

The societal impact of exceptional CX.



CONNECT[®]

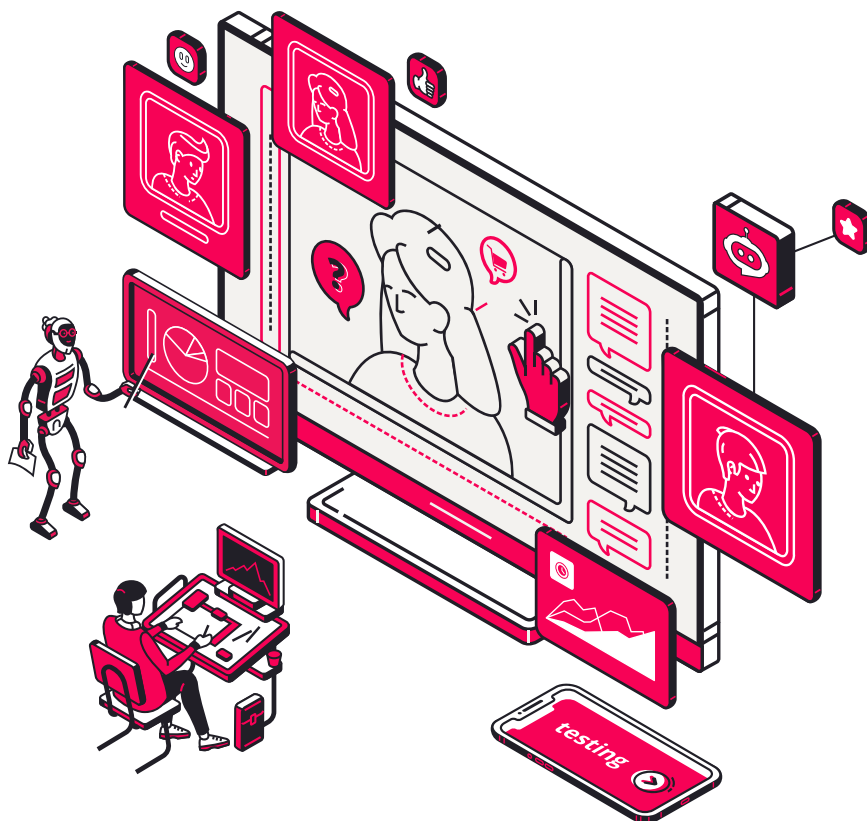
Introduction.

Companies and contact centre operators use numerous means to quantify the impact that exceptional technology-enabled customer experience (CX) has on the business.

From customer satisfaction (CSAT), net promoter score (NPS) and retention statistics to average handling times (AHT), first contact resolution (FCR) rates and customer lifetime value (CLF), contact centres apply various metrics to measure and benchmark CX.

However, these measures typically emphasise the utilitarian aspects of contact centre effectiveness and ease of use.

Many companies often fail to consider the numerous less tangible, but no less important metrics, like the societal impact that kind and compassionate interactions or seamless, frictionless engagements have on the general public at large at an emotional level – how interactions make customers feel – particularly when dealing with sensitive issues and anyone who finds themselves in a vulnerable or difficult situation.



Establishing connections.

CX refers to all the interactions between a business and its customers, including engagements facilitated through different contact centre technologies and advanced omnichannel solutions

However, a study conducted by PwC found that “59% of all consumers feel companies have lost touch with the human element of customer experience.”

