



Multi-channel Customer Service: Into The Bright Future

Five steps from your stuck-in-the-past contact
centre to real-time, multi-channel service



The bright future of customer service

“We love talking to gamers, engaging with gamers, and solving their problems. We interact with our customers in ways that work for them – in addition to taking phone calls, it’s important to expand our communication with our gamers on Facebook and Twitter.”

Robert Schmid, CIO, Activision

Tantalisingly, we can all see the bright future of multi-channel, real-time customer service. Trailblazing organisations are showing the way, like KLM, whose social media-driven service operation has turned customers into loyal, positive ambassadors, and Activision, which “swarms” tricky customer enquiries across the organisation to provide expert answers in real time.

The way forward

But for those of us who are stuck with last century’s CRM systems, the goal may be clear but the way forward is not. This ebook will show you, the long-suffering customer service leader, how to get your service organisation out of the 20th century and into the world of always-on, real-time, social-powered and mobile-enabled customer service.

Getting there will win you many fans among the millions of social media users who now expect service in every channel: from Facebook and Twitter to forums, blogs and mobile apps. (And it’ll mean better and more responsive service for those who prefer old-fashioned phone and email, too.)

“The next generation contact center will be the engine organizations depend on not only to handle interactions with customers, but also to listen to and engage in external communities.”

Brad Cleveland, Author, Speaker, Consultant, and Senior Advisor at ICMI



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The Grim Reality of Customer Service Today



British internet users spend
13 minutes
out of every hour
of their time online using
social networking sites
such as Facebook, Twitter
and message forums.

Experian, April 2013



If yours is like most established, sizeable businesses, your current service operation is probably geared around phone and email, with a team of agents working from a single, physical location.

Agents spend the day toggling between different applications to try to piece together customer histories and find the information they need to answer inbound customer enquiries. Because there are only a couple of ways for customers to contact you, phones are frequently overloaded and customers may have to queue for far longer than they (or you) would like.

You're aware – sometimes painfully – of customers talking about your organisation on social media, but you're powerless to do anything about it. If social media complaints are handled at all, it's done by PR, and they may end up giving out conflicting information that makes your service team look pretty bad.

Frustrating for everyone
Not being able to provide instant, informed, consistent service over many channels is frustrating for everyone – your customers, your agents, and yourself. (Not to mention anyone who cares about how the business performs and how it's perceived by the media, investors, and the outside world in general.) You know your competitors are doing better, and you want to do better too.

Five steps to real-time, multichannel service
As eager as you are for change, it may seem an impossible dream to create a slick, joined-up service operation capable of responding instantly in every conceivable channel, from anywhere your experts happen to be. The good news: it's not. At Salesforce we've helped thousands of organisations to make the move. The five steps outlined in this ebook will help you get there too.



Step 1: Define Your Ideal Service Organisation

Every good transformation plan begins at the end – by defining the ideal scenario. Start by painting a picture of the ideal service operation, by asking and answering questions like:

- **What do our customers need it to look like?** Create a small number of 'typical customer' personas and put yourself in their shoes. How do they want to interact with your organisation? What kind of service will make them happy? Do they need to get it directly from you, or would they prefer self-service, or advice from an independent expert?
- **Which channels do we need to be available in?** Where are your customers active, and where do they expect to be able to receive prompt and informed service?
- **What will the engagement model be?** Who will handle customers on social platforms? Will your team take the whole of the strain, or will other departments be involved? How will the new channels integrate with existing ones? How much can you offer via self-service? Could you harness the knowledge of experts outside the organisation, like super-user customers?

- **What new skills do we need?** Does the service team know how to respond to customers in newer channels? Does management understand the role and importance of social media? If not, you may need to organise training or start hiring people with social customer service skills.
- **How will it operate?** Is a single contact centre the most efficient way of delivering service? Could you provide a more flexible, better-informed and lower-cost service by having agents work remotely, or from home? What if you could instantly mobilise your experts via tablet and smartphone?

Once you have this picture, you have something for everyone to work towards – an inspiring vision of the future that will motivate agents and management alike. Most importantly, it gives you a means of measuring your success: if you define what a successful result looks like, you'll know when you've got there.



