

September  
2010

# Beyond. Customer satisfaction

Keeping your customers in an  
age of ruthless cost **control**



# 1

## Where does the quest for optimum productivity begin to compromise the necessity for cost efficiency?

Where does the pursuit of absolute security begin to hinder straightforward customer service? Where does fighting to keep customers from leaving become too expensive, in terms of infrastructure and resource?

Striking the right balance between the matrix of challenges facing organisations today is not so much akin to walking a single tightrope as navigating a web of them.

Gartner recently threw this balancing act into stark relief by positing that the ‘four 9s’ philosophy might, in the current climate, be open for debate.

This is the idea that organisations must have “99.99 per cent” reliability, that their networked IT services must be unavailable to them no more than 0.36 seconds in any given hour, or no more than 8.64 seconds in any given day.

It’s an accepted, established target for the managed networked IT services industry. Gartner has asked the previously un-askable: is almost-perfect reliability really necessary for an optimised, productive business? Or does that quest for perfection upset the balance between risk resilience, productivity and cost efficiency?

According to Gartner, losing that last ‘9’ can save an organisation 30 per cent of its IT budget.

They suggest that for most organisations, most of the time, 99.90 per cent is more than reliable enough. That would mean services being available for all but 3.6 seconds in any given hour.

But can you compromise reliability, even to that degree? Just how much risk is acceptable before you lose customers?

Customer contact is more than simply mission-critical.

It is sacrosanct. That’s why, for all of the promises that cloud-based, hosted customer contact centres offer, for example, such as flexibility, cost-accountability and on-demand service provision, there remains a strong degree of trepidation among organisations yet to convert.

The notion of allowing this to happen somewhere as apparently ambiguous as ‘the cloud’ understandably prompts concern for many.

### It comes down to risk and trust.

Consider the old days of movie-watching at home. People would buy a video, give it a space on their shelf and watch it time and time again. Today, the norm is increasingly for people to watch their movies on demand, streamed from the cloud to their screen. They don’t pay the up-front ownership cost; they pay a flexible subscription or on-demand fee. Crucially, that’s because they trust the technology to deliver, which wouldn’t have been the case five years ago, when on-demand streaming was first being hyped.

Now transpose that to the enterprise. It’s one thing to trust cloud technology to deliver you a movie at home; it’s another thing altogether to trust it with something as mission-critical to your organisation as customer contact.

There’s also no point having a cloud contact centre product if you can’t connect both the agent and the consumer to the cloud – which requires a global network of appropriate reach and reliability that might not have always been available when hosted services were first hyped.

So, the concern about risk is understandable. But the irony in all of this is that customer contact is the operational area where, today, cloud services offer the highest levels of security, safety and reliability.

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**‘With BT NGCC, Expedia were able to activate 30 new agents in 24 hours to react to a sudden change in their market.’**

# 2

## The reliability of the new

It is precisely because continuity of customer contact is so mission-critical that the hosted contact centre is more reliable than the traditional, 'fixed-location' model. Take any kind of major natural disaster or terror attack, or, at the other, more prosaic end of the spectrum, an interruption to power or utility supply. In any of these scenarios, the 'shed' model of contact centre is vulnerable. Customer service is interrupted and customer satisfaction therefore suffers.

With a hosted, cloud-based contact service, of course, this risk – inherent with any contact centre that is fixed to a single physical location – is removed at a stroke. Specific calls are routed via the network to the right expert, wherever they are located. Combining this with other technologies whose time has also come – like Unified Communications – means that those experts can be more easily contacted, regardless of location and regardless of communication platform. Be they on mobile, landline or instant messaging, for example, their availability is automatically assessed by the system, and calls or emails or live messaging routed instantly to them.

After the hype, the time for these technologies is finally and demonstrably here. The reliability and security is proven. It's even possible to build in complete fail-safes for hosted contact centre solutions, with a whole other 'ghost' or shadow platform waiting in the wings to seamlessly take over in case something does go wrong.

It comes down to trust – but it also comes down to the CxO getting his head around a simple fact: that customer contact isn't a place, it's an activity. And that it has always been thus. It was only ever the shortcomings of technology that limited organisations to premises-based contact centres in the first place.

Cloud is not the panacea that much of the hype of recent years would have us believe and will not be the 'right' solution for every organisation's customer contact needs. But, right now, we know that every organisation out there is trying to balance competing objectives of efficiency and customer service.

To do the same or more for less. The cloud is definitely one way to achieve this, but trust has to come first.

**'In February 2010, NGCC – one of our cloud contact centre offerings – delivered 1,000,000 calls and 500,000 messages and chats from 178 different countries to agents located in 37 different countries.'**

**'We design, deliver and maintain over 4,000 contact centres around the globe, including managing one of the largest hosted contact centres with 32,000 seats.'**

# 3

## How can BT Global Services help you keep your customers?

**“Last year BT invested £2bn in network and products. Now is the time for our customers to leverage that investment.”**

BTGS is responding to the squeeze on businesses to manage costs yet sustain or even improve customer service in two key ways.

We are enhancing our cloud-based customer contact service – Next Generation Contact Centre (NGCC) – with full global redundancy. This means that there is a full ‘back-up’ in place to keep customer contact systems running seamlessly even if one hosted system suffered a major failure.

We are creating innovative pricing models. For example, we are offering in-bound services that include the NGCC solution – essentially offering NGCC free with Global Inbound (just as BT Vision’s library of movies on demand is free with that service).

We are also able to extend the benefits of a hosted contact centre by combining it with Unified Communications technology. BT Unite is a globally available, breakthrough approach to unified communications, which takes the leading technologies and combines them into an optimised and extended communication environment.

Rather than taking a piecemeal approach to deployment – something that has confused many organisations – we have developed a core solution based on the best parts of the two leading technology vendors, Microsoft and Cisco.

BT Unite offers total communications flexibility under a single user interface. So, two users could exchange emails, quickly revert to IM to talk in real time, and at the click of a mouse, turn it into a video chat. They could then seamlessly conference in a number of remote colleagues who are on a variety of mobile and land lines and hold a video conference.

We also offer Cisco Hosted Unified Communications (HUCS), the world’s first global cloud-based IP telephony solution. Next Generation Contact Centre and HUCS can be combined and delivered as an integrated communications and customer contact solution as a service.

Our self-service and call-back solutions also deliver cost-efficiencies to organisations that experience significant peaks in demand. Staffing for peak times is rarely cost effective. Self-service solutions automate processes that take care of the simpler transactions, freeing agents for more complex and revenue-generating calls, while at the same time improving the overall customer experience.

### Offices worldwide

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**‘We provide contact centre services to: 75% of the world’s biggest banks; eight out of ten of the world’s largest utilities; 11 of the world’s biggest airlines; and 13 of the global top 20 pharmaceutical companies.’**