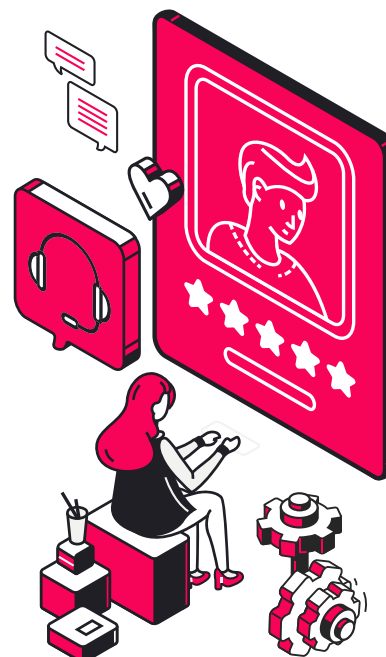
Yet, CX is critical to customer well-being (CWB), with joy and customer satisfaction as mediating factors linking three critical factors – convenience, performance and relationships, according to a 2022 study.

As such, shifting from the traditionally skewed focus on the rational side of engagements, by empowering contact centre agents with the ability to deliver exceptional CX, can have a profound societal impact.

Transforming CX with technology that supports agents during customer interactions or facilitates frictionless customer journeys can improve CWB in direct and indirect ways. For instance, reduced friction significantly reduces stress levels for anyone contacting the contact centre.

Furthermore, solutions that empower agents to deliver connected, personalised experiences allow them to establish meaningful connections with the customer, which is a critical step to forging the relationships that boost CWB.

These capabilities also allow agents to offer emotional support during difficult times, or engage with greater care, empathy and understanding to foster a sense of shared humanity, which has the power to elevate interactions from a purely transactional to a more meaningful level.



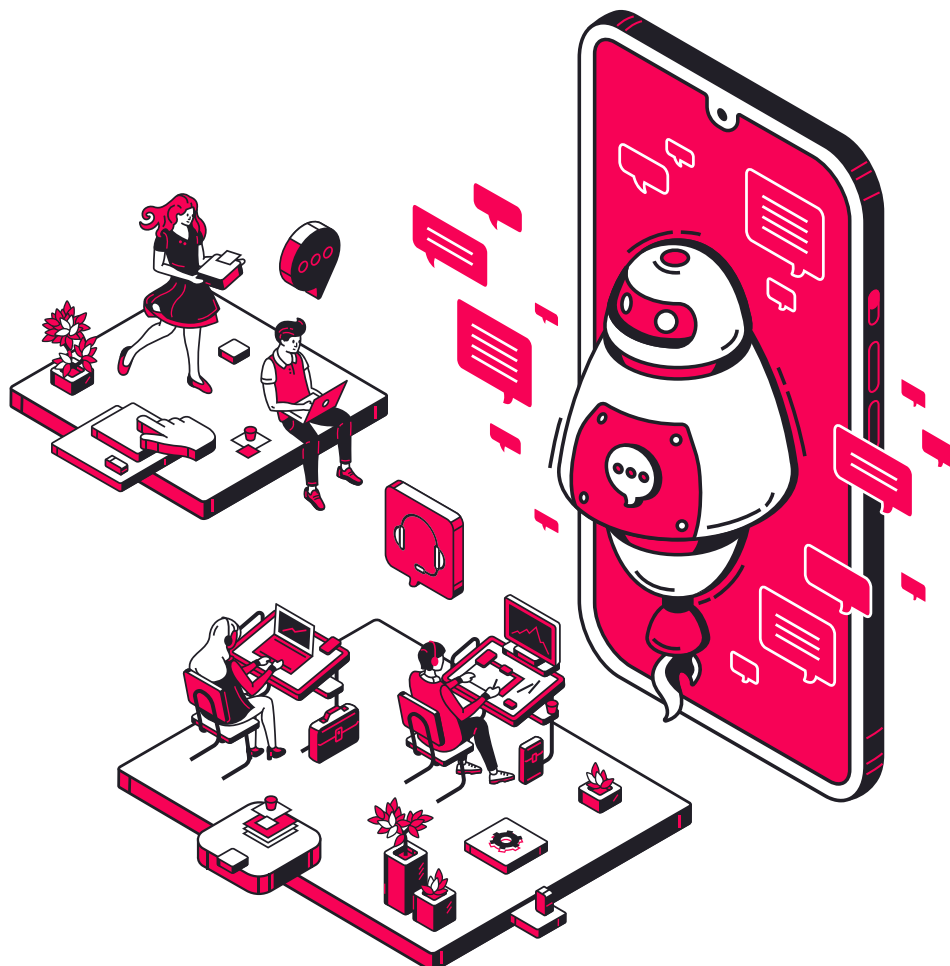
High-tech, high-touch.

