

Contact Centre:

2030

A CCMA Research Initiative

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Contact Centre: 2030 is the documented output and summarisation of a series of leadership roundtables hosted by CCMA with support from Genesys, in which senior leaders came together during three separate sessions in Spring/Summer 2025 to explore these vital themes and how their respective organisations might be impacted by changes related to each.

Their views and insights were fascinating, candid and deeply rooted in the knowledge of the subject matter, helping to guide the majority of the content in this report. Our thanks and gratitude go out to all our members who supported the programme and who helped us paint a picture of what the not-so-distant future looks like in our industry.

Over the next five years, three fundamental shifts will reshape the contact centre industry: how people work, what customers expect and where organisations find value.

People Strategies will transform as AI assumes routine tasks, pushing human advisors toward complex problem-solving and emotionally-charged interactions. Success depends on redefining recruitment, reimagining training and creating career pathways that attract talent to an evolving profession.

Customer Experience faces competing pressures: aging populations demanding voice channels and personal relationships versus digital natives expecting instant, text-based interactions. Hyper-personalisation, proactive service and the trust economy will define competitive advantage.

Value Creation emerges as contact centres evolve from cost centres to strategic intelligence hubs. Analytics, AI collaboration and cross-functional insight-sharing will position customer operations at the executive table, measuring success not by efficiency alone but by commercial, emotional and societal value delivered.

Leigh Hopwood, CEO, CCMA



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People Strategies: 2030

The Human Question in an AI-Driven Future

Prophesising about 2030 may seem paradoxical, given the imminent nature of the year in question. And yet, such is the current pace of change, that the coming five years are expected to represent a unique period of rapid transformation for contact centres and the organisations they operate within – especially when looked at through the lens of their people strategies, the customer experiences they provide and their value proposition.

When assessing future people strategies, specifically, it's hard to avoid the artificial intelligence (AI) debate. The emergence of agentic AI – systems capable of making independent decisions and performing tasks without human intervention – challenges traditional assumptions about workforce planning, skill requirements and the very nature of customer service work.

Leadership perspectives reveal a spectrum of

possibilities, from scenarios where AI handles the majority of transactional work, to hybrid models where humans and machines collaborate as equals.

Whatever the chosen path, a new consensus appears to be emerging: rather than wholesale replacement, AI is expected to fundamentally reshape what humans do in the contact centre – and how they add value.

The Evolution of Advisor Roles

The frontline advisor of 2030 is likely to operate in a markedly different environment to now. As AI assumes responsibility for routine interactions, human advisors are expected to increasingly focus on complex problem-solving, emotionally-charged situations and vulnerable customer support. These are areas where empathy, judgment and lived experience remain irreplaceable.

This shift carries profound implications for both job satisfaction and operational stress. While advisors may handle fewer calls overall, the interactions they manage will be consistently challenging, requiring sustained emotional intelligence and advanced decision-making capabilities. Organisations will be required to manage these heightened demands placed on their frontline colleagues and crucially, protect their wellbeing.

Recruitment and the Generational Shift

The contact centre industry could face fundamental recruitment challenges as the profile of ideal candidates evolves. Traditional entry-level roles are predicted to reduce in numbers, while role variety across the contact centre is expected to increase. The skills and qualifications required at all levels will therefore change markedly, also.

How Do Contact Centre Leaders Predict Frontline Roles to Change?

- From technical knowledge retention to prompt engineering and AI collaboration
- From following 'scripts' to exercising judgment on complex cases
- From volume handling to quality outcomes in challenging scenarios
- From individual task completion to end-to-end journey ownership
- From reactive problem-solving to proactive insight generation

A younger generation of workforce represent a clear opportunity. Digital natives demonstrate natural comfort with technology, multitasking across platforms and adapting to AI-augmented workflows. Many have grown up gaming, giving them innate skills in managing multiple simultaneous interactions - a natural fit for multi-channel digital contact centre environments.

However, this generation's communication preferences skew heavily toward text-based interaction, raising questions about voice channel capabilities. Organisations must balance leveraging these digital strengths while developing traditional interpersonal

capabilities that remain critical for complex customer interactions.

The traditional 'recruit for attitude, train for skill' philosophy may still apply, but the definition of required attitudes is expanding to include technological curiosity, adaptability to constant change and comfort with AI collaboration.

