



The New Reality for Customer Engagement

HOW TECHNOLOGY IS SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONTACT CENTERS

The contact center has been at the core of successfully serving customers, but times are changing. New customer expectations across all facets of engagement are challenging how traditional centers operate.

MARKET CONDITIONS ARE CHANGING

Customers want their service experiences to be personalized, their interactions to be effortless, and their inquiries to be resolved quickly with a single touchpoint. Customers today also expect the ease of reaching out across an ever expanding variety of communication channels, while experiencing the same level of integrated service across each.

Increasing Complexity

By 2019, more than half of customer interactions will be in channels other than voice.¹

Organizations are gearing up to support chat, social media, voice, SMS, and other mediums in an omni-channel environment. As digital channels begin to handle more transactional requests through automation, the customer interactions that reach agents will be more complex.

Contact center agents are already faced with increased complexity, often having to interact with upwards of 20 systems and applications to serve customers, leading to inefficiencies and poor customer satisfaction. Siloed operations, processes, and systems present significant barriers to delivering a seamless customer experience, and are preventing contact centers from effectively integrating new technologies and communication channels.

Emerging Technology

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is disrupting contact centers and the role of agents. Forrester found that four in 10 contact center decision makers are exploring use of AI technologies to differentiate their service.² Organizations need to understand how they can incorporate chatbots, virtual assistants, predictive personalization, voice sentiment analysis, and other AI-infused approaches in their service strategy to improve customer experience and stay ahead of competitors.

Contact centers are also adopting robotics to augment human interactions. Robotic Process Automation (RPA) allows information to be processed quicker and more accurately, leading to more productive contact centers. McKinsey suggests that robots will be able to fully resolve 30 to 50 percent of all requests, which can double productivity while reducing costs in half.³

Evolving Compliance

With new and evolving regulatory compliance requirements, and the security measures needed to prevent fraud, organizations are revisiting the importance of data management and process practices. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in particular, with its May 25th, 2018 deadline, is pushing contact centers to relook at the way in which personal data and requests are handled.

In addition to monetary fines, consequences to brand value and risks associated from not having the proper data security in place can be significant. The Ponemon Institute reports that the average total cost of a single data breach in 2017 was \$3.62 million⁴ — a preventable statistic with the right technology and processes in place.

CONTACT CENTER LEADERS ARE RESPONDING

Leaders of contact centers face immense pressure to optimize customer experience, achieve operational performance metrics, and deliver on strategic business initiatives.

Providing a Concierge Experience

The traditional contact center approach, operating on a tiered methodology with escalation and resolution being handled by multiple agents, will no longer suffice. Customers demand their issues be resolved in real-time. Organizations must respond by providing concierge-level customer experience, where they understand and anticipate customer needs, and agents have all the necessary information at hand to provide personalized service. This allows customers to experience:

- Reduced wait times
- Faster call resolution
- Reduced processing time
- Personalized content
- Seamless engagement across channels
- Proactive service
- Confidence that information is handled securely

McKinsey recommends that contact center leaders must “reorient their businesses away from a singular focus on day-to-day operations and cost cutting and toward anticipating evolving customer expectations and providing a portfolio of tailored interaction models to meet them.”⁵ To achieve this, organizations have to bring together engagement channels, customer journey touchpoints, and smart decisioning into a single, intuitive interface to support front-line employees.

Creating Rock Star Agents

At the same time, there is pressure to increase agent productivity. However, high agent attrition rates and disparate systems and tools make this especially challenging. Training programs are not enough. As more complicated and higher-value transaction interactions are funneled through the contact center, agents must have the skills, knowledge—and technology empowerment—to effectively resolve customer queries, personalize engagements, and go the extra mile.

Forrester predicts that in the next 10 years “cognitive contact centers will incorporate artificial intelligence to personalize agent/customer matching, augment agent capabilities, and offload management tasks, allowing firms to focus more on strategy.”⁶ The value chain must be redefined to go beyond human agents to include AI assistance, machine learning, Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, and emerging technologies—to make every agent a rock star agent.

Delivering on Strategic Business Initiatives

Organizations have started to realize the immense value of the contact center in engaging with customers. In an age where it’s hard to stand out in the mind of customers, leveraging the front-line support that have day-to-day interactions with customers is a golden opportunity.

Contact center leaders are coming to the table to help execute on strategic initiatives around customer experience including:

- Improving Net Promoter Scores (NPS)
- Driving revenue through cross-selling and upselling
- Implementing Voice of the Customer (VoC) programs to flow insights back to the business
- Accelerating revenue recognition opportunities
- Supporting new business line launch activities
- Launching new products and services to market
- Adhering to regulations around customer data protection

Improving customer experience is a top priority for organizations. **Forrester Research found that the revenue impact of a 1-point improvement in CX Index scores can help a company increase revenue by \$175 million annually.**⁷ To achieve customer experience transformation, executives responsible for top-line strategy and those managing front-line customer interactions must come together to successfully lead the charge.

THE APIAN INTELLIGENT CONTACT CENTER™

With the growing complexity of channels, interactions, and customer expectations, organizations are embracing technology to transform their operations into engagement centers, redefining customer experience—and business value they bring to the organization.

