



CLOUD CONTACT CENTER BUILDING BLOCKS

HOW TO AVOID THE PITFALLS OF
PREMISE-BASED SOLUTIONS

A VOICEBASE WHITEPAPER

The contact center has been moving to the cloud for a decade now.

In fact, a 2017 Forrester report predicted that the global public cloud services market will reach \$236 billion by 2020. Just look at the growth of the pioneer in this paradigm shift: Salesforce. It has grown to over \$18 billion in annual revenue in the cloud-based CRM space.

With this monumental growth, it's not a matter of if for contact centers to migrate to the cloud, but when.

The reasons behind this are simple: cloud solutions are open, reliable, scalable, secure, and most of all, cost-effective, which are all glaringly obvious perks for any contact center operations. Does your business have seasonal and fluctuating call volumes and only want to pay for what you use? Or perhaps you're frustrated with paying service fees for on-premise hardware that delivers lackluster results? Cloud contact center solutions are the best ROI you will get.

With the prominence of artificial intelligence, you will find that leveraging these capabilities can become a very compute-intensive task. Neural networks take massive amounts of CPUs to run—more than any singular enterprise contact center should invest in. There is no doubt: the only viable avenue to take advantage of AI in a cost-effective way is to leverage the cloud.

1. The Problem

Your contact center is often viewed as a cost center. It costs money for the hardware, maintenance, security, and upgrades you need to run a smooth operation. You probably find yourself battling an ever-present dilemma:

On one end, you are aware of the tantamount importance of contact center agents—they battle on the front lines of your business, maintaining customer interactions, brand perception, service, and sales. Despite this crucial role of the contact center, you are constantly pushed to cut costs while simultaneously improving the customer experience. Eventually, something has to give.

LEGACY WOES

The first issue with legacy providers like Avaya is that all of their newer contact center technology requires massive core upgrades. This, in turn, causes a large expenditure and contract around maintenance on your end. Furthermore, business pressures on spending for contact center legacy solutions are affecting a large

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amount of decision making. Contact center leaders—who, in previous years, would spend the \$2+ million on a large Avaya upgrade—are being forced to review the cost and account for what these features bring as far as revenue or customer satisfaction are concerned.

Finally, there is a lot of angst with premise-based customers like Avaya customers as the roadmaps still require huge lifts in tech, money, and time. This is where cloud-based solutions like Amazon Connect and Symbee Connect can help.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT WITH A LEGACY PROVIDER?

RESOURCE INTENSIVE



COSTLY



OBSOLESCENCE



THE CLOUD PROVIDER DIFFERENCE

There are many reasons that your premise-based hardware could need to be updated, and it's not just because the hardware itself isn't reliable anymore. Oftentimes, when the company updates software, it is utilizing more, less, or different functionality, and the current hardware is too out-of-date to adapt to the changes. So, although it theoretically works fine, it doesn't work for your solution in the long run; and the software will need to be replaced. All of this costs time and money to change and usually results in some downtime or a noticeable interruption of service and/or experience. This is something the customer can see.

With this in mind, the downside should be apparent: with on-premise solutions, you are responsible for managing, maintaining, and upgrading the system, and subsequently all of the costs associated with that. With cloud providers, this responsibility is on their shoulders. And frankly, they are more well-equipped to handle these kinds of issues: they can do it on the fly, over the Internet, and without cost, downtime, or noticeable interruption to the customer. Cloud solutions are designed to be resilient to these updates.

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ADVANTAGES OF MOVING TO THE CLOUD

The benefits of housing your contact center in a cloud solution are plentiful. For one, it allows much more scalability for your business. That means more features, less cost, and less overall operational headache. Since less maintenance is required, there are fewer IT resources required, such as dedicated server management or DevOps teams.

Cloud solutions are also more agile, meaning that they are faster to deploy and upgrade. Your team is able to test features without a large time or financial commitment to the project; once changes are live, it's quicker to get ramped up and utilize the latest features.

PERCEIVED RISKS OF MOVING TO THE CLOUD

Advocates of on-premise architecture are very vocal about the inherent risks of moving to the cloud. Perhaps the hallmark of their criticisms is the lack of perceived security with a cloud solution. However, cloud encryption is a decidedly powerful mechanism that ensures that all of your data is safe, whether that data is in transit or at rest. You could even argue that building an on-premise solution could be more at risk—natural and human-made disasters pose much more of a threat to a centralized, physical platform than that of the decentralized cloud storage option.

Another major point in the on-premise versus cloud debate is the access to the environment. The argument is that lack of internal control curbs your

visibility into usage, bugs, troubleshooting, and billing issues. Yes, on-premise solutions do grant greater opportunities for custom management. But, as before, these custom-built solutions cost a fortune to build and maintain, and they do not lend themselves to scalability and agility like cloud solutions do. However, with this pass of visibility, the customer is also passing the responsibility for monitoring and fixing these such issues.

