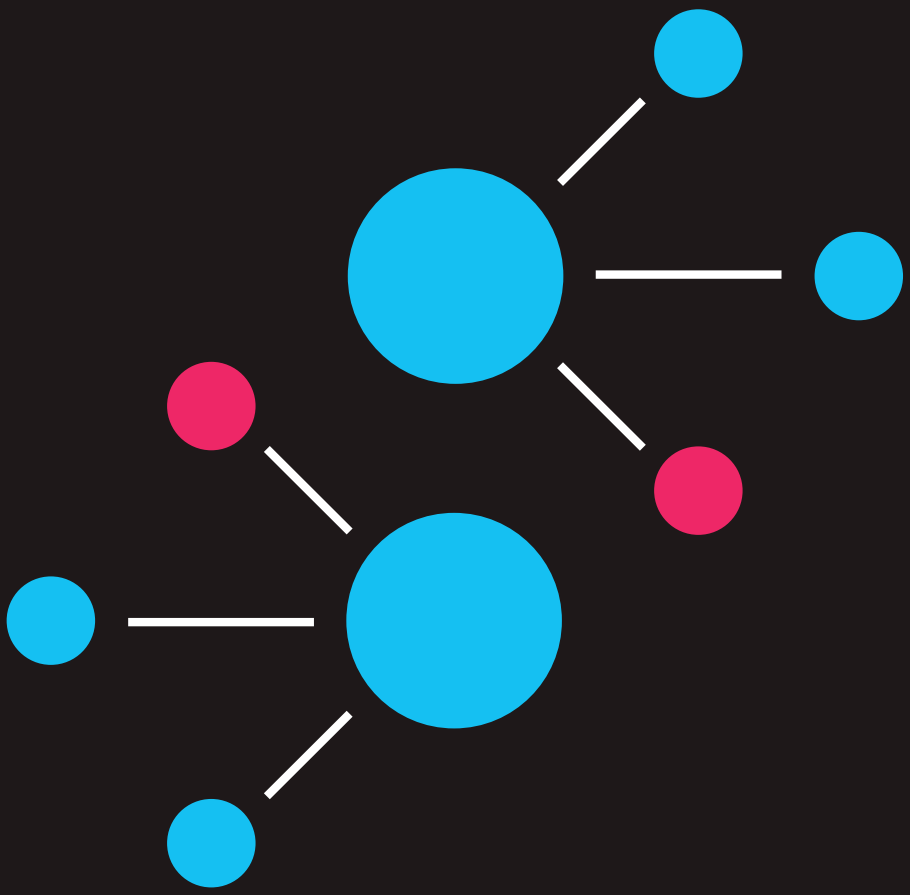
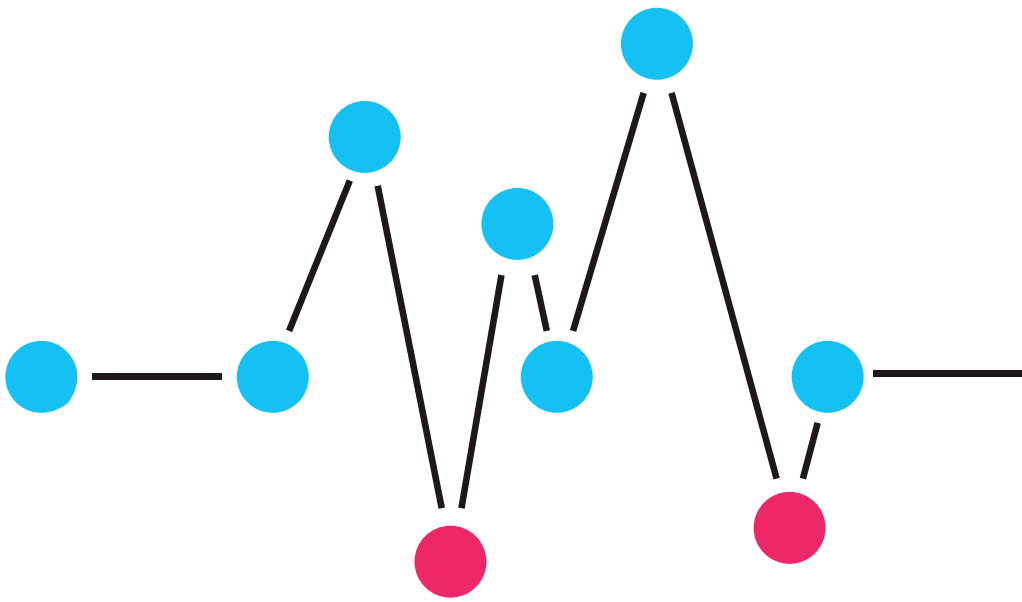
White Paper

