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The connected contact center: Creating a more satisfying experience for both customers and agents

We live in an age where instant gratification is not just a desire but an expectation. Customers today are interconnected and always on. Empowered by smartphones and

social media, they are used to getting what they want and when they want. This expectation extends to their business interactions, including calls to contact centers for sales or support.

This call might be a customer's first interaction with a brand, a critical touchpoint in their journey. At that moment, customers seek empathy, understanding, and respect, not just solutions to their problems. In short, a swift, hassle-free, satisfactory human experience to their inquiries.

On the other hand, agents, as frontline representatives, must be equipped with the tools and information to provide a superior customer experience, manage complex queries, resolve issues, and meet customer expectations.

Unfortunately, traditional contact centers often fall short. Complex automated systems, lengthy wait times, and ineffective problem resolutions can amplify customer frustration, posing challenges for agents in delivering smooth service.

A connected contact center addresses these challenges head-on by giving agents a 360-degree view of the customer, enabling personalized service and faster issue resolution. As a result, agents experience reduced workloads and increased satisfaction.

Within the chapters of this ebook, we will expand our comprehension of the connected contact center, exploring its capabilities, role, importance, and implementation in fostering a more fulfilling encounter for both customers and agents.

Chapter 1- 'Unloyalty' can limit business growth

Loyalty - the glue that binds customers to businesses, the unseen force that propels growth. But what happens when this bond is broken? When loyalty is replaced by its sinister opposite - 'Unloyalty'? It leads to poor customer experience, which prompts around [half of them](#) to switch to alternative businesses.

A connected contact center or an omnichannel contact center solution navigates these noisy tides of unloyalty by integrating various communication channels, such as phone calls, emails, live chats, social media, and more, into a unified platform, enabling seamless and efficient interactions between customers and agents.

1.1 Shifting from low to high customer retention

“ It’s time to think about customer success — creating strategies around how to help customers reap the rewards of their investment.”

—Ray Pun, Senior Director Analyst, Gartner

In this cutthroat market, one bad experience can make [32%](#) of loyal customers leave. In such a situation, a connected contact center is a reliable ally. Let’s see how.

1. 24/7 availability makes customers confident

Whether customers need immediate assistance or prefer to interact outside conventional business hours, 24/7 availability ensures they can receive help whenever needed. This constant availability builds customers' confidence in the brand, making them feel valued and supported.

2. Proactive problem-solving prevents churn

Using advanced analytics (such as predictive, prescriptive, big data and more) and AI, the solution can identify potential issues before they escalate into major problems. This proactive approach allows businesses to address and resolve these issues before customers become aware.

3. Reduced wait times reduce frustration

It's not just about the inconvenience of waiting; it's about the customer's time, which is valuable. Waiting to receive service can feel like a lack of respect for that time. Connected contact center features such as AI chatbots can handle routine queries, and self-service options allow customers to solve simple problems themselves. This swift and efficient service translates into shorter wait times, bringing customers immediate relief.

1.2 Delivering exceptional CX is tough

[Lee Resources](#) indicates a significant disparity between how businesses and customers view the quality of customer service. While 80% of businesses believe they offer "superior" customer service, only 8% of their customers agree. The challenge stems from two primary factors:

1. Tactical orientation of support functions

Support functions within an organization often operate in silos, leading to fragmented customer experiences. Disconnected systems among sales, billing, and technical support teams cause delays and miscommunications. However, a connected contact

center acts as a centralized hub, fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and streamlined workflows to ensure a seamless support experience for customers.

2. The multitude of customer touchpoints

Customers engage with businesses through multiple touchpoints like phone calls, emails, social media, and live chat. Ensuring a consistent experience across channels is a challenge for businesses. As mentioned earlier, a connected contact center integrates these touchpoints into a unified platform, enabling agents to provide consistent and personalized support regardless of the channel used.

Chapter 2- Happy agents, happy customers is the 'mantra'

Behind every great customer experience lies agents' hard work, dedication, and contentment. This principle is amplified in a contact center setting where the emotions and attitudes of customer service representatives directly impact the quality of customer interactions.

For instance, [Starbucks](#) has cultivated a culture centered on close employee relationships for years. Under former president Howard Behar, the company supported a belief that cared-for employees extend that care to customers.

2.1 Better agent experience creates a customer-centric culture

While customer experience remains the primary focus, ensuring a positive experience becomes challenging if agents' well-being is neglected. [Jacob Morgan's study](#) showed that companies that invest in customer service representatives outperform those that don't. The happiness of agents directly impacts customer satisfaction. But how does it happen?

1. Brand ambassadors

Satisfied agents become enthusiastic brand ambassadors who promote the company's values, further cementing a customer-centric culture.

2. Exceptional service

Agents who feel valued and supported are likelier to deliver superior customer service, reinforcing the organization's customer-centric focus.

3. Continuous improvement

A good agent experience promotes a continuous improvement mindset, encouraging them to constantly seek ways to enhance customer experiences.

