

How Collaborative Communications Improves the Customer Experience

White Paper



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Today, instant gratification is the norm, and it's harder than ever for businesses to create and retain loyal customer bases. To compete effectively, companies must invest in creating a positive customer experience (CX) for everybody who encounters their brand.

Unfortunately, there's a disconnect between customer service expectations and customer service delivery. A study by [Ovum](#) indicates that 76% of customers will quit doing business with a company following a bad customer experience. Furthermore, consumer surveys consistently show that customers are becoming increasingly intolerant of bad experiences. In fact, a 2017 [Ombudsman Services](#) report estimated that UK businesses lose about £37 billion every year due to bad customer service.

When customers have a bad experience, approximately one-third

respond by spending less on that brand—and may even switch to a rival, according to the Ovum study. Dissatisfied consumers are also more likely to complain to others or leave bad online reviews and social posts, which can cause significant damage to a brand and its profitability.

With [Gartner](#) declaring CX as the number one way enterprises can differentiate themselves from the competition, businesses everywhere are starting to understand the impact customer experience has on their bottom line.

The challenge of delivering great CX

Enterprises that know how to adapt and change quickly to suit the needs and preferences of their customers can differentiate themselves from their competitors. Delivering great customer service and quickly responding to and solving customer problems earns repeat customers and brand loyalty. The challenge is that many businesses are using antiquated on-premises PBX systems that cause delays in getting calls to the right recipients. Not only that, but their equipment incurs high maintenance, repair, and downtime costs—and these tend to increase with age. As businesses grow internationally and add disparate communication systems by country, calls move less seamlessly across borders.

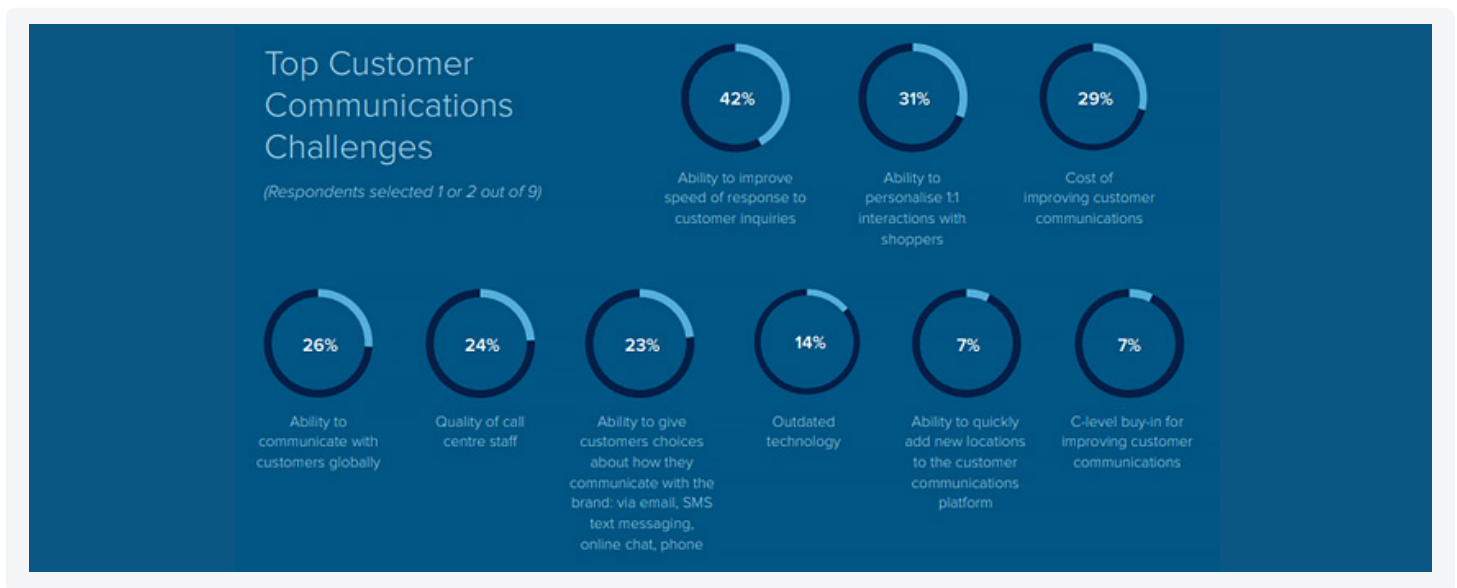
In addition, many businesses separate communications by channel and have one team and technology for phone calls, another for social media, and yet another for chat and chatbots. But customers expect service agents to be up to date and knowledgeable about their issue even if they reach out via a different channel from their last contact. Disparate communication channels also challenge employees—70% of workers say their communications volume is a challenge to getting their work done, and 66% want a single platform that integrates all their communications, according to a [CITE Research study commissioned by RingCentral](#).

Integrated cloud communications and collaboration technology lets businesses connect with customers, partners, and teams anywhere and on any device to offer premium customer service.

The ideal system should offer:

- A broad choice of communication channels for customers
- Analytics so businesses can understand customer preferences and trends
- Support for quickly responding to and resolving issues on the first call
- The ability to route calls to the most suitable agent rather than simply the next available one, and interactive voice response (IVR) for quicker resolution to problems and inquiries
- Unified communications and the ability to integrate tools so agents don't need to switch applications so frequently to resolve inquiries

With effective workflows and the right technology, businesses can address customer needs quickly and effectively, regardless of which communication method the customer prefers.



*According to a survey of the retail industry by Retail TouchPoints.

