

Connect and Brittany Ferries transform CX for channel travellers.



CONNECT[®]


Brittany Ferries

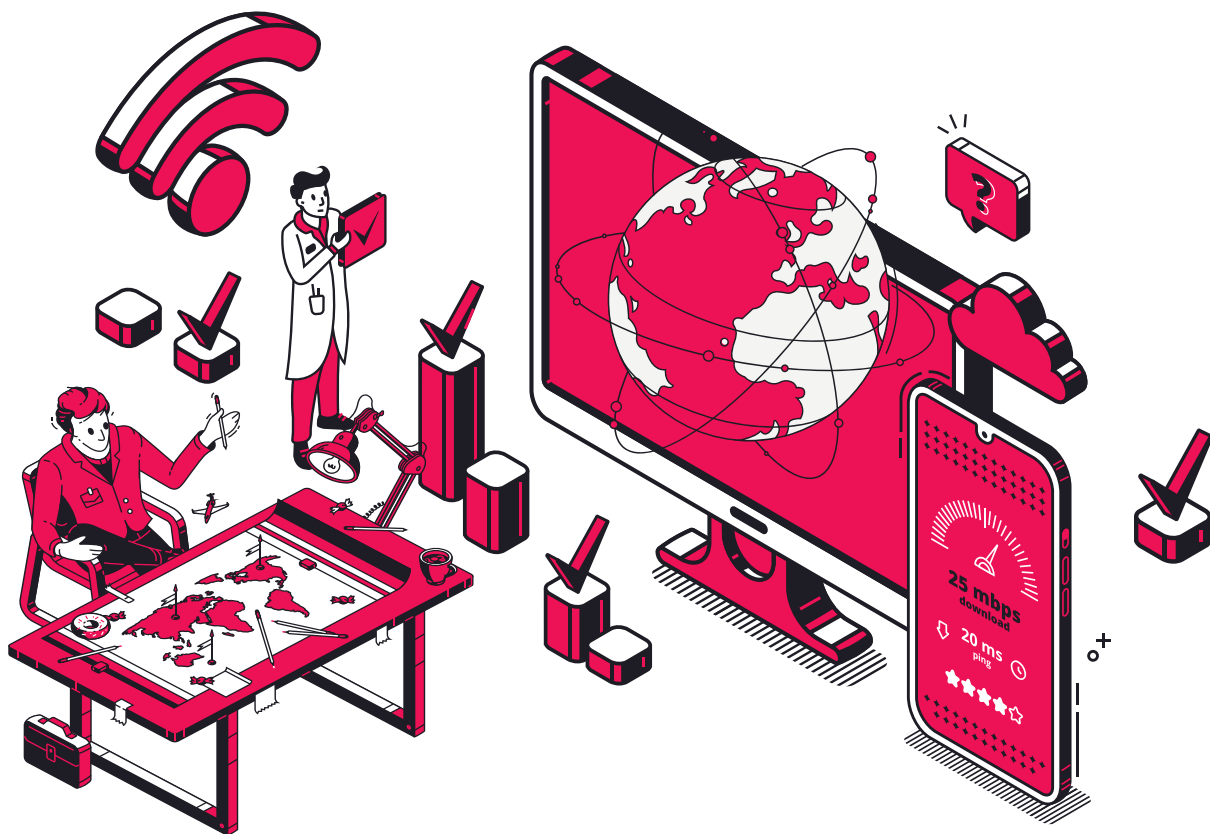
Overview.

Brittany Ferries is a multi-national award-winning maritime transport provider and tour operator connecting France, the UK, Ireland and northern Spain.

In a normal year, the company ferries 2.5 million passengers, plus around 200,000 freight vehicles aboard 6,000 sea crossings.

Brittany Ferries provides customer support for passengers and freight customers from four contact centres across different countries, plus a dedicated freight contact centre, split equally between dual sites in Poole and Cherbourg.

These contact centres operated on Genesys Engage technology with back-office capabilities and the company network built around Cisco Call Manager (now Unified Communications Manager). A small, highly committed unified communications team managed these contact centres.