How Monitoring Contact Center Technology Can Solve Common Issues



Contact center technology can be a beast: powerful, difficult to control and if there's something wrong with it, it can be tricky to figure out what exactly it is.

Monitoring contact center technology helps you tame the beast and understand it's behavior better. This enables you to predict reactions based on previous patterns and ultimately resolve issues before they ever even happen.



Why Monitor Contact Center Technology?

Be aware of contact center issues before your customers

Monitoring contact center technology allows you to stay on top of problems before they reach your customers. By monitoring you're not reliant on customers to tell you when something isn't working properly, you're already ahead of the game.

Keep your SLAs - save your company millions

By fixing problems before they reach customers you're consciously saving your business thousands, if not millions, of dollars on kept SLAs. When outages occur and SLAs are broken the ramifications begin to stack up quickly.

Avoid churn through poor CX

There's no excuse for poor customer experience but if technology breaks down and the contact center is in limbo, customer experience is negatively impacted. By monitoring the technology and ensuring it's always on you can keep the customer experience up and avoid churn.

Increase efficiency, have less people on standby, save time

It's easier and faster to solve a problem when it's a small inconvenience. Monitoring shines a light on the blips before they turn into unmanageable problems. By addressing a problem early on your team can be more efficient and reduce damage control without having to get the whole team involved.

Understand your system better

When you're monitoring your contact center technology every day you get pretty familiar with what's normal and what's not. You'll know any quirks and nuances. If monitoring your system is not an easy task and therefore you only dip in and out, you'll be less likely to immediately spot irregularities.

Predict the future and prescribe resolutions

While monitoring contact center technology is not going to take you Back to the Future it does give you the tools to predict when things are about to occur based on chain reactions from previous patterns. Advanced monitoring solutions will also prescribe resolutions indicative of their knock-on effects and thus point towards the recommended solution too.

Automatically fix common contact center issues

By monitoring contact center technology, you can automatically fix problems with machines instead of manual labor; saving time and boosting morale by sparing your team working on repetitive easy fixes.

Peace of mind

Possibly one of the most underrated reasons for monitoring contact center technology is the peace of mind it gives the teams responsible for uptime. This peace of mind goes far in giving those responsible more head space to focus on other tasks; a valued asset.

Reduce risk and uncertainty

Having a reliable far-reaching contact center technology monitoring solution as your single source of truth eliminates uncertainty around what's happening. Having everyone's attention and focus in one place that covers everything reduces the risk of missing something. Jumping between multiple systems splits attention

Your team can focus on other projects

If monitoring is part of your business-as-usual workday with necessary alerts built in your team doesn't have to worry about sitting on top of it waiting for something to happen. Your team can work on other projects safe in the knowledge that if something crops up their red flags will be raised.

Typical Contact Center Technology Issues & How to Solve Them

1

Limited Bandwidth on the Network and Calls aren't being prioritized

Limited bandwidth is a common problem for VoIP customers. When moving from a traditional system to VoIP often companies do not increase their network's bandwidth enough to carry the additional traffic. Other times they increase the bandwidth but fail to prioritize calls on the network. If one user is draining the network bandwidth with large downloads and calls aren't prioritized their performance will suffer.

How to solve: Gain network visibility to see what is happening and prioritize calls and/or increase the bandwidth.

