, and this multifaceted approach to customer engagement will only gain momentum in the years to come. According to the 2023 Gartner State of the Customer Survey, customers perceive 62 percent of customer service channel transitions as "high effort." Customers frequently change channels during a single session, and companies often struggle to facilitate these transitions smoothly. As customers increasingly prefer digital engagement, it becomes more urgent for business to cater to this new normal. Whereas customers with an issue with a product or service once dialed up a massive brick-and-mortar call center, teams of remote agents now serve clients through various channels.



REMEMBER

Excellent customer service strengthens your brand, builds loyalty, and has a direct impact on revenue.

In a sign that early investment can pay dividends down the road, Domino's saw its market share double after it transitioned to digital-first customer engagement a decade ago. From better website design to chatbots, apps, and artificial intelligence (AI) robots that simulate human conversations, improved digital engagement reaches out to customers on their terms, boosts efficiency, and gathers data to improve other aspects of your company.

Going beyond voice with a next-gen cloud contact center means creating a digital-first experience that empowers your customers with options that include the following:

- » **Self-service:** Intelligent virtual agents (IVAs) and chatbots are at the forefront of self-service automation technology that is transforming customer service in contact centers. Together, IVAs and chatbots make it possible for organizations to automate customer service and create a 24/7 support channel where people can find resolutions and answers to their issues and concerns on their own. These technologies

are reshaping the way customer interactions are managed, offering significant benefits that improve both customer satisfaction and operational efficiency.

- » **Digital channels:** Engaging with your customers in a physical location or through a call center is very different from engaging them digitally. In-person, face-to-face interactions and voice calls are more personal than social media or live chat, but often less convenient and impractical. A comprehensive virtual strategy encompassing live chat, social media, text messaging, email, websites, mobile, and more lets you engage and interact with customers wherever they are, on their preferred channels.
- » **AI and automation:** AI and automation are transforming the contact center. AI-powered virtual assistants, automated call routing systems, and intelligent analytics platforms streamline customer support processes. By integrating AI and automation, contact centers can significantly reduce response times while improving first-call resolution rates and delivering more personalized experiences. The system's ability to handle routine operations, manage workflow distribution, and analyze customer interactions enables businesses to optimize their operations while enhancing customer satisfaction.
- » **Conversation intelligence:** Conversation intelligence analyzes business conversations (such as sales calls and customer calls) and supports the next best actions for improved operations and results. Conversation intelligence integrates AI, machine learning (ML), and natural language processing (NLP) to deliver AI-powered summaries, coaching, and insights from every interaction. AI can automatically review every interaction and extract valuable insights around agent performance, customer satisfaction, trending topics, identification of customer frustrations and objections, and more.

Integrating Unified Communications and Contact Center Technologies

Customer experience managers in contact centers want to overcome obstacles such as a lackluster customer journey, data silos, and lack of visibility into the customer journey. Yet, if they don't have the right solutions in place, that's not possible.

A next-gen cloud contact center solution creates a better customer experience by giving your agents the tools they need to meet your customers' needs. A cloud contact center that is integrated with a unified communications (UC) solution, for example, provides access to an internal directory with presence information so your agent can connect to other experts within the company and ensure the customer's issue is resolved in the first interaction. This capability helps improve your first contact resolution rate, an important measure of customer satisfaction. File sharing capabilities further enable customers and employees to easily exchange information that can help solve problems.

The business benefits of integrating UCaaS and CCaaS include higher agent productivity working from a single pane of glass (one application) for all communications, unified analytics to track the complete customer journey across all touchpoints (including CCaaS-to-UCaaS and UCaaS-to-CCaaS transfers), greater customer satisfaction, and better first contact resolution.



REMEMBER

The next-gen cloud contact center delivers an integrated approach to UC and contact center software that brings business experts and contact center agents together across every channel — not just voice — to deliver modern, real-time customer experiences in a cloud-based, collaborative customer engagement structure.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Leveraging artificial intelligence, real-time assistance, and automation
- » Reviewing contact center operations
- » Building a customer-centric contact center

Chapter 3

Understanding AI and the Future of Cloud Contact Center Technology

In this chapter, you look at key technologies in the next-generation cloud contact center, the changing nature of contact center operations, and the customer-centric role of the modern contact center.

Deploying Contact Center Technologies

We live in an age of instant gratification. With numerous solutions available at their fingertips, customers demand service that lives up to their demand for faster and better results. To keep up, contact centers have to carefully balance quick responses with personalized customer experiences, more interactions with less time, and automation with a human touch.

The next-gen cloud contact center is built on the foundations of the systems that came before it. By cherry-picking the best elements of existing systems and enhancing them with innovative new technologies — such as artificial intelligence (AI), real-time assistance, and automated quality management — next-gen cloud contact centers allow organizations to deliver the experiences their customers demand.

Artificial intelligence

In the pre-AI era, contact centers had basic phone trees (that is interactive voice response, or IVR) to connect or route people and rigid rule-based workflows and basic chatbots with limited intelligence — when you got outside their predefined flows and vocabulary, these chatbots often caused more harm than benefit.

