

# Find your brand's voice: The future of customer communications



Redefine the customer experience and give your brand an edge with the right voice platform



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# The enduring power of voice



**61%**  
of consumers  
prefer to speak  
to a real person.<sup>1</sup>

**Did you know 61% of consumers prefer to speak to a real person when they need a question answered?<sup>1</sup> For consumers age 65 and up, that number rises to 85%.<sup>2</sup>**

Chatbots, asynchronous messaging, SMS, and other non-traditional communication channels have transformed the customer experience over the last few years. But in the rush to improve how we connect, we risk losing sight of a fundamental truth—sometimes we prefer customer service with a human touch.

This is especially true for specific segments, like older consumers. But the same holds true for all consumers under certain conditions. For example, when the question we need answered is complex. Or when the value of goods or services is high.

But voice cannot stand alone, apart from the rapidly developing customer experience ecosystem. To reach its full potential in delivering the level of service

modern consumers expect, voice must integrate seamlessly with other communication channels and the enterprise systems—like customer relationship management (CRM) or ticketing platforms—that connect those channels.

In this paper, we'll explain the role voice plays in delivering an outstanding customer experience. We'll teach you how to integrate it with other platforms and communication channels to maximize return on investment (ROI). We'll also expand on why it's important to have a market-leading voice platform as the backbone of your entire customer experience ecosystem.

<sup>1</sup> Alice Cumming, "Research suggests phone calls preferred for customer service," Business Leader, October 4, 2022, <https://www.businessleader.co.uk/research-phone-calls-preferred-customer-service/>.

<sup>2</sup> Clare McDonald, "Older customers prefer phone calls to chatbots," Computer Weekly, August 16, 2022, <https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252523867/Older-customers-prefer-phone-calls-to-chatbots>.

# Executive summary

How enterprises deliver customer service and shape the customer experience must change—and quickly. Today's customers connect with brands using more channels than ever. They also expect the same consistent level of service and knowledge of their needs across all channels.

Despite all the ways they have to connect, consumers are less brand loyal than they've been in decades. A 2022 study found that 43% of customers switched products or canceled a service because of poor customer service.<sup>3</sup> To retain market share, brands must deliver a better experience.

To prevent brand switching, enterprises must:

- **Deliver seamless and intuitive service** to anticipate customer needs
- **Share knowledge across the enterprise** so customers don't have to repeat the same information
- **Minimize hold and wait times**—60% of customers say it's the most frustrating thing companies do<sup>4</sup>

To avoid these pitfalls, companies need to change how they deliver their customer experience. They must use the latest AI-driven technologies to unlock the full expertise of the enterprise in a way that enables customers and frontline agents to find the answer to any question, quickly.

This philosophy is called collaborative customer experience (CCX). To build CCX into your business, your first step is to migrate to a flexible, scalable, and intelligent voice solution that will also act as your data backbone for wide-area communications.

Once you have this solution in place, the next step is to integrate intelligent, data, and AI-driven assistive and analytics technologies into your contact center. From there, you'll continue to build outwards into your broader enterprise ecosystem.

Long holds and wait times—60% of customers say it's the most frustrating thing companies do.<sup>4</sup>

Making CCX the foundation for your customer service ecosystem enables you to:

- **React faster** to customer needs and changing market conditions
- **Empower agents** with data-driven tools and assistive AI
- **Scale operations** quickly to meet spikes in demand
- **Streamline your workflows** with AI and automation

AT&T and Five9 are committed to delivering high quality cloud voice and intelligent customer experience solutions. When you collaborate with AT&T and Five9, we engage with your stakeholders to assess your needs and work with you to design and build the collaborative and intelligent CX ecosystem that best suits your business goals.



<sup>3</sup> "2022 State of Customer Loyalty and Churn," TechSee, Accessed June 26, 2023, <https://techsee.me/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Churn-Survey.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Allie Decker, "11 Customer Service & Support Metrics You Must Track," HubSpot, April 5, 2022, <https://blog.hubspot.com/service/customer-experience-metrics>.

# Why the customer experience needs to change

A recent study found 78% of customers have used multiple channels to connect with companies.<sup>5</sup> And 76% expected consistent and informed interactions across all channels. In a separate study, 60% found wait times to be the most frustrating part of customer service.<sup>6</sup>

These findings reinforce what many companies already know. If a customer is unhappy, they're more likely to switch brands—now more than ever. A 2022 study found 43% of customers switched products or canceled a service because of poor customer service.<sup>7</sup> This new reality means brands must work harder to keep customers happy or risk losing them.

