



*CCW San Antonio Presents:*

**MARKET STUDY**

# **STATE OF CONTACT CENTER TECHNOLOGY**

**January 2023**



**Medallia**

## CCW San Antonio Presents: State of Contact Center Technology

With customer and employee expectations soaring, an important question faces today's contact center leaders: is your technology empowering or hindering success?

Obviously, the answer *should* be the former. The very goal of technology is to eliminate inefficiencies and maximize capabilities, ensuring contact center teams can parlay their ingenuity and customer centricity into amazing experiences. It should enable agents to focus intently on connecting with customers, and it should allow customers to enjoy the benefits of those connections.

Unfortunately, the latter answer has long been the status quo. Many contact center solutions have been underwhelming, if not downright debilitating, and customers and employees have been forced to pay the price. These cumbersome solutions have increased agent effort and created operational silos, leading to experiences that are inefficient, disconnected, and unproductive.

Will 2023 be the year in which contact centers finally derive positive benefits from their technology investments?

It certainly can be. As digital communication and artificial intelligence technology matures, tools for elevating customer and employee journeys are increasingly within reach. Concepts like uncovering actionable customer intelligence, unifying touch points into a seamless omnichannel experience, and augmenting agent competencies are all realistic.

Historical precedent, nonetheless, gives reason for pause. Contact centers have long invested in the wrong technology, followed the wrong implementation protocol, and squandered opportunities to optimize processes. Why, then, should there be optimism about a reversal of fortunes in 2023?

That question is especially relevant given external market pressures, including economic wariness. The reality of tighter budgets will only exacerbate the challenge of optimizing technology.

The product of exclusive research, this Market Study will provide color for this conversation. It will reveal what contact centers want to achieve in 2023, why previous contact center technology investments have failed, and what opportunities exist for righting the ship in the short- and long-term future.

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## Methodology & Demographics

For its investigation into the state of contact center technology, CCW Digital surveyed global leaders responsible for their organizations' customer experience and contact center strategies. Example respondent job titles included director of customer success, chief operating officer, vice president of customer service, senior customer experience manager, director of client experience, chief marketing officer, chief technology advisor, senior leader of vendor management, customer director, team leader, and customer success officer.

Respondents represent organizations of most sizes and industries.

## About the Author



**Brian Cantor**  
Principal Analyst, CCW Digital  
**Customer Management Practice**



Brian Cantor is the principal analyst and director for CCW Digital, the global online community and research hub for customer contact professionals. In his role, Brian leads all customer experience, contact center, technology, and employee engagement research initiatives for CCW. CCW Digital's articles, special reports, commentaries, infographics, executive interviews, webinars, and online events reach a community of over 150,000.

A passionate advocate for customer centricity, Brian regularly speaks on major CX conference agendas. He also advises organizations on customer experience and business development strategies.

## Key Findings

- 1 Evidently still confident that “happy agents yield happy customers,” today’s contact center leaders are prioritizing the employee experience. Top strategic goals for 2023 include improving agent engagement, strengthening agent knowledge, and fostering collaboration.
- 2 In reflecting on why past technology investments failed, leaders blame a focus on price over long-term cost, poor integration with existing systems, and a failure to consider the end-user experience.
- 3 As the overwhelming majority of companies did not increase their contact center technology budgets, cost unsurprisingly represents the #1 technology challenge in 2023. Successful companies must focus on resource optimization and prioritization as they work to elevate their technology stacks.
- 4 In general, today’s solutions are insufficient for most aspects of the contact center operation. Particular weaknesses include supporting omnichannel engagement and fostering personalization.
- 5 Given that sobering revelation, it should come as no surprise that omnichannel represents as the #1 priority for contact center investments in 2023.
- 6 Not simply focusing on the customer experience ramifications, brands also view omnichannel technology as the #1 way to reduce agent effort.
- 7 The top AI focuses for 2023 include customer analytics, process automation, and the digital user experience.



## Top Contact Center Goals for 2023

Technology can be exciting. It can be fun. It can be flashy. Those qualities are nonetheless *secondary* to a more important focus: does it help companies achieve their objectives?

An inquiry into the state of contact center technology, therefore, begins by assessing organizations' most important priorities.

For today's contact centers, the employee experience reigns supreme.

A focus for 89% of organizations, improving agent engagement and satisfaction represents the most universal goal for 2023. Improving agent knowledge (89%) and fostering greater collaboration (84%) represent the next-most important contact center focuses.

All speak to the enduring importance of the agent experience, and all are relevant to a conversation about contact center technology. Easier, more efficient, more integrated solutions provide a means of reducing agent frustration – and improving satisfaction levels. Indeed, great technology is the best recipe for creating the “happy agents” who yield happy customers.

