

---

# Next Generation Contact Centres

Successful contact centre strategies

## Embracing new technologies to steal a march on the masses. Effective tools to observe manage and intervene customer interactions on your site and across the relevant social media channels.

By blindly pushing self-service over agent interaction, many companies are inadvertently running the risk of revenue leakage - especially if there is limited or no understanding of how customers are behaving online. New virtual helper applications can bridge the gap between the web and the contact centre, giving agents visibility into the online customer experience.

### Enabling direct communications

Such tools include Klick2Contact – a cloud-based widget that can be integrated online to enable behavioural monitoring – Avaya’s Aura Contact Centre Solution and Zeacom. All these applications offer the opportunity to engage in direct voice, instant chat or video communication at a critical point in the transaction process, which can be pre-defined through the study of web analytics. Indications could be after a customer has been browsing for a certain time; a known drop-off area; or when a customer is experiencing difficulty during payment.

Real-time instant chat and call-back functionality intuitively offer one-to-one communication and enable contact centre representatives to monitor for these all-important triggers – facilitating interaction with the customer as soon as disengagement sets in; or at a preferred time and, importantly, through their preferred channels by making ‘call-back’ request buttons widely available across the site at key times. Customers on the move, for instance, can click on a button to submit an SMS text request via their mobile and an agent will contact them there and then or at a more convenient date and time if they so wish.

This ability for immediate response and to converse completely on the customer’s terms puts agents on the front foot – eradicating the most frequently complained about aspect of customer service i.e. the length of time customer’s waste on hold or waiting for agents to pick-up. What’s more, as call-back requests and general enquiries submitted via the ‘contact us’ form on corporate sites tend to come through to the contact centre via email, most companies don’t have any means of monitoring response times or prioritising those prospects requiring urgent attention.

The interactive call-back functionality incorporated into these collaborative tools, however, means customers are contacted at exactly the right time and in-depth reporting allows contact centre managers to keep a closer eye on agent performance. As well as dramatically cutting instances of lost sales, such prompt service sets the ‘leaders’ apart from the ‘laggards’ (The Temkin Group), offering genuine differentiation in a crowded marketplace.

### Obtaining actionable insights

In addition, call-back buttons can also pop-up a small form asking customers for some very basic details, thus helping the agent to further personalise the service and open the door to new business opportunities in the future by building customer data.

It is also possible to code the position of the call-back button so agents can see the likely activity the customer was managing when they requested the call back, helping them to better prepare for the discussion and improve service.

Screen pop-ups can recommend additional products or services to the customer, or special promotions that tie into their preferences, supporting the agent in building rapport and up selling.

The ability to take control of the customer’s desktop can also help point to potential products of interest or resolve navigation and technical issues more quickly.

### Proactive engagement

But beyond reacting to call-back requests, the most compelling argument for giving your contact centre staff unprecedented insights into the online customer experience is the empowerment to proactively engage. Not only can they contact the customer as soon as they’ve dropped off an online session (as long as that customer has exchanged contact details) but they can capture their attention long before they become just another ‘abandonee’.

Think back to all the times you’ve got halfway through completing an online booking form or trying to obtain a comparative quote for a particular service; fatigue’s set in and you’ve navigated away from the site. If your interaction was being actively monitored an agent could have connected with you to complete the remaining fields. As well as lessening the onus on you, let’s face it, your chances of converting would now be much higher and your overall impression of the company extremely positive. For as long as agents act as soon as a prospect drops off, or when frustrations are obviously mounting, this proactive intervention will be perceived as a value-add example of good customer service, rather than an overtly pushy sales effort.

## Money talks

Embracing technologies like Klick2Contact, Avaya Aura and Zeacom maximises the potential of visitors by bringing them into your sphere of influence, and eventually turning them into a paying customer. But while conversion is the ultimate goal, keeping that person as a satisfied customer and brand advocate is equally as important – especially if that individual is still at the exploratory stage and may well come back to purchase at a later stage.

Personal interaction is preferred by many people to confirm decision-making and real-time assistance solutions are shown to significantly increase the conversion rate of customers already browsing your sites by 1 or even 2% – which could mean thousands more transactions.

Indeed, according to Customer Service Magazine, a 1% cut in customer service problems could generate an extra 16m in profits for a medium-sized company over five years. And given that it can cost five to six times as much to acquire new customers as it does to retain existing ones, the business case for online engagement technologies is tangibly compelling.

## Social media opportunities

The next generation contact centre is all about conversing with customers in the ways that they prefer to communicate. As touched on earlier, social media is another important channel that's being increasingly exploited as a valuable means of direct customer interaction. Customers use 2.0 networks to seek information, find relevant reviews and express their opinions about the products or services they receive.

As well as active monitoring from a reputational management point of view, handled appropriately, becoming visible in these channels opens up new opportunities to influence customer perceptions and enhance customer service

levels. What's more, public profiles can provide agents with invaluable information and context for online and offline engagement.

## Tools to prioritise 2.0 engagements

Social media crawlers, such as the Social Media Manager solution from Avaya, enable direct customer communications through a customer's social network presence. It is then possible to elevate communications started on a public social media site to a private one-to-one voice and/or video-call, emails and instant messages without the need for a phone number or email address.

Customers simply connect to the application from your company website to their social network page, e.g. via Facebook or Twitter, and click a link in your social media profile to connect with contact centre representatives.

As well as providing a more relevant means to communicate in today's digital age, social media crawling improves the efficiency of social media responses in your contact centre and provides time and cost savings by allowing you to focus only on meaningful, actionable interactions. Using analysis engines to identify spam, crawlers can rank the relevance of social media posts and classified topics, as well as tracking trends. It is also possible to automate responses using FAQs and existing documentation.

“a 1% cut in customer service problems could generate an extra 16m in profits for a medium-sized company over five years.”

Customer Service Magazine

---

4net's powerful combination of service excellence and technical expertise makes us the partner of choice for organisations who want to transform the way they communicate with customers, staff and stakeholders, reduce costs and gain competitive advantage.

Our contact centre, unified communications, managed services and telephony solutions are designed to address today's complex business challenges, helping you to respond to your customer and staff requirements.

From simple IP Telephony Solutions to Virtual Contact Centres, from Unified Communications to Cloud Services, we partner with best in class vendors such as Avaya, Cisco and ShoreTel to deliver a solutions portfolio that will address today's changing workplace and build tomorrow's future, making 4net the preferred communications partner for many businesses across the globe.