## Keep customers happy, get better results

The key to keeping customers happy is to deliver intelligent, adaptive, and seamless customer service across all channels and touchpoints. User experience consultant Steve Krug coined the concept of “Don’t

make me think” to illustrate how asking too much from customers impacts the interactions they have with your brand. To achieve whole brand, omnichannel transformation, companies should avoid instances in which customers have to repeat the same information to multiple agents to reach a resolution.

With customer expectations increasing, the way CX teams operate is also changing. Distributed work environments put distance between the agent and the enterprise. This is happening at a time when businesses need to give the contact center rapid access to the experts capable of solving customer issues, including customer information stored in various business systems, in the quickest way possible.

**78%**  
of customers have used multiple channels to connect with companies.<sup>5</sup>



<sup>5</sup> “State of the Connected Consumer, Fifth Edition,” Salesforce, 2022, [https://www.salesforce.com/content/dam/web/en\\_us/www/documents/research/salesforce-state-of-the-connected-customer-fifth-ed.pdf](https://www.salesforce.com/content/dam/web/en_us/www/documents/research/salesforce-state-of-the-connected-customer-fifth-ed.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Decker, “11 Customer Service & Support Metrics You Must Track.”

<sup>7</sup> “2022 State of Customer Loyalty and Churn,” TechSee.



A recent survey found nearly half of contact center workers consider their workplace stressful.<sup>9</sup>

## A new CX culture, enabled by technology

Creating processes and structures that break down the barriers of distance will enable you to leverage the benefits of a distributed workforce and foster a common working culture. But technology also plays a significant role.

Doing so means empowering customer support agents with an enterprise layer of solutions linking them to the shared technology and data sources they need as well as sources of deep expertise. Experts like company engineers, designers, logistics professionals, and others across the company.

This whole enterprise approach, also known as collaborative customer experience (CCX), enables businesses to deliver a consistently excellent customer experience across all touchpoints.

## The competition for CX talent

According to Deloitte, nearly two-thirds of U.S. contact centers are short staffed.<sup>8</sup>

To improve the contact center employee experience, companies should choose solutions that will enable agents to resolve issues sooner. This keeps customers happy and gives agents a greater sense of achievement.

<sup>8</sup> "Trends & AI in the Contact Center," Deloitte, 2023, <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/process-and-operations/us-consulting-trends-and-ai-in-contact-center.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Kamer Gür, Rukiye Pinar, Saime Erol, "Health Related Quality of Life and Related Factors Among Bank Call Center Employees," Nobel Medicus, January 2021, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348923654\\_HEALTH\\_RELATED\\_QUALITY\\_OF\\_LIFE\\_AND\\_RELATED\\_FACTORS\\_AMONG\\_BANK\\_CALL\\_CENTER\\_EMPLOYEES](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348923654_HEALTH_RELATED_QUALITY_OF_LIFE_AND_RELATED_FACTORS_AMONG_BANK_CALL_CENTER_EMPLOYEES).

# The enduring value of voice



Asked which channel they trust the most, consumers say voice.<sup>10</sup> Further research found voice to be highly effective, with 76% of respondents reporting they received the help they needed from voice support.<sup>11</sup> In a separate study, voice received the highest satisfaction rating of any support channel at 91%.<sup>12</sup>

What this data tells us is that voice is still a vital part of the customer experience mix. If you lose voice as a customer support channel, or you downgrade it and make it harder for customers to use, you risk significantly degrading the customer experience—for all consumers some of the time, and for some consumer groups, all the time.

The benefits of providing high-quality voice support include:

- **Building trust:** A human voice inspires greater trust compared to less personal communications channels<sup>13</sup>
- **Giving them what they want:** Nearly 70% of Americans prefer phone support to other channels<sup>14</sup>
- **Building rapport:** More than half of customers prefer a human conversation over other communication methods<sup>15</sup>

The role of the contact center is shifting. And for companies, the stakes couldn't be higher. Asked about their priorities, contact center leaders list revenue generation as one of their top four goals.<sup>16</sup> To make this happen, contact centers need a full range of the highest-quality tools and technologies integrated to work together as part of a single, customer experience system.

This means adding voice capabilities that provide the best possible call quality and scale easily to meet spikes in demand. They'll also need to integrate flawlessly with other contact center platforms like CRMs. To achieve this level of flexibility and scalability, the voice platform should be cloud-based.

## Embracing sentiment analysis

One benefit of integrating intelligent voice solutions into your contact center is that it enables you to use sentiment analysis. Using AI technology, sentiment analysis looks at everything from the words a customer uses, including tone and pitch, to whether they frequently interrupt the agent. With this information, it scores how positive the customer feels about the brand and their interaction.

