MANAGED SERVICES FOR THE CONTACT CENTER

What it is, Why it's Crucial, and What Your Organization Needs to Consider

SERVION

Crafting **CX Solutions**

Over the last decade, many changes have happened in terms of customer service, accelerated even further by the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Call volumes are at an all-time high, emotions are also heightened, and customers are using more digital touchpoints than ever before, with the expectation of a personalized and effortless experience each time. Not to be left out are employees, many of whom are expected to continue working remotely and have their own set of wants to serve customers more efficiently.

The pressure is intense for businesses to move faster and respond more intelligently to meet shifting CX expectations. Beyond voice and messaging infrastructure, interaction routing, reporting, quality management, and workforce management this means investment in AI and automation, which are now essential for providing customers with relevance and immediacy, empowering employees to do their best work, and helping organizations lower costs and increase operational efficiencies. Ai and automation include speech analytics, knowledge bases, chat or voice bots, and conversational AI as companies look to migrate contact volume from assisted to self-service channels. Upgrading legacy contact center technology is mandatory and tying together fragmented systems from multiple vendors is crucial for better understanding the customer experience through data.

As the contact center rapidly grows in complexity, the help of a Managed Service Provider (MSP) has become vital for streamlining processes, reducing costs, improving efficiencies, mitigating risk, and continually improving and optimizing.

WHAT IS A MANAGED SERVICE PROVIDER (MSP)?

An MSP comes alongside you, understands what issues or challenges your organization is facing, and then works to architect solutions that can be managed entirely by them or jointly by them and you (typically, the MSP manages solutions remotely via a combination of onsite, offsite, and offshore resources). MSPs help from initial planning (creating a roadmap that prioritizes contact center initiatives linked to business value), identifying needs and requirements, designing and building your solution(s), and then running and optimizing them for continuous improvement, governed by SLAs.

In short, an MSP helps with the following:

- Delegating management of contact center infrastructure and/or contact center applications
- Managing day-to-day contact center operations
- Benefit from scale economies through an emphasis on process and automation
- Preventive, corrective, and adaptive maintenance
- Ongoing changes, development (i.e., scripts, IVR/bot dialogues, applications), and contact center system performance (measured by IT outcomes delivered)

WHAT ARE
THE BENEFITS OF MANAGED SERVICES FOR THE CONTACT CENTER?

There are countless benefits to having a professional help manage and optimize your contact center, but perhaps the greatest is cost savings. A recent study ⧉ from Infrascale found that the top reason 51% of executives choose to work with an MSP is for cost savings. Another study ⧉ from CompTIA found that 96% of businesses agree working with a service provider saves them a substantial amount of money annually, with almost half indicating reduced costs of 25% or more. The right MSP will provide pricing based on performance metrics like SLA for response and resolution and application availability, ensuring cost efficiency in line with expected goals and outcomes.

The next big benefit is pooled expertise, know-how, and tools. Consider technologies like AI and automation. One study from Deloitte ⧉ found that almost half of companies that consider themselves seasoned in AI (defined as having a high number of deployments at the highest sophistication) rate their current AI skill gap as either moderate, major, or extreme. With an MSP, your organization will no longer need to worry about what type of talent is needed, where that talent will come from, and (perhaps most stressful of all) training efforts. You can start immediately benefiting from a shared delivery team that boasts a deep well of contextual knowledge to help improve efficiencies, streamline processes, scale, and innovate.

In this way, working with an MSP will allow you to relieve or redeploy your internal IT resources (a.k.a. employees) so they can focus on higher value-added projects instead of operations. At the same time, you'll benefit from having a single point of contact for all contact center software (i.e., cloud CCaaS, applications such as WFO/WFM) and hardware (i.e., recorders on premise, voice gateways/SBCs, VPN, SD-WAN). An MSP will take care of service integration and management across your partner ecosystem, serving as a one-stop shop not only for all your system and application needs but for all your contractual relationships.

