



Contact Center Cloud Technology Quick Guide

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Customer Experience and the Cloud Contact Center

Across industries, customer experience has become a key strategic differentiator. In fact, a recent global contact center survey conducted by Deloitte found that 88% of respondents say customer experience is the main driver of growth within their contact center, up from 71% the previous year.¹

Providing a superior customer experience means meeting demands for always-on support and access through the customer's preferred channel—whether that's a mobile app, chat, social media or the phone. The best way to achieve that is through a cloud-based contact center solution.

So, where should you begin when considering a contact center solution to meet your customer experience requirements?

A good place to start is by determining what you can do with your current contact center technology and compare it to what you could do with a cloud-based solution. If you decide to explore the benefits of the cloud, you'll be in good company. An Aberdeen Research trend analysis found cloud technology adoption among contact centers has risen continuously from 2013 to 2018.²

In addition to capabilities that deliver on improved customer experience, a cloud contact center solution's benefits come in both operational efficiencies and cost savings. But once you've decided to move to the cloud, there are numerous critical issues to consider.

With so much to think about, this practical guide is designed to arm you with a high-level view of the cloud and its role in the contact center. Here's what you need to begin an informed search.

Why Move to the Cloud?

Over the past decade, cloud computing has become the technology lifeblood for successful enterprises. It has been widely adopted for solutions ranging from CRM to marketing automation to financial software. The cloud has achieved widespread adoption for reasons that include:

Low Upfront, Predictable Costs

On-premises solutions require hefty upfront investments. These costs include software licenses, maintenance and support; hardware and data centers; as well as the staff necessary to install, configure and maintain the solution. The cloud replaces these capital costs with annual or monthly subscriptions—eliminating the heavy investment on day one.

With the cloud, you also only pay for what you use. There's no more fixed pricing or contracting for the maximum number of seats to satisfy fluctuating call volumes. The cloud is far more cost-effective because it allows for flexible pricing based on what you actually use.

The number one reason 90% of respondents to a recent Aberdeen survey move to the cloud is the financial flexibility of replacing fixed costs with variable costs.

Ease of Deployment

Since cloud vendors install and implement hardware and software for you, you no longer need to spend weeks or months on deployment. You can start using a software as a service (SaaS) solution relatively quickly. Rapid deployment can provide a significant competitive advantage for companies in rapidly changing markets.

Simpler Management

With the cloud, you no longer need your in-house IT resources to manage hardware and software maintenance and updates for your contact center. Cloud solutions offer fast, regular upgrades that don't disrupt your day-to-day business with ongoing changes to hardware and software.

Your vendor handles all management responsibilities for you, so your in-house IT resources can focus on more strategic initiatives. You will, though, still want to keep your IT team informed of your project and implementation planning to keep the process as smooth as possible.

[1] Deloitte Global Contact Center Survey

[2] Five Reasons Why Contact Centers Move to the Cloud, Aberdeen

Critical Contact Center Capabilities Enabled by the Cloud

Omnichannel

Organizations that offer the best customer support do so in the channels their customers want. If your customers are avid email users, give them great email support. If they're active on Facebook, that's where you should go. If they prefer chat, consider chatbots.

Omnichannel contact centers make it easier for your customers to do business with you by enabling you to support them through their preferred channels—i.e., text messaging, voice, chat, email or social media. To provide the level of service your customers want, you need to go beyond simply offering multiple channels, which are often disparate systems and do not allow the agent the seamless ability to support the customer. A unified, omnichannel solution easily connects a customer's journey across any channel.

Full omnichannel capabilities allow you to:

- **Employ intelligent routing** that recognizes the channel of the incoming contact and uses appropriate routing rules based on guidelines you establish in advance. Such routing allows you to treat all channels the same or differently—depending on your business needs.
- **Pivot interactions** from one channel to another. Agents can easily see and respond to customer interactions on every channel from a single screen. This visibility reduces the cost of service for your company by eliminating the need to assign different agents to each channel and improves agent engagement.
- **Share information among agents** handling different channels, rather than requiring customers to repeat themselves. Customers gain a consistently outstanding experience from knowledgeable service or sales people, regardless of the channel through which they interact.
- **Integrate directly with leading CRM platforms** such as Salesforce and Zendesk to enable agents to respond to customers based on their full history with your company on any channel. A cloud solution also can give you the option to embed omnichannel interaction and routing capabilities directly into your CRM to give agents a single workspace for supporting customers.