The results can be used in many areas, from detecting when a second-tier agent needs to intervene in a call, to long-term customer service and brand communications. According to McKinsey, brands that use advanced analytics, including sentiment analysis, are 27% better at solution selling than their peers.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Brian Cantor, "Future of the Contact Center," Customer Contact Week Digital, November 30, 2022, <https://www.customercontactweekdigital.com/performance-metrics/whitepapers/2022-november-market-study-future-of-the-contact-center>.  
<sup>11</sup> "Automation in the Contact Center: 2022 Benchmark Report," Replicant, Accessed June 30, 2023, <https://www.replicant.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/2022-Benchmark-Report-Rebranded.pdf>.  
<sup>12</sup> "Zendesk Research: Customer Satisfaction," Zendesk, Accessed June 28, 2023, [https://d26a57ydgshvqx.cloudfront.net/content/resources/zendesk\\_research\\_customer\\_satisfaction.pdf](https://d26a57ydgshvqx.cloudfront.net/content/resources/zendesk_research_customer_satisfaction.pdf).  
<sup>13</sup> Katie Seaborn et al., "Voice in Human-Agent Interaction: A Survey," ACM Computing Surveys, May 3, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1145/3386867>.  
<sup>14</sup> "2021 Understanding the Modern Consumer," TCN, July 27, 2021, [https://go.tcn.com/ConsumerSurvey2021\\_InsightsCustomerService.pdf](https://go.tcn.com/ConsumerSurvey2021_InsightsCustomerService.pdf).  
<sup>15</sup> "2023 Consumer Insights Survey Results," TCN, 2023, <https://go.tcn.com/ebook-customer-service-survey-2023>.  
<sup>16</sup> "The state of customer care in 2022," McKinsey & Company, July 8, 2022, <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/operations/our-insights/the-state-of-customer-care-in-2022>.  
<sup>17</sup> Boudevijn Driedonks, Sinem Hostetter, Ryan Paulowsky, "By the numbers: What drives sales-growth outperformance," McKinsey & Company, April 13, 2021, <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/growth-marketing-and-sales/our-insights/by-the-numbers-what-drives-sales-growth-outperformance>.

# Introducing collaborative customer experience

The good news is that the enduring power of innovative, modern voice communications addresses the modern customer experience challenges we've identified so far. It does this by forming the foundation for CCX.

Integrating intelligent, data, and AI-driven technologies into your contact center so that data flows freely into a common back end enables you to unlock new ways of working and unleash your full business expertise through CCX.

CCX benefits your company by providing:

- **Business-class voice communications** for fixed-line, mobile, and softphones across your organization
- **Secure communications using encryption and SIP trunking** to connect your entire workforce, whether they're working on site, at home, or on the road
- **Voice integration with business-critical systems** such as the CRM, a customer support ticketing platform, and business-analytics applications
- **A robust, always-on, secure transport layer** that carries voice and data traffic to form the backbone for protected, distributed communications

With the technology-enabled contact center at its core, CCX finds the shortest distance between a customer query and the solution. It ensures everyone in the company—from subject matter experts to frontline agents—has instant access, in line with the relevant data security legislation, and up-to-date information about the customer and their query.

Once companies have this secure IP-based communications foundation in place—capable of carrying voice plus a host of other CX services—they can add a broad range of intelligent customer experience tools and technologies to streamline customer resolutions.

With a secure CCX backbone and high-quality cloud voice as a base layer, technologies such as Five9 Agent Assist help human agents find solutions faster and work more efficiently.

Deploying virtual agents using capabilities like sentiment analysis, shared analytics, and other common back-end systems to triage customer queries, help customers self-assist and pass complex cases, or frustrated customers, through to human agents.

## The benefits of scalability

A CCX-based communications infrastructure is much easier to scale when needed compared to Private Branch Exchanges (PBX) and customer service applications running in silos.

If customer demand spikes, you simply add more licenses—for example, when using softphones and other agent applications—and rent more bandwidth. This enables you to be more flexible and responsive than you would using a traditional set up.



# Choose AT&T and Five9



AT&T has been providing dependable, business-quality voice services to enterprises for decades. The networks we install and maintain have powered some of the world's best-known businesses to growth and profitability.

AT&T Cloud Voice is a market-leading business-grade voice service for enterprises. It integrates SIP trunking and toll-free service with cloud solutions to give you a voice connection you can count on. No matter how simple or complex your environment might be.