Overall, top benefits of working with an MSP include:

- ⊘ Cost efficiency
- ⊘ Single point of contact for all contact center software and hardware
- ⊘ Complete service integration and management across the partner ecosystem
- ⊘ Renewed focus on business versus technology
- ⊘ Streamlined processes
- ⊘ Reduced operational cost
- ⊘ Improved efficiency and operations
- ⊘ Pricing based on IT outcomes
- ⊘ Seamless scalability
- ⊘ Pooled expertise, know-how and tools
- ⊘ Explicit SLAs

WHAT TO CONSIDER BEFORE DECIDING TO WORK WITH A MANAGED SERVICE PROVIDER

There are a few things you should consider before deciding to partner with an MSP:

Scope of work: What exactly needs to be done? Do you know what functions will be retained in-house and which will be delegated?

Data privacy and regulatory requirements: What data privacy, security and regulatory requirements does your organization need to consider, and will your MSP be compliant?

High-touch and low-touch functions and proximity of support personnel (onsite/offshore): Depending on where your organization is operating, you will need to decide which support activities require engineers on-premises and which can be performed remotely. For example, support engineers will be needed on-premises to replace faulty phones in your agent locations.

Maturity of current IT process: There are specific frameworks that can help your organization better understand the maturity of its current IT processes. Typically, all modern IT support operations follow the ITIL framework. This framework provides best practices to run operations seamlessly with a focus on continual service improvement.

Transition timeline: When do you need your scope of work to be completed by? Keep in mind that most transitions occur between six to eight weeks. It's crucial to work backwards with transition planning to ensure your process doesn't coincide with other key business-driven activities (ex: the transition of services should be completed at least one month before the Thanksgiving holiday so that the new service provider has time to stabilize the system to avoid outage risks during peak call times).

Risks and mitigation plans: It is always necessary to identify and mitigate both internal and external risks during transition of services. Internal risks include active support from both business and IT leaders. A formal internal communication ahead of time, would be necessary to get commitment from the respective stakeholders. External risks include the ability of the new Managed Services Provider to understand and transition the services as per the proposed plan. Though you might have assessed the ability of the Managed Services Provider earlier, finer details like the knowledge transition plan, availability of key personnel to share the knowledge and configuration of existing systems, availability of documentation of internal systems and

applications, ability of the Service Provider to ramp-up the resources as per the agreed timelines and the ability of the newly onboarded support team to take up support activities independently without affecting the service levels need to be constantly assessed and managed. A formal cut-over plan should be jointly developed and tracked along with a contingency plan for unanticipated delays.

Cost savings along with timelines: It is common practice to compare current support costs (usually termed as non-discretionary spend) with your managed service proposal, which should be lower. Your organization must work to determine costs and expected savings for a multi-year managed services deal. For example, a telecom customer might figure out that by spending "X" amount of dollars every year by partnering with an MSP for five years, they can save "Y" amount of dollars.

Pricing methodology: For managed services, usually this will be a fixed price for a specific duration of your contract and for specific SLAs. Some customers also engage resources on a time-and-material basis.

WHAT
HAPPENS
NEXT

Assuming you are ready to move forward and have found your ideal partner, the first thing you need to do is have an organizational assessment conducted. During this process, your MSP will look for an architecture diagram, design documents, a network diagram, and more. The availability of these documents as well as their accuracy (many system changes can occur over the course of the lifecycle; certain documents may have become obsolete) will give an idea of process maturity. If there are gaps between what is available and what is configured in the system, then the MSP will leverage the extensive knowledge of its support engineers to move forward.

Your MSP will also look at current performance metrics and compare them to targeted metrics. This is crucial, as this determines how IT outcomes are measured. Typically, there will be metrics like service level compliance (SLA) for various severity of support tickets, application availability metrics, and also customer satisfaction (CSAT) metrics. If these are measured and reported already, then you can expect the service provider to meet or exceed the current performance metrics. If these are not measured, the current performance metrics must first be baselined and then improvement from the baseline needs to be set as a target for the service provider. From here, next steps are taken for development, management, and continuous improvement.

Working with an MSP is one of the best investments your organization can make to increase efficiency, improve KPIs, and continually improve customer and employee experience.

At Servion we serve hundreds of customers from 4 operations centers across the globe. Our hundreds of engineers master a broad swatch of contact center technologies, from network infrastructure to applications and AI. Our NPS is best in class at 75. In addition to complying with the IT metrics like System Availability, SLA compliance etc., our teams also assisted our customers in seamless transition of agents to work from home during this pandemic.

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to streamline and optimize your contact center operations.

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