Modern solutions can also play a role in surfacing relevant, actionable knowledge and supporting collaboration for in-office *and* remote workers.

Not exclusively focused on the internal operation, a significant percentage of companies are also concerned about what happens during customer interactions. More than 83% of organizations aspire to make customer experiences more personalized and frictionless in 2023.

Technology can also play a powerful role in supporting these initiatives. By capturing, analyzing, and surfacing intelligence, innovative contact center solutions can empower agents and bots to recognize customers, anticipate their needs, and tailor experiences. They can empower a deeper, more productive personalization that results in more predictive and valuable journeys.

By anticipating customer needs, these solutions also have the potential to reduce customer effort. AI-driven self-service, intelligent routing, and omnichannel engagement solutions can further reduce frustration and increase convenience.

**Are the following goals important for your 2023 contact center strategy?**

Yes  No

Our systems and channels will be more unified & seamless



Our employees and teams will be more collaborative



Our experiences will be more personalized



Our experiences will be more frictionless



Our agents will be more engaged and satisfied



Our agents will be more knowledgeable



Our experiences will be more predictive and/or proactive



More customers will be self-serving



More processes will be automated



Our cost-per-interaction will be reduced





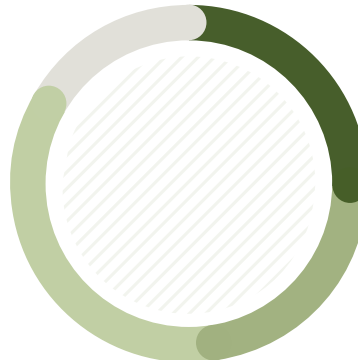
## Budgets And Other Challenges To Address In 2023

Conversations about the uncertain economy became inescapable in the latter half of 2022, and they have remained ubiquitous in 2023.

Not simply empty talk, this economic wariness is meaningfully impacting contact center budgets. Only 16% increased their technology budgets in 2023, which means the clear majority of companies will have to exercise frugality in achieving their goals.

### Which best describes your budget/investment strategy for contact center technology in 2023?

- 25.37%** Budget has decreased from last year, we will invest less into contact center technology
- 22.39%** Similar budget, and we won't make many changes to our tech stack
- 35.82%** Similar budget, but we will make tech investments/cuts/changes
- 16.42%** Budget has increased, we will invest more into contact center technology





## PAST MISTAKES TO AVOID

One way to ensure they get the most “bang for their buck” is to avoid the mistakes that have derailed investments – and undermined customer experiences – in the past.

Each experienced by 43% of organizations, the most common pitfalls were focusing on price over long-term cost and investing into solutions that do not integrate well with their other systems.

Given widespread budgetary constraints, there is a *significant* risk of repeating the former mistake in 2023.

Companies will obviously face hesitation – if not a downright inability – to purchase solutions with a high price tag in the current climate. They cannot, however, let this fear compromise their long-term thinking. They cannot pursue bargain bin technology that will create more headaches, spending needs, and productivity challenges down the road.

Long-term thinking is also essential for avoiding the integration pitfall. Companies cannot purchase trendy, exciting solutions without considering how well they can connect to existing tools and databases. They must also consider whether these systems will be future-proof; will they provide an easy means of adding new tools and upgrading performance as marketing conditions, agent needs, and customer demands change? If not, these seemingly valuable *solutions* will inevitably transform into *problems*. They will undoubtedly create inefficiency and fragmentation at a time when seamless, end-to-end experiences are the ultimate goal.

Other widespread pitfalls included failing to consider the end-user experience (36%), purchasing from vendors that did not provide enough support (32%), and struggling to measure the results of their investments (32%).

In order to actually improve agent and customer experiences, contact center leaders must be certain their solutions deliver value for those actually using the technology. The best sourcing process, therefore, pays careful attention to the voices of the customer and employee. It ensures that they understand the purpose of the technology, have a say in its selection and implementation, receive the requisite training, and actually benefit once it is launched.

