

CCW Market Study

# THE FUTURE OF THE CONTACT CENTER IN 2019



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## FUTURE OF THE CONTACT CENTER: RESTORING A PAST VISION

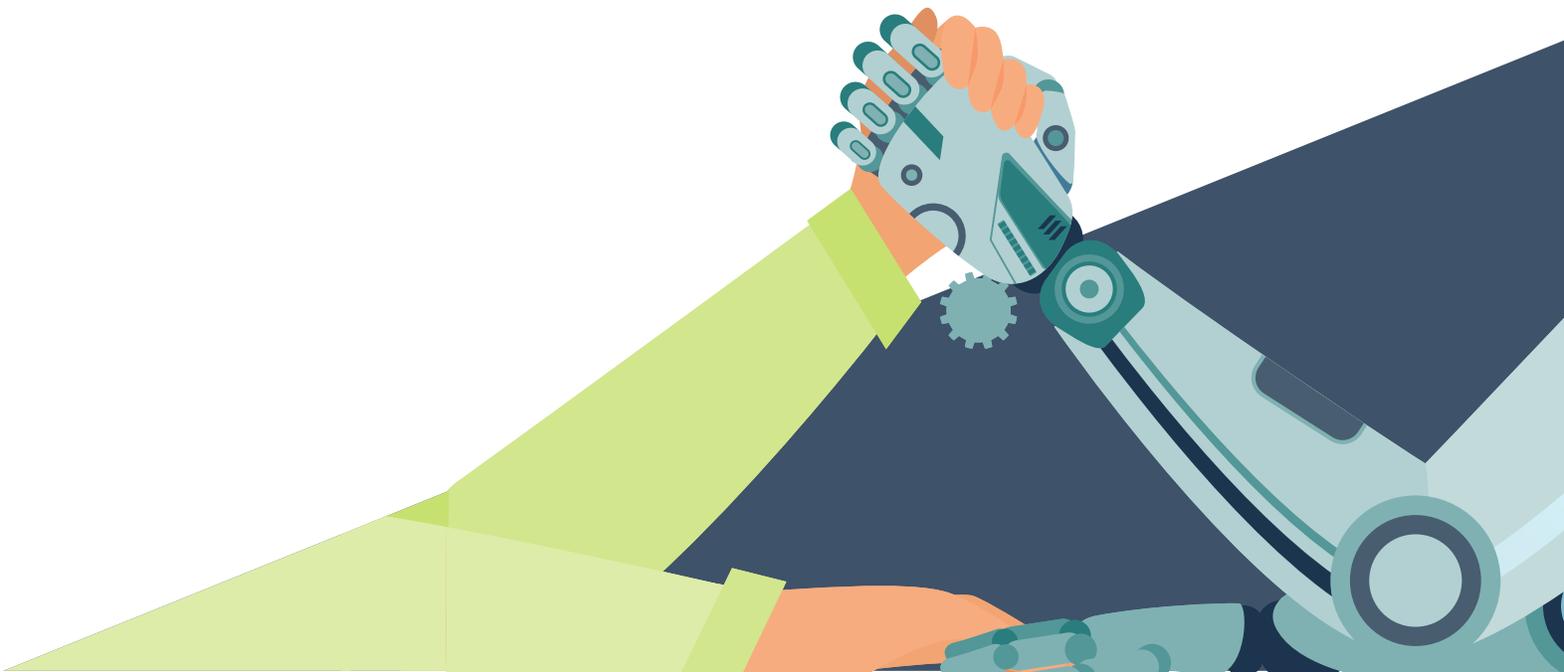
It may be a popular cliché, but the term “back to the basics” does not accurately reflect the mindset we have toward the contact center. There is nothing basic about how organizations will interact with customers in the months and years ahead. They will use new technologies, engage in new channels, and assess performance against new metrics.

These new innovations and initiatives will not, however, obscure an emphasis on one of the most fundamental truths associated with the contact center. The goal, above all, is to make meaningful connections with customers.

In revealing their visions, priorities and plans for 2019, customer contact leaders reveal a lingering passion for the human touch. They will leverage new technology to augment—not eliminate—human connections. They will drive agents to become partners rather than providers. They will evaluate customers as multi-faceted, emotion-heavy individuals rather than random buyers.

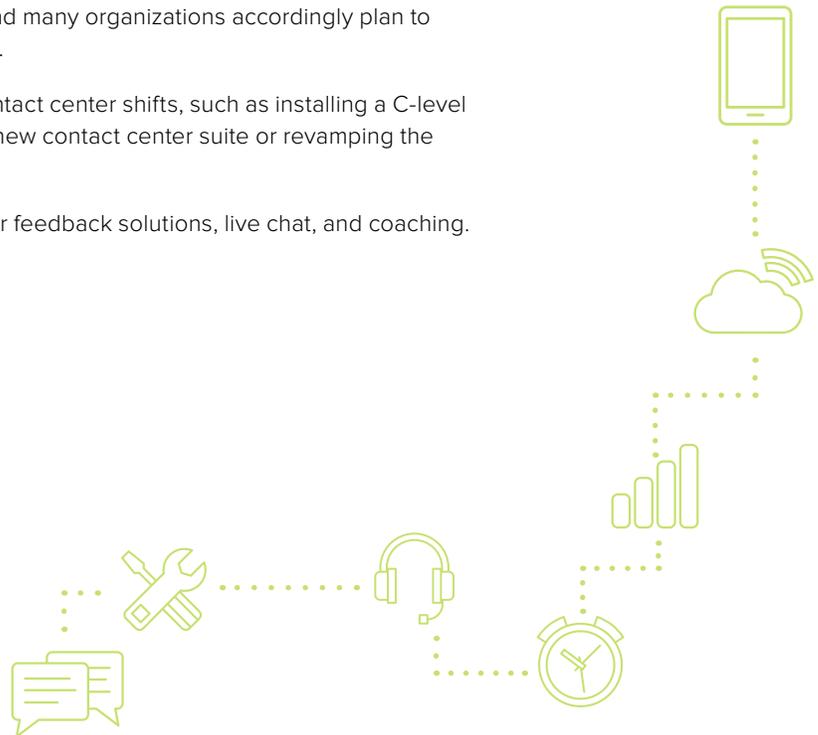
CCW Digital's Market Study on the Future of the Contact Center explores this research, ultimately revealing that the best way forward is to make sure the heart of customer centricity is not left in the past.

After detailing visions, strategic priorities, agent engagement initiatives and investment plans for 2019, this study dives deeply into a variety of technologies, best practices and case studies that can make a human-centric contact center a reality.



