



A Mobile Customer Service Strategy:

Research Report and
Best Practices Guide

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Productivity Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS

In late 2012, the International Customer Management Institute (ICMI) reached out to their network of contact center professionals to better understand the community's 2013 Mobile Customer Service Strategy. The 422 survey respondents answered questions pertaining to their activities and intentions around supporting customers directly from a mobile device, both through self-service and live agent options.

A Mobile Customer Service Strategy is defined as the holistic operating plan an organization creates in order to effectively design and execute mobile and SMS support, either through a mobile web app or a native/smartphone app.

For the purpose of this research study, mobile support includes all customer service that is accessible to the user directly from their mobile device, preferably through a web app or native/smartphone app.

The research focused on key areas of mobile customer service:

- **Transactional and Interactive Self-Service** which includes all support that is self-directed and self-navigated such as in-app help portals, visual IVRs, account and transaction look-ups, and product recommendations. It can also include more advanced SMS self-help like push notifications, IM bot responses, and texting for assistance (i.e. Text 'HELP' to 99999)
- **Conversational Live Agent Service** is similar to traditional contact center channels like chat, email, and phone support, but it provides both the agent and the customer the ability to communicate without leaving the mobile app. More progressive options may include video and Facetime usage, Click-to-Call and Click-to-Connect/Click-to-Talk or instant messaging.

It was apparent that contact center professionals believe there is an increasing need to support their mobile customers "on the glass", but that the implementation of this is often proving to be a challenge.

This report strives to provide contact center leaders the data they require to secure executive-level sponsorship in order to create and implement a successful Mobile Customer Service Strategy.

KEY FINDINGS

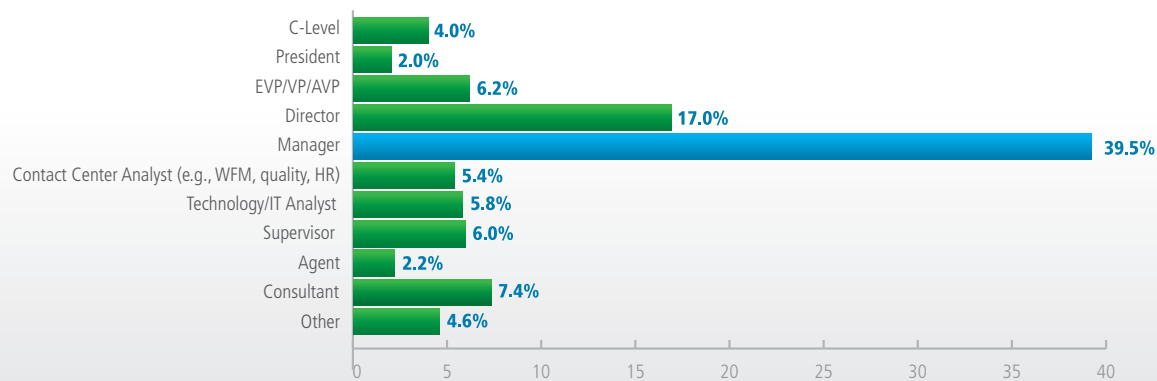
- **Six** key mobile support best practices previously identified by ICMI were confirmed through the study
 - Over **43%** say their company knows Mobile Customer Service is a priority
 - **68%** say it improves user experience
 - Almost **62%** think it's a competitive differentiator
 - But only **33%** are in the planning stages, and only 25% report actually HAVING a Mobile Customer Service Strategy for 2013
-

STUDY RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHICS

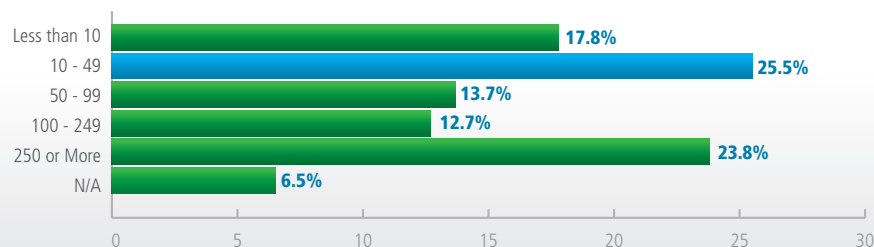
The 422 survey respondents represented nearly every level of the contact center, with the majority of results provided by executives (12.2%), directors (17.0%) and managers (39.5%). Also participating were functional team members and managers/analysts from workforce management, QA and information technology, as well as a few agents. Consultants (7.4%) also comprise a respectable percentage of survey respondents.