Benefits of AT&T Cloud Voice include:

- **AT&T Business Fiber** as a dedicated backbone for your voice and data traffic, connecting the contact center to your broader business and the world beyond
- **Secure and encrypted voice and data connections** between on-premises applications and workers, including those working from home and on the road
- **Near-instant, seamless scalability** from a fiber backbone, along with integrated 5G and wireless connectivity where applicable
- **Industry-standard encryption and security** to ensure communications on site, between locations, and with remote workers are protected to the highest standards
- **Integration with leading contact center as a service (CCaaS)** providers such as Five9 to deliver intelligent customer experiences, consistently and reliably



## Bringing Intelligent CX to the enterprise

The Five9 Intelligent CX Platform leverages the power and stability of AT&T Cloud Voice, transforming how brands interact with their customers.

Using the latest AI-powered contact center solutions, Intelligent CX blends the strength of people and machines to serve the customer in the best way possible. Humans harness the power of machines and in return, machines give humans 24/7 assistance. Together, they deliver a seamless, efficient, and enhanced customer support experience that neither could do alone.

The Five9 Intelligent CX Platform enables you to:

- **Move faster, react smarter, and transform your business** by migrating to a market-leading, intelligent contact center platform
- **Empower agents to deliver results** using Intelligent CX tools that capture contact data and allow for continuous optimization of contact center operations
- **Scale operations with AI and a connected workforce**, and leverage the power of technology and distributed contact centers to make sure you're there for customers 24/7
- **Streamline workflows using AI and automation** to increase efficiency, free workers from engaging in repetitive tasks, and reduce the scope for human error

The Five9 Intelligent CX Platform offers seamless integration between your unified communications as a service (UCaaS) platform and other business-critical solutions, such as your CRM or your enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. It deploys best-in-class AI assistive technologies to help your agents be more effective, find the right solution faster, and create an improved employee experience.

## Improve the customer experience with Intelligent Virtual Agents

Five9 Intelligent Virtual Agents (IVAs) are an AI-powered digital workforce that operate over the phone—not online—and understand human speech.

This makes them ideal for functions like triaging calls, routing to self-serve and live agents, and answering queries outside of business hours for any operation that requires a combination of voice-based support and automation.



# Why AT&T and Five9



## The availability of 5G and fiber is rapidly changing how we do business.

AT&T is leading this charge with our fast, reliable, and secure 5G network and growing multi-gig fiber internet service.

As much as we depend on broadband connectivity today, we're certain this is only the beginning. We project a 5X increase in data usage on our network between 2021-2025 and expect the average number of household devices to triple over that same period. That's why we're strengthening our network to enable everything from smarter homes and cities to high-quality remote healthcare, augmented and virtual reality, and sophisticated new workplace collaboration tools.

Providing these connections is in our DNA. We've been a leader in connecting people and businesses since Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone more than 145 years ago. We have the resources, focus, expertise, and people to be recognized as a leading provider of voice and connectivity through 5G and fiber.<sup>18</sup>

Five9 is a leading provider of cloud contact center software. Five9 is driven by a passion to transform contact centers into customer engagement centers of excellence, coupled with a deep understanding of the cost and complexity in running a contact center.

Founded in 2001, Five9 led the cloud revolution in contact centers. Five9 rapidly gained momentum as contact centers saw the potential the cloud could bring and began searching for alternatives to traditional, premises-based solutions. Five9 has been leading the cloud charge ever since.

Together, AT&T and Five9 provide businesses with the full suite of technologies and expertise they require to rapidly transform their customer experience infrastructure to meet modern demands. From a resilient, scalable global network that provides secure and reliable cloud voice and data technologies, to the latest AI-assisted contact center solutions, AT&T and Five9 have the skills to deliver technologies that will transform your customer experience.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.business.att.com/about/why-att-business.html>

# Conclusion

**The market today is evolving faster than ever. Customers have higher expectations, tastes are changing faster, and—faced with financial and other headwinds—supply chains are reconfiguring quicker than at any time in recent memory.**

To survive and thrive in this environment, organizations must be just as responsive and adaptable. A big part of that is reimagining and retooling the contact center and the broader CX ecosystem to be more intelligent, more data-driven, and better equipped to react and adapt.

Working with AT&T and Five9 will help you do just that. Our consultants and engineers work with you to plan and deliver the most reliable, flexible, and scalable CX architecture. We'll help you seamlessly integrate your contact center solutions with AI-driven analytics, assistive technologies, and more.



**Transform your  
CX ecosystem with  
AT&T and Five9.  
844.924.2496**

## Why AT&T Business?

Whether your team works on a different floor, across the country, or around the globe, distance doesn't matter. They can collaborate as if sitting in the same room. Let our experts work with you to solve your voice and collaboration challenges and accelerate outcomes. Your business deserves the AT&T Business difference—a new standard for networking.