## KEY FINDINGS

- 1 Customer satisfaction will remain a pivotal contact center metric. 73% of organizations believe CSAT should be on the quality scorecard.
- 2 Despite the hype surrounding self-service technology, 64% of organizations believe customers should have easy access to a live agent.
- 3 Organizations reiterate that artificial intelligence should complement, rather than replace, human agents.
- 4 In a summer 2018 CCW survey, consumers said that they prefer “easy” experiences to “personalized” ones. Organizations, interestingly, believe that increasing personalization is more important than reducing customer effort.
- 5 Less than one-third of organizations believe in “right-channeling” customers to a more efficient touch point.
- 6 Increasing digital engagement capabilities is the #1 priority for 2019.
- 7 Other top priorities include improving the knowledge base, journey mapping and orchestration, coaching agents on “human” factors and using AI for process automation.
- 8 “Empowerment” to provide unique resolutions to customers represents a top agent experience priority.
- 9 Reducing agent effort is also a concern, and many organizations accordingly plan to update their workspace tools and systems.
- 10 Few organizations are planning radical contact center shifts, such as installing a C-level customer experience team, investing in a new contact center suite or revamping the outsourcing strategy.
- 11 Popular investment areas include customer feedback solutions, live chat, and coaching.



## METHODOLOGY & DEMOGRAPHICS

To collect data for the Market Study on the Future of the Contact Center, CCW Digital surveyed customer experience, contact center, marketing, customer care, IT, and operations professionals in August, September and October 2018.

Example respondent job titles included vice president of market operations, guest care manager, director of call center operations, global customer experience director, EVP operations, director of customer experience design, service design manager, chief operations office, vice president of call center operations, senior vice president of marketing and the customer experience, vice president of member experience, and senior vice president of customer service and marketing.

The respondent pool encompasses a wide range of organizations, including a substantial number of large enterprises. 59% of respondent organizations generate over \$1 billion in revenue, and 57% employee over 1000 individuals. Sixty-seven percent of respondent organizations have multiple contact center sites.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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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 Digital's series of reports. 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.





## A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Not every organization develops comprehensive, long-term blueprints for its customer contact strategy.

All organizations, however, have some form of vision for their contact center. They have at least a rough sense of what they are trying to achieve. They know the general purpose behind their customer experience initiatives, and they have an idea of what success entails.

No matter how thorough, that vision will ultimately *define* customer contact strategy in 2019 and beyond. It will be the calibration point for most, if not all, decisions related to people, processes and technology.

To properly understand and evaluate strategic priorities for the future, it is consequently imperative to consider the vision organizations are setting for the customer contact function.

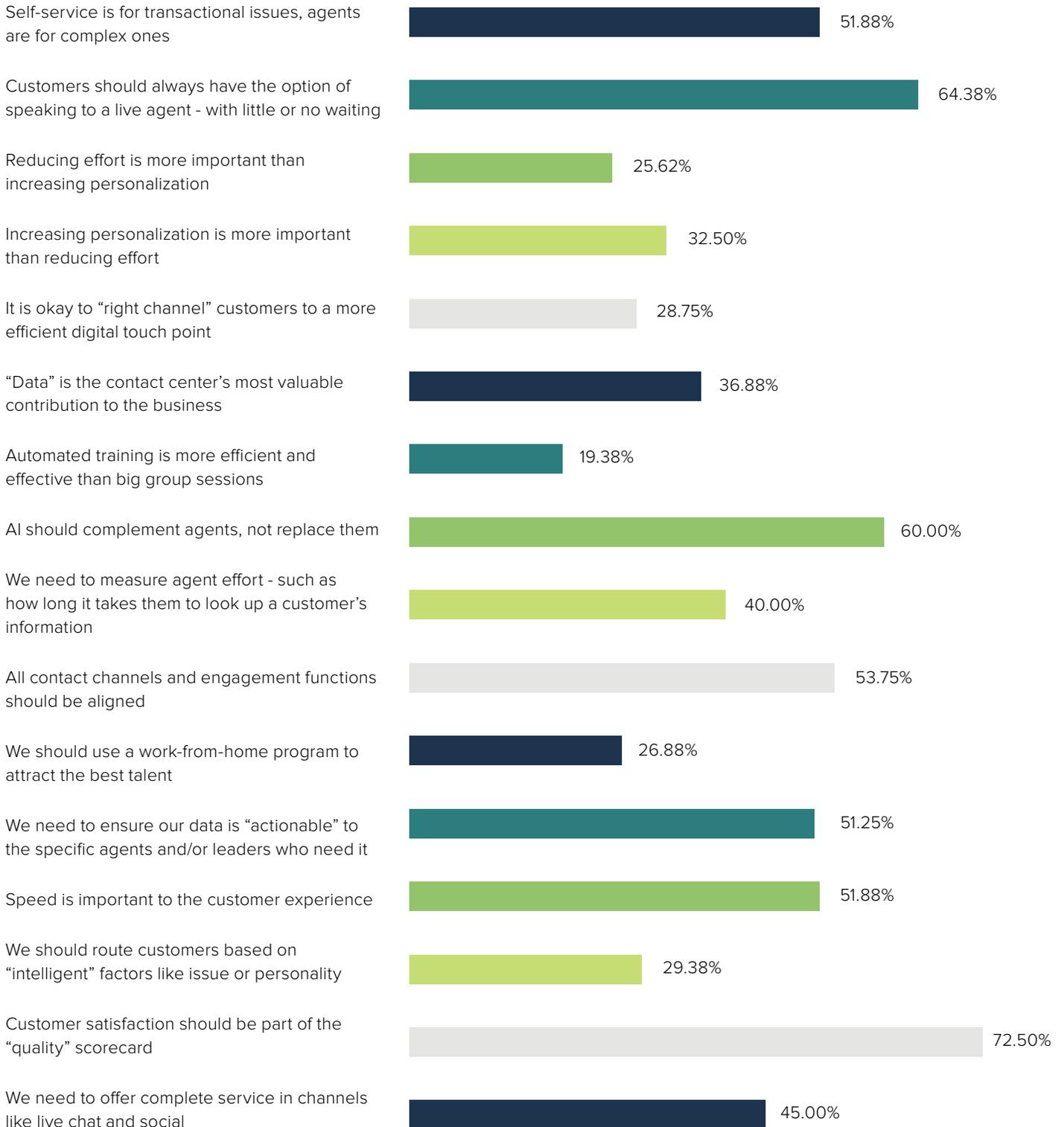
For many organizations, the vision includes a firm commitment to driving customer satisfaction. Supported by 73% of respondents, the notion that “customer

satisfaction warrants a place on the quality scorecard” represents the most popular perspective.

Other comparatively popular visions for the contact center include the belief that customers should always have easy access to a live agent (64%), the notion that artificial intelligence should complement rather than replace human agents (60%), the importance of aligning all contact channels and engagement functions (54%), the dichotomy that self-service is for transactional matters while agents are for complex ones (52%), and the sense that speed is important to the customer experience (52%).

Comparatively unpopular statements regarding the customer contact landscape include the belief that automated training is more efficient and effective than classroom sessions (19%), the ideology that reducing effort trumps increasing personalization (25%), the notion of leveraging work-from-home to attract the best talent (26%), the strategy of right-channeling customers for efficiency purposes (29%), and the commitment to routing based on factors like issue or personality (30%).

