

# Cloud Solutions Transforming the Call Centers



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## Introduction

Change is imminent. And when it comes to technological advancements, we notice changes are happening at an alarming rate, be it medical science, environment or artificial intelligence. These are just to name a few, the technological advancement has touched every nooks and corner and such advancements bring the necessity to a meaningful solution for better experience and a better call center scenario.

With such technological advancements, call center environment has seen several changes that have introduced some totally new terms to the contemporary scenarios of the call centers, such as virtual call centers, predictive dialers, auto dialers, cloud PBX etc.



All these terms signify that the transformation that has largely taken place and our call centers have come a long way to a much more productive domain of customer support system. The biggest reason behind this transformation is 'Cloud.' Cloud has made the call centers a lot more equipped with sophisticated features and efficient for today's challenges.

## What is Cloud Technology

Information is made of bits, which are made of ones and zeroes. Cumulatively, these ones and zeroes create the data. And data needs storage, where it can be retrieved from, whenever needed. With the growth in internet and online activity, storage of data has become the biggest of the necessities. And this necessity is growing at an alarming rate day by day. This data is stored in the servers and a bulk of servers in a lot many numbers make the data centers. And once you use these servers for storage, you can say your data is on cloud.



A hosted call center is the one that works on cloud technology and is immensely flexible and scalable than the traditional call centers.

## Why to Introduce Cloud in a Call Center?

Cloud technology has attributes that easily fulfill the needs of a contemporary call center environment. Premise-based solutions are not yet completely obsolete, but the uncertainties related to contemporary economics as well as management are forcing the decision makers to give a second thought to the cloud-based solutions. And evaluation reports have perpetually suggested that cloud has a bright future.



If we consider about the call center environment, we realize that there are several challenges that have made their presence felt with the exponential growth in the number of customers as well as the scheme of things that make a common platform for the customer and agents such as call centers, a complete necessity.

To understand why cloud for a contact center, let's look at the challenges that are present in call center environment today.

# Challenges in Traditional Call Center Environment



## Call Volume Demands

The exponential growth in the number of customers has increased the need for agents to have a greater responsibility towards having a satisfactory solution for customer queries.

## First Call Resolution

Customers want their time to be valued in their best possible way, but things go against if the agent is not aware of the exact solution the customer might be looking for.

## Customer Relationship Management

It involves maintaining a proper call history and setting a proper time for call back. A promising customer can be contacted multiple times by the agents. Traditional call centers face tough times for a good follow up management.

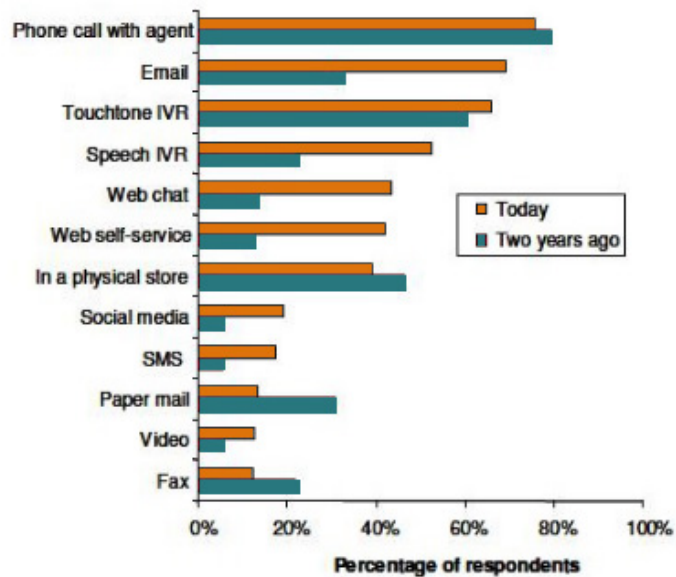
## Call Center Management

A traditional call center asks for space and a proper set up to accommodate the agents and equipment. Equipment do need attention from time to time, and a number of agents vary according to the business need.

## Cost Challenges

Cost is an essential factor, and any business has to look for avenues to save money and use it for something more constructive.

## Current Trends in the Call Centers



Consumer preferences for customer services in the US. It clearly shows that customers are not giving it a second thought before dialing a number for support.

