



Five ways to improve customer service

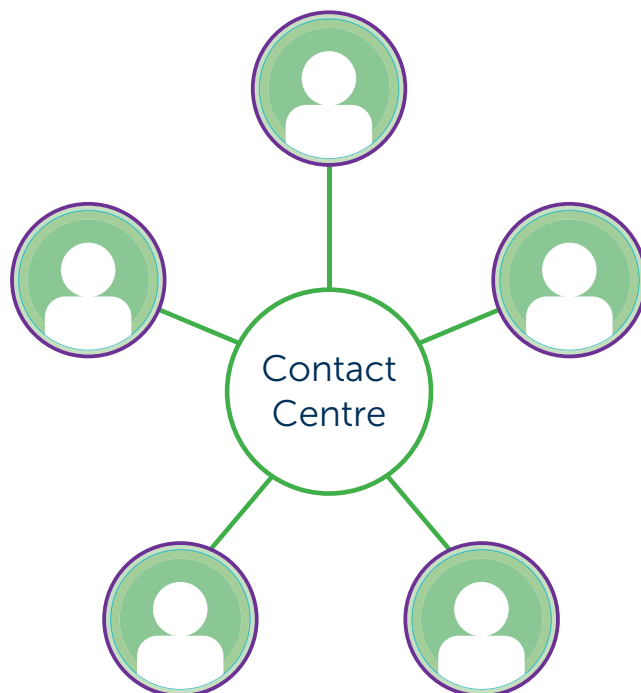
Mitel Mobility

Five ways to improve customer service

The key to great service is being accessible to your clientele
—no matter where you are

Picture a contact centre. Did your brain conjure an image of a sea of low-walled cubicles with agents speaking into headsets? Until recently, that's what most contact centres were—a single site where agents commute to the office and complete their work at a fixed location.

Today, contact centre agents are not bound to the office; they can work just about anywhere: at home, in hired office space or even on the move from a mobile device. But that's not the only benefit that mobility has on customer service. Here are five ways you can boost customer service levels using mobility.



1

Manage resources to maintain service levels

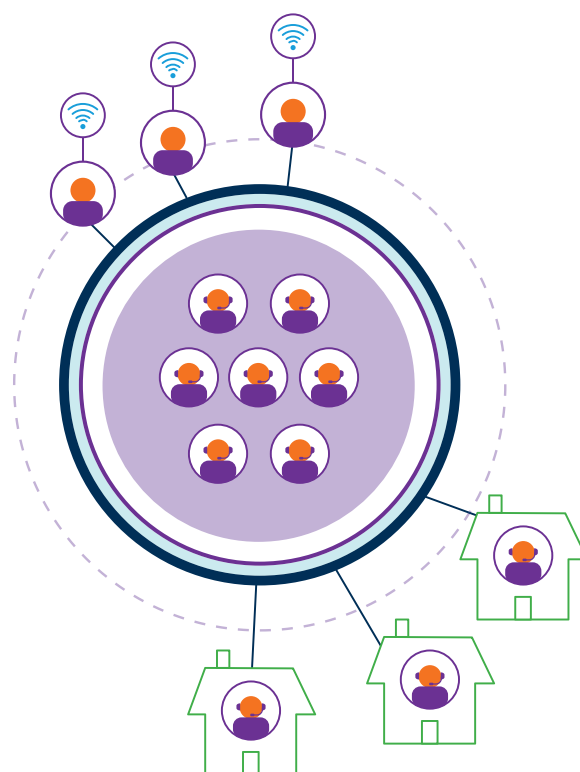
In nearly every industry, contact centre supervisors struggle to balance service levels with available resources. Of course, they want to ensure they have enough agents working to handle call volumes, but without overstaffing, which is costly to the organisation.

Some ebb and flow in contact volumes are seasonal. For instance, retail contact centres know they need extra resource between November and February to manage the holiday season and January sales. In these cases, supervisors can staff the contact centre to handle the volume of calls expected.

But what about cases where there is little to no warning? Say you're an insurance company managing a severe weather event or an internet service provider managing an outage. In either case, mobile technology can be used to maintain service levels. With cloud-based contact centre software, additional seats can be 'spun up' in virtually no time at all. Staff at other locations can be redeployed to manage customer interaction during busy periods. Agency staff can be online and handling enquiries and home workers can be ready to go at a moment's notice.

When call volumes stabilise, you can return to pre-emergency staffing.

It's essentially a pay-as-you-go model.

