



Contact center transformation

Reimagining the purpose & approach to value realization



Transformation is not NEW. The NEW is transforming with speed, agility, and creating value for stakeholders.

Recent years have seen an emphasis on enterprise-building capabilities to respond with speed and agility but the missing piece has been the right approach to value definition, creation and realization for stakeholders. A quick peek inside most organizations will validate this as finding teams trained on new and faster ways of working will be easier than finding the value realization office.

Enterprises in the race to compete in the digital world have ended up focusing on the means (adoption of emerging tech and practices to solve an isolated problem) rather than the end (reimagining the larger picture to drive value definition and creation). Contact center transformation has witnessed a similar trend where emerging tech has been leveraged to drive improvements within contact center operations in an isolated manner rather than looking at it as a part of an integrated, larger unified value proposition to the end consumer. This approach has led to a lot of value being left on the table.

The business operation ecosystem has become complex

Before defining the future role of contact centers and how transformation should be approached, let us visualize the dimensions of change in an interconnected ecosystem and what it means for contact center operations.

The competition is more from non-traditional players and product commoditization is prevalent. New business models are emerging focused on new collaborations, where service differentiation is at the heart of things. Partners and suppliers are looking at ease of doing business in a platform economy where managing cost as well as the quality of product and service has become a key focus. Contact centers that were traditionally focused on the end consumer are now focusing equally on these new alliances.



Figure 1: Evolving interconnected business ecosystem

Employee churn coupled with a steep learning curve (domain & tech) of the new workforce has been an age-old challenge. However, today, the focus has shifted to provisioning remote and connected ways of working while managing risk.

Rate of emergence of new technology, skill availability, commercial viability, models of usage, tech choices to bet on, and cost of ownership are keeping enterprises on their toes. Whether and for what to take an enterprise view or department view has been a challenge. This situation has grown today, where running operations in this new normal has become imperative.

The face of risk has changed. The current pandemic and recent epidemics have opened up a new debate; one that challenges the erstwhile setup of contact centers. The risk today has to be categorized into two separate buckets: the known risks, and the other unforeseen threats, where the impact has to be evaluated in a quicker and sharper manner.

Customers, too, are impacted by this changing environment. Now more than ever, they are looking at enterprise to deliver value-led, personalized, contextual, and empathetic experiences through channels of their choice, where transparency and trust are sacrosanct along with service agility and completeness.

Contact center operations are falling short of delivering the right experience

Enterprises are moving to a business model where their products and services are being assessed and / or bought through partner stores and platforms. This has led to the second moment of truth (customer servicing) in customer journey becoming the first touch point with enterprises. The engagement experience at this stage will be a key enabler for future brand association and hence enterprises should work on getting it right the first time. However, multiple studies highlight gaps between customer expectations and service delivered. A few key ones are highlighted below.



Contact centers really don't care about feedback



Agents don't have much information or context about the customers



You can expect to repeat info/questions when calling a contact centre



You can expect to wait on hold/deal with an IVR if you call a contact centre



Customer service department is siloed from rest of the organization



If you have a real problem then you should call rather than use a digital channel

The gaps highlight that transformation in contact centers is not integrated with the larger customer transformation mandate, and that despite investments by enterprises in emerging tech & digital channels, customers still prefer to talk to a person to get issues resolved. In this new normal, empathy is emerging as a key component of service delivery, and voice-led, people-managed services are still there to stay for some if not all customer segments.

Enterprises have to rework on an experience delivery model, where they need to use the right mix of voice and non-voice based services for different customer types. This would mean re-assessing the efficacy of already-digitized processes. Today, more than ever, it is imperative for enterprises to rethink their contact center strategy.

The new purpose of a contact center needs to be conceptualized

In this dynamic and constantly evolving new normal, enterprises must focus on four key strategic objectives and the following enabling themes.

Pivot to be a value delivery hub

The value being delivered should focus on solving customer issues. How contextual and stateful information is passed to the contact center to make decisions will be key. Enterprises need to re-think and focus on the larger integrated omni-channel user journeys and not just the journey being traversed within the contact center. The workforce model should be designed to deliver value through experience differentiation strategy for segments rather than to merely engage.

