

## Six Irresistible Reasons for Strategic Business Leaders to Embrace the Cloud

*Providing each customer with a frictionless experience across all of the channels they use strengthens loyalty and amplifies business performance*

**Just the Facts:** The traditional view of the contact center as a cost center is a thing of the past. That's largely because the contact center often serves as the most likely channel to foster and deepen relationships with customers, and a growing number of strategic business leaders are acting on the opportunities this presents. Innovators are leveraging the interactions and conversations that occur between customers and their contact center agents to identify and act on potential cross-sell/upsell opportunities.

In fact, nearly one-third (30 percent) of contact centers are now focused on inbound sales opportunities while 25 percent are driving new revenue via outbound customer communications, according to Deloitte Consulting's 2013 Global Contact Center Survey.

Of course, a number of components must fall into place to enable contact centers to cultivate new revenue opportunities with customers. For starters, companies need to be able to deliver the kind of frictionless and relevant customer support experiences that foster loyalty and a willingness among customers to consider buying additional products or services. Inbound and outbound agents also need to gain a 360-degree view of customers, including insights about their transactions, channel behaviors, and product sentiment that can be used to know how to customize their communications and when to extend the right offer to the right customer through the right channel at the right time.

**Business leaders are discovering that the cloud provides their organizations with the agility to meet strategic business objectives such as revenue growth and customer retention.**

—Madelyn Gengelbach, Vice President of Strategic Marketing, inContact

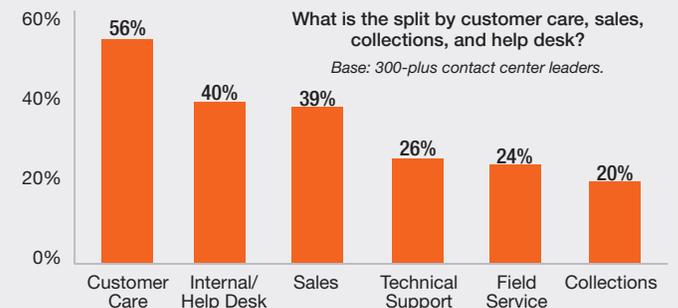
"The time-worn reasons for going to the cloud have been scalability and continuous technology refresh," says Madelyn Gengelbach, Vice President of Strategic Marketing at inContact. "What business leaders are discovering is that the cloud also provides their organizations with the agility to meet strategic business objectives such as revenue growth and customer retention," Gengelbach adds.

### Putting it all together

Pulling together these collective capabilities requires a contact center platform that provides agents and other frontline employees with a complete view of each customer across the various channels that

### The Multi-Purpose Contact Center

While customer care remains the dominant service offered by most contact centers, many organizations are branching out into other disciplines such as inbound sales, collections, and field service.



Source: Deloitte Consulting's 2013 Global Contact Center Survey.

they use. A cloud contact center can provide companies with blended omnichannel customer routing that enables revenue-focused organizations to match each customer with the most suitable agent based on that customer's behaviors, transaction history, and preferences to drive the greatest possible business outcomes. Meanwhile, the right cloud platform can provide sales-focused agents with decision trees based on a customer's responses.

A cloud contact center also offers additional benefits that enable the revenue-generating goals of strategic business executives. For instance, adding new sales capabilities to existing premise-based contact center platforms can take weeks or even months, depending on how these efforts are prioritized in the corporate IT project queue. Using a cloud contact center, new sales functionality can be launched with the click of a mouse or a phone call.

The contact center is a critical touchpoint in the relationship between a customer and a company. The interactions that occur between agents and customers – whether by phone, SMS, social media, email, or through other channels – offer rich opportunities for companies to strengthen and deepen the customer-company relationship. Having the right contact center platform that can enable agents to deliver relevant, timely, and personalized experiences plays a major role in determining the future outcomes of those relationships.

## Six Irresistible Reasons for Strategic Cloud Center Business Leaders to Embrace the Cloud



The ability to draw upon all of the information that customers share with us every day allows companies to retain more customers and increase their profitability by improving satisfaction and loyalty -- even if there's no upsell or cross-sell.

