

The new face of contact centres

Increased digital interaction is forcing technology change, says Hannes van der Merwe, product manager at Itec Distribution.

Issued by: **Itec**

[Johannesburg, 26 March 2015] -

With digital interaction sharply increasing in **contact centres**, organisations will have to invest in revamping their technology to ensure they deliver on customer needs. And those who, at this stage, are not yet considering **cloud** solutions, are putting themselves at risk. This is the view of **Hannes van der Merwe**, product manager at Itec Distribution.

According to a study by Frost & Sullivan, the use of **digital engagement platforms** continues to increase with **Web collaboration tools** and **Web interaction analytics** showing the most growth. The study, which focused on North American and European contact centres, showed about 46% of customer interactions are fully automated and that e-mail is preferred over voice engagement.

Van der Merwe says this will put pressure on organisations to rethink their contact centre infrastructure to make it more flexible and agile. "We know contact centres can no longer rely on voice only. Customers want to engage through the platform of their choice, and if the capability is not there, they will move to another service provider," he says. "Where agents could, in the past, focus on a single mode of contact, they now have to manage multiple sources. Companies will therefore have to invest in solutions that provide a simple, yet effective interface for agents as they navigate this complex environment."

He adds that the increase in channels will also impact contact centre measurement. "Contact centres will have to ensure that they measure across all possible channels, which means the amount of data to be analysed will increase significantly. This will increase the demand for data analytics and will require advanced solutions if they are to use the analytics effectively to drive improved customer satisfaction," he says. "Real-time, device-agnostic reporting is also a key requirement, particularly when it comes to mobile work forces.

"We are also seeing an ongoing move towards the decentralised contact centre, providing business with all the benefits of the contact centre solution, including multimedia, without the contact centre agent being forced to come into the office."

Through the use of technology, a contact centre agent can work from home, reducing the brick and mortar costs involved with needing a physical office environment. This is enabled through IP-based contact centre platforms, enabling remote working and virtual teams. "The move towards using cloud solutions in the contact centre environment is also leading towards greater flexibility, allowing for multi-channel management capabilities," he says.

"Implementing the appropriate contact centre solution will allow organisations to manage multiple contact centres offices, teams and individuals as one logical contact centre even when they are physically dispersed across the country or even across the world, and we are seeing a growing demand for these solutions," says Van der Merwe.

In order for a contact centre to remain relevant today and in the future, it will have to adapt as technology and customer requirements evolve. "The key here is to understand what your customers want and then implement a solution that not only meets those needs, but enables your agents to deliver the service they expect," Van der Merwe concludes.

Itec

Itec is southern Africa's fastest growing office automation, production printing and telecommunications solutions provider – with annual revenue of nearly two billion rand. Through its 47 southern African branches and an international footprint that includes the United Kingdom, the company implements total office solutions based on imported, industry-leading, and award-winning products.

Itec serves medium-sized and large businesses in sectors as diverse as financial services and retail –

supporting its innovative solutions with proactive service delivery. Some of its 18 000 customers include Value Logistics, Implats, Department of Housing, Business Connexion, ADT, Rand Refinery, First National Bank, Anglogold Ashanti, National Health Laboratory Services and Advtech. Itec management rebranded the company in 2004 following a merger of the separate copier, printer, and fax business units initially established in 1987. For more information, please see www.itecgroup.co.za.

Editorial contacts

Itec

Marketing Team

(011) 236 2000

marketing@itecgroup.com