**WHICH OF THESE STATEMENTS ALIGN WITH YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE CONTACT CENTER?**



## Organizations Value Speed But Are Cautious About Chasing “Efficiency”

Ahead of 2018, customer contact executives professed a resounding commitment to reducing customer effort. CCW Digital research, in fact, revealed reducing effort as the #1 customer experience priority for 2018.

Consumers have also demonstrated their own support for a frictionless experience. According to the CCW Digital Market Study on the Customer Experience, consumers prefer low-effort experiences to highly personal ones by a factor of 2-to-1.

Given these previous findings, the data for this year's Market Study is intriguing, if not outright surprising. With 2019 approaching, many organizations generally believe that personalization is as important as (if not more important than) reducing effort. Only 25% accept the notion that reducing effort trumps increasing personalization, and 33% believe increasing personalization is more important than reducing effort.

This perspective on reducing effort aligns with a lukewarm reaction to the idea of efficiency. In articulating their customer contact visions for 2019, many organizations shied away from efficiency-minded concepts.

Four-fifths of organizations prefer group training sessions to automated coaching tools. Nearly 70% are averse to right-channeling customers to create more efficient interactions. Organizations also demonstrate continued reverence for offering live agent assistance.

These organizations, it should be noted, are not downplaying the importance of speed. They believe speed is important to the customer experience, and they understand the importance of aligning contact channels to help customers more smoothly navigate the journey.

The issue, therefore, seems to be skepticism that efficiency-minded efforts may come at the expense of the customer experience. They may believe in reducing effort or leveraging digital channels, but they do not want such pursuits to impact the quality of the engagement journey. They do not want to force customers into ill-suited digital environments strictly in the name of “reducing effort.” They do not want to eliminate group training purely for “efficiency” purposes.

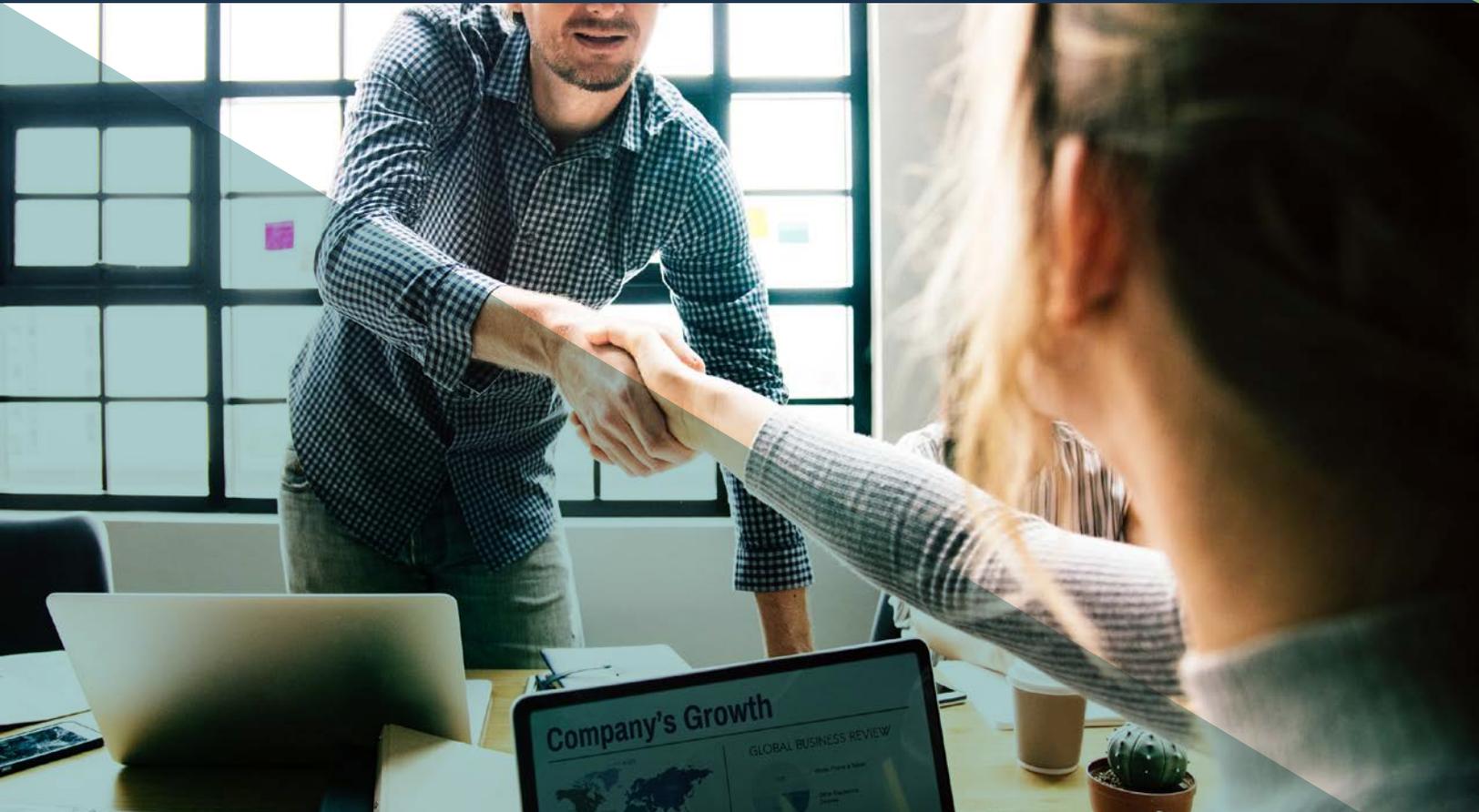
## The Human Touch Remains Paramount

Driving this skepticism toward efficiency is a renewed emphasis on the human touch.

By professing a widespread commitment to offering live agent support, leveraging live agents for complex matters, adding customer satisfaction to the quality scorecard and employing actionable analytics, organizations are ultimately professing their interest in making connections. They want to make each “moment of truth” as meaningful as possible.

Unsurprisingly, the idea of reducing *agent effort* (40%) is more popular than the idea of emphasizing customer effort (25%). Whereas an emphasis on customer effort may conjure up negative images about forcing customers to use digital channels, reducing agent effort empowers agents to spend less time *preparing* and more time actually connecting with customers.

Indeed, the human connection is the ultimate goal.



## EXECUTIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2019

Setting a vision for the customer contact function is important. Taking meaningful action to realize that vision is far more important.

The earlier investigation into the vision for the contact center uncovers key objectives and aspirations, but it does not confirm any action steps. It does not reveal the type of transformation organizations will make in 2019, let alone provide any insight into whether the transformation will be successful.

To gain a true window into the future of the contact center, it is consequently important to explore strategic plans for 2019. Which issues will organizations tackle? Which initiatives, quite simply, will constitute executive priorities?

The most widespread priority involves increasing investment into digital channels. Nearly 47% of organizations say they plan to expand their digital capabilities in 2019.

Other popular priorities for 2019 include improving the knowledge base (44%), customer journey mapping and orchestration (39%), coaching agents on making “connections” (37%), and using artificial intelligence for process automation (36%).

In sharing their visions for the future of the contact center, organizations demonstrated a clear passion for increasing the human touch. They clearly believe in maximizing the connections they make at each moment of truth.

