



Are You Enabling Extraordinary Customer Journeys?

Take Your Contact Center to the Next Level

A Frost & Sullivan White Paper

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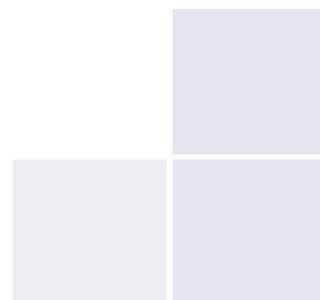
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ABOUT AVAYA

Avaya is a leading, global provider of customer and team engagement solutions and services available in a variety of flexible on-premise and cloud deployment options. Avaya’s fabric-based networking solutions help simplify and accelerate the deployment of business-critical applications and services. For more information, please visit www.avaya.com.



INTRODUCTION

Today's customers are more educated, more demanding and more discerning than ever. Are you doing everything you can to meet their needs and expectations? Or are you at risk of losing prospects and clients alike—without even knowing it?

If you're not sure of the answer, it's time to rethink your contact center. First up: a complete assessment of the contact center itself. Today, yours should support a full range of channels, running the gamut from voice and live chat to automated self-service, social and, of course, mobile. Just as critical, those channels must be integrated with one another and with your back-end systems, including CRM and sales- and marketing-automation platforms; you might even want to integrate them into your ERP or supply-chain systems in order to best leverage customer data to improve product development, production and overall business processes. And every channel should feed all customer data into an analytics engine, so that you can analyze customer information as it comes in; identify trends, opportunities, and potential issues; develop personalized marketing and offers; and change your product roadmap, production plan and operations as needed.

Frost & Sullivan research shows that contact center managers are making technology investments that support this new way of thinking. In a survey of more than 300 contact center decision makers, new contact channels are far surpassing traditional ones when it comes to IT investment. Our research shows that while email, live-agent voice and IVR are expected to see declining use in the coming years, web self-service, social, video and mobile apps are all expected to grow—in many cases by double digits.

Still, a successful transformation requires not just new technology, but also a new approach to customer service: it must be direct, honest and immediately actionable. The goal is to respond to your customers on any channel or device—on a PC, tablet or smartphone, via voice or text, or even in person—and deliver a consistent, contextual experience.

An omnichannel contact center can make it easy for you to stay connected to your customers via digital channels, even when they are physically in your stores or other places of business. Using geo-location, for instance, companies can text special offers or pop up product suggestions in real time on a customer's mobile device, helping them locate what they are looking for and, perhaps, what they didn't realize they needed.

This paper will discuss the pressing need to create consistent, exceptional customer experiences and outline the value of a contact center that supports a wide variety of channels integrated across the organization. We will look at why it's so important to generate actionable data analytics and leverage back-office applications and employees to deliver truly personal interactions. And we will offer Frost & Sullivan's research-driven recommendations for consistently delivering a customer journey that drives loyalty, improves customer and employee satisfaction, and increases sales and revenues.

THE CURRENT STATE OF THE OMNICHANNEL CONTACT CENTER: DO YOU MEASURE UP?

Frost & Sullivan research reveals that no trend has impacted the business environment more than mobility. In our latest survey of almost 2,000 IT decision makers from around the world, well over 90% of respondents report that at least some of their employees are using smart phones and tablets to meet the company's goals for IT investment, including reducing costs, boosting creativity and innovation, and improving productivity. These days, workers and consumers must be able to communicate with the companies they do business with anytime, from anywhere and on any device—be it a smart phone, a tablet, a PC, a piece of wearable tech, a landline phone or even an in-store kiosk or associate.

Right behind that huge mobility trend comes social media, which is changing not just the medium people use to interact with companies, but their expectations for those interactions. More than one-third of organizations say that social media increases revenues (the highest-rated technology in this regard) and almost as many tout it for helping to reduce costs. Social is more casual, authentic and immediate—and customers insist that companies approach them differently on social sites than they do in a contact center environment.

Customers use Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and other social sites to register their experiences—most likely bad ones. In those cases, they expect to receive feedback and resolution within the social site itself. Smart companies are finding ways to incorporate those interactions into contact center operations for best practices and better results.