— Madelyn Gengelbach,  
Vice President of  
Strategic Marketing,  
inContact

Great customer support experiences don't occur magically. Companies require agile and robust technologies and processes to deliver omnichannel experiences that are personalized, relevant, and efficient.

We explore six reasons why strategic business leaders should adopt a cloud contact center.

**1. Increase Customer Loyalty.** Customers have little tolerance for substandard experiences. Dissatisfied customers will turn to companies that are able to resolve their issues quickly and effectively. In fact, a customer is four times more likely to defect to a competitor if the issue is service-related and not price or product-related, according to Bain & Company. Cloud contact centers enable companies to deliver seamless omnichannel customer experiences that can strengthen loyalty and business outcomes.

"The ability to draw upon all of the information that customers share with us allows companies to retain more customers and increase their profitability by improving satisfaction and loyalty -- even if there's no upsell or cross-sell," Gengelbach adds.

**2. Enhance Agent Knowledge.** The typical contact center agent uses five screens to access the information she needs to support customers, according to Aberdeen Group. When agents have to jump between different screens to find information that customers are looking for, the result can be a garbled customer experience that can lead to dissatisfaction.

When critical customer, product, and other important information are separated between different systems, agents who are struggling to pull it all together can appear to be unknowledgeable or incompetent to a customer. A cloud platform can synthesize all of this information into a single screen which enables agents to deliver the kind of graceful support that resonates with customers.

**3. Ensure Consistent and Accurate Messaging.** Regardless of whether a contact center agent is fielding an inbound support call or exploring an upsell/cross-sell opportunity with a customer, it's imperative for companies to provide customers with consistent information. Companies that are able to provide customers with reliable support across each of the channels they use position themselves to gain a customer's trust and loyalty.

Intelligent routing capabilities that are available in a cloud contact center can connect the right customer to the right agent. Having this wherewithal can generate multiple benefits. Connecting customers with the right agents based on their skills, product knowledge, geographical location, and other attributes increases

the likelihood that a customer will have a satisfactory experience. Meanwhile, intelligent routing can connect a customer who is an excellent prospect for a product with an agent who is adept at discussing the merits of that offering.

**4. Increase Agent Productivity.** As experienced contact center leaders know, certain agents are more adept at handling customer interactions in specific channels, such as chat, email, or social media, than others. Companies that adopt cloud contact centers can draw on the power of a Universal Queue to automatically route customers to an agent based on their skills and availability. A Universal Queue is also able to heighten agent productivity by identifying agent downtime to intelligently schedule inbound or outbound calls based on agent availability. In addition, a Universal Queue can also determine when active channels such as voice should take precedence over passive channels such as email. The system can direct an agent to take a high-priority customer call and then return to email work as her schedule permits.

**5. Decrease Time-to-Market.** It can take weeks or even months for companies relying on premise-based contact center systems to deploy new sales tools and capabilities since project requests can often get stuck in the queue behind other enterprise initiatives. Businesses using cloud contact centers can add new sales tools on the fly, enabling agents in sales-focused contact centers to act on new opportunities immediately. Meanwhile, a cloud contact center offers companies the flexibility to pilot new sales tools and other systems before making a commitment.

**6. Save Time and Money.** With the cloud, companies only pay for the capacity they use. If a seasonal business or a company with sales campaigns planned during different times of the year wants to add support for agents with specific sales skills, the cloud offers the flexibility to add seats and then scale back when call volumes diminish. Other operational efficiencies include the ability to support agents anywhere/anytime. For instance, if a company wishes to expand its use of at-home agents or add support capabilities for staffers in regional offices, agents simply need an Internet connection and a phone to access the same universal functionality available to all users.

Plus, workforce optimization capabilities offered in the cloud provide supervisors the means to ditch old-fashioned spreadsheet scheduling and transition to more sophisticated agent scheduling using a single system of record for all locations.

