

# Is your contact centre a brand building or grudge centre?

We all know the theory: consumers are changing the way they interact with each other and businesses. But how many contact centres have taken full advantage of this?



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If businesses are willing to embrace the ubiquitous technology solutions available, the once-dreaded call centre (typically synonymous with long queues, bad hold music and a rising temper) can be turned into a positive, brand-building, revenue generating department, aligned with business goals and strategies.

According to Jed Hewson, co-founder of 1Stream, there are a number of trends that have emerged that can support the transformation of contact centres into proactive departments that provide positive customer experiences and support the business as a whole.

## Understanding needs

“A contact centre is not a place to have a grudge conversation,” says Hewson, “but a place to handle sales and marketing, and to better understand the customer’s needs as well as how to address these. It is an important crossing-point between your business and your customers.”

He goes on to say that you need to prepare your contact centre to communicate with people in a meaningful manner, and

this means enabling new forms of communication and across various platforms. Cloud computing, as well as technology such as HTML5, WebRTC (Web Real-Time Communication) and Internet of Things (IoT) are the means through which businesses can get the most out of their contact centres.

No longer does a customer have to wait in the tedious queue for an operator. With a move to the world being viewed through a browser, WebRTC enables browser-based communication, whether through voice, chat or video and across all connected devices. This form of technology can remove the phone, and call charges, from the equation altogether. This, paired with HTML5, technology that removes the need for added plugins and ensures applications work seamlessly regardless of the device being used, significantly elevates the customer experience of engaging with a contact centre.

## **Power of cloud**

Hewson explains that while the benefits of cloud computing are widely understood, in the specific context of a contact centre, cloud computing removes geographical boundaries and allows even a small startup to go global. “It opens up markets for communication and allows flexibility not previously possible”, says Hewson, “for example, home agents can be employed for busy times or in specific areas based on language needs.”

The demand and expectation for response and turnaround times has necessitated a move away from the traditional contact centre using disparate systems and focussing on voice communication and IVR (interactive voice response). The future, enabled by technology such as cloud computing, HTML5 and WebRTC, is one of streamlined systems that provide a simple user experience, self-service options, real-time communication (in more forms than just a phone call) and measured results through ensuring the reason for the contact is resolved and providing an easy way to escalate a matter where necessary.

Hewson believes that opening the communication channels for customers, whether for queries or complaints, says a lot about an organisation and all businesses need to seriously start planning for how they are going to deal with more than just voice.

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