



Title: Contact Centre 2021 – The Digital Migration

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Date: 8 Sept 2017 reviewed 21 Jan 2018

*“In the new world, it is not the big fish which eats the small fish,
it’s the fast fish which eats the slow fish”*

Klaus Schwab

The founder and executive chairman of World Economic Forum

THE COLD REALITIES

The cold realities are that the Contact Centre of 2021 is a mere four years into the future; a future in which we are assured of exponential changes; changes in the development of contact centre and customer service technologies; changes in the socio-economic environment and massive changes in customer demands and expectations. What’s more, we can be assured that contact centre operators will be facing the realities of declining workforce productivity, escalating operational costs and intense competition.

DISRUPTION or SURVIVAL

We don’t have to look far to see and experience the impact of disruptive organisations and how they have become so by adopting and leveraging disruptive technologies. They surround us in the likes of Uber, Airbnb, Amazon, Tesla, Zappos and many more.

Even fifteen years ago, in his brilliant book, “Good to Great”¹, author and business strategist Jim Collins gave us the keys to organisational success; one of the being “Embrace Change and Innovation”. More recently, founder of Singularity University and globally recognised futurist, Salim Ismail defines an Exponential Organisation as one who’s impact (or output) is disproportionately large (at least ten times larger) compared to its peers because of the use of new organisational techniques that leverage accelerating technologies.

¹ Good to Great. Published by Random House Business Books. © Jim Collins 2001 ISBN 9780712676090



In today's customer centric world, innovation and change are no longer the sole domain of a few bold and brave organisations. Change and the adoption of innovative organisational methods and technologies are now a strategic imperative. In corporate terms, it's now a matter of "Adapt or Die".

In the context of contact centres, the realities of 2021 loom menacingly ahead. These are but some of the challenges:

- Customers will demand that we serve their needs on any device, on any channel. True 'Omni Channel' services.
- We must be accessible to our customers 7 x 24 x 365.
- Up to 70% of all customer interactions must be via efficient, effective and user-friendly self-service portals. Handling high volumes of voice calls or human-assisted text interactions will become prohibitively expensive.
- The time for procrastinating over systems integration issues is over. It is now an imperative!
- High level skills and the practical application of 'Big Data', Data analytics, Interaction Analytics and Knowledge Management will be fundamental to customer service operations.
- New generation Process Automation tools and platforms will be vital enablers.
- The reduction in agent headcount, driven by self-service, will demand high level skills and adequately experienced and empowered "Super Agents", (The agents of last resort).

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CALL TO ACTION

There are no easy solutions and no easy roadmap to Contact Centre 2021; merely a few pointers.

- The Digital Migration strategy and implementation plan will demand Executive-level support.
- Create a specific Digital Team. It must have its own culture of being experimental and entrepreneurial. Ideally it should exist outside of the influences of the “Corporate Immune System” that resists change.
- Speed and Agility are the keys to deploying digital strategies.
- Build an incubator. Start now and gradually deploy proven strategies. Avoid the “Big Bang” approach of the 70’s. It will almost certainly result in just that, a very big bang!

Recommended reading:

“Good to Great” – Jim Collins

“Exponential Organizations: Why new organizations are ten times better, faster, and cheaper than yours (and what to do about it)” – Salim Ismail, Michael S Malone and Yuri van Geest.

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