**Source:** Ovum [\[1\]](#)

According to Frost and Sullivan market research company, the call centers are shifting their focus from cost to value, from merely satisfying customers to creating delighted brand advocates and loyal customers.

### Social Media:

Most of the companies are doing their best to use social media to promote the brand and enhance brand awareness. Factors related to sales and services are also touched by social media these days.



### High Maintenance Customers:

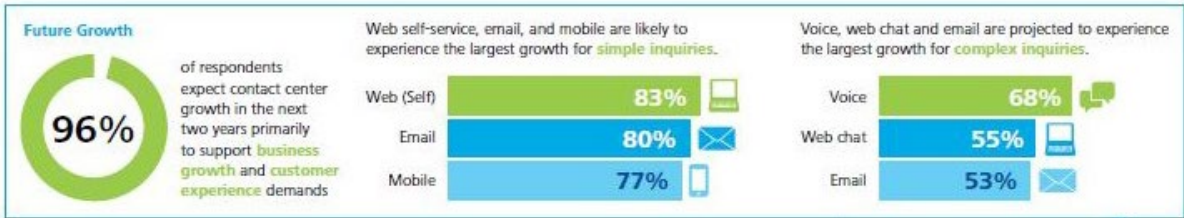
Such customers have a totally different attribute, they have elevated expectations, and they want their issues resolved immediately and effectively.

### Self-Service:

IVRs and other web-based services have turned out to be one of the best services in which customers help themselves without much time wasted as they are designed so well.

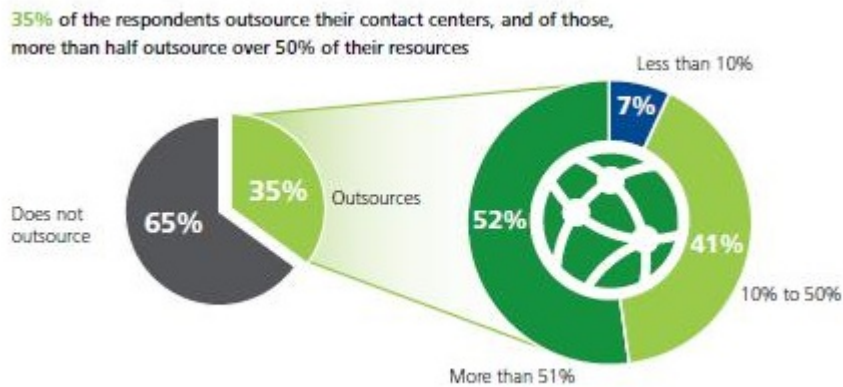
**Source:** Frost and Sullivan [\[2\]](#)

In a survey done by Deloitte [3], there are certain findings depict that the contact centers are going to be the most dependable thing in the coming future about the call center environment.



**Points**

96% of the respondents expected that in the next two years there would be growth in the contact centers, which suggests call centers are consolidating in customer support, gradually.

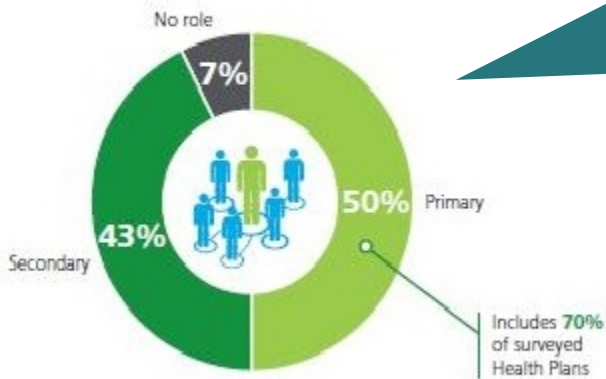


72% of the respondents are planning contact center transformation in the next two years with heavy emphasis on consolidation, outsourcing and establishing new contact centers, it means more number of cloud contact centers are going to be there in coming future.

Over half of the respondents believe that call centers play a primary role in customer retention.



Half of respondents believe that contact centers play a primary role in customer retention



Out of all the respondents, 50% of them have said that contact center plays a primary role in customer retention.

85% of the respondents have said that customer experience is an important competitive differentiator for the year 2015. Most of the companies are keeping customer experience in focus.

