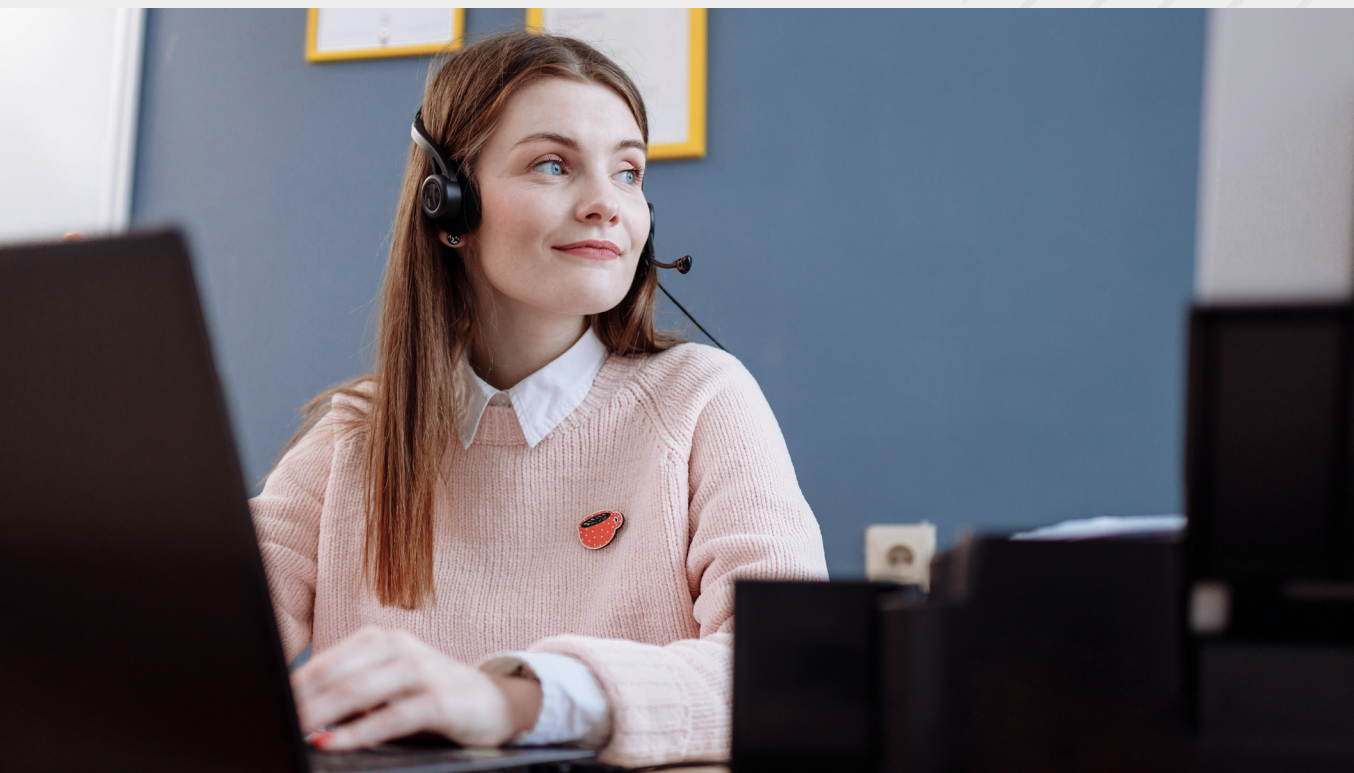# 2023 Contact Center Forecast

WRITTEN BY: BROOKE LYNCH

SPONSORED BY: **twilio**

Featuring Insights From

Lenore Files
Principal Product Marketing Manager
Twilio

Raphaël Daverio
Senior Product Manager
TravelPerk

Introduction

Over the past two years, organizations have clearly prioritized the customer experience. When everything else was subject to change, the least they could do was deliver a great experience. Today, that focus on continuous improvement and dedication to delivering exceptional support remains a priority. Companies are now working to actively exceed expectations by presenting more streamlined, personalized and convenient support options.

