

A man in a dark suit and light blue shirt is seen from behind, holding a smartphone to his ear. He is standing in a city at night, with blurred lights from buildings and streetlights in the background. An orange semi-transparent banner is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

Using Your Phone System to Create the
Ultimate Customer Experience

**7 strategies for wowing your customers with
Unified Communications**

SANG*MA

THE CURRENT STATE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

Consumers are getting more choosy, which means customer service is becoming more crucial to businesses' success than ever before.

55%

55% of consumers are willing to pay more for a guaranteed good experience.

ThinkJar¹

84%

84% of organisations working to improve customer experience report an increase in revenue.

Dimension Data²

77%

After having a positive experience with a company, 77% of customers would recommend it to a friend.

Temkin Group³

14%

When comparing the total growth rate of all customer experience leaders to that of all customer experience laggards, the leaders collectively have a 14% advantage.

Forrester⁴

With the rise of the Internet and social media, it's easy to believe that consumers would rather handle their service issues online. The problem is that it can take a while for businesses to respond to emails and direct messages, and you have no idea when (or if) you'll get a response. This is one of the many reasons why most people still prefer to resolve their customer service issues over the phone.

U.S. customers prefer to resolve their customer service issues by phone (48%) over any other method (the second most popular being email at 24%, half as many as those who prefer the phone).

eMarketer⁵

The truth is that business phone systems are still relevant in every industry today. Companies heavily rely on them to keep their clients happy and their internal structures organized. However, advances in technology are blazing past ancient, analog legacy phone systems. A better grade of customer service is demanding better business phone systems. This is why Unified Communications is quickly becoming the new standard.

WHAT IS UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS?

Unified Communications (UC) refers to a phone system that integrates (or “unifies”) multiple communication methods within a business.

For example, your business probably communicates in a number of ways: phone calls, video conferencing, instant messaging, email, SMS, fax... the list goes on.

A UC solution brings together all the ways your business communicates and lets them “talk” to each other so they can work together in one system, making your business much more efficient.



UC can improve your company's customer service by providing:

- Improved service time⁶
- Increased agent knowledge
- Flexible work options for agents
- Informative, quick responses from agents
- Quicker access to customer information
- Ease of connecting an incoming caller to the correct agent

According to CRN Magazine, there are seven key successful customer service strategies. Let's look at each of them and see what part UC can play in every one.

Among B2B decision makers, lack of speed in interactions with their suppliers is the number one pain point, mentioned twice as often as price.

Temkin Group⁶

74% of people are likely to switch brands if they find the purchasing process too difficult.

Salesforce⁷

1 INTEGRATE EASY-TO-NAVIGATE SELF SERVICE

Human interactions are hugely important, but so is getting customers the service they need quickly. Allowing customers to serve themselves can make them happier and saves companies a lot of manpower and money. Imagine a simple task that might take an agent a couple minutes to handle. Now multiply that by a thousand. That's a lot of time that could be better spent!



UC SOLUTION

IVR
(Interactive
Voice Response)

Interactive Voice Response systems allow you to easily create “call trees” that can be customized infinitely. Auto attendants use these call trees to route customers to the correct agents, eliminating the need for administrative assistants to constantly be on standby for phone calls.

IVRs can also automate processes like giving customers the ability to make payments or check account balances over the phone, with no agent required. This hands-off, frictionless approach gives customers what they want whenever they want it and removes any potential for human error.

Incoming caller ID information can also be altered depending on the customer's interactions with the IVR. This allows your agents to know why a customer is calling in. For instance, a customer needing support may show up on an agent's caller ID with the word “Support” included. With IVRs, the possibilities are endless.

SUCCESSFULLY SUPPORT EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL CUSTOMERS 2

Not only should you support your external customers, but employees should be a priority as well. No agent wants overly-complicated (or worse: a total lack of) service processes. Customers and employees alike deserve to be supported and informed. If they're not, you run the risk of losing them.



UC SOLUTION

Call Queues /
Automated Call
Distribution

UC solutions give you the ability to route an incoming call to more than one agent at a time. A customer seeking support no longer has to wait for a specific agent to be done with his or her current phone call to receive attention. Incoming calls can be routed to multiple agents so that the first available agent can take the call, providing quicker service and distributing the workload.