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Step 2: Choose a Platform to Support It

“By 2014, Gartner predicts that 10% of the problems solved by customer service agents will be resolved or influenced by customer communities.”

Customer Service Innovations in a Collaborative World, Gartner, 2010

“The ability to consolidate onto one platform has had a big impact for us. It’s more cost-effective to maintain and support, and users only have to log into one place.”

Christina Scott, CIO, Financial Times

Unless you’re confident your current systems can support the vision you’ve outlined, it’s highly likely you’ll want to look for a new, multi-channel customer service software platform. One that can effortlessly handle social channels alongside traditional ones, and where customers get great service no matter which channel their enquiry starts in or where it ends up.

But that’s just entry-level stuff. We’ve looked at all the things you might need from a new platform in another ebook: The Multi-Channel Customer Service Buyer’s Checklist. Here’s a quick recap:

1. Single customer view

A unified view across channels, including phone, email, social media, online forums, self-service and live chat. Look for a platform that has a single agent console for all channels (no more toggling), and a single customer record for all activity.

2. Self-service

A platform that lets you create one or more self-service communities so you can reduce inbound call volumes, but can still step in when your expertise is needed.

3. Social power

Sophisticated social media listening services that let agents see and respond to issues quickly, before they escalate. Bonus: great service delivered via social media is visible to others and often results in customers becoming public evangelists for your brand.

4. Knowledge base

A powerful and flexible knowledge base that’s geared for external as well as internal use: not only helping agents to find the information they need, but also helping customers to answer their own questions quickly.

5. Collaboration

Easy, real-time collaboration across the organisation can get complicated questions to the right expert straightaway. Better still if that collaboration is mobile-enabled, so people can see when they’re needed even when they’re out on the road.

6. Analytics

Dashboards, alerts and reports so you can instantly see what’s working and what isn’t. Bonus: you can also use the metrics to prove the value of the new-look service operation.

7. Mobile access

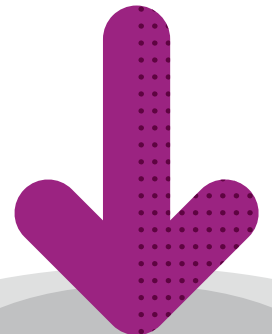
With a platform that can be accessed from anywhere, on any device, you can move to a virtual contact centre model and reap the benefits. Agents aren’t tied to a physical location, managers can access the latest performance stats while on the move, and experts can be pressed into service wherever they happen to be.

8. Low running costs

A cloud-based system means no hardware to buy, no installation costs, no maintenance costs and no upgrade fees – just a single, monthly subscription for a platform that’s continually updated with the latest functionality.

9. Future-ready

A new multi-channel service platform should cover all the channels that customers use today, but should also be flexible enough to accommodate future channels as they emerge.



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Step 3: Map the Cultural and Organisational Change



“Our focus is around hiring for attitude and training for skill. We are very selective because our customer service is at the heart of everything we do.”

Sharon Dawson, Head of Banking Services, First Direct

It's not just about processes, platforms and people. Moving from a reactive, siloed service organisation to one that's proactive, real-time and multichannel-focused will almost certainly mean some degree of cultural change as well.

To manage it, you'll again need to understand what the end-result will look like, and what you'll need to do to get there. Things to consider include:

What impression will the service offering give of the overall organisation? Savvy firms are putting service at the heart of their business, making it a reason in itself to buy. Look at Rackspace Hosting's 'Fanatical Support', or Zappos' famous above-and-beyond service ethos. Can you do this too?

Can the service organisation be a revenue-generator? If so, how will it contribute to the bottom line, and what needs to change in order for that to happen?

