



# Improving the customer experience in the digital communications era

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## Introduction

The acceleration to a world based on digital exchanges is motivating organisations (private and public) to rethink their strategies around the customer experience. They must take into account new communication habits, as well as digital media and social networks. They also need to maintain the humanity in exchanges between people. Decision-makers must find a way to bridge the dichotomy of this new digital communications era to deliver the world-class experience customers expect.

Moving forward will require learning from the lessons of the past, considering the needs of today's demanding and hurried customers, and designing for the future based on new tools and technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) which are becoming readily available to everyone.

## Tackling the challenges

Improving the customer experience in the new digital communication era brings with it the age-old challenges of retaining customers and attracting new ones. However, it also introduces a new set of hurdles. To sustain business and remain competitive, organisations must:

- **Optimise resources and budget to deliver world-class customer service:** Organisations must keep employees and experts, a precious and costly resource, focused on value-added issues while self-service tools are managing mundane demands, all without impacting their customer service satisfaction level. Successfully addressing this challenge will bring immediate and tangible outcomes in terms of cost savings, improved employee sense of value and overall efficiency.

- **Make quick responses and first-call resolution a priority:** Customer experience can be measured by the amount of time it takes to respond to a query and the accuracy of the response. That means connecting customers with the right expert at the right time and empowering front-line employees with the tools to locate the relevant information and quickly solve the problem. A satisfied customer is a repeat customer who will recommend and promote your brand.
- **Onboard the entire workforce as part of a global customer service strategy:** Opening the customer relationship role to the whole organisation can be tricky, especially for large organisations. Expertise can be spread across teams, however, even if people are ready to help their colleagues on the front line, these experts must be equipped with the right collaboration tools to be reachable on-demand. Benefits of such approach will be equally shared on the customer side by delivering quality responses and on the employee side by working together as a team.
- **Manage multi-generational engagement preferences:** It can be very challenging to deliver consistent, high-level service while managing multiple interaction channels, as well as the growing digital channels among the younger generation. However, not offering these channels can limit your customer base. Opening engagement channels presents a significant opportunity for organisations to touch new prospects, optimise the customer's journey by cross-referencing information and data from different sources to better meet their expectations and potentially boost business.



# Optimise resources and budget to deliver world-class customer service

Customers are more demanding than ever. In fact, research shows that [90% of customers](#) say an 'immediate' response is important or very important, when they have a service question. To stay in the game, organisations must provide a 24/7 professional welcome and accurate response to customers. The human factor is key, as one of the main concerns Customer Service Managers have is the ability to keep agents — a scarce and expensive resource — from being inundated with mundane tasks so they are available when needed throughout the day. The emergence of Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems is now available in many environments to help manage basic functions such as account balance requests and validation of transactions, among others.

**Self-service** is undergoing a revolution led by AI innovation. A new generation of intelligent conversational robots, far beyond automatons, is emerging, capable of doing much more than the basic tasks to which the legacy systems were limited. Empowered with **chatbots or voicebots**, self-service applications not only replace human agents outside of opening hours, but are capable of tasks much more complex than in the past. Advances in voice recognition have helped to humanise the relationship without replacing the dialogue capability.

Simple queries and frequently asked questions can be handled with self-service applications to offload the human agents and provide an always-on, scalable service. Metrics and analytics are available for the Customer Service Manager to monitor satisfaction, quality of support engagements and customer effort score. For more complex cases or premium customers requiring a human agent, **intelligent routing** and **AI assistance** ensure world-class service and customer satisfaction.

Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise provides solutions to help keep the balance right between self-service applications for automated customer welcome and intelligent routing to the best expert in the organisation for a fast and accurate response.

## Medical centre use case

**Fertylis clinic** is a medically assisted reproduction centre in Quebec. In assisted reproduction, scheduling appointments and patient cycle tracking are essential to the fertilisation and insemination protocol, and key to the success of the procedure. The clinic could not afford to lose calls, which were causing patient dissatisfaction and frustration. Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise proposed an automated call welcome that would route the patient to the right available expert. [Full story here](#).

## ALE solutions

- [Alcatel-Lucent OmniPCX® Enterprise Purple \(OXE Purple\)](#)
- [Alcatel-Lucent Purple on Demand \(PoD\)](#)
- [Alcatel-Lucent Visual Automated Attendant \(VAA\)](#)
- [ALE Connect](#)
- [Alcatel-Lucent OmniPCX® RECORD](#)
- Integration with third-party solutions from technology partners for chatbot/voicebot

# Make quick response and first-call resolution a priority

Responding quickly and accurately to customers so that they are satisfied and regard your brand, products and services highly, is a top priority for any customer-oriented organisation.

Most companies have invested in this area, including **integration with Customer Relationship Management (CRM)** business applications where possible. With CRM technology, customer conversations are put into context, for example providing personal information, such as a history of exchanges, preferences, expectations, and most importantly data on the problem at hand. This background information can reduce customer anxiety and helps provide rapid and satisfactory responses to customers seeking recourse or assistance.

Frontline self-service applications such as chatbots or voicebots can seamlessly escalate to a human agent in the case of a complex query. Agents can use data and **contextual information** from the CRM with off-the-shelf connectors for complete integration or data retrieved from the business applications and displayed on the call centre agent's dashboard. A synthesis of records from the previous interactions (for example phone call, email, chat and social media instant messages) are provided to the agent. **AI assistance** automatically proposes typical answers matching the customer's request. And real-time **collaboration** is improved between frontline agents and back-office experts to provide a quick and accurate customer response.

Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise provides solutions to improve customer experiences by putting them in contact with the right expert at the right time, with the right context.