The business need.

However, the system could not handle spikes in call volumes, which typically occurred during bad weather, when mechanical issues forced the ferry operator to cancel scheduled trips, or during peak holiday periods when traveller numbers rose exponentially, leading to an influx of calls and queries to the contact centres.

When call volumes spiked, customers typically experienced long hold times, and when the system exceeded its maximum trunk line capacity, customers encountered an engaged tone.

During peak periods, less than 50% of customers could get through on their first attempt and the call centre experienced up to 250,000 engaged tones a month, which was disastrous for customer experience (CX).

These capacity limitations on incoming calls meant customers would turn to other contact channels like email and social media, which drew on scarce human resources and added additional pressure on contact centre staff.

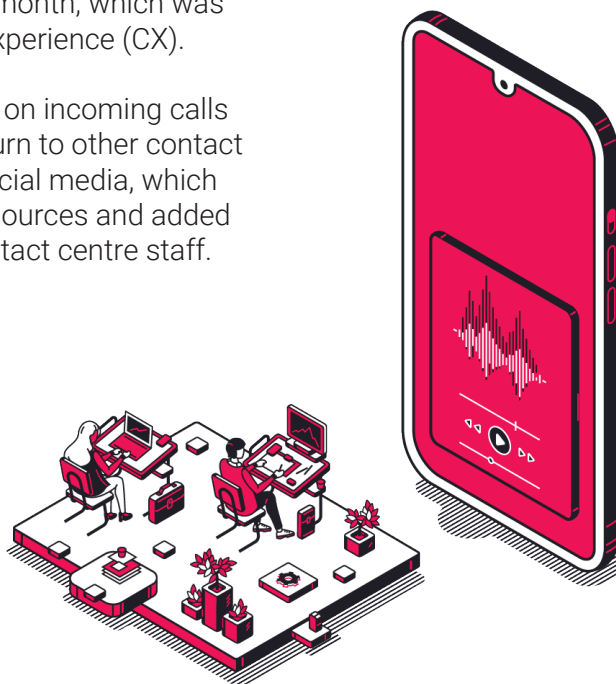
Matters also worsened when the COVID pandemic drove a surge in customer interactions, with the need to support agents remotely further compounding the challenges.

Facing unprecedented engagement levels, both in terms of calls and emails as customers cancelled or changed reservations, all at short notice, Brittany Ferries needed to find a quick solution.

However, making changes on the Genesys Engage platform required time and resources, which the already overstretched in-house team could not provide at the time.

The company urgently needed to implement additional features to manage the demand – such as enhancing its interactive voice response (IVR) system to enable self-service and smarter routing, and adding callback requests to minimise escalations and repeat contacts.

The costs related to managing and maintaining the on-premise Genesys Engage system had also become burdensome.



The solution.

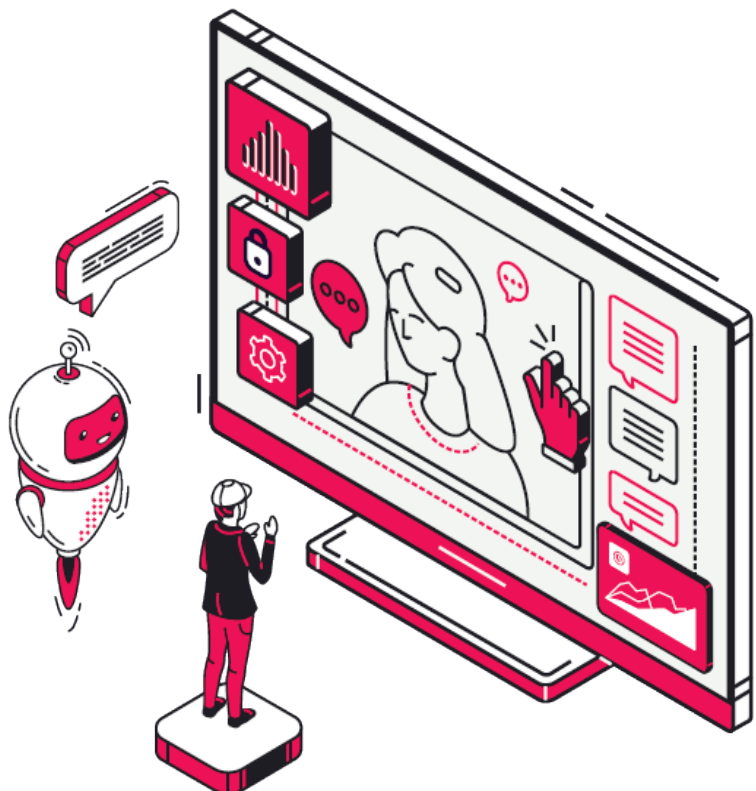
Brittany Ferries approached Connect to find a solution and initially signed up for a Connect MAC (moves and changes) pack. This solution gave the ferry company a flexible and innovative way to access Connect's managed services expertise, including specialist IT and networking support, to assist with enhancements and fixes across its contact centre and internal operations.

