Appian

The New Reality for Customer Engagement

HOW TECHNOLOGY IS SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONTACT CENTERS

The contact center has long been at the core of successfully serving customers, but times are changing. New customer expectations across all facets of engagement are challenging how traditional centers operate.

MARKET CONDITIONS ARE CHANGING

Customers want personalized experiences, effortless interactions, and quickly resolved inquiries with a single touchpoint. They also expect convenience and an equal quality of service across a variety of communication channels.

Increasing Complexity

Organizations are adding more communication channels including chat, social media, SMS, and others. As digital channels begin to handle more transactional requests through automation, the customer interactions that reach agents will be more complex.

Contact center agents are already faced with increased complexity, often having to interact with upwards of 20 systems and applications to serve customers. This burden leads to inefficiencies and poor customer satisfaction. Siloed operations, processes, and systems present significant barriers to quality customer experience (CX) and prevent contact centers from effectively integrating new technologies and communication channels.

Emerging Technology

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is disrupting contact centers and the role of agents. Forrester found that 4 in 10 contact center decision-makers are exploring the use of AI technologies to differentiate their service.[1] Contact centers need to understand how they can incorporate chatbots, virtual assistants, predictive personalization, voice sentiment analysis, and other AI-infused approaches in their service strategy to improve CX and stay ahead of competitors.

Contact centers are also adopting robotics to augment human interactions. Robotic Process Automation (RPA) allows information to be processed faster and more accurately, leading to increased productivity and higher customer satisfaction. Mckinsey suggests that robots will be able to fully resolve 30% to 50% of all requests, which can double productivity while reducing costs by half. [2]

Evolving Compliance

With new and evolving regulatory compliance requirements, and the security measures needed to prevent fraud, organizations are revisiting the importance of data management and process practices. Laws like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) are pushing contact centers to reconsider the way they handle customer data and requests.

Insufficient data security can have serious consequences, from monetary fines to a tarnished reputation. The Ponemon Institute reports that the average total cost of a single data breach in 2018 was $3.86 million[3] — a preventable statistic with the right technology and processes in place.

CONTACT CENTER LEADERS ARE RESPONDING

Contact center leaders face immense pressure to optimize CX, achieve operational performance metrics, ensure compliance, and deliver on strategic business initiatives.

Providing a Concierge Experience

The traditional contact center approach—operating on a tiered methodology with escalation and resolution being handled by multiple agents—will no longer suffice. Customers demand that agents resolve their issues in real time, on first contact. Organizations must respond by providing concierge-level CX, meaning they understand and anticipate customer needs, and agents have all the necessary information to provide personalized service. This allows customers to experience:

• Reduced wait and processing times
• Faster call resolution
• Personalized content
• Seamless engagement across channels
• Proactive service
• Confidence that information is handled securely

McKinsey recommends that contact center leaders "reorient their businesses away from a singular focus on day-to-day operations and cost cutting and toward anticipating evolving customer expectations and providing a portfolio of tailored interaction models to meet them." [4]

To achieve this, organizations have to bring together engagement channels, customer journey touchpoints, and smart decisioning into a single, intuitive interface to support front-line employees.

Creating Universal Agent Capabilities

At the same time, there is pressure to increase agent productivity. High agent attrition rates and disparate systems and tools make this especially challenging. Training programs are not enough. As more complicated and higher-value transaction interactions are funneled through the contact center, agents must have the skills, knowledge, and technology empowerment to effectively resolve any customer query, personalize interactions, and go the extra mile.

Forrester predicts that in the next 10 years "cognitive contact centers will incorporate artificial intelligence to personalize agent/customer matching, augment agent capabilities, and offload management tasks, allowing firms to focus more on strategy."[5]

The value chain must be redefined to go beyond human agents to include AI assistance, machine learning, Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, and emerging technologies—to help guide agents as interactions become increasingly complex.

Delivering on Strategic Business Initiatives

Organizations have started to realize the immense value of the contact center in engaging with customers. In an age where it's hard to deliver differentiated CX, improving day-to-day interactions with customers is a golden opportunity. Contact center leaders are coming to the table to help execute strategic initiatives around CX including:

• Improving Net Promoter Scores (NPS)
• Driving revenue through cross-selling and upselling
• Implementing Voice of the Customer (VoC) programs to flow insights back to the business
• Supporting launch activities of new products, services, and business lines
• Adhering to regulations around customer data protection

Improving CX is a top priority for organizations. Forrester Research found that the revenue impact of a 1-point improvement in CX Index scores can help a company increase revenue by $175 million annually.[6] To achieve CX transformation, executives responsible for top-line strategy and those managing front-line customer interactions must come together to successfully lead the charge.

## APPIAN FOR CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

With the growing complexity of customer expectations, communication channels, and interactions, organizations are embracing technology to transform their contact centers and redefine CX—and the business value they bring to the organization.