2

Incorrect Router Configuration

It's an easy mistake to make: an engineer incorrectly configures a router during a changeover or installation, it happens every day. The impact can be big or small depending on the affected lines, causing problems like routing loops or packet loss. Luckily, it's an easy fix when you know where to look.

How to solve: Use a monitoring tool that can access routers to identify problems, find the misbehaving router and correctly configure it.

3

Faulty Network Switches

A network switch can fail just like any other active component so whether it's a port, cabling, etc. One bad switch can cause entire network to lose connection to a server. However, again it's not difficult to fix once you know where the problem lies.

How to solve: Identify that the problem lies in a faulty network switch through a deep monitoring tool and find the offending switch. Replace the faulty part or the switch entirely if necessary.

4

IVR is Rerouting Incorrectly

Ever been bombarded with calls for Kathy in Accounts? Or Jim from the support desk? Wherever the mix up the arises it's not something your staff will be prepared to deal with for long. It's highly disruptive and irritating if the volume is high. Sometimes IVR rerouting mistakes can go under the radar if it's a small mishap, between members of the same team but nonetheless it unnecessarily adds up the time a customer needs to be on the phone and this can damage the customer experience.

How to solve: Carry out automated feature function testing to identify that all IVR traffic is routed where intended.

5

Overloaded Lines

The classic virtual standing in a line that's bursting at the seams; the longer the queue the higher the drop off rate, the lower the customer experience. Monitoring the overloading of lines is crucial for a positive customer experience, as such the effect of this problem spills out into many areas of the business, not just call center agents dealing with aggravated customers.

How to solve: Monitor traffic going through IVR and set threshold alerts for when they are overfilling to help you identify the best course of action at that time. Alternatively, through cognitive automation you could set up smart rerouting to deal with overflow of calls.

6

High levels of Jitter, Packet Loss and Latency

The three nemeses of call quality: jitter, packet loss and latency. Time delays, stuttering and loss of chunks of a call are never fun to deal with and these can be caused by countless reasons.

How to solve: Use a deep reaching monitoring tool that gives measured transparency on jitter, latency and packet loss on each call and also delivers the ability to drill down through each of them to identify the root cause. Once identified, fix the problem at the root to avoid repeat crashes.

7

Dropped Calls

If a large number of calls are getting dropped, you need to be notified. You need to understand quickly the breadth and depth of any systematic problem that's occurring in the environment. Does the problem lie with a certain call center, line of business, or at-home agents in a specific region? Is it inside the network, or is it something outside of the network that you cannot control?

How to solve: Use a tool that monitors every single interaction, including voice call quality. Ensure it can send a real-time alert whenever degradation occurs in a conversation. Quickly pinpoint the location of issues during troubleshooting and get root cause analysis in real-time.

8

Can't Share Screens on Live Video Chat with Customer

Live video chat is not the most common customer service channel but in a B2B environment it's common place. If a contact center offers live video chat as a channel they are making a commitment and setting themselves accountable for it. Being able to share their screen with customers can be very helpful, in particular if they're troubleshooting issues. If it fails, the whole added value of the channel evaporates.

How to solve: Firstly, ensure your monitoring tool covers the new channel. It needs to be able to crack down and understand what's going on in the background causing degradation and then solve.

9

Where's the Problem? What's the Problem?

Playing hide and seek is not a game you want your UC team to be playing when it comes to solving issues. Neither is finger pointing: the network team blaming the voice provider, the voice provider blames the hardware manufacturer, the hardware manufacturer blaming the session border controller. Unfortunately, when disparate tools are being used and all the main areas are showing up clean of issues it can quickly ignite, all while the problem is escalating. Where the problem often lies in these instances is often when a communication is passing from one system to the next or on an unmonitored section of the environment.

How to solve: Use an all-in-one experience management solution that stretches horizontally across multiple vendors, vertically on-premises up to the cloud and the third dimension, through all the layers of the network stack. Being able to pinpoint where a problem lies saves time and spares relationship wounds.

