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A Practitioner's Guide to Sustainable Customer Experience in the Contact Center

Introduction

Businesses everywhere are under pressure to digitally transform and differentiate on customer experience (CX). It is the only way to survive in today's customer-driven environment.

According to Gartner, within two years' time, 81% of companies expect to be competing mostly or completely on the basis of CX.

But, delivering a sustainable CX is no small task, especially when the experiences delivered by the best customer-focused companies set the bar for all the rest.

Today's CX is multi-faceted, covering the customer journey from sales to service and spanning channels from the online and mobile to the contact center. And while digital interactions are on the rise, the contact center continues to play a significant role in building and maintaining a brand's reputation with an increasing number of customers calling the contact center for high-touch, complex engagements or for remediation of digital failures. Succeed in the contact center and your brand will thrive; fail in the contact center and your brand will languish.

At Vonage, we've given the subject of CX a lot of thought and we've developed this guide to help you with your CX initiatives in the contact center. Designed for the practitioner, you'll find out what's critical to delivering a great experience and how you can deliver it by focusing on a few key elements. We've also included examples and videos highlighting how businesses have used the Vonage Contact Center to digitally transform and dramatically improve CX.

Read on to envision the possibilities and bring them to life in your contact center.

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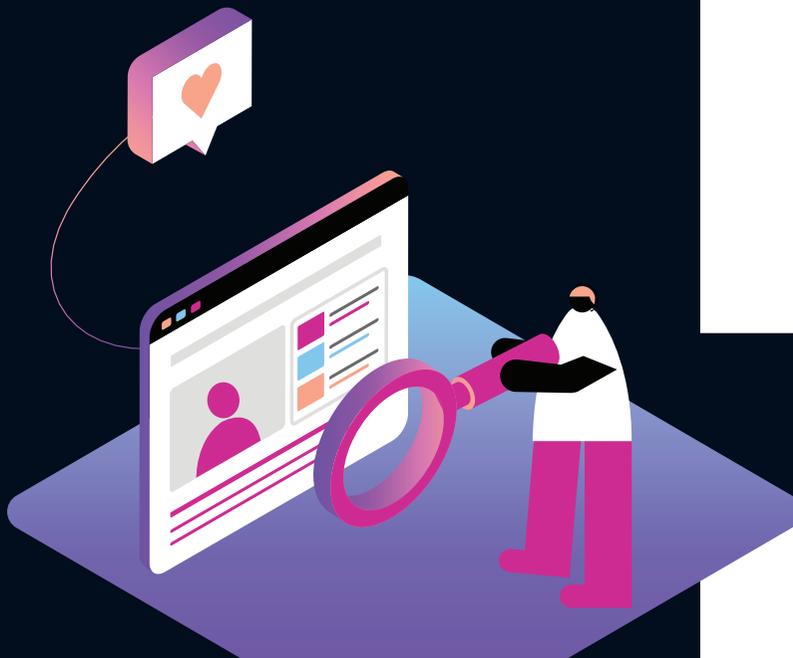
What Constitutes Great CX in the Contact Center

Customers call your contact center to fix problems, navigate purchases, and arrive at positive outcomes.

Many contact centers focus on driving efficiencies around customer interactions and expect those efficiencies to translate into great CX. But delivering great CX is more than solving a customer problem efficiently. According to Forrester, how customers feel is a significant component that drives CX quality.

If you want to deliver great CX, resolve customers' issues, make it easy for them, but most importantly, make them feel great. Take the opportunity to impact how customers feel by having great conversations with them every time you interact with them in the contact center. So, to make customers feel great, make every conversation great.

CX = **Effectiveness** (Goal achieved) + **Ease** (Effort expended) + **Emotion** (How did it make you feel?)

Make Customers Feel Great = Make Every Conversation Great

Enabling Great Conversations in Your Contact Center

To make contact center conversations great, you need to set up the right environment for success. This involves your contact center design, the data you use, and some critical customer-centric capabilities. Set up the right environment and watch your contact center transform from a necessary operation to a beacon of customer excellence for your company's brand. See below for the key areas of focus:

01.

Work with your CRM

How you engage with your customers in your contact center should be a natural extension of your CRM. Your CRM is the single source of customer truth. It holds your customer-centric view and includes all your customer contact information, sales opportunities, service issues, marketing campaigns, and customer history.