85% of respondents view customer experience as a competitive differentiator, compared to 62% in 2013



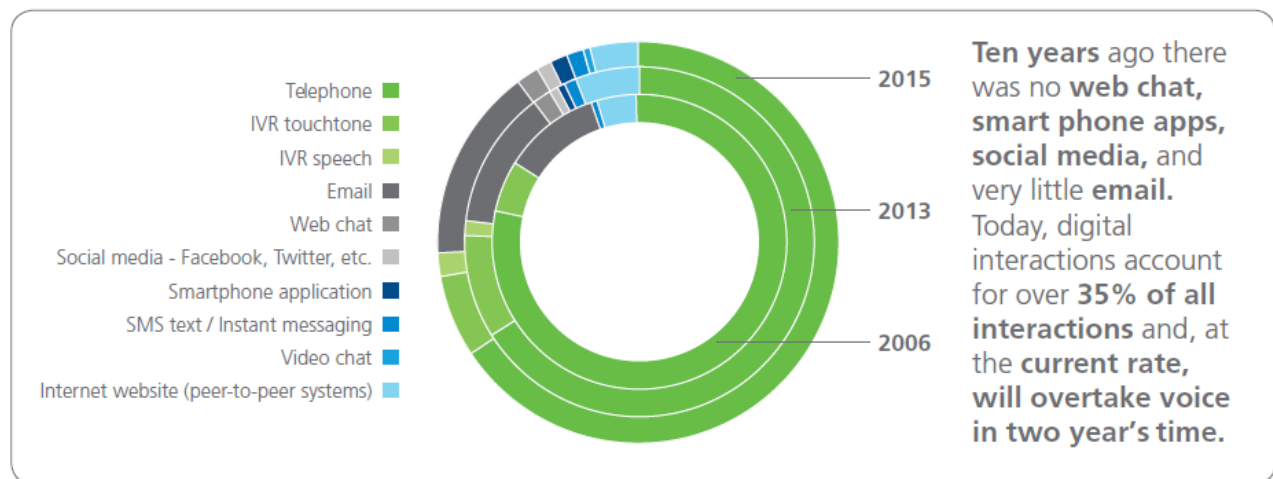
Source: Deloitte Survey 2015 [\[4\]](#)

2015 Global benchmarking report suggests that a telephone line has always been a preferred medium for customer support. IVRs and email come after the phone call that customer use to find customer support.

But today, 35% of all the interactions are digital today, and it will supersede the phone call in the next two years.

## contact centres – going digital...

The 2015 Global Contact Centre Benchmarking Report highlights a dramatic evolution in the industry, as digital interaction continues its explosive growth as contact method. The graph below provides a more detailed breakdown of this shift.



**Source:** Global Benchmarking report 2015 [www.dimensiondata.com](http://www.dimensiondata.com) <sup>[5]</sup>

## Strengths of Cloud Technology

The strengths of cloud technology have various aspects, and by their effective indulgence in every area of business, it has been proved to be helpful for better business results.



### Proactive

Cloud solutions have made the call center scenario more proactive. Today, they are not just attending the issues related to customer's business needs but also providing an interface to deliver complete customer experience. Such pro-activeness is necessary for immediate and appropriate responses to customer demands.

It has become gradually acceptable that once a customer is in your orbit to receive a particular service, it becomes essential to understand his behavioral patterns and interests with time. With such understanding, the retention of the customer becomes a lot easier.

For such customer engagement, the agents should be apprised with the most updated customer insights that deal with the business needs and interests of the customers. A bulk of customer data is churned out for better insights.

This data can be related to customer's behavioral patterns, transactional interests or other crucial information like their attitudinal attributes. In such scenarios, the storage and retrieval of data through cloud becomes a lot easier and safer. And incorporating cloud technology in the call center environment helps to provide a seamless customer experience because the agents are aware about the customers in a much better way.

## Enhanced Productivity

Productivity enhances many folds if the agents work in a humane and hassle-free environment. The traditional call centers have always found it tough to handle the day to day work pressure and stress that agents go through while meeting the expectations of the customer needs. A hosted call center gives autonomy to agents, they can work from home and still be in touch with the call center manager and other agents who are sitting overseas. The remote agent model has proved to be cost effective and competitive.

