



# Investing in Your Contact Center: How to Build a Business Case

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# The Need for Continuous Investment

The role—and importance—of contact centers in an organization's success has evolved over time. Today, contact centers are the strategically important frontline for many brands. While their early goals were simply to solve customer issues, now the priority is to provide a positive customer experience that builds long-term loyalty and bolsters reputation. The days of focusing only on efficiency metrics are over.

While efficiently solving customer problems is still important, it falls far short in meeting the sky-high expectations of today's consumers. In 2018, [Forbes](#) declared customer experience the new brand, maintaining that while “80% of companies believe they deliver ‘super experiences,’ only 8% of customers agree.” Clearly, many brands and organizations have work to do living up to customer experience expectations.

Delivering a seamless, helpful and positive customer experience is a multifaceted undertaking that requires thoughtful, continuous improvement and investment—especially from and in the contact center. When operated well, a contact center can become a strong value creator. When ignored, and customer experience falls short, a single negative experience shared widely via a tweet or other social media posting can create a damaging firestorm.

## Invest in Customer Experience

As the frontline for brands, contact centers need to make real, human connections. In order to do that, your agents must be well-informed, fully trained and able to easily access the complete history of customer interactions—over time and across all channels. The right technology is transparent and doesn't distract agents. Instead, it allows them to connect with and listen to customers so they can efficiently and effectively address their needs and deliver exceptional experiences.

Investing in the right technology can have dramatic, positive effects on customer experience. For example, solutions that deliver features like true omnichannel capabilities give customers a consistent experience, regardless of the channel they choose, while agents have the necessary information to support interactions across any channel. High-quality global voice technology for crystal-clear voice quality and insightful analytics and reporting are also investments with high potential for quick return because they get to the heart of better customer experience.



## Make It Simpler

Time and time again, customers tell brands they want “easy” interactions above all else.

While customers and agents alike are craving better experiences, they’re asking for things that make their interactions simpler. For customers, that means integrated communication channels—from social media to texting to voice. For agents, it’s coaching, training and an improved knowledge base.

There’s also overlap in these needs. Investing in better agent technology, adding customer experience officer roles or improving processes can bring positive benefits to both agents and customers. But here’s the rub: while contact center leaders may understand the business need for investments and improvements that can deliver better experiences, they often struggle to build the business case for an investment that can provide that real value.

This guide will help make those investments a quicker reality as you navigate the hurdles for organizational buy-in.

**“Companies that fail to provide simple experiences leave an estimated share of \$98 billion on the table.”**

Source: Siegel+Gale Simplicity Index

## Know When to Make the Business Case

Before you begin to construct a business case for a particular investment, you’ll need to clearly articulate why the investment should be made. There are a number of signs that can indicate an obvious need for improvement, providing direction for which investments will deliver the most value.

To identify the signs, ask and consider these questions:

- What specific complaints are you getting from customers or agents? Is there a theme?
- Have you seen a sudden fluctuation in volume? How can you compensate?
- Is your agent attrition rate skyrocketing? What’s their biggest frustration/reason?
- Do you have a low customer satisfaction or net promoter score? Why?
- Are your first contact resolution rates too low?
- Do you have an extremely long hold or response time? What’s causing it?
- Are you experiencing high abandonment rates? Is there a trend in times or by channel?

When you leverage qualitative and quantitative data to create better customer experiences, you build long-term value and help create a competitive advantage for your contact center. But, it’s not enough to simply collect data. You’ve got to put it to good use. When you have a good understanding of where your gaps are (based on the questions above), you can start to seek solutions.

Once you know it’s the appropriate time to make an investment—and which investment to make—it’s time to start building your business case. At this point, take off your contact center leader hat and start thinking like a finance person.



# Practical Steps for Building the Business Case for Contact Center Investments

Building a strong business case—one that stacks the odds in your favor—can take months of preparation and research. Not only do you have to back up your argument for the changes you wish to make, but you should also demonstrate (or at least reasonably predict) a return on investment (ROI).

Your business case will need a mix of tactics and strategy.

It's important to remember new initiatives that change established systems and processes mean potential disruption to groups throughout your organization. You are likely to face resistance to even a new solution that provides everything you need, simply because it's new. It can help your case if you exhibit sensitivity and understanding about this. A thoughtful and inclusive approach to presenting your business case will go far in assuaging resistance. Consider taking time to address not only how the technology investment you are recommending will solve problems, but also your proposed change management plan to minimize disruption. And ask for input from stakeholders.



