

The Perfect Marriage of Automation and Customer Experience for a Call Center Using Legacy Systems

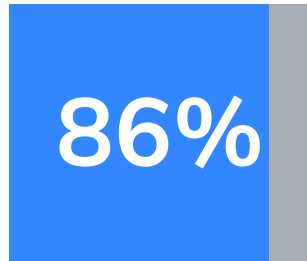


Whitepaper

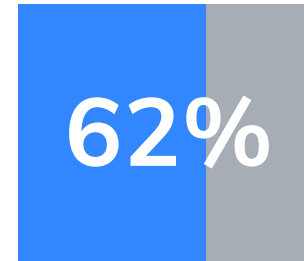


Executive summary

Customer experience is not what it used to be years ago. It has evolved and come a long way. By 2020, customer experience is expected to overtake price and product experience as a pivotal differentiator. The study also mentions that 86% of the users are ready to pay more for a great customer experience (CX).



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A good 62% of the companies see customer experience offered by a call center as a competitive differentiator

For any business today, call center plays an important role in maintaining CX. A good 62% of the companies see customer experience offered by a call center as a competitive differentiator. But call centers are stuck in the antiquity. One of the main reasons for this is that, businesses want to derive the most out of their CapEx from the legacy systems, the licensing fee etc.

A call center is established with the sole purpose of improving customer satisfaction and boosting the brand image. But this very call center is now touted as the bearer of bad name for the brand, because of long wait times, multiple transfers etc. Automation has come about like a magic pill to make our life simpler. Call center automation improves effectiveness and quality, thereby delivering superlative CX. So why are we hesitant to extend it to CX? Are we doomed to deliver a lesser CX because of an obligation like CapEx?

What if a new-age system can work with the legacy systems to help you up the game when it comes to customer experience?

This white paper aims to look into working around rigid systems, building a reliable system and incorporating automation on top of the existing one, and how all of these can help significantly in lowering the costs and improving the customer experience.

The 360 view on traditional systems

How many times in the past month have you contacted a call center and waited on the line for so long, only to be greeted by a dull, monotonous voice?

Call centers often receive flak from customers for endless wait times, multiple transfers, and the incompetence of the agents to address their problems. A large part of these problems stem from the usage of on-premise telephony solutions used by the call centers. For the lack of a better word, the legacy systems can be termed 'dumb'. Some of their pain points are

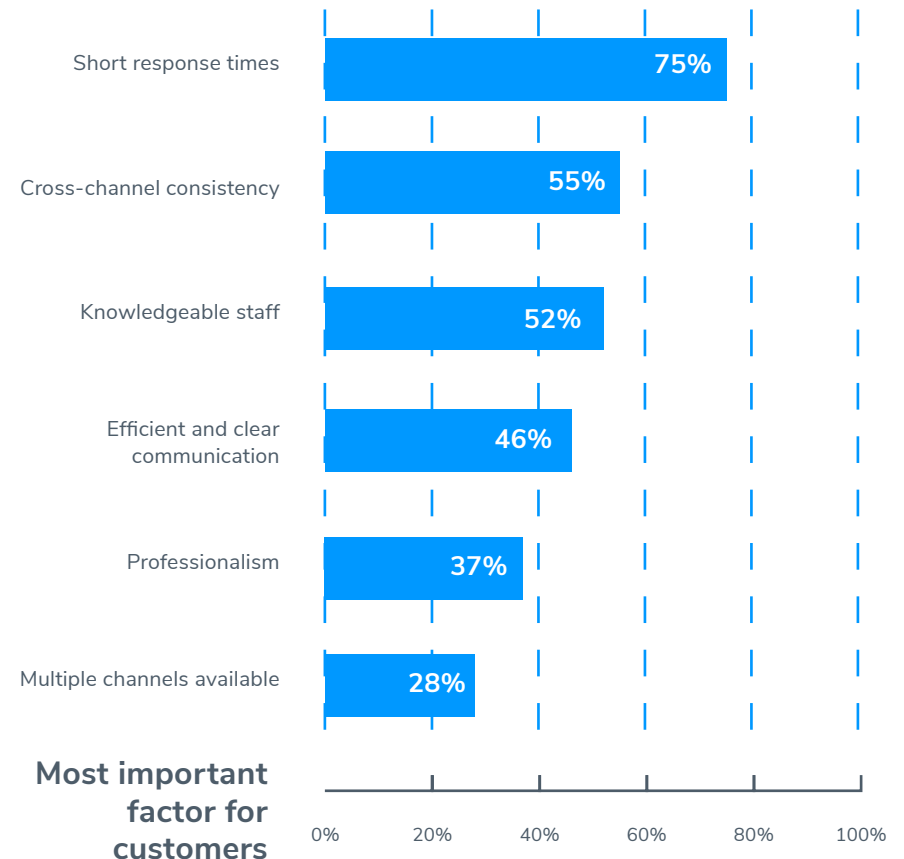
- ◆ Single points of failure
- ◆ Occupies large real estate
- ◆ Comes at a premium price
- ◆ Next to nothing features
- ◆ Complicated to alter the call flows
- ◆ Scalability restrictions

