



FORRESTER®

# Enrich Customer Interactions By Combining Unified Communications And Contact Center Technology

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FORRESTER OPPORTUNITY SNAPSHOT: A CUSTOM STUDY COMMISSIONED BY ORANGE BUSINESS SERVICES | NOVEMBER 2021

## Unlock The Potential To Deliver Superior Customer Experience

Driven by new paradigms of business operations, contact centers are becoming a key customer channel for many organizations. Not only do they contain a treasure trove of customer data that can inform decision-making, but they are also a crucial touchpoint for customer interactions.

Organizations show renewed interest in modernizing contact center operations with new technologies, but legacy issues hinder progress. To improve customer service experiences, organizations are considering a more flexible approach by combining contact center and unified communications services to enhance and differentiate customer journeys.

Orange Business Services commissioned Forrester Consulting to examine contact center needs and unified communications priorities for European business decision-makers.

### Key Findings



The pandemic has accelerated the need for enhanced features such as AI, analytics, and integration with unified communication (UC) tools in the contact center.



Fragmented and siloed customer data blocks organizations from attaining a complete view of their customers' journeys.



Connecting unified communications and contact center technology enables agents to better understand customer issues and resolve issues faster, improving the overall customer experience (CX).

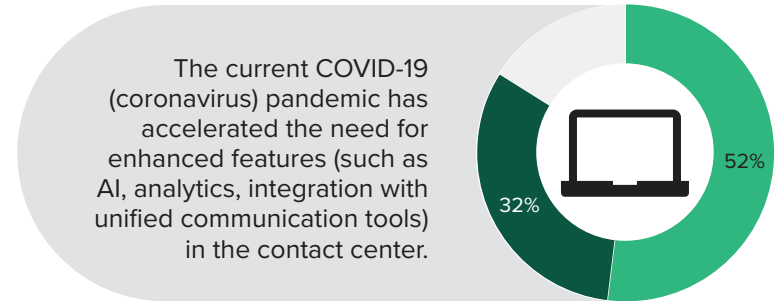
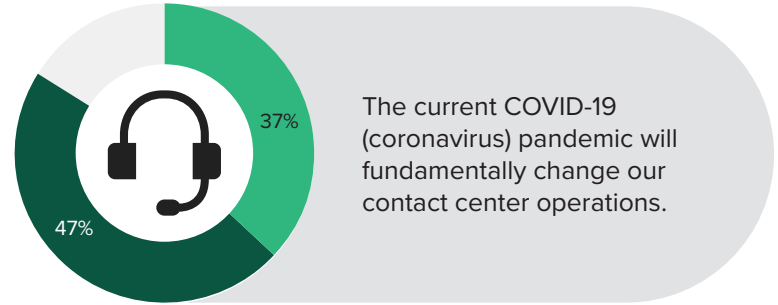
## The Pandemic Has Accelerated The Need For Enhanced Contact Center Tools

Contact center innovation has historically been slow. More concerned with the need to maintain reliability, customer service leaders hesitate to make major technology upgrades. But 84% say the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed their contact center operations, and there's now renewed urgency for flexibility, agility, scale, and speed.

For many organizations, the pandemic has created staffing issues brought on by shelter-in-place restrictions and a surge in volume as customers pivoted to nonphysical interaction channels. Combined, these forces have driven customer service leaders' interest in implementing automation and further digitalizing contact centers. Over 80% of decision-makers agree that the pandemic has accelerated the need for enhanced features such as AI, analytics, and integration with UC tools.

### “How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?”

● Agree      ● Strongly agree



## Organizations Need More Sophisticated Tools

To better prepare for continuously evolving business needs, organizations are investing further in their UC tools and contact center technologies. In addition to technologies that directly improve the front-end customer experience (e.g., AI-enabled interactive voice response, chatbots or agent assistance), organizations are investing in analytics to process and leverage the large amounts of data that reside in their contact center systems.