## Here Are the Steps for an Effective Approach



### 1. Break Down the Numbers

Hard numbers backed up with research and data can be your most helpful tool in presenting your case. Data from your initial research into identifying the need for your investment, such as forecasted cost-savings as a result of decreases in first contact resolution rates and fewer calls, is a good start. But here are two ways to take things further:

- Work with IT to understand the impact of the changes to them and uncover any related costs such as the need for additional resources or increased IT infrastructure to support the new technology.
- Talk with other contact center leaders to understand how they're using the solutions you're proposing and how they quantifiably impact their businesses.

Once you have the numbers, and internal teams like IT are onboard, you'll want to make a more specific case for your proposed investment. Plainly lay out how the investment will affect specific metrics. Give the finance team the confidence it needs to see how the investment will deliver measurable return to the entire business.

Let's say you've identified that you're losing sales because you don't have omnichannel capabilities (email, chat, phone, social media interactions all talking to each other). If a sale is worth \$600 on average and you're losing 56 sales a month because people can't contact you as easily as they'd like, that's a yearly loss of \$33,600.

If the investment you're proposing costs \$100,000, you'll see a return in just a few months. That's a no-brainer. But how do you build a case for improvements that are less quantitative, things that make agents' jobs easier and customers more satisfied? That's step two.



## 2. Get Aspirational

Without numbers to persuade, you'll have to paint a picture of the improved future. You could point out what the competition is doing and show how you're falling behind, or you could identify new opportunities. How will this add value? How will it make agents and customers feel? How will it make people's jobs easier so they are more efficient? How will it slow attrition and increase engagement?

These effects are harder to convey than numbers, but you should be able to point to similar results at similar contact centers, describe how the investments are working for them and speak to what your projected results are in terms of improved customer experience. The easiest way to do this is to tie your investment to the organization's overall goals, objectives and mission. How does it fit with your contact center's current business strategy? What gaps will the investment fill?



## 3. Create a Roadmap

A clear plan is the best way to alleviate fear of change or disruption. As part of the roadmap, you'll need to provide proposed timelines, milestones, potential risks and shortcomings, and cost analysis. All of this should complement your research, data and projected ROI. Lay out the process that will help ensure the investment fulfills the contact center's overall business goals and mission. This should be the bridge between the current state and the improved future state.

## 4. Present Multiple Options & Make a Recommendation



There's a strategic advantage to presenting multiple options. People are more likely to pick from the options in front of them. So, presenting just one option isn't giving them options at all. Instead, you've given them a binary choice: yes or no. And you won't want to leave something this important up to a coin toss.

If you present a few options that are acceptable to you—say, your dream option A, an option B that's still good and a final option that gets you the basics of what you want—you're more likely to be successful in winning your business case.

Finally, you'll want to make a clear recommendation, speak in-depth about which you prefer and why. Again, show them the numbers and demonstrate the return. It won't be enough to just say you like option A better than B and C. Support your reasoning.

## Prepare for Success

If creating a positive customer experience is the best way to differentiate a brand in today's world, it's imperative that contact centers continue to evolve and invest in the best ways to make that a reality for customers.

Continuous investments in technology, channels, and agent training and coaching are some of the easiest and fastest ways to reap transformative, quantifiable benefit. It's a mistake to leave these critical upgrades to chance. Making a strong business case for helping customers seems easy, but ensuring you have the numbers and data behind your recommendations will pave a faster road to getting buy-in from all stakeholders.

For additional resources on cloud contact center solutions and optimizing customer experience, visit Serenova's [resource center](#).



## About Serenova

Serenova has transformed the customer experience. Over a decade ago, the company realized technology didn't exist that could deliver immediate, consistent and exceptional service. So, it created a true cloud contact center solution that could. The result is the ability to unify everything from customer engagement to quality management to analytics. This single source of truth provides global brands insights about customer information and experiences as they pivot between channels such as SMS, voice or Facebook messenger.

Whether it's technology, healthcare or retail, brands from all industries come to Serenova for its global coverage and deep integrations into the business systems used every day. Why is this important? It creates the opportunity to keep pace with customers by quickly scaling up across the enterprise or out geographically. Recognized by analysts such as Gartner, Serenova is committed to building on an 18-year legacy leading the way in cloud-based contact center innovations.

To learn more, visit [www.serenova.com](http://www.serenova.com). For live updates, follow [@SerenovaShine](https://twitter.com/SerenovaShine).





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