The first phase of AI introduced conversation AI with semi-structured workflows and speech recognition to understand context and sentiment.

The second phase of AI brought generative AI (GenAI) which provided more human-like experiences with basic workflow automations and industry-specific models.

The third phase of AI, agentic AI, enables complete automation that is self-improving and can autonomously take action within defined guardrails, thereby augmenting team capabilities, accelerating decision-making, automating routine tasks, and providing real-time assistance.



REMEMBER

Your adoption of AI shouldn't be based on the newest trend; it should be based on your specific pain points. Start there, then figure out the right AI solution to help solve your unique challenges.

Real-time assistance

Chatbots simulate human conversation and were the first iteration of real-time assistance. The most common way customers interact with chatbots is through text. Chatbots can handle simple interactions or gather information so that an interaction can be passed off to a human contact center agent.

An *intelligent virtual agent* (IVA) is the next iteration of real-time assistance, an AI-powered software application that interacts with customers in natural language to provide automated customer

service, support, and engagement across multiple channels. An IVA combines advanced natural language processing (NLP), machine learning (ML), and automation capabilities to understand and respond to customer inquiries in a human-like manner.

Unlike basic automated systems, IVAs can handle complex conversations, learn from interactions, and seamlessly integrate with knowledge bases and existing business systems to provide personalized support. They can understand context, remember previous interactions, and adapt their responses based on customer history and preferences.

Although traditional chatbots and IVAs may seem similar at first glance, IVAs represent a significant evolution in automated customer service technology.

Key differences between IVAs and chatbots include the following:

- » **Natural language understanding:** IVAs can interpret complex queries, understand various phrasings of the same question, and maintain context throughout a conversation, whereas traditional chatbots often require exact keyword matches.
- » **Learning capabilities:** IVAs continuously improve their performance through ML, adapting to new scenarios and customer interactions, whereas traditional chatbots maintain static response patterns.
- » **Integration depth:** IVAs can deeply integrate with business systems to access customer data, process transactions, and provide personalized service, going beyond the surface-level interactions typical of basic chatbots.
- » **Multi-intent recognition:** Advanced IVAs can understand multiple customer intentions within a single message and address them comprehensively; basic chatbots can handle only one simple request at a time.



REMEMBER

You can think of a chatbot like an older TV set with a knob or dial that allowed people to select from a limited number of channels broadcasting preprogrammed content. Similarly, a chatbot can gather information and provide limited answers based on pre-defined workflows and scripts. IVAs are more like a smart TV that allows you to choose from practically unlimited content — such as streaming services, interactive games, websites, and more.

Automated quality management

As contact center AI continues to evolve, simple and repetitive tasks can be taken on by chatbots, saving a ton of money and freeing up agents to work on the harder stuff that really requires the human touch. Automating agent tasks and customer interactions has already produced incredible improvements in contact center costs and efficiency.

Beyond self-service, contact centers can automate many other workflows, both customer-facing and administrative backend, to further increase agent efficiency and productivity while delivering the ultimate customer experience. The addition of AI automation in customer service has incredible benefits for businesses of all sizes and industries, such as the following:

- » **Maximizing agent efficiency:** Agents are the biggest cost in a contact center, so maximizing agent efficiency is the key to saving money. Automation has already drastically improved contact center results. Customers want frictionless interactions — the best driver of customer satisfaction is fast answers to their questions. Automation can help here, too. For example, automated AI summaries eliminate the time and effort that agents spend on call wrap-ups; real-time information retrieval from knowledge base articles puts fast, accurate answers at every agent's fingertips; and automated scheduling based on call disposition can schedule follow-up actions based on conversation triggers. As automation further streamlines contact center services, agent responsibilities can shift from customer interactions, allowing them to do much more in far less time.
- » **Enabling valuable customer insights:** Not only does automation speed up processes and lighten the admin burden of agents, but AI is able to support and train agents on the job, helping them perform better as they work. For example, automated call scoring analyzes every customer interaction in real time, instead of manually evaluating just a sampling of calls, ensuring a comprehensive and objective assessment of agent performance; predictive customer satisfaction (CSAT) score leverages AI and NLP to predict customer sentiment instead of relying on the customer to complete a survey; and tailored training plans can be automatically created for each agent based on their individual performance and actual interactions with customers.

Looking at Contact Center Operations

The main function of a contact center is to act as a bridge between the customer and the company. Most contact center agents have the following responsibilities, among others:

- » Handling inbound customer interactions
- » Offering proactive outbound engagement to generate revenue and inform customers
- » Interviewing clients and verifying information
- » Resolving customer complaints and providing general customer support
- » Resolving customer issues preemptively
- » Managing multiple customer communication channels

But there's much more to contact center operations than agent responsibilities. Your contact center agents are your brand's ambassadors. In the era of digital interaction, the digital experience has become a way of life for many. AI solutions can greatly improve agent efficiency and customer satisfaction, but the goal is not to replace human agents entirely. Instead, the goal is to allow human agents to focus on delivering more personalized and meaningful customer interactions. When it comes to the contact center, your human agents are responsible for the overall customer experience.