Select the role that best describes your work function:



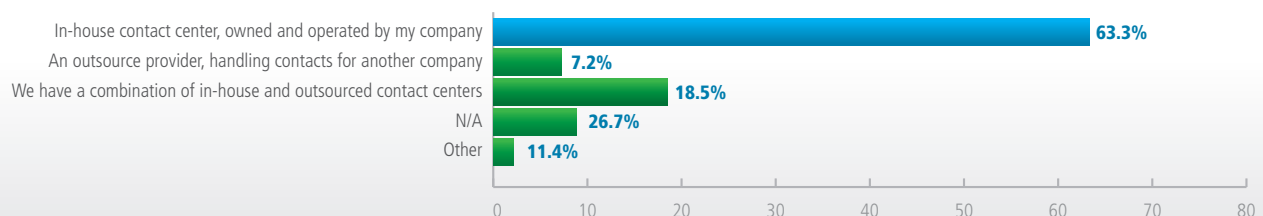
Call centers of every size are proportionately represented here, from small (50 agents or less) to medium (50-100), to large (100 or more). Contact centers with less than 100 agents comprised 57.0% of participating centers, while those larger centers with 100 and above are 36.5% of respondents.

How many agents work in your contact center(s)?



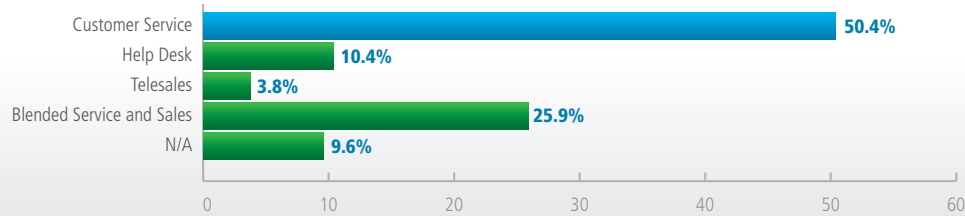
The majority (63.3%) of contact centers are in-house and owned and operated by the company, while 18.5% are some combination of in-house and outsourced.

Please indicate the type of contact center you work in.



Not surprising, over half (50.4%) report customer service as their primary function, with another quarter (25.9%) offering a blend of service and sales. The remaining are either help desk centers or telesales.

What is your contact center's primary function?



Although North America was the most represented region, participation in the study came from all over the world.

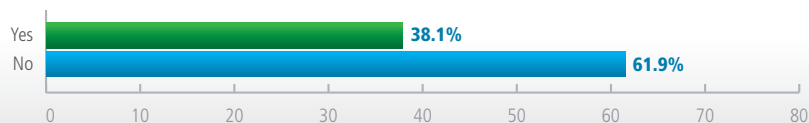
Participation spanned all industry verticals. Financial services, telecom, and healthcare were the largest groups accounting for 18.1%, 7.9% and 7.2%, respectively.

THE MOBILE LANDSCAPE TODAY

In the 2012 research for *Technology Review*, Michael Degusta claims smartphones are set to become the fastest spreading technology in human history. Although the data he cites is U.S.-centric, it does appear representative of other Western countries. Nielsen data from Q2 2012 supports this, showing the ever increasing penetration of smartphones with 54.9% of U.S. mobile subscribers owning them. In the months preceding the report, 2 out of 3 Americans purchased a smartphone over a standard mobile device.

Customers aren't just buying and using smartphones, they want customer service through them as well. When reviewers of this survey were asked the question "Are your customers actively asking for mobile customer service?" a sizable (38.1%) number answered the affirmative. While this isn't yet the majority, it is a significant enough percentage in this early stage of mobile customer service, that companies should take notice.

Are your customers actively asking for Mobile customer service?