## Case Study: United Way Takes a United Approach to Support Fundraising

When deadly tornadoes ripped through Oklahoma in May 2013, entertainer Blake Shelton was able to organize a benefit concert within a few days. For United Way Worldwide (UWW), it took even less time to get five centers across the country with hundreds of agents up and running as a virtual call center operating on contact center software used to support the fundraising efforts.

Staffers and volunteers from multiple 2-1-1 organizations that United Way marshaled together “collected millions of dollars in donations from across the country and the agent-donor experience was completely seamless,” says Lisa Austin, Director, 211 Strategic Enhancements & Disaster Recovery at United Way.

United Way operates nearly 1,400 local affiliates across 41 countries and territories to advance the common good through community involvement. As part of its mission, United Way is the national leader of 241 2-1-1 information centers across the U.S., directly operating 50 percent of these while funding 75 percent of the network.

### A United Front

A few years ago, United Way was planning to launch a nationwide support line to assist homeowners who were facing foreclosure. Since UWW does not have its own physical call center location, the inContact cloud solution provided it with the ability to use other 2-1-1 centers across the nation. Although some 2-1-1 centers were already using inContact’s cloud contact center platform, United Way wanted all of the 2-1-1 groups to be interconnected with one another. Doing so would allow for distributed call routing between groups when call volumes are high in certain areas. The ability to use the skills-based routing option has not only proven to be beneficial for individual projects but it has also been valuable when a disaster strikes and disaster-related calls need to be routed to one set of

agents while conventional 2-1-1 calls are funneled to other agents.

By creating a strategic plan to have the 2-1-1 network on a common platform, this has generated a variety of business and operational benefits for United Way. A growing number of the regional 2-1-1s organizations are currently using inContact’s voice, email, and chat support capabilities for projects over the past three years. Austin says each of the channel support functions is so intuitive “training is quick for anyone with a direct line or a cell phone.”

Meanwhile having more of the 2-1-1s interconnected on the same workforce optimization tool will enable Austin and her team to provide more nationwide projects and opportunities to the 211 network. (e.g., such as tax services for low-income working Americans). This has enabled Austin and other organizational leaders to plan for future projects and ensure they’re equipped with the right level of resources.

Many of the 211 organizations that are currently using inContact are in the process of integrating their referral databases with the inContact platform. When a caller dials 2-1-1 for assistance or makes a request, the system can pre-populate a data base to assist the specialists with finding the resources and information quickly. This can enable specialists to have immediate accuracy, leading to faster and better experiences for both agents and the people they’re supporting, says Austin.

But perhaps while the greatest benefit of having each of the 2-1-1s on the same platform is that it has provided Austin and her team with a common set of performance metrics (i.e., average handle time) that can be applied across the entire 2-1-1 network.

“Operationally, when we ask for metrics or data from the 2-1-1s, the data will not have to be massaged, in the near future,” says Austin. “The calculations will be exactly what we’re looking for every time.”



In one fundraising campaign, we collected millions of dollars in donations from across the country and the agent-donor experience was completely seamless.

— Lisa Austin, Director,  
211 Strategic Enhancements  
& Disaster Recovery at  
United Way.

## Case Study: Allegion Strives to Secure an Exceptional Customer Experience

Before Allegion was spun off from Ingersoll-Rand plc in late 2013, the provider of residential and commercial security products had been using a cloud contact center to support its customers. Although the platform offered the basic capabilities that Allegion needed at the time, the company had reached a point where it wanted to expand beyond simple call routing functionality and utilize other tools such as quality management and speech analytics to identify and maximize opportunities for strengthening its B2B and B2C customer relationships.

“Relationships are a huge part of our business,” says Bradley Garrett, Director of Customer Care Operations for the Carmel, IN-based company. “We’re not just providing answers during our interactions with clients. There are multiple products we support and we talk to some of our clients five times a day. So we wanted to use the quality management and speech analytics capabilities to help us with training and to strengthen soft skills such as product knowledge,” Garrett adds.

Although Allegion had developed its own quality assurance capabilities with homegrown tools, it wanted a cloud contact center platform that could be used to integrate all of these resources together in a cost-effective manner. Garrett and his team selected inContact based on the robust functionality it offered through a pay-as-you-go model.

