



Real-Time Contact Centers: What the Competition Knows That You Don't

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Real-Time Contact Centers: What the Competition Knows That You Don't

Businesses with mission-critical contact centers face the constant challenge of finding the right balance between performance and cost. They must differentiate themselves from competitors and meet the increasing service demands of customers, while simultaneously finding new ways to be more efficient in their operations.

For these companies, technology has always played a major role in helping them achieve their goals and leverage their contact centers as a strategic asset. As a result, they have increased customer self-service, improved resource management and agent performance. However, most call centers still lack the ability to identify issues and assess problems quickly enough to take action before they negatively impact operations.

Changes in the performance level of any component of the contact center operation—from customer call volume to agent availability to technical systems support—can have a dramatic effect on the entire organization.

The majority of enterprise contact centers rely on a complex system of multiple applications, reports, and field staff to try to manage issues and minimize problems. Many of the reporting systems in use today date back to the early 1990s. This continued reliance on historical information and multiple data sources allows problems to go undetected for extended periods and forces contact centers to operate in a purely reactive mode. Over time, these inefficiencies lead to reduced customer satisfaction, lost revenue opportunities, and higher operational costs.

To effectively drive operational excellence, contact center operators need real-time information that precisely identifies and helps resolve mission-critical business issues as they occur. From executives to frontline managers, the need for a consolidated view of the complex, interdependent systems, resources, and processes involved in running their contact centers has become a business priority in today's ultra-competitive, cost-conscious business landscape.

The complex nature of contact center operations demands real-time management.

So what do Your Competitors Know That You Don't?

- They have figured out that their existing systems are ineffective and inefficient at delivering real-time information in an intuitive and meaningful way.
- They know that hour-old statistics and historical reports provide limited insight in solving current problems.
- Finally, they know that they need to disseminate critical information immediately and directly to those most capable of acting on it.

Your competitors know that through a blend of talented people, streamlined processes, and state-of-the-art software, they can transform their operations into a real-time contact center.

This white paper examines the complexities of today's contact center operations and identifies the chasm between the mountain of historical data and the contact center's need for relevant, operation-impacting information in real time. Then, it introduces Genesys performance management capabilities that address these needs with real-time insights into the operations of your contact center.

The best-run contact centers now realize the power of a solution that immediately identifies problems, pinpoints their root cause, suggests corrective action, and communicates this information to the individuals who can do something about it.

Complex Systems and Information Overload

Most contact centers operate with a carefully orchestrated patchwork of advanced systems, including ACD, CRM systems, CTI, and workforce management. Collectively, these systems provide the technology and workflow to effectively conduct contact center transactions (completed calls, emails, etc.). While each of these systems can generate report after report that contains the minutiae of data that covers every aspect of your operations, understanding the end-to-end flow of these transactions is almost impossible through the monitoring capabilities of any one system.

Customer care executives and contact center managers are forced to collect and consolidate the information from these various systems for their own analysis. This usually involves extended periods of combing through volumes of data to pick out the few exceptions that really require management's attention. Only then can the organization recognize issues that affect performance and react to situations that may have already be having a major impact on customer satisfaction or revenues.

While each of the many independent systems within contact center operations can function exactly as expected, contact centers still face a significant void in identifying and assessing operational problems across the enterprise. Specifically, systems are limited by poor enterprise visibility and constrained by historical data.

Impaired Vision

With current technologies, managers are blind to the true performance levels and costs of the entire contact center enterprise. Reliant on a series of disparate systems to provide data, they have no way to view, monitor, and manage the enterprise as a unified whole. Stacks of reports from unconnected silos of information provide insight into individual systems or processes but not the whole operation. The result: Decisions take longer and are based on a narrow, incomplete view of operations.

While contact center managers rely on key metrics to run their operations, they must search for the cause of the problem when one of these metrics indicates a problem. For example, a contact center manager notices a significant drop in performance to a point where only 70 percent of calls are answered in 45 seconds. The manager must then search through many systems to find the root of the problem, which could be any number of issues such as:

- Call volume spikes
- Staffing issues
- Handle time issues
- Self-service containment problems

Investigating the problem often involves application experts running reports on the ACDs, CTI, IVR, and workforce management systems. By the time the cause of the problem is identified, a single issue can grow into a significant crisis, such as widespread call abandonment, drastic increases in cost per call, lost sales, and customer churn. Critical problems can literally cost a business millions of dollars in a single afternoon.

Rearview Mirror Syndrome

Malcolm Forbes once said, "The rearview window of business is always cleaner than the windshield." In a complex contact center environment, this has certainly been the case to date. Existing systems inundate decision-makers with volumes of mostly irrelevant historical information, without providing the consolidated, real-time metrics really needed to drive the business forward. This means contact center managers engage in massive firefighting every day to keep operations running smoothly.

Historical information provides good data points for post-crisis evaluation and future planning. However, the contact center has already suffered lost opportunities. Typically, a contact center manager presents this information to the customer care executive the day after a significant event with an explanation of what exactly happened, how it was resolved, and the consequences of increased costs, lost customers, and missed goals.

During this historical review of the issue, both executives and contact center managers recognize the need for more targeted and timely information that can guide them to quick, accurate resolution. As problems develop, contact centers need relevant real-time information from across their systems with detailed analysis that identifies the root of the problem. Finally, this information must be delivered instantly to those who can act and prevent a costly crisis.

Traditional Solutions

Once customer care executives and contact center managers recognize the need for real-time management, IT departments are quick to suggest home-grown custom applications or a generic business intelligence tool with hundreds of custom queries. However, neither of these options provides an effective solution that meets the specific real-time demands for contact centers.