The decision proved invaluable, with Connect providing a rapid response and specialist knowledge to deliver solutions to issues that helped Brittany Ferries ensure a consistent, quality customer experience during a challenging period.

The next step in transforming the customer experience when engaging with the contact centre entailed adding callbacks for those unwilling to wait. This was the first step in the broader digitalisation strategy that Brittany Ferries planned to embark on to modernise the business and become a digital-first company.

A vital step needed to secure buy-in from all internal stakeholders to support the modernisation agenda entailed demonstrating how the contact centre could lead the broader digital-first transformation strategy by embracing technology to improve customer service.

Connect proposed a quick-win solution, as there was no time to go through a complex contract negotiation. The team took advantage of a Genesys try-before-you-buy Cloud Attach offer to implement the Call Deflection and Callback functions available in Genesys Cloud to deliver quick results and serve as a proof-of-concept (POC) trial for the broader cloud migration.



Outcome.

The implementation happened overnight and went smoothly, delivering immediate tangible benefits by almost entirely eradicating engaged tones. As a result, the 50-60% abandonment rate plunged, and the company immediately started receiving positive customer reviews.

After implementing the call priority and routing enhancements and intraday features, the contact centre experienced an average 20% improvement in calls answered, rising to 92% during the trial period launch in September 2022 through to the end of the peak sales period in the UK, compared to 71% during the corresponding period in the previous year.

The platform gave the contact centre team greater visibility with a dashboard view of all daily incoming calls, which changed the game as the company could track volumes. This true view of call volumes empowered the team to develop a strategy on how best to handle these contacts.

Furthermore, the Callback functionality delivered immediate results with a steep drop in engaged tones, which reduced customer friction and complaints and increased customer satisfaction.

These results demonstrated the value that investing in contact centre modernisation could deliver and showed how these digital capabilities could support the company's overall digital ambitions and revolutionise CX.

Following the successful POC trial, Brittany Ferries invested in the next phase of its digital modernisation strategy by replacing the legacy Genesys Engage contact centre solution with Genesys Cloud and an updated recording system.

Connect assisted in documenting full IVR flows as a precursor to customer journey optimisation as part of the contact centre migration.

The full Genesys Cloud implementation took a month and entailed migrating users to the new platform across four countries. Brittany Ferries started with the UK contact centre for a trial period before migrating the other six contact centres onto the platform in a phased approach, tackling one site at a time.

The internal implementation team visited seven sites, spending a week at each, working closely with the Connect team to train agents, go live with the solution, migrate and embed users and test everything before moving to the next region.

Embracing an agile approach, the team rolled out features one at a time to get agents accustomed to the new solution interface and its functionality.

The continuity provided by migrating from an on-premise to a cloud solution from the same vendor accelerated adoption, which was a critical success factor as staff are often hesitant to embrace change. Moreover, many of the staff working at Brittany Ferries at the time had been with the company for their entire careers, working on the Engage platform.

Selecting Genesys Cloud as the replacement solution ensured continuity in the established ways of working and delivered a similar user experience (UX) that was easy to use and intuitive. As a result, any initial hesitancy from staff quickly fell away, and their willingness to embrace change and use new tools has evolved.