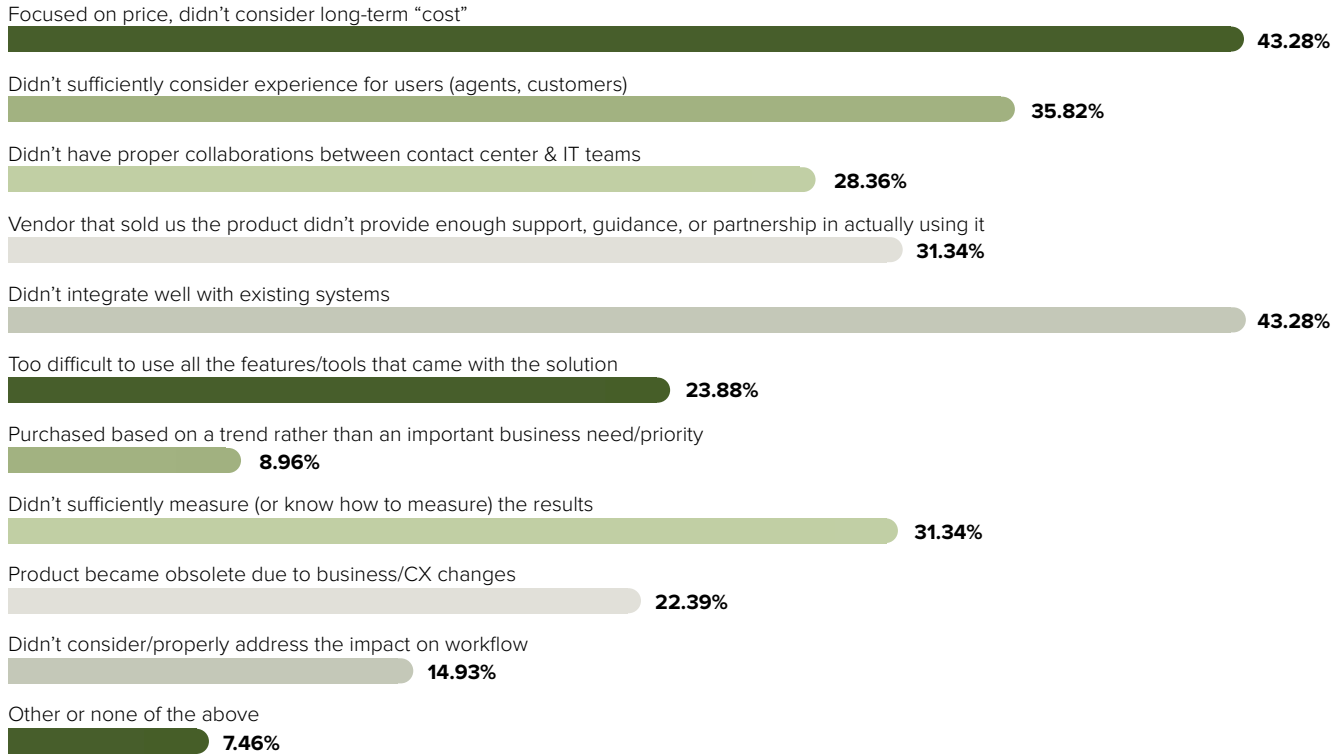
Because customer and employee needs evolve so rapidly, set-and-forget technology has unsurprisingly proven costly in the past. Savvy contact center leaders know that an effective technology purchase can be as much about the *vendor partnership* as it is the solution itself. Technology that is not backed by an accessible, knowledgeable team that can help the organization implement, evaluate, refine, and scale its solution is doomed to fail.

One particular item to consider is industry-specific intelligence. As high-stakes conversations move into digital channels, contact centers will require assurance that their systems meet their industry’s standards for quality, privacy, and compliance. Vendors that can provide this assurance will best help companies adapt to a digital-first world.

Given the ever-tightening contact center budgets and the ever-increasing importance of customer centricity, brands cannot leave their contact center investments to guesswork and ambiguity. They require a clear sense of what success looks like, and they require data that can allow them to measure how their technology is performing – and driving agents to perform – in real-time.

Beyond informing day-to-day contact center decisions, performance data is crucial for achieving buy-in across the business. When C-suite executives see that technology investments are yielding meaningful results, for example, they have more incentive to support future purchases.

**Consider a technology purchase/initiative that did not work as planned. Which of the following factors hurt your success?**



**NEW CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER**

Knowing which pitfalls to avoid is only half the battle. In order to maximize technology investments, successful brands must also consider the new challenges they will face. They must consider why a seemingly perfect contact center investment might fail to deliver a meaningful return.

Unsurprisingly, budget also factors into this conversation. A whopping 72% of contact center leaders fear that budget constraints and cost-cutting could inhibit their technology initiatives in 2023.

Other concerns include a lack of collaboration with IT (63%), uncertainty over what to prioritize (63%), and not enough time and resources to truly invest in new technology (62%).

For many contact centers, building a successful partnership with IT is a "make or break" endeavor. Contact center leaders will require consistent IT support to make the most of their new investments. They will also require a seat at the IT decision-making table to ensure enterprise-wide purchases take into account contact center goals, agent needs, and the voice of the customer.