Training and Development Transformation

As AI handles system navigation and information retrieval, it is largely agreed that training and development programmes will need to evolve in order to meet changing requirements. Multi-week





Expected Future Training Priorities for Contact Centre Leaders

- Empathy and active listening for complex emotional situations
- Judgment and decision-making in ambiguous scenarios
- Collaboration skills for team-based problem resolution
- Prompt engineering: Learning to interact effectively with personal AI assistants
- Continuous learning mindset as technology evolves rapidly

training courses focused on technical procedures will likely become obsolete. Instead, development will emphasise conversational skills, emotional intelligence, vulnerability awareness and the ability to have meaningful customer dialogues.

Automated quality assurance tools enable 100% conversation monitoring, creating unprecedented coaching opportunities. AI can identify patterns, suggest improvements and provide personalised training recommendations based on individual performance data. However, this raises important questions about surveillance, trust and the balance between automated feedback and human coaching relationships.

Traditional contact centre hierarchies may flatten as AI assumes supervisory functions such as call routing optimisation and real-time performance monitoring. However, new roles will emerge: prompt engineers

who optimise AI interactions, AI oversight managers who ensure system decisions align with organisational values and content engineers who maintain knowledge bases.

Increasingly, 'storytellers' are of great value in contact centres – professionals who can interpret interaction data, spot patterns and identify customer experience improvements and value drivers.

AI dominates discussion about the human's role in the contact centre, but that doesn't mean the human is being replaced. Organisations must urgently address how to make contact centre careers attractive to the talent they'll need. This includes developing clear progression routes, offering competitive compensation that reflects increased skill requirements and positioning contact centre experience as valuable preparation for broader organisational roles.

Emerging Contact Centre Careers

- AI collaboration specialists
- Vulnerability and complex case experts
- Knowledge management and content engineering
- Customer insight analysts
- Process improvement and automation designers



Managing the Human-AI Balance

Perhaps the most critical question facing contact centre leaders is establishing which decisions should remain exclusively human. While AI may achieve higher accuracy and consistency in many judgment areas, customer and colleague acceptance of machine-made decisions remains uncertain.

High-stakes decisions affecting customer welfare, financial outcomes or organisational reputation will likely require human validation for the foreseeable future – not necessarily because AI cannot make these decisions well, but because accountability, empathy and trust demand human involvement.

Organisations must establish clear governance frameworks that define which decisions AI can make autonomously, which require human validation,

which remain exclusively human domains and how accountability is assigned when AI recommendations lead to poor outcomes.

The Path Forward

The contact centre workforce of 2030 should be more skilled, better compensated and focused on higher-value activities than today's operations.

However, the exact timeline for this transformation remains uncertain – technology may advance more slowly than anticipated, customer acceptance may lag, or business cases may prove challenging. Despite this, the direction seems clear: success requires organisations to begin preparing now, developing new training approaches, creating attractive career pathways, building AI collaboration capabilities and fostering cultures that embrace continuous change.





Customer Experience: 2030

Competing with 'Yesterday's Best Experience'

The rules of customer experience are being rewritten. Organisations say they are no longer competing solely against direct rivals within their sectors - they compete against the 'last exceptional experience their customer received from any company, anywhere'. This shift from service economy to experience economy places unprecedented pressure on contact centres to deliver emotional connections that match expectations set by entirely different industries.

The question customers now ask is simple: "How did it make me feel?" This emotional dimension has become the new currency of loyalty, requiring contact centres to evolve beyond transactional efficiency toward delivering memorable, personalised interactions that build lasting relationships. All with the spectre of AI hanging over them.

The Demographic Transformation

The UK's age demographics are in the midst of an important shift. Close to half of the population will be over 50 years of age by 2030, with more people over 65 than under 15 - a ratio that will characterise the entire world by 2070. The UK population is projected to reach 72.5m by 2032.

This aging population brings specific requirements that contact centres must address. Research demonstrates that verbal ability remains one of the cognitive functions best retained in older age, suggesting continued demand for voice channels even as digital adoption increases. Older consumers typically seek interpersonal relationships with brands and will delegate choice to trusted providers, take longer making simple decisions, and experience reduced tolerance for time pressure.

Simultaneously, digital natives bring contrasting behaviours. Raised on multitasking and constant connectivity, this generation exhibits deteriorating concentration spans but excels at managing multiple simultaneous interactions. Their communication preferences skew heavily toward text-based channels, creating tension between demographic groups with fundamentally different service expectations.

