The Intelligent Cloud Contact Center

Now More Than Ever it is Time to Move Your Enterprise Contact Center to the Cloud

Cloud contact center has been a hot topic in the industry for some time, but moving your enterprise contact center to the cloud is no small decision. We understand that migrating your contact center is not something to jump into without considerable due diligence.

We also know from our experience working with leading brands, however, that moving the contact center to the cloud pays off and is fast becoming the only way for an organization to embrace the advancements in self-service, intelligent routing and agent assistance that artificial intelligence (AI) will soon deliver.

This paper is designed to help evaluate your current contact center as you consider a move to the cloud. Cloud services also support business continuity and disaster recovery in ways premises solutions can't. For example, because agents can be located anywhere, businesses can continue to provide a high level of customer service even when adverse events occur. Our goal, as always, is to enable you to deliver exceptional customer experiences, and we are here to assist you at every step as you transition to the cloud.

Why the cloud, why now?

The chief response to that question is simply: customer experience (CX). According to Dimension Data's 2019 Global Customer Experience Benchmarking Report, "CX is recognized as the number one driver of digital transformation and the top strategic measurement for organizational performance."

The analyst firm also points out that 62.4 percent of organizations "see the opportunity in evolving their CX transformation strategies to really stand out from competitors."

The cloud offers the only sustainable path to deliver customer experiences that are immediately relevant to the customer's service or sales journey. That's why enterprises small and large across all industries are moving business processes to the cloud for the security, scalability, speed and seamless omnichannel experiences it enables.

Virtual work plays a part ensuring business continuity and staffing coverage. Cloud-based applications slip easily into disaster recovery plans by delivering uninterrupted communication when it's needed most without the need for maintenance staff in potentially unreachable locations.

> **"By 2022, CCaaS will be the preferred adoption model in 50 percent of contact centers with more than 750 agents, up from approximately 10 percent today."**
>
> **– Gartner**

Echoing these market trends, in January 2019, research firm Gartner announced they would no longer publish Magic Quadrant reports for premises-based Unified Communications or Contact Center Infrastructure. Because "premises-based options have reached full maturity" and it forecasts that "By 2022, CCaaS will be the preferred adoption model in 50 percent of contact centers with more than 750 agents, up from approximately 10 percent today."

Differentiating on customer experience now implies cloud strategies. Backing up Gartner, Morgan Stanley reported in its 2019 AlphaWise survey that "88 percent were very or somewhat interested in moving to cloud for contact center infrastructure at their next upgrade."

For enterprises securing their position in a world driven by customer experience and preparing for the impact that AI will bring, moving the contact center to the cloud is not a question of if, but when.

But before moving to the cloud, there are due diligence questions to address:

- Is the cloud ready to handle the scale and complexity of my contact center?
- Does it offer the same or better availability and resiliency?
- How do we organize CX holistically within our operation to serve customers consistently and effectively across communication channels?

- Will we lose the geographic reach or functionalities we've so painstakingly customized in our on premises solution?
- What are the business and service delivery risks if we don't move soon? When is late, too late?
- How does cloud contact center support our business continuity and disaster recovery planning?
- How can we know if moving to the cloud now is the right choice?

We have purposely left out a discussion around hosted and hybrid technology paths. It's our opinion that hosted solutions simply trade CAPEX for OPEX pricing while relocating premises solutions off-site and retaining all the issues legacy systems have built up over the years. Similarly, hybrid solutions (where parts are located on premises and in the cloud or hosted off-site) seem to offer the worst of both worlds to enterprises trying to make a next, long-term, strategic step.

Note: When an on-premises contact center vendor says it has the same software in their cloud as in its on-premises solution, that is a hosted solution, not cloud. No major contact center vendor has a multitenant cloud solution based on their premises system.

The risks of not moving soon

It's generally understood that for most, moving to the cloud is inevitable. The question is: When is the right time to make that change?