Today's customers also expect a truly customized experience based on their personal needs, habits and history with the company. Regardless of how they contact a business—via phone, chat, mobile or web—customers want the responding agent (or expert) to know everything about them and their relationship with the organization. This includes basic information, such as account numbers and payment history, as well as contextual data, including their buying history, past experiences with the company (including any trouble spots), their broader needs and interests gathered, perhaps, from non-traditional public sources, and even the impact of life-changing events on their buyer status.

Perhaps most critical of all, today's customers fully expect all their interactions with a given company to be captured and analyzed, so that regardless of the method they use to connect, they receive the same level of care and overall experience. It should not matter whether a customer starts out using self-service, engages in a web chat, and ultimately places or receives a phone call for final resolution; the experience should be connected and joyful across all modalities, and at each stop along the way the agent, expert, or automated resource (i.e., a bot) should know exactly who the customer is and what her relationship is with the organization. For example, an agent responding to a call should know immediately that this is the first time the customer has dialed into the contact center, but the fourth attempt she's made at getting service—that is, the agent should know that the customer initially looked at self-service help online, engaged with another agent via chat, and tweeted the company about her experience. That ensures she feels respected and valued when she finally engages live on the phone.

JOYFUL JOURNEYS REQUIRE AN INTEGRATED, 360-DEGREE VIEW

The easier it is for customers to buy, use and service their products, the more satisfied those customers will be. That makes it more likely they will stay loyal to the business and share their positive experiences with friends and family, both in person and across social media.

The best way to meet these changing customer needs—and improve the bottom line in the process—is to deploy technology that delivers a single view of the customer across all contact points, interactions and time lines. If customers can contact the organization via their channels of choice—and those channels are tightly integrated with one another and any relevant enterprise applications—agents, experts and resources can support consumers with a 360-degree view, one that provides relevant information on the entire customer journey. At Frost & Sullivan, we call that an omnichannel contact center, and we believe it is critical for success in today's increasingly global, always-on competitive environment.

Omnichannel contact centers make it easy for companies to ensure their customers receive the support they need when they need it on their preferred channels, and to deliver targeted offers for new and existing products and services based on customers' specific buying behaviors and broader contextual information. That's good for the bottom line; by treating each customer as uniquely valuable, companies can deepen and retain their relationships, resulting in more engagements and, ultimately, sales opportunities from them and with their friends and family.

An omnichannel contact center can and should include a variety of channels and capabilities, including:



- **Chat** is not a new technology, but it is increasingly important for companies that want to ensure they don't lose customers who don't find what they need via self-service applications. By enriching chat interactions with other media, such as video and screen sharing, companies are ensured that customers receive the information they need at that moment—without risking the customer leaving or abandoning the engagement. That richer functionality can also deliver collaboration, predictive analytics, proactive engagement and personalization for a truly customized experience. And companies that use chatbots today can deliver an exceptional experience thanks to natural language technology that easily passes the Turing test. Consumers feel like they are speaking to a live person, while companies can more easily right-size the contact center as needed.



- **Persistent Chat** captures the information exchanged in any given customer interaction, and then presents this information to the agent when the customer contacts the company again. Think of it as personalized CTI: Organizations know who you are, each time and every time, allowing them to provide a personalized interaction and create an endearing relationship with every contact. This type of contextual record is critical for letting the customer know that the company really does know her and value her business, with the ability to treat her as a unique individual with specific experiences, needs and purchasing history, regardless of how or when she interacts with the organization.



- **Social Media** is one of the most likely places for your customers to go to share their experience with your business, be it on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn or even Snapchat. But few companies are leveraging it as a legitimate channel for customer interaction. Only 41% of responders deliver exceptional customer service via social media, according to a 2017 Avaya survey of executives at successful global brands.¹ That needs to change. By interacting with customers on social sites, companies can provide immediate support, turning a negative experience into a positive one right before the public's eye. Organizations can also use social to increase brand recognition, create strong communities, and offer and monitor new promotions, products and services. Best of all, analytics are gathered to identify trends and specific customer needs and buying patterns; the outcomes can then be used to inform and influence everything from pricing to product development.