The Hyper-Personalisation Imperative

The customer of 2030 is likely to be far more expectant around customer experience factors pertaining to immediacy, omnipresence, proactive service and hyper-personalisation powered by AI and big data. Real-time customisation will likely become a standard expectation rather than premium feature, with customers increasingly developing emotional connections with AI-powered tools.

The rise of 'me-commerce' – shopping experiences tailored precisely to individual preferences, behaviours, and contexts – could force some contact centres to move beyond segment-based approaches and toward genuinely individualised service strategies. This requires integration of data across touchpoints, sophisticated analytics capabilities and AI systems

that can detect and respond to emotional states in real-time.

Organisations are already deploying technology that flags vulnerability and emotional distress during interactions, enabling appropriate escalation and support. However, the challenge lies in balancing personalisation with privacy concerns, regulatory compliance and the fundamental question of how much customers actually want companies to know about them.

Channel Strategy and the Trust Economy

The perpetual question – “What channels do consumers want?” – receives an increasingly straightforward answer from contact centre and customer experience leaders: whatever channel works best for their specific need at that moment. However, contact centres face difficult strategic choices about whether to maintain broad channel coverage or concentrate resources on fewer channels executed excellently.

Trust has emerged as a mega-trend defining customer relationships. The proliferation of deepfakes, social engineering attacks and sophisticated fraud schemes



What are the Future Channel Considerations for Contact Centre Leaders?

- WhatsApp and messaging platforms: Will they remain relevant or become outdated?
- Voice channels: Critical for aging populations and high-emotion situations
- Seamless omnichannel: Expected but difficult to execute effectively
- Proactive outreach: Moving from reactive to predictive service delivery
- Premium tiers: Should superior channels require premium payment?



creates an environment where customers struggle to distinguish legitimate from fraudulent contacts. Fraudsters remain consistently ahead of defensive measures, exploiting romance scams, impersonation tactics and increasingly convincing AI-generated content.

Paradoxically, research suggests customers may trust well-designed robots more than humans in certain contexts. AI systems can provide consistent, unbiased responses free from judgment or frustration. However, this trust remains fragile – a single failure can destroy confidence permanently.

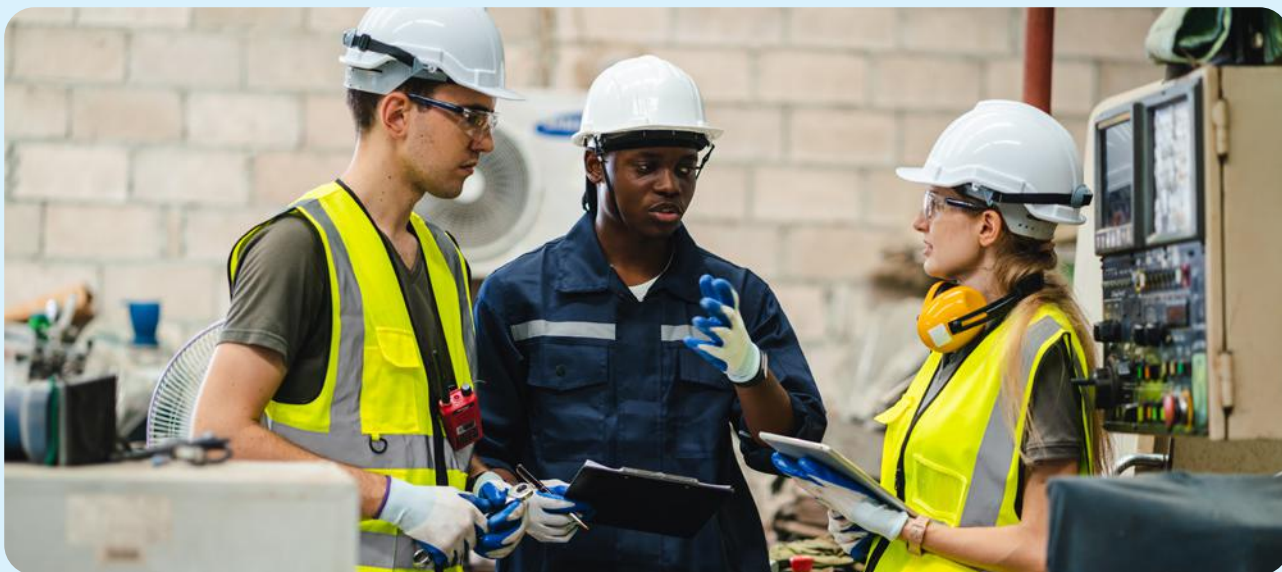
Contact centres must balance seamless experiences with robust security measures. Biometric authentication, behavioural analytics and multi-factor verification protect customers but add friction to journeys. The challenge intensifies as AI ‘agents’

become more sophisticated and customers cannot reliably distinguish human from AI interactions.

