

Elevating and Integrating the Contact Centre



Contact centres have enjoyed a much higher profile over the last year. Their role quickly evolved from a historical downstream channel for customer service to become the upstream face of the organisation.

This recalibration has been backed up by demonstrable success across the sector – not just through the rapid transition to flexible working, but also in terms of being more proactive and adjusting quickly to changing customer demands.

In this CCMA Good Practice Guide, we look at ways that the contact centre can become more strategically important to the wider business. We will also suggest some ways for organisations to unlock increased value by breaking down some of the silos that still impact the customer service experience from an organisational perspective.

Embedding customer engagement across the business

With the contact centre increasing its boardroom exposure, there's a great opportunity to better embed customer engagement within the business. As channels proliferate, the contact centre is involved in a wider range of customer journeys, and is increasingly seen as the focus of the end-to-end customer experience. Bringing together data and insight from interactions across multiple channels, the contact centre is ideally placed to create and manage experiences that make a real difference in terms of customer engagement.

However, if the contact centre is to successfully deliver for the business it has to find ways to translate better customer experiences into tangible business value. Contact centres already have unrivalled insight into critical customer behaviours that can help improve loyalty, drive retention and increase customer lifetime value. Better customer experiences can quickly become a strategic

corporate value, but only if contact centre insights can be shared successfully and enacted across other parts of the business.

Optimal service experiences need to extend beyond the contact centre

Unfortunately, when organisations consider customer service, they typically focus only on the contact centre and the different advisors, assisted service and self-service channels that customers use to interact with organisations. It's easy to forget that the contact centre is only where the actual engagement happens. It doesn't directly solve the underlying problems that customers might be having – that's down to the rest of the business.

If your contact centre advisors are having to rely on a mix of internal emails, calls and chat sessions to get information or drive actions from colleagues in middle- or back-office teams, then it's going to be very difficult to get things done quickly or well, and impossible to have end-to-end visibility across the entire customer journey in your organisation. Delivering an optimal service experience means you have to go further – bringing together all the people, processes and tools that are involved across your entire organisation. And the only way to resolve customer issues quickly and permanently is to break down information silos and automate processes across teams.

Connecting workflows to clean up the 'messy middle'

Customer service typically places a premium on the front-end experience where the customer connects with the advisor. But, beyond engagement, customers quite rightly demand successful

outcomes, and customers don't care how your organisation is organised, or what each team does and is responsible for, they just want their issue resolved, and quickly. Regardless of where or how the request comes in, the ability to resolve customer queries by connecting to the right department within the business is critical to delivering the right results.

This requires much closer links between customer engagement and service operations, connecting the back- and middle-offices to contact centres and self-service, and avoiding the 'messy middle' that can easily delay customer journeys and negatively impact customer satisfaction. This inevitably involves forging closer ties across the business, removing barriers and streamlining co-operation between teams. Organisations that invest in the technology that

allows them to connect customer engagement with the service operations teams will have the greatest chance of bridging the messy middle. The only way to deliver this is to have the right digital workflow infrastructure in place to enable true cross-team, end-to-end customer service.

Uncovering gaps in service delivery – 15 key questions to consider

While every organisation will have its own strength and weaknesses, it's important to identify areas in your own customer engagement, service and field service operations where you can invest time and effort to help streamline workflows. Key areas to investigate that can support a more proactive service approach include:

Customer Engagement	Service Operations	Field Service
Are you looking to reduce contact volumes? Do you provide self-service?	Can you quickly resolve complex issues needing cross-organisational input?	Does your team need to perform services at multiple locations?
Is it easy for customers to complete requests or find answers on their own?	Can everyone across the business see task assignments/status for each case?	Do you consider workload, location and past experience when scheduling field service employees?
Can you route customer requests to the advisors with the right skills & capacity?	Are you able to monitor customer products/services to spot potential issues?	Can you dynamically update schedules as higher priority tasks come in?
Can you guide advisors through the right process steps for each customer case?	Do you track performance across teams to identify improvement opportunities?	Are your field employees able to safely perform their work while documenting their steps via checklists?
Do you have real-time visibility into service delivery metrics and SLAs?	Do you have an auditable process trail for issues that involve multiple teams?	Do your field colleagues have all the information and equipment needed before they arrive at a job?

Move towards smart digital workflows

Once any areas for improvement have been identified, cross-company teams can begin to build a more structured work approach with connected digital workflows that link the back and middle offices to the front office. Adopting a workflow-based approach can help unlock key benefits including:

- **Customer Engagement** – expand capacity via self-service, while also empowering advisors to resolve customer issues from a more intelligent workspace
- **Service Operations** – break down silos and automate processes across teams to not only resolve single customer requests but also resolve root cause issues permanently
- **Field Service** – apply dynamic scheduling to automate field service tasks, track customer cases via mobile applications and maximise uptime for customers.

Examining all aspects of customer engagement, service operations and field service – and understanding their specific interactions and interdependencies – is core to uncovering any broken processes. Traditionally these service gaps are the reason why contact centre advisors have to fall back on a mixture of internal emails, phone calls, and chat apps to either get to the answers they need or drive a response from middle and back office teams.

Connecting workflows across the front, middle and back offices makes sure you have all the pieces you need working together – giving you the confidence to scale your customer service, beyond just the contact centre, for whatever comes next for your business.

Learn more at: servicenow.com/customer-workflows