While building optimised solutions helps businesses realise the defined CX metrics and overarching business objectives that impact the bottom line, leveraging the right technology can empower agents with the information and tools they need to deliver empathetic and impassioned engagements in real time.

Furthermore, advanced technological capabilities supported by AI can also facilitate automated digital interactions delivered with a human touch, which is often missing in today's digital-first world.

While data, technology and automation are vital elements when designing and delivering great CX, nothing can replace the human touch and authentic experiences.

As such, the goal of crafting high-tech, high-touch contact centre engagements should aim to seamlessly blend the efficiency and capabilities of advanced solutions with the warmth and empathy of genuine human interactions. This is particularly important when dealing with customers in vulnerable or difficult situations.



Shaping CX.

CX exists on a spectrum, ranging from exceptional to infuriating, which can either increase or decrease the stress associated with interactions.

When customers have a negative experience with a contact centre, it materially impacts their emotional state and how they feel about the brand or the level of service they receive.

Connecting customers to knowledgeable and helpful agents who can swiftly address their concerns through efficient and timely resolution rates reduces the frustration and anxiety often associated with customer service interactions. Crafting seamless interactions can have a broader societal benefit by reducing stress levels while also benefiting the business by forging consumer trust and meaningful connections and engagements that deepen brand loyalty.

For contact centres that operate in critical sectors like healthcare, telemedicine, first response services, life or medical insurance, or charities that offer services like crisis hotlines, the ability to deliver seamless, frictionless CX with empowered agents on the other end of the line can literally mean the difference between life and death. Furthermore, empowered contact centre agents can also focus on providing compassionate support to customers dealing with challenging personal or financial situations.

Partnering with a service provider that can craft these contact centre capabilities materially impacts how organisations engage with consumers who often make contact in distressing situations, like accessing insurance for emergency medical care, requesting immediate assistance with a potentially life-threatening situation, or managing the onerous but necessary administrative processes while navigating periods of bereavement.

By feeding agents with accurate, relevant and personalised information, agents can help customers navigate complex processes to make more informed decisions, provide guidance to ease their burden, and make the process as easy as possible.

Intelligent solutions that prompt agents with correct information in real time allow them to focus their attention and resources on creating real human connections and providing empathetic responses and emotional support, which can make customers feel valued and understood.

Calling a contact centre that delivers a seamless experience, with immediate availability across every channel makes the process as easy as possible, which can help people get through these difficult periods or situations without creating unnecessary distress or adding to already difficult situations.

Empowered agents.

According to the Salesforce State of the Connected Customer Report, 66% of customers expect companies to understand their unique needs and expectations.

Empowering agents with an intuitive, streamlined, responsive and easy-to-navigate system interface enables them to handle every type of interaction and task with ease. These capabilities enhance agent experience (AX) by alleviating common pain points and making customer interactions more successful.

Critically, AX is closely tied with CX as happy and empowered agents are more productive, loyal, and customer-oriented. They are also more likely to provide positive, empathetic, and personalised customer service, leading to higher customer satisfaction, retention, and loyalty.

A survey conducted by Webex by Cisco in conjunction with CMSWire found that 92% of respondents said they believe that senior leadership understands the correlation between AX and CX and are actively investing to improve AX.

CX technology that delivers the granular real-time insights that enhance AX requires access to a comprehensive knowledge base that contains personalised and relevant customer insights.

Access to this information enables agents to personalise and improve customer interactions, and informs agent decision-making, thereby enabling agents to provide superior customer service while enhancing engagement.

