

The rise of the multi-skilled agent, by Thomas Rødseth at Puzzel

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The seismic shift in consumer behaviour over the past few years has brought fresh challenges to organisations looking to respond with fast-moving, efficient contact centres to match. The prevalence of social media and 24/7 connectivity, made possible by mobile devices, conspire to make instant responses and a single integrated interaction critical to running a successful customer service centre.

The evolution from a multichannel to an omni-channel environment that delivers a fast, seamless yet highly personalised experience to customers, whatever channel they choose to use to communicate, adds additional pressure. Any breaks in communication are opportunities to lose customers and prospects, which means that agents need to be adept at managing the different demands of voice and text based communication, such as social media and web chat. Choosing the right staff and training them is now more important than ever before.

Fortunately, help is at hand. The advent of cloud-based technology brings out the very best in today's multi-skilled agents, empowering them while putting managers in control and delivers true social customer service. The 100% web-based nature of cloud technology means users can access the system from any location and from any device via an Internet connection, thereby vastly improving the speed and first contact resolution expected from an increasingly demanding client base.

Here's how to build the next generation contact centre in the cloud. Select technology solutions that offer:

- No more queues in the cloud - managing and scheduling multi-skilled agents is a perennial problem but cloud technology helps. Every channel is managed by the same intelligent routing algorithm meaning customers receive a consistent experience, regardless of the channel. Wait times are dramatically reduced and queues are minimised.

Contact centre managers can set different priorities for each channel, allowing agents to focus on the enquiries that matter most to their business. For example, when volumes are high the system can turn off channels such as chat, allowing agents to concentrate only on voice enquiries.

- Real-time performance monitoring – enables agents can see and change, in real-time, their status in the queues they are logged into. They also have visibility of other agents' status and activities. Supervisors can see the total number of requests queued at any point in each channel and make adjustments as necessary. Look for a solution with a high level of configurability to display a warning message if too few agents are active in a queue.

- Outbound dialling - finding the rare breed of agent who is skilled at both outbound and inbound calls is a gift. Using an outbound dialler which can combine inbound and outbound calls in a seamless fashion means greater efficiency from these talented agents. A cloud-based solution allows calls from an outbound list to be given a lower priority compared to regular incoming calls. This increases impact as outgoing calls are activated and flagged-up automatically to the waiting multi-skilled agent.

The agent can then categorise each call answered and if necessary reschedule it for a call back at a more

suitable time - a perfect example of how to manage call blending for multi-skilled agents.

- Call recording and quality monitoring - call recording allows users to manage their audio catalogue and decide exactly what type of calls or chat conversations should be recorded. Quality Monitoring enables contact centre supervisors to retrieve, manage, listen to, save and share voice and chat conversations in an efficient and user-friendly way. Managers can listen to and view conversations, identify skills gaps and highlight future training requirements for their already multi-talented workforce.
- Sophisticated voice functionality – despite the surge in digital communications, organisations still need to provide excellent voice facilities or risk alienating a vital part of their customer base. Innovative technology gives agents the necessary tools to handle telephone enquiries effectively by incorporating a wealth of powerful, specialised features such as Softphone, Outbound Dialler, Interactive Voice Response (IVR), Call Recording and Call-Back.

These solutions can be integrated into any third party CRM system and link seamlessly with other directories such as Microsoft Outlook and Microsoft Skype for Business to improve accuracy and responsiveness in one go.

Multi-skilling agents can help drive a more efficient contact centre operation and the answer to managing and empowering them lies in the cloud. Make sure you're not left behind by deploying the latest technology to reduce costs, by staffing to meet demand and driving business growth while providing next generation customer service with the next generation of multi-skilled agents.

Thomas Rødseth is VP of Product & Marketing Puzzel (formerly Intelcom's contact centre entity).

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About Puzzel

Puzzel builds on 20 years' heritage. It was one of the first pioneers to develop a cloud-based contact centre. Puzzel also encompasses leading mobile messaging and mobile payments to deliver a flexible and customisable customer interaction platform to meet the needs of today's omni-channel and mobile environments. Puzzel can be adapted to accommodate from one to several thousand agents using any device, in any location and integrates with multiple applications seamlessly.

Headquartered in Oslo, Norway, Puzzel employs over 130 people who are all passionate about delivering innovative customer interaction solutions for contact centres and mobile environments.

For more information please visit PUZZEL (<http://www.puzzel.com>)

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