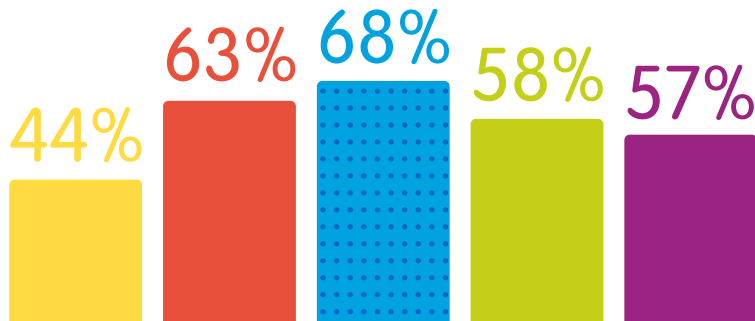
What kind of people will we have? What will be the defining characteristics of a service agent in the new-look organisation? What personality traits should they have?

What service levels will we offer? Service targets used to be all about cutting down call times, but that only led to multiple calls and frustrated customers. What service levels do customers want to see, and how can these be expressed?

Does the working environment need to change? There's no shortage of research showing that happy employees are more motivated, more customer-focused, less likely to be ill and less inclined to leave. Pay isn't the only factor affecting employee happiness: the work environment plays a big role too. What adjustments should you make to yours?

In a study of call center employees at a municipal utility in Sacramento, agents with the best view to the outdoors processed calls up to 12% faster than those with no view.

Source: Creating the Productive Workplace, London: Taylor & Francis, 2006

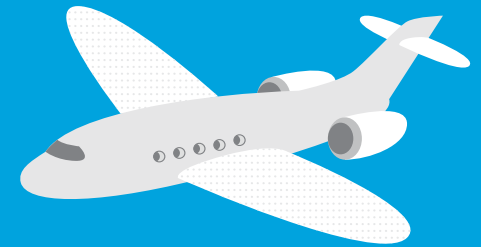


Source: American Express, 2012 Global Customer Service Barometer

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Case Study: KLM puts social at the heart of its service operation



“Now we can identify our customers’ experience at check-in, in the lounge, or when they’re collecting their bags. Any problems in any of these areas, and we are straight on the case via social media.”

Viktor van der Wijk, Director of Digital Marketing, Air France KLM

When the Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajökull erupted in 2010, so did social media traffic. A giant cloud of ash grounded flights across Europe, prompting stranded travellers to flock to social networks such as Twitter and Facebook in search of help. KLM jumped right in.

Using the same social platforms, KLM was able to “respond more quickly to customer enquiries, re-direct them to other means of travel, and protect the KLM brand image,” explains Viktor van der Wijk, director of digital marketing at Air France KLM. It was this quick-to-respond moment that prompted Peter Hartman, CEO of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, to declare social media the centre of KLM’s customer service efforts. The goal was clear: cut resolution time to one day with an initial response time within an hour of a social media post.

Today, KLM has surpassed Hartman’s initial vision, defining new job roles, reorganising marketing and service functions to support social media, and launching a Social Media Hub to handle all incoming requests.

The airline has transformed into a socially connected business that can intelligently and efficiently collect and track all social conversations, measure brand sentiment on the Web, and achieve its goal of one-hour response/24-hour resolution time. It also introduced the first social media-driven flight schedule, which led to loyal, positive ambassadors for the airline.

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Step 4: Create the Business Case and Get Buy-In (From Everyone)

37%
increase in first call/contact resolution

37%
faster case resolution time

36%
increase in agent productivity

35%
increase in understanding of customer service issues from social channels

34%
increase in customer satisfaction

Even if you're the world's smoothest operator, moving to real-time, multi-channel customer service is going to take money, effort and a certain amount of upheaval. It's probably going to mean re-organising your team, investing in new skills, moving to a new software platform and changing at least some of the ways that you currently work.

Doing that successfully means a) getting senior management on board with your vision, and b) getting budget approved. Neither of those things will happen without a solid business case.

Fortunately, building the business case isn't as hard as you might think, because of two key facts:

1. Not even the bitterest of cynics can deny that social media is here to stay, and ignoring it is far more dangerous than embracing it.
2. There are a huge number of success stories out there that show how delivering true multichannel service can make a huge and positive impact on the organisation as a whole. ([Here are just a few to get you started.](#))

Some things to bear in mind when drawing up your business case:

The strategic goals of the project: do you want to be the most highly thought-of organisation in your sector? Do you want to reduce customer churn by xx%, or grow the customer base by xx%? Do you want to blow a particular competitor out of the water?