Recognizing the Customer-Centric Role of the Contact Center

The customer journey is one of the most important aspects of your business because customers have access to more touchpoints today than ever before. There's your website, live chat capabilities or chatbots on your website, social media channels, and third-party sites such as reviews or forums where people talk about your brand and its products or services.

Your contact center serves as a beacon for customers. When they encounter a problem on their customer journey, they tend to turn to a contact center first because it's supposed to be the official

source of information, and contact center agents are expected to help customers with those problems.

A customer-centric, next-gen cloud contact center ensures that you can communicate with your customers, on their preferred channel, easily and efficiently throughout the customer journey. The foundation of a customer-centric, next-gen cloud contact center has the following key characteristics:

- » **Cloud-native:** It runs in the cloud, so it provides agents and supervisors greater flexibility to work from anywhere and ensures business continuity while continually delivering agility and innovation.
- » **Self-service:** Customers can utilize self-service capabilities such as knowledge bases and chatbots.
- » **Omnichannel:** It features omnichannel support, allowing customers to move seamlessly between their preferred channels while having a single identity with the business.
- » **Advanced routing:** Intelligent routing connects customers to the right agents to help them based on numerous factors, including agent skill to handle a specific request, customer data in a customer relationship management (CRM) or other business system, and other attributes.
- » **Workforce management and AI assistance:** Tools easily adjust staffing levels, engage the workforce, and provide real-time support and training to agents as they work.

- » Empowering contact center supervisors and agents
- » Tracking the metrics that matter most
- » Taking customer experience to the next level with analytics

Chapter **4**

Going beyond Metrics with Analytics

In this chapter, you see how contact center supervisors and agents can proactively monitor and improve performance, which key performance indicators (KPIs) you need to track, and how you can use analytics to deliver a superior customer experience.

Measuring Success in the Contact Center

Next-gen cloud contact center software offers built-in analytics that give you a wealth of information about your contact center's performance. Savvy contact center managers are able to see trends in their analytics and either address issues before they become much larger problems or seize opportunities to become more profitable. Proactively acting on this information enables you to improve your contact center performance in meaningful ways that can pay big dividends for your business. According to

McKinsey research, the benefits of proactively tracking contact center metrics include

- » A reduction in average handle time of up to 40 percent
- » An increase in self-service rates of between 5 percent and 20 percent
- » A broad set of prebuilt reports and dashboards to track the most common KPIs, historically or in real time
- » Customizable widgets and report builders to deliver customized insights for your business

Best-of-breed contact center technology provides comprehensive analytics, including the following:

- » Omnichannel analytics, so you can see the full customer journey across all channels
- » Customer surveys such as Net Promoter Scores, Customer Effort Scores, general satisfaction ratings, and more
- » Brand ambassador and detractor statistics

Additionally, contact center supervisors can gain insight into their employees' performance with next-gen cloud contact center software. They have access to analytics on metrics such as average handle time, first contact resolution, and more. With these analytics, supervisors can effectively coach their agents to improve their performance.

Beyond measuring performance, contact center supervisors still need to be able to coach their agents — even in a remote contact center. Features like whisper allow supervisors to speak to an agent during a customer call without the customer hearing the supervisor. Videoconferencing is great for one-on-one coaching, as well as team huddles at the start of a shift (much like the team stand-up meetings at a supervisor's desk that may have taken place in a physical contact center).

But today's remote contact center agents also enjoy greater autonomy than in the past. Giving your agents more autonomy gives them greater responsibility for the quality of their work. Instead of relying on a supervisor to counsel an agent about poor performance, you give your agents the tools to evaluate themselves. When you create a culture of self-analysis and continuous improvement, your contact center only gets better.



TIP

Next-gen cloud contact center software tracks employees' performance wherever they're working, making it ideal for contact centers with remote agents working from home.



TIP

Artificial intelligence (AI)-powered quality management tools can also provide valuable insights for agents without direct supervisor feedback. For example, AI can provide guidance to improve soft skills such as asking more engaging questions or identifying calls in which an agent missed an upsell opportunity.

Today's contact centers can provide open access to performance data for agents. Your agents can click into teamwide dashboards and see how they're performing compared to their team averages. For example, an agent might log on and see that their customer satisfaction score is lower than their team average. Now they know something is wrong, and they can take proactive steps to fix it — but only if you've made it clear that self-evaluation is part of their new role as a remote agent.



TIP

Giving your agents more autonomy and providing access to their own performance data means they'll no longer sit in the dark, waiting for supervisors to assess their work. Instead, they can click into their performance dashboard to see how well they're performing. They can take control of their own work lives and kickstart a process of self-improvement.