Proactive Service as Competitive Advantage

The contact centre of 2030 will operate more proactively than ever before, spotting problems before customers encounter them and resolving issues without requiring contact. Organisations are already experimenting with alerting customers to service disruptions before they occur, using predictive analytics to identify at-risk accounts and deploying AI to monitor for early warning signals across customer journeys.

This proactive approach fundamentally changes how customers experience service. Rather than waiting for problems to arise and then contacting the organisation for help, customers increasingly benefit from organisations anticipating needs and resolving issues before they’re even aware problems exist.



Where Do Leaders Think Proactive Service Might Be Applied?

- Predictive maintenance alerts before service failures occur
- Automatic refunds and compensation without customer requests
- Personalised recommendations based on life events and behavioural patterns
- Cross-organisational collaboration to resolve systemic issues
- Real-time journey optimisation based on friction detection

This shift reduces customer effort, builds trust and transforms the relationship from transactional to protective.

However, proactive service must be carefully calibrated. Customers want organisations to prevent problems and alert them to relevant issues, but they don't want to feel monitored or inundated with unnecessary communications. The challenge for 2030 will be identifying the right moments for proactive outreach – those genuine opportunities to add value – while respecting customer preferences for when and how they're contacted.

Keeping the Humanity Within the 'Perfect' CX

An uncomfortable question faces the industry: Should premium human contact become a paid service in a world where AI handles standard interactions? This tiered approach arguably already exists informally – some organisations make human contact deliberately difficult, using friction to encourage digital

adoption. However, explicit pricing risks backlash from customers who expect human service as a fundamental right rather than premium feature.

Despite automation advances, preserving humanity in customer service remains essential. The 'perfect' customer experience of 2030, as described by industry leaders, involves proactive service that prevents problems before they occur, intuitive systems that understand individual needs without explanation, and seamless collaboration across organisational boundaries. Critically, it includes appropriate human contact when needed, not inundation with unnecessary communications.



Value Centre: 2030

From Cost Centre to Value Generator

The next five years will mark a decisive shift in how organisations perceive and position their contact centres. By 2030, the era of the contact centre as a 'cost to be contained' will largely have given way to one in which these operations are recognised as dynamic value generators – sources of intelligence, innovation, care and sustainable growth.

For decades, contact centres have been judged on operational metrics: handle times, occupancy rates and cost per contact. But efficiency alone no longer defines success. The contact centre of 2030 will be measured on the value it delivers across the organisation – commercial, emotional and societal. Contact Centre Leaders increasingly say they speak in the “language of the finance department” and heightened their focus on quantifying how great

service prevents churn, drives advocacy and informs better strategic decisions.

From Contact to Care Centre

As automation and self-service remove high-volume, low-value work, the remaining interactions are of higher stakes. Customers in distress, navigating vulnerability, or managing sensitive financial or health issues require more than efficiency – they require care. Delivering that care consistently demands specific capabilities. Frontline colleagues will need even deeper emotional intelligence, supported by AI systems that surface contextual insights and guide next-best actions. Organisations will also need to design journeys that balance empathy with empowerment – knowing when human connection adds value and when well-designed self-service can be more supportive.

Key Indicators of the Value Centre Mindset

- From cost containment to value creation
- From transactional metrics to strategic outcomes
- From service delivery to customer insight generation
- From isolated operation to enterprise connector
- From reactive support to proactive care