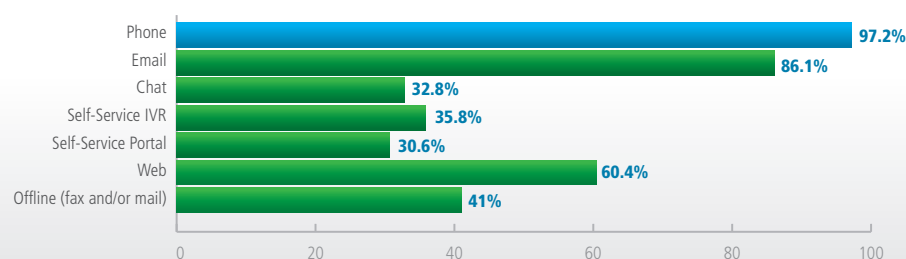


"Mobile is the killer channel for customer service!" says Kim Martin, Director of Marketing for Voxeo, a leading provider of hosted and on-premise platforms for mobile and multi-channel customer care. "Smartphones and tablet devices have built-in capabilities that will completely transform the customer experience. The result will be an unparalleled level of convenience when it comes to enabling anytime, personalized self-service access through mobile web, native mobile apps and SMS interactions, as well as voice."

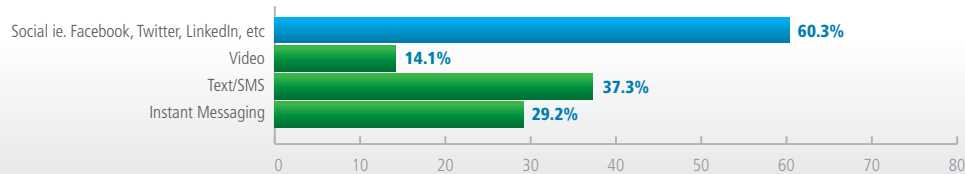
THE CURRENT STATE OF THE CONTACT CENTER

While most contact centers utilize the traditional channels of phone (97.2%), email (86.1%), web inquiries (60.4%) and offline activities like mail and fax (41.0%), an increasing number have implemented self-service options like IVR (35.8%) and online portals (30.6%). Despite its surge several years ago, online chat usage remains steady at 32.8%. Although video is still the laggard at 14.1%, it may experience momentum as smartphone adoption increases. The biggest growth surprise was that 60.3% of contact centers now report supporting social.

What traditional customer service channels are you currently supporting in your contact center(s)?



What emerging customer service channels are you currently supporting in your contact center(s)?

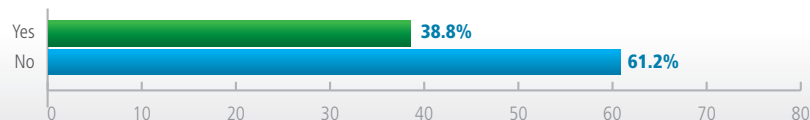


Chat usage could start to see traction again as contact centers continue implementing the “text-heavy” emerging channels like SMS (37.3%), and instant messaging (29.2%). In fact, when asked about launching new customer service channels next year, 50.2% expect to add some form of chat as a channel, which was the third most selected response behind the unsurprising email (71.9%) and phone (69.6%). Rounding out the top 5 anticipated additions in 2013 were web inquiries (45.6%) and mobile web app or smartphone app support (45.2%).

“While the technology behind SMS has been around since the mid-90s, enterprises have only recently started embracing this channel for customer care. We see a significant increase in interest, particularly for outbound notifications and reminders in the healthcare space, financial services and utilities,” says Tobias Goebel, Director of Mobile Strategy for Voxeo. “By combining proactive, outbound SMS with an option to switch the channel to mobile web, new opportunities arise for reducing costs in the contact center while simultaneously improving the customer experience.”

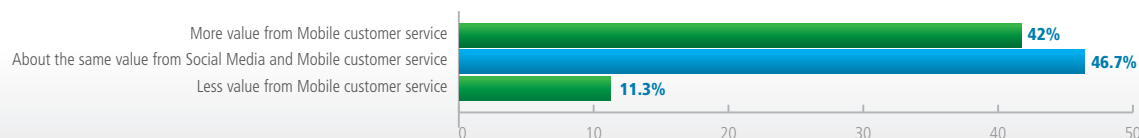
That's good news for mobile customers, as right now only 38.8% of contact centers are currently supporting mobile as a customer service channel!

Do you currently support Mobile as a customer service channel (transactional self-service, automated self-service and/or live agent)?