Treat your CRM as your contact center foundation and design around it. It should work dynamically with your CRM for routing, agent operations, customer messaging, reporting, and analytics. Design an environment that will resonate with your brand and customers. And, ensure the contact center solution you pick is designed for your CRM and doesn't merely consider it a point of integration after the solution is implemented.

Customer CRM

Make conversations personal

Nothing delights customers more than conversations that are tailored to them. Wouldn't it be great if your contact center knew who you were as soon as you called? And even more importantly, wouldn't you be ecstatic if the agent knew what you were calling about, and was able to resolve your issue instantly? **To personalize conversations, ensure you can:**

Key Capabilities

- Access to CRM and Call data

- Intelligent routing using CRM data

- Journey insights connecting online and contact center

Access all relevant customer data

Your CRM is key, and your solution should be able to easily leverage data from your CRM to tailor the conversation. In addition, you should be able to view all call history from the prior contact center interactions. Being able to easily access all these data sets gives you the ultimate ability to personalize conversations. You'll know what the customer has ordered, the status, service issues, what events they attended, or the last time they called. Look for a solution that gives you access to these powerful sets of data.

Route intelligently and dynamically

Being able to immediately route to the most qualified agent based on the customer's unique need without delay and annoying transfers will deliver a personalized CX. So, ensure your contact center solution can route flexibly based on any field in your CRM and not just by IVR-limited capabilities, so you can get to right product expert, case owner, or language-speaking agent as soon as the person calls in. By routing intelligently and dynamically on your CRM data, you'll delight your customers, increase First Call Resolutions, and increase your CSAT scores. s.

Connect digital and contact center journeys

With digital interactions on the rise, ensure you have visibility into the entire customer journey. This is a major source of frustration for customers when your contact center agent has no visibility into online history. Your contact center solution should be able to connect the dots between the online and contact center journeys. Your agents and reps should be "journey aware" when customers call the contact center.

Implement these capabilities and you'll improve your KPIs like handle times, CSAT scores, and First Call Resolutions, and dramatically improve CX.

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Customer Example:

Earlens, an innovative hearing aid manufacturer, offers a high-touch, concierge program to directly support end-customers on their hearing-aid devices. They wanted to provide their concierge customers with a very responsive and tailored service. They use Vonage Contact Center's intelligent routing capability using cases set-up in Salesforce. Now, when a concierge customer calls with any questions, they are immediately routed to the right case-owing agent without delay or transfer and the customer can get right to the heart of the issue. Vonage's CRM-centric design makes delivery of this level of personalized CX a breeze for Earlens.

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Focus on people not technology

To make customers feel great, keep the focus on people and not technology. Use technology as an enabler and keep it invisible as customers and agents try to address issues. How many times have you been asked to hold while an agent is trying to toggle into other systems? When technology becomes the focus of the conversation, it is a bad experience for the customer and worse experience for the agent. **To use technology as an enabler:**

Key Capabilities

- CRM is the interface for agent contact center operations

- Auto-logging and call recording access within CRM

- Seamless integration of chatbot and self-serve options with live agents

Minimize the numbers of systems – keep operations within the CRM

Allow agents and sales reps to keep the focus on customers by enabling them to operate using the fewest possible number of systems. The best-case scenario is for agents to operate solely within your CRM for all customer interactions. This will eliminate the delay associated with toggling back and forth and needless duplicative data entries. Agents need only learn how to operate in a single system, which will also drive the adoption of your CRM.

Enable teams with the right information and auto-logging capabilities

Equip agents to quickly resolve issues with automatic and timely screen pops of all the relevant data including case, interaction, and journey history prior to engaging on calls. Agents will feel empowered to deal with the most daunting issues if they are well prepared. Pick a solution that screen pops prior to calls. Additionally, enable as much auto-logging of data into the CRM as possible. You'll reduce unnecessary errors and the tedium associated with duplicative data entry. And, populate the CRM with call data like call recordings for easy access for training and quality management purposes.

Focus holistically on the customer

Finally, strike the right balance between automation, self-serve options, and live agents. Know when to transition a chatbot conversation to a live agent and do it seamlessly and gracefully by sending all chatbot history to the agent. Ensure that your contact center solution can integrate seamlessly with any "best-of-breed" bot you have selected.

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Customer Example:

Cradlepoint, an industry leader in cloud-delivered 4G LTE network solutions with more than 23,000 customers worldwide, uses the Vonage Contact Center solution to enable agents to work within Salesforce for all their operations. Agents are also equipped with timely screen-pops populated with relevant data from Salesforce as well as call history from contact center interactions for a complete customer view for quick resolution. Supervisors easily access call recordings from the case records within Salesforce and can easily coach and correct agents. The Vonage solution design enables a great agent and supervisor experience with the right Salesforce-centric technology.