It also empowers agents to quickly find answers to customer queries while reducing the time spent on research and improving customer satisfaction.



Enhancing EX

Contact centre agents who feel empowered by technology find it easier to do their job, which is vital to delivering exceptional CX. Conversely, solutions that constrain an agent's ability to do their job well create frustration and stop them from being able to deliver the level of service they want.

Moreover, the quality of the experience they can provide the customer with impacts their happiness as they derive greater satisfaction from customer interactions.

This is also a critical factor in AX, as giving agents the ability to perform their jobs with relative ease and to the best of their ability boosts job satisfaction, which has numerous knock-on effects, from enhanced customer service to reduced agent churn.

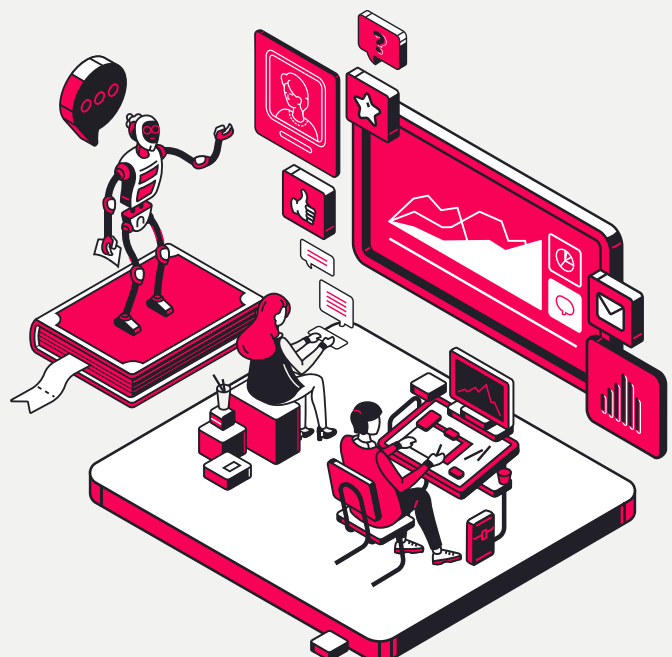
It also empowers agents to quickly find answers to customer queries while reducing the time spent on research and improving customer satisfaction.

Beyond the tech

However, the ability to provide empathetic and compassionate service is not just about the technology. The foundation of great CX is a culture of employee inclusion and engagement.

Investing in agent training and development is critical to equip employees with the technical competence and proficiency to effectively leverage the solutions in place, and the communication skills and soft skills, knowledge and tools needed to develop their emotional intelligence and identify the context of each interaction and understand how to engage at this point of contact.

Effectively combining these hard and soft skills helps agents deliver the type of service that leaves customers with an elevated sense of well-being following stress-free interactions that meet their expectations.



Technology enablers.

In this regard, AI-powered tools can assist agents in understanding customer sentiment, identifying potential issues, and suggesting appropriate responses to improve the outcomes of human interactions.

Intelligent routing helps match the customer to the best available agent based on the customer's history and the products or services purchased by that individual. Matching the right caller to the right agent increases the likelihood of quick resolution.

The key to embracing these capabilities lies in the cloud. Shifting systems into the cloud creates opportunities to converge different data sources to create a complete view of the customer in real time across all critical business applications, making every touchpoint an opportunity to deliver exceptional CX.

Moreover, leveraging an integrated platform creates the foundation to orchestrate better EX in real-time, while the flexibility inherent in the cloud encourages innovation by supporting a broad range of applications and services, giving operations the power to tailor applications to unique use cases.

Connecting all experiences in the cloud also creates a single, consolidated view of customer journeys and intents, which empowers agents to transform and optimise experiences with personalisation based on contextual understanding.

Viewing customer data in a single workspace empowers agents to make more impactful decisions to serve each customer with individualised and tailored experiences based on insights into their current and previous visits.

Humanising digital engagements

Unified customer data creates opportunities to add a human touch across digital service channels like chatbots.