## Regional administration use case

The **Spanish region of Cantabria** provides their citizens with a mobile application powered by Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise, offering the ability to get expert health advice in self-service using chat, and have questions answered by a chatbot about vaccinations and health centre opening hours. In addition, for more serious cases requiring a quick response, patients can access voice communications, and secure video teleconsultations with healthcare professionals. [Full story here.](#)

## ALE solutions

- [OXE Purple](#)
- [Purple on Demand](#)
- [VAA](#)
- [Rainbow](#)
- [Rainbow CRM connectors](#)
- [ALE Connect](#)
- Integration with third-party solutions from technology partners for chatbot/voicebot

# Onboard the entire workforce with a global customer service strategy

The customer satisfaction strategy must be shared, understood and accepted by all employees, whether in the private sector or in public institutions, opening the customer relationship to the whole organisation. This approach benefits both customers and employees. Customers get quick, helpful responses and employees get to work together as a team.

The strategy already exists in organisations where activity is subject to predictable peaks in demand. An example is suppliers of products or services whose volume of orders is linked to the calendar such as Black Friday, Christmas, Valentine's Day or Mother's Day. Mobilising the entire staff on a one-off basis that is agreed upon in advance is known as a 'horizontal extension'. At the same time, the organisation can develop in a 'vertical extension', involving all teams and activities, not just on a seasonal basis but continuously, ensuring customer satisfaction is an ongoing top priority, especially in crisis situations.

Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise provides solutions to enable the entire workforce to be engaged as one in providing customer service, with intelligent call routing and distribution, desk phones and softphone applications supporting on-demand customer service agent capabilities. Engaging all available resources in the entire organisation will make a difference. This includes **involving experts** who can help in their specific areas of competence alongside their colleagues on the front line, ready to help and participate in the collective effort. The organisation provides the staff involved with **collaboration tools** and applications to facilitate both occasional and regular requests. This provides frontline agents with greater confidence and accelerates problem resolution. In addition, the ALE solution **subscription-based model** enables organisations to quickly adapt to new demands, increasing or decreasing the number of licenses on the fly, when needed.

## eBook

Improving the customer experience in the digital communications era



## Local administration use case

**The Town of Foxborough** is a suburban area near Boston, Massachusetts USA. At the onset of the 2020 global health crisis, the Town of Foxborough was met with the challenge of keeping its community informed while enabling nearly 200 employees to keep the town and services operational, even when working from home. Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise provided the city's employees with an efficient solution to continue delivering residential services, collaborate during planning meetings and host internal board meetings.

[Full story here.](#)

## ALE solutions

- [OXE Purple](#)
- [Purple on Demand](#)
- [VAA](#)
- [4059 EE Attendant Console](#) and [Dispatch Console](#) applications
- [ALE Connect](#)
- [ALE DeskPhones](#) and [Softphones](#)
- [Rainbow for collaboration services](#)



# Manage multi-generational engagement preferences

Organisations have taken customer preferences, in terms of engagement (which goes far beyond the phone), into consideration for many years. However, even though the spectrum of access including telephone, email, websites and social networks, remains consistent, there is still work to be done to bring coherence between all these channels. An omnichannel strategy for customer relationship management can ensure efficient and successful interactions.

The omnichannel strategy develops the use of new conversational channels through which customers can achieve first-contact resolution for their issue with an equal level of quality and efficiency. ‘Hot’ channels, such as phone call — synchronous and in real-time — combine with ‘cold’ channels, traditionally email but now extended to digital channels for instant messaging such as Twitter, Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp, and also live chat through brand websites or mobile applications. Digital channels still only represent a small part of the exchanges happening between customers and brands, but they’re growing rapidly. Among younger generations, these channels are becoming the number one choice for communications. Not offering these channels means cutting off part of your customer base.

The challenge for the organisation is to process information independent of its media of origin. Different media can mean differences in formulation and in satisfaction analysis. The goal is to restore it and use it in a ‘neutral’ way in future exchanges. This means erasing media particularities linked to its origin to allow for fluid and effective conversations.

From an operational perspective, the secret to great customer service efficiency has always been to allow agents to use multiple channels in parallel. When not handling a phone call, the agents can deal with emails, or manage multiple chats to optimise their time. To make this a reality, organisations need to proceed in stages. Start with one or two channels, then add more overtime. The solution must be plug-and-play, to enable organisations to activate new interaction channels quickly and easily as they need, to address customer preferences.

Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise provides solutions for organisations that want to connect with their customers the way they prefer and interact using any available channel such as phone calls, video calls, email, web chat or social media instant messaging. Solutions facilitate cross-channel interactions, starting with one form of media and switching seamlessly to another, more convenient one.

## Retail sector use case

**Eberhardt** is a French company specialising in the distribution of household appliances for the general public and professional equipment. Their customer service team was struggling with multiple heterogeneous tools to manage the different interaction channels with customers and partners. Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise proposed a solution to optimise customer service with an all-in-one omnichannel contact centre application to handle phone calls, emails, web chat and social media. [Full story here.](#)

## ALE solutions

- [ALE Connect](#)
- [Purple on Demand](#)



## Conclusion

Digital transformation acceleration and innovative technology are breathing new life into the customer experience arena. Organisations, both private and public sectors, are being challenged by today's knowledgeable and demanding customers to respond quickly and accurately using their media of choice to address customer service issues. Those that choose to transform will be well positioned to turn their customer service centres into customer satisfaction centres.

Learn how Alcatel-Lucent [Digital Age Communications](#) solutions are helping organisations offer a next level customer experience with improved resource optimisation and efficient employee engagement to deliver a superior customer experience.