Each of the investment priorities aligns with this vision.

The interest in improving digital channels coincides with the goal of adding a human factor to historically “low-touch” environments. Few organizations offer a “full service” experience within their digital channels, and many are looking to change that reality. They want to inject deeper engagement into their digital channels, making them more personal, more conversational, more resolute and, ultimately, more valuable.

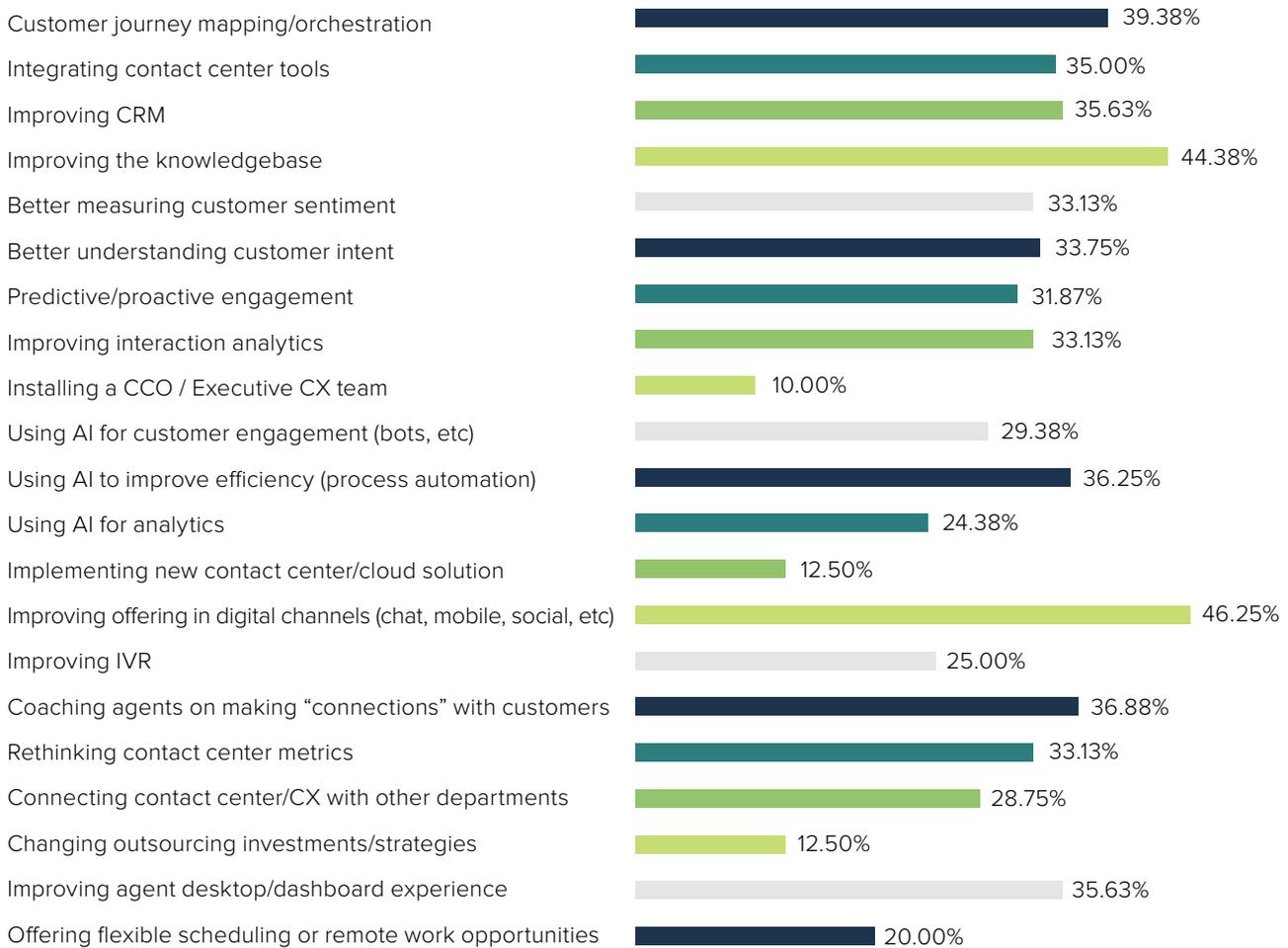
By improving the knowledge base and automating processes, organizations will empower agents to more meaningfully engage with customers. With access to a more intuitive, powerful knowledge base, agents can quickly gain the information they need to delight customers. With artificial intelligence removing rote, back-office tasks from their plates, agents can spend more time engaging in those delightful conversations.

To strengthen those conversations, organizations will predictably incorporate the “connection” into their coaching and training curricula. Rather than focusing exclusively on system and process training, these organizations will make agents better at actually communicating with customers.

Not merely consistent with the emphasis on the human touch, this endeavor also aligns with the belief that customer service warrants a place on the quality scorecard. Incorporating the “connection” into coaching communicates the message that the goal is not merely to serve customers; it is to satisfy them.

Through journey mapping, organizations can anticipate customer behaviors and intentions. Through orchestration, these organizations can help agents communicate the right message in the right place in the right time. Ultimately, the moments will be more magical, and the satisfaction score will be more impressive.

### WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING INITIATIVES WILL BE PRIORITIES FOR YOUR CONTACT CENTER/CX TEAM IN 2019?



## Agent Tools Are Important

Of the five most common focuses for 2019, only the knowledge base constitutes an agent “tool.”

Agent tools are not, however, a low-profile focus for 2019. Although they may be just short of the Top 5, other aspects of the day-to-day agent experience are indeed top-of-mind for 2019.

Thirty-six percent of organizations aim to improve agent desktop and CRM experiences in 2019, tying them as the #6 priority for 2019. Integrating contact center tools (#8, 35%) also constitutes a comparatively popular focuses for 2019.

Clearly, organizations are looking to empower agents to make connections in 2019. The real question is how they will create that empowerment. Will they focus more heavily on data, training or technology?

## Little Interest In Big Transformations

The preface to this section discusses the idea of making a transformation. It questions how organizations will *transform* to turn their visions into realities.

In looking at executive priorities for 2019, the word *transformation* may overstate the changes organizations plan to make.

While they will *enhance* their digital channels, agent tools, coaching strategies and customer intelligence initiatives, organizations are not generally planning to overhaul their overall customer experience function.

Only 10%, as an example, plan to install an executive-level customer experience presence (such as a chief customer officer or steering committee). Fewer than 13% plan to implement a new contact center suite or change their approach toward outsourcing. Only 20% will consider flexible scheduling or remote work opportunities.

Supported by 10 and 20% of organizations, these big picture transformations are not completely off the radar. Some organizations wholeheartedly accept the need for a major transformation.

It is also important to note that many of these transformations will contribute to the other, more granular priorities for 2019. A new contact center solution, as an example, may improve channel or agent desktop capabilities. Changing the approach to outsourcing or remote work, meanwhile, may have ramifications for agent training and the ability to emphasize “connections.”

