Implementing cloud based technology to drive contact centre efficiency and improve service delivery

Lessons Learnt from NSW Department of Justice's Transition to a Cloud Based Telephony

In 2016 the NSW Department of Justice began the transition to a cloud based telephony system and seized the opportunity to revisit long-held practices and engage staff in a series of reforms to provide better service to customers.

For their contact centre, communication, training and change management strategies were essential to ensure staff moved seamlessly onto the new platform and embraced the reformation of other processes to drive a customer centric experience.

While the journey was not without its challenges, according to Nicholas D'Cruz, Contact Centre Manager at the Department of Justice, the key to success has was keeping the customer front-of-mind.

"Always putting the customer as the centre focus of anything we're doing has been helpful. Our communication with staff always had the customer in mind and this helped them to understand what the advantage of the new platform was going to be for the customer, as well as for them," he says.

And this focus seems to be working. Since transitioning to the cloud, the contact centre has seen a 75% reduction in time to answer, a 10% reduction in average handle call time and more motivated staff who are willing to embrace the benefits of new technology and processes.

Ahead of Government Contact Centre Summit 2017, Nicholas shares the lessons learned from rolling-out cloud based telephony in their contact centre and the steps his team is taking to roll-out other digital platforms to improve service delivery and the overall experience for customers.
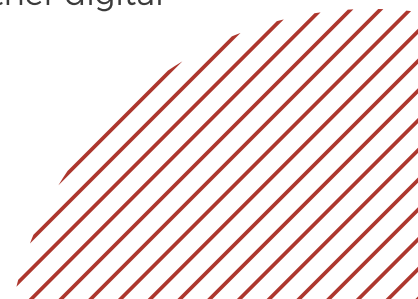
Building the business case: gaining internal buy-in for new tech

"Over the past 12 months our contact centre has been transitioning to a new cloud based technology platform. This transition was part of a broader organisational strategy, so the move was mandated and was something we did not have a choice about.

However in the early stages we did realise that this new technology could have a huge impact on improving the customer experience, largely because as part of the transition we were able to allocate more specialised agents to take customer calls and queries.

As this was a mandated change, it was important that we gained staff buy-in in the new platform and effectively explained to them what it would mean for them as well as for our customers. We talked about the advantages of the new platform, how it would less restrictive for us as a contact centre and how we would have more control over it.

While not all staff are directly impacted, it was very beneficial for agents to hear how the cloud would help become more autonomous as a function and less reliant upon other departments to enact certain processes and changes. This really helped us gain buy-in.

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# Implementation: ensuring the transition to the cloud happens smoothly

"When it came to implementation, one of the biggest challenges we faced was uncertainty in terms of how it was going to happen and how it was going to impact staff.

We overcame this challenge by being quite confident and ensuring constant communication and transparency throughout the journey. We used techniques such as behavioural insights sessions to convey that moving to the cloud is essentially the norm and is what to be expected.

We wanted to communicate to staff that the cloud isn't a massive change for everybody and rather, it is the next step in our overall contact centre improvement journey. The aim of this framing was to ensure that moving to a cloud telephony platform wasn't too concerning for staff.

It was also important to ensure we had all the tools and appropriate training in place that was easy to access. Our aim was to let staff know in advance about how change would affect them as well as providing them progress updates, without making a huge deal about it. This helped to create an atmosphere of confidence amongst staff when it came to using the new platform.

We also ensured that all staff were trained before the new platform went live. Our contact centre only had access to the new platform at very short notice, but this actually worked in our favour.
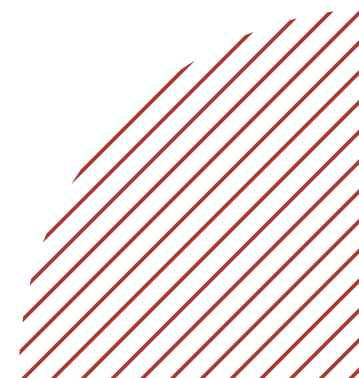
"For example, rather than having staff trained months earlier and potentially losing confidence by thinking about all the things that could go wrong, we trained staff fairly close to the date of implementation which helped to boost confidence. This meant staff didn't really have the opportunity to get too nervous and everyone just got on with the job."

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Benefits for both staff and customers

"One of the biggest benefits we've realised in our contact centre since transitioning to the cloud has been that we have more flexibility. For example, being able to close or open phone queues. We are now also able to update messages on our own without sourcing an external provider. While we still work with our providers Genesis and Telstra quite closely, we're not necessarily going through the middle-man as much as we previously were.

It has essentially enabled us to become more efficient. While on some occasions there are things which might take longer (like the employee onboarding process or training) we now have set expectations on how long different processes like these will take.

There is now an expectation and understanding about our processes which is creating more transparency and an improved culture. It also means in terms of staffing we're not making as many changes short notice as we previously were and we have more consistency in our approach."

Interested in learning more?

Join Nicholas at the 17th Annual Government Contact Centre Summit 2017 taking place on 30-31 August in Sydney where he will further explore the NSW Department of Justice's contact centre transformation and how they are leveraging new technologies to improve service delivery and internal staff engagement.

For more information visit http://govcc.iqpc.com.au or call +61 2 9229 1000 or email enquire@iqpc.com.au