In addition to its use of inContact’s Workforce Optimization suite for quality management and speech analytics, powered by Verint® Allegion is also in the process of integrating the inContact platform with its Siebel CRM suite. The integration between these systems is expected to enable Allegion’s agents to automatically authenticate the company’s B2B customers when they

call in without forcing customers to identify themselves. Garrett says he’s hopeful this will lead to more fluid and efficient interactions between its customers and agents.

### Strengthening scalability

Allegion officials also wanted a cloud platform that offered greater scalability than the system it previously had in place. “We receive calls from outside the country, so we wanted the ability to route calls to agents outside the U.S. if need be,” says Garrett. Plus, if any of its agents are forced to work from home due to weather-related issues, they’re able to connect seamlessly to the cloud platform using an Internet connection and a landline.

Allegion also utilizes inContact’s outbound agent dialing capabilities to offer options to customers who have placed orders that go beyond the company’s expected lead time for delivery.

“Our customers really appreciate that we call them so long as we have relevant information about the new ship date and other details for offering them options on their order” such as substitute products to shorten the delivery time, says Garrett.

Looking ahead, Allegion is also considering expanding its omnichannel support capabilities beyond voice and email into areas such as SMS chat and IVR, says Garrett.

Garrett believes that Allegion’s use of the inContact platform has enabled the company to stay on the cutting edge of customer support capabilities with minimal cost and effort.

Says Garrett, “It’s allowing us to run our business and not have to focus on the software needed to run our business.”



**ALLEGION**

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—Bradley Garrett, Director of Customer Care Operations for the Carmel, IN-based company.

**By the Numbers:**  
Better Performing Contact Centers Are More Likely to Be Deployed in the Cloud

**Cloud Contact Center Users**  
(Average Performance)

- 51% first contact resolution rate
- 13.1% average year-over-year improvement in annual company revenue
- 3.2% average year-over-year improvement (decrease) in non-compliance frequency

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**Traditional Internal Contact Center**  
(Average Performance)

- 30% first contact resolution rate
- 4.0% average year-over-year improvement in annual company revenue
- 1.2% average year-over-year worsening (increase) in non-compliance frequency

Source: Aberdeen Group, "The Hidden ROI of a Cloud Contact Center."

## Getting Started

Strategic business leaders considering a cloud contact center should start their journeys by identifying their organizational requirements, both near term and long term. For instance, while customer retention may be a top priority over the next 12-to-18 months, it's also important to think ahead to the company's business requirements beyond that period. Does the company currently have contact center agents that are dedicated for upsell/cross-sell? If not now, could this be a possibility three-to-five years from now? Knowing what's down the road, or at least being able to anticipate business changes that may lie ahead, requires companies to have a platform that's flexible and adaptable, says Allegion's Garrett.

Another reason to consider a cloud platform is that it's an ideal environment for experimentation. If a bank

wants to try out blended predictive dialer capabilities or a retailer decides to pilot new channel support for social media or web chat, they can test new functionality in stages and then evaluate before making a transition.

Meanwhile, a cloud contact center enables organizations such as United Way to stay current on cutting-edge technologies without having to schedule and install the systems themselves, says United Way's Austin.

Ultimately, the \$64,000 question for many business leaders is this: How many companies can afford to use a contact center platform that can remain static for years at a time? Says Gengelbach, "If you want the contact center to be a dynamic tool that can unleash new business and operational opportunities, a cloud platform is the right approach."

**inContact** cloud contact center software and contact center agent optimization tools help organizations around the globe create high quality customer experiences. inContact is 100% focused on the cloud and is the only provider to combine cloud software with an enterprise-class telecommunications network for a complete customer interaction solution. Our cloud platform reduces IT maintenance costs, does not require hardware or software investment, and delivers the ability to scale service up or down as you need it. inContact's complete, multi-channel solution is designed to enhance personalized service experiences, delivering more 1-to-1 connections with customers while providing game-changing contact center effectiveness.

For more information, please visit [www.inContact.com](http://www.inContact.com) or call 1-866-965-SaaS



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