Understanding Today's Contact Center KPIs

An organization can use lots of different KPIs to measure the performance of its contact center. Depending on the purpose and goals of your organization's contact center, certain KPIs and metrics will be more important than others. Here are some common contact center metrics that every organization should monitor:

- » **Customer satisfaction:** Customer satisfaction measures how happy your customers are with your product or service. It has a direct impact on your customer retention rate. If you're not looking at your customer satisfaction rate, you don't know whether your customers are pleased to do

business with you or whether they're about to leave you for your competitor.

- » **Customer retention rate:** Your customer retention rate is the average length of time someone stays with you as a customer. Tracking this metric shows you how many customers you've succeeded in keeping. Keeping an existing customer costs far less than acquiring a new one — numerous studies have shown it can be anywhere from 5 to 25 times more expensive to get a new customer.
 - » **First contact resolution:** First contact resolution metrics show how many customers you're able to help the first time they contact you. This particular metric is closely linked to your customer retention rate. The more problems you can solve the first time a customer contacts you, the more likely that person will stay a customer.
 - » **Call abandonment:** Without a solid cloud-based contact center system, many companies struggle to identify how many customers simply give up (that is, hang up) due to long hold times, confusing interactive voice response (IVR) menu options, or other factors. Your call abandonment rate is important because it can be an indicator of customers you've lost forever.
 - » **Average hold time:** This metric (or similarly, average speed of answer) is an important factor that leads to customer frustration and high call abandonment rates.
 - » **Average handle time:** Average handle time is the average amount of time an agent handles a customer interaction. This is one of the contact center metrics where you have to tread carefully. For the most part, long handle times aren't good — they could mean that your agents aren't trained properly to solve customer problems. On the other hand, you can't look at this metric in a vacuum — you may have a complex product or service that requires agents to spend more time on problems. Look at this metric in light of things like your customer retention rate and customer satisfaction.
- Average handle time can also vary based on the channel. Voice is synchronous — a voice call will typically be handled the fastest. On the other hand, businesses should expect asynchronous channels, like email, to take longer to resolve issues. Businesses tracking average handle time should avoid a one-size-fits-all approach.



TIP

Many forward-thinking companies avoid average handle time altogether, because it can drive bad behavior (such as wrapping up calls prematurely to improve an agent's score). Instead, these companies may look at the amount of time an agent spends talking to customers over the course of a day, regardless of whether it's one call or a hundred. This approach assumes that the time agents spend talking to customers is their best-spent time of the day.

» **Adherence to schedule:** Adherence to schedule focuses on the amount of time an agent is available to work. It can replace average handle time as a metric. This metric looks at every aspect of what employees do on the clock:

- The time they spend answering customer queries through any channel
- The time they spend on post-customer interaction tasks
- The time they spend waiting to deal with incoming interactions



TIP

Consider tracking adherence to schedule if you're concerned that your team isn't reaching peak productivity. These contact center analytics help you identify your busy periods so you can optimize your scheduling.

» **Quality of service:** Quality of service looks at how reliable your contact center software is. Your contact center can't afford dropped calls or calls with terrible audio quality. Measuring your quality of service enables you to fix problems before they have a serious, negative impact on your business.

Defining the Customer Experience

The rules for customer engagement have changed. It's not enough for companies to monitor their phone lines and email inboxes during normal business hours. We live in an always-on society, and organizations must adapt to stay relevant and competitive. But being available when your customers need you is just the start.

Modern consumers have moved beyond traditional communication channels like phone and email. Today, they expect engagement on their preferred channel — whether it's phone, text, social

media, or something else entirely. Ultimately, customers want their interactions with you to be as easy as talking with a friend.

Modern consumers are also better informed. The traditional contact center is no longer the first point of contact for a growing number of consumers. By the time a consumer reaches out, they've likely already Googled their issue, searched through support forums, and watched self-help videos on YouTube. So, the next-gen contact center must be able to correctly route complex issues to skilled agents to deliver an exceptional customer experience every time.

According to Gartner, the most common features for digital customer service/support are: personalization and context awareness; analytics and optimization; platform-wide, programmatic support for customer journeys; customer data management; search, navigation, and insight; collaboration and knowledge sharing; security and access control; and applied AI. Next-gen cloud contact centers — specifically those with unified communications (UC) integrations — give remote agents the opportunity to deliver in all these areas. But the remote working model built on these platforms also directly impacts and defines the customer experience in the following ways:

- » **Building a superior, diverse talent pool:** Operating a remote contact center broadens the potential hiring pool. Whereas physical call centers could only recruit agents within commuting distance of the building, remote workers know no geographical bounds. Likewise, skilled people with disabilities who may otherwise have been discouraged by a challenging commute or rigid office conditions face no such misgivings. The same goes for working parents with tight schedules, military spouses who frequently relocate, or students looking for part-time work. More people competing for a single position gives you more opportunities to hire the best possible agent — and better agents lead to improved customer satisfaction.
- » **Keeping your workers happy means satisfied customers:** Not only do customers prefer interaction with remote agents, but agents also prefer working that way. A Forrester Future of Work Survey found that in 2024, after years of investing in and adapting to hybrid work arrangements, just 13 percent of US homeworkers agreed that they were not as

productive working from home. Remote agents report higher levels of satisfaction, increased ability to focus, better sleep, and less stress. By cutting out that morning commute and arranging their workspaces themselves, agents are more satisfied with their jobs. Because happy workers are less likely to change jobs, lower rates of churn save money and keep knowledge and agent-specific skills in your contact center. And who benefits the most from a happy, experienced team of contact center agents? The customers who contact them.