### “Which of the following contact center functions are you expanding/upgrading?”

- 38%** Text analytics (web chat, email, social)
- 37%** Online payment (two-factor authentication)
- 35%** Customer journey analytics
- 34%** Interactive voice response (IVR)
- 34%** Customer-facing chatbots/virtual agents

### Using enhanced tools and AI in contact center for:

- 1.** Voice bots/chatbots: To automate certain customer interactions
- 2.** Agent assistant bots: To monitor what the agent is doing and providing advice
- 3.** Automated quality management: For speech and text feedback to improve quality
- 4.** Call routing: For skills-based call routing
- 5.** Workforce management: For better forecasting and scheduling of agents' time

## Dependance On Legacy Infrastructure Hinders Contact Center Modernization

Sophisticated tools and new technologies like AI and analytics, however, require intensive computing power and advanced capabilities. Despite this need, most organizations currently deploy their contact center tools on-premises and plan to do so in the next upgrade cycle as well. Doing more of the same could potentially hinder organizations from maximizing the potential return on their investment in enhanced tools to deliver compelling customer experiences.



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“How does your organization manage or deploy contact center tools? How do you anticipate you will manage/deploy contact center tools during your next upgrade?”

ON-PREMISES SELF-PROVISIONED, SELF-MANAGED



**65%**  
Currently



**61%**  
Anticipating for next upgrade

Base: 148 decision-makers at the director level or above at large multinational companies and midsize French international companies  
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of OBS, May 2020

## Organizations Struggle To Integrate Information Across Silos

To get the most value out of their investments in new UC and contact center technologies, firms must first dismantle the barrier between their contact center and the rest of the organization.

Organizational silos and fragmented data prevent them from effectively analyzing data and creating a complete view of their customers' journeys. As a result, they struggle to link customer data and insights and make better decisions and improvements to CX.



**Leaders at European multinational companies cite channel, department, data, and organizational silos as top barriers. French decision-makers are most concerned about creating timely and accessible insights across the organization.**

## “What are the factors that prevent your organization from creating a complete view of the customer’s journey?”

**38%** It is difficult to organize different types of data/ fragmentation of data.

**36%** Efforts are siloed by channels.

**34%** Efforts are siloed by department.

**34%** It takes far too long to create actionable insights based on customer interaction data.

**33%** It is difficult to enable people across our organization to access and use data insights.

**32%** Analytics platforms/tools are not fully integrated.

**32%** There are employee skill gaps in creating/using insights on the customer journey.

## Firms Lack An Integrated Approach For UC And Contact Centers

Despite a desire to provide innovative, enhanced, and differentiated customer journeys, organizations face challenges with a lack of programmability and integration of the customer service communications platforms.

In considering their challenges in contact centers and unified communications, decision-makers point to integration and compatibility as key culprits.

However, Forrester's research suggests that fixing underlying technology issues to allow an integrated approach and improve the use of data across the board is a critical first step.

### “What challenges, if any, does your company experience in the contact center?”

**34%** Managing multiple disparate data sources

**31%** Combining customer data and insights to improve product development

**28%** Training agents to use new multiple systems/ applications

### “What challenges, if any, does your company experience in unified communications?”

**31%** Performance and reliability of the technology

**27%** Ability to secure voice, video, and messages on UC systems

**26%** Complexity of the back-end infrastructure configuration

## Integrated UC And CC Applications Lead To Positive Business Outcomes

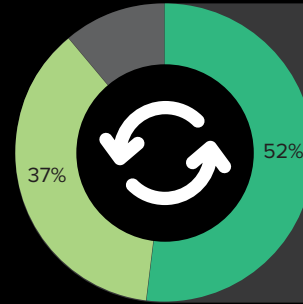
Organizations must consider a more flexible and programmable communications platform that will enhance and differentiate customer journeys.

As contact centers play an increasingly important role in the customer engagement, decision-makers overwhelmingly agree that integrating contact center applications with UC tools would enable service agents to enrich customer interactions and deliver better business outcomes.

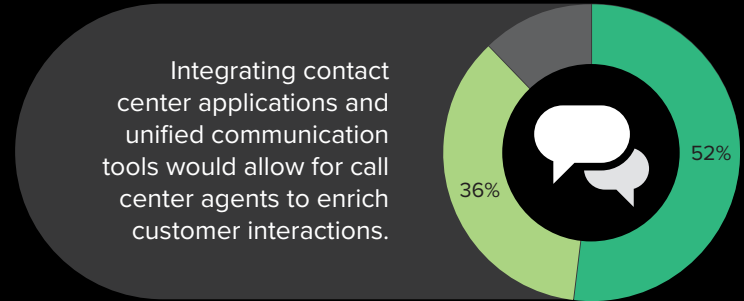
Customer data residing in contact centers enables organizations to make insight-driven decisions to improve the customer journey and product development.