- **Mobile Customer Care** is table stakes for any company that wants to compete in today's 24/7 world, and it must be included in any omnichannel solution. According to the Avaya survey, 88% of employees spend between 10% and 50% of their time away from their desk or are dependent on a mobile device. Apps designed specifically for the mobile environment can leverage smart phone technology such as speech recognition, instant video, geo-location, SMS and QR codes to deliver a unique customer experience. The key is to integrate these interactions with the broader contact center, ensuring all mobile communications are captured, analyzed and acted upon now and in the future.



- **Text Analytics** makes it possible to analyze new types of customer data, much of which follows non-traditional rules with different linguistic attributes. For example, if a customer tweets "2day I scored a sweet new pair of kicks from XX," you need an analytics tool that can "translate" the language into standard English, put it into context and integrate it with other customer data. But not all text is created equal when it comes to customer communication. A modern solution should not only recognize the patterns and language specific to text-based speech in mobile and social environments to respond accordingly at the moment, but also be able to tag, catalog, analyze, and leverage this information in future instances.

¹ 2017 Avaya-commissioned survey of enterprise-level managers, directors, vice presidents and presidents from successful global brands

Consider social media an opportunity to quickly and publicly turn a negative experience into a positive one—while the whole world watches.

Omnichannel contact centers will, almost by definition, improve the customer experience—after all, giving your customers choices about how to interact with you on their terms can only be well received. But are you getting everything you can from your newest investment? In order to ensure positive results with these technology

Analytics is the Secret Sauce that Spices up the Customer Experience

investments, analytic tools should be able to access data from all the channels you support, all the relevant applications you use from across the entire organization, and all the agents and experts you employ. Until recently, “analytics” meant tracking phone calls to identify repeat contacts and measuring first-call resolution results. But today, even if a call from a customer seemingly results in resolution, the customer may have first tried to use web self-service, then escalated to live chat, then sent an email, and finally, in frustration, placed a call—all before actually getting satisfaction. In that situation, determining the time it took to “resolve” his issue will fall well short of the mark or your established KPIs. So how can businesses get a complete picture of the customer experience? By tying all the channels together, and then applying cross-channel analytics. This ensures not just that the company knows everything it can about a customer’s past and current interactions, but also that it can predict where future interactions may occur—and then turn that data into actionable information.

THE AGENT EXPERIENCE MATTERS, TOO

Companies that want to jump-start the customer experience must pay attention to the agent experience, too. This can start with traditional tools like skills-based routing and CTI that put basic client data at an agent’s fingertips, but for organizations to be successful and win the customer experience, it must go much further to enable authentic, actionable interactions. For example, next-generation routing schemes like attribute matching can provide a single engine across all channels for matching customers directly to the most appropriate agent to handle the interaction. By giving agents the information they need regardless of where it resides in the enterprise—ERP systems, shipping schedules, and so on—and by making it easy for agents to collaborate with anyone in the organization—from supervisors and offer managers, to product and marketing teams—companies can help agents answer customer inquiries faster and more accurately. That will improve not just customer satisfaction scores, but also the metrics on which the agents themselves are judged, leading to better performance and, ideally, recognition and other rewards.

But it’s not all about traditional metrics. Skilled executives know that the most satisfied employees are also the most productive; when people like their jobs, are given the freedom to take action as they see fit and feel like valued members of the team, their performance goes up and turnover rates go down. When companies adopt an omnichannel contact center, they also introduce a much broader range of contact points for the agents who handle them, which has the benefit of matching personality and preference to channel where appropriate. Once they try out the new systems, some agents will naturally gravitate to them, while others will show their worth sticking with traditional channels; either way, the company gets the benefit of matching the right person to the right job, while also driving employee satisfaction, both of which will ultimately benefit the bottom line.

KEY COMPONENTS OF AN OMNICHANNEL CONTACT CENTER

To attain the goal of consistently excellent customer journeys, companies must develop a clear strategy for deploying and integrating any new channels into their existing contact center and back-office systems. This should involve a holistic approach, ensuring that certain departments or managers don’t deploy new tools on their own and that any new initiatives are embraced company-wide to leverage the real benefits of customer data across the organization.