- » **Making stronger connections through better collaboration:** Agents now use chat functions to share best practices with each other. Maybe a mix-up in the shipping department has created confusion for several customers. Staying connected and keeping the team on the same page helps ensure agents can deal with those issues in a consistent, repeatable way. Despite their new physical distance, technology keeps agents better connected than ever before. They may not sit side by side anymore, but improved tools mean more opportunities for collaboration. For customers, that means faster, consistent results, even if the agent needs to reach out to an expert in another department.
- » **Improving performance through coaching:** AI provides a 24/7 coach behind every agent through agent assist, which means coaching happens throughout the day. The assistance is immediate, virtual, and not reliant on supervisor presence, making it infinitely scalable and accessible from anywhere. Managing by walking around a physical call center had limitations — it was difficult for managers to cover lots of ground and jump between agents. Agile cloud-based management platforms still allow supervisors to seamlessly move from agent to agent and call to call. They can even provide AI insights to help supervisors be more proactive in identifying agents in need. The highlighted improvements from real-time AI assistance for agents and supervisors lead to an improved experience for the next customer.

- » Identifying your capabilities
- » Determining where you need to start
- » Developing a plan to get to your desired state

Chapter 5

Getting Started with a Next-Gen Cloud Contact Center

There's never been a more important time to build a customer-centric service strategy that goes above and beyond expectations to deliver a superior customer experience. However, transitioning to a digital-first, integrated cloud-based contact center with distributed teams doesn't happen overnight. In this chapter, you find out about the key areas to look at in a maturity model for your contact center and discover how to assess where you're at and how to get your contact center to where it needs to be.

Defining a Maturity Model

Customers move at lightning-fast speeds, and businesses need to respond just as quickly without sacrificing service or quality. Next-gen cloud contact center solutions can revolutionize the way you provide service to your customers and make it easier to manage daily operations so you can focus on delivering excellent customer experiences.

A maturity model can help you determine where to get started with your next-gen cloud contact center. You can determine your current capability level (Basic, Standard, Advanced, or Optimized) to help you determine where to focus your efforts in three key areas: customer experience, agent productivity, and overall customer experience strategy.

Assessing Your Current State

Knowing where you are helps you determine the best way to get to your goal. Consider the current state of your contact center to determine your organization's overall maturity level with regard to customer experience, agent productivity, and overall strategy.

Customer experience

Take a few minutes to assess your customer experience and evaluate how you're providing personalized, intelligent interactions to your customers on the channels of their preference. Rate your current capabilities on the following metrics; then take the average to determine your organization's customer experience maturity level:

- » **Self-service options:** The tools and capabilities you provide for your customers to solve issues themselves so they can avoid waiting on hold for an agent to assist them with relatively simple or common issues. Rate your organization:
 - *Basic:* Static interactive voice response (IVR) choice tree with a finite number of ports that are dimensioned for peak traffic. (1 point)
 - *Standard:* Unlimited IVR capacity and context-based phone tree logic. (2 points)
 - *Advanced:* Ability to deflect voice calls to digital channels through omnichannel self-service, bots, and IVR. (3 points)
 - *Optimized:* Actionable automation analytics and insights, natural language processing (NLP), and unstructured input processing. (4 points)
- » **Omnichannel flexibility:** The ability of your contact center to meet customers on their preferred channels with quick responses and personalized experiences and provide a

consistent experience across different channels. Rate your organization:

- *Basic:* Siloed solutions from different one-touch vendors with no integration across digital channels or with voice. (1 point)
- *Standard:* Integrated agent experience across voice, text, and email from one vendor with unified routing and reporting. (2 points)
- *Advanced:* Single pane of glass for agents to support all digital channels (such as Facebook, X, email, chat, in-app messaging, and so on) with unified routing and reporting. (3 points)
- *Optimized:* Artificial intelligence (AI)-powered content analysis to route questions to respective teams/departments through skills-based routing. (4 points)

» **First contact resolution rate:** An important performance metric that shows how effective your contact center is in resolving customer issues with a single contact rather than multiple contacts that can increase customer frustration and decrease customer satisfaction. Rate your organization:

- *Basic:* Simple queue-based routing; frequent agent transfers; customers must call back repeatedly about unresolved issues. (1 point)
- *Standard:* Data-driven routing through open application programming interfaces (APIs) to retrieve data from backend and customer relationship management (CRM) systems to make smarter connections. (2 points)

Note: An API is a set of rules and specifications that software programs can follow to communicate with each other. It serves as an interface between different programs and facilitates their interaction.