The expected cost of the project: including IT costs and software licenses (or, if you choose a modern, cloud-based, multichannel service platform like Salesforce Service Cloud, the monthly subscription), recruitment and training and workplace improvements.

The expected financial return: including things like reduced costs to resolve queries by enabling self-service, reduced shopping cart abandonment through live chat, reduced customer churn by resolving enquiries faster and in more channels, reduced employee churn by creating a more dynamic and stimulating work environment, reduced real estate costs by introducing virtual agents...

The expected business benefits: including brand awareness and reputational boost from turning customers into advocates, positive publicity from your new approach, generating sales through outstanding service, attracting customers from the competition...

31%
increase in call deflection (via self-service)

28%
increase in customer retention

21%
increase in agent cross sell/up sell revenue

Source: Survey of 5,035 Salesforce.com customers, November 2012

Step 5: Make the Switch

This is it: everyone's inspired by your vision, you've chosen a technology platform, you know what cultural changes you need to make, and you've got sign-off on the business case and budget allocated. Now it's time to implement the plan and make the move to real-time, social-powered, multi-channel customer service.

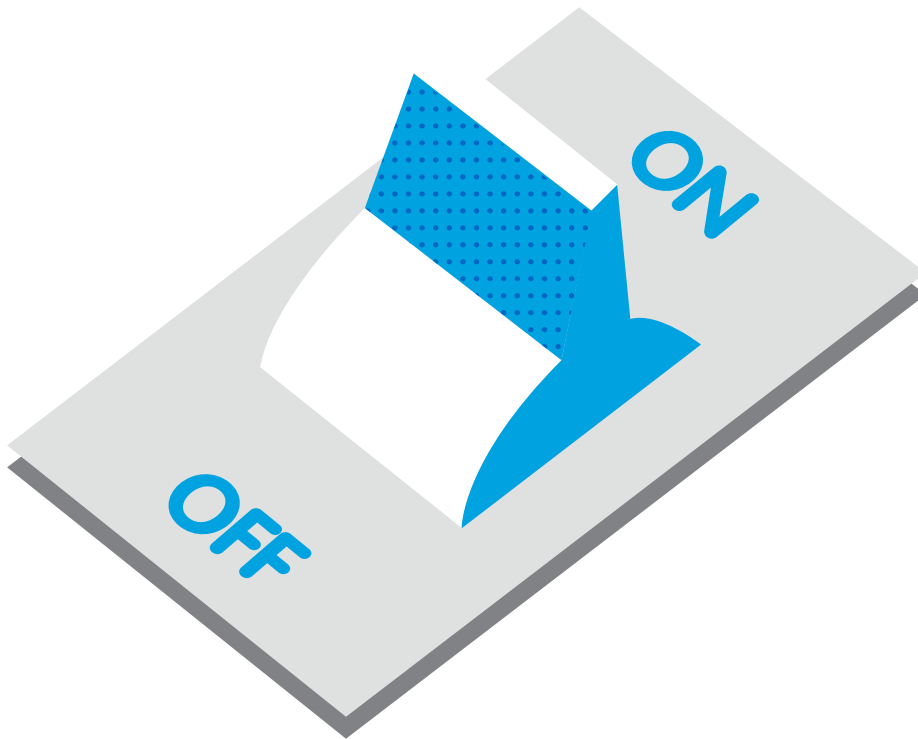
Here are some things you need to bear in mind during the transition:

Focus on the big picture: Don't be derailed by short-term problems or ad-hoc issues. Keep your vision in mind and keep reminding everyone what they're working towards and how great the new operation will be – for customers, for your agents, and for the business as a whole.

Create a realistic introduction plan: You may want to start small, by simply listening on social media platforms and answering direct questions in a couple of online channels. Or you may prefer a 'big-bang' switchover to full multi-channel service, with proactive social media engagement, self-service communities and internal collaboration across the organisation. Whichever direction you choose, remember to include clearly-defined project stages, KPIs, roles, responsibilities and delivery dates.

Choose the right project team: You may choose to conduct the entire transition internally or you may prefer to seek help from an external consultancy. Make the decision early and ensure that everyone understands the plan, the timelines and their roles and responsibilities.