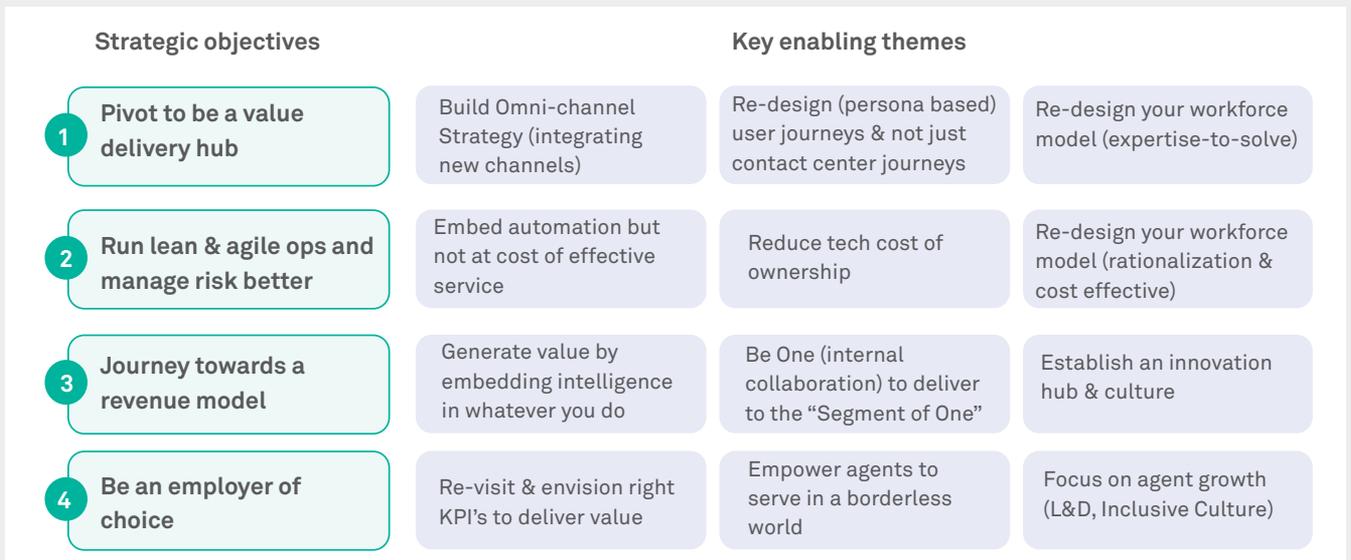


Figure 2: Re-imagining the purpose of contact centre

Run Lean & Agile Operations and manage risk better

Automation strategy must focus on delivering effective service rather than headcount reduction. Digital channel migration and adoption strategies, and their impact on contact centers, have to be well-devised to be effective. COVID-19 has underlined conversations around new tech solutions to manage risk in the work-from-anywhere model. Business cases to drive new models of technology consumption coupled with multi-country operations rationalization have to be worked through to optimize total cost of ownership.

Journey toward a revenue model

Contact centers are a treasure trove of meaningful information if you know how to mine it. The need of the hour is to embed intelligence the right way to drive the right insights, which is then shared with the right teams to achieve the objective of serving a customer segment.

This calls for joint governance and integration between the contact center and other enterprise departments. It is important to have a culture of innovation embedded into the operations. Enterprises should also evaluate how their external contact center partners have embedded a transformation charter into the fabric of day-to-day operations.

Be an employer of choice

Enterprises need to pick up their game on how to engage, manage, and sustain their workforce in a more inclusive manner for long-term sustenance. With the transition of contact centers to become value delivery hubs, there is a need to revisit traditional KPIs to drive the right agent behavior. Contact center operations were forced to change their setup overnight. Now, it is time to revisit this option of work from anywhere in a more strategic manner and create value levers to ensure a win-win situation for all parties involved .