- *Advanced:* Intelligent routing selecting the best suitable agent; access to subject matter experts (SMEs) across the company with presence indications for easy transfer or conference to resolve customer inquiries. (3 points)
- *Optimized:* Escalation to video for increased communication between agent and expert or customer and expert; easy to use and doesn't require a download. (4 points)

» **Frictionless interactions:** The ability of your contact center to deliver satisfying and consistent experiences across different channels. Rate your organization:

- *Basic:* Lack of consistency in responses across agent teams and various channels for agent support tasks. (1 point)
- *Standard:* Easy-to-update agent scripting tools allow flexibility while maintaining consistency in agent responses to customer inquiries. (2 points)
- *Advanced:* Unified scripting and access to knowledge bases for all agents on every channel so agents can deliver personalized customer experiences. (3 points)
- *Optimized:* Proactive outbound dialing leveraging analytics with actionable insights to proactively reach out to customers and meet their needs before they call. (4 points)

» **Voice of the customer/customer satisfaction:** Your ability to evaluate your contact center's performance with customers and measure against your competition. Rate your organization:

- *Basic:* Stand-alone survey tools make it difficult to correlate survey results with specific interactions. (1 point)
- *Standard:* IVR-driven survey post-call; direct correlation with agent for each call. (2 points)
- *Advanced:* Surveys on every channel (voice and digital) following interactions; unified view of Net Promoter Score (NPS) or other industry standard measurements across every interaction channel. (3 points)
- *Optimized:* Leverage individual customer satisfaction scores for skills-based routing and match lowest satisfied customers to highest skilled agents. (4 points)

Agent productivity

How do you provide your employees with the tools they require to maintain productivity and collaborate with experts across the business? How do you provide coaching and feedback for continuous agent improvement?



REMEMBER

Two-thirds of the cost of a contact center is agent labor, including salaries, benefits, office space, and so on.

Rate your current capabilities on the following metrics; then take the average to determine your organization's agent productivity maturity level:

» **Agent tools:** Your contact center depends on tools and infrastructure to deliver reliability, performance, and security, ensuring you have the capability to meet customers on their preferred channels. Rate your organization:

- *Basic:* Multiple siloed tools with limited or no integration, forcing the agent to toggle back and forth between tools. (1 point)
- *Standard:* Unified agent desktop for voice and basic digital (chat, email, text) with CRM integrations and screen pop-ups that surface relevant customer information when the interaction is delivered from within a single application. (2 points)
- *Advanced:* Unified omnichannel agent desktop on a single pane of glass for every interaction, including voice and advanced digital (messaging apps, social media, mobile, and so on); integration with CRM and backend applications within a single application. (3 points)
- *Optimized:* Unified omnichannel agent desktop with CRM and scripting; real-time agent assist based on NLP to guide the agent on the fly. (4 points)

» **Agent hiring/ramp up/onboarding:** Contact center technology should be intuitive and easy to learn so that you can get new agents up and running quickly. Rate your organization:

- *Basic:* Fragmented tools cause agent fatigue and high turnover rates; onboarding processes are long and arduous; training and key performance indicator (KPI) assessments must be performed in person. (1 point)
- *Standard:* Remote training and onboarding (video-enabled curriculum); agent scripting for ongoing enablement. (2 points)
- *Advanced:* An on-demand library of training videos focused on specific soft skills and agent tools. (3 points)

- *Optimized:* Continuous training enablement with content analytics of interactions (voice and digital) and tailored training recommendations by agent. (4 points)

» **Supervisor tools:** Your contact center supervisors need modern management tools (for example, to enable them to course-correct agent behaviors through listening and coaching functions across remote contact centers with agents working from home). Rate your organization:

- *Basic:* Supervisor assessments rely on “walking the floor,” and KPIs are based on basic metrics such as call duration. (1 point)
- *Standard:* Call recording with monitor, whisper, and barge-in features to assist agents in real time; KPIs based on qualitative metrics such as customer satisfaction, business outcome per agent, and so on. (2 points)
- *Advanced:* Proactively monitor interaction quality on every channel (voice and digital) and leverage team messaging tools to coach agents in real time; supervisors can review and validate digital interactions before allowing agents to send. (3 points)
- *Optimized:* Spot customer trends and issues and immediately alert supervisors to take action. (4 points)

» **Workforce optimization:** You need new management tools to measure agent satisfaction, reduce churn, optimize agent schedules, maximize coverage, and minimize idle time across remote contact centers. Rate your organization:

- *Basic:* Managing workforce through simple tools like worksheets, resulting in mismatch of call volume and staffing, which further leads to long customer queue times and unnecessary staffing costs. (1 point)
- *Standard:* Managing workforce based on historical voice call volume and real-time adherence; enable agents to trade shifts, bid for days off, plan for training, and so on. (2 points)
- *Advanced:* Workforce management based on call and digital interactions; provide staffing recommendations for all channels; enable agents to trade shifts, bid for days off, plan for training, and so on. (3 points)
- *Optimized:* Leverage AI and machine learning (ML) to optimize staffing. Contact center is fully staffed with little to no agent downtime or long customer queues. (4 points)