Many call centers have saved a lot of money as they have enabled 500 plus personal technology experts to work from home.<sup>[6]</sup>

For a purposeful conversation with the customers, agents should be informed about their customers and the product. The virtual call centers have provided avenues to keep such vital information handy and expedite the process of customer support in an efficient way. Sitting across the continents and have face to face interactions between agents and customers via desktop video cameras has become widespread to get an uninterrupted services.

## Meeting tomorrow's Expectations

A survey done by Spherion Staffing Services<sup>[7]</sup>, 17% of the customers talk about a good customer support experience on social media, while 15% of them go for an online review. On the other hand, when customers have a bad experience, 25% of them vent about it on the social media. So, it becomes necessary to collate and analyze the customer related data, using data analytics tools and then act accordingly. Customers expect for a good support system irrespective of the channels (web, chat, social, email) they are using.

With such demands, the customers fully expect that the agent is knowledgeable about how to resolve the issues. Agents should be made capable to do so. There should not be a scenario in which the agent has to Google for a particular thing to answer a customer query. The traditional call centers have faced many circumstances like this earlier, but cloud has made it a lot easier to bring in the persuasive customer support with higher awareness and agility in the agents.

## Cloud Call Centers as Customer Engagement Centers

Most of the companies go through a critical juncture when the customer retention becomes equally important as acquiring new ones. Because customers don't give it a second thought before changing their loyalty to some other brand if their demands are not met. So, it becomes necessary to engage the customers with a worthwhile approach towards providing a business solution. Traditional call centers are gradually becoming obsolete because cloud technology has made it a lot easier to engage the customers with meaningful touch-points with unique engaging experience.

According to American research and advisory firm Gartner Inc., "A customer engagement center (CEC) refers to a logical set of technological and business applications that are engineered to provide customer service and support, regardless of the interaction (or engagement) channel."

Optimization of data usage, people and technology is necessary to execute a customer engagement. These are some drivers that seek for transformation in the call center environment.

### Customers look for engagement option

The quality of service is the only touch point that decides, how well the customers are going to remain stuck to your brand. And once they reach an agent they want their problems to be resolved without wastage of any time.

### Greater Acceptance to Digital Technologies

A survey done by Mckinsey & Company <sup>[8]</sup>, about 73 percent customers use the internet to gather information, while rest use call centers, either for standalone research or to supplement their internet research.

There are various points that interpret the customer engagement ideas for a call center. Here are few check points as suggest by Forbes <sup>[9]</sup> if you look closely they are fulfilled by Cloud Call Centers

## A customer engagement center

- Connect to multiple back-end systems
- Customizable and flexible experience for customers and prospects
- Give employees a 360-degree view of the customer
- Can track customers from first interaction all the way through the entire customer lifecycle.
- The entire desktop of information can be transferred from agent to agent
- Offers real time analytics.
- Mobile enabled
- Manages social media engagements for customer service.
- Peer to peer support (including community forums and blogs)
- Allows for the scalability of your business
- Can accommodate any telephony system
- Ability to embed support into your products and apps.
- If we look closely, cloud call centers fulfill all the points mentioned above.

## Benefits of Cloud Transformation

The benefits of cloud technology in various fields show that the attributes of cloud are versatile and they take care of the contemporary needs.

### Reduced Investment



Cloud call centers have come up as the best solution in comparison to the traditional call centers when it comes to cost, because of the various solutions available depending on the need and the strength of customer base. One is, it is independent of investment on the premise and infrastructure. The premise-based solutions ask for maintenance whereas in case of hardwired call centers, the equipment needs occasional upgrade.

For call centers, shifting to cloud has made users try out new features and change the traditional ways of working. Accepting these changes has increased the overall capability of the call center.

### Easy Set Up



Cloud-based call centers are set up, easily because of their easy and user-friendly methodology and software-based model. Whereas in traditional call centers, technical experts are needed to do the set up. It adds to the expenditure and as well as delay in the timeline.

Since the cloud-hosted call centers work on software-based model so, users can give it a try to various call center software and go for one that is best suited for them.

### Sophisticated Features



A wide array of sophisticated features are available with the cloud based call centers, because of the updated features like predictive dialing, and automatic call routing, automatic upgrade of the software, the call centers have undergone a long-lasting transformation.