Given tightening budgets, the concern over prioritization is immensely intuitive. Companies do not have an endless opportunity to experiment with new solutions; if they do not focus on their most critical goals, they will not generate the return for which their customers, employees, and shareholders are looking.

In stressing over time and resources, contact center leaders are acknowledging the reality that technology investments are a journey. Selecting the right solution is an important first step, but if the company cannot sufficiently focus on implementation, training, and refinement, the purchase will never live up to its potential.

Achieving that focus will be very challenging for today's contact centers. In addition to well-documented cost and resource limitations, they have the continuous need to support customers. They do not have the luxury of "closing for maintenance" while they figure out how best to implement their new systems.

**Might the following factors prevent you from meaningfully improving contact center technology in 2023?**

Yes  No

Budget/cost-cutting



Lack of buy-in or collaboration with IT and other key departments



Unclear on which solutions to prioritize



Existing/legacy systems prevent the upgrade



Employees do not want to learn new systems



Customers do not want to adjust to new channels/systems/processes



Not enough time/resources to implement new tech





## Today's Technology Scorecard

CCW Digital research has repeatedly confirmed that contact centers are not delivering frictionless, personalized, predictive, and proactive experiences. Their operations are not connected in an omnichannel manner, and their agents are not empowered to meaningfully connect with customers.

Suffice it to say, today's contact center operations *are* broken. As a result, they absolutely need fixing.

Of course, fixing *everything* may not be possible in an era of tighter budgets and resources. Contact center leaders will have to prioritize their technology investments and strategies. To support that prioritization, it is essential to identify the biggest weaknesses and limitations of existing contact center systems.

### SCORING EXISTING TECHNOLOGY

In evaluating their existing technology stacks, contact center leaders are finding little to celebrate. Companies, by and large, do not feel their tools are very well-suited for any facet of the customer contact operation.

The biggest gaps concern omnichannel and personalization. Only 12% feel their technology is adept at fostering seamless, omnichannel experiences with 360-degree customer views, and a mere 24% believe their tools provide employees with the data they need to personalize interactions.

Given customers' demand for highly relevant and convenient experiences, these weaknesses are particularly costly. Given the fact that many contact center solutions are marketed as ways to connect channels, reduce fragmentation, surface actionable intelligence, and augment humanity, these weaknesses paint a very sobering picture of the technology landscape.

Ideally, they will not be the *only* priorities for contact center leaders. Today's contact center technology is delivering disappointing results across the board, and the best brands will pursue every possible opportunity to reduce inefficiencies, unify operations, and elevate customer interactions.

As they are the biggest weaknesses in the status quo, omnichannel engagement and personalization should represent top priorities for forthcoming technology investments.

**How well does your organization's EXISTING contact center / CX technology support the following operational focuses?**

Not well
  Somewhat well
  Very well

Seamless, omnichannel experience with 360-degree customer view



Agents can easily login and work remotely



Agents & CX leaders can easily access customer data to personalize experiences



All employees have instant access to detailed product & process knowledge



Protect security & privacy of customer data



Capture feedback from employees



Monitor and benchmark performance



Support team collaboration and knowledge-sharing



Support effective training and coaching



### DOES THE VOICE OF THE AGENT CARRY ANY WEIGHT?

In reflecting on past technology pitfalls, a substantial number identified their failure to include end users in their decision-making. This mistake remains fairly common.

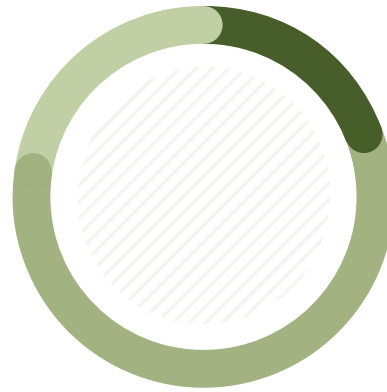
An alarming 19% of companies do not consider agents, at all, when making technology decisions. The idea of ignoring agents – the people who will not only be asked to learn new systems but leverage them to perform their jobs – is disconcerting at a time when the employee experience represents such a high priority.

And though this means more than 80% are somewhat accounting for the voice of the agent, only 22% are actively including them in the sourcing process. The other 58% *think about the agent experience* – and may evaluate feedback and insights – but they do not explicitly ask employees for their input.

At best, these companies are limiting the trust and buy-in they receive for new technology. At worst, they will select the wrong technology – and deal with the consequences of added costs, inefficiencies, and agent attrition.