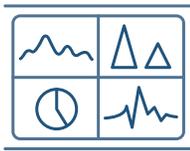
Indeed, if new channels originate in siloed departments without any plans to tie them together, or if the resulting customer data are not shared, you might be *lowering* customer satisfaction even as your goals—and the money you spend to achieve them—are quite the opposite.

When rethinking your contact center, don't forget to include channels that reside outside the traditional system, including social media posts, back-office systems, mobile apps, and even snail mail and in-store contacts. They should also have the flexibility to extend to other channels in the future: telematics, beacons, sensors, environmental factors, geo-location, and so on.

Of course, omnichannel contact centers must include traditional voice, IVR, chat, outbound contacts and web self-service, but they must also expand to newer channels, most especially social and mobile. Beyond those key capabilities, you should also look for a solution that offers the following:



- **End-to-end, software-based platform.** All-in-one deployments let companies activate new capabilities as soon as they're ready to do so, with no obligation to take on too much at once. Integrated platforms also provide centralized administration and management, analytics and reporting, making it easy to incorporate new channels into the broader contact center to get a clear, holistic view of the customer journey.



- **Big data analytics.** Applying analytics to the wide range of data available from all contact channels—and then integrating it with other corporate information, such as product details, supply-chain data, staffing resources, and so on—ensures companies are getting the most complete and up-to-date picture of their customers on individual and aggregate levels. This can give managers valuable insight into prospects' and customers' needs and preferences, and enable truly personalized customer interactions. By including information from every channel the customer touches, companies can also proactively engage with customers that might be in danger of leaving for the competition. And they can even use the data to help shape strategic planning, product development and process improvements throughout the organization.



- **Application integration.** Integrating all customer contact channels is critical to success. This should include a single data repository that captures and stores all data across disparate systems and applications both inside and outside the contact center (including back-office software such as CRM and marketing automation tools); a single agent desktop; centralized management and reporting tools; and web services that make it easy to link new technologies as they are added to your environment.



- **Leveraging employees throughout the enterprise will improve outcomes.** One of the best ways to improve the customer experience is to involve employees outside the contact center to help answer tough questions and deliver exceptional service on a one-on-one basis. These employees know more about the products and services under discussion, and they can often answer inquiries much more quickly as a result. By leveraging tools like presence and advanced routing rules—and by incorporating all ensuing interactions into the contact center platform for later review, assessment and training—companies can make it easy and cost-effective to leverage every employee in putting the customer first.

The Internet of Things (IoT), social media, augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR)—these are just a few of the new technologies that leading-edge companies are looking at to take their customer journeys to the next level. By leveraging data collected in a variety of wearables, sensors and beacons, companies can use the IoT to deliver exactly what customers need in real time, wherever they are and in the proper context. They can also use that information to drive research and development, improve productivity and shrink sales and cycle times. Meanwhile, being proactive with customers across channels, including social media, allows businesses to interact with prospects and customers within the apps and medium they prefer to deliver immediate assistance, updates, promotions and feedback. And finally, AR and VR are turning the gamification of customer service into a reality, making it more fun for customers to interact with the organization while getting the service they expect and the support they need. In doing so, resolution times can be reduced and the potential for increased revenues through driving loyalty with joyful contacts encourages customers to continue to do business with you.

Are You Ready for the Future?

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A VENDOR PARTNER

When you're ready to deploy an omnichannel contact center, choosing the right vendor is critical to success. Look for a partner with deep roots in the market, unmatched industry experience, and a clear and achievable roadmap for the future.

Here are four key pillars to look for:



- **Omnichannel Options** If your goal is to allow your customers to contact you on their channels of choice, you must work with a vendor that can support a full range of engagement, allowing them to use any device—mobile, web, landline phone—anywhere and anytime. But your chosen system should go well beyond basic capabilities to enable contextual contacts by capturing all interaction data, from the past and in real time. The solution should also make it easy to match customers with the right agents, experts, and resources using advanced matching techniques, and deliver seamless transitions so that the handling agent always has the right information right when needed—without any input from the customer.