2. Cloud-Based, Enterprise-Grade Solutions

Now that the benefits of a cloud-based contact center solution are evident, it's imperative to evaluate different building blocks for your contact center to make sure you're getting the end solution your operations require.

There are many options you can choose from for your connectivity, call recording, speech analytics, chat, social media monitoring and visualization tools that are each tailored for certain use cases. Your job is to find the best combination of tools that will fit your business' needs—solutions that ideally have open platforms, can connect with APIs, and can deliver actionable results.

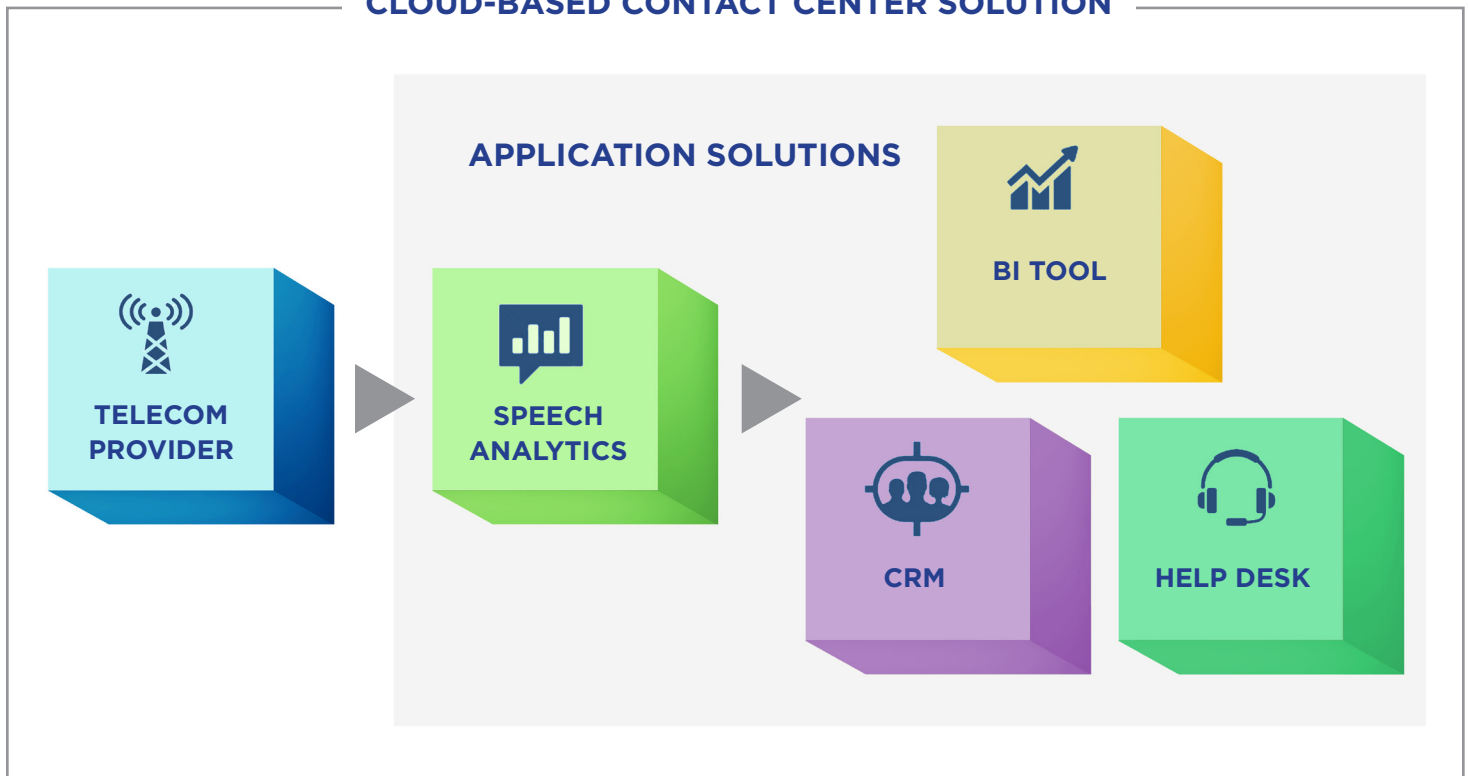
Because these solutions are based in the cloud, they have the the potential to save you hundreds of thousands,

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if not millions of dollars while still delivering rich analytics and actionable insights to improve the customer experience and decrease churn. Now, your cost center can turn into part of your revenue strategy. Let's explore the solutions you can leverage in the cloud to best benefit your contact center.