### Do frontline agents/employees have a voice in your contact center technology decisions?

- 19.4%** Not really
- 58.21%** We try to consider their needs/feedback, but do not necessarily consult them directly
- 22.39%** They always play an active role in evaluating and selecting new solutions





## Contact Center Technology Plans for 2023

They want to improve employee experiences. They want to make customer experiences more frictionless, personalized, predictive, and proactive. They want to address existing gaps regarding omnichannel communication and data. They want to better account for the voice of the agent when making decisions.

To put it simply, organizations have much to consider when building their contact center technology strategies for 2023. Whether they are investing in new solutions, upgrading old ones, or simply transforming how they use their tools, they have numerous objectives to prioritize – and little budgetary leeway.

Companies that successfully navigate this challenge, of course, stand to attain the lean operations and customer-centric journeys that have long eluded the contact center community.

Recognizing the stakes, contact centers big and small have been thinking critically about their technology investment strategies for 2023 and beyond.

### THE MOST ESSENTIAL SOLUTION

There is no silver bullet for contact center excellence, but there are actions that can have a particularly significant impact on success.

Contact center leaders are most confident that investing in a cloud-based, omnichannel platform is one such action. If given the option to invest in only one solution in 2023, a substantial 25% would choose a product in that category.

The decision is entirely logical, given that omnichannel engagement represents the biggest gap area for today's contact centers.

They simply do not feel that their systems are allowing them to connect channels, unify enterprise systems, deliver cohesive experiences, and access 360-degree views of their customers. As a result, they want to do what it takes to remedy this situation in the near future.

Other high-ranking focuses include customer intelligence (16%), self-service (13%), workforce management (13%), and digital experience platforms (12%).

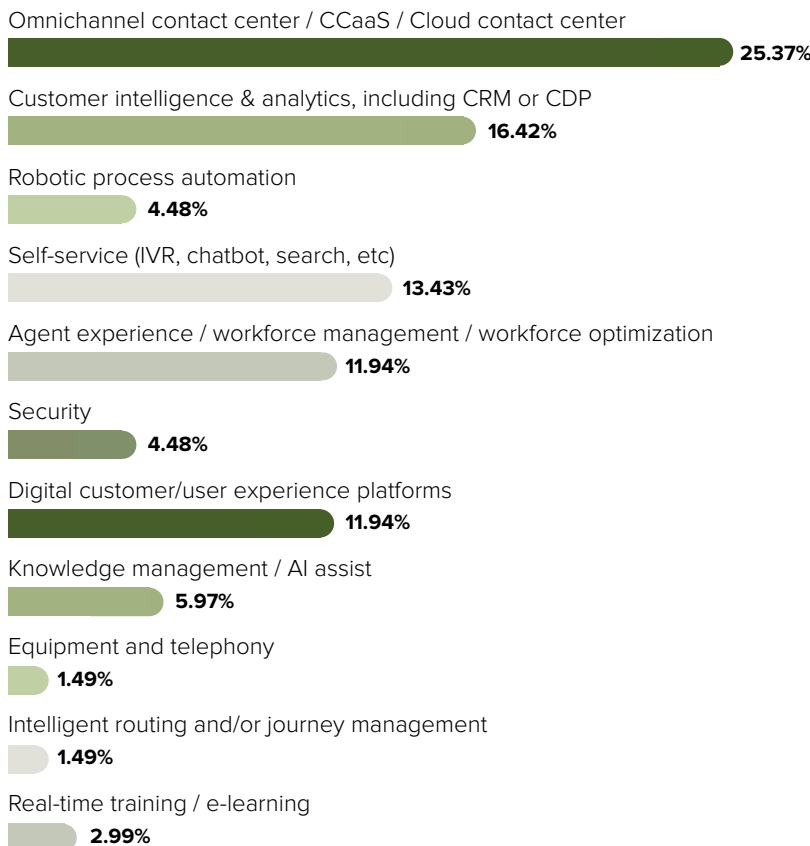
Leaders identified personalization as their second-biggest technology gap, and investing in data represents the perfect solution. By using modern, AI-driven solutions to capture, unify, analyze, and democratize critical customer intelligence, brands can design better journeys *and* tailor individual conversations.

The overwhelming majority of companies anticipate an increase in self-service interactions this year. By investing in technology that empowers the autonomous customer, brands can ensure these self-service interactions are intuitive, personalized, and effective. The effort would help customers become more trusting of self-service interactions, leading to higher customer satisfaction and lower inbound call volume.

Since improving the employee experience represents a paramount goal for contact centers, technology that streamlines workflow and improves performance is essential. It enables brands to not only boost agent happiness but ensure agents spend less time fumbling through systems or dealing with complicated tools and more time actually engaging with customers.