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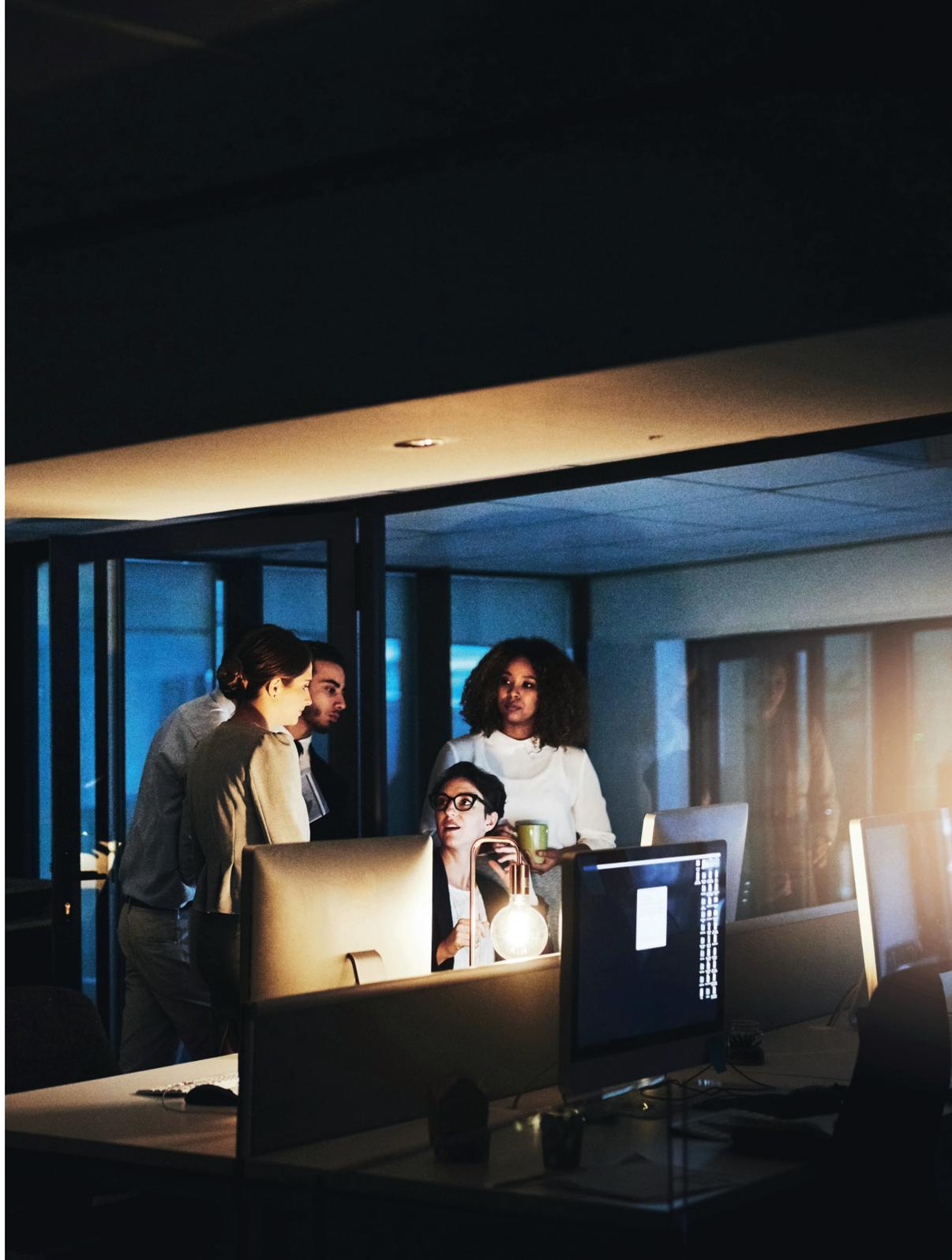
04.

