

# Guide to Unified Agent Desktops in Contact Centers

## Improving First Contact Resolution and Customer Experience in the Contact Center

“ Many of today's contact centers use multiple complicated applications, often only loosely-linked, which require skilled and experienced agents to navigate, let alone to manage interaction with customers successfully at the same time. Even after the call is completed successfully, each system may need specific inputs from the agent in order to start the required back-office processes, or to keep each database consistent with the others. With 90% of contact centers requiring their agents to use multiple applications within a call, there are significant dangers around forgetting to key in information, forgetting to ask for the required information, starting the correct processes or failing to type in consistent data. The use of multiple applications will have a negative effect on training times for new agents as well.(...) At the moment, due to complexity, expense and the sheer weight of constant change, applications are either integrated very loosely, or not at all. Agents are trained (or more likely, learn on the job) to switch rapidly between applications, relying on their experience to make sure they don't forget to do everything.”

2012 US Contact Centre Decision-Makers Guide, ContactBabel

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# What is a unified desktop?

**A unified desktop is an agent desktop application that empowers contact center agents to handle all interactions, regardless of media type, and provide a consistent, quick, and efficient service to customers, highly increasing first call resolution and customer satisfaction rates.**

## Single user interface

On average, 26% of agent time is spent looking for relevant data across different systems and screens during each customer contact and 14% is spent on call wrap-ups. A unified agent desktop decreases these numbers to a minimum.

A unified desktop enables companies to integrate all applications used by the agents into a single user interface and hence reduces input errors and after call work. For example, an outsourcer doing collections was able to reduce a process from 40 to 7 screens using a unified desktop solution. A single user interface leads to improvements in agent productivity and to a reduction in costs and training times, as agents are able to start using the application almost immediately.

On average, 26% of agent time is spent looking for relevant data across different systems and screens during each customer contact, and 14% is spent on call wrap-ups. A unified agent desktop greatly reduces these numbers

## Guiding scripts

Guiding scripts display the information that agents need, according to the interaction flow. The desktop puts agents on the path of success, it gives them the right information, at the right time, together with a clear view of the next step of the process, aligned with the direction the interaction takes.

## Customer interaction history

A unified desktop allows agents to access the full customer history and past interactions, regardless of the media used by the customer to reach the contact center. It keeps a record of all the activities related to the customer, the status and the outcome of each activity, and leads to a personalized and improved customer experience.

36% of customers state their personal experience as a reason to commit to a brand.

## Integrated enterprise information

Sharing information between all departments of a company, front and back-office, is crucial to have a 360° view of the customer. A unified agent desktop gathers all the knowledge of the customer in a single application and allows agents to access the information in real time. To improve the handling of customers' requests and issues, it is also possible to use a workflow-process, which links different processes and bridges the gap between different resources, databases and departments.

# The Unified Desktop Impact on Contact Center Operations

**According to the 2012 US Contact Centre Decision-Makers Guide from ContactBabel, not having a unified agent desktop can have severe consequences:**

- High training costs;
- 25% higher staff turnover caused by inability to complete tasks successfully;
- Inconsistent data because of manual input errors or of missed procedures caused by manual wrap-ups;
- High call handling times;
- Low customer satisfaction caused by long queues and unnecessarily long calls;
- Cross-sell and up-sell missed opportunities.

Contact centers without a unified desktop have, on average, a 25% higher agent turnover.

## **Improved first call resolution**

First call resolution (FCR) is one of the most important metrics of the contact center, and one that management usually makes a great effort to continuously improve and measure. If customers call 2, even 3 times about the same issue, it represents a waste of resources and very poor and inefficient customer service. When customers call with a question, be it billing, account state, technical assistance, information, and so on, they want a quick and accurate answer, preferably right on the first time that they call.

A unified agent desktop is essential for agents to be efficient and effective in helping customers with queries, and its use can increase the FCR rates up to 72%. Since agents have to manage multiple interaction channels, business applications while guiding the conversation with the customer through a script, all the information must be a click away. If that's not the case, the agent may not be able to get the right answer within an acceptable period of time and will have to put the customer on hold until retrieving the application with the appropriate data. The unified desktop not only saves time, but also optimizes the agent performance, directly impacting the contact center bottom line.

Technological tools, such as intelligent routing and a knowledge base, together with the agent desktop can provide a boost to FCR rates can, improving the contact center performance.

Having a unified desktop can increase your contact center's FCR rates even up to 72%.

**Reduced call time**

An agent desktop allows the automation of repetitive, time-consuming tasks, displays a 360° view of the customer, and provides the agent with the right information at the right time.