To achieve some of their more microscopic goals, many organizations consequently *should* consider revamping their overall contact center framework.

Still, as it currently stands, the average contact center plans to address its needs issue-by-issue.



## THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE

In their commentaries on the vision for the contact center, organizations stress the importance of the human touch. Technology may be changing the way organizations communicate with their customers, but it is not changing the belief that humanity belongs at the center of those conversations.

Agents, obviously, play an integral role in this human-minded approach to the contact center. As the individuals directly communicating with customers, they ultimately create moments of humanity within the experience. They determine whether the brand connects with—or merely serves—its customers.

To unlock the human touch, customer-centric organizations will undoubtedly seek to create happy, engaged, productive agents. The agent experience is clearly integral to the future of the contact center.

What is less universal is how organizations will aim to improve the agent experience. There is, after all, no true consensus regarding the factors that carry the greatest impact.

There are, however, some factors that seem more relevant than others.

According to 24% of organizations, empowering agents to offer custom or unique resolutions to customers has the biggest impact on their experience.

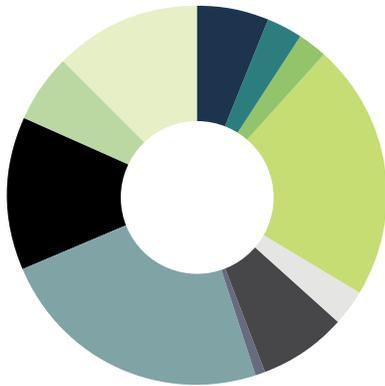
Twenty-two percent believe the effort associated with internal tools carries the biggest agent experience ramifications, and 13% ascribe prime importance to coaching and training.

Opportunities for advancement (13%) and sense of community (7%) are the next-highest-ranking factors.

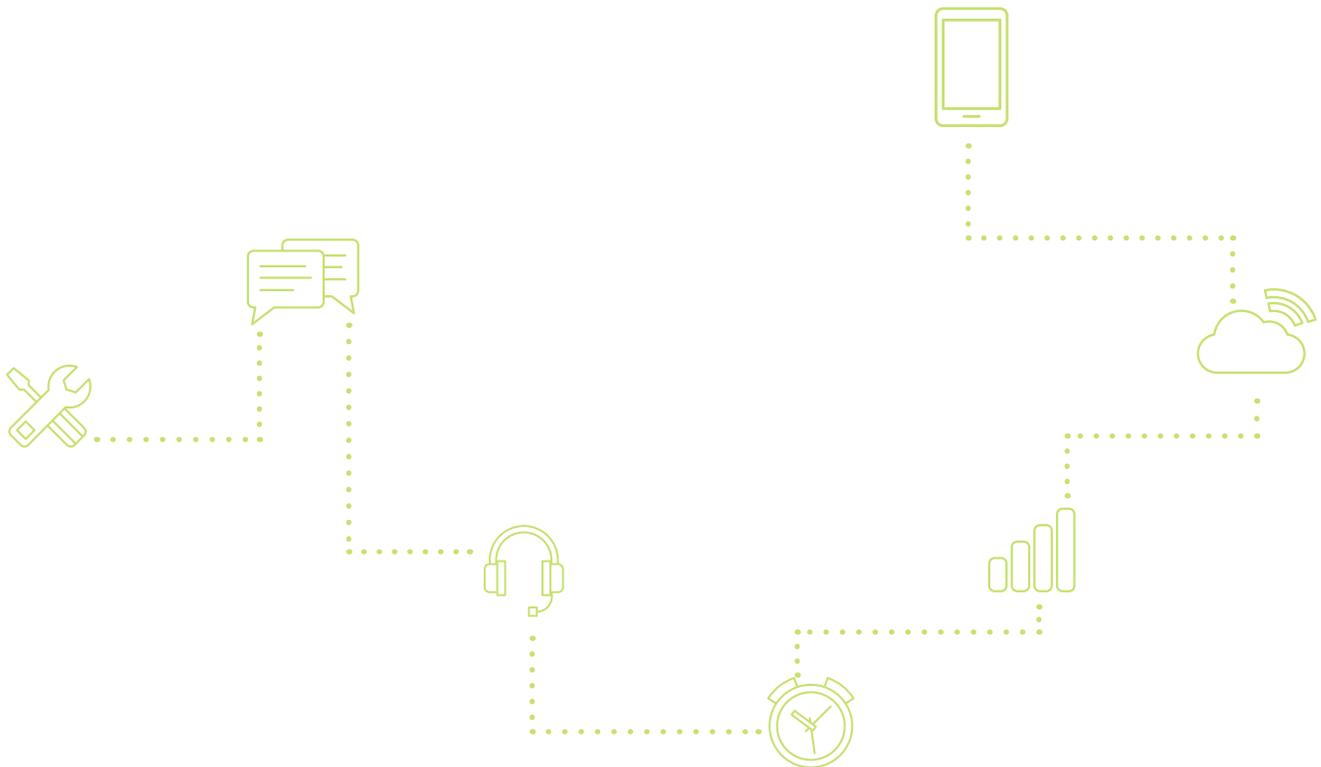
Although the lack of a consensus may be frustrating to those seeking a silver bullet for the agent experience, it ultimately communicates an important reality. There is no such silver bullet. There is no singular way to transform unhappy, disengaged, poor-performing agents into perfect, content ambassadors for an organization.

It takes a combination of endeavors—from emphasizing a customer-centric culture, to offering intuitive tools, to improving training, to helping agents grow in their careers, to everything in between—to cultivate the happy, productive agents who create happy, loyal customers.

**WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING HAS THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON THE AGENT/EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE?**



- **6.25%** Compensation
- **3.13%** Ability to work remotely/from home
- **2.50%** Quality of the work environment (office space, hardware, etc)
- **21.88%** Effort/frustration associated with contact center tools (CRM, knowledge, dashboards, etc)
- **3.13%** Scheduling/shift options
- **7.50%** Sense of community
- **0.63%** Use of scripts
- **23.75%** Empowerment to offer custom/unique resolutions to customers
- **13.13%** Training/coaching
- **5.63%** Clarity/logic of performance and metrics
- **12.50%** Opportunity for advancement





## POPULAR INVESTMENT AREAS FOR 2019

The executive priorities breakdown gives insight into which issues organizations plan to tackle in 2019.

The priorities do not, however, provide a crystal-clear window into the specific mechanisms through which they will achieve those goals.

A portrait of the future of the contact center requires that dimension. It requires a sense of how organizations will *invest* into their customer experience visions.