Calls may also be organized and distributed based on certain agents' specialties, time of day, day of the week, or any specific order that you choose. Wait time rules can route calls based on how long someone has been on hold so that they can be answered as quickly as possible.

Furthermore, you can create your own ring strategies, like the in-order strategy. This gives a specific agent or agents the first chance to answer certain calls before sending the calls to other agents. This is helpful if you have a few specialists or more experienced agents that you would rather customers to speak with first before speaking with the rest of your team.

Another popular ring strategy is round-robin, where incoming calls rotate equally among agents. This is great for sales teams because it gives every agent an equal chance to make sales.

Once you have established multiple call queues, they can be completely customized. Different on-hold music and messaging can be assigned to your call queues to create distinct customer experiences. For example, you can play notifications to callers letting them know how much longer they will have to wait or how many people are in front of them. This is also great for advertising. If you have more than one product line or brand, you can assign different music or ads to queues so that callers will hear messaging specific to what they are calling about.

It is anywhere from 5 to 25 times more expensive to acquire a new customer than it is to keep a current one.

**Harvard
Business Review⁸**

3 CONSOLIDATE DISJOINTED DEPARTMENTS OR LOCATIONS

Companies need to be able to efficiently organize and manage themselves as they grow and add new employees, departments, and locations. UC can give companies a unified appearance, regardless of where employees are located.



UC SOLUTION

Cloud
Deployments

If you are a growing company with multiple locations or need geographic flexibility, cloud-based phone systems are an excellent option to unify your business communications. User and admin portals are accessible via the Internet, which gives all users access to the same features and functionality wherever they may be.

Having your phone system in the cloud gives you the flexibility to expand or retract it effortlessly, whereas with an on-premise appliance you must correctly estimate how many employees you will have so you can purchase the correct server ahead of time. Additionally, some UC vendors even run promotions so you can get up and running with zero upfront hardware costs.



UC SOLUTION

Presence
Integration

Another fantastic way to bring together disjointed departments is with Presence, a feature that allows you to see an agent's current status. You can program statuses for all kinds of situations so that you can instantly see, for instance, if your agents are available, if they are on a call, if they don't want to be disturbed, if they are on vacation, or whatever status the situation calls for.

Another great thing about Presence is that it doesn't matter whether a location's deployment is on-premise or in the cloud. You can see presence information across the board, giving you full supervision over your team members wherever they happen to be.

DEVELOP A **REMOTE WORKER STRATEGY** 4

The Internet has organically led to the rise of remote working. People are now seeking out jobs that offer more flexibility, and those jobs are becoming more common. All businesses must develop a remote worker strategy that also guarantees their customers' needs will be met any day of the week.



UC SOLUTION

Mobile
Integration

It's possible to keep both your customers and employees happy while providing more work flexibility with UC mobile applications. These apps or softphones allow you to use your mobile phone as you would your desk phone. Calls made from your softphone app appear on recipients' caller IDs as your work extension, and call details from softphones are recorded so that they can be included in reports, just like calls made from desk phones.

Because of these innovations, mobile integration keeps your workforce at its fullest potential even when your employees are away from the office. Your customer service team won't be behind just because one of its members had to leave the office or work from home.

5 CREATE A SINGLE SOURCE OF CUSTOMER INFORMATION

Most customers probably don't enjoy reciting their personal information to strangers every time they call your business. And you can't blame them. Having to retrieve and record customer information for every call is awkward, impersonal, and wastes a lot of time. Thanks to today's technology, there's a much better way to handle that issue.



UC SOLUTION

Third-Party
Application
Integration

UC phone systems can integrate with third-party applications like customer relationship management (CRM) tools. The Switchvox phone system, for instance, integrates with Salesforce, Zendesk, and Outlook. This allows returning callers' information to be pulled from an application and populate agents' caller IDs. No more gawky phone interrogations!

Switchvox even integrates with Google Chrome and Firefox web browsers so that you can instantly dial phone numbers that you find online. As we've seen so far, it's the little things that add up to a lot of saved time and energy.

IMPROVE **6** DATA QUALITY AND ACCESS

Companies need to be able to measure their successfulness frequently and painlessly so that they can be proactive about future customer interactions. This requires the recording of data in some way, shape, or form. And the more accurate, detailed, and easy-to-access that data is, the better businesses can learn from it.