- **Customer Journey Mapping** The best way to evaluate and enhance your customer experience across every channel is to create visual customer journey workflows that let you see who is doing what, when and how, and to enable agents and resources to drill down easily for further details. But that shouldn't require management or programming expertise. Rather, you should be able to use drag-and-drop tools to assess a customer's journey, evaluate her needs and deliver personalized responses during every interaction. Look for a tool that is intuitive and easy to use to cut down on training time and costs.



- **Advanced Analytics** Your new platform should enable real-time and historical insights into the customer journey, each unique experience, and your operational performance so that you and your agents can always make decisions based on pertinent information and deliver better results across the business.



- **Simple Application Integration and Development** Make sure you can quickly and easily create or embed rich, real-time communications capabilities into your contact center, including teaming and collaboration, and build innovative applications that meet the unique needs of your business.

Finally, make sure your vendor can support a full suite of inclusive and integrated offerings, including professional services, global 24/7 support and managed services as needed.

Avaya Oceana™ is an omnichannel customer engagement solution built on the Avaya Breeze™ platform and designed to give companies the opportunity to create, innovate, optimize and future-proof the customer journey. Real-time decision making and insight into the multi-touch customer journey are delivered by Avaya Oceanalytics™, while Avaya Oceana™ Workspaces provides a complete view of customers across all touch points. Avaya Oceana:

**Avaya Oceana
is Disrupting the
Contact Center**

- Enables customers to interact with organizations using their device of choice, inclusive of mobile devices, information kiosks and IoT, seamlessly connecting all channels to deliver a consistent experience for both the customer and the business;
- Preserves rich context from all customer touch points to enrich and personalize the customer's journey at every point in their interactions;
- Uses attribute matching to manage customer interactions, defining business rules by priority, segment, and behavior to pair customers to the right agents and resources;
- Enables a powerful visualization of the customer journey in context across all touch points, and reports from disparate systems and applications;
- Breaks the silos of traditional analytic tools with the flexible collection, processing and analysis of data across all real-time and historical systems to provide rich data visualization;
- Delivers agent and supervisor desktops to streamline the user experience and allow companies to easily create, customize and integrate with key applications as needed; and
- Extends customer interactions beyond traditional contact center boundaries, giving agents easy access to back-office employees and other experts through presence, chat, voice, video, etc.

CONCLUSION

Today's customers want to be able to engage with businesses on any channel and any device, but they don't want to sacrifice service in the process. To enable joyful journeys and keep your business competitive, your contact center must support a full range of channels, from voice and live chat to automated self-service, social and mobile, and beyond. Those channels must be integrated with each other and any relevant back-end systems, including CRM and sales and marketing automation. And a modern contact center should enable advanced data analytics, so that you can use customer data in real time to proactively identify problems and trends.

To achieve these ends, look for a provider with a full suite of integrated capabilities, advanced analytics, centralized management and reporting, intuitive user interfaces, and excellent service and support. Your successful transformation will enable authentic interactions that inspire your customers to share their stories and drive your revenues, all while streamlining costs and decision making not only in the contact center, but throughout the enterprise.

LEARN MORE

For more information on digital transformation, Avaya Oceana and other customer experience capabilities from Avaya, contact your Avaya Account Manager or Authorized Partner, or visit avaya.com/oceana.

NEXT STEPS



Schedule a meeting with our global team to experience our thought leadership and to integrate your ideas, opportunities and challenges into the discussion.



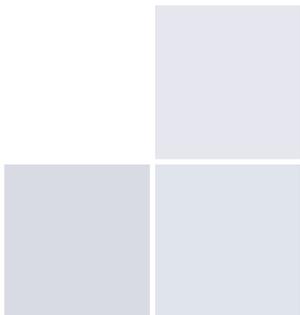
Interested in learning more about the topics covered in this white paper? Call us at 877.GoFrost and reference the paper you're interested in. We'll have an analyst get in touch with you.



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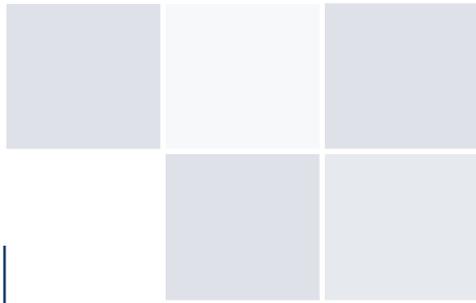


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