10

Omnichannel Inconsistencies

We all love talking about the omnichannel contact center, but the reality of its delivery is usually far from the innovation envisioned. Sure, some channels technologically speaking will perform above and beyond their requirements, but what about the other struggling ones? Customers expect their chosen channels to deliver the desired result, they'll only pay attention or be negatively impacted by those that drop below expectations. So rather than be judged by your strongest channels in an omnichannel experience you're often judged by your weakest.

How to solve: Rely on a monitoring tool that runs across all channels with a dashboard that shows performance of each. Use per channel performance gauges and alerts for when SLA performance is dropping.

Non-negotiable Features You Need in a Contact Center Monitoring Tool

Cloud, Hybrid, On Premises

From a technology perspective, we're living in a hybrid world where some systems have completely migrated to the cloud, many are still hosted on-premises and others use a mixture of cloud and on-premises architecture. Monitoring tools need to have hawk eyes across all domains in order to have full visibility.

Multi-vendor

Contact center technology monitoring tools designed for one or two systems will only bring an investigator to a certain point. There are hundreds of contact center applications and most call centers will use anything from 5-25 different pieces of technology. To have a monitoring tool for each application is adding unnecessary and unmanageable complexity to the piece. Ensure the experience monitoring tool you use sits across all vendors.

Comprehensive Deep-diving Root Cause Analytics

The level of depth a monitoring solution has will determine how effectively you can perform root cause analysis. Being plugged into multiple vendors, hybrid solutions and the entire network stack is an impressive proposition. But again, simply touching each of these will only bring you so far, it needs to infiltrate each system and get that detailed, transparent visibility you need to identify catalysts.

A shallow contact center monitoring tool gives limited reach and therefore is unlikely to truly deliver root-cause analysis. It may highlight generally where the problem is and what it's affecting but the absence of understanding where and how it began leaves the investigator in a cul-de-sac.

Your ideal solution should begin with everything on one dashboard which you can click through further and further until you hit the root of the problem.

Network Monitoring & Assessment Tool

Because VoIP calls traverse a network, we can sometimes observe degradation in a contact center when there's an issue due to excessive traffic on a router or switch. The issue could be isolated to a particular floor, for instance. Maybe something on the network is consuming bandwidth or causing latency or packet loss, which is affecting the entire line of business. Network visibility is critical for voice components, and network performance can be the difference between a flawless conversation and a muffled exchange. Having a monitoring tool that has visibility into the network layer without the need for invasive probes should allow you to carry out troubleshooting and testing, which are vital in the lead up your busiest times of year.

Omnichannel

While your contact center might not be operating omnichannel conversations today you need a tool that's ready to monitor the omnichannel when you're ready to implement it. Multi-channel contact center monitoring may suffice your needs today but you should be working with a future proofed provider that can meet your needs down the line.

Historical Data and Real-time Analysis

Retrospective and real-time data should form the bulk of information your team is looking at in a contact center monitoring tool. Having one or the other solely will not fulfill your requirements as you will not be able to make agile, informed decisions.

Proactive Alerts

Proactive alerts put your organization in control so you can be aware sooner, respond faster and solve performance issues before they become customer facing. Proactive alerts give your team the freedom to focus on other projects safe in the knowledge that if something goes wrong a red flag will be raised. Proactive alerts are a "goes without saying" feature but it's important to have a good level of flexibility and customization available to ensure your alerts are fit for purpose. Customer experience alerts are another great way of ensuring you are always-on and saves your staff from performing the manual task every hour.

Predictive & Prescriptive Analytics

Predictive analytics take your team up a notch in operational efficiency. Descriptive analytics is a solid starting point for any good contact center monitoring tool. If your organization is coming from a chaotic reactive environment predicative analytics will not be number one of the priority list, descriptive analytics may suffice their initial needs. They will be focused on getting out of the firefighting zone which can be achieved through deep transparent historical data and real-time analysis delivered through descriptive analytics to stop problems in their tracks.

