

Customer engagement, Contact Center AI

Revisit your contact center strategy: 3 new ways to approach CX transformation

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With focus switching to how organizations can achieve long-term goals with fewer resources, there's never been a better time to reassess your contact center strategy with careful budgeting and new approaches in mind. After the recent announcement of the Microsoft Digital Contact Center Platform, we spoke to a roundtable of contact center leaders—who are also Nuance customers—to see what their strategic priorities look like right now—and how this new comprehensive platform can help them deliver stronger customer experiences and more revenue.

The contact center of today may look vastly different to ten or even five years ago—but so many of the core challenges are the same. Often, leaders are still balancing the high costs of running a contact center with the need to provide comprehensive, engaging customer experiences and effective service.

It's time to take a new approach to contact center strategy and re-evaluate the solutions organizations have adopted over the years, to see if they're really delivering the value contact center leaders need. With continuing innovation in our contact center portfolio, and the recent announcement of the Microsoft Digital Contact Center Platform, which combines our AI-powered solutions with Dynamics 365, Power Virtual Agents, Azure, and more to create a flexible, end-to-end environment, there's never been a better time to take a pause and think about new strategies.

In a recent customer roundtable, we asked our panelists to highlight some of the major roadblocks to their current contact center strategy, and talk about the potential of new avenues for transformation and

improvement. Here's what came out of that discussion:

Let's think about customer experiences in a new way

Our panelists were keen to discuss how we can approach the future of work in the contact center, empowering agents to do their jobs efficiently, securely, and compliantly.

For many organizations, turning the classic contact center into a functioning work-from-home operation in 2020 put huge pressure on an already tricky transition to new systems. For example, we supported Curry's (formerly Dixons Carphone Group) as it shifted to working remotely and expanded its live agent team to manage the sudden growth in demand during lockdowns, handling more than 400,000 contacts using Live Assist during its peak. In the months since, the UK electronics retailer has turned its focus to refining these digital customer care journeys and continuing to improve agent efficiency.

Whether they're back to fully in-person, functioning as a hybrid operation, or staying totally distributed, contact centers are now settling into whatever tomorrow looks like for their organization. That means now is the time for leaders to take stock of the tools they implemented and initiatives they kicked off over the last few years.

1. Customer experience relies as much on security as simplicity

Those years have also highlighted major gaps in both customer and agent experiences, and areas where fraud prevention and other security initiatives need to be tightened up. Our recent research with Forrester showed that there's ongoing tension between seamless experiences and secure experiences; 61% of the CX decision-makers interviewed agreed that protecting customers from fraud was often at odds with providing customer-friendly support across channels.

Balancing this equation while making all the adjustments to individual solutions could take years—and a massive amount of investment. But simplifying contact center operations with one vendor, on a single fully-featured platform, can take all that complexity out of the equation. The Microsoft Digital Contact Center Platform centralizes omnichannel self-service and agent-led engagements, telephony, fraud prevention, business process automation, and customer data; everything the modern contact center needs to thrive well into the future.

2. Customer confidence is the key to contact center success

Increasing customer confidence in self-service tools—and therefore their willingness to engage with them—is high on the agenda for the leaders who joined our roundtable.

Self-service pulls a vital double duty in the contact center, empowering customers to find their own resolutions and lower costs, and giving agents the bandwidth to deliver resolutions to those who need extra support. But you only really have one chance to convince a customer that your self-service tools are worth using; it doesn't take much more than a "Sorry, can you repeat that" from an IVR, or a too-general answer from a chatbot to put them off. And before you know it, they're calling into the contact center and using expensive agent time for basic queries.

AI-assisted solutions, such as a conversational IVR with natural language processing or a virtual assistant that can automatically personalize an interaction, are vital for offering satisfying self-service and building that all-important confidence. For example, we worked with a major global telco to implement a conversational IVR which now handles more than 70% of the organization's four million monthly calls—helping every customer get rapid support. Savvy organizations can push these solutions even further; sophisticated AI self-service tools (and tools that use AI to support live agents) can be instrumental in strengthening relationships and making customer interactions more lucrative.

3. Modern contact centers are sources of real revenue

Contact centers can be expensive to operate, and today more than ever it's important to find ways to do more with less. But nowadays it's important to change the perception of the contact center within the organization as simply a revenue drain. Building AI into customer journeys, and integrating useful backend systems like order management, pricing databases, product catalogs, and inventory, will reduce costs, but can also turn every interaction into an opportunity to bring in much-needed revenue.

Customers looking for an out-of-stock product can be offered an alternative by a chatbot. The IVR can proactively ask if a customer is calling in to ask about the order they placed that morning. And agents can offer special deals, or upsell and cross-sell based on AI-powered recommendations. When everything's linked, everything's possible.

There's always more on the horizon

Our customers were also keen to hear more about the combination of Nuance and Microsoft, and how our products will work within the Microsoft Digital Contact Center Platform. And since the interest after the platform was announced this summer, we're sure that's a sentiment shared by a lot of contact center leaders.

We're committed to developing a truly end-to-end solution that will deliver long-term competitive advantage for our customers through a constantly evolving platform. More details—including information about our roadmap for the coming months and years—will be shared as we continue to develop our components and Microsoft refines the offering.

Now is the ideal time to join this journey. By following this path to contact center transformation, you can drive cost reduction and revenue creation alongside your long-term goals, building value directly into your strategy.

Tags: [Conversational AI](#), [Contact center strategy](#), [Intelligent virtual assistant](#)



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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