

CALABRIO™

Embracing Double-Edged Customer Expectations

NAVIGATING THE COMPLEXITIES
OF RISING DEMANDS + DIGITAL-
FIRST CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES



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THE DIGITAL-FIRST EXPERIENCE IS NOW THE DEFAULT

The last two years have seen a massive shift toward digital-first customer experiences across all sectors and customer demographics. As consumers were rapidly left without the option of in-person interactions, contact centers saw surging volume in digital channels: 7 in 10 consumers across North America increased digital interactions with brands and businesses,¹ and 65% say they now prefer to have the majority of their brand experiences through digital channels.² This shift isn't a new direction; it's an acceleration of an already quite evident trend. It's also not going away. Three in five American consumers say digital experiences will only become more important in the near future.³

But for brands and businesses trying to navigate changing customer expectations in a digital-first world, an interesting paradox has emerged: Customer expectations for speed, convenience and seamlessness are higher than ever. But customers aren't willing to sacrifice the human element. They're simultaneously demanding more of the human touch. They want *more* empathy, deep knowledge and complex problem-solving when they reach out to brands.

How do brands — and their contact centers — untangle this complexity and deliver on these double-edged demands?

7-IN-10

Consumers in North America increased digital interactions with brands in 2020⁴

65%

Say they want most brand experiences to be digital⁵

3-IN-5

Say digital experiences will become more important in the near future⁶

¹ <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/consumers-experiment-with-digital-amid-the-pandemic-but-companies-miss-the-mark-on-cx-annual-broadridge-cx-study-finds-301239410.html>

² https://insights.appnovation.com/resources/research-report/the-digital-consumer/?utm_source=press&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=research%20report%20digital%20consumer

³ https://insights.appnovation.com/resources/research-report/the-digital-consumer/?utm_source=press&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=research%20report%20digital%20consumer

⁴ <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/consumers-experiment-with-digital-amid-the-pandemic-but-companies-miss-the-mark-on-cx-annual-broadridge-cx-study-finds-301239410.html>

⁵ https://insights.appnovation.com/resources/research-report/the-digital-consumer/?utm_source=press&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=research%20report%20digital%20consumer

⁶ https://insights.appnovation.com/resources/research-report/the-digital-consumer/?utm_source=press&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=research%20report%20digital%20consumer

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CUSTOMERS DEMAND THE BEST OF ALL WORLDS

It's an understatement to say that experience is everything. Businesses in every sector compete primarily based on customer experience — not price or product. Customers are willing to seek out — and pay an average of a 16% premium for — exceptional experiences.⁷ But there's a growing fault line in what defines an exceptional customer experience.

Speed is King — But the Human Element Isn't Going Away

PricewaterhouseCoopers conducted one of the most robust consumer experience surveys of the recent past, finding that the most important factors in an exceptional experience are:

1. Speed
2. Convenience
3. Knowledgeable help
4. Friendly service⁸

⁷ <https://www.pwc.com/us/en/services/consulting/library/consumer-intelligence-series/future-of-customer-experience.html#must-dos>

⁸ <https://www.pwc.com/us/en/services/consulting/library/consumer-intelligence-series/future-of-customer-experience.html#must-dos>

⁹ <https://www.salesforce.com/form/pdf/state-of-the-connected-customer-2nd-edition/>

¹⁰ <https://www.calabrio.com/resource-center/white-papers-reports/dl-state-of-cc-tech/>

¹¹ <https://www.calabrio.com/resource-center/white-papers-reports/dl-state-of-cc-tech/>

¹² <https://www.pwc.com/us/en/services/consulting/library/consumer-intelligence-series/future-of-customer-experience.html#must-dos>

¹³ <https://hbr.org/2016/12/the-most-and-least-empathetic-companies-2016>



Omnichannel is Still a Struggle



59% of customers say they don't get omnichannel service from companies.⁹

Nearly half of all contact centers say **channel disconnects** are the biggest technology challenge.¹⁰



4-in-5 organizations say they can't consistently deliver omnichannel experiences.¹¹



The Human Element is In-Demand



82% of U.S. consumers say they want more human interaction in the future.¹²

The most empathetic companies generated **50% more revenue** than the least empathetic.¹³



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THE PARADOX OF CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

At a glance, the first two qualities seem to contradict the second two. But the truth is more complex: Customers are happy to encounter greater self-service and automation-enhanced experiences that enhance speed and convenience. But they still expect the human touch to be there when they need it – whether that’s an in-depth answer to a complex question or a patient, empathetic ear to vent frustrations. Even amid the landmark shift toward digital-first experiences, PwC found that 82% of U.S. consumers say they want more human interaction in the future.¹⁴

Countless consumers surveys and studies offer similar conclusions – and these findings reflect Calabrio’s original research from all angles:

What customers want now, according to...

CUSTOMERS¹⁵

70%

expect multiple channels of communication/ seamless omnichannel.