» **Collaboration with experts across the company:** The tools and capabilities available to your agents for collaborating with other team members across the business to resolve customer issues. Rate your organization:

- *Basic:* No integration between unified communications (UC) platform and contact center software; communication mediums within the company are siloed. (1 point)
- *Standard:* Shared directory shows agents who's available across the entire company to maximize efficiency when transferring/conferencing customers to experts across the organization. (2 points)
- *Advanced:* Easy collaboration to better answer customer questions in real time with the rest of the company through team messaging, video meetings, and calling. (3 points)
- *Optimized:* Leverage bots to identify the best expert in the company based on topic; enable agents to discover best resources in real time while on calls with customers. (4 points)

» **Open APIs to integrate with backend systems and workflows:** APIs enable you to easily customize workflows and integrate with apps integral to your business. Rate your organization:

- *Basic:* Limited integration with back-office systems and workflows; requires extensive development and specialized resources to set up and maintain. (1 point)
- *Standard:* Easy integration with business communications tools and data sets via open Representational State Transfer (REST) APIs for voice and digital interactions; provides faster problem resolution and less wait times. (2 points)
- *Advanced:* Unified digital and voice support platform with integrated business communication tools and data sets. (3 points)
- *Optimized:* Customized workflows to automate tasks that integrate seamlessly into your communication and customer support platform; provides end-to-end productivity improvement. (4 points)

Overall strategy

Assess your business's overall operational strategy to accelerate growth, reduce costs, and stay on top of industry and consumer trends. Rate your current strategy on the following metrics; then take the average to determine your organization's overall customer experience strategy maturity level:

- » **Contact center growth plans:** Consider your overall strategy including cloud, vendor management, and future-proof technologies. Rate your organization:
 - *Basic:* Multiple one-touch vendors with siloed interaction touchpoints and multi-site deployments that require physical installation and upgrades as you grow; poor capacity planning abilities. (1 point)
 - *Standard:* Consolidation of voice UC and contact center platforms to the cloud; centralized routing, unlimited burst capacity, seamless monthly upgrades in the cloud. (2 points)
 - *Advanced:* Full cloud and digital transformation within the customer interaction strategy that removes organizational silos and provides a single solution for customer engagement departments. (3 points)
 - *Optimized:* Optimized digital-first customer engagement with unified analytics and actionable business intelligence across every interaction touchpoint; customer journey mapping and proactive engagement to maximize business outcomes. (4 points)
- » **Changing from cost center to profit center:** Does your contact center infrastructure enable greater efficiencies and agent productivity to transform your contact center into a profit center? Rate your organization:
 - *Basic:* Contact center primarily used as customer support; KPIs to incentivize short calls; agents not empowered to make decisions. (1 point)
 - *Standard:* Cross-train agents for customer outreach (inbound/outbound/blended); use KPIs to incentivize customer satisfaction and business outcome; use outbound in low traffic period and reach out for potential up-sales. (2 points)

- *Advanced:* Decrease costs with call deflection to digital channels; leverage NLP for automation (bots); invest in agent training and tools to solve advanced problems (access to experts, real-time knowledge bases, and so on). (3 points)
- *Optimized:* AI-driven proactive customer engagement throughout the entire customer lifecycle with intelligent scripting and tailored interactions per customer. (4 points)

» **Associated costs:** These include the costs of managing multiple contact centers, vendor relationships, and contact center software and infrastructure. Rate your organization:

- *Basic:* Hardware and software deployments and upgrades to manage each system represent significant expenses with professional services and systems integrators. (1 point)
- *Standard:* Reduce capital expenditures (CapEx) with cloud deployment and save on integrations with a single vendor for unified communications as a service (UCaaS) and contact center as a service (CCaaS). (2 points)
- *Advanced:* Consolidate voice and digital with one vendor; leverage a single pane of glass for every digital communication across the entire company with smart routing to the corresponding teams. (3 points)
- *Optimized:* Leverage analytics to identify large interaction volumes per theme and deploy bots with NLP to automate answers; redeploy agents only for more advanced and complex tasks. (4 points)

» **Ability to support work-from-home (WFH) contact center agents:** How well can you support remote agents with your current contact center solution in the “new normal”? Rate your organization:

- *Basic:* Inability to support remote teams. (1 point)
- *Standard:* Ability to support agents from anywhere with cloud deployment and voice over Web Real-Time Communication (WebRTC); simple data connection is sufficient. (2 points)
- *Advanced:* Enable agents to work from home on any channel (digital or voice) with call deflection to digital channels to reduce voice wait times. (3 points)

- *Optimized:* Utilize the entire UCaaS portfolio to run daily team meetings, celebrate wins, hire, onboard, train, and provide feedback to remote teams via messaging, video, and voice. (4 points)

» **Innovation (AI and NLP):** Does your current contact center solution enable business agility with advanced technologies (such as AI, messaging, bots, and so on)? Rate your organization:

