

Top six priorities for contact centres in 2013

 [Bylan Goss-Ross](#)

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If contact centres aren't preparing to embrace these six key trends, they have already fallen behind.

Too many contact centres have relied on tried-and-trusted technologies for too long. But emerging trends and technologies that have been on the cards for a while are becoming forces contact centres can't afford to ignore any longer.

In 2013, contact centres that have not yet prepared for, or adopted, these new trends will have to move fast to embrace them:

Mobile apps and self-service

Mobility is ubiquitous and people increasingly expect to be able to self help. While many companies have launched mobile apps, they may not have fully integrated them into their contact centre systems; therefore the apps are not delivering full value. Seamless integration into the back-end and contact centre is a challenge, and it is an important issue to address now.

Automation

Demand for self-help drives a need for automation. All the processes enabling self-service should be, or can be, automated. Herein lies another challenge for contact centres, in the implementation of automation in all their processes. Eventually interaction with live agents will fade away and fully automated processes will be expected. However, automating all processes takes time, and in order to meet demand in a few years' time, the planning and implementation needs to begin now.

Multimedia

In line with this, there will continue to be an increase in non-voice interaction and the true value of multimedia will be realised. Contact centres need to apply the same performance metrics to multimedia contact that they do to voice or any other channel.

Cloud vs premise

A move to the cloud is a key consideration now. However, too many companies are holding back due to the misconception that entering the cloud has to be an 'all or nothing' approach. Few realise they can have both cloud and premise in a hybrid model for their contact centre deployment, and thanks to simplified and increasingly flexible solutions coming to market, now is a good time for contact centres to investigate their options.

Virtualisation and storage

Just because systems worked in the past, does not mean they will continue to work in future. Virtualisation is an imperative - contact centres must virtualise in order to stay competitive. There are multiple benefits, including rapid deployment of new products and services and more efficient upgrades and maintenance. Contact centres need to embark on a virtualisation strategy now.

Social media

Many companies are still unsure about where social media should fit in; but there's a growing acceptance that social media is an important channel and it is gaining traction. As such, it needs to be treated like any other channel, with the same queuing, routing, recording, forecasting, and performance metrics requirements.

To meet these new challenges effectively, contact centres need to take action now. Despite challenges in doing so, there will be considerable ROI in it for them.

ABOUT IAN GOSS-ROSS

Ian Goss-Ross is CEO of Elingo, the only accredited reseller partner for the Interactive Intelligence Inc in South Africa.
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