Forward thinking contact centers are prioritizing technology across four key areas:

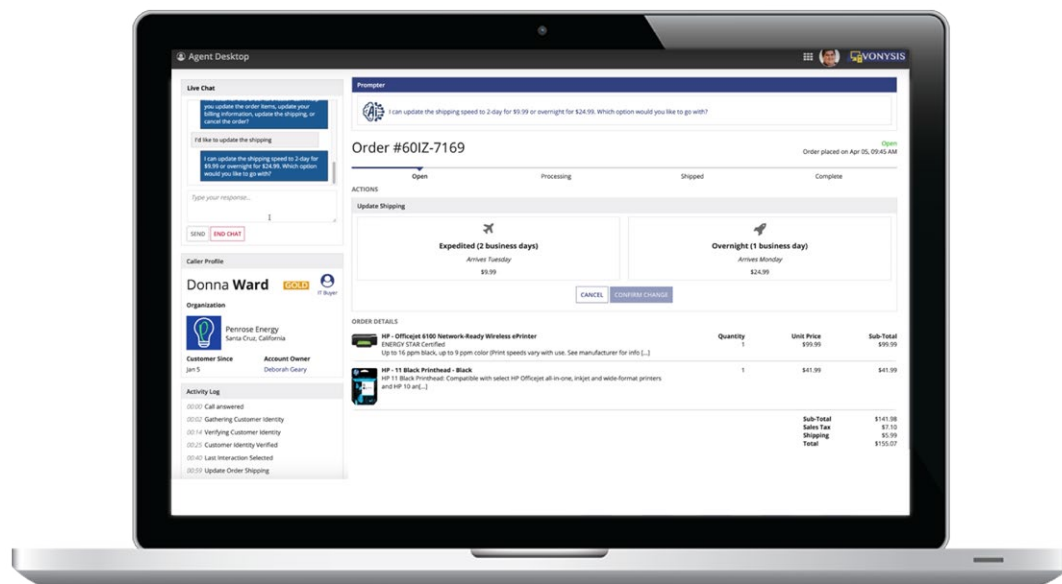
1. Omni-channel Communication

McKinsey predicts that 75 percent of customers will use multiple channels to contact companies.⁸ Leveraging a platform that unifies various communication channels into a single interface is important to turn multi-channel support into a true omni-channel environment.

Supporting voice alone is no longer enough. To fully understand their customers, organizations must look to integrate additional options including chat, SMS, email, social media, and co-browsing. Data must be shared across these channels, so agents have a real-time view into customer case history. This provides an effortless and seamless experience across all the ways customers want to engage.

According to Aberdeen Group, companies that provide consistent service quality across multiple channels retain 89% of their customers, compared to 33% retention rate for companies that do not.⁹

Barclays saw a 64% increase in customer satisfaction scores within just one month by prioritizing omni-channel customer engagement. They integrated systems and channels into one cohesive interface, allowing them to provide customers with the same, transparent experience whether they are engaging on a mobile device, website, or phone call.



2. Dynamic Case Management

Dynamic case management allows organizations to achieve a single, consistent view of the customer journey and supports high-end problem solving for complex interactions. Unifying the interactions between people, process, data, and content, case management provides a powerful interface that allows agents to reach resolution faster and provide accurate information.

Gartner confirms that case management is the essential core of CRM customer service systems, “yet most customer service centers lack any form of advanced customer service case or problem resolution functionality.”¹⁰ Whether a contact center is handling disputes, finance processing, service requests, incident management, client advisory, constituent response, or other case types, dynamic case management helps organizations deliver support more efficiently.

In order to spin up a new business line, a large multinational financial services company leveraged case management to create a single view of the customer, empowering agents to support new customer onboarding, service existing customers, and handle account disputes, collections, and complaints. They realized a greater than 75% decrease in customer loan processing time from initial projections.