Predictive analytics works by monitoring patterns, chain reactions and behaviors that offset big issues. When tied to proactive alerts predictive analytics can be a game changer for call center operations. It can entirely eliminate manual intervention to iron out issues because problems get solved before they even exist.

Prescriptive analytics identify one or more courses of action to combat a fault. It shows the likely effect of each action and recommends a preferred action to take. Prescriptive analytics are extremely useful for cutting down time researching potential solutions and selecting one.

Inside-out and Outside-In Testing

A big mistake lots of companies make with monitoring contact center technology is they only look at one side of their environment; they fail to test, troubleshoot and monitor inside-out as well as outside-in. Furthermore, they may have a tool that does one but not the other. Outside-in testing is availability tests, load tests etc. on your IVR, website and other UC channels. Inside-out is troubleshooting and monitoring within your own internal environment to identify what's happening on the inside.

When something comes from the outside-in we see whether it works or not (outside-in testing). If it works: great, if it doesn't work you need to find out why it's not working. What's happening inside the organization that's causing it to break down? You need inside-out troubleshooting and monitoring to find out what's going on inside.

Some Nice-If Features You'll Want

You'll survive without these features, you'll tame the beast without these, but they'll make it a much easier and less cumbersome task. They're not a need, but they are a want.

User Friendly, Intuitive Interface

Having a degree to understand how to use a product or requiring years of experience to be able to interpret the data is mind boggling. Technology shouldn't be that hard. Don't take no for an answer.

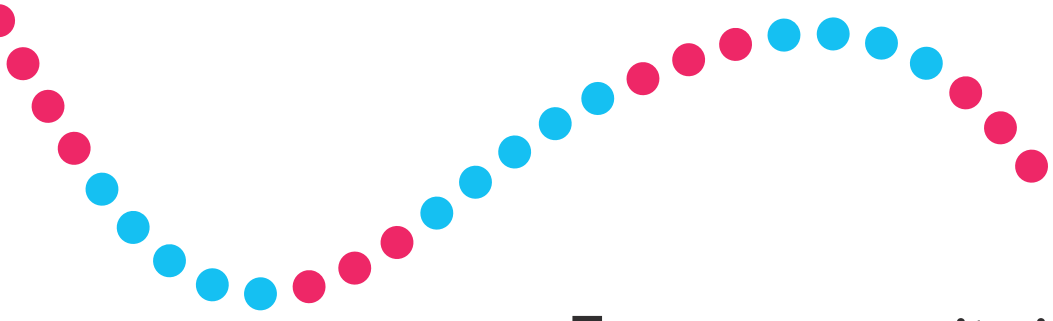
One Dashboard

The holy grail. Everything in one place. Why compromise on less? You've made it so far.

Before selecting a contact center technology monitoring provider ask them if they have customers who work off of a single interface. If the answer is yes, ask them if you can see an example – trust me, you'll thank me for it.

Probeless Architecture

Many contact center monitoring solutions require probes to analyze unified communication traffic across a network. However, a probeless design has all the great features of a probe based analysis: full visibility across the entire UC environment, including SBCs, routers, and Wi-Fi access points but without the cost and time constraints. And what organization wants to spend more money unnecessarily?



To sum up – monitoring contact center technology is not an if, it's a how. It's critical for ensuring you're delivering the experience your customers expect and deserve.

Unified Communications

Prognosis brings a thousand points of reference into a single point of view. Solve problems for people, not processors and make decisions faster. Have fewer outages and stop problems in their tracks.

Contact Center

Prognosis identifies issues fast so you can take rapid action to protect the quality of customer service. Keep systems humming, nip issues in the bud and validate 100% call recording guarantees are being met - all in real time.

Payments

Prognosis makes it easy for you to stay up to date with all the latest payments technologies. Adopt and manage new services like chip cards and mobile payments, without affecting your current technology.

Infrastructure

Prognosis spots patterns in your data so you can stop problems before they happen. Now you have the insight to optimize systems and networks to help them run at their best and do more every day.

Prognosis for UC is Microsoft SDN API 2.2 qualified with Skype for Business

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