Successful CX starts with omnichannel communications

Businesses with a large volume of customer calls benefit from a contact centre, which automates and coordinates all contact between the organisation and its customers. As such, the contact centre is becoming a strategic function within the business. But not all contact centre solutions are created equal.

Many contact centres support email and phone, which are traditionally the most popular methods for communicating with customers. But consumers increasingly are using digital channels such as the web, applications, voice response systems, online chat, or social media to connect with businesses. And in an age in which modern smartphones provide unlimited access to information and services anytime, anywhere, user expectations are heightened. And customers expect to engage with businesses through any channel, from the device of their choice, at any time.

That means the contact centre of today must not only support all the communication channels customers expect, but also connect

them so users can easily carry the conversation from one to another. Cloud communications and collaboration systems connect traditionally disparate forms of communications so that agents can engage with customers on their channels of choice, view contact history, and access other relevant data. This omnichannel communications ability helps make for a more seamless and better overall customer experience.

According to Aberdeen, companies that engage in **omnichannel communications** post some dramatic results:



Personalisation through integration

As digital leaders like Amazon, Facebook, and Netflix add personalisation, convenience, and elevated service levels, they raise the stakes for businesses across all industries. Analysts concur that personalisation is a crucial digital investment. [Forrester](#) says, “Personalisation is no longer optional for delivering exceptional customer experiences.” And [McKinsey](#) says personalisation can reduce acquisition costs by as much as **50%**, lift revenues by **5–15%**, and increase the efficiency of marketing spend by **10–30%**.

To meet consumers’ expectations of a more relevant, personalised relationship, all the applicable data—customer purchase history,

loyalty membership, previous communications, even browsing history—needs to be available in real time and from every touchpoint. This includes associates, marketing engines, and especially customer service personnel. Traditional, on-premises communications solutions make this difficult because they lack the required integrations to bring all this data together.

Cloud communications and collaboration systems with open APIs address this challenge by making it easy and inexpensive to leverage APIs to enable seamless data exchange with key systems. Instant access to vital contextual customer data enables your employees to deliver better service and engagement with

customers and prospects. Cloud communications and collaboration systems allow businesses to enhance key applications with an integrated communications solution, so employees have more time

to deliver satisfied engagements. Often, native integrations already are available for popular CRM applications such as Salesforce or Oracle and help desk systems like Zendesk.

AI and analytics are critical to the future of modern CX

Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to redefine the customer service experience. Consider these AI use cases for customer communication:

- Virtual agent learning engines improve performance over time based on their interaction with customers. Chatbots and **natural language processing (NLP)** can leverage these continual improvements to solve customer issues faster and more efficiently than before, saving contact centre agents' time.
- Assistants, powered by AI, NLP, and speech analytics, dynamically support agents by accessing a knowledge base to gain contextual information while the agents' is engaging with a customer.

- AI-powered routing engines use behavioural analysis to detect intent and optimise skills-based routing, connecting customers to the best available person to handle the interaction.
- AI-powered workforce optimisation solutions leverage machine learning and improve performance over time.
- Intelligent cross-selling and upselling engines align scripts, customer insights, and propensity to buy to power improved performance.

Modern enterprises using cloud communications and collaboration systems can integrate AI to take advantage of powerful analytics, help improve team productivity, and enhance the customer experience.

Closing the customer communications gap with cloud communications

To keep up with rising consumer expectations, enterprises are rushing to transform their digital processes and infrastructure. A modern cloud communications platform designed around real-time collaboration brings all forms of customer communications onto the same platform and overcomes multiple barriers:

- **Faster speed of service.** Cloud communications systems remove the roadblocks an antiquated PBX system causes, so customer communications quickly reach the right places.
- **Lower costs.** Cloud eliminates many equipment, maintenance, and downtime costs; the only local hardware is the handset or device.
- **Global reach.** Cloud platforms easily cross international borders with one system.
- **Personalised interactions.** The personalised experience today's customers demand requires agents to access customer history and preferences. Cloud architecture makes it much easier to make CRM systems accessible via all forms of customer engagement.
- **Seamless cross-channel communications.** Many enterprises operate separate solutions for phone, text, chat, chatbots, and

social media communications. But customers expect customer service representatives to be up to date on their issue even if they reach out via a different channel. A unified cloud solution means communications are integrated and readily available from the same digital contact centre platform.

- **Access across the customer journey.** Customers have different reasons to reach out depending on where they are in their purchasing journey. It's important to be able to offer an array of choices to contact the brand at every step, with visibility to the customer's entire history, a capability enabled by cloud.
- **Collaborative capabilities.** Customers are not the only ones who need help. A unified cloud solution also enables employees to quickly and easily access product expertise whether it's in another location, at headquarters, or even on the go.

By evolving away from old-school, problematic, siloed communications methods, organisations can align their communications with the fast and personalised interactions that today's digitally savvy consumers demand.

For more information, please contact a sales representative. Visit ringcentral.co.uk or call 0800 098 8136.

RingCentral, Inc. (NYSE: RNG) is a leading provider of global enterprise cloud communications, collaboration, and contact centre solutions. More flexible and cost-effective than legacy on-premises systems, RingCentral empowers modern mobile and distributed workforces to communicate, collaborate, and connect from any location, on any device, and via any mode. RingCentral provides unified voice, video meetings, team messaging, digital customer engagement, and integrated contact centre solutions for enterprises globally. RingCentral's open platform integrates with leading business apps and enables customers to easily customise business workflows. RingCentral is headquartered in Belmont, California, and has offices around the world.