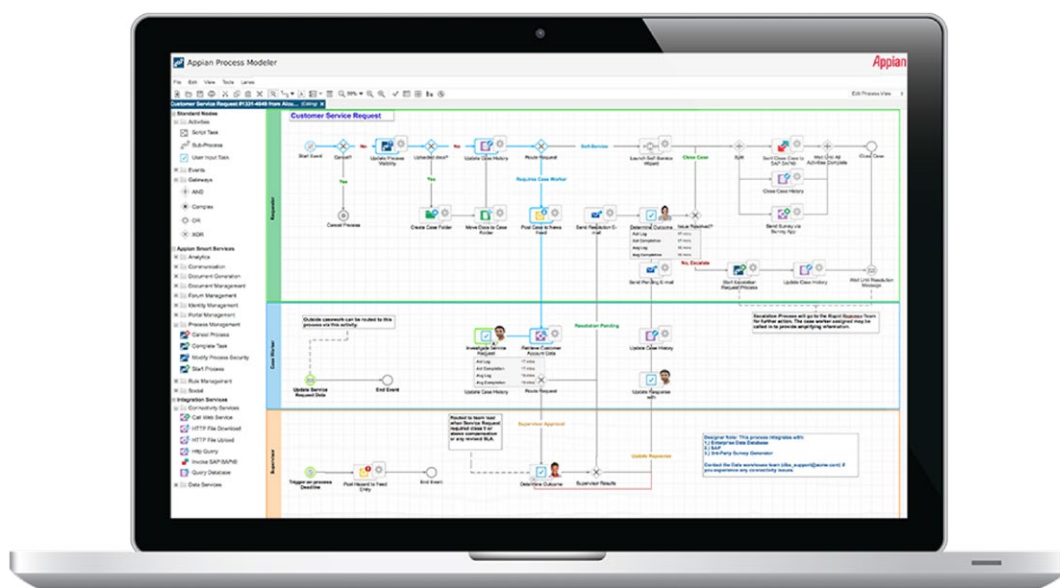
3. Intelligent Automation

The real powerhouse to dramatically increase the productivity and effectiveness of agents comes from intelligent automation. Comprehensive Business Process Management (BPM) orchestrates processes, integrates systems, and applies business rules—while agents are supported by robotics and coached by artificial intelligence. Manual work is widely automated and real-time recommendations are suggested to agents in a single interface, allowing them to focus on advising customers, delivering personalized offers, and pursuing upsell opportunities.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is enabling companies to automate high-volume, repetitive manual tasks and integrate chatbots, freeing agents to spend more time assisting customers with higher-value interactions. An integrated digital workforce can help automate tasks including collecting payments, order processing, compliance reporting, providing notifications, and updating client profiles.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) assisted interactions are changing the way contact centers can anticipate the needs of customers and respond in real-time to customize suggestions and offers. Leveraging AI-powered best next action, sentiment analysis, smart categorization, and transcriptions—agents can deliver proactive service and an improved experience for customers.

Aviva, the largest insurer in the UK, leveraged smart automation to reinvent their contact center operations and delight their customers. Front line advisors have a single view of customer and policy information in one interface, consolidating 22 systems that had to be navigated previously. Robots work alongside support staff, handling the repeatable processes, so advisors can spend more time talking to customers. The impact for Aviva has been a 9 times acceleration in customer service response time and 40% operational cost savings.



4. Low-Code Cloud Platform

Faced with increasing pressures from global regulations, organizations must ensure compliance while continuing to drive innovation. The need to keep systems compliant, secure, reliable, and built for scale is a huge cost burden to organizations. Additionally, on-premises solutions require organizations to spend significant time with managing servers, maintenance patches, and upgrades. With rising demands, dwindling resources, and evaporating time, low-code development has emerged as an opportunity to build powerful contact center applications and deliver quickly. When speed to market and compliance is critical, adopting a cloud strategy with a low-code application development platform is essential.

Low-code cloud platforms allow organizations to build applications that meet security, confidentiality and compliance controls, while accelerating time for deployment—and in turn, time-to-value for the business. This is why CITO research estimates that 93% of businesses are beginning to move their processes to the cloud.¹¹ Without the worry and cost of maintaining systems and compliance—and the ability to deploy unique, powerful applications fast—engagement centers can focus on what they do best: delivering exceptional customer experience.

[For cloud platforms] the primary advantage lies in the ability to scale for contraction and expansion, lower the cost of compute and storage resources, and deploy rapidly.

– Forrester, The Forrester Wave™: Cloud-Based Dynamic Case Management, Q1 2018



SUMMARY

As you consider the best pathway to a next generation contact center, consider an application platform approach that supports omni-channel engagement, complex cases, and robust intelligent automation.

Here's what to look for in your technology partner:

- Offers a low-code application development approach for speed and agility
- Provides the ability to integrate data across existing systems
- Includes dynamic case management to handle complex interactions
- Allows for business process, workflow, and collaboration management
- Offers the ability to embed AI, RPA, and future advanced technologies
- Provides trusted security, reliability, and governance with cloud-enablement

The Appian Intelligent Contact Center™ makes it easy for organizations to build next generation contact center applications that accelerate customer experience, increase agent efficiency, and deliver business impact. With Appian, organizations can move fast, revolutionize customer engagement, deliver on strategic initiatives, and master global risk and compliance.



Visit our resource center to find out more: appian.com/platform/intelligent-contact-center

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 2. Forrester, Report: How AI Will Transform Customer Service, 2017
 3. McKinsey, Article: Charting the future of customer care through a core optimization philosophy, 2018
 4. Ponemon Institute, 2017 Cost of Data Breach Study: United States
 5. McKinsey, Article: Winning the expectations game in customer care, 2016
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 9. Aberdeen Group, Research Report: Omni-channel Customer Care: Best-in-Class Steps to Success, 2015
 10. Gartner, Place Case Management at the Core of the CRM Customer Engagement Center, 2017
 11. CITO Research, The 2017 Executive Cloud Survey

Appian

Appian provides a software development platform that combines intelligent automation and low-code development to rapidly deliver powerful business applications. Many of the world's largest organizations use Appian applications to improve customer experience, achieve operational excellence, and simplify global risk and compliance.

For more information, visit www.appian.com