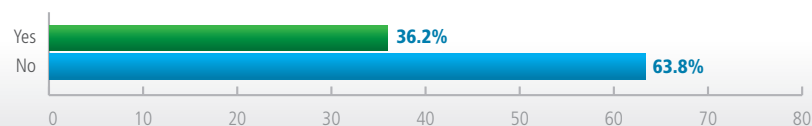
Considering the growing adoption of social media support, it is fair to assume that mobile customer service will be as readily considered. Almost half (46.7%) said that customers will get the same value from mobile support as they do with social, while 42.1% actually said the value was higher with mobile.

Do you think customers will get more value out of Social Media customer service or Mobile customer service?



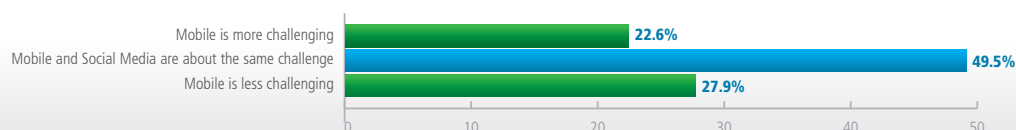
Contact centers need to be as mindful and strategic with mobile support as they have been with their other channels, as almost two-thirds (63.8%) said that mobile customers expect the same level of service as they do from the traditional channels.

Do your Mobile customers expect a different level of customer service than those from more traditional channels?



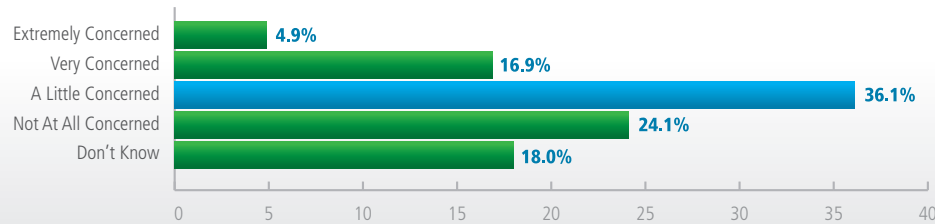
Interestingly enough, about half (49.5%) of respondents feel mobile and social are about the same level of difficulty for the contact center to support, while 27.9% actually believe that it is less challenging to support mobile and only 22.3% consider it more so.

Do you think Social Media customer service or Mobile Customer service is a harder channel to support within your contact center?



Adding all these new customer service channels like mobile and social into the contact center is not always going to be easy. When asked, “how concerned are you that mobile customer service is simply too difficult for your contact center to handle successfully”, 36.1% stated a little concerned, while 21.8% were either very or extremely worried about it. On the other side of the scale, 24.1% weren’t concerned at all.

How concerned are you that Mobile customer service is simply too difficult for your contact center to handle successfully?

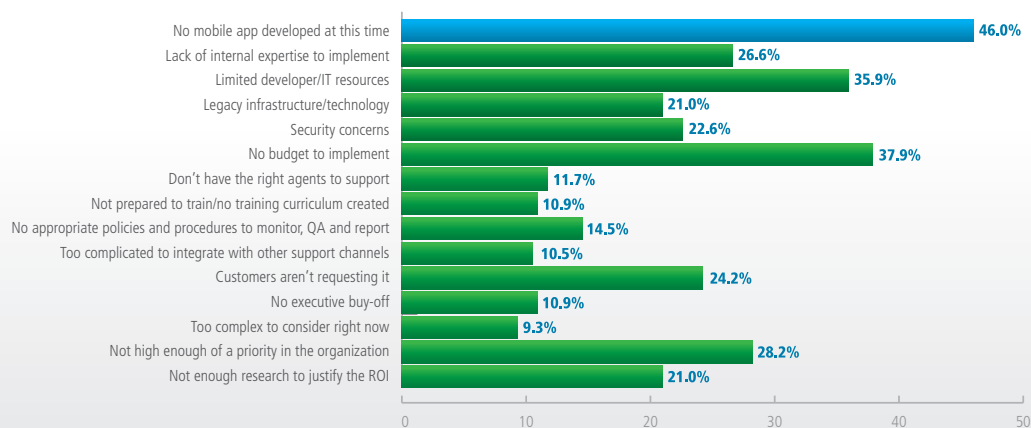


While contact center leaders report being worried about handling mobile customer service, the overall company itself appears less concerned. In fact, overall complexity (9.3%) and integration complications (10.5%) ranked at the bottom when companies were asked “what prevents you from adding Mobile as a customer service channel today”. This identifies a potential inconsistency between the company and the contact center, as the former believes that mobile is easier to support than the latter does. While this isn’t necessarily unusual, it will be beneficial for both the company and the contact center to be in agreement on the mobile strategy. This is of course, a great argument for partnering on the plan, so that all parties are better prepared.