The legacy systems are hard-coded in nature. There is no leeway to analyse the data, and tweak your customer support experience to match the expectations of the customers.

Adoption of automated systems

From ordering pizza, to booking a doctor's appointment, automation is enabling and empowering us achieving a broad range of tasks in a short span of time. Automation is ubiquitous these days, and there's no running away from that. Artificial intelligence is taking the spotlight, and for all the good reasons.

Companies fear automation for a number of reasons. Either they feel it is too complicated to implement, or they feel it creates a barrier between the customers and employees, businesses should not demonize automation. In fact, they should embrace it with open arms.





Why you should automate?

Automation is helpful in establishing a streamline in the communication process. As is evident from the graph, customers expect an immediate response when they pick up the phone to call the customer care.

However, unless you have a mammoth workforce, this is not practical or workable. Instead of waiting on the line forever, your customers will greatly appreciate an instantaneous reply which can be achieved with the help of IVR.

IVR is a self service that allows the callers to communicate with a voice recognition program, and direct them to the right team or agent based on their needs. This spares the caller a great deal of frustration, and gives them no reason to complain or churn.

Some other benefits of automating the call center are:

- Reports & Analytics
- Easy to alter workflows
- Easy integration with CRMs
- Remote working (eliminate real estate space)
- No CapEx, only OpEx

But what to do with the existing infrastructure?

Companies that have invested in legacy systems see a need to drive the maximum value out of their investment. Therefore, retaining and working with these systems might seem like a better option for them. However, these systems affect business operations underhandedly with their rigidity. Some of the other most common reasons for resisting automation are

- The integration with traditional system is complicated.
- Automation systems are too expensive and complex.

Upto 60% cost saving by building a hybrid system that puts customer experience first

A large online ticketing platform, the pioneer of online ticketing in India, started off by using legacy systems for their call center.

Typically, the call center received calls for refunds, cancellations, status of the journey, etc. Today, they handle close to 2 lakh calls in a week. Although a large part of this number is outbound reminder calls, they still receive a significant number of incoming calls. 25% of the total calls are incoming calls for support. On an average, they receive 8000 calls in a day.

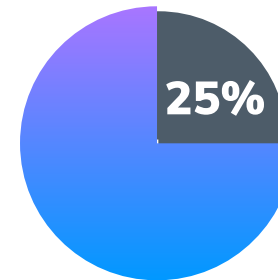
Most of these calls are for ticket cancellation or to enquire about the refund status. Handling these calls manually was no mean feat. Not only was their manpower cost inflating by the day, but the agents were also dreary answering the same questions over and over again. This resulted in poor customer service, directly affecting their sales.



**Online
travel
ticketing
platform**

**200,000
calls
per week**

**25%
support
calls**



**Incoming support
calls for
ticket cancellation
& refund status**

60%

**reduction in cost
using automation**

Some of the other challenges faced by them were:



Not having a call record for existing customers: This is a dampener, as no one likes to explain the problem over & again.



Increasing call abandon rates: Waiting on the call with no end, with no solution either prompted the customers to abandon the calls halfway.