Reliability

Your contact center is mission-critical to a positive customer experience. It must be available when your customers want to reach you, and often that is 24/7. If customers cannot get the service they need, you risk them going elsewhere.

So, you need to ensure your contact center is available when your customers need it. Look for a vendor that guarantees reliability by offering service level agreements (SLAs) that meet your organization's uptime requirements. How do you know your vendor can deliver on these SLAs? Look at the technical details they use to back up their claims. A key factor to consider is reliance on market-leading cloud infrastructures such as Amazon Web Services (AWS).

Redundancy is another attribute of a highly reliable solution. A cloud contact center solution should offer redundancy to keep systems and applications functioning in case of failure. Multiple, replicated data centers mean that if one data center goes down, you can get back up and running quickly on another.

Low latency also improves performance. When users connect to the service over the internet, latency can become an issue, causing slow performance, particularly if the cloud provider is geographically distant.

Security

Keeping customer data secure is critical for any organization. It's particularly important if you're in a heavily regulated industry, such as financial services or healthcare, or if you do business in Europe and are impacted by the European Union's General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Not long ago, security was the top reason companies hesitated to move to the cloud. Today, many organizations understand security in the cloud can be even more stringent than for an on-premises data center. That's because large cloud vendors have the resources to hire the right security personnel and install the most advanced security solutions. As a cloud customer, you benefit from the same stringent security as a large enterprise, regardless of the size of your business.



When evaluating a cloud contact center solution's security, look for a vendor that offers multiple layers of security. A multi-layer approach delivers many different levels of security to protect your data and systems—so the strength of all the layers can cover any flaws in individual components.

These security layers should include:

- **Physical Security**

Cloud contact centers store your data in one or more data centers. So, physical security is critical. Look for a vendor that provides identity and access management to ensure only authorized staff access your applications and data. Background and reference checks should be conducted on personnel who are authorized to access customer data. In addition, all employees should be required to review and certify a full understanding of the vendor's policies and procedures.

- **Network, Application and Data Security**

Your cloud vendor should follow Secure By Design principles, designing software to be secure, and anticipating and minimizing the impact of security vulnerabilities. The vendor should also undergo Holistic Security Reviews—unbiased, comprehensive analysis of its entire site operations and business security—to limit any security vulnerabilities within the application. All call recordings should be encrypted in accordance with industry standards and regulations.

Choose a cloud solution that supports security services built into its cloud platform (e.g. AWS or Azure), including those for cloud compute, storage, identity and access management, and other services. The vendor should also adhere to standards set by regulations such as PCI-DSS and HIPAA.

When your cloud vendor works with a leading storage provider like AWS security is at the highest level, with more controls and increased privacy, including encrypting data as it travels the network to keep it private; ensuring security of the data in the cloud; and monitoring the entire system for any signs of attack or data breach.

Next Steps

Armed with the information in this guide, you're now better equipped to understand the considerations necessary to determine if a cloud-based contact center is right for your organization. A good next step is to understand how the benefits of a cloud contact center will directly affect your business, including how it will optimize the customer experience and drive growth.

As customer experience becomes an increasingly important strategic differentiator and, therefore, determinant of organizational growth, the benefits of cloud contact centers, such as omnichannel capabilities, reliability and security will go a long way in helping meet today's consumers' sky-high expectations and deliver bottom-line results.

Ready to improve your customer experience with the latest generation of cloud-based contact center technology?

[Schedule a demo of Serenova's CxEngage platform today.](#)

About Serenova

Serenova simplifies every aspect of the customer experience to make life easier for contact center executives, their customers and employees. The world's most passionate, customer-focused brands achieve better interactions, deeper insights and more meaningful outcomes with Serenova's contact center solutions. To see the power of Serenova yourself, [request a demo](#).





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