

Customer engagement, Contact Center AI

Contact Centers Are Not Dead. Course-Correct Your Strategy Now.

Tony Lorentzen | [General Manager & Senior Vice President, Intelligent Engagement](#)

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Mark Twain said, “the reports of my death are greatly exaggerated.” The claims that Contact Centers are dead also would be exaggerated, and organizations should use caution when faced with a single-threaded death-to-the-contact-center approach. Instead, organizations must find technology partners that have their customers’ choices and best interests in mind. This blog explores ways to transform Contact Centers to virtual engagement centers – and shares tips with those that want to course-correct death-to-the-contact-center approaches.

Consumers want choice. Contact Centers are the front-door to those choices. When thought of as virtual engagement centers powered by a range of customer input options from voice and video to text, Contact Centers are vital lifelines for organizations’ digital transformation and customer engagement strategies. And, while the shift to using digital channels like SMS and in-app messaging is growing, there are still millions of people who want the opportunity to pick-up the phone to talk to a human when engaging their favorite retailer, bank, or healthcare plan. The data proves it.

The power behind virtual engagement centers is in applying AI to automate the tasks that can and should be automated so that organizations can serve their customers in connected and seamless ways. Virtual engagement centers give human agents and associates the power to achieve more with technology, so organizations can grow and thrive.

Virtual engagement centers are poised to allow organizations to interact with their customers in new ways by leveraging conversational AI and empowering a more connected experience, no matter which channel customers choose by:

1. Intelligently guiding customers to the channel most appropriate for them to get their query resolved, whether that is via voice, SMS messaging with a live agent or chatting with an in-app virtual assistant
2. Proactively reaching out to customers to alert them of changes in the status of orders or inquiries, answering the questions likely to arise before they even reach out
3. Offering more visual interfaces on mobile phones, to improve first contact resolution,

whether through video or in shared document viewing

Over the last several months, we have seen a rapid interest in and understanding of the importance of transforming Contact Centers into virtual engagement centers. In recent weeks, Nuance has assisted large global organizations by (1) turning their brick-and-mortar store employees to virtual chat agents; (2) launching new virtual assistants to automate online purchases; and (3) shifting calls from overburdened call centers to automated virtual assistants and live-chat channels. These activities have been the cornerstone of the digital transformation for many organizations, all of whom will be stronger longer term as a result.

Even if you've gone down the path with a "contact-center-is-dead" approach, you can quickly course-correct. Here are some tips to get your virtual engagement center approach started:

1. Tightly integrate your traditional voice and digital channels to enable a true omnichannel, connected experience
2. Leverage conversational AI not just to automate but to intelligently determine the purpose of an inbound call and guide those customers to messaging and virtual assistants where appropriate
3. Use common tooling to leverage previous investments in the telephony channel across newer digital ones to reduce total cost of ownership
4. Deploy a true enterprise-grade Virtual Assistant, not a simple chatbot, to handle complex inquiries to increase sales and drive out costs
5. Implement AI in learning and guiding conversations so you can coach agents to respond faster

Tags: [Contact center strategy](#)

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About Tony Lorentzen

Tony has more than 25 years of experience in the technology sector, spending the last 17 with Nuance where he is currently the SVP of Intelligent Engagement Solutions within the Enterprise Division. Before that he served as the leader of several teams at Nuance including Sales Engineering, Business Consulting, and Product Management. A proven leader in working with the cross-functional teams, Tony blends his in-depth knowledge of business management, technology and vertical domain expertise to bring Nuance's solutions to the Enterprise market, partnering with customers to ensure implementations drive true ROI. Prior to Nuance, Tony spent time at Lucent and Verizon where he led teams that applied the latest technologies to solve complex business issues for large enterprises. Tony received a B.S. from Villanova University and a MBA from Dowling College.

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