A guiding script helps agents reduce the complexity of handling the customer interaction. It presents the information according to the flow of the call and prevents the agent from spending time navigating for information and guidance. The script contains all required information on a single page, and automates tasks, such as rescheduling calls. With a unified agent desktop the average call handling time can be reduced by 20-50%.

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**Improved customer experience**

To get new customers is a very hard task, to keep existing customers can be even harder, but to lose customers is a luxury that companies cannot afford. The key to keep existing customers and getting new ones can be to differentiate yourself from competition through better customer service. Companies must invest and leave no room for failure in the customer service experience.

Agents are the ambassadors of the company to its customers. They have the power to improve the customer experience and it is through them that the contact center can reach its business goals.

A unified agent desktop automates tasks and allows agents to handle more customers as they are freed from automatic, repetitive tasks and can dedicate more time at issues that make a difference on the service that is provided.

To provide a personalized service during customer interaction is also a very important factor. Addressing the customer by name, knowing exactly what the customer's needs are, or providing a quick solution to a specific problem, makes customers feel unique and appreciated, and increases cross and upsell opportunities. 85% of companies using a unified desktop have improved their customer experience.

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**Reduced training time**

The unified desktop also reduces training time and the costs associated with it. It has a simple user interface which enables agents to start using the desktop application after just one morning of training. On average, the agent training time is reduced by 10-30%. Moreover, the standard desktop architecture, consistent across all client applications, enables outsourcers (for example) to create shared training modules to introduce all new campaigns.

A unified agent desktop reduces agent training time by at least 10-30%.

# The Unified Desktop Impact on Contact Center Audiences

## The contact center outsourcer

The unified agent desktop solution gives outsourcers the possibility to manage multiple clients and multimedia interactions simultaneously, while at the same time enabling agents to deliver outstanding customer service.

The desktop also reduces training time and the costs associated with it. The standard desktop architecture, consistent across all client applications, enables outsourcers to easily add new campaigns, and even adapt to changes on the fly.

The unified desktop makes the work of agents easier and less stressful, therefore decreasing turnover rates. This allows outsourcers to make a better use of resources and enhance productivity levels.



### Benefits for outsourcers

- Possible to run multiple client campaigns simultaneously
- Multimedia handling
- Reduced agent training time
- Easy to add new campaigns
- Possible to make changes in campaigns on the fly
- Lower agent turnover rates
- Higher productivity

## The customer

How many times have you called a help desk line and had to repeat your problem over and over again to several agents whether they're automated or human? An efficient agent desktop allows agents to view information previously gathered by an IVR, to access the interaction history of the customer, and to transfer the information gathered up until that moment if the agent needs to transfer the call. Due to the availability of customer interaction history, workflow and knowledge databanks, the agents are able to help customers with more accurate answers, in a shorter period of time, and with an increased FCR.

Further, the service provided is more personalized, and customers are being offered products and services relevant to their personal needs. 36% of customers state the personal experience as a reason to commit to a brand.



### Benefits for customers

- Customer history - no need to repeat the same story to each agent
- Shorter calls
- Less calls - higher FCR
- Better and more accurate answers
- Personalized service

### The agent

Interactions with customers have become increasingly complex, as contact centers must support a wide range of channels and require several applications to ensure that agents communicate quickly and efficiently to provide the best service. However, it is crucial that these applications are transparent and easy to use. Agents need to access them through a single click, and view all the necessary information to handle an interaction, in a single window. Easy-to-use interfaces and the guided scripts lead to reduced training times.

Motivated agents are the first step to make customers happy. Agents must feel that they part of the process, and must feel appreciated. For example, to enable the use of skills at the contact center makes agents feel valued. Additionally, access to a unified customer interaction history and to an information repository enables agents to give precise answers, regardless of the interaction media. The unified desktop increases agents' ability to help, reducing the number of dissatisfied customers and frustrating conversations.

Moreover, a unified desktop can also enable agents to view their own performance indicators, such as the talk times, or how many interactions they have handled, to keep up their motivation and improve their work.



#### Benefits for agents

- Easy to use interface
- Reduced number of windows and applications
- Pop-up windows
- Unified information repository
- Interactions are distributed according to the skills of the agents
- Agents are empowered and are able to better service customers
- Guided scripts
- Reduced training times
- Less angry customers
- Agents are able to monitor their own performance

### The management

Human resources represent a very significant cost to the contact center. An agent desktop application that reduces agent training times and turnover and increases productivity by allowing agents to handle more interactions in less time is every manager's dream. Additionally, the agent desktop application also allows real time and historic monitoring and reporting on the agent's activity and performance.

The unified desktop also enables managers to set up new campaigns within days and make changes and adjustments to existing campaigns on the fly.