69%

expect heightened levels of emotional empathy.

CONTACT CENTER MANAGERS¹⁶

62%

say customers want more emotional empathy from agents.

63%

say customers want expanded channels.

CONTACT CENTER AGENTS¹⁷

73%

of agents say rising customer expectations are a top challenge for their contact center.



Agents rank omnichannel experiences & emotional empathy as top consumer demands.

¹⁴ <https://www.pwc.com/us/en/services/consulting/library/consumer-intelligence-series/future-of-customer-experience.html#must-dos>

¹⁵ <https://info.calabrio.com/state-of-the-contact-center-cloud-is-here/>

¹⁶ <https://info.calabrio.com/state-of-the-contact-center-cloud-is-here/>

¹⁷ Calabrio 2021 Agent Wellbeing Report

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3 Top Challenges in the contact center¹⁸



Channels are not unified, hindering 360° views + omnichannel CX



Insufficient or unsuccessful use of automation and AI



Systems don't collect enough data about customer and agent behavior, sentiment, etc.

DIFFERENT OBJECTIVES – THE SAME BARRIERS

Fast, seamless, omnichannel service seems at odds with knowledgeable, empathetic, human touch. To many contact centers, it looks like a zero-sum game: Moving in one direction will mean losing ground in the other. But the real barrier here is complexity. Customers want the convenience of omnichannel. But the proliferation of channels has fragmented the customer experience in many organizations. At the same time, the range of customer needs is widening. On one end of the spectrum, customers want to use self-service and automated channels to get fast service for simple issues. On the other end of the spectrum, agents and managers agree that the complexity of customer issues is increasing – demanding more in-depth knowledge and empathy.

As it turns out, these two different objectives – omnichannel speed and in-depth human connections – share many of the same barriers within the typical contact center. Put another way, the same basic strategies can empower a contact center to tackle both goals simultaneously.

¹⁸ <https://www.calabrio.com/resource-center/white-papers-reports/dl-state-of-cc-tech/>

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SIMPLE STRATEGIES FOR UNRAVELING COMPLEXITY

1 – Breaking down data silos + gaining 360° customer visibility

Most contact centers still have heavily siloed systems and customer data. Nearly half of all contact centers say their biggest technology challenge is that channels are not unified, leaving them with sub-par customer visibility.¹⁹ In addition, companies identify a disconnect between the information technology and contact center teams as their biggest technology pain point.²⁰ And as a result, less than 1 in 5 organizations say they can consistently deliver omnichannel experiences.²¹

But siloed data and poor customer visibility isn't just an omnichannel problem. It also leaves agents struggling to deliver empathetic, personalized service that recognizes and validates the customer based on past experiences.

Contact centers need to seek out contact center technology platforms that are purpose-built for the omnichannel world. They need technology that creates a foundation of integrated customer data for 360-degree visibility – so they can see and track the customer across all channels and touch points. This integrated visibility enables the contact center to deliver the seamlessness that defines a true omnichannel experience – and empowers agents with the robust context and background to deliver service that empathizes with a customer's experience and anticipates customer needs.



¹⁹ <https://www.calabrio.com/resource-center/white-papers-reports/dl-state-of-cc-tech/>

²⁰ <https://www.calabrio.com/resource-center/white-papers-reports/dl-state-of-cc-tech/>

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2 – Accelerating the use of intelligent automation

Customers increasingly seek out self-service tools and are happy to enjoy the speedy benefits of chatbots and other automation tools. As a result, most contact centers are using some automation. But to catch up with customer expectations, contact centers need to aggressively invest in self-service and automation tools that enable them to deliver the slick, convenient experiences that customers crave.

Moreover, effectively leveraging automation isn't just a speed play; it also helps avoid bogging down agents in repetitive tasks, handling high-volume, low-complexity calls. Surging omnichannel contact volume over the past two years demonstrated the need and value of chatbots and automated routing tools. Deploying intelligent automation effectively (and widely) will empower agents with more time (and emotional energy) to dedicate to the most complex and demanding customer interactions.



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3 – Putting analytics into action

Contact centers know that analytics tools have tremendous potential. Yet, many are still not using analytics in any meaningful way. For example, as of early 2021, 2 in 5 contact centers said they could not use analytics to see customer issues or

predict customer behavior.²² And 1 in 3 contact centers said they're not yet doing any voice-of-the-customer (VOC) analytics.²³ Siloed, unintegrated data is one part of the problem – an analytics engine is only as good as the “fuel” you put into it.

Just as Big of a Problem: Contact Centers aren't Putting Their Analytics Tools into Action in Meaningful Ways



SEE CUSTOMER FRICTION IN REAL TIME

Every contact center should be using analytics to reveal where bottlenecks and friction points are hindering the customer experience – and to uncover opportunities for improvement in efficiency and convenience – in real time so that you can turn potential negatives into customer delights.