One other key finding should be highlighted in this piece of the research. Near half (46.0%) of the respondents said “no mobile app developed at this time”, was the primary factor that prevented them from adding the channel. It can then be surmised that either 1) most feel an actual web app or smartphone app is a requirement for mobile support, or 2) that companies are not yet tracking conversations that occur from a mobile device. Because by definition, mobile customer service can occur simply from a mobile device through SMS, chat, email, or a browser. A customized web app or smartphone app is certainly preferred, but not required.

Other top reasons of no budget (37.9%), limited expertise (26.6%) and resources (35.9%), no customer request (24.2%) and low prioritization (28.2%) suggest that either these particular industries or company types do not have a smartphone-centric user base, or again they do not have a Mobile Customer Service Strategy to even determine the significance. Most seem to agree that implementation is possible; they just don’t have or understand the need yet.

What prevents you from adding Mobile as a customer service channel, today?



Goebel agrees that, “True mobile customer care is about much more than just saying ‘we now have an app’. A holistic approach will include other mobile technologies like SMS, Location-Based Services, or outbound IVR, and linking or combining the channels to utilize each for what they are best suited for. Cloud-based deployments with support for flexible but secure enterprise backend integration help keep the complexity of dealing with so many new technologies under control, as responsibility is shifted to the vendor.”

Brad Cleveland, the Senior Advisor and former CEO of ICMI recognizes the challenges surrounding the implementation of mobile. He's created '**Four Key Steps to Getting Started in Mobile Customer Support**' as best practices for any contact center.

Four Key Steps to Getting Started in Mobile Customer Support

By Brad Cleveland, Senior Advisor and Former CEO, ICMI

I get concerned when I hear mobile being referred to as a "channel" in contact center circles. Don't get me wrong, I often do the same ... depending on the context of the conversation. Yes, mobile is a means for the organization and customer to connect and interact. You'll need to forecast and schedule the workload related to these interactions, just like any other channel.

But consider the sheer breadth of the mobile services many of us use daily: travel, banking, navigation, shopping, productivity, news, social communities, service and support and yes, communication, to name a few. (I recently got briefed on a new line of smart phones, and a company engineer added this to the end of a long list of capabilities: "It makes calls, too!") We carry in our pockets and purses enough connectivity and computing power to put yesterday's mainframe computers to shame.

Mobile can enable new channels (e.g., interactions that begin within mobile apps) and can be a seamless conduit to existing channels (i.e., phone, chat, social communities, and others). But it of course does much more. Mobile is a fast-evolving and vast ecosystem, and I believe we need to think of and manage it as such.

From a contact center perspective, I encourage you and your team to begin (or keep) pushing along four fundamentally important aspects of strategy and planning when building out mobile services and support:

1. Ensure your organization is aligned. I recently delivered an address for an executive level planning conference at a California-based health provider. The organization has been working on a new suite of mobile-based health management tools—super cool apps. But they were being developed and launched largely independent of contact center involvement (different divisions, separate teams). And the results were predictable: service misses and gaps.

As any seasoned contact center manager knows, even "self-service" tools impact virtually all types of customer interactions, including traffic patterns, handling times, the nature and demands of existing contacts (e.g., agents become de facto tech support for web and mobile services) and customer expectations. For all the potential and positive impact of these new capabilities, the rollout was creating new problems in service expectations and delivery. The solution? Create a cross-functional team with a comprehensive view of the customer experience, and then incorporate forecasting and planning activities into the ongoing rollout. The results improved quickly.

2. Anticipate evolving customer expectations. There are ten primary expectations customers have when interacting with organizations, whatever the channel and whether by self-serve, agent-assisted, or any combination. With your cross-functional development team, think through how these expectations are evolving and where they are likely to go in coming months:

- *Be accessible*
- *Treat me courteously*
- *Be responsive to what I need and want*
- *Do what I ask promptly*
- *Provide well-trained and informed employees*
- *Tell me what to expect*
- *Meet your commitments and keep your promises*
- *Do it right the first time*
- *Follow up*
- *Be socially responsible and ethical*

I recently expressed some concern about a service issue with my mobile service provider, through a text-based survey they initiated. Later that day, I received a call from them, which helped me resolve the problem. That kind of responsiveness drives a new level of expectations with our customers. (For the record, I love it! We're in a season of significant development in customer interaction, and it's exciting to see the progress.)