The data related to the customers is analyzed thoroughly by the software, and predictive dialers choose the right time and customer to call.

### Remote Agents



In the recent years, most of the companies have focused on productivity and to enhance this factor in a call center environment, cloud-hosted call centers have set a great example. The productivity of the workforce depends on the fact that how hassle-free and humane the environment is, with the help of cloud-hosted call centers. The agents have found it easier to maintain a disposition to handle the work pressure.



## Dealing with the Call Volume Demand

The call volume demands vary according to the interests and demands of the customers and may differ country wise. So, in this sense cloud hosted call centers take care of the peaks and valleys of the call volume and accordingly, zero in agents who are free and available to attend the calls. In this way, the call volumes are perfectly distributed, and the output of the call center is optimized.



## Easy Administration

The cloud-based call centers give a lot many options to administer the features and attributes to comply with the current needs of the industry and the customer interests. The control of the IVRs, call flows and routing strategies and changes based on customers are always there in the administrator's hands.

Such self-service capabilities give the call center managers a lot more options to monitor the business and take steps accordingly.



## Customer Relationship Management

The traditional call centers had certain limitations, and integration and customization have always remained tough to execute. But cloud has brought many aspects to the current scenario that has enabled our today's call centers to innovate.

Integration to CRM is easy with cloud-based call centers, and in this way it is much more user-friendly than the previous one, because of its application programming Interface and web-based interfaces, it is a lot simpler to integrate with the system or any third party application.



## Security Features

The security features related to the cloud are immense, and data remains 100 percent safe on the cloud. A team works behind the security of the data, and they assure any security breach when the software that evades any new threat and keep it secure from any security breach. In this way, any speculation of a threat to data is avoided.



## Innovation for the Future

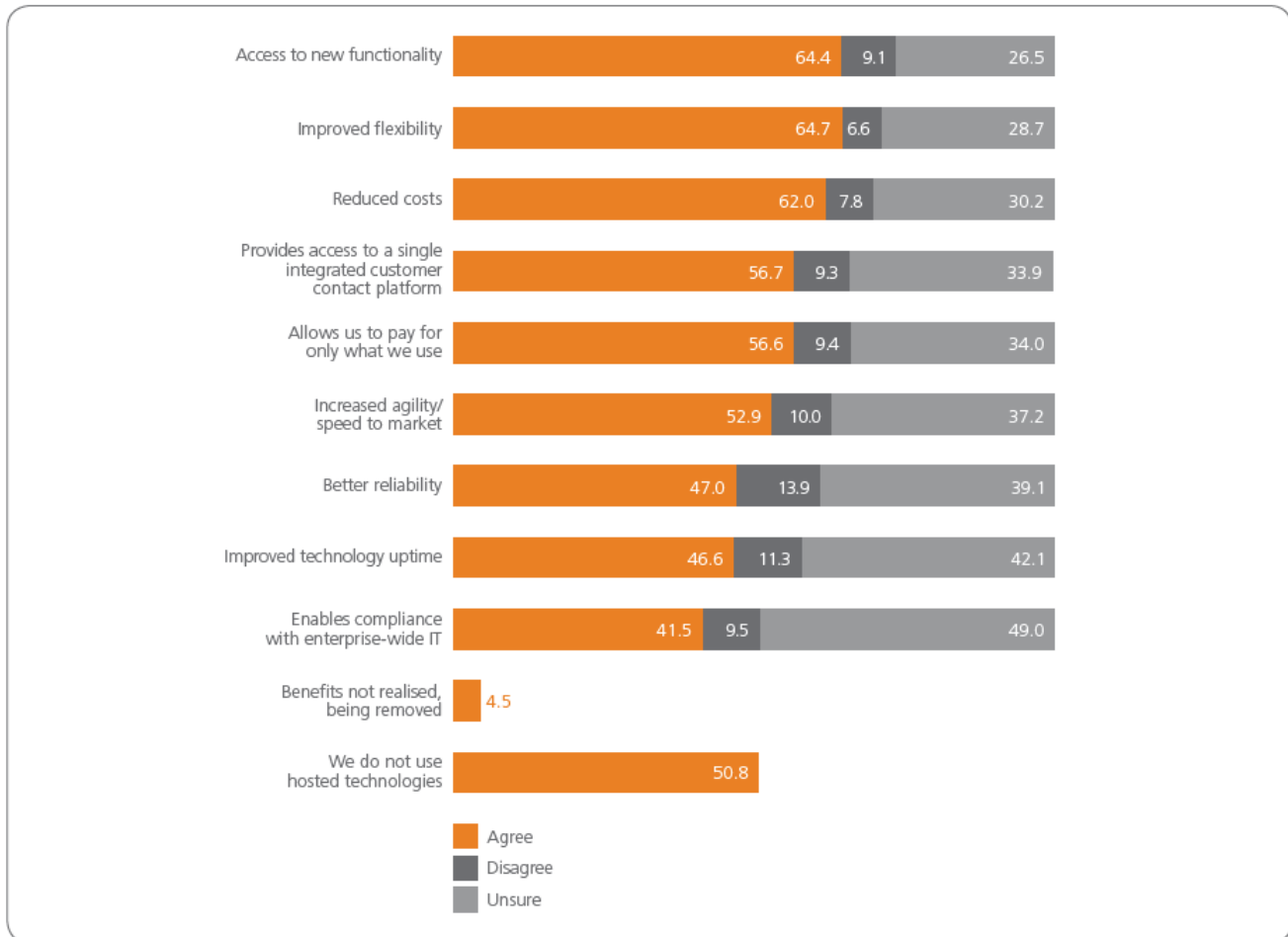
Innovation goes hand in hand with cloud technology and with its arrival in call center environment its overall outcome in productivity and customer relationship solution has gone up many folds and has helped to accelerate sales and increase the loyal customer base. The transformation of call centers has become a lot easier with the cloud technology and in this way, it has assured that the future ahead for call centers is very promising in virtual space.