## Customer Relationship And Intelligence Investments

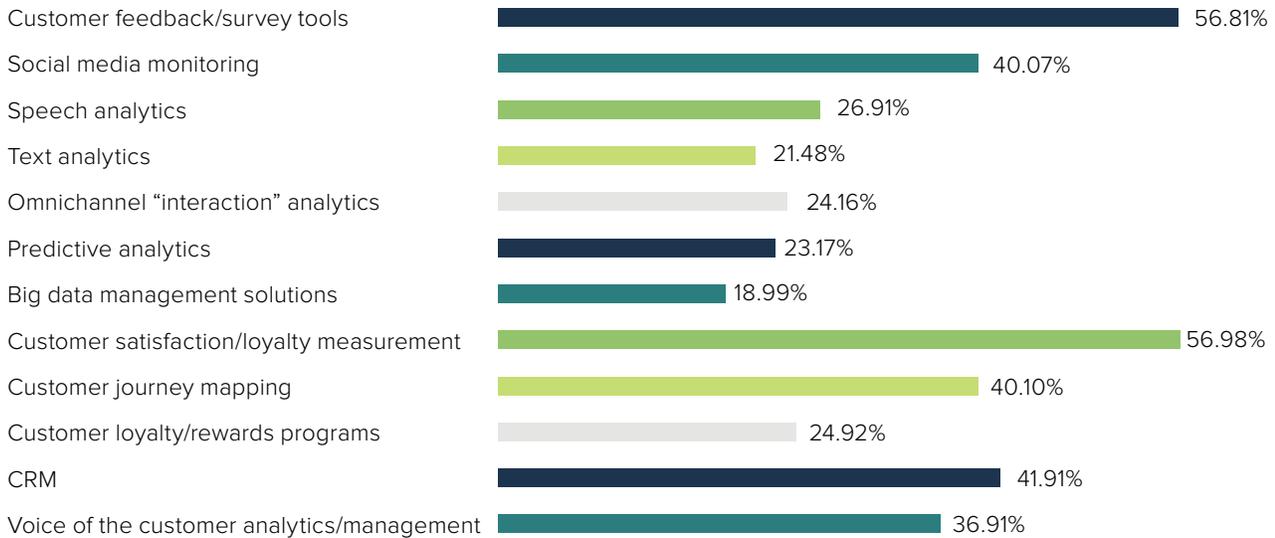
Nearly three-quarters of organizations believe customer satisfaction warrants a place on the quality scorecard. Many of those organizations will invest in making that vision a reality.

Fifty-seven percent plan to invest in customer satisfaction and loyalty measurement this year, making it the top customer relationship and intelligence priority.

Other leading priorities include customer feedback and surveying tools (57%), CRM solutions (42%), customer journey mapping (40%), and social media monitoring tools (40%).

If there is a central theme to the investment priorities, it is the idea of gaining a multi-faceted understanding of customers as people. Organizations will leverage satisfaction measurement mechanisms, feedback tools and social media monitoring solutions to understand how customers feel about the service they are experiencing. They will also leverage journey mapping to track how customers behave and CRM solutions to turn their insights into relationships.

## WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP AND INTELLIGENCE CATEGORIES ARE URGENT INVESTMENT PRIORITIES?



## Channel Investments

Unifying contact channels represents a key part of the vision for the future of the contact center. Improving capabilities within digital channels represents the top strategic initiative for 2019.

Collectively, these speak to a continued belief in the omnichannel approach to the customer experience. Organizations aim to ensure that customers are receiving the same, great commitment to customer centricity no matter where they interact—or how frequently they switch channels.

To realize this vision of an omnichannel experience, organizations will naturally need to make investments into specific channels, as well as their overall customer contact framework.

The top investment area for 2019 will be the voice channel. Nearly 60% view investments into live agent telephony as a priority.

Other top focuses include live chat (49%), email (47%), virtual queue solutions (42%), and social media engagement (38%).

The data aligns with the reality of the contact center.

Although organizations are committed to *improving* digital channels, they are still primarily *interacting* in the

voice environment. Conditioning bias notwithstanding, customers continue to resoundingly declare voice their preferred option for receiving customer service. Voice, moreover, remains one of the only channels in which the majority of organizations offer a full-service experience. Voice is still an integral part of the contact center, and organizations have no choice but to view it as an investment priority.

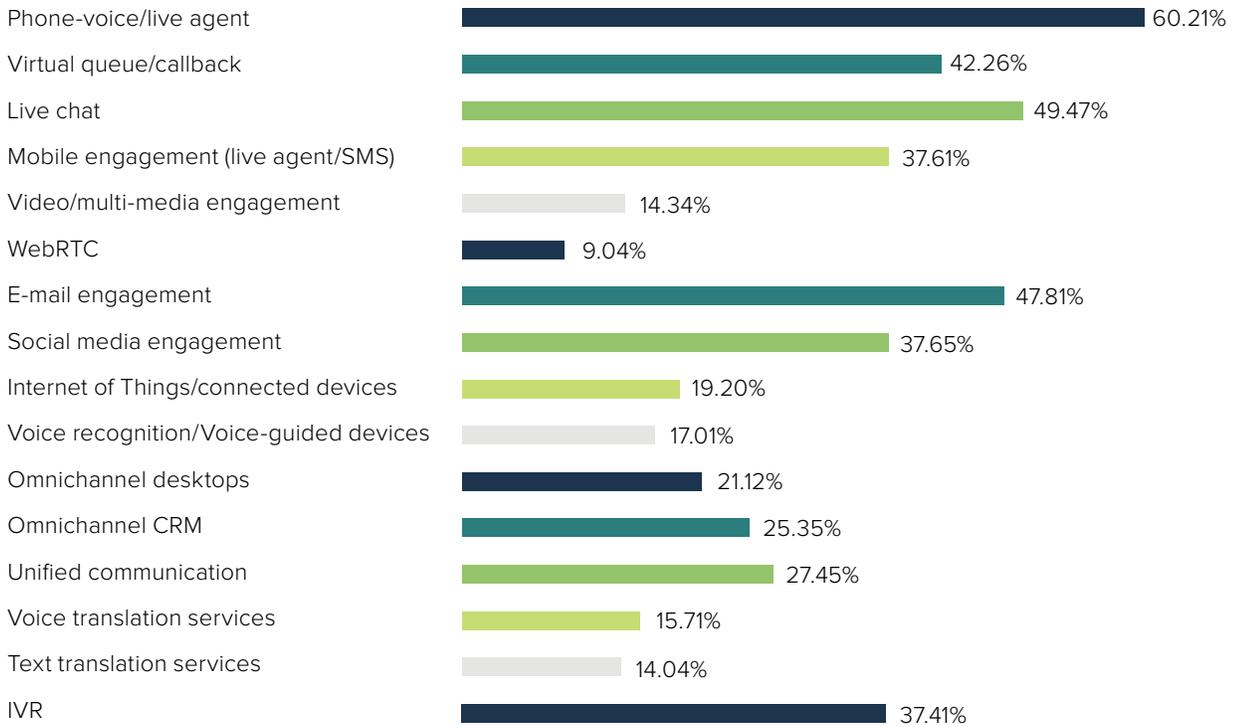
That does not, however, mean they must run voice exactly how they have in the past. Organizations are heavily interested in solutions for managing the call queue, consistent with their belief that customers should have easy access to live agents.

The notion of supporting "conventional" channels also explains why email continues to register as an investment focus.

Live chat is attracting attention as the intersection between offering human engagement and support for the digital world. An organization with a robust live chat offering can simultaneously connect with customers *and* support their growing familiarity with text-based, digital communication.