Forward-thinking contact centers are prioritizing efforts across three key areas:

1. Unified Customer View

The lack of a single, unified customer view is a major barrier to customer satisfaction and CX transformation. Contact center agents are forced to cobble information from multiple systems, sources, and applications. This leads to extended hold times, dissatisfied customers, and frustrated agents. To meet increasing expectations and deliver the personalized experiences customers want, organizations should bring together customer data from across data sources and present it to agents in a single, actionable context. Allowing agents to focus on the customer, not complex and disparate systems, increases the opportunity to achieve high customer satisfaction.

> Organizations should also take into consideration evolving data regulations, like the aforementioned GDPR and CCPA, and look to solutions that enable them to aggregate data without having to move it.
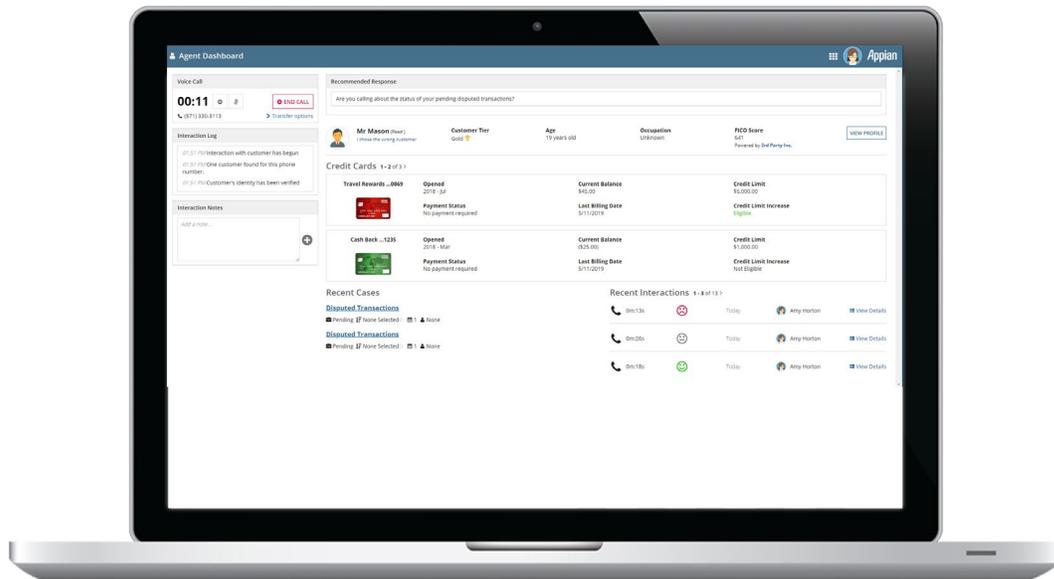
2. Universal Agents and Dynamic Case Management

Universal agents—agents that can handle any question or inquiry across any channel—have eluded contact centers due to the vast amount of knowledge and training required to develop such individuals. However, technology is providing solutions that overcome these challenges.

Dynamic case management is a key capability for contact center agents and supports high-end problem solving for complex interactions. Gartner confirms that case management is the essential core of CRM customer service systems, "yet most customer service centers lack any form of advanced customer service case or problem resolution functionality." [7] Whether a contact center is handling disputes, finance processing, service requests, incident management, client advisory, constituent response, or other case types, dynamic case management helps any agent deliver support more efficiently.

Additionally, comprehensive Business Process Management (BPM) is a critical component to orchestrate processes, integrate systems, and apply business rules—while agents are supported by robotics and coached by AI. Manual work is widely automated and real-time recommendations are suggested to agents in a single interface, allowing them to focus on advising customers, delivering personalized offers, and pursuing upsell opportunities. Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is enabling companies to automate high-volume, repetitive manual tasks and integrate chatbots, freeing agents to spend more time assisting customers with higher-value interactions.