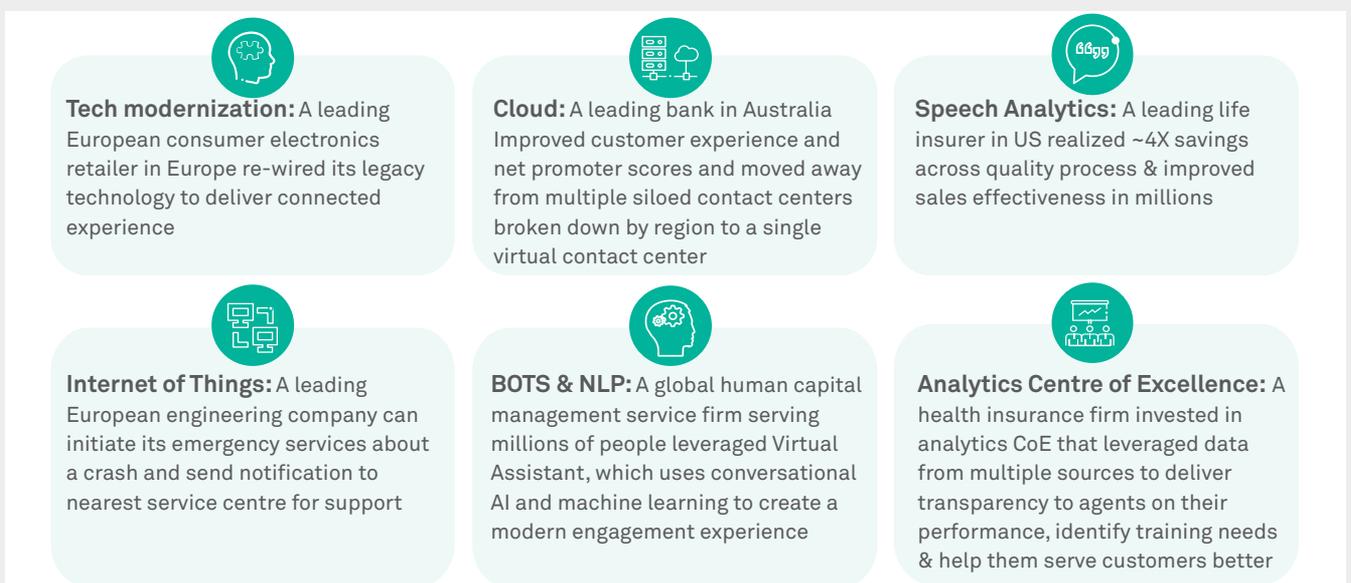


Figure 3: Key technology themes

Approach to transformation must change: Re-imagine, but holistically

In a transformation journey, the right approach is as important as establishing ambitious goals. Choices and decisions are made across the enterprise. These could be anything from strategic to tactical across purpose, processes, technology, data, and people.

Contact center transformations have witnessed choices and decisions made in a rather siloed manner, with the focus on capabilities just within the contact center (box). Enterprises need to appreciate the fact that the contact center is a part of larger business operations and there are upstream and downstream handshakes to it. So trying to solve a part of the puzzle will provide incremental automation-led benefits but traps realization of exponential benefits at an enterprise

level. Unlocking this exponential benefit is important as customers too are focused on getting an end-to-end resolution of their problems and aren't looking at how well enterprises run their contact center operations.

To help enterprises realize their transformation journey successfully, we leverage our transformation framework that takes a holistic rather than compartmentalized approach to value creations and realization. The framework is divided into three interconnected stages of value definition, value delivery, and value sustenance, which are further broken down into five themes. Each of the five themes is further divided into 25+ sub-themes .