A product of growing chat, social, and messaging use, the emphasis on digital experience platforms also speaks to the nuance of digital customer journeys. Customers are evaluating digital experiences not simply based on the support they receive during a live chat but on how easy it is to use the website, access relevant content, complete transactions, and connect with support teams. Digital experience platforms grant companies an intuitive, low-code opportunity for surfacing enticing content and orchestrating customer journeys. They help companies ensure that all facets of the digital experience – not just the support interaction – reflect a commitment to personalization and quality.

**If you could only seriously invest in ONE of the following technology areas over the next year, what would it be?**





### PRIORITIES FOR REMOVING AGENT EFFORT

Technology cannot independently account for every facet of the agent experience. It cannot make salary and benefit packages more significant, and it cannot create robust employee career paths. It most certainly can, however, address one of the greatest drivers of employee dissatisfaction: agent effort.

Contact center technology is supposed to streamline convoluted processes and eliminate grunt work, allowing agents to focus more on customer interactions and creative decision-making. Unfortunately, many solutions have the opposite effect and increase frustration levels within the contact center.

A successful contact center strategy will address these frustration drivers, ensuring the technology lives up to its potential for augmenting human performance.

In 48% of contact centers, the lack of an omnichannel framework ranks as a key agent effort driver. Other top concerns include the number of screens they have to access when supporting customers (42%), their limited access to vital customer data (37%), and the lack of effective training (32%).

Omnichannel already ranks as a top technology priority for numerous reasons, and the impact on agent effort strengthens the case. If companies can empower employees to look across the entire experience and then *support* customers in multiple channels without accessing new systems, they stand a better chance of cultivating a happy, productive team capable of wowing customers.

### Which of the following sources of agent effort / inefficiency would you like to address in 2023?

None - do not care about or plan to address agent effort in 2023

**4.48%**

Number of screens/systems they have to access throughout the workday

**41.79%**

Contact center isn't omnichannel; it takes effort to support customers in different channels

**47.76%**

Not enough customer data - they often have to spend time searching CRM/CDP or asking repetitive questions

**37.31%**

Training isn't effective; agents are too reliant on knowledge base or asking for help

**32.84%**

Knowledge base(s) are hard to search, no or ineffective AI "agent assist"

**20.90%**

Agents have to devote too much time to fraud prevention/authentication

**10.45%**

Agents have to follow too many scripts/compliance procedures

**29.85%**

Systems are hard to use/master in general

**10.45%**

Too much red tape/approval required to go "off script"

**22.39%**

Too much post-call / administrative work

**17.91%**

Reducing the number of screens agents have to access plays a similar role, eliminating stress from the workday while increasing their ability to converse with customers.

Providing agents with more customer data frees them from having to ask repetitive questions or devote time to pouring through knowledge base. A direct way to boost agent efficiency, this endeavor also reduces customer frustration. Customers will consequently be less hostile during calls, leading to more pleasant and enjoyable interactions for agents.

Training was an enduring contact center challenge prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the subsequent rise of remote work has only amplified the issue. Technology can help companies not only deliver training in a more efficient and flexible manner but ensure the content is relevant to specific agents and their specific issues. Agents are more likely to absorb this personalized knowledge, and thus less reliant on looking up knowledge entries or asking peers for help. The effort they put forth will fall even as the quality of work they produce rises.

### RETHINKING AI FOR 2023

As the need to transform and scale operations is growing, the availability of resources is declining. The modern contact center landscape is the perfect backdrop for artificial intelligence (AI) technology.

Chatbots have helped to popularize such technology among consumers and customer contact leaders, but they are far from the only use case. In fact, they are not even one of the top priority use cases for 2023.

The honor of biggest AI priority, instead, belongs to customer analytics. Eighty-one percent (81%) of organizations plan to invest in AI as a way to bolster their customer intelligence.

When leveraged correctly, AI can elevate all aspects of customer data collection and democratization. Conversational AI technology allows brands to understand natural language and capture organic sentiment, needs, and intentions from every interaction in every touch point. AI can then help automate the process of unifying and analyzing this data, before surfacing it to the right agent at the right time. Companies will have the intelligence needed to make effective big picture decisions, while agents will have what they need to anticipate needs and empathetically connect with customers.

Other AI priorities include process automation (74%), digital user experience content creation (70%), and training and coaching (68%).

Providing agents with the data they need to connect would be for naught if the employees did not have the time or energy to *use* the data. By intelligently automating repetitive back-end processes, AI can help provide agents with the requisite focus.

As companies look to make their digital user experiences more convenient, relevant, interactive, and consistent with brand values, AI solutions can hasten the transformation. They can dynamically present different offers and content items throughout the journey, ensuring high conversion and satisfaction rates.