2.2 Enable, equip, and empower agents

Businesses can cultivate a competitive edge that drives growth by enabling, equipping, and empowering agents for customer experience. Let's discuss how to implement this agent experience optimization process.

1. Enable agents

Let's take an example of a telecommunications company, where contact center agents are crucial for customer support, trained to handle inquiries, address complaints, and provide solutions. To ensure genuine CX delivery, educating these agents about their role in the company's overall strategy becomes essential. This includes emphasizing the significance of their contribution to customer satisfaction, loyalty, and the business's overall success. By understanding their importance and how their actions impact the customer experience, call center agents can approach their work with a customer-centric mindset and deliver exceptional service.

2. Equip agents

A [Deloitte](#) study indicates that only 38% of business leaders believe their customer service representatives are extremely content with the work-related tools and technology provided. Companies can address agent dissatisfaction and contribute better towards growth by equipping them with better tools and technology.

For instance, let's consider an insurance company. The customer service agents at the company are responsible for handling policy inquiries, processing claims, and assisting policyholders. However, if they struggle with outdated and inefficient software systems, it can result in delays and frustrations for agents and customers. The company can improve their work experience and encourage them to deliver more efficient and effective customer service by equipping them with better tools and technology.

3. Empower agents

Why is it crucial to "empower agents"? It's because they are the face of the organization and have direct interactions with customers in various roles like marketing, sales, support, customer service, and professional services. They play a pivotal role in shaping the delivered customer experience. Merely enabling and equipping them is not enough; organizations must take the extra steps to empower their agents. Some pragmatic steps can be:

1. Training

Regular and comprehensive training sessions equip agents with the knowledge and skills needed to handle various customer situations effectively.

2. Encouraging autonomy

Empowering agents with the authority to make certain decisions on the spot can drastically improve customer satisfaction. It shows customers that their concerns are important and are being addressed immediately.

Chapter 3- A single provider maximizes UC and connected contact center capabilities

Historically, many companies have managed Unified Communications (UC) and contact centers independently, leading to isolated agents and unaware sales, marketing, and product teams. However, the shift is moving towards consolidating these tools under one vendor. Let's explore some benefits of adopting a single-provider strategy.

1. Improves employee productivity by 31.7%

When team members utilize collaborative tools such as meetings or team collaboration platforms, they witness productivity improvements. For example, by using meeting platforms, they enjoy more effective and better-quality meetings, save time by avoiding travel, and expedite sales cycles through enhanced face-to-face communication.

2. Reduces operational costs by 44%

Businesses relying on multiple providers typically undergo an average monthly cost of **\$260 per license** for operational expenses. However, opting for a single vendor reduces the monthly per-user cost to **\$145**. This results in substantial annual savings of \$1.38 million for a company with 1,000 employees.

3. Boosts application utilization rate by 33.1%

Application utilization refers to the percentage of active application licenses employees use. In the case of collaboration applications, not all employees utilize all the available applications, often due to a lack of awareness or understanding of their purpose. However, opting for a single provider helps address this issue. By consolidating all collaboration applications under one provider, employees have better visibility and accessibility to the available tools. This promotes awareness, encourages usage, and maximizes the value derived from these applications.

Chapter 4- HoduSoft's role in enhancing agents and customers' experience

Agent satisfaction and customer experience are two pillars of success for any organization. HoduSoft's unwavering commitment to both aspects is evident through our Solution. These success stories reflect HoduSoft's dedication to nurturing a positive work environment and prioritizing agent satisfaction to deliver exceptional customer experiences.

1. Turaco Insurance overcomes communication challenges with an omnichannel Solution

Turaco Insurance, a micro-insurance company based in Nairobi, Kenya, overcame challenges related to its multi-channel communication system, pricing clarity, and adoption hurdles. By partnering with HoduSoft, they implemented a customized omnichannel contact center solution. This collaboration led to improved customer experience, including faster claim settlement, increased customer engagement and outreach, and the establishment of a fair and transparent pricing structure.

2. Brother India delights customers with personalized contact center solutions

Brother India, a century-old brand renowned for product innovation and customer satisfaction, was facing multiple operational challenges such as complex workflow, limited call-handling system, lack of customized support and more. Partnering with HoduSoft empowered their call agents, improved customer service, and streamlined communication using self-service options and survey modules. This boosted their overall business performance and strengthened their position in the market, resulting in increased customer satisfaction, higher engagement levels, and improved brand reputation.

A connected contact center is a transformational approach to meet the future needs of end users

Connected contact center solutions differentiate themselves from traditional contact centers by offering adaptive, flexible models prioritizing channel-agnostic customer service journeys. These contact centers are "connected" because they provide a unified platform where different communication channels are integrated, ensuring a consistent customer experience. This transformational approach embraces the future of customer service - one that is digital, integrated, personalized, data-driven, and above all, customer-centric.