Analytics as the Engine of Value

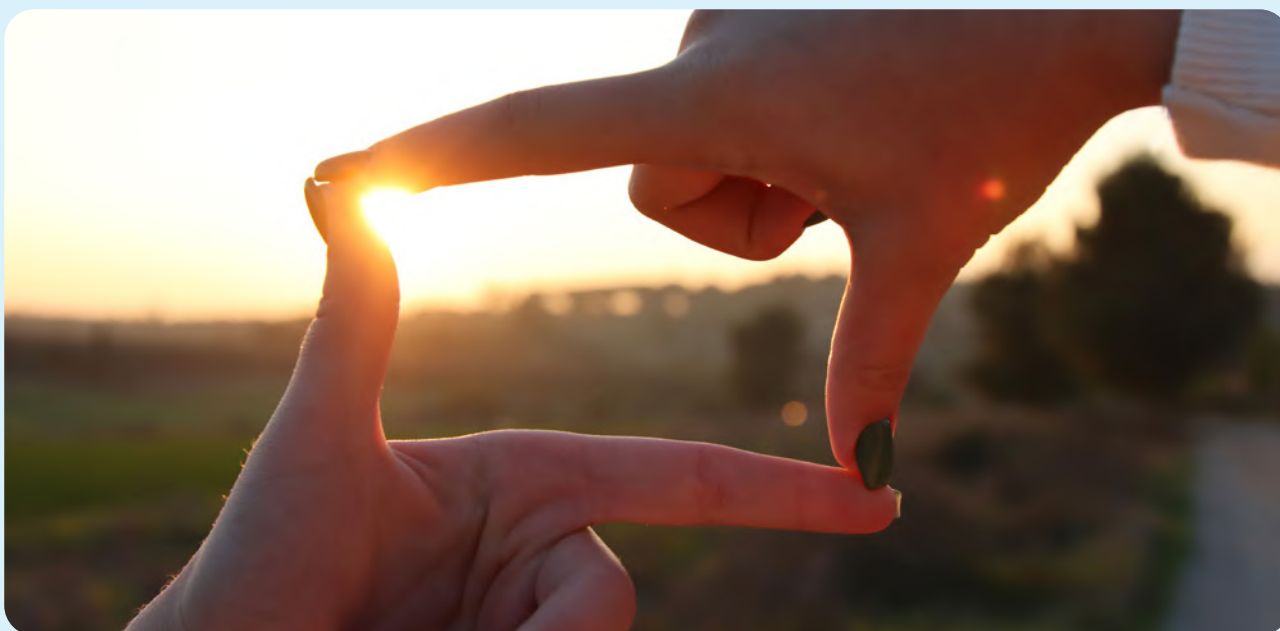
Perhaps the clearest marker of the shift toward value lies in how contact centres are now using data. Advanced analytics – once viewed primarily as a performance management tool – has become a strategic engine for insight and innovation. Quality management automation is freeing analysts to focus less on scoring calls and more on identifying emerging themes, customer needs and product feedback.

Forward-thinking leaders are no longer asking how to reduce contacts but how to learn from them. Protecting the volume and quality of customer interactions has become a strategic priority. While efficiency remains important, leaders recognise that reducing contact volume too aggressively can actually diminish the organisation's ability to understand customers and detect emerging issues.

The goal shifts from minimising interactions to maximising the value extracted from each one – ensuring customers can reach the organisation when they need to, while using those touchpoints to generate actionable intelligence. Each interaction represents a data point that can influence marketing, product design, pricing and risk management.

When these insights are systematically shared across departments, the contact centre becomes a live sensor network for the organisation, capable of detecting weak signals long before they appear in traditional reporting.

A major caveat exists, of course. Value is only likely to be fully unlocked when silos are removed. Too often, customer data has remained trapped within operational departments, slowing responsiveness and diminishing potential impact. For the 'connected



Key Levers for Value Creation

- Real-time analytics for proactive action
- Automation of quality management
- Cross-functional sharing of customer insights
- Unified data ecosystems connecting CRM and CCaaS
- Storytelling that turns analytics into influence



contact centre' of 2030 to exist, it will rely on unified data architectures and seamless integration between systems – creating a single ecosystem where insight flows freely to those who can act on it.

The AI Dividend and Hybrid Models

Artificial intelligence is not only transforming how customers are served, it is reshaping how value is created and distributed. Leaders are now increasingly of the opinion that AI will give contact centres a seat at the executive table. When service operations generate intelligence that informs strategy, pricing and product development, their influence grows exponentially.

At the same time, the arrival of agentic AI introduces both opportunity and risk. Customers can now deploy their own 'personal concierge' bots to negotiate renewals, raise complaints, or query policies on their behalf. Organisations must prepare for a future in which interactions may well occur between machines as often as between people, ensuring regulatory compliance, data protection and ethical oversight keep pace with innovation.