#### Benefits for management

- Reduced agent training times and associated costs
- Lower agent turnover
- Higher productivity
- Real-time monitoring and reporting tools
- Easy to set up new campaigns within days
- On the fly changes to existing campaigns to adapt to the needs of the customer

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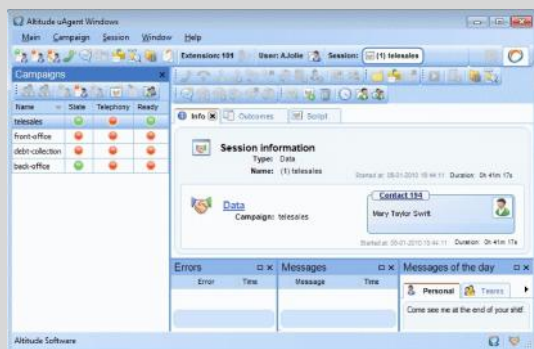
#### Sources

Agent Desktop Optimization: Agents can finally focus on the customer. Aberdeen Group; October 2012.  
Altitude Software Global Professional Services Field Data.

# Altitude uAgent Desktop Solution

Altitude uAgent desktop is a unified application that empowers agents to handle and control all types of multimedia interactions. Altitude uAgent desktop is an out-of-the-box tool that also allows complete customization of the agent desktop, using either the Altitude Scripting Studio or integration APIs.

The media toolbar enables agents to control different media interactions on their desktop, increasing their productivity. It is fully customizable, to display the right information at the right time, increasing customer satisfaction while reducing agent's training needs. The availability of the customer interaction history enables agents to view everything about a specific customer, and supervisors to view monitoring information and generate reports.



## Agent guidance

Altitude Scripting guides agents through the interaction with customers, ensuring consistent communications and reducing costs and the time to train new agents. Agents provide consistent answers regardless of the media used by the customer to reach the contact center. Moreover, Altitude uAgent automatically displays the agent guide according to the language of each customer.

Altitude Scripting Studio is an industry unique development environment developed for contact centers, which allow the design, control and execution of agent desktops. It significantly reduces the time to market for new campaigns and services and the time to adapt to constantly changing business needs, enabling the contact center to dramatically improve productivity and profit.

## Knowledge Base repository

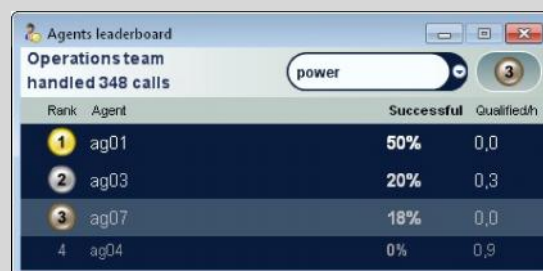
The Knowledge Base repository includes FAQ's, templates and articles that can be used to reply to multimedia requests. It improves agent efficiency, helps to implement policies and ensures consistency in customer service while implementing best practices at the company. The Knowledge Base is a vehicle to quickly and efficiently solve customer issues and improve the communication

between agents and customers. The repository also has an approval mechanism that enables agents to update and enrich its content.



## Agent Motivator

Altitude uAgent Motivator aligns agents with contact center goals while improving agent motivation and morale, as agents have a clear view of their own, the team's, and the campaign's performance. The Agent Motivator board shows everything related with performance, from built-in to user defined KPIs.



Contact center operations can completely customize the information displayed by Altitude uAgent Motivator to show built-in indicators, custom indicators, time frame, scope, etc.

## Altitude uAgent features

- Out-of-the-box agent desktop
  - Screen pop with configurable contact data and history
  - Multimedia
  - Allows to record outcomes and set callbacks
  - Knowledge-base
  - Blending: agents are automatically switched from outbound to inbound as call volumes change
- Fully customizable
- Scripting
- Easy to integrate with 3rd-party applications
- Supervisor can shift agents to meet the constantly changing operational requirements.

For more information:

<http://www.altitude.com/en/products/applications/agent-desktop.html>



# Case study

## Intrum Justitia boosts credit management activities

The Intrum Justitia Group is Europe's leading Credit Management Services (CMS) company. Today, Intrum services more than 90.000 clients worldwide, with local and cross-border credit management support.

### Scope of project

Intrum Justitia's main goal was to redesign the whole collection process by integrating nine agent applications into one single user interface.