However, they could not consider moving to an exclusively automated system for their call center software because



Their phone number had become their vanity number



Heavy duty CapEx investment



Automation, which is powered by cloud telephony platforms, does not allow number porting

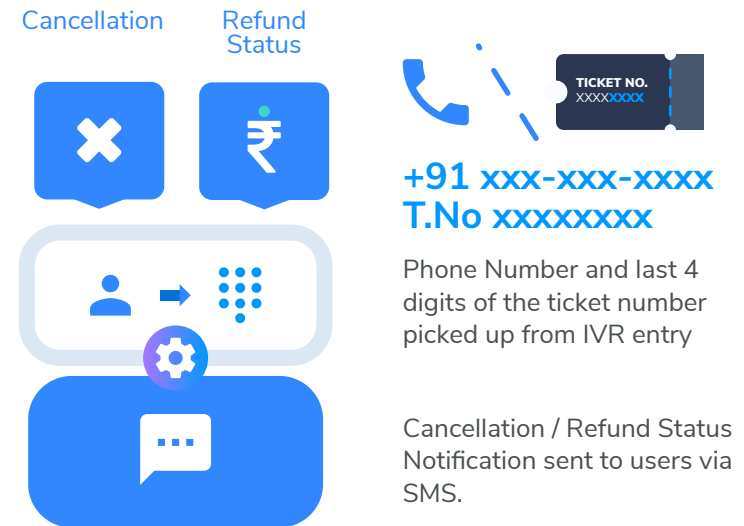
The company was on the lookout for a consistent solution, that could perform even during peak hours without any friction. Understanding that their needs would never be fulfilled by traditional telephony systems, they decided to give cloud telephony a try. They built a hybrid system that combined the best of both worlds.

Incoming support call flow

Before - Legacy System



After - Cloud + Legacy System



IVR Solution for Call Centre Automation

Results

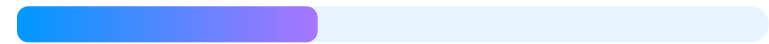
-  Enhanced customer experience
-  Reduced manual efforts by 30 agents
-  Reduced cost by 60%

Two of their most standard queries are received for ticket cancellation status and refund status, the details of which can easily be retrieved from the CRM. The company had allocated 30 agents to both the teams combined to handle these queries. Yet, there were almost always long wait times, spillovers, and imaginably unsatisfied customers.

The company was presented with a solution of automating only these two options in a way that the capital invested on their equipment was not taking a cut. This win-win situation was exactly what they were expecting. An IVR was built on top of the existing system to answer queries related to ticket cancellation status, and refund status, to start with.

The initial results were overwhelming- there were no wait times, the call connect rates were up even when 100 customers called at the same time, and call abandon rates decreased. It also resulted in witnessing a 60% reduction in manual efforts.

This translates to a huge number in the cost saved, and in reducing the headcount significantly.



60% reduction
in manual efforts.

How does automation help in boosting CX of a call center?

From a strategic standpoint, automation helps the call centers to deliver a consistent and superior experience to the customers every single time. We do not have the same experience when we talk to the agents at the contact center everyday.

It

largely depends on the issue or the topic of the call, and also on the reaction of the agent.

The customer is usually calling the call center as a last resort and in frustration. Instead of prodding them for details and statistics, a simple CRM integration will help in providing a near-empathetic support to the customer.

Moreover, automation can bring down the error rate to 0%, while the same cannot be said about agents. This creates a superlative experience for the customer.

This opens up a host of advantages for the business. Implementing a hybrid system ensures that agents are only used to answer queries that require human intelligence. Repetitive tasks are automated. This forges a self-serve mindset, which is the top preference with customers nowadays. It keeps business costs in check, because you don't have to spend time constantly recruiting. Naturally, scaling is seamless and easier.

Conclusion

The largest customer segment that actively uses call centers is the millennials. More and more millennials are opting to read FAQs on the website, turn to chatbots, or to social media to get the problem resolved, rather than spending time on the phone with a call center agent. While this might be great for the long run, it also means that the call center equipment, manpower training etc. the company invested in becomes worthless.

Automation in the form of natural language processing and cognitive technology is set to be the next big disruptor in contact center technology. Automation does not have to be exclusive from the existing infrastructure. It can be built on top of the existing systems. It is time to embrace the change and stay on top of the competition.

To understand how call center automation can add value to your business and boost overall customer experience, [get in touch with us](#)



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