Not simply a popular contact channel, social media offers great insight into customer sentiment and behavior. By investing more heavily into social engagement, organizations can better support and learn about their customers.

**WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CONTACT CHANNEL CATEGORIES ARE URGENT INVESTMENT PRIORITIES?**



## Workforce Empowerment Investments

Maintaining the human touch remains a vital focus for contact centers, which means investment into agent empowerment is utterly essential. An organization cannot successfully connect with customers if it does not empower those responsible for making the connections.

In their pursuit of agent empowerment, organizations will prioritize investment into learning.

A 2019 investment focus for 61% of organizations, training represents the top investment priority. Coaching narrowly follows; it is on the immediate radar for 60%.

Other key investment areas include quality monitoring (59%), workforce management solutions (53%), and scheduling and forecasting tools (51%).

Training and coaching typically command considerable investment attention, and that interest will remain alive and well in 2019. In addition to continuing to meet basic

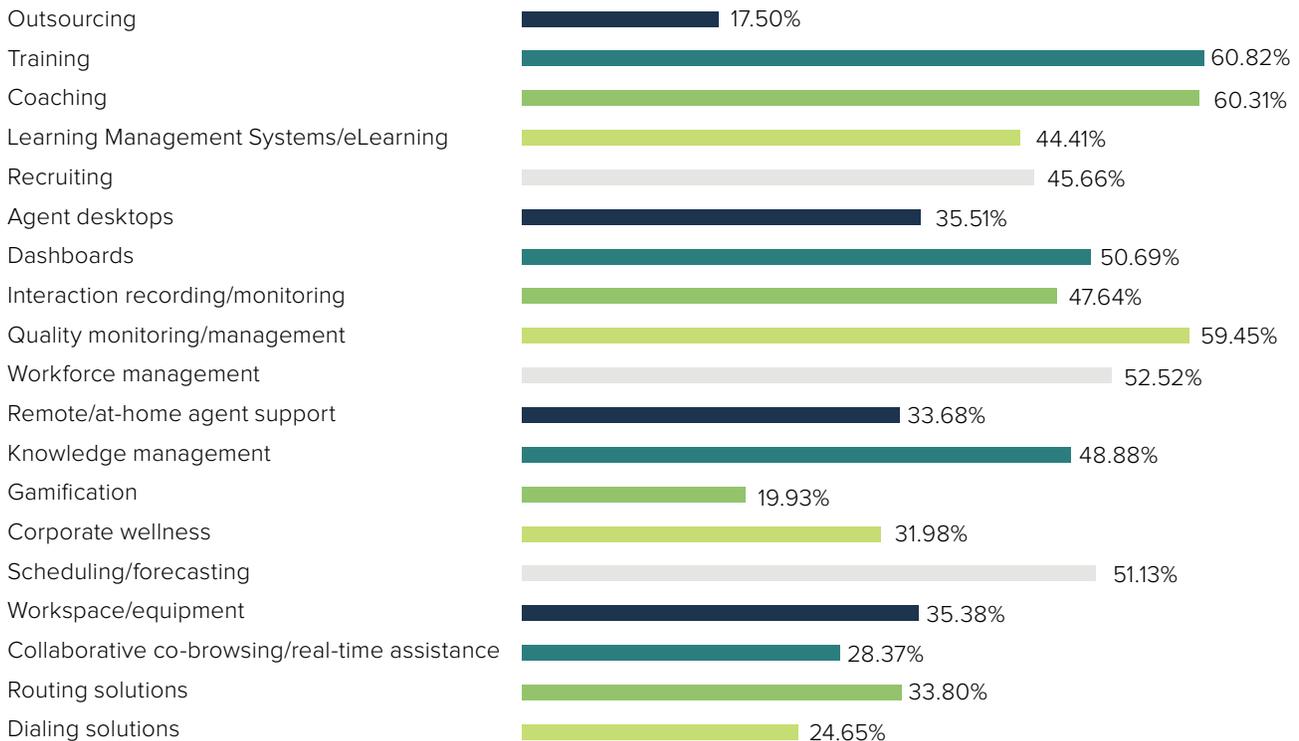
training needs, organizations will use 2019 to incorporate the “connection” into their training curricula.

Quality monitoring is not simply a fundamental part of the contact center but of particular relevance as organizations emphasize satisfaction measurement. They will need new processes, if not new tools, to actualize their new vision for quality.

Organizations recognize agent effort as an important experience concern and numerous agent tools as key strategic priorities for 2019. Their interest in prioritizing workforce management solutions is, consequently, rather intuitive.

As they aim to orchestrate journeys, reduce wait times and create more meaningful moments of truth with customers, organizations will need to better optimize their resources. Scheduling and forecasting solutions will ensure agents are available to connect with customers as needed.

## WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CUSTOMER WORKFORCE EMPOWERMENT CATEGORIES ARE URGENT INVESTMENT PRIORITIES?



# PRACTICALITY GUIDE

Customer experience case studies, expert tips and practical exercises that you can bring back to the office.





## SOCIAL MEDIA ISN'T JUST A SERVICE CHANNEL— IT'S A POWERFUL SALES CHANNEL

In contact centers, there used to be just one method of contact: the phone. But over the past 20 years, digital channels have become an increasingly popular method of customer service. In fact, research shows that there is an average of nine channel options in the contact center.<sup>1</sup>

But there's one channel that shouldn't be overlooked—social media. Over half of contact centers today are using social media for service-based functionality. And it's not hard to see why—there are more than 3 billion active social media users worldwide,<sup>2</sup> sending 500 million tweets alone every day.<sup>3</sup>

If a customer wants to voice their grievances with a company, they turn to social media, and expect an agent to help. Millennials in particular are on the lookout for help on social media—55 percent use social media to ask a customer service question, and 65 percent think it's an effective channel for customer service.<sup>4</sup>

But social media is also an effective channel for sales. When customers share their unhappiness with a company, they're not just looking to get their problem resolved—they're often on the lookout for a new company who can provide a better experience. And they expect it quickly: two in three customers expect a response on social media in 24 hours or less.

Agents are trained to quickly reply to customer service requests on social media, but if they solely focus on service, they're only responding to half of customer engagement. They're missing out on the sales opportunities that are present. In fact, one social listening company estimates that there are 44,000 consumer requests for shopping assistance each month (i.e. "Can anyone recommend..." or "Where can I buy...").

Of all those requests, 26,000 go unanswered.<sup>5</sup>

But companies don't have to miss out on these opportunities! Half of contact centers are already using social media for sales and marketing. And, when asked what channels are most commonly used to initiate contact with customers for sales, 22 percent of businesses said they use social media.

Will your company be next? Read on to find out how to take advantage of the social opportunity.





## Use the 3 “A’s”

Many times, when customers mention a brand on social media, they’re either lauding or lamenting that company’s product or service. But it can be difficult for agents to identify which conversations they should be a part of. Over 40 percent of digital assisted-service agents, like those who use social media, are unable to identify sales opportunities.