With a collective focus on both the customer and agent experience, organizations are hoping to accelerate this momentum in 2023. By optimizing contact center operations, companies can improve the agent's workflow, enhance engagement and reduce effort across the journey.

However, beyond just simplifying processes, contact center leaders are now focused on relationship building. Creating a culture that amplifies the agent's voice and empowers more active engagement will be critical in 2023. Further, establishing meaningful customer relationships that prompt higher satisfaction and long term loyalty will also be key for imminent growth.

This report will cover a complete contact center forecast for 2023. Highlighting the top trends in customer behavior, agent experience and contact center operations, it will uncover a roadmap for future success.

What Customers Want in 2023

Customers were less optimistic about experiences in 2022. Although businesses certainly prioritized the customer experience, they did not achieve sweeping improvements this year. According to CCW Digital research, **only 10% of customers stated that experiences have significantly improved** — meaning that although companies are working to deliver optimal experiences, there is still a disconnect when it comes to the customer.

To actively impress customers, companies need to step away from typical reactive support mechanisms and adopt a more proactive service approach. In 2023, customers will expect all-encompassing service experiences that predict their needs and proactively address their concerns. Customers want agents to understand their intentions and offer highly personalized support. Because, **only 15% of customers stated that most experiences were tailored to their specific preferences, needs and previous interactions this year.**

Aligning contact center operations and technology to improve personalization and enhance experiences will be a priority in the upcoming year. Conveniences like not having to repeat personal information and reask questions, having access to intuitive and accurate self-service and speaking to confident and knowledgeable frontline staff seems simple enough, yet, many companies are failing to deliver these basics.

So, what *do* customers want in 2023? Consistency. Exceptional support will now be measured not only by great interactions, but the consistency with which customers are able to access them. Organizations that are equipped to deliver a consistently accurate, fast and personalized experience will win customers in 2023. And implementing the resources needed to achieve these more intuitive experiences will be a critical imperative.

The Year of Data

To continuously improve experiences, companies rely on effective data. Establishing hyper-personalized experiences requires comprehensive insight and context. However, many organizations are currently lacking these key details. CCW Digital research confirmed that **59% of companies do not currently have enough real-time insight data about customer intention. Further, 49% do not have a 360 degree view of their customers' journey.**

When it comes to providing high quality personalization, data is critical. The customer journey is unique and every new touchpoint offers insight into intention, sentiment and behavior. Not having access to this deeper look at customer behavior across the journey means companies are simply unprepared to address deeper needs. Further, it keeps experiences surface level, denying any level of meaningful personalization.

Therefore, leaders must ensure that they are equipped to not only measure, but analyze and act on their data in 2023. Further, organizations should be prepared to leverage this data to proactively address customer needs and identify ongoing points of friction. By better understanding the customer, companies can meet them with the care they need throughout their experience and alleviate points of friction before they become widespread.

Better data management will allow for more natural, intuitive experiences, and prompt meaningful interactions. With all of the necessary context upfront, agents will be more attentive, empathetic and engaging when interacting with customers. Data driven communication and personalization will empower organizations to build customer relationships and instill long term loyalty.

Engaging Agents

In 2022, organizations finally realized the importance of the agent experience. After years of saying happy agents create happy customers, companies finally took notice. Going beyond superficial perks, organizations became dedicated to delivering an experience that keeps agents engaged and invested in their growth within the role.

This will be no different in the new year — according to CCW Digital research, **45% of companies are setting the goal of improving agent engagement and workplace culture in 2023. Additionally, 47% are aiming to unify systems and tools to reduce agent effort. By engaging agents with better processes and efficient workflows, companies can empower their frontline employees to deliver better experiences.** By enhancing engagement, organizations will also establish greater expertise as retention increases.