*"A new agent needed an average of one month training on the tool before being able to handle cases. With Altitude, after only a day of formal training and half a day with a colleague (seeing and understanding the system in action), the new agent is autonomous to start working."*

Erik Vrieling, Regional IT Project Manager at Intrum Justitia Netherlands

### Unified Front End: from 40 to 7 screens

The implementation of Altitude uCI, a contact center suite for unified customer interactions, allowed Intrum Justitia to unify all applications in a single front end, the Altitude uAgent. Currently, agents use seven instead of the 40 screens of the old system.

### From a month to a one day training session

Normally, when a new agent started working with Intrum Justitia he needed on average a month of training on the collection tool before being able to handle cases by himself. With the Altitude solution, after only half a day of formal training (learning the scripts and tools) and half a day with a colleague (seeing and understanding the system in action), the agent can start working. The guided script is a valuable feature, even for the most experienced agents, as it eases the process of complying with legislation and with the several procedures established with Intrum Justitia's customers.

### Fast ROI: a third more calls every day

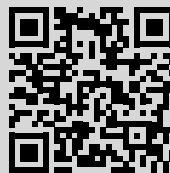
Before Altitude was implemented, the agents in the Intrum contact centers were handling an average of 4000 calls per day. Now, they perform between 5000 and 6000 calls each day. The average call duration was reduced by 30 to 45 seconds, from 3 minutes 30 seconds to 2 minutes 45 seconds.

### Intrum Justitia

- Founded 1923 in Sweden
- Presence in 22 countries
- Credit management leader in Europe
- 3000 employees
- More than 90.000 clients worldwide

### Business benefits

- Application training reduced from one month to one day
- 33% more calls per agent per day
- Average call duration reduced by 30 to 45 seconds, from 3 minutes 30 seconds to 2 minutes 45 seconds
- Business people are empowered to setup new scripts in days
- Intrum's sales gain extra flexibility due to a faster implementation



Watch full case study video:  
[www.youtube.com/altitudesoftware](http://www.youtube.com/altitudesoftware)

# Case Study

## Dovetail increases agent productivity by 50%

Dovetail Services is a subscriptions bureau representing approximately 70 different publishers and handling subscription services for over 400 magazine brands.

### Scope of project

The email turnaround time at Dovetail's contact center was around 72 hours and was hindering their competitive edge. Dovetail needed a new email handling tool and, after a thorough research, selected Altitude uCI, a flexible and easy to use contact center suite for unified customer interactions.

The Altitude agent desktop application makes everything available on a single page and enables the contact centre to easily and quickly adapt to new issues and business needs, without the need to invest more resources. With Altitude, agents now have at their disposal, customised email templates and signatures for each publisher, which greatly eases their job and gives them much more insight into what they need to do.

*"Altitude is a lot more efficient than the system we had before. It gives us a lot more details and options, and we can make it more specific to fit with our job role."*

Lyndsay Bootes, Email Marketing Team Manager

### 50% increase in agent productivity and email response time reduced from 72 h to 24 h

With an email average response time of 72 hours, the first goal was quickly achieved having email turnaround going from 72 hours to 24 actual hours, not working hours, with extra room for improvement. The company now aims to decrease response time to 12 hours in some instances, and has already done so with some customers for the past 12 months.

The agent productivity rose by 50%, going from 12 to 18 emails an hour per agent.

### Agent training decreased to 10 minutes

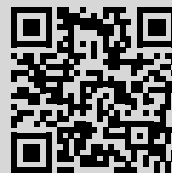
The implementation of the unified desktop, the customised email templates and signatures is also reflected in the training time. New agents need as little as 10 minutes to get working on Altitude uCI.

### Dovetail Services

- Subscription services bureau representing 70 publishers & over 400 magazine brands
- over 1 million calls per year
- 2.4 million subscribers

### Business benefits

- 50% agent productivity increase (from 12 to 18 emails answered per hour on average)
- Email turnaround decreased from 72 h to 24 h on average. (some publications 12 h)
- It takes only 10 minutes to train a new agent to use Altitude uCI



Watch full case study video:  
[www.youtube.com/altitudesoftware](https://www.youtube.com/altitudesoftware)

Altitude Software is the leader of unified customer interaction solutions, managing dynamic contact centers independently of platforms since 1993. With about 1100 customers in 80 countries, Altitude strives for customer satisfaction and is ISO 9001 certified for its worldwide support.

Altitude Software has won 50+ industry awards. "Altitude uCI" (unified customer interaction) is a software suite that manages in real time enterprise functions like Customer Service, Help Desk, Collections, Telesales, Surveys, etc. It is unique in accelerating the creation of services and campaigns, thanks to the unified design studio, routing, dialler, voice portal, desktop front-end, monitoring and analytics.

Altitude Software can be reached at [info@altitude.com](mailto:info@altitude.com)



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