The future of Contact Centers:
Be where your customers are.

Part 2:
4 keys to eContact Center success

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Executive Summary

IR is an industry leader in customer experience management solutions that help staff keep the focus where it should be; on delivering a simple and collaborative end-user experience.

In this three-part series, we take a look at the future of the Contact Center; the trends, opportunities, performance monitoring and management technologies and potential return.

In Part 1, we looked at:

- Moving from voice only contact centers to omni-channel (eContact) centers.
- Changing expectations digitally-savvy customers have of contact centers, regardless of channel.
- How you could lose a customer in as little as 90 seconds.
- How companies must now know if customers have already accessed other channels before calling.

NOT READ PART 1? DOWNLOAD HERE ＞

In Part 2:

We look at the critical '4 keys to eContact Center success' when moving to eContact:

- Technology
- Enhancing CX
- 90-second rule
- Performance management technology

The **No. 1** technology trend being prioritized by contact centers is customer demand for emerging channels

Source - Dimension Data's 2015 Global Contact Centre Benchmarking Report, © Dimension Data 2009-2015.

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Key 1: Technology

Technology choices and maturity levels drive better performance of important contact center metrics.

Contact centers are strategic connection points and their purpose is changing from 'fixing things' to enhancing CX (Customer Experience) at all stages in the pre/during/post sales process.

Customers want immediate and frictionless ways to communicate - it's that simple.

Many recent Contact Center research reports add some valuable insight and terms.

1. A true contact center will have at least nine available channels. Embedding CX into the fabric of the Contact Center is not just about providing channels but servicing them properly.

2. Digital or multi-channel is not omni-channel. The former are technologies and the latter is how these are totally focused on CX. It is as fundamental as changing your view from 'inside out' to 'outside in'!

3. Improved CX is the most competitive business differentiator.

4. Capturing data from all sources to obtain a 360° view of the customer is key to CX but applying comprehensive business analytics is key to profit growth.

Right now there are few true eContact centers - this is more a case of the technology needing to catch up with the will to improve the customer experience.

The leaders in eContact increasingly come from the finance and online shopping sectors where high levels of CX lead to high levels of sales and increased customer loyalty.

30%
of organizations plan to introduce
new technology to enhance customer experience

Source 2016 survey by IR

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More choices than ever before

Unified Communications vendors are a great place to start as omni-channel is as much about voice – and moving from it – as it is moving to digital and self-help channels.

You need the hardware and software topology provided by vendors like Cisco, Avaya, Microsoft, Genesys, Alcatel-Lucent, Mitel, NEC, IBM, and more (this list is in no way definitive). There are also many new 'cloud' entrants – 68.5% of contact centers plan to move to cloud technology soon.

The complexity does not stop at hardware. eContact relies on a customer relationship management (CRM) system to bring the omni-channel customer journey together for a 360° view. Oracle, Salesforce, SAP, NetSuite, Microsoft Dynamics CRM, SugarCRM, IBM and perhaps lesser known vendors like Shopify, Shopatron or Ultra Serve's Hybris may be viable.

There are thousands of 'interface solutions' to interact with the hardware, IP and CRM as well as monitoring social media feeds from Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or any of the international or ethnically driven social channels. Some monitor, some facilitate feedback, and some allow for transfer to a more established channel, but all use proprietary data feeds and algorithms that need to be fed into the 360° view.

And... all this technology is no use if it does not work. See Key 3 - the 90-second rule.

2015 MULTICHANNEL STATE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customer expectations are changing and growing just as rapidly as the channels and technology consumers are now empowered with to engage, encouraging (if not demanding) that brands and organizations embrace a strategy of non-stop, customer-centric adaptation. Is it worth the investment and effort to keep trying to be a leader when it comes to customer service? You bet:

98% of U.S. consumers say customer service is important in their choice of, or loyalty to, a brand.

The top 4 aspects of a satisfying customer experience:

- 34% GETTING MY ISSUE RESOLVED QUICKLY
- 29% FIRST CONTACT RESOLUTION
- 27% A FRIENDLY, KNOWLEDGEABLE AGENT
- 10% FINDING ANSWERS WITHOUT ASSISTANCE

"CUSTOMER SERVICE IS NOT A DEPARTMENT. IT'S EVERYONE'S JOB."

The average number of channels customers use consistently when interacting with a brand or organization: 4. Customer service channels consumers use on a regular basis:

- 81% PHONE
- 78% EMAIL
- 64% LIVE CHAT
- 62% SUPPORT PORTAL/FAQs
- 51% SEARCH ENGINE
- 46% IN PERSON
- 23% SUPPORT TICKET
- 18% SOCIAL MEDIA
- 14% ONLINE COMMUNITY
- 9% MOBILE APP

*Source 2015 U.S. State of Multichannel Customer Service Report published by Parature, from Microsoft and Microsoft Dynamics ©

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Key 2:
Enhancing customer experience

Frictionless customer experience has emerged as a key business differentiator

Companies focusing on end-to-end customer journeys, across multi-channels and touch-points are building significant competitive advantage, measurable business benefits and are realizing reduced customer attrition.