The sooner you can make the move, the better. Taking time to settle into a new solution before making the more sweeping operational changes that AI brings will ease the transition. In "Prediction Machines: The Simple Economics of Artificial Intelligence," Ajay Agrawal argues that AI will soon be an economic imperative for organizations to survive.

The cloud is the foundation for adopting these new strategies that are themselves located in the cloud.

A more pressing issue for many on-premises contact centers is that their customers notice their experience being behind the times compared to others. Despite best efforts to leverage on-premises capabilities, they simply do not compete with the customer experience that cloud systems deliver. Customers feel the difference when interacting with contact centers who began their journey sooner.

For decades, on-premises solutions have been a solid investment; equally true is that they can no longer keep pace with the rapidly-changing contact center landscape in the way cloud solutions can.

For many businesses, the impetus to move to the cloud arises when their on-premises solution starts to hold them back, causes frustration or disrupts service delivery. The ability to take advantage of a steady-stream of new capabilities relieves the years of waiting between software releases in the premises world.

Many on-premises solutions are aging out and are brittle due to extreme customization.

Those semi-regular software updates cause concern about their effect on system and service operations. The risk of changing anything often feels too great and the downtime too challenging. Many enterprises are left trying to figure out if continued investment in an aging on-premises contact center makes sense.

Your on-premises solution is inhibiting your business and customer experience today if it:

- Is not flexible enough to take advantage of new capabilities
- Must be manually updated during off hours and is difficult to keep secure
- Frustrates agents because they must work in multiple, disparate systems and are unable to provide a streamlined customer experience
- Continuity and disaster recovery requirements do not match the centralized approach of premises systems.
- Is out-of-maintenance and/or at end-of-life status which makes it hard to justify continued investment
- Prevents the business from transforming or iterating as fast as competitors due to heavy customizations
- Does not have the technical capability to meet digital era CX expectations
- Comes from a vendor that has shifted their R&D away from on-premises investments and toward an incompatible cloud future.

These are just a few of the signs that it's time to move to the cloud.

Today's cloud is ready to handle the scope of your enterprise contact center

Enterprises often ask us if the cloud is ready to handle the scope of their operations. The cloud has rapidly matured and offers a host of proven capabilities and benefits for ever larger, more sophisticated operations:

- **Scalability.** The cloud offers the ability to quickly and economically scale as your business needs change – permanently or seasonally. With the cloud you pay as you go – only for what you actually use, not what you might use in the future.
- **Security.** SaaS companies MUST provide high security in order to operate. This delivers an economy of scale related to security, as well as resiliency. As enterprises have increasingly moved other applications to the cloud, they have spurred innovation and investment in cloud security making cloud providers the most secure businesses around.
- **Rich features.** Cloud-based solutions offer an array of features that many on-premises solutions don't have or cannot provide cost-effectively. With cloud, you can trial new applications such as workforce optimization (WFO) or a new digital channel quickly – without the need for major long-term financial commitment or the angst of installing a new capability.
- **Connectivity to existing applications.** Cloud solutions use open APIs and provide pre-packaged integration with leading CRM market leaders. Because the application is in the cloud, they also ensure that the integration is kept current with access to latest capabilities. No need for manual updates or crossing your fingers it will be compatible.
- **Resiliency.** Premises-based contact centers operate in a 99.999 percent availability world. But premises-based systems subtract scheduled maintenance from their stat, actually resulting in a less-available solution. Cloud vendors' availability is measured 24/7/365. At Five9, system updates occur without ` interruption of service. While customers are always notified of pending updates, agents and supervisors only notice changes at their next login.
- **Cost.** With a fixed rate, pay-as-you-go, and the ability to rapidly scale to permanent or seasonal needs by adding or subtracting agent licenses, cloud contact centers enable tight cost controls.

- **Maintenance.** Premises-based solutions require in-house IT skillsets for routine moves, adds, changes and more encompassing work that requires maintenance windows. Cloud solutions reduce the cost and time, freeing IT personnel to focus on more strategic priorities.