UC SOLUTION

Reporting

UC phone systems include and provide exhaustive reports on hold times, login times, the number of abandoned or redirected calls, and more. Reporting helps you monitor, control, and optimize your service level agreements (SLAs) by giving you access to the data and analytics you need.

Some UC solutions even report granular details for every individual call that goes through your call center. You are able to see who made the call, how long the phone rang, whether the call was transferred or not, whether it went into a call queue or conference room, and more. This allows you to pinpoint any pain points that may exist in your call-in customer experience.

Reports can be modified endlessly. If you want to see how many calls each agent has made or received, you can run reports on-the-fly or have them emailed to you on a regular schedule. You can conduct performance reviews by comparing multiple agents' statistics side by side. And if you'd really like to personalize your data, you can export it to create your own reports with your favorite reporting applications.



UC SOLUTION

Real-time Queue Statistics

Beyond having post-call information, knowing what's going on in your call center at any given moment is crucial for delivering the best customer service and adapting to present circumstances. Some UC solutions offer a web-based wallboard that displays current call information and color-coded alerts to notify managers about high hold times. This allows supervisors to efficiently manage calls and agents and lets them know when to add additional resources or make short-term staffing changes.

7 MAKE MONITORING INTEGRAL TO TRAINING

A lack of guidance for inexperienced agents can lead to disaster. It's the employer's responsibility to train employees the right way the first time.



UC SOLUTION

Training
Tools

With training tools found in many UC systems, you don't have to formally educate people about service theories and hypothetical situations. Experience is the best teacher. Recording functionality, for instance, allows you to record all or certain calls taking place in your organization. If you record trainees on practice calls, they can listen to their calls afterwards to hear how they sound to customers. Additionally, some UC solutions allow you to schedule recordings and have them sent to your email address.

Being able to actively monitor agents on phone calls also guarantees that they are practicing correct behaviors. Monitoring functionality allows a supervisor to listen to agents' live phone calls.

Similarly, whisper functionality allows supervisors to speak to their agents on live calls without customers hearing. This is helpful for giving advice to agents without the customers' knowledge.

The barge function allows supervisors to enter an agent's call, making it a three-way call. This is more of an emergency feature that is best used when a customer is very dissatisfied or an agent expressly asks for help.

CONCLUSION

Customer service is a vital part of every business, and the need to provide customers with an exceptional experience is only growing. To remain competitive in the future, organizations must not only adopt strategies for giving customers the level of service they expect, but must wow them in the process. Unified Communications is an integral facet of a great customer service strategy and provides businesses the means to execute their plan.



Sources

- ¹ Afshar, V. 50 Important Customer Experience Stats for Business Leaders. Huffington Post.
- ² Dimension Data. 2017 Global Customer Experience (CX) Benchmarking Report.
- ³ Temkin Group. ROI of Customer Experience.
- ⁴ Forrester. Customer Experience Drives Revenue Growth.
- ⁵ Marketer. Preferred Communication Channel for Select Customer Service Inquiries/Issues According to US Internet Users.
- ⁶ Temkin Group. Tech Vendor NPS & Loyalty Benchmark
- ⁷ Salesforce. State of the Connected Customer.
- ⁸ Gallo, A. The Value of Keeping the Right Customers. Harvard Business Review.



Everything Connects, Connect with Sangoma!

Sangoma Technologies is a trusted leader in value-based Unified Communications (UC) and UC as a Service (UCaaS) solutions. Sangoma has the products, the people, and the proven track record to help your business shine with the latest communications and collaboration technology. For over thirty years, we've helped businesses grow through scalable, flexible, reliable communications solutions. Today, we offer a complete portfolio of next-generation Unified Communications solutions, including IP-based PBXs, cloud-based communications, fax solutions, SIP trunking services, session border controllers, and much more.

Sangoma products and services are backed by the best engineers in the business and a professional services team that is second to none. We also offer Peace of Mind Packages (POMPs) that deliver systems integration expertise in a completely managed solution that includes maintenance, upgrades, security patches, and more for the life of the solution. If you're looking for a Unified Communications platform that delivers advanced features, flexibility, and high performance, you'll find it at Sangoma.

To learn more about Sangoma products and services, visit us at www.sangoma.com.

Contact us. We're here to help.

Talk with a UC specialist.

Sales:

+1 905-474-1990

Toll Free in N. America:

+1 800-388-2475