

Part 2 | The Evolution of the Contact Centre

Planning for growth

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What did we do?

- Focus-group based qualitative research
- Three waves: August, November, March
- Wave Two featured 11 contact centre leaders from different sectors



Planning horizons

The near term



Manage through uncertainty

Look after colleagues

Establish flexible-working policies

Team-building and organisational culture

Longer term



Build skills and career pathways

Harness the power of customer data

Become the hub for inbound CX

Manage through uncertainty



- We are living during a period of heightened uncertainty
- Customers and colleagues are in need of reassurance

Consistent communication and coherent planning are critically important

“I think we've provided our people with a level of security and stability that the world isn't giving them.”

Look after colleagues



- Signs of fatigue are evident
- Tackle mental health proactively

Spot warning signs early
and follow up

“We've been good at responding when staff have initiated the triggers and we've caught it early. What we need to do better is focus on how we mitigate people actually getting to that point.”

Establish flexible-working policies



- Home working perceived as the “default” option?
- Consider job content and the needs of the organisation alongside those of the individual

How to uphold a consistent and fair approach that balances safety with productivity?

“Treating people fairly doesn’t mean treating everyone the same.”

“We're all in the business of people. And of course, people are anything but binary.”

Team-building and organisational culture



- Threat of job commodisation leading to attrition
- Increasing use of online collaboration tools

Ensure teams have regular planned and spontaneous opportunities to connect

“Are people not as connected to the organisation when they're working from home? And then, do they start looking at opportunities to work for other organisations?”

Build skills and career pathways



- Currently high availability of qualified staff but attrition will rise again once the pandemic is under control
- Increasing mobility to and from other departments

Build out soft and hard skills in role descriptions supported by training and objectives

“We have seen lots of our team progress their career within the company, moving into roles such as account management and business analysts.”

Harness the power of customer data



- Empower agents and help deliver better customer experiences
- Use A/B testing to show how retention, order values can be improved based on contact centre activity

The contact centre is the organisation's repository of customer information

“There's huge interest in terms of data coming through [in the contact centre]. That's how you put the customer at the heart of the organisation - through analysing data, learning from that and taking action from it.”

Become the hub for inbound CX



- Some organisations have consolidated inbound customer activity across all channels into the contact centre team
- Working across sales and marketing as well as operations and customer care

Increasing the contact centre's influence and relevance to other parts of the business

“We want to move away from being just the problem-solving piece and offer an experience that is an extension of what you would get in a store or on one of our flagship websites.”

Five key questions as we look ahead to 2021

1. Can you protect your team and provide them with the certainty, consistency and control they need to stay motivated and healthy?
2. Will you balance the needs of the individual and the organisation when planning resources and flexible working arrangements?
3. Do you anchor remote-working colleagues around the values and purpose of an organisation?
4. Are you offering upskilling and progression pathways to mitigate attrition and facilitate mobility to and from other parts of the organisation?
5. Are you effectively capturing customer insight in your contact centre, and enabling other departments to act on this intelligence?

Thank you!

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