Build It Yourself

Most businesses experience challenges related to developing and maintaining custom applications. IT departments recognize the cost and personnel drain of maintaining the application and responding to the continual evolution of feature requests. Business continues to evolve, and the cost to continually enhance and upgrade these applications becomes high. Over time, most organizations lose their appetite (and often their budget) to maintain these in-house applications.

Because of these inherent problems in home-grown applications, these solutions generally fail to meet the specific demands of contact centers because they remain dependent on managers running reports designed by software engineers who don't anticipate the needs of contact centers.

Real-time contact center management cannot rely upon managers continually running reports to look for problems. Managers are busy coordinating their operations and need to be notified when something goes wrong, instead of routinely looking for things that could go wrong. Besides, reports can become dated historical information just a few minutes after they run.

Real-time contact center management demands a live view of performance based on up-to-the-minute information from across all contact center operations. Notification of all developing issues must be automatic and dynamic to ensure that management takes action as soon as problems arise. In other words, key personnel need to be notified no matter where they are (airports, meetings, training) as soon as conditions begin to deteriorate.

Customized Business Intelligence

Contact centers can deploy a typical business intelligence tool to aggregate information across their many systems, but an effective solution still demands contact center managers to specify their precise metrics and build all analysis into the customized application. Before they deliver any value, business intelligence tools must be highly customized by contact center experts.

While generic business intelligence tools have a proven value for historical trending and forecasting, they simply were not built for real-time correlation. Like home-grown applications, these business intelligence solutions deliver analysis and reports based on a static view of your call center operations.

Most contact center managers already possess the historical information they need. Business intelligence tools cannot provide the real-time aggregation, analysis, and communication needed for identifying and resolving operational issues before they affect your bottom-line results.

The Genesys Performance Management Advisor Suite of Products

The Advisor suite of products provides real-time business intelligence to:

- Consolidate information from disparate systems
- Correlate this multi-source information to identify real problems and pinpoint root cause
- Communicate this information to the right managers and personnel

The Advisor suite of products combine the proficiency of contact center experts with the functionality of real-time business intelligence. With 24x7 consolidation, correlation, and communication, these products provide effective real-time contact center management.

Consolidate

The Advisor suite of products work by continuously monitoring all contact center systems and consolidating relevant information for analysis. Much like a business intelligence tool, they interface with many systems and passively extract information. However, Advisor suite of products consolidate this information on a 24x7 real-time basis.

Correlate

The Advisor suite of products correlate all information to provide a single real-time view of performance. However, this solution proves its domain expertise by correlating information from many systems and analyzing performance based on integrated performance metrics. It goes beyond individual metrics, such as scheduling efficiency, hold time, and handle time, to analyze individual metrics as they relate to each other.

For example, as scheduling efficiency drops cause longer hold time, the problem is recognized before it leads to an unacceptable abandonment rate. These integrated metrics drive the complex analysis for determining root cause of performance issues and directing business line managers to address the problem.

The correlation and functionality within the Advisor suite of products derive directly from the domain experts who designed and built the product. After millions of dollars and tens of thousands of hours of product development, the level of analysis within the Advisor suite of products cannot be matched by a generic business intelligence tool and a never-ending consulting project to write the queries and tests.

Communicate

Real-time contact center management cannot hinge on managers and executives constantly watching a monitor and waiting for something to happen. Their day-to-day jobs and responsibilities can keep managers and executives tied up and away from their computers.

For this reason, the Advisor suite of products were designed to communicate relevant information and alerts in real time to decision-makers and business line managers who can take action and effectively manage the contact center operations. While existing solutions report heaps of useless information and rely on managers to interpret generic reports, the Genesys Advisor suite of products deliver only pertinent information in clear business language.

This information is communicated through:

- Contact Center Advisor that provides a single view into operations across all systems and locations.
- Workforce Advisor pulls data from workforce management systems in order to monitor agent schedule adherence to the forecast.
- Frontline Advisor delivers real-time visibility into activity trends, business rule violations, and key performance indicators.
- Agent Advisor enables agents to manage their own performance by notifying them when their agent state and performance exceeds desired threshold and behaviors.

Benefits

The Genesys Advisor suite of products deliver proven benefits in the form of their ability to consolidate real-time information, correlate the information with root-cause analysis.

For example, a Fortune 500 wireless telecommunications company deployed the Advisor suite of products to more effectively manage its 62 contact centers. As a result, the company nearly doubled its call volume while maintaining its high standards for performance without adding call management headcount. Specifically, the company measured an annual benefit of over 200% on its investment. The company measured return on:

- Increased sales per agent
- Decreased customer churn rates
- Improved agent accessibility rate
- Real-time identification of call routing issues
- Decreased call abandon rate

Conclusion

The complex nature of contact center operations demands real-time management. Your competitors may have already figured this out and are already avoiding the common errors where contact centers fail. They don't rely on the hourly statistics and reports from their siloed systems for real-time information. They avoid inefficient data gathering and custom-built IT projects.

Before your contact center suffers a lasting competitive disadvantage, customer care executives and contact center managers should investigate how they move toward real-time management. The Advisor suite of products deliver proven value from consolidating real-time information, correlating the information with root-cause analysis, and communicating only relevant information.

About Genesys

Genesys, creator of the world's #1 Customer Experience Platform, empowers organizations to build exceptional customer relationships with personalized, omnichannel experiences across all journeys in the customer lifecycle. For over 25 years, we have put the customer at the center of all we do, and today, we continue to passionately believe that great customer experience drives great business outcomes. Trusted by over 4,700 customers in 120 countries, Genesys orchestrates over 24 billion interactions per year in the cloud and on premises.

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