The need to group agents into specialized teams focused on specific products or services is being eliminated, opening the door for more varied and rewarding work for agents and better workforce optimization for the organization.
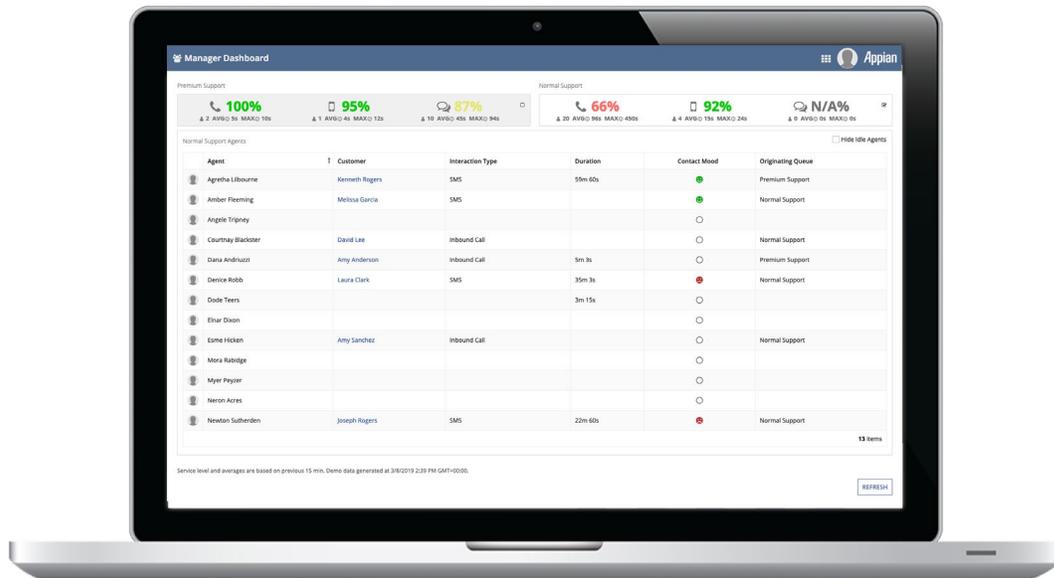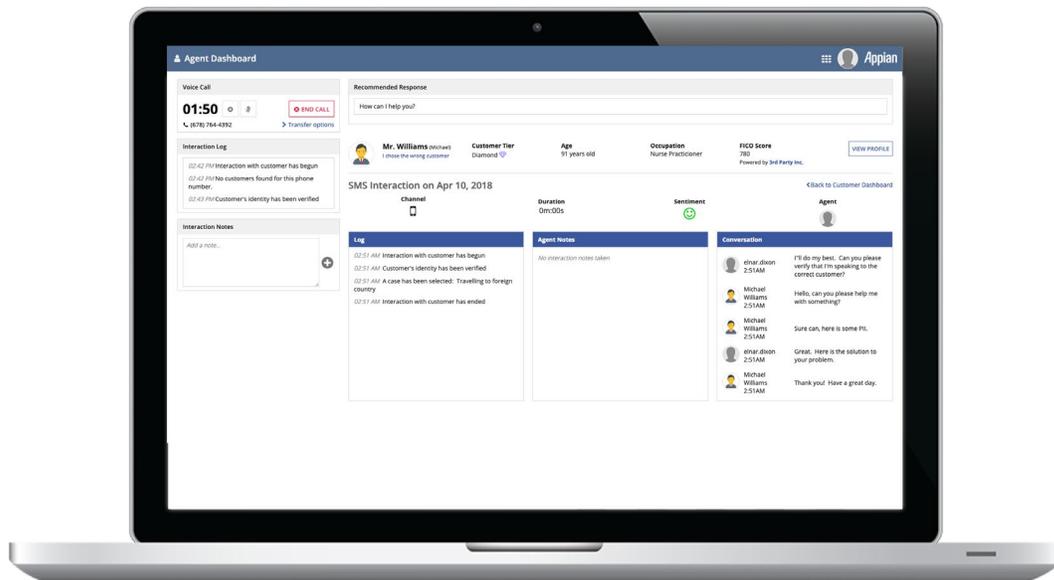
3. Digital Engagement

McKinsey predicts that 75% of customers will use multiple channels to contact companies.[8] Leveraging a solution that unifies various communication channels into a single interface is important to turn multi-channel support into true digital engagement.

Supporting voice alone is no longer enough. To fully understand their customers, organizations must look to integrate additional options including chat, SMS, email, social media, and co-browsing. They must share data across these channels so agents have a real-time view into customer case history. This provides an effortless and seamless experience across all the ways customers want to engage.

According to Aberdeen Group, companies that provide consistent service quality across multiple channels retain 89% of their customers, compared to 33% retention rate for companies that do not.[9]

SUMMARY

As you consider the best pathway to a next generation contact center, consider a solution that delivers a unified customer view, helps you create universal agents, and improves digital engagement.

Here's what to look for in your technology partner:

- Provides the ability to integrate data across existing systems without moving it
- Includes dynamic case management to handle complex interactions
- Allows for business process, workflow, and collaboration management
- Offers the ability to embed AI, RPA, business rules and future advanced technologies
- Provides trusted security, reliability, and governance with cloud enablement
- Offers a low-code automation platform development approach for speed, agility, quicker implementations and reduced time to deliver improved and KPIs and return on investment.

Appian for Customer Engagement makes it easy for organizations to build next generation contact centers that transform CX, increase agent efficiency, and deliver business impact. With Appian, organizations are improving the metrics that matter to them most, seeing improved customer satisfaction, service levels, and cost savings.

To learn more, visit: appian.com/intelligent-contact-center

1. Forrester, Report: How AI Will Transform Customer Service, 2017

2. Mckinsey, Article: Charting the future of customer care through a core optimization philosophy, 2018

3. Ponemon Institute, 2018 Cost of Data Breach Study: Global Overview

4. McKinsey, Article: Winning the expectations game in customer care, 2016

5. Forrester, Report: How AI Will Transform Customer Service, 2017

6. Forrester, Report: The ROI of CX Transformation, 2017

7. Gartner, Place Case Management at the Core of the CRM Customer Engagement Center, 2017

8. McKinsey, Article: Charting the future of customer care through a core optimization philosophy, 2018

9. Aberdeen Group, Research Report: Omni-channel Customer Care: Best-in-Class Steps to Success, 2015

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Appian provides a low-code automation platform that accelerates the creation of high-impact business applications. Many of the world's largest organizations use Appian solutions to improve customer experience, achieve operational excellence, and simplify global risk management and compliance.

For more information, visit www.appian.com