Brittany Ferries and Connect adopted a train-the-trainer approach to support the migration with the international teams to cater to different language, cultural and localised business needs.

The team identified internal super-users from various contact centres who received training and learnt new skills. They subsequently became advocates to assist and shadow their colleagues during the transition and impart the skills they had gained throughout the organisation.

Following the success of this peer-on-peer training model, Brittany Ferries has continued to implement this approach when rolling out new feature developments, which continues to yield success.

The company also created a feedback mechanism to share updates and issues with Connect that the services provider could address to get new features up and running quickly. These engagements included regular team chats and bi-weekly contacts with Connect.

Overall, the Genesys Cloud solution implementation went smoothly and was a good learning experience for the Brittany Ferries team.

Following the successful implementation, Connect has taken a basic contact centre that experienced poor performance and created a challenging work environment for staff, and transformed it into a modern contact centre that offers the tools and visibility agents need to perform their tasks more efficiently.

The resulting rise in agent experience has replaced anxiety with optimism, especially during inclement weather – a situation agents previously dreaded due to the associated rise in customer calls and complaints.

Instead of spending their day apologising to customers over the phone or email, the features in Genesys Cloud have delivered capabilities that help remove the burden of sharing information from agents and made them more efficient at their jobs by eliminating numerous manual tasks and processes.

For example, Agent Assist increased the accuracy of responses to customer questions and improved consistency with contact centre staff using templated answers, which helped to reduce total hold time by 10% year-on-year.

Agents now also have a system that works for them, such as Workforce Management (WFM) capabilities that streamline previously administratively onerous tasks, like reporting and data input, and requesting leave and shift changes, which saves time and reduces frustration with greater efficiency in scheduling. These WFM capabilities also delivered better resource management, leading to efficiency savings.

The overall improvement in user and agent experience lowered contact centre staff attrition from 20 leavers in 2022 to 13 in 2023, representing an improvement in attrition rate from over 30% to 20%.

From a management perspective, the Genesys Cloud solution has transformed the quality monitoring function from a manual time-consuming task to a smoother and more efficient process that draws data from a larger sample size and provides more granular feedback to agents to improve quality control.

KPI and performance reporting is now also automated, which is less time-consuming while offering deeper insights, which is a major step forward for the company. Brittany Ferries is currently running all KPIs through the gamification feature in the platform to improve engagement and increase productivity and adherence.

The contact centre modernisation initiative has also future-proofed the operation and created an environment where younger digital-first and digital-native staff members who are coming in to replace the outgoing generation feel comfortable and engaged.

Moreover, the efficiency gains and improvements that the Genesys Cloud platform delivered enabled Brittany Ferries to reduce the contact centre staff headcount through natural attrition, equivalent to a 20% reduction in FTE in 2023.

Importantly for the business, the Genesys Cloud solution has revolutionised customer service and CX. Since implementation, Brittany Ferries has witnessed a significant improvement across various metrics, including faster time to answer, reduced average handling times (AHT), and a reduction in the call abandonment rate from 50% to 15%.

Thanks to the improved oversight, reporting and staff engagement, the contact centre operation increased contacts per hour (CPH) from 5.69 in 2022 to 6.06 in 2023, rising above benchmark levels.

But the real headline is the eradication of the 250,000 engaged tones customers previously experienced every month. In the year before migrating to Genesys Cloud, Brittany Ferries experienced over 1 million engaged tones in a year when the maximum number of lines were in use at any one time. These numbers were fully removed following the migration to Genesys Cloud, which provided unlimited lines.

With enhanced digital capabilities, Brittany Ferries effectively reduced call volume by deflecting voice calls from an IVR to a messaging channel, or the Genesys Cloud ACD messaging routes customers to a self-service bot or agent.

For instance, the company can now deflect frequently asked questions (FAQs) about bringing pets on ships or cabin availability to an automated digital channel or web platform that can provide relevant real-time information to divert queries away from live agents to free up capacity.