Improving training represents a top priority for many contact centers, and AI represents a powerful solution. AI-driven training solutions can surface interactive lessons based on actual agent performance data. “Agent assist” solutions can help agents better internalize the knowledge they need to succeed, while AI-driven simulations can help employees – especially new, home-based ones – test their skills in a realistic sandbox.

Will you invest in AI to address/better address any of the following in 2023?

Yes
  No

Self-service/chatbots/intelligent search



User experience / digital CX / content creation



Intelligent routing and escalation



Process automation / address "boring" or repetitive agent tasks



Agent assist / knowledge management



Training & coaching



Customer analytics



Agent performance & quality monitoring



Workflow/workforce management (scheduling, forecasting, etc)



Proactive/predictive support



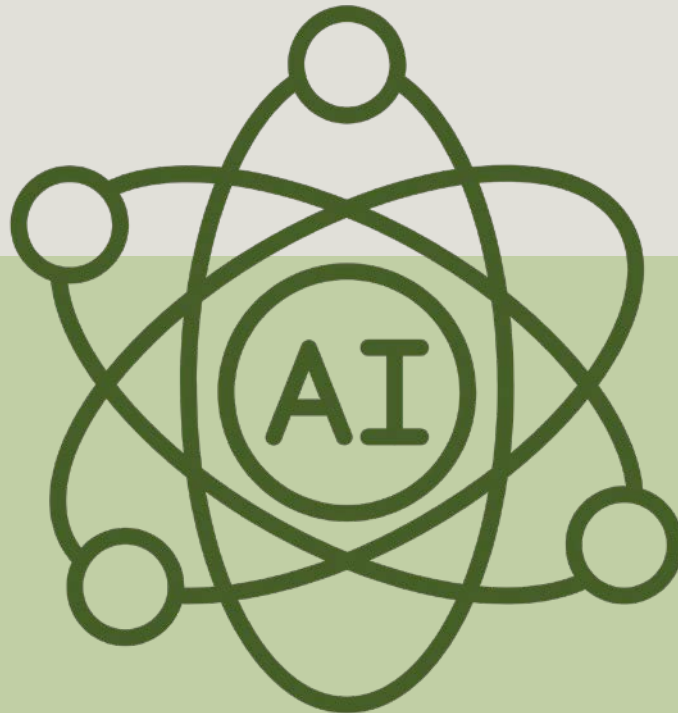
Translation



Authentication and fraud prevention



# PRACTICALITY GUIDE





## Medallia

### How ESPN Improved Customer Satisfaction and Reduced Agent Attrition by Building a Feedback-driven Culture

#### Supporting the fan and protecting the brand

ESPN is the leading multinational, multimedia sports entertainment brand, serving sports fans anytime, anywhere, since 1979. The company's current offerings include TV networks, direct-to-consumer via ESPN+, radio and podcast shows, sports event management, and a broad range of digital delivery vehicles. Majority owned by ABC, Inc., which is a subsidiary of The Walt Disney Corporation, ESPN has an overarching directive to offer world-class customer service. Modeling the Disney philosophy of referring to customers as guests, ESPN refers to customer care as fan support.

ESPN's fan support team is made up of sports fans, to better empathize with customers and converse with them, fan to fan. The team's motto – "sitting with the fans in the stands as well as the suits in the suites" – is a great encapsulation of how they want agents to think and act. ESPN fan support

reports into the marketing organization, with a mission to support the fan and protect the brand. As the primary point of contact with customers, they get the unvarnished and authentic truth and have a responsibility to listen to and echo the voice of the customer throughout the company.

When ESPN started its fan support organization 18 years ago, the leaders did not want to replicate the traditional call center with unempowered and unengaged agents. They knew that measuring agents by handling time or number of calls and reprimanding them for bad decisions would not deliver world class fan support. So the leadership de-emphasized quantity metrics and focused on quality, coaching people to do the right thing instead of catching and chastising people who do the "wrong" thing.

If a fan makes the effort to contact ESPN, whether by phone, chat, text, email, or social media, they usually have something on their mind. This could be streaming frustration, fantasy sports problems, gameplay confusion, or content they cannot access. ESPN's goal is not just to resolve their problem, but to figure out what the company could do better or differently so that the fan wouldn't have to contact ESPN in the first place. This means putting greater trust in the agents, coaching them through challenging scenarios, and celebrating successes. After all, even the best player has a batting coach to help adjust their swing for better results.