Leading companies are also leveraging hiring practices to secure talent who are dedicated to delivering exceptional experiences. **52% of companies stated that they are hiring more highly skilled individuals who can contribute more value in 2023.** As companies look to establish more meaningful customer relationships they must understand the skills needed to build these connections. Hiring and training agents to flex into a more analytical, relationship-focused role will be critical in the new year.

2023 Tech Trends

To address the top challenges contact centers faced in 2022, leaders will look to technology. Implementing solutions that can optimize the agent workflow, improve operations and streamline experiences will be mission critical. As customer expectations evolve, companies must have flexible, sophisticated technology in place to readily adapt. Here we will discuss the top technology trends of 2023 and highlight solutions for continuous improvement.

Flexing the Contact Center

To build the contact center of the future, companies must prioritize flexibility. Shifting away from rigid legacy systems that complicate the agent experience and slow down customer interactions, organizations will be implementing flexible, open solutions in 2023. Leveraging composable solutions will give organizations agency over their customer experience and ensure long term innovation and growth.

With a programmable cloud contact center software, businesses gain complete control over their implementation. By adding features that are most necessary, companies can optimize at their own pace and prioritize the most critical improvements. API-based programmability also empowers leaders to adapt at a moment's notice — with customer needs continuously evolving, flexible solutions encourage expansion and growth even during times of change.

> "This level of agility allows them to adapt at the speed of their business and customers. Businesses should be able to first ideate and then creatively think about how they want to serve their customers, and then deploy with a flexible platform that supports that vision. It really sets the foundation for innovation. Just adding digital channels, or a web chat channel on your website, isn't enough, the experience needs to be orchestrated, while leveraging data for personalization."

Lenore Files
Twilio

Increased flexibility also ensures a more intuitive customer experience. According to CCW Digital research **as high as 55% of customers stated that experiences didn't feel seamless this past year.** Leveraging real-time flexibility promotes continued improvement and optimization, assuring customer needs are met across their end-to-end journey. For example, if customers are leaning more toward digital, companies can introduce WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger or Webchat to engage customers who prefer a seamless chat experience. And, with a composable, open platform, agents can easily access customer insight to meet them with the care they need as they add-on new channels.

Implementing technology that promotes innovation is critical for success in 2023. Organizations that stick with legacy systems will continue to perpetuate customer pain points like long wait times and frequent transfers and ultimately push customers away.

Better Mortgage

Better Mortgage is a digital mortgage lender with a goal of making the mortgage process faster, more transparent, and more accessible to their customers.

The Facts:

- Their existing contact center software didn't integrate with its proprietary system for mortgage origination and lead generation, making it difficult to take true ownership of their customer experience.

- With Flex, they could get the customization they were looking for and partner with them every step of the way to bring their vision to reality.

The Solution?:

- They now have Twilio Flex for inbound voice (sales, operations, and supervisor functions), progressive outbound dialing (SDRs), and two-way SMS for agent communications. They're able to scale quickly as they grow, as they doubled the number of agents, with plans for additional growth.

Giving Agents a Curated POV

Flexible UI solutions empower organizations to design a better agent experience. **With 47% of contact center leaders focusing on improving the agent workflow and reducing effort**, it is clear that customizable, intuitive technology will be pivotal in the new year.

Platforms that empower agents with a single pane of glass will help meet this requirement. With a curated interface employees can manage tasks across channels, create engagement workflows and surface key insights during customer interactions. API integrations allow agents to quickly access the customer's history including past orders and payments, all in a single view.

Integrations like Google Contact Center AI also ensure agents are receiving direct guidance and information in real-time. Keeping agents up-to-date with instant insight and supporting them with recommended responses allows them to engage further with the customer, rather than the technology. Bolstering accuracy, consistency and empathy, agents will be equipped to deliver better interactions that support relationship growth.

With greater flexibility over their solutions, companies can give agents more of a voice in technology additions, features and outcomes. By keeping agents in the conversation, organizations can be sure that employees are leveraging technology to its full capacity while optimizing efficiency.

