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Delivering Customer Service in a New Hybrid World

How cloud contact centers are helping agents delight customers.

By Pasquale DeMaio, General Manager of Amazon Connect, Amazon Web Services

The Great Resignation has caused a dramatic shift in hiring practices. To stay competitive, businesses need to offer flexible working environments, and customer service centers are no exception. We often think of contact centers as packed rooms filled with agents on the phone, but now agents need the flexibility to work from anywhere. To support remote customer service, many businesses are turning to cloud contact center solutions. This enables agents to work remotely, because all they need is an internet connection and a headset.

Regardless of where agents are working, the goal is always to delight and deliver for customers. The cloud not only allows for hybrid work environments, but also helps businesses better manage agent workloads, improve resolution time with intelligent agent assistance, and provide automated service to increase customer satisfaction. And the stakes are high: according to Accenture research, companies focused on the entire customer and employee experience see year-over-year profitability growth at least six times over industry peers.¹

During my time at Amazon Web Services (AWS), I've seen many leading-edge companies innovate customer service. Our customers like Traeger,

Priceline, and The University of Auckland tell us the cloud is helping them empower their agents to deliver better customer service in a hybrid world.

Preventing burnout

Agents are the superheroes at the front line of customer service delivery, and it can be a thankless job. It's more important than ever for contact center leaders to have tools to help balance agent workloads, especially when people are remote. This starts with more efficient and effective scheduling to ensure agents aren't overloaded as they work across time zones and serve customers through multiple channels. This helps reduce agent burnout and attrition, which is good for agents and good for customers.

Traeger, best known for their wood pellet grills, needed a better way to forecast customer demand and manage their agent workload. Using the built-in **forecasting, planning, and scheduling** capabilities recently added to Amazon Connect, Traeger can dynamically respond to peak grilling season demand while providing a more consistent workload for their agents and simplifying a disparate set of processes and platforms. These

planning tools also help their contact center managers create time for additional agent training—an investment that supports employees and leads to great customer service.

Helping agents respond

Another thing our customers struggle with in a remote working environment is that agents don't always have fellow senior agents or a supervisor on hand to quickly consult when faced with tougher customer situations. Helping agents navigate customer interactions in real time can be the difference between a satisfied and dissatisfied customer, and an empowered or frustrated agent.

This is where intelligent assistance comes in. Using the power of ready-made intelligence and machine learning (ML), customer intent can be quickly understood. Amazon Connect can listen in on customer calls, understand what the problem is, and then surface an answer and recommend next steps directly to the agent. Real-time intelligent assistance helps agents respond more effectively.

The University of Auckland fields questions daily from students and other customers about course details, enrollment, test results, and health and counseling. With Amazon Connect, their agents can access real-time information from caller interactions. ML-powered intelligent assistance provides capability to the university's agents to respond to questions with confidence, and help students and other customers effectively navigate their university experience.

Getting accurate answers to customers faster

Everyone wants faster, more responsive customer service. We've seen automated customer service play a critical role in helping answer questions quickly and more accurately. Built from the same technology that powers Amazon Alexa, Amazon Connect chatbots can address the most commonly asked questions, and callers don't have to speak like a robot—they can simply explain what they need in a normal, conversational voice.

Also, a caller's identity can be verified with just their voice, instead of repeating their mother's maiden name or the street they grew up on. While customers get fast and accurate service, agents are freed up to focus on customers who have more complex questions.

Our customers have told us this sort of automation is really easy to add when using a cloud-based contact center. When **Priceline** saw a 300%-plus spike in call volume at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, they moved more than 1,000 agents to work from home overnight by migrating their customer care centers to Amazon Connect. Priceline's contact center managers were able to create fully automated paths for less urgent, more routine customer questions, and free up their agents to stay focused on the most pressing customer inquiries.

Customer service from anywhere

Now more than ever, cloud-based contact centers are enabling agents to provide great customer service whether they are working from an office or remotely. Businesses that are moving to AWS's cloud contact center solution, **Amazon Connect**, are able to help level agent workloads, provide agents with intelligent assistance, and support customers with automated resolution. In this new world, customer satisfaction improves, and agents are empowered to deliver great customer service from anywhere. deliver better customer service in a hybrid world.

To discover more ways to improve your customer experience in the cloud, [click here](#).

To read all the pieces in our "Contact Center in the Cloud" series, [click here](#).

Sources:

"Growth: It Comes Down to Experience," Accenture.

<https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insights/interactive/business-of-experience/>