Mistakes to Avoid

When Using Cloud Contact Centre Technology

Cloud technology has transformed the industry by effectively removing the need for enterprises to own, operate and manage an on-site contact centre system. However, many contact centres are still not utilising the technology to its full potential. In this article, we will reveal the worst mistakes you can make when deploying and using cloud contact centre technology.

Providers failing to fully prepare for cloud implementations

Service providers often assume they have the structural organisation in place to implement a new cloud proposition. They often underestimate the challenges to overcome and the timeframe for operational readiness. In our experience, it's usually a bad assumption. They often have to pool resources from a range of disparate teams to make it happen and frequently they can run into trouble if they try to work in isolation on such projects.

Service providers should expect their cloud application provider to provide support based on experience creating an "as-a-Service" solution and to have programs which deliver help, advice, and strategic consultancy that ensures long term success. Service Providers looking to become a contact centre as a service provider should expect to engage teams from marketing, product management, sales engineering, sales, as well as operations and engineering.

Failure to use a simple agent graphical user interface

Any business looking to move its own contact centre to the cloud needs to acknowledge the importance of providing a wide pool of distributed agents with an ergonomic graphical user interface (GUI). Reducing training for new agents is critical and the ability to pull in knowledge workers or back office staff not typically serving as full time agents is a valuable benefit of the "burstability" of a cloud contact centre solution.

The GUI should be Web accessible and available on demand as interaction levels fluctuate allowing new staff to easily engage. It should also be intuitive to use. Moreover, it should not require intervention by any IT function before it becomes functional. One of the fundamental benefits of moving to the cloud is the

reduction in IT burden and if the IT department needs to get involved to 'add an agent' that key benefit is compromised.

Neglecting voice quality

In the cloud contact centre market, discussions around quality of service (QoS) in infrastructure are frequent, but should not be overlooked as it relates to delivering voice audio service to end users. Assuming that the same level of quality enjoyed 'on premise' is delivered over standard public Internet is a mistake. And while OK for exceptional 'overflow' situations or occasional calls into the back office, it's important to ensure parity in audio quality.

The cloud provider should be consultative in their approach, examining and recommending the most effective connectivity between their network and the contact centre location(s). A provider that can also provide cloud network best practices aimed at reducing potential QoS issues is highly valuable to the contact centre.

Failing to ensure your provider can deliver integration cost-effectively

When a business moves from on premise to the cloud, it needs to ensure that any CRM interfaces can move with it and that its chosen cloud contact centre provider can deliver the necessary integration without significant costs or having to re-engineer services.

It's a mistake to assume that most vendors can achieve this easily. They can't. It requires a lot of effort on their part. And from the perspective of the end user business, it is advisable to seek proof points from their intended cloud provider that they have the experience in carrying out low cost, high value integrations that work successfully.

Don't make the mistake of disregarding contact centre size

Service providers need to ask themselves if they're considering the differing administration requirements of small, medium, and large cloud contact centres. After all, the supervisor of a ten agent operation is not going to require, nor do they

need, advanced scripting tools to deliver the functionality that somebody in a much larger contact centre might expect. The smaller contact centres are likely to need simple wizard based tools that allow them to conduct routine tasks such as adding an IVR prompt or menu, or additional agents or skills. Larger tenants, on the other hand, typically require access to advanced tools as their operational processes and workflow requirements are going to be more complex. As a provider, you need to make sure you deliver an efficient administration solution that fits.

Don't fall into the trap of working with providers who don't offer a genuine multi-tenant environment

Many providers claim to offer a cloud contact centre proposition. However, many simply virtualise an instance of what was traditionally deployed as an on-premise solution and offer a commercial subscription offer around it. However, when that provider has 20 or so individual instances, operations and maintenance costs soar and they'll pass on the significant cost of ownership to their customers. Instead of managing, operating, and upgrading a single platform with a single set of tools and skills, the provider will need to manage, operate, and upgrade multiple instances of it, with the associated cost overhead. Consistent and accurate communication of future roadmap features quickly goes 'out of sync' as different versions are implemented across different customer instances. The safest route for the end user business is to ensure they're working with a provider who operates a genuinely multi-tenant solution.

Switching off your quality management when you move to the cloud

Any business looking to move to the cloud may be unwilling to replace their existing call recording, quality monitoring, or workforce management solutions. These are typically 'sticky' applications, often integral to the way contact centre operations are managed. A forced migration to something new is likely to be very disruptive. Instead, organisations should look for cloud contact centre providers who offer options. Look for a vendor that provides QMS and WFM if you need it and if you already have it make sure your cloud vendor can integrate your quality management applications and deliver the level of continuity and productivity gains the business is looking for.

Being constrained by the interaction end point

Many organisations migrating to the cloud will likely have multiple vendor PBX hardware and different telephone handsets. As they switch to cloud, they'll want the freedom to choose whether to re-use the incumbent device or replace it with a low cost softphone/IP device option. A move to the cloud should not mean end users, that are often geographically distributed, are forced to adopt a single vendor device. Again look for a vendor that has multiple options, one that allows you to deliver voice directly to an agent SIP enabled desktop or reuse SIP phones where you have them.