### “How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?”

● Agree ● Strongly agree



Integrating contact center applications and unified communication tools would result in positive business outcomes.



Integrating contact center applications and unified communication tools would allow for call center agents to enrich customer interactions.



## Integrated UC And Contact Center Tools Enrich The Customer Journey

When contact center agents can quickly access relevant, contextual customer data and enterprise expertise, efficiency and customer satisfaction improve. By integrating UC tools and contact center applications, not only would agents be more satisfied with their jobs, but they'd also be better equipped to resolve customer issues through improved understanding and the ability to act in real time. As a result, customers would benefit from faster and/or personalized resolution, simplified interaction, and improved overall experience.

### “What would be the customer benefits of integrating unified communications tools and contact center applications?”



**53%** Faster time-to-resolution



**53%** Improved or personalized resolution



**52%** Reduced wait times

### “What would be the agent benefits of integrating unified communications tools and contact center applications?”



**57%** Improved understanding of customer issues



**50%** Ability to provide customer assistance suggestions in real time



**49%** Increased job satisfaction

## Deliver Enhanced Experiences With The Right Partner

Overcoming the breadth of challenges in integrating UC and contact center tools and capabilities can be daunting for organizations. Working with a technology partner with expertise and experience in integrating these tools can ease the process and speed up value realization for organizations.

Decision-makers evaluate communications technology partners primarily on their ability to help them integrate, flexibility with deployment, and their ability to provide value-added services.

Regardless of company size, decision-makers at both European multinational companies (MNCs) and French small to medium-size enterprises (SMEs) value their technology partners' abilities to help with integration and offer multiple deployment options to match their needs.

### “What capabilities do you look for from a contact center and unified communications technology partner?”

- 47%** Ease of integration
- 41%** Multiple deployment options (cloud, on-premises, etc.)
- 41%** Value-added/managed services

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#### Europe MNC decision-makers

- 46%** Ease of integration
- 42%** Value-added/managed services
- 40%** Multiple deployment options (cloud, on-premises, etc.)

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#### France SME decision-makers

- 50%** Ease of integration
- 46%** Ability to more readily and easily implement new customer journeys
- 43%** Multiple deployment options (cloud, on-premises, etc.)

## Conclusion

Contact centers can deliver exceptional value, both to customers and the wider organization, especially when combined with other enterprise systems. Our study of 148 decision-makers in Europe revealed that despite intent and efforts to modernize contact centers, the associated challenges of integration are simply too complex for organizations alone to bear.

Technology, contact center, and line-of-business leaders must work with technology partners to orchestrate transformations at both the infrastructure and application layers.

To be effective with using more advanced tools in the contact center and UC, organizations should consider investing in cloud-based tools to allow for better scalability, data processing, application management, and integration with other unified communications tools.

Only then can they unlock the value of combining contact center and unified communications data to deliver superior CX.

### **Project Director:**

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### **Contributing Research:**

Forrester's Application  
Development & Delivery  
research group

## Methodology

This Opportunity Snapshot was commissioned by Orange Business Services. To create this profile, Forrester Consulting supplemented this research with custom survey questions asked of 148 leaders (at the director level and above) in large multinational companies and midsize French companies. All respondents were involved in UC and contact center technology investment decisions. The custom survey began and was completed in May 2020.

### ABOUT FORRESTER CONSULTING

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## Demographics

### GEOGRAPHY

SME France=31%

MNC Europe (Belgium, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, UK)=69%

### DEPARTMENT

SME France:

IT=30%, Contact center=24%, Other LoB=46%

MNC Europe: IT=56%, Contact center=10%, Other LoB=34%

### SIZE OF ORGANIZATION

SME France: 100 to 499 employees=57%, 50 to 99 employees=43%

MNC Europe: 20,000+ employees=30%,

10,000 to 19,999 employees=30%, 5,000 to 9,999 employees=39%

### AGENT SEAT COUNT

SME France: <50 agents=63%, 50 to 99 agents=33%, 100 to 249 agents=4%

MNC Europe: <100 agents=20%, 100 to 249 agents=33%, 250 to 499 agents=25%, 500+ agents=23%

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.



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