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR CLOUD-BASED, ENTERPRISE GRADE SOLUTIONS

— CLOUD-BASED CONTACT CENTER SOLUTION —



Telecom Integration—Telecom integration providers are the foundation in which you structure your cloud-based contact center, these platforms typically handle your connectivity, call routing and call recording and should be your starting point when evaluating different building blocks. One such industry leader is Amazon Connect, which provides an easy-to-use, scalable platform to connect any solutions you need.

Speech Analytics Solutions—Speech analytics solutions are typically cloud-based speech analytics platforms to help monitor your agents, extrapolate NPS scores, and alert you when customers are about to churn. They also ensure the safety of sensitive data through encryption and redaction of your customer's private information. This allows you to automatically score 100% of calls and surface intelligence for agent and sales optimization.

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BI Tool Integration- Business Intelligence tools source the data from a data warehouse and provide business users with the proper tools to analyze their data and extract information. It supports the transformation of raw data into useful information to support businesses in decision making processes. BI tools provide businesses with reporting functionality, tools for identifying data clusters, statistical analytics, business performance management and predictive analytics.

CRM Integration- Feeding your data into a CRM solution equips agents with the necessary information to assist a customer in a timely manner. With an integrated solution, the agent can simply create a new ticket and the known information will be automatically populated from the CRM, including the customer's contact information and products that were discussed in prior interactions.

Help Desk Integration- Integrating cloud-based help desk software with speech analytics offers businesses to provide the best customer service and support while eliminating duplicate entries and potential errors. With a help desk integration you can connect all of your agent's phones, emails, chat and social through one easy-to-use solution.

Application Integration—Application integration partners are the helping hands that aid in connecting telecommunications and analytics into a user-friendly dashboard so the enterprise doesn't have to do the work. An example of this type of service is Symbee Connect, who has developed a pre-built application that imposes actionable data on a user-friendly dashboard.

System Integrators—These highly experienced teams will do the heavy lifting to build a custom integration between multiple building blocks to meet the unique needs of any enterprise.

All of the various API integrations layer on top of your telecom platform to give you an extra dimension of analyzation, visibility, and convenience into your contact center operations. You may find you want to take advantage of all of them, some of them, or just one of them. It comes down to your needs as a business and what kind of information you are looking to extrapolate from the Voice of the Customer.

3. Building Your Cloud-Based Contact Center Solution

Now that you are familiar with the many offerings of cloud-based contact center solutions, the question then becomes how to choose the right building blocks for your cloud contact center?

First, you'll want to define your objectives: what functionality do you have now that is crucial, and what new functionality do you need that would be difficult, expensive, or hard to implement in your current architecture?

For example, you may be eager to take advantage of artificial intelligence to monitor and extrapolate 100% of your CSAT and NPS scores. But because neural networks are so compute intensive, it doesn't make sense to run these powerful neural networks on-premise. Or perhaps you want to integrate with some other platforms your organization is using like Zendesk, Salesforce, or

Tableau so that your data is no longer siloed just for the contact center teams to use. This opens your operations up to better visibility and reporting for the entire organization.

Next, identify some solution providers that tailor to those needs. If data is important to you, make sure your call recording provider can deliver stereo or dual-channel call recordings, so you'll know who said what (i.e., the caller or the agent). Pick a speech analytics provider that can give you the answers to your questions like "How likely is this customer to churn?" or "What would this customer's NPS score have been?" instead of just delivering a transcript that you still need to analyze.

Then, ask your team if there's a preferred BI tool that they have expertise in. Why not send all of your data to one place for reporting and visualization?

Lastly, you will want to develop a cloud migration strategy. Determine where your data will live and how you will handle the migration to this new architecture. Is it in your data warehouse or in an application that you can log in to? Will your current vendor give you your data, or do you need to start collecting it now before your contract expires? If you want to use the same BI tool that other departments use, find vendors that will deliver this data right into your data warehouse or data lake so your team can use it wherever you may need it. If you follow this roadmap, you will find yourself on the path to better technology, better data, and, as an ultimate result, better business decisions.

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4. Summary

Why the Time Is Now

Cloud-based business technology has proven its worth in the past few decades. Statistics from multiple industries demonstrate that the move to the cloud is irreversible, fully in flight, and not slowing down. Since 2009, cloud computing spending has grown at 4.5 times the rate of IT spending, and is expected to be six times more than that of IT spending from 2015 through 2020. According to CIO, by 2018, “at least half of IT spending will be cloud-based.” By 2020, it will be 60 percent of all IT infrastructure and 60–70 percent of all software, services, and technology spending. And your contact center’s operations are right in the middle of that fray.

It is imperative that you begin to develop a cloud migration roadmap. Consider all the different technology areas that are impacted by your contact center platform and verify that you have reviewed not only what they do, but also how they work with your other systems. There is no longer a need to sink large sums of money into legacy contact center technology. Cloud-based telecom platforms paired with powerful analytics are here, and they are reliable, secure, and proven to substantially improve your contact center investment.