Deploying human-like digital technology that leverage data and AI technology can deliver a realistic, personalised experience with real-time speech and behaviour that respond to external stimuli.

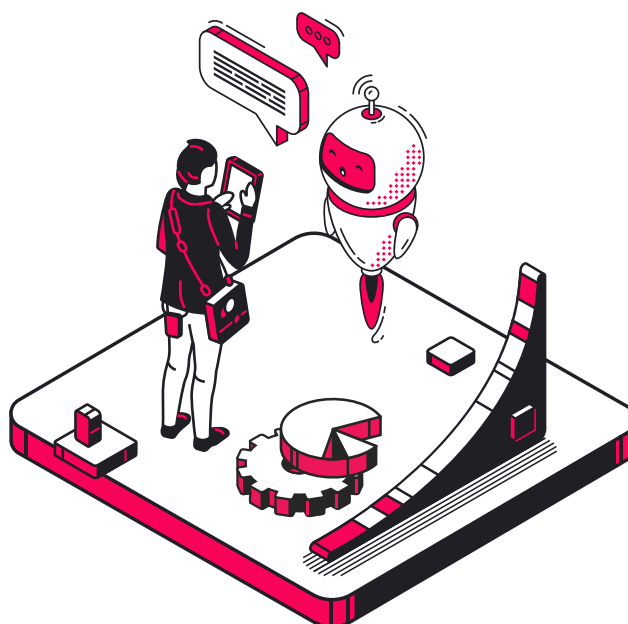
In this regard, conversational AI services with generative AI support automation with a human touch, and predictive AI equips businesses with deeper customer insights for personalisation.

However, this type of technology requires deep domain expertise, particularly in use-case discovery, natural language processing and persona creation. As such, companies looking to implement this technology in their businesses must partner with leaders in this field to achieve the desired outcome.

Impactful CX

By delivering exceptional CX through technology and data-driven customer insights that facilitate seamless interactions, contact centres can improve the overall well-being of the agents who orchestrate engagements and the individuals they engage with to create a positive societal impact.

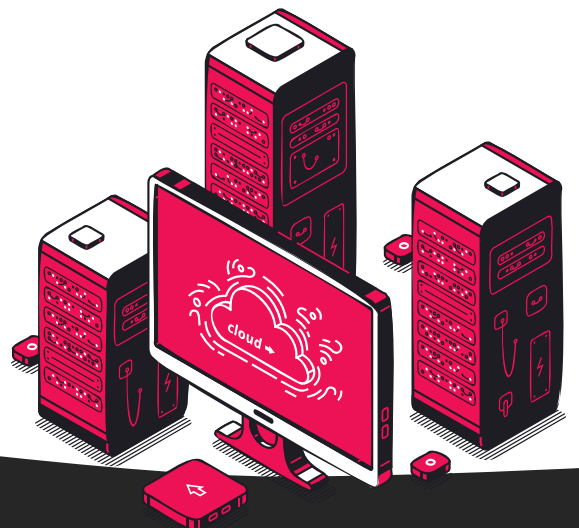
By reducing stress, offering support during difficult times, and fostering empathy and kindness, contact centres can contribute to a more positive and compassionate society.



About Us.

Connect is a global systems integrator and digital transformation partner, dedicated to delivering impactful, technology-enabled customer experiences. Since 1990, we've been committed to excellence, innovation, and a client-first approach. Leveraging AI, data analytics, and automation, we design and implement personalised customer and employee experiences across all channels.

Our vendor-independent, service-led solutions simplify complex challenges and ensure a unified view of customers and operations. Guided by values of integrity, collaboration, and sustainability, we strive to make a positive impact for clients, colleagues, and communities, supporting businesses worldwide with global reach and local expertise. We make the complex simple.



Connect with us.

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



+44 2070 751450 (UK) +27 10 476 0300 (SA)



info@weconnect.tech



weconnect.tech