Make conversations flow effortlessly

In today's digital age, customers expect to reach you via multiple channels, so it is important to support a true Omni-Channel experience. Providing an Omni-Channel experience allows customers to connect through the channel of their choice i.e. email, SMS, chat, or voice and ensures that conversations stay connected across channels. This capability gets a lot of focus in the contact center environment, and it's important to get this right. **To make a conversation flow effortlessly:**

Key Capabilities

- Single brain Omni-Channel routing for digital and voice channels

- Omni-Channel reporting

- Seamless support for CRM-provided digital channels

Enable Omni-Channel routing

Ensure that your solution can route and distribute load to digital or voice agents and can use the same set of rules to route based on skills, case ownership, or other fields leveraged from the CRM. This way, irrespective of how a customer reaches you, they'll receive a consistent experience. And, if you pool your agents, you can automatically route digital and voice traffic across the pool.

Ensure Omni-Channel visibility

Your reporting and analytics tools should provide visibility across all your channels. Look for real-time and historic Omni-Channel dashboards. Your solution should enable you to manage and optimize resources across channels.

Support your selected digital and voice channel platforms

If your operation utilizes "best-of-breed" digital channels from your CRM vendor, ensure that your contact center can support your CRM channels. You should not be required to switch all channels to the contact center platform in the interest of providing consistency.

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Vertafore

Customer Example:

Vertafore, a leading provider of cloud-based software and services to the insurance industry, uses the Vonage Contact Center Omni-Channel capability to route and manage Salesforce digital chats (LiveChat) and voice traffic. They route voice calls and chats using a single set of rules to a pooled group of agents to provide customers with great response times, and they've improved the agent experience by ensuring agents receive a balanced workload. Vertafore was able to reduce average speed to answer, increase chat volume, and drive up their CSAT score with the Vonage Contact Center Omni-Channel solution.

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05.

Leverage data to get better over time

And, finally, the capability that will enable you to seal the enabling of great customer conversations has to do with getting better over time. The more you know about your customers, the better you'll be able to meet their needs and build loyalty. To accomplish that objective, use data to improve and fine tune agent performance, drive compliance, develop best practices, and identify customer trends. **To get better over time:**

Key Capabilities

- Integrated speech analytics to automatically analyze all customer conversations

- Automatic data pushes into CRM

- Analytics across Contact Center Call data and CRM data sets

Tap into your customer conversations with speech analytics

Your customer conversations are a rich source of data. Look for speech-to-text transcription capability integrated with your core contact center solution, so you can immediately tap into that rich source of unstructured data. Preferably, your solution should transcribe all conversations and provide you with analytics at your fingertips. You'll immediately be able to improve agent behaviour, enforce compliance, and implement best practices.

Automate data pushes into the CRM

To maintain your CRM as your single source of customer truth, push customer call data from the contact center into your CRM automatically so it remains the repository and provides you with the complete customer view. Your solution should automatically push this data into your CRM without the need for CSV-based imports and uploads.

Analyze CC+CRM data

Once your contact center data is in your CRM, you should be able to easily analyze across both data sets using your CRM BI tools like Einstein. This will enable you to unearth insights to truly drive your business. With this data at your fingertips, you'll be able to identify call attributes associated with top-selling reps and agents and replicate those approaches to make them best practices.

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Customer Example:

Six Pack Abs, a hugely successful global internet business, used Vonage Contact Center's speech analytics solution (Conversation Analyzer) to go from monitoring 5% of calls with a call quality team to monitoring 100% of calls. Using this technology, they were able to quickly scale agent operations to support their growing customer base needs.

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MTD
For A Growing World.™®

Customer Example:

MTD Products, a worldwide leader of outdoor power equipment sold through home improvement stores, hardware stores, mass retailers, and independent dealers across the globe, uses Vonage Contact Center's solution to push call data into Salesforce, and with Einstein dashboards they analyze call data with orders to accurately track sales conversion rates and improve agent performance.

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Conclusion

Operational efficiencies do not translate into great CX. If you're serious about improving CX in your contact center, make customers feel great by having great conversations. Make conversations personal, focus on people during the conversations, let them flow effortlessly across channels, and ensure that conversations get better over time. The only way to enable these high quality conversations is by deploying a contact center solution designed to work in concert with your CRM.

Implement these changes and instantly improve the CX in your contact center.

For more information and a consultation on how to transform your contact center, please contact us at:

Vonage.com

About Vonage

Vonage is redefining business communications once again. We're making communications more flexible, intelligent, and personal, to help enterprises the world over, stay ahead. We provide unified communications, contact centers and programmable communications APIs, built on the world's most flexible cloud communications platform. True to our roots as a technology disruptor, our flexible approach helps us to better serve the growing collaboration, communications, and customer experience needs of companies, across all communications channels.