## Impact of hosted/cloud technologies on the business | 2015 Report sample question

How has the use of hosted/cloud technologies affected your business?

Percentage of contact centres | n = 673



88.8 % agree that they have reduced costs, which are partially linked to the 85.7% saying it allows them to pay for only what they use. As many as 90.8% confirm that it offers improved flexibility, while 84.2% report that it increases agility and speed to market.

Source- Global benchmarking report 2015 dimensiondata.com<sup>[10]</sup>

## Sales Acceleration with the Cloud Call Centers

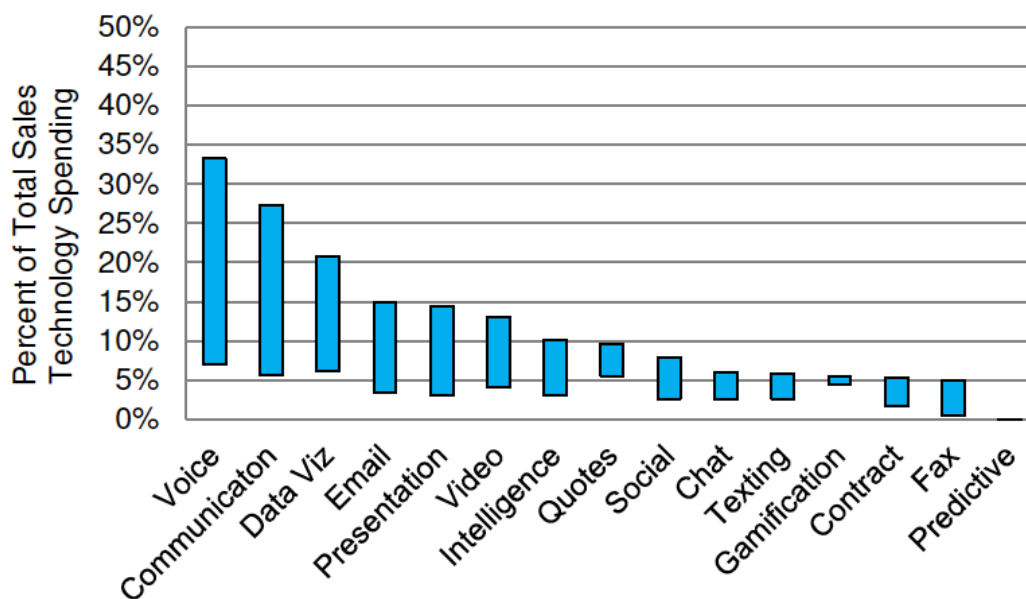
Call centers are helping to drive the sales acceleration to new heights, and cloud technology has played an important role in it. Sales acceleration depends completely on the fact that the conversation should end on a convincing note with the customer. So for the same reason, it is necessary to do lead data management for every sales activity. Call recording, customer call history, customer contact info are important data that are properly taken care of.