ANTICIPATING VOLUME + OPTIMIZING STAFFING

With omnichannel volume surging and fluctuating, contact centers should be leveraging analytics insights to focus resources where they matter most. Analytics-powered forecasting and dynamic scheduling tools empower contact center managers to anticipate volume more accurately – and rapidly adjust in real time – to put the right agents, with the right knowledge, in the right place, at the right time.



DELIVERING PERSONALIZED + PREDICTIVE SERVICE

Best-in-class analytics tools are woven right into agent workflows, empowering agents with real-time customer insights that empower them to know their customers and deliver better, smarter, more predictive service.

²² <https://www.calabrio.com/resource-center/white-papers-reports/dl-state-of-cc-tech/>

²³ <https://info.calabrio.com/state-of-the-contact-center-cloud-is-here/>

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CLOUD-SMART CONTACT CENTERS LEADING THE WAY

Contact centers have been investing in smart, omnichannel technologies for well over a decade. The shift to the cloud has also been happening gradually for the last several years. But all of that accelerated significantly in early 2020. Our 2020 State of the Contact Center study found that 90% of contact centers said they were aggressively investing in new channels, automation and AI, and analytics tools – and 68% of cloud migrations happened in 2020.²⁴ A year later, it's clear that the success of all their technology initiatives is directly related to their cloud maturity:

HALF



Of partial-cloud contact centers say they feel limited by their current solutions.



2-IN-3

On-premise contact centers say they feel limited by their current solutions.

2X

Full-cloud contact centers are nearly TWICE as likely to have implemented social channels, chatbots and business intelligence (BI) platforms.



70%

Of cloud-powered contact centers say their cloud solutions are enhancing analytics use.

CLOUD-POWERED CONTACT CENTERS SAY THEIR CLOUD SOLUTIONS...



Increase the value of analytics programs



Increase the value of AI and ML initiatives



Enable more strategic, smarter business decisions.²⁵

²⁴ <https://info.calabrio.com/state-of-the-contact-center-cloud-is-here/>

²⁵ <https://info.calabrio.com/state-of-the-contact-center-cloud-is-here/>

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TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS CAN'T ADD COMPLEXITY

It's clear that many contact centers need better, smarter technology to overcome incumbent barriers and enable forward-thinking CX strategies — connecting data silos; bridging gaps and accelerating the CX; and enabling more personalized, predictive service experiences. But given that technology proliferation and complexity is already a root cause of many of the biggest problems in the contact center, adding more technology naturally sounds like more complexity and more burdens. The key is seeking out technologies that resolve, rather than augment, complexity.

3 CRITERIA FOR TECHNOLOGIES THAT RESOLVE COMPLEXITY



Easy

Gone are the days of painful rip-and-replace deployments, slow learning curves and years-long ROI paths. Best-in-class contact center technology platforms are now purpose-built to be easy to deploy, learn, and easy to use. The right solution should offer pre-built integrations with all your existing core systems and technologies. The vendor should provide robust support and guidance throughout implementation and staff training. And the technology itself must be intuitive to use, with tools and functionalities that make it easy for all users — agents, managers and business leaders — to quickly see the customer-centric information and insights they need to take meaningful action.



Personalized

Forward-thinking contact center technologies are built from the ground up with the customer's needs and journey in mind. This means features like AI-enhanced, highly automated workflows and capabilities that are designed not just to drive operational efficiency, but to enhance and accelerate the customer experience; and analytics tools smartly embedded right within agent dashboards and workflows to give them the information they need to deliver more personalized, predictive service experiences.



Smart

Contact centers should expect modern contact center technology platforms to come with truly embedded analytics capabilities — not bolt-on tools. They should deliver customer-

centric analytics insights seamlessly within agent and manager workflows — enabling data-driven decision-making and allowing agents to add smart, personalized touches. Leading technology platforms are also built to be omnichannel not just from the customer perspective, but from an internal enterprise perspective. You should be able to pull in any data stream from anywhere within the business to derive meaningful business intelligence (BI) insights that drive relevant action well beyond the walls of the contact center. Finally, smart platforms pull all that customer data and analytics insight into reporting tools that bring that information to life — providing highly visual, intuitive outputs that make data relevant and insights meaningful for any user, anywhere in the business.

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Calabrio is a customer engagement software company that provides analytic insights to catalyze growth through customer service contact centers. The Calabrio ONE® software suite empowers everyone in an organization, from contact center agents to the CEO, with easy-to-use tools that provide a better understanding of the customer. Every customer interaction yields insights that expand customer consciousness, which is how leading companies now drive growth and long-term corporate prosperity. Calabrio ONE is a unified workforce optimization (WFO) software suite—including call recording, quality management, workforce management, voice-of-the-customer (VoC) analytics and advanced reporting—that transforms the contact center into a customer engagement center and a valuable source of customer insight.

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