These capabilities have been a game-changer for the business and a massive step forward in terms of operational efficiency, with the over 300 deflected calls a day the equivalent of 1 agent full-time equivalent (FTE). The new IVR option regarding FAQs sends over 50 SMSes daily, with an over 70% success rate, which means these customers do not need to call back, equating to 1 FTE.

Customers now also have 24/7 access to resources and information through digital service channels when the contact centre is closed. The self-service options meet a crucial need for customers who travel overnight, who often require information about the facilities onboard ferries and details like restaurant operating times or where to find the lost and found department.

The internal team continues to work with Connect to evolve the platform and introduce new functionality and features through regular releases.

A key focus currently is finding new ways to deflect calls from the contact centre by diverting customers to SMS options or relevant web pages via links rather than remaining on hold. As a third of all calls coming into the contact centre are knowledge-based, automating responses with SMS deflection and voice bots can further offload a significant number of voice calls to service more customers.

The team has also recently implemented web messaging with chatbots and the voice bot feature on IVR calls. In the near future, the company is looking to explore integrating the Brittany Ferries booking system with a payment IVR that can handle declined payments to enhance self-service capabilities.

While this requires changing customer behaviours around why and how they engage with the contact centre, expanding the available digital channels will create different routes, with predictive routing used to provide a quicker, easier way to find the information they are looking for to improve CX and customer service further.

Critically, the contact centre now links online and offline departments in the business, serving as a vital source of data to feed into systems that can inform business decisions and drive the digitalisation agenda forward.

For instance, Brittany Ferries can now identify how many booking amendments and non-sales queries are coming through the contact centre, or identify issues on web platforms that can signal a need to address a potential issue on the sales and booking system.

This feedback to the digital teams enables them to improve online features and self-service capabilities. For instance, the team identified that 2 out of 3 amendment calls could be resolved via the online self-service channel. Containing customers on the website to complete transactions rather than calling the contact centres further reduced call volumes. Ultimately, this functionality helped increase the number of customer amendments completed online from 38% in the previous year to 45%.

Based on the resultant performance improvements and benefits to the business, the Brittany Ferries contact centre is no longer deemed a necessary evil and a project that failed to deliver a return on investment. Instead, it is now viewed as a value-adding department with a compelling business case, which has shifted the role of the contact centre in the company's broader digital transformation strategy.

Ultimately, implementing the Genesys Cloud platform has delivered tangible business benefits, helping to extricate the contact centre from a very challenging situation that posed significant risks to the business in 2019 into a completely different operation today.



Reduced

abandonment rate from 50% to 15%.



Eradicated

over 1 million yearly engaged tones.



Improved

staff attrition from 30% to 20%.



Reduced

total hold time 10% year-on-year.



Improved

operational efficiency with 300 deflected calls daily.



24/7 access

to information via digital service channels.

About us.

About Connect

Connect combines global contact centre and customer experience (CX) expertise, deep domain knowledge, and unparalleled industry skills to make the complex simple.

Since 1990, we have leveraged our vendor-independent managed services approach to digitally transform how organisations communicate, both internally and externally.

We specialise in combining the most relevant technologies and services from leading vendors and platform providers to create opti-channel engagement solutions, orchestrating frictionless experiences and simplifying complex communication challenges.

Acclaimed partner

As an established and multi-award-winning Genesys Gold partner, we offer exceptional capabilities in extracting unparalleled value from data and AI, paving the way for deeply connected, personalised end-to-end customer and agent experiences.

Our collaborative ecosystem ensures seamless data sharing, advanced analytics, and workflow automation, ultimately positioning Connect as the preferred technology partner for organisations seeking to drive innovation and create truly frictionless customer journeys.

Connect stands out for our proven track record, implementing solutions that consistently earn industry accolades, showcasing our commitment to excellence and innovation.

With a footprint in key markets such as the United Kingdom, South Africa, USA and India, we bring global expertise to organisations seeking transformative solutions.

Connect with us.

To discuss a communications challenge or find out more about our capabilities, get in touch with us today.



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