

Customer engagement, Contact Center AI

How Vodafone adopted best practices for its COVID-19 response plan

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During the pandemic, we saw many contact center leaders forced to adapt to remote customer service—and it's not a working model that's going away any time soon. In this blog post, we look back on Forrester's remote customer service advice in its COVID-19 response plan and explore how Vodafone offered the perfect real-life example with its contact centre strategy.

If you spent any time on the What's Next blog last year, you might have seen us talking about [Forrester's COVID-19 response plan](#). It offered timely, expert advice on how brands can tool up their contact centers to manage remote agents and adapt their customer service strategies to new consumer behavior.

Now we're a year on, Forrester's advice remains just as valuable today as it was during the pandemic. While working from home is no longer a necessity, [Forbes research](#) suggests that almost three-quarters of contact center managers think remote working will be a permanent model for the customer service industry.

If they haven't already, many [contact centers will need to ensure they're well-equipped](#) to support flexible working models well into the future.

The wisdom of Forrester's response plan becomes especially clear once you map the analyst's recommendations to the successful strategies already adopted by leading brands. And worldwide telecommunications provider Vodafone offers a perfect example.

Stage one: The quick shift to remote working

For the first stage, labelled the “storming” period, Forrester suggested brands begin to deploy agents to work from home, coach supervisors for remote work management, and start to manage their response and queue times. It’s worth checking whether, even now, your agents have all the tools they need to serve customers wherever they’re working, and your managers have strong visibility of the teams and channels they’re managing.

At the onset of the pandemic, Vodafone faced the monumental challenge of quickly moving its live agents to remote working set-ups, as well as training 2,500 brick-and-mortar staff for online customer service. Fortunately, the telco already had [Nuance Live Assist deployed across its contact centers](#), which meant agents could easily access the brand’s live chat platform from any location. Also, Vodafone had the flexibility to scale its live chat to accommodate its new agents.

Stage two: Time to optimize your new way of working

Vodafone’s transition wasn’t without its hurdles. At this point, its contact center managers realized they didn’t have the same visibility of agent performance while working remotely. Previously, managers would use a physical dashboard that captured real-time KPIs—but they needed a new, digital-first solution for remote teams.

During the second stage, labelled the “optimizing” period, Forrester recommended brands focus their analytics efforts on the “now”, and begin to further mature their work-from-home tools and strategies. It’s a chance to look at where remote service impacts your customers, identify any dips in performance, and make any necessary changes to your tools and agent pool.

Having identified the visibility challenge its managers were facing, Vodafone collaborated with our professional services team to find a rapid solution. Our team worked with the telco to build a digital KPI dashboard in just two weeks, which uses data captured within its Nuance Live Assist and [Call Steering deployments](#).

The dashboard displays real-time metrics, like customer queue times, NPS scores, and average agent handling time. Using these, contact center managers can quickly identify any dips in performance and customer satisfaction, and quickly take action to resolve them—whether that means supporting agents with service delivery or deflecting customers to other channels to relieve pressure.

Stage three: Look ahead to a digital-first future

Forrester’s final stage, the ‘new normalizing’ period, is all about refining the foundations you’ve put in place. The analyst suggested using your new labor models to drive long term success, and pushing for a digital-first approach to technology across the board. And that advice still remains valuable post-pandemic.

Once again, Vodafone’s story shows the wisdom of Forrester’s recommendations. The telco now allows contact center agents to work remotely, and it uses the KPI dashboard as a permanent solution—helping contact center managers maintain full visibility of their teams, wherever they decide to work.

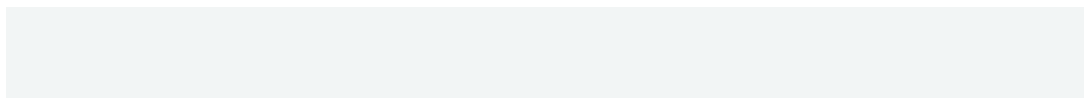
Step into the ‘work from anywhere’ world with AI

Just like Vodafone, many of the brands we’ve worked over the past 18 months have found solutions to temporary challenges that continue to prove their value today. As more agents continue to work remotely, and more contact center leaders face the challenge of managing a remote workforce, we’re offering critical support with our [Agent AI](#) solutions—investing in a digital, ‘work from anywhere’ world.

We’re excited to see how more brands like Vodafone will find their new way of working, and how they’ll support their agents to deliver standout, innovative customer experiences over the next few years.

Tags: [COVID-19](#), [Forrester](#), [Remote working](#), [Telco](#), [Customer success story](#), [Contact center strategy](#)

More Information



Read Vodafone's full innovation story

Get the case study to read Vodafone's inspiring story, and hear from the telco's Senior Partner Delivery Manager on the difference its KPI dashboard is making.

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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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