- *Basic:* Antiquated equipment without modern APIs to allow for AI/NLP integration. (1 point)
- *Standard:* Cloud IVR with open APIs allowing integration with leading AI/NLP providers such as Amazon Web Services (AWS), Google, and so on. (2 points)
- *Advanced:* Ability to automate simple queries with bots and provide answers or gather information up front automatically and route to an agent with skills-based routing and with the full context for an optimized interaction. (3 points)
- *Optimized:* Real-time integration (voice and digital) with leading AI/NLP providers via open APIs with real-time agent assist; AI understands customer questions and proactively provides agents with the best answer based on ML. (4 points)

» **Security:** How do you protect your customer data and maintain security and compliance? Rate your organization:

- *Basic:* Hard to maintain compliance with yearly certification assessments and investment in experts to maintain the security of on-premises equipment. (1 point)
- *Standard:* Leverage certification from the cloud for compliance requirements such as Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), FedRAMP, and so on; stay current with latest certification. (2 points)
- *Advanced:* Leverage expertise of most advanced experts on security with cloud applications running in the public cloud. (3 points)

- *Optimized:* Regular penetration testing/assessments with top security talent from third-party providers to identify and remediate vulnerabilities and protect customer data. (4 points)



TIP

How does your organization measure up to that of your industry peers? Go to <https://assets.ringcentral.com/us/checklist/assess-implement-cloud-contact-center.pdf> to find out. You'll receive a personalized report with actionable insights and recommendations on how to evolve your strategy.

Moving Your Contact Center Forward

With a good understanding of your organization's current state, you can define your desired future state and perform a gap analysis to determine what it will take to get you there. As you plan your path forward, also consider your top business priorities, such as the following:

- » Boosting agent performance
- » Enabling WFH
- » Adding more digital channels
- » Improving reporting and analytics
- » Improving voice of the customer score and NPS
- » Moving to the cloud
- » Increasing automation (such as bots and AI)
- » Integrating UCaaS and CCaaS

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Delivering a digital-first, omnichannel customer experience
- » Getting customers to the right agents with the right skills
- » Staying current in the cloud
- » Managing traditional and remote contact center agents
- » Evolving the roles of supervisors and maximizing agent productivity
- » Enabling hybrid teams
- » Focusing on your customers
- » Attracting talent from everywhere

Chapter 6

Ten Takeaways for Your Next-Gen Cloud Contact Center

In this chapter, I leave you with ten key takeaways to keep in mind as you elevate customer experience to a new level with a next-gen cloud contact center for your organization:

- » **Bringing automation to your contact center:** A digital-first customer experience is replete with automation — from chatbots and natural language processing (NLP) to skills-based routing, call deflection, and more.

- » **Enabling omnichannel communications:** Customers today expect to interact seamlessly with businesses on their preferred channels, whether voice, text, email, live chat, social channels, or something else.
- » **Leveraging intelligent routing:** Route customers to the right agent with the right skill sets to resolve their issues quickly and efficiently.
- » **Taking advantage of UCaaS and CCaaS:** Unified communications as a service (UCaaS) and contact center as a service (CCaaS) platforms enable businesses to leverage evergreen deployments that are kept up to date with the latest enhancements, upgrades, and innovations.
- » **Recognizing the changing role of the supervisor:** Managing, coaching, and mentoring remote agents requires supervisors to master a new set of management tools in the next-gen cloud contact center.
- » **Maximizing agent productivity:** As automation increasingly frees humans to focus on other tasks, agents can be trained to handle both inbound and outbound calls to maximize their value to the organization.
- » **Working in hybrid teams:** The next-gen cloud contact center enables organizations to manage hybrid teams working in on-premises contact centers and remotely.
- » **Becoming customer-centric:** To succeed in today's highly competitive marketplace, businesses must proactively manage every step of the customer journey.
- » **Delivering a superior customer experience:** The next-generation cloud contact center provides organizations of any size and in any industry with powerful capabilities and tools to deliver a superior customer experience every time.
- » **Recruiting diverse worldwide talent:** The new normal of remote working enables organizations of any size to recruit from a worldwide talent pool to get the best agents for their contact center.



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Consistently deliver a superior customer experience

For years, businesses have treated their contact centers as a cost of doing business. That mindset may have been acceptable in the past, but in the modern era of customer experience, not so much. Consumer behavior has changed — and not by a little bit. Modern customers do their own research before asking for help, and when they do reach out for help, you can be sure their issue will be complex. A next-generation cloud contact center empowers your agents with powerful tools and capabilities to resolve even the most difficult customer problems and deliver a superior customer experience.

Inside...

- Boost agent productivity
- Reduce operating costs
- Interact with customers across channels
- Leverage AI and chatbots
- Assess your current state and define your goals
- Connect customers with the right agents

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Lawrence Miller has worked in information technology in various industries for more than 25 years. He is the co-author of *CISSP For Dummies* and has written more than 200 For Dummies books on numerous technology and security topics.

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