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Andy is a director with Deloitte Consulting LLP and leader of its Customer Operations practice. With 18 years of consulting experience, Andy focuses on improving customer experience and reducing costs by helping clients transform their customer interaction capabilities and operations within customer service and sales functions. He holds a BA in Management from Ball State University and a MS in Communication and Information Sciences from Ball State University.



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Key insights from Deloitte's 2015 Global Contact Center survey

Major themes which emerged from our 2015 Global Contact Center survey indicate that contact centers are becoming more strategic and critical to business value chains.

What are the major trends shaping the future of Contact Centers?

It is clear contact centers are becoming more strategic and critical to business value chains; both in terms of competitive positioning and in delivering the desired customer experience. We saw some key themes emerge in our 2015 Global Contact Center survey, which I see echoed in the market today.

- **Contact centers and customer engagement channels continue to grow at a pretty significant rate. Contact center executives expect volumes to grow on every customer contact channel over the next two years.** Digital channels such as web, self-service and mobile applications see the highest expected growth for transactional contacts while live-representative supported channels (namely, voice and web chat) expect the largest growth in volume for complex customer contacts. Interestingly, the survey indicated over 50 percent of contact centers have partially integrated the multiple customer contact channels and 30 percent effectively having limited to no integration. Now, more than any time in the contact center maturity lifecycle, multi-channel integration and optimization is critical to effective customer engagement.
- **Customer experience as delivered by contact center is a competitive differentiator.** It's clear customers expect the contact center to be available to support them when and how they want, with clear and efficient outcomes that consistently provide value. When these needs are not met we see increasing customer churn, escalating operating costs, and decreasing shareholder value. Conversely when customer experience is effectively delivered through the contact center, we see high customer and employee satisfaction, increased revenues through customer retention and expanded wallet-share, and efficient operating cost structures.
- **While the struggle to balance cost and quality in the contact center continues, strategic priorities enabling customer experience and business growth are growing in importance within companies' broader enterprise strategies.** More and more C-level executives have direct line of sight and responsibility to contact center functions given the escalating importance to the customer value proposition and its impact on the bottom line. Accordingly, we're seeing contact center functions integrated into companies' value chains and broader ecosystems with contact center leaders having a seat at the table in corporate strategy discussions. It appears the days of viewing the contact center as a "cost center" are over for companies who value customer engagement as part of their strategy.
- **SaaS-based contact center solution and technology adoption continues to grow.** While customer relationship management is the capability with the most SaaS-based solution adoption, we expect to see adoption of SaaS-based workforce management, quality management, and social integration to make big leaps in the next two years.

As it appears “contact centers are becoming more strategic and aligned with broader business strategy,” what steps are contact center executives taking now to prepare for changes over the coming years?

Historically, most organizations have done a pretty good job of calibrating their contact center operations and technologies with a focus on reducing costs and at least sustaining quality. Now, customer-centric organizations are evolving their focus beyond cost control and maintaining the status quo to much more of a holistic business focus. Leaders are developing strategies, roadmaps and business cases to support the transformation of the entire contact center operating model (experience, channels, talent, operations, processes, location, enterprise alignment, and enabling technology) to support the themes we observed in this year’s survey. Specifically, leading contact center organizations are focusing on how to tangibly improve the customer experience, how to deliver a truly integrated, cross-channel and proactive customer experience across the full customer lifecycle, and prioritizing capability investments in areas such as customer analytics, customer engagement enablers, and capabilities that deliver market differentiation which often are tied into marketing and brand strategies and/or value proposition differentiators in the sales cycle.

What does the contact center of 2020 look like?

Leading, customer-centric businesses will have contact center operating models that truly support the entire customer lifecycle in an integrated fashion, even if the traditional functional silos (e.g., marketing, sales, product) remain. I expect digital channels to address a large percentage of transactional and repeatable contacts and essentially becoming commoditized, while representatives handle complex, high value and strategic contacts creating stressors on talent acquisition and retention, learning and development, sourcing models that emphasize value not labor arbitrage, and effective operationalization of capabilities such as workflow, knowledge management, and customer lifecycle analytics. Lastly, I fully expect customer-centricity to continue to grow as a C-level concern and strategy as we enter 2020. In 2020, I expect those companies that effectively engage and serve the customer to have a clear market advantage over those who don’t potentially to the point where customer-centric organizations drive those who are not customer-centric out of business.

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