With the help of feature like predictive dialers, a thorough analysis of customer-related data is done, and many meaningful results show up, such as the best time to call the customers based on demographic details, orientation as well as need.

For sales acceleration, giving proper value to time is the most essential and the possibility of best usage of time increases as predictive dialers filter out the unprofitable numbers, fax lines, engaged signals.

In this way, the best of the customers are accessed and the most appropriate time, ensuring a much better sales acceleration.

If we look at the graph below, we find that companies are spending the highest on voice communication technology as expenditure for sales. Cloud-hosted call centers are setting an example for improved sales acceleration.



Source- Forbes <sup>[11]</sup>

## Reducing Risk with cloud

Operating risks go hand in hand with call centers. These risks can be reduced to some major issues, thanks to cloud technology.



### Regulatory

Call centers have to abide by many regulations. For example how an auto dialer should be used and time during which the calls can be made, number of abandoned calls and so on.

### Privacy

Call centers deal with a lot of personal information, and this data should be protected from disclosure and misuse. The technical data should be masked and muted. Call centers must implement methods to minimize the risk of data loss.

### Confidentiality

Call centers need to convince their clients that their confidential data is secure. For keeping the data confidential, cloud technology plays a vital role. A software is used to monitor agent activity and detect any unusual usage patterns. There are restrictions, that how much of data can be accessed by the agents.

### Security

Security risks are inherent in all types of call centers, whether inbound or in the cloud. There are issues of physical, data and security. Typical security risks are handled by taking the following precautions.

## Self Service is making its Presence Felt (IVRs)

Today's call centers are providing better avenues of self-service in call center environment and in this way with the advancement in technology the self-service has evolved, gradually. Customers look for the best service in the least time invested, and in this way, IVRs (Interactive Voice Response) is getting more rife in the current call center scenario.

Use of IVRs has become widespread be it any business. And with the passage of time, IVRs have become more interactive and intelligent. Despite the fact that the IVRs are proving to be biggest help, access to the live agent has always been kept open.

Cloud technology has helped a lot in this as to keep the data accessible to the customers who interact and look for self help and save their time.

In December 2015 survey done by Forrester<sup>[12]</sup> it has been found that 53% of the customers are likely to abandon their purchase if they can't find quick answers to their questions. 73% have said valuing their time is the most important thing a company can do to provide good

customer service. The same report also suggest that customers increasingly leverage the self service and digital channels because they offer least amount of interaction friction.

## Conclusion

Cloud technology has backed up the current call center environment and taken it to completely new heights by giving it a totally new dimension to the customer services. The final result should be satisfactory for the customers and to keep this idea alive, the adoption of cloud technology is by the call centers has paved a way towards future and because of the growing intelligence on the customer's part, it gets essential to bring in some powerful changes in the way services are delivered to the customers. Because customers always expect more than what they get. And cloud is giving a good company to the contemporary call center environment leading to fulfill that customer's expectations.

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## About Author

Vipul Srivastav is an expert in cloud-based communication solutions with [CallCenterHosting](#). He writes about various subjects such as cloud related innovations, customer behavior, marketing and how to make customer experience better in the contemporary times. Many research-based contents written by him are available over the internet. He is also a photography enthusiast and finds music as an unavoidable part of his life.

## About Company

[CallCenterHosting](#) has been providing cloud hosting solutions for more than 10 years now. The company is one of the best names in the domain of service providers of cloud hosting.

The call center solutions have proved their potential in the contemporary call center scenario with solutions like predictive dialers, virtual call centers, inbound and outbound call centers, virtual number, cloud PBX, toll free number and dialer hosting for VICIdial and GOautodial. Cloud has won the trust of its users gradually and security measures for the data has become unprecedented. CallCenterHosting assures its customers with a trouble free and secure cloud hosting solutions because they have set an example in the past many years for designing their products with an intact focus on the customers.

Learn More

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