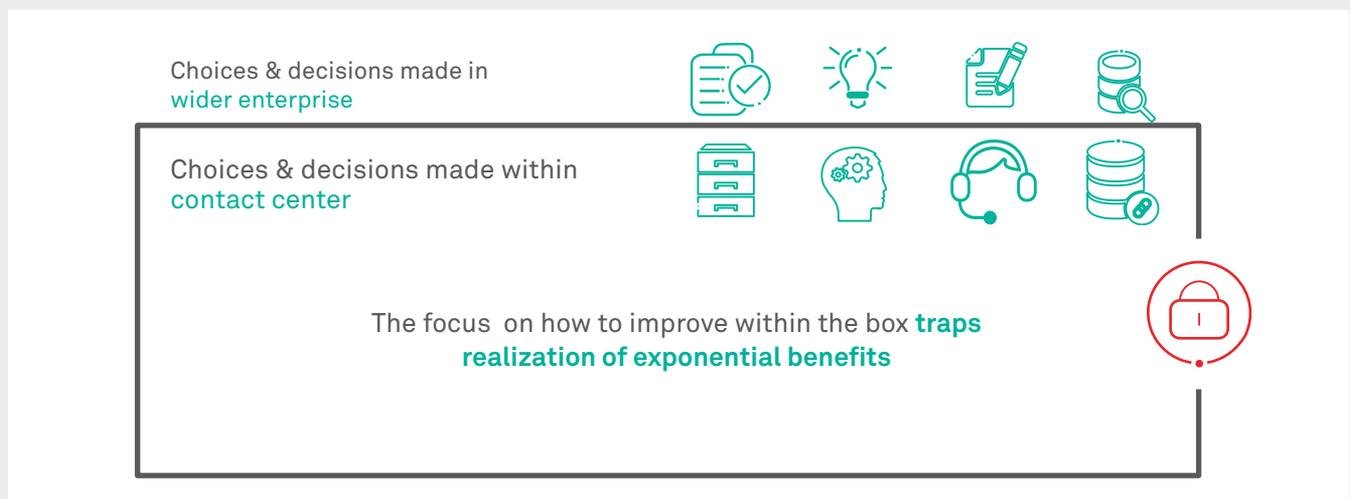


Figure 4: Holistic approach to contact center transformation

In the **value definition stage**, the focus is on identifying the purpose of transformation aligned to the business model strategy and the underpinned experience strategy. It is imperative to understand what an enterprise is trying to achieve, customer segments it wants to service, the value propositions defined for them, and how this transformation fits into the scheme of things. It is also important to understand how an innovation engine can be aligned to the enterprise construct so that this initiative doesn't become a one-off before fizzling out.

In the **value delivery stage**, the focus is on redefining the enterprise operating model to service the value definition construct. Emphasis is laid on managing both external and internal stakeholders. Enterprises must focus on making their own back-office operations easy and seamless for internal stakeholders to have better experiences and more time to focus on customers. Each component of the operating model i.e. underlying processes, technology, data, design, and people must be evaluated to service the propositions of the value-definition stage.

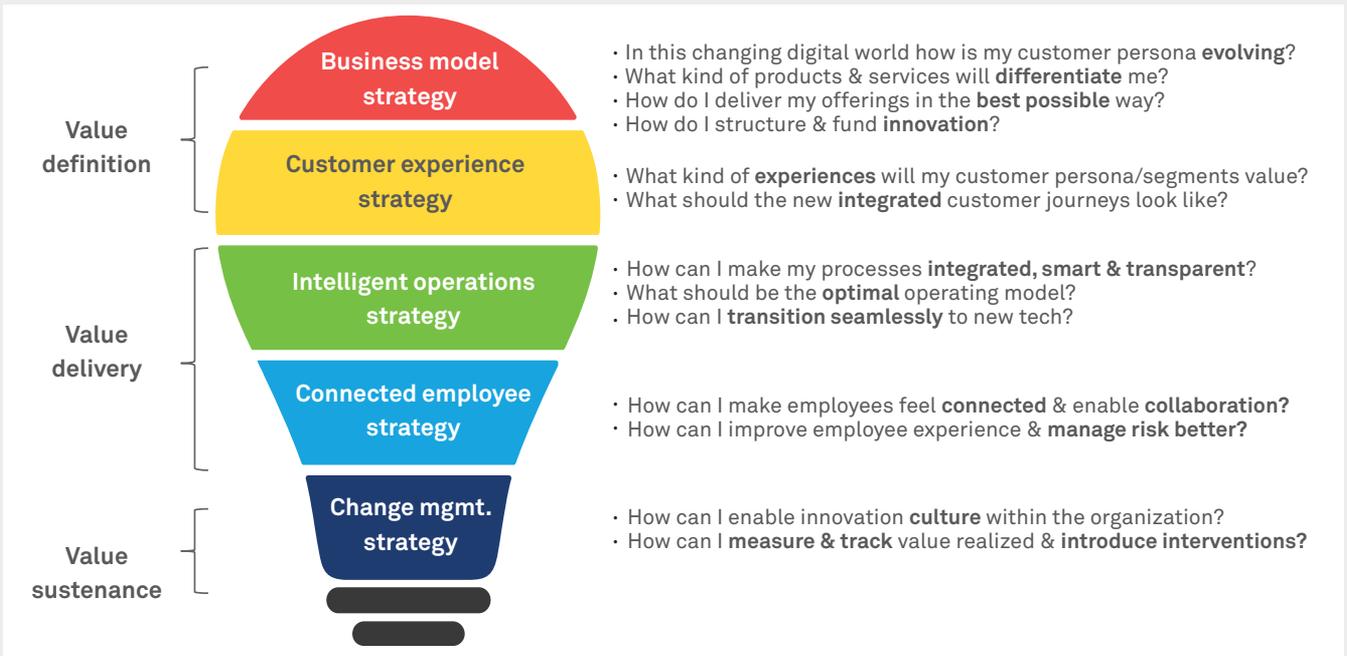


Figure 5: Integrated transformation framework

In the **value sustenance stage**, the focus is on how to make everyone visualize, breathe, and work toward the transformation. The planning and requisite interventions of this stage is initiated with value definition stage and goes alongsidethrough to value delivery stage. Regular leadership interventions, cultural transformation, & migration

and adoption strategies are some of the sub-themes underpinning the change management strategy. Our advisory offerings support enterprises at different stages of their transformation journey. We run our advisory services even in remote setups, leveraging virtual design workshops, data analysis, and process mining tools .