The cloud plays a key role in enabling your organization's digital transformation and empowers agents and supervisors with intuitive, easy-to-learn and use tools that put the technology in the background and let the agent focus on relating to the customer.

What does the customer experience?

Cloud-based contact centers are integrated with other applications in a single agent desktop that gives a full historic and real-time view of the customer's engagement with the organization. This information empowers a true omnichannel experience where customers can choose the channel of their choice to connect to your contact center, start and stop communications on various devices and never have to repeat their story.

From the customer's perspective, your service department knows their story, knows their preferences, knows what's been done and what is needed next to address their needs. The customer feels the support and ease that your agents can deliver – and even the most complex cases can be seamlessly escalated to a subject matter expert.

The cloud – along with best practices in customer care – makes customer service feel easy. And that makes customers happy. Fast, accurate, smooth service that doesn't waste their time.

Whether working remotely or within a structured contact center, agents also feel the difference. The easier and more streamlined their work is, the less frustration technology causes them, the more they are emotionally available to provide uplifting support with a caring attitude.

Steps to take before you move to the cloud

While using a cloud contact center is literally as easy as typing in a URL and logging in on Day One, getting to that point requires cross-functional planning. IT, customer service leads, marketing, sales, risk management – these stakeholders all need to be brought into the planning phase.

Discussions to have internally and with select vendors should address questions such as:

- Who is accountable for our CX roadmap?
- Are our internal processes ready? If not, what's needed to update to prepare them?
- What contact center and cross-functional steps need to be taken before we're ready for the cloud?
- Is our internal infrastructure up to date?
- How would existing third-party and homegrown applications integrate?

Stakeholders need to understand how their workflows will change and how processes will be reconfigured. Clear communication from the outset ensures that everyone is working toward a successful transition. Your cloud contact center vendor should provide responsive, accessible "best practices" guidance based on their experience, along with the expected implementation support and training. Five9 provides this as part of every customer migration to the cloud to ensure the successful use of our service and to facilitate a smooth transition to the cloud. Research firm Gartner even calls out the quality of Five9 service.

Preparing for a strong tomorrow begins in the cloud

Delivering the experience customers expect today is only possible with the cloud. Not only does moving enable you to differentiate on customer experience immediately, it also sets you up for a strong tomorrow.

The future of the contact center incorporates AI-powered features and functionalities that will become mainstream more rapidly than some expect. While these are still evolving in the areas of intelligent routing, agent empowerment and analytics, it's understood that cloud-based contact centers will be best prepared to embrace AI features.

That future is not far away.

Partnering with Five9 makes the move as smooth as possible

Five9 is a cloud-native company with thousands of implementations. Enterprises that partner with Five9 experience modern, high-touch, personalized service honed by our history.

We believe that the people who deliver customer experiences must deliver superior customer experiences in return – and that is our aim at every touchpoint.

Five9 makes moving to the cloud a positive, transformative experience and empowers you with the guidance, partnership and continued customer support to ensure that your enterprise delivers the best possible experience to your customers and agents available today and ready for tomorrow.

We're here to help you discern the right course for your company as you plan for your contact center's future in the cloud.

Call us today to learn how we can support your success.

About Five9

Five9 is the leading provider of cloud contact center solutions, bringing the power of the cloud to more than 2,000 customers worldwide and facilitating more than five billion call minutes annually. Five9 helps contact centers increase productivity, boost revenue, and create customer loyalty and trust.

For more information visit **www.five9.com** or call **1-800-553-8159**.

4000 Executive Parkway, Suite 400
San Ramon, CA 94583
925.201.2000

www.five9.com

Five9 and the Five9 logo are registered trademarks of Five9 and its subsidiaries in the United States and other countries. Other marks and brands may be claimed as the property of others. The product plans, specifications, and descriptions herein are provided for information only and subject to change without notice, and are provided without warranty of any kind, express or implied. Copyright © 2020 Five9, Inc.

DR