"Customer experience sits with the fans in the stands, not the suits in the suites." - Doug Kramon, Head of Fan Support/ Customer Care, ESPN

### TURNING DARK DATA INTO INSIGHTS AND ACTION

In 2018, ESPN deployed Medallia Agent Connect to augment the fan support team and enable better collection of the "dark data" that flows around every interaction. By focusing on giving the fan what they want where they want it, ESPN has improved both fan experience and internal efficiency. They have introduced valuable alternatives to customer service delivery, such as chatbots and email autoresponders.

But bots and automation can only do so much. A live human interaction is the most expensive element of customer service, but it has the potential to be the most valuable. Call deflection and automated services are great for dealing with repetitive issues that can burn out agents, but they lack the depth of human conversations. So, it is important to empower human agents to build relationships and get value from their care interactions.

To supplement agents' insights and increase their pool of data, ESPN directly surveys and interviews fans across their breadth of services and supported devices and brings that data into the fan experience analysis. Building a solid feedback loop from fan interactions, customer satisfaction surveys, recognition of exemplary agents, and a rewards program has been a significant contributor to changing the fan support dynamic. Agents seek out positive feedback and coaching, and leaders model a culture of open communication. Connecting with agents as peers and teammates makes it easier to talk about issues – "What's working? What's not working? How can we improve?"

Celebrating successes encourages excellence and sustains agent morale. The growing dataset helps ESPN improve agent training programs, informs accountability and quality assurance activities, and feeds the recognition and reward program. Agents with stand-out performance are featured in a monthly newsletter, collect Karma points, and can win

cash prizes. Accumulated Karma points are redeemable for customized team jerseys and other swag. More than 25% of agents have accumulated enough points for at least one cool item from the Karma store in the past year, and over half of those have made enough for multiple redemptions.

"It is our obligation and responsibility to listen to and consider the voice of the customer and echo that throughout the company." - Jenn Lien, Manager, Fan Support and Data Analytics, ESPN

### IMPROVING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION BY MOVING AT THE SPEED OF LIVE

As fan support has evolved at ESPN, the leadership have transformed the paradigm from cost center to profit center, providing valuable insights to internal partners. For example, feedback from passionate fans drove some significant enhancements to ESPN's fantasy football leagues. Active collaboration between fan support and fantasy engineering prioritized sought-after features like league history and live chat, resourced them, and delivered them in time for the next season.

Results like this have an obvious effect on fan experience, but also give agents a strong sense of contribution and job satisfaction. By focusing on excellence and continuous improvement, instead of "perfection" against quantitative metrics like average handle time, ESPN's agent attrition rate is less than 10% per year, and without COVID would have been closer to 4%, compared to the typical 30-45% attrition that many customer support organizations experience.

Fan support is also meeting internal budget requirements, while maximizing contact across an increasing set of channels, including calls, texts, chats, email, and tweets. Medallia enables ESPN to efficiently capture real-time feedback after customer interactions regardless of channel. Overall, fan support is operating at about 60% of their original budget, while maintaining consistently high customer satisfaction scores of 91% year over year, with little variability.

ESPN leadership is excited about the future possibilities with Medallia. While they currently capture real-time feedback post-interaction, their dream state is knowing what matters to fans right now. What are fans talking about, across all channels? With rapid analysis of a "bag of words", ESPN hopes to identify issues not just by the recent frequency of keywords, but also by velocity, surrounding sentiment, severity, and urgency. The goal is to have banners or bots that can say "We know there's a problem and we're working on it." Not only will this deflect a lot of connections, but it will also impress fans - "It's as if ESPN knew what my problem was before I even spoke." This is delivering fan experience at the speed of live.

## Appendix

**Medallia**



Contact Center Performance Scorecard Template



Special Report: The New Customer Expectations for the Contact Center

## 2022 Editorial Calendar

### JANUARY

**State Of Contact Center Technology**

### MARCH

**Customer Contact Industry Review**

### JUNE

**Customer Experience Trends,  
Challenges & Opportunities**

### AUGUST

**Modernizing Service Experiences With  
AI & Digital**

### OCTOBER

**Customer Contact Intelligence  
& Analytics**

### NOVEMBER

**Future Of The Contact Center:  
A Forecast**

### FEBRUARY

**Strategic Planning For CX Operations**

February 9-11, 2022

### APRIL

**State Of Contact Center Technology**

April 6-8, 2022

### MAY

**New Standards For Customer Contact  
Performance**

May 25-27, 2022

### JULY

**Modernizing Service Experiences With  
AI & Digital**

July 20-22, 2022

### SEPTEMBER

**Customer Experience Trends,  
Challenges And Innovations**

September 14-16, 2022

### OCTOBER

**Business Continuity 2.0**

October 26-28, 2022

### DECEMBER

**Future Of The Contact Center:  
A Forecast**

December 14-16, 2022



## Meet the Team



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