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**MOST IMPORTANT  
CONTACT CENTRE TRENDS  
TO WATCH IN 2018**

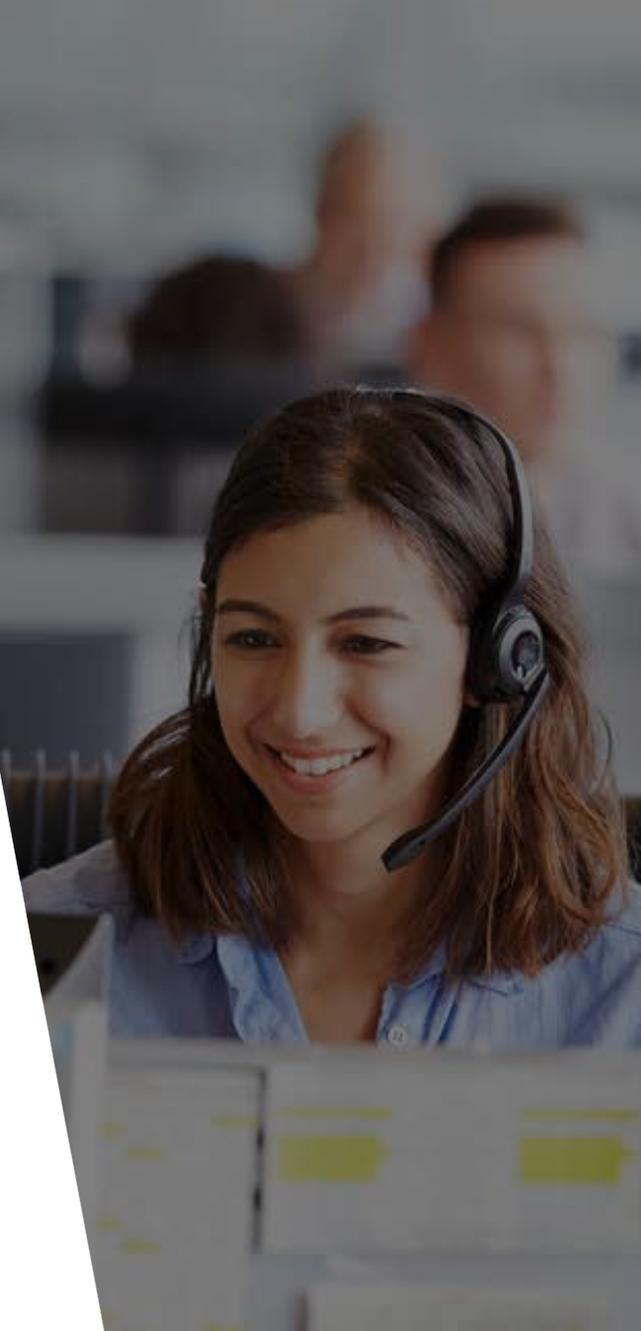
We saw a lot of changes to the contact centre and customer experience landscape in 2017. Cloud communications and virtual agents were on the forefront of everyone's minds, and social media was more important than ever. 2018 is shaping up to be the year of strategic thinking: better analytics, more intentional social media conversations and innovative ways to involve artificial intelligence. To help you stay on target for 2018, we've identified eight of the most influential trends affecting centres so far.



### 1. Digital transformation

Businesses have always tried to differentiate themselves on price or product quality. Today, however, we're seeing that customers are more frequently looking for something more: a rewarding experience that leads to a long-lasting relationship with a business. Customer interactions are no longer stand-alone activities, and customers are demanding a more comprehensive and consistent experience.

Digital transformation, the application of advanced technologies that have completely restructured the modern business environment, is a big part of this. With advancements like unified omnichannel communications and machine-to-machine communications via the Internet of Things (IoT), a forward-looking digital transformation strategy is going to be key for businesses who want to stay competitive.





## 2. Better contact centre analytics

Gone are the days of relying on supervisor skill and know-how to get the most out of a contact centre agent. Now, even smaller businesses are taking advantage of sophisticated analytics to turn data – like call and screen recordings, chats, SMS messages and more – into truly useful feedback for their agents.

It's not enough to rely on manual observation and monitoring—there's just too much information.

More omni-channel contact centres are starting to rely heavily on analytics programs to build dashboards with the statistics that affect their businesses. We're also seeing more and more businesses display this kind of statistical dashboards on user interfaces, so contact centre agents and managers get real-time updates on customer experiences.



## 3. Omni-channel communications for all

A huge hot button in 2016, omni-channel communications continue to separate proactive businesses from their more reactive counterparts. A holistic view of the customer experience, factoring in an omni-channel approach, is helping businesses give customers a more personal feel to resolutions.

More businesses are recognising that while a customer journey may begin on one channel, valuable insight and feedback from the customer is taking place on a completely different channel.

Unifying customer communications across channels gives businesses better context for their customers, helps resolve issues more quickly and helps sales agents identify better opportunities for future sales.



## 4. More remote contact centre agents

Lower overhead, time zone flexibility, and flexible working hours have made remote contact centre workers a stable trend for 2018. With constantly improving and unified cloud communications, remote workers have become a permanent (and beneficial) part of the contact centre environment. With collaboration tools, contact centre agents can take their work mobile, with access to real-time analytics and customer context.

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## 5. Widespread adoption of cloud communications in contact centres

Many businesses have already adopted cloud communications as part of their communications strategies, but cloud communications has become particularly important for contact centres. With the steady increase in remote call agents, cloud communications are a necessity for businesses who want to take advantage of seamless team communications and collaboration. With cloud communications, traditional office-based contact centres can take on new locations, grow and contract workforces as market needs demand it.

Moving to the cloud also doesn't have to happen all at once. Vendors that offer hybrid cloud options can help you phase your organisation into the cloud at your own speed or create a tailored architecture that leverages the best of multiple deployment models based on your business needs. So, for example, a contact centre with an on-premises solution could implement a cloud-based webchat system, without needing to completely reinvest in infrastructure up front.



## 6. More robust customer satisfaction measurements

Customer satisfaction sends huge signals to companies about where and how their businesses could improve. Businesses approach customer satisfaction measurement in different ways, but slick all-in-one measures seem to be holding steady.

No matter which measurements businesses are using, however, special care needs to be taken when addressing the customer experience across digital channels.

Using effective reporting and analytics tools that are integrated with your communications systems makes this process automatic and valuable.



### **7. Continued emphasis on self-serve documentation**

So far we've seen a greater emphasis on self-service problem solving information on business websites. Giving customers information quickly helps reduce call volumes, and easy-to-navigate FAQs help narrow down calls to those with sufficiently complex issues. Quick access to self-serve solutions to problems also provides an emotional benefit to customers (that DIY fix high!), and reduces overall call times.



### **8. Two-way social media conversations**

An effective social media presence is a necessity. Customers want a place they can go to give quick feedback, and learn about their favorite businesses. But the way businesses approach their social media conversations is changing.

It's not enough to make witty posts or share images. Customers are looking for a two-way social media conversation, and when they interact with businesses online, they expect a personalised (and immediate) response.

Responsive businesses are using this trend to create a superb customer experience by unifying communications across channels into one stream. This helps their customers by connecting them with an agent who knows their purchase and service history, provides valuable context, and most importantly: the two-way conversation is public, on a social media platform, so that other customers can see how the business solved the problem.

Need more help figuring out how to  
apply them to your Contact Centre?

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