> "Having a flexible UI and single pane of glass cuts down on frustration and the inability to obtain the information needed at critical times. We are seeing an emerging best practice where agents are engaged in focus groups and are asked what works and what doesn't. What integrations do they need, they essentially help design the UI, and then with a flexible platform, like Twilio Flex changes can be made in the next revision. It does wonders to engage agents, it increases buy-in and ultimately lowers attrition as they feel like an integral part of decision making."

Lenore Files
Twilio

TravelPerk

TravelPerk is a great example of an agent-inspired contact center. They built their own solution with Flex.

The Facts:

- The problem they needed to solve was different tools for different channels (voice, chat, email), different tools for context and different tools for action (internal systems, external suppliers, etc).

The Solution?:

- With Twilio Flex, they were able to prototype what they wanted and ran focus groups with agents to better understand their needs and so with their feedback and guidance they came out with their own system. Agents even voted on the name: 'Lighthouse.' This impact this has delivered has been measurable, with an NPS improvement to 95%

> "The core thing Flex enables us to do is build a personalized experience that we can customize for our agents."

Raphaël Daverio
TravelPerk

Leveraging a CDP for Customer Delight

Data will obviously be critical in 2023. As customers seek out better, faster, more personalized experiences, companies will need to remain in the know if they want to keep up. Customer data is the ultimate connector between organizations and their customers, so implementing resources that effectively curate, analyze and leverage data will be necessary.

Customer Data Platforms (CDP) can help organizations navigate their data and target customers for optimal personalization and engagement. With a CDP, companies collect data from every interaction across

channels, whether a customer directly engages with an agent or browses a website. Organizations can then piece together a customer's complete journey and build a 360 degree profile accessible by teams across the business.

With this deeper picture of the customer, companies can begin to facilitate data-driven conversations that address customer needs effectively. Enhancing personalization with more in-depth insight ensures customers are receiving the most effective support, increasing satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, companies can deliver the consistency customers expect with one single source of truth. By leveraging key customer details, agents can deliver personalized messages at the most opportune moments and proactively anticipate their needs as they uncover their deeper intentions.

If 2023 is the year of data, companies must implement Customer Data Platforms to better understand customer needs and organically address pain points to deliver exceptional experiences no matter the circumstances.

Vertu Motors

Vertu Motors is a car dealership group based in the United Kingdom with a significant presence online.

The Facts:

- Partnering with Twilio consulting partner Ciptex, Vertu built a truely game changing solution with Twilio Flex and Segment.

- Segment provides full call context to all Flex users by capturing clickstream data from shopping activity and pairing that with data on sales, service and parts records for customers and prospects This allows the Vertu Team to know why their customers are calling them before they even respond.

- For Example if a customer calls in to the sales team they can see who's calling, if they are an existing customer they will see the details on the car they currently own, the value of that car for a trade in and the last cars that they viewed online.

The Solution?: Now Vertu agents can personalize their conversations by recommending cars they KNOW the customer is interested in AND that are in their budget.

- They now have Twilio Flex for inbound voice (sales, operations, and supervisor functions), progressive outbound dialing (SDRs), and two-way SMS for agent communications. They're able to scale quickly as they grow, as they doubled the number of agents, with plans for additional growth.

About the Author

Brooke Lynch is an analyst and staff writer for CCW Digital. With a background in television news and production, she's worked across industries covering B2B marketing, procurement and finance events.

Her current work highlights challenges and opportunities for customer experience and contact center leaders, with a recent focus on e-commerce, retail, and technology.

Brooke studied journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and held positions at Fox Business in Development and as a college associate on Countdown to the Closing Bell.

Brooke Lynch, Senior Analyst & Staff Writer, CCW Digital

Meet Our Analysts:

Brian Cantor
Principal Analyst & Director, CCW Digital

Wandy Ortiz
Content Analyst

Christine Ducey
Content Analyst

Get involved:

Ben McClymont
Divisional Sales Director
E: **ben.mcclymont@cmpteam.com**

Simon Copcutt
Head of Strategic Accounts
E: **simon.copcutt@cmpteam.com**