That’s where the 3 A’s come in: automation, artificial intelligence and analytics.

## Automation

Automation is becoming more prevalent in customer service interactions, but it’s also a key part of social sales. Over 30 percent of contact centers have automated processes in place for digital assisted-service channels like social media, helping to identify sales opportunities based on certain triggers. Customers may have complaints about different things on social media, so automation and bots can assist agents with common tasks.

For instance, if an agent working for a cable company replies it’s a shame that a competitor disappointed a customer, the agent can then follow up with an automated response promoting an offer for their company. The customer gets specialized service, and the agent doesn’t have to craft a new message with the offer.

## Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence helps agents identify patterns and trends and data—and be prepared to act on the opportunity. If a customer’s social media profile is connected to a company’s CRM, artificial intelligence can run predictive models to check propensity to churn, buy, or recommend. Once agents have that information, they can reach out proactively with a targeted offer to encourage the customer to stick around.

## Analytics

Artificial intelligence helps predict customer intent, but analytics dig into customer sentiment. Almost a third (32.7 percent) of contact centers mine social media for sentiment, preference and habits. Here's an example: if a competitor experiences an outage, analytics can identify that there are more tweets than usual about that competitor, and they're all coming from a certain area with negative sentiment (i.e. "I hate that provider A's service just went down!"). Agents can then respond to customers who are unhappy with their service.

It's important to remember that every social media user can be a potential customer, and if there's an agent to step in and save the day, they might be more likely to switch to your brand. In fact, 56 percent of customers will stop doing business with a company after a poor service experience.

So what kind of messages should agents look out for on social media? There are four main types, and they all have one thing in common: a customer who is ready to act.



## Take Note, Then Take Action

With so many tweets, posts and comments being published every day, there's no way for agents to keep track of every single one. But with the 3 A's, agents can identify customers who are ready to buy in four distinct scenarios:

### Direct Sales Mentions

In this scenario, customers are already ready to buy your product or service. In fact, they might mention your brand directly and ask what you have to offer them. If a customer tweets, "I'm in the market for a new cable company," text analytics can track mentions of your brand, a phrase like "cable company," and then agents can intervene with an offer. (A little personality doesn't hurt, either!)

## Comparison Shoppers

In this scenario, a customer mentions two, three, or even four brands because they're not sure which product or service they need. Text analytics can monitor for mentions of your brand alongside other competitors, or even just competitors' names—that way you can be sure your company is part of the conversation, even if you're not mentioned.

It's important for agents to be the first with an authentic response—it's easy for customers to tell when companies are using the same response for every customer. Being the first to answer, and having an offer ready, can help seal the deal.

## Competitor Churn

In this scenario, a customer is complaining about a competitor's product or service. They might tweet at or mention your company to see if you can help them. Text analytics can scan for negative sentiment surrounding your competitors, letting you identify when customers are most likely to switch.

For example, if a customer tweets, "I have been on the phone with customer service four times in the past week," agents can intervene with a response such as, "Time to try something new! We'll cover your cost to switch to brand A."

## Referrals

In this scenario, someone is referring your product or service to a third-party comparison shopper. They might also be coming to the aid of a customer who is sharing a bad experience they've had with a brand.

Text analytics can monitor for positive sentiment surrounding your brand. If a customer is referring your product or service to another potential customer, agents can echo that sentiment with a message such as, "That person is completely right! We've got the lowest cost per month and the most availability. Check out our plan for new customers."

By having agents ready to respond with an offer, especially when customers are most receptive, agents can become a reliable revenue driver for your organization.



## What Agents Need to Succeed

For agents to succeed at social media engagement, they already have what they need to get started: a human touch. But they also need a platform that can organize the kind of messages that come in, and sift through social posts with a focus on sales queues. CRM integration can provide a more complete view of past customer interactions across channels, and specifically provide more context into customers' positive or negative comments on social media.

Agents should also have the ability to transition to other channels from within the same platform that they use to respond to social media requests. Over half of companies today have a single system that processes customer interactions on digital-assisted channels like social media.

Moving seamlessly between channels is a must-have. If a conversation needs to be taken off of social media and moved to a more formal channel, like Apple Business Chat, agents should be able to transition between channels from a single platform so they don't lose context. And if a conversation was initiated by a bot and passed to a live agent, agents should be able to see the whole comment thread so they can seamlessly pick up the conversation. Visibility between channels progresses the conversation without frustrating the customer, as the entire conversation is documented within a CRM.

Notably, a platform should let agents respond to any digital customer service inquiries from the same platform—they can be monitoring for new opportunities while ensuring that existing customers don't become former customers.

## The Next Steps

Contact centers will always be a popular channel for customer service, and that won't change in the near future. What can and should change is how contact centers are using social media. Instead of using social media solely to resolve customer complaints, agents can initiate sales interactions, delivering twice as much value from a single digital channel.

So where will your business take social media? Are you content to have it be just a service channel—or are you sold on the sales opportunity?

<sup>1</sup> Dimension Data, "2016 Global Contact Centre Benchmarking Report"

<sup>2</sup> Brandwatch, "121 Amazing Social Media Statistics and Facts"

<sup>3</sup> Internet Live Stats, "Twitter Usage Statistics"

<sup>4</sup> Microsoft, "2017 State of Global Customer Service Report"

<sup>5</sup> Brand24, "The State of Social Selling"

## APPENDIX



### **Engaging Customer Experiences**

Digital disrupters have reset the bar and fundamentally changed how companies engage their customers. Earning and keeping customer loyalty is a growing challenge; one that requires customer journey orchestration. [Learn more here.](#)

### **How To Succeed At Data-Driven Journey Orchestration**

Almost 90 percent of customers think brands need to work harder at creating a seamless experience. But with disconnected communication channels and siloed departments, it's a problem that's hard to overcome.

Until now. Discover how journey mapping can move you from siloed customer communications to unified customer experiences—and help you engage customers throughout their journey. [Learn more here.](#)

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## MEET THE TEAM



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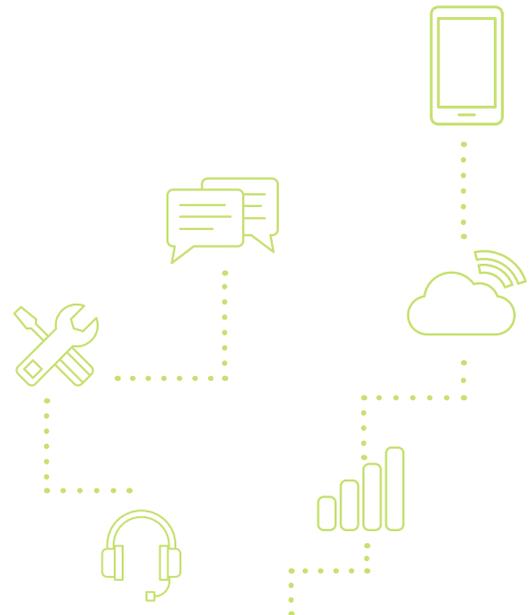
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**Contact us for our 2019 Calendar!**