The visible problem(s)

- Agent**
 - Long wait time to reach prospects (leads from partner channels)
 - Long time to validate and populate customer data
 - Product explanation & pricing issues
- Team leads**
 - Manual follow up with branches to understand lead progression status
 - Audit findings (VoC) identified long lead time by branch to engage leads

The hidden problem(s)

- Surveyors**
 - Complain that call centre doesn't assess lead maturity properly before passing leading to low conversion
 - Lead distribution is dispersed wrt geographic location with high travel time between leads
- Channel Partners**
 - Leads are coming from non industry digital partners who
 - have low maturity of product info dissemination &
 - lead maturity wrt buying stage is low

Solution approach 1: Automation & agent enablement

- Predictive/ progressive dialer
- Agent training on products
- BOTS powered by NLP to support Agents
- 2 way Integration with branch system for appl updates

Solution approach 2: Re-imagining the journey by also evaluating the ecosystem around contact centre

Upstream customer journey improvements	Call centre capability improvement	Removing branch bias
Re-designing the appl form (digital & existing cust.)	Integrated eKYC for instant approval	Survey allocation rules engine
BOTS powered by NLP to support customer on D2C	eSignatures	Zoning & pooling
Upfront 3rd party checks	Enterprise wide credit simulator	
	Pre-approved Credit Limit Checks	
	KPI re-definition	

Benefits realized from Approach 2 over Approach 1

2.5X Headcount reduction	3X Increase in sales	1.8X Improvement in Agent experience	7X improvement in quality of leads passed to branches
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Figure 6: Case study of how a financial enterprise unlocked exponential value by reimagining holistically

Enterprises were pushed overnight in a situation where decisions they took to run their operations were tactical in nature. These decisions were on agendas, which till a few months ago, were waiting for the right business case or not even envisaged. But today, there is a massive opportunity to assess and design new possibilities in a more strategic manner. Enterprise must go back to the drawing board, reimagine how they can think holistically in

an integrated manner to build a more resilient operation for the future, which can withstand new challenges and create value for stakeholders in an evolving new normal. Our advisory offerings support enterprises at different stages of their transformation journey. We run our advisory services even in remote setups, leveraging virtual design workshops, data analysis, and process mining tools.

Advisory Offering	Key Activities	Outcomes
1 Readiness assessment for contact center of future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify contact centers with different ops which would act as base models Understand future vision of its contact center Evaluate impact to contact center operations due to new business pgms, new ways of working & other support channels Impact will be assessed across people, process, tech & architecture Identify areas of opportunities for improvement & prioritize them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact center readiness maturity Solution theme cards & prioritization matrix
2 Strategy & transformation blueprint for contact center of future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jointly ideate and baseline purpose of contact center in the new world Assess contact center rationalization opportunity Evaluate impact to contact center operations due to new business pgms, new ways of working & other support channels Impact will be assessed across people, process, tech & data/analytics Define new experience journeys to be provided to consumers Define contact center new capabilities & its impact to other channels Detail target operating model (capabilities across people, process, tech, architecture, scorecard/ KPI) Develop transformation roadmap & transition plan incl. channel migration & adoption strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future vision for contact center Future experience journey maps Future operating model Transformation roadmap incl. benefit case & transition plan
3 Bringing ideas to life for contact center of future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify 2-3 key use cases based on business & operational metrics Identify its impact to current operations Define end-to-end solution (process, tech/architecture, KPI's) Evaluate the right products incl. PoC as applicable Support during pilot, change mgmt & track business impact and provide any course correction inputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New capability enablement Benefit tracking report & intervention strategy to improve

Figure 7: Contact center transformation advisory offerings

About the author

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Joydeep Dutta is a strategy professional who leads the Business Transformation & Digital Advisory practice globally as part of his role at Wipro. He advises clients in their endeavors to rethink their value propositions for different stakeholders (customers, partners, and employees), defining and enabling the underpinning new, adaptable target-operating model.

His experience of working across continents, cultures, and industries with senior executives helps him deconstruct business transformation problems and opportunities quickly, identify cross-industry solution ideas, and contextualize them to realize business value. Over his career, Joydeep has set up a Digital Advisory practice for a Big 4 company in India and led cross-industry Digital Strategy & Customer Experience practices with a focus on the Southeast Asia market for a leading strategy & consulting firm.



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