Measure your success: Establish what you want to achieve in the first 3 / 6 / 12 months of your new multi-channel service strategy. With the right service software in place, you'll be able to use in-built dashboards and analytics to measure your progress. And if all goes to plan, you should have some successes to shout about straightaway.



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You Can Get There Faster and Easier Than You Think

Whatever your vision for real-time, multi-channel customer service, you can get there faster and easier than you think with the Salesforce Service Cloud.

By moving to the Salesforce Service Cloud for all of your traditional and social channels, you get all of these benefits – and more:

- One platform, one customer record and one agent console for all channels
- Listen, engage and open cases directly from social media
- Self-service communities that integrate with your service platform
- Full mobile access to all functionality – for agents, managers and domain experts
- Collaborate in real-time with experts across the organisation
- Scalable to hundreds of thousands of users and customers
- Easy and enjoyable to use
- Great dashboards and analytics to monitor performance against KPIs

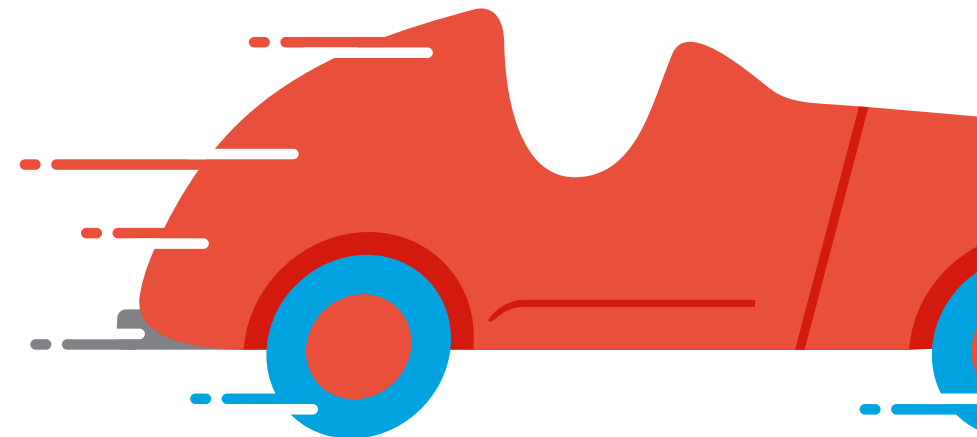
And as Salesforce runs in the cloud, there's no hardware to buy and no software to install. Your new service organisation can be up and running in days – and your FD and IT director will be eternally grateful for the savings.

[Check out Service Cloud today](#)

It's quick and easy to see if Service Cloud is right for your team:

- Watch a [demo of Service Cloud](#) in action
- Take a [30-day free trial](#) of Service Cloud

Or just call us: our experts are here to listen to your ideas and help you get the multichannel service platform that's right for you. Call us on 0800 0921223 or email info@emea.salesforce.com. We look forward to helping out.



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About Salesforce

Salesforce.com is the enterprise cloud computing company that's leading the shift to the Social Enterprise – helping over 100,000 companies connect to customers and employees like never before. Our social tools include:

Super-charge your sales

- [Sales Cloud](#), for social-powered sales force automation and contact management
- [Data.com](#), B2B sales and marketing account and contact data

Social-power your business

- Our [Social Success site](#) is packed with best practice advice and expert tips
- [The MiniGuide to Social Selling](#) is full of good ideas

Deliver amazing service

- [Service Cloud](#), for social customer service and support solutions

Join the conversation

- [Chatter](#), a secure, private social network for your business
- [Radian6](#), social media monitoring and engagement

Build killer apps

- [Force.com](#), the Cloud platform for custom app development
- [Database.com](#), the trusted Cloud database
- [Heroku](#), the platform to build social and mobile apps in Ruby and Java

Cloud Computing Marketplace

- [AppExchange](#), the leading marketplace for enterprise Cloud computing applications
-

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Let's socialise!

No matter what system you're using for CRM today, switching to Salesforce is easy. And if you have any questions at all, we're here to help. Contact us on 0800 0921223 or connect with us via social media and we'll be only too happy to guide you.



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