The real breakthrough will come from hybrid 'human-in-the-loop' models, where AI and people collaborate

dynamically. The most successful contact centres of 2030 will not automate indiscriminately but will almost certainly design for balance – using automation to remove friction while preserving humanity where it matters most.

Sustainability and Governance

By 2030, carbon efficiency may sit alongside cost efficiency as a core performance indicator. The push to digitise must be matched by awareness of environmental trade-offs, from server energy use to the carbon footprint of offshore delivery.

Artificial intelligence is carbon-intensive, and so a significant indicator of its required use in contact centres may come from justifying the environmental impact of doing so. Leaders are increasingly aware that customer interactions now come with a 'carbon footprint' and an impact on their organisation's ESG (environmental, social and governance) credentials.

Governance is often the most undervalued part of the ESG agenda. However, as AI and automation reshape customer interaction, regulators are responding with new governance requirements.

Responsible Value Principles

- Build 'friction for good' into critical decisions
- Maintain human oversight in high-stakes interactions
- Ensure transparency in AI-led decisions
- Use customer data ethically and purposefully
- Align automation goals with organisational mission



For instance, in sectors such as financial services, the introduction of 'friction for good' demonstrates growing recognition that some journeys should not be entirely seamless. When decisions carry financial, emotional or social risk, human judgment and pause points protect both customer and organisation. The once utopian view of the 'seamless interaction' of the future may come with the occasional asterisk.

Future regulation will likely continue balancing innovation with protection, demanding evidence that automation enhances outcomes without introducing bias or harm. Contact centres – long accustomed to operating in controlled, auditable environments – are well-positioned to lead on responsible design, demonstrating how technology and human oversight can co-exist transparently and ethically.

The Connected Value Centre of 2030

The contact centre of 2030 requires more than technological transformation – it demands cultural evolution that connects people strategies, customer experience excellence and value creation into a unified vision.

People form the foundation. Advisors, team leaders and analysts must understand how their work contributes to organisational value, requiring new skills in data literacy, storytelling and cross-functional collaboration. The workforce will evolve as automation reduces repetitive work, freeing people to become business improvement specialists, content engineers,

AI trainers, or strategic advisors influencing product design and brand strategy.

Customer experience remains the ultimate measure of success. The connected value centre balances efficiency with empathy, automation with humanity, and proactive service with appropriate restraint. It recognises that value emerges not from eliminating customer contact but from making every interaction meaningful – whether that's resolving complex problems, supporting vulnerable customers or building emotional connections that drive loyalty.

Strategic value completes the transformation. When contact centres generate intelligence informing strategy, pricing and product development, they secure influence at executive tables. Success requires building systems that connect data across silos, cultures that prioritise insight-sharing and strategies recognising that every conversation and data point carries measurable value.

The transformation from cost centre to value centre is well underway. The challenge for leaders is sustaining momentum – creating contact centre operations that are critical, connected and valued components of the organisations they serve.

By 2030, those who succeed will have built something greater than efficient service delivery: they will have created strategic assets that drive commercial growth, deliver exceptional human experiences and contribute positively to society.



About the CCMA

For more than 30 years, the CCMA has been dedicated to supporting contact centre leaders. We push ourselves to do more for our thriving membership base, which is the largest community of industry professionals in the UK.

The CCMA was founded with the goal of sharing best practice and networking to improve skills and knowledge in order to progress contact centre operations – and we live by that to this day.

We give those who work in contact centres the chance to discuss ideas and share experiences through member-only Special Interest Groups and online and in-person events. Member organisations are invited to become Accredited through the Contact Centre Standards Framework and get independent guidance on where they can improve. There is the opportunity to compare operations against industry standards and 25+ KPIs, via our annual CCMA Benchmark.

Our training arm, CCMA Academy gives contact centre professionals at all levels a structured learning opportunity to support both personal and professional development for the benefit of their operations. We also celebrate the progress our industry is making through the UK National Contact Centres Awards. Those that win go on to share their stories through channels such as the UK National Contact Centre Conference, Best Practice Visits and CareerTalk, while also providing input into our Special Interest Groups and other events.

www.ccma.org.uk

About Genesys

Genesys empowers organisations of all sizes to improve loyalty and business outcomes by creating the best experiences for their customers and employees. Through Genesys Cloud, the AI-Powered Experience Orchestration platform, organisations can accelerate growth by delivering empathetic, personalised experiences at scale to drive customer loyalty, workforce engagement, efficiency and operational improvements.

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