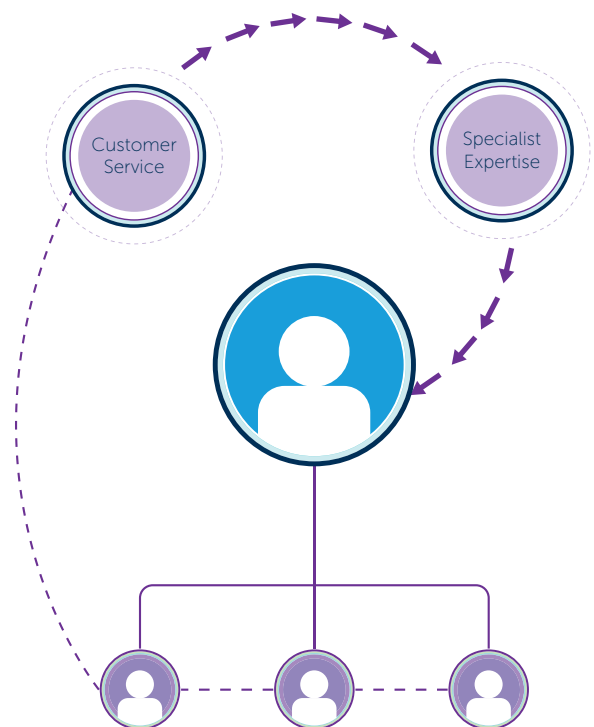


2

Improve access to specialist skills anywhere

In some environments, contact centre staff need in-the-moment access to specialists. For instance, say a customer calls to set up an account for satellite TV service. The agent needs to have someone in the finance department check the customer's credit before proceeding. Rather than put the customer on hold while he or she dials endless finance extensions until finding someone available who can help, the agent can utilise unified communications to simplify the process. He or she can use presence to see if the specialist needed is online and then either dial that person directly or send him or her an instant message while staying on the phone with the customer.

Of course, unified communications tools allow specialists to be contacted on the go too. If a customer has a question that an agent needs a specialist's opinion on, the agent can quickly communicate with the expert via a mobile device. Or if the challenge is more complicated and the customer would benefit from speaking directly with the specialist, the agent can seamlessly conference in the expert without having to call the customer back. These tools enable businesses to increase productivity and better service their customers by improving first-time resolution rates.



3

Attract and retain staff

Forty-five per cent of companies say they expect the number of contact centre positions to increase between 5 and 10 per cent in 2014, according to Forrester Forrsights¹. And where do they expect to find the talent? Traditionally, contact centre staff had to be recruited from a specific geographic location to work in a single office. But using virtual contact centre technology, businesses can now access a much wider employment pool.

That means that you can hire exceptional agents, whether they live near your business or not. This is particularly helpful for contact centres that require agents to have specialist skills, such as technical, medical or legal expertise.

And once you find stellar employees, offering them the option to work remotely can help retain them through life changes, such as a spouse being relocated or a need to care for an ill family member. Working from home is a benefit contact centre agents have long been left out of. But not anymore.



4

Ensure your business is always available

Single site contact centres that cope well during normal working hours may struggle to offer the same level of service at other times. It may be difficult for customers to access the right specialist after regular office hours, especially if the expert is required to work in a fixed office location. But mobility tools allow customers to get their problems solved at all hours of the day. And you don't need to keep your contact centre's doors open 24/7 to make that possible.

Using a distributed approach, staff can deliver the same level of service from home or elsewhere using a mobile device as they would from the office. This model allows you to spread the love among on-call employees.

For example, calls to a technical helpdesk could be directed to field engineers during the evening or at weekends.

Allowing contact centre staff to work from home also increases the likelihood that you'll find agents who are willing to work night or even split shifts, making it easier to have coverage around the clock and ensuring your customers get a live person each and every time they contact you.

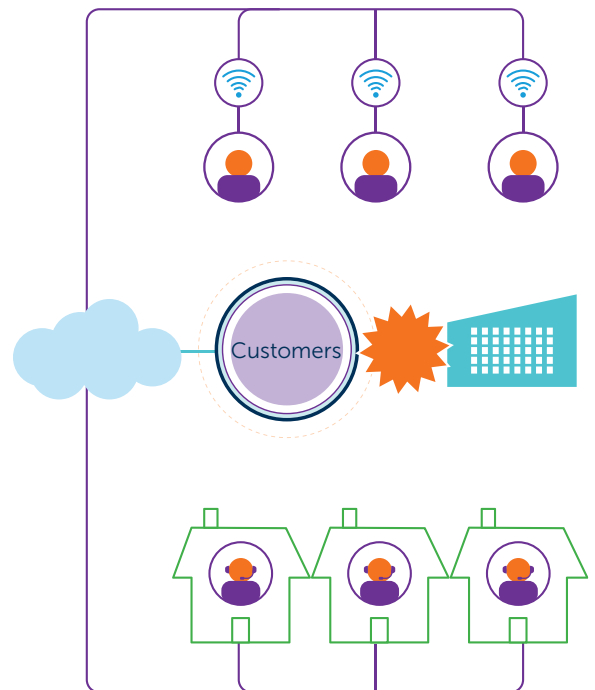



5

Ensure business continuity in the face of disaster

In many organisations, the contact centre is the primary point of contact for customers. Any break in availability is highly visible and can result in permanent loss of business to a competitor. But cloud-based contact centre systems offer resiliency and mobility, meaning you can continue to serve your customers with little interruption caused by power outages, public transit strikes, natural disasters and other situations that may leave you without a place for contact centre agents to work.

In the event of major incidents that render the office useless, agents can work from another location or even from home. In cases where agents are unavailable throughout the incident as well, such as during a natural disaster, staff from other departments and in other locations can be drafted to handle contact centre functions remotely.





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