CX simply means that customers expect the same 'journey' as they would if they marched into the bricks and mortar store where they bought an item. The rush to eContact technologies often overlooks this face-to-face people factor. When done properly good CX can lead to reduced costs and increased profit, and is therefore one of the most valuable performance measurements organizations can implement.

The people factor may involve recruitment and training of a different type of CSA (Customer Service Agents) and equipping them with the tools to quickly resolve all issues regardless of channel. Businesses must move from product focused, to customer focused.

The result is that contact centers must change from 'fixing things' to enhancing CX at all stages in the pre/during/post sales process.

It is an understatement to say that a customer can choose from a huge range of channels so most companies start out offering limited channels and add more as customers demand it.

In the US a recent State of Multichannel Customer Service Report published by Parature* highlights the preferred communications channels used by customers when speaking to a brand or organization.

Voice (live agent or self-service) remains the preferred channel for contact center communication. However, with improvements in technology and the emergence of new platforms, voice could soon lose its position at the top of the ladder. SMS text, web chat and mobile apps are also seen as key growth areas, with the latter able to cover a broad range of functionality from research, inquiry, support and feedback from the convenience of a mobile phone.

Social media is widely used by brands and will continue to be. However, because of the very public nature in which it operates, companies typically start with one social media channel – Facebook (or its regional equivalents) and look to get that right before expanding to other platforms.

Mobile apps change the game because they inherently elicit a sense of urgency/immediacy into the interaction, plus they have the potential to add location and video to the context of the CX. The ability to bring the entire customer journey to bear in a mobile interaction is key to meeting customer expectations.

*Source 2015 U.S. State of Multichannel Customer Service Report published by Parature, from Microsoft and Microsoft Dynamics ©

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Key 3:
90-second rule

eContact Centers must meet acceptable, client-centric service levels.

This brings in the 90-second rule – the maximum time/delay that a customer will tolerate before CX is ruined, sales are lost and reputations shattered.

Unlike basic voice metrics like queue length or voice quality, eContact is about offering a consistent experience on all channels. If you expect all voice calls to meet a specified service level, you must expect all eContacts to be similarly treated.

All this 'technology' can be an expensive nightmare if it does not work – potentially comprising dozens of 'best of breed' solutions and an on-premises or cloud platform that has to cope with them all.

Recent research** has shown that currently 40% of digital systems fail to meet current needs and 78% of managers fear these systems will not meet future needs regarding volume, traffic and customer response times. eContact is complex and it needs a platform, operating system, hardware along with software agnostic tools to ensure it's working. Imagine the issues in a voice only contact center and multiply them by at least nine times.

Most vendors will have performance measurement metrics for their individual solutions 'silo' – measurement of digital transactions such as time to respond.

But what about the back of house technology that underpins all of this – simplistically speaking the IP networks comprising cabling, switches, routers, gateways, storage, computer, power, and more?

One thing doesn't change – if the back of house fails to deliver, it affects the ability of front line staff to service customers.

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Key 4:
Performance management technology

Comprehensive performance management correlates disparate data sources, from network, voice, web and contact center technologies, adds in real-time CX measurements and presents those 'thousand points of reference' in a single 'pane of glass' point of view.

Optimizing Contact Center technologies is the key to customer experience, productivity and enhanced savings.

This is where performance management technology bridges the "gaps" - creating powerful and actionable intelligence to optimize operations and workflows ensuring frictionless omni-channel communications.

From an 'outside looking in' customer perspective it will prove end-to-end channel performance – did it act as well as it was supposed to? You can see step by step response times, results and recordings – unobtrusively observing the CX and getting actionable data to reduce issue resolution time and cost. Channel performance, or lack thereof, is the largest single issue that contributes to a good or bad Net Promoter Score (NPS).

From an 'inside looking out' perspective real-time monitoring helps identify and quickly remedy channel issues. You can see network activity, identify network segments adversely impacting voice quality - the contact center technology's reaction to customer interaction.

With Contact Center solutions from IR, you have the power to be on top of everything 24/7. To identify and fix problems before they impact customer experience.

Customer Experience Management

IR Prognosis for Contact Center gives you everything you need to identify and eradicate problems before they impact the customer or agent experience. You'll have full application and network visibility with hop-by-hop call information, including any network-related degradation. This lets you quickly pin point the devices that are involved in the impairment.

Prognosis StressTest™ provides load and performance cloud-based testing giving you the insight you need to manage, tune and verify contact center performance before you go live as well as after any changes.

Prognosis HeartBeat™ initiates Virtual Customer® test calls that interact with your system through the public telephone network just like real customers, giving you assurance that your system is working in every location and for every agent.

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What now?

BLOG:
WHY OMNI-CHANNEL IS IMPORTANT ❯

WEBINAR
IDENTIFY & ADDRESS CONTACT CENTER SHOW STOPPERS ❯

LEARN:
PROGNOSIS FOR CONTACT CENTER DEMO ❯

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