3. Update your customer access strategy. We've often written about the importance of keeping your strategy current, so this one is probably no surprise. If your contact center doesn't already play a central role in mobile customer services, it's only a matter of time (see the ICMI Research Guide on mobile customer service [<http://www.icmi.com/Resources/Articles/2013/May/The-Mobile-Customer-Service-Marathon-an-ICMI-Research-Guide>]). The ten components of an effective customer access strategy include:

- **Customers:** How do you segment, serve and learn about them and from them? Some industry professionals are arguing that mobile creates new kinds of customer segments with unique expectations and needs, and I concur.
- **Contact types:** This component anticipates all of the major types of interactions that will occur, e.g., inquiries, orders, policies, support, feedback, automated customer care notifications (for those who opt in), and others
- **Access alternatives:** This step identifies how mobile services impact both traditional communication channels (telephone, email, chat, self-service, et al.) and create new alternatives (e.g., surveys, user communities, text-based interaction, and others).
- **Hours of response:** Today's mobile customers are "always on, always connected," creating evolving perceptions of access and responsiveness. Many service teams are wisely wrestling with this issue and how to best respond.
- **Service level objectives:** As with hours of operation, your service level objectives for agent-assisted interactions should be driven by the gravity of the conversations taking place and the responsiveness appropriate to your brand. In a mobile setting, shorter windows of time (and less tolerance for queues) are common.
- **Routing:** What tools and processes do you need to identify, prioritize, and deliver mobile interactions to the right agents?
- **Agents required:** This step identifies who will handle service issues for your mobile customers, how you will incorporate these agents into your structure, and the tools and support they will need.
- **Information required:** What information on customers, products and services will need to be accessible to agents and customers? What information can and should be captured? (Mobile and social are driving a renewed focus on the potential in harnessing "big data" to better understand and serve customers; this is a good place in your strategy to think through these opportunities.)
- **Analysis and business unit collaboration:** This step defines how you will capture and share information that can help improve the organization's products, services and processes.
- **Guidelines for deploying new services:** This aspect of strategy summarizes technology architecture, investment guidelines (how plans must be analyzed for returns, etc.) and other overarching considerations.

Though mobile initiatives can start out as self-service apps, they tend to quickly foster new ways to connect with, interact and serve customers. So strategy is not a one-time project; it should be a living, breathing, and ongoing part of service development.

4. Forecast and staff for evolving workloads. Mobile impacts staffing resources, and different types of mobile interactions each require a specific approach to resource planning. Here are some common examples:

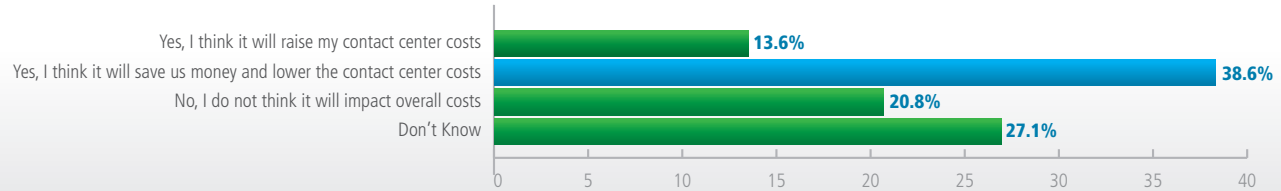
- **Self-service.** The requirement here is to be cognizant of how existing as well as emerging channels and interactions will be impacted. You'll get fewer of some types of contacts, more of others. Perhaps most importantly, the content and complexity of interactions will evolve as mobile services mature.
- **Real time, with single response.** In this example, the organization handles interactions as they occur (e.g., text or phone conversations initiated by customers), with one response generally being sufficient. These are service-level-type interactions, and the staffing approach is like that for traditional inbound calls.
- **Real-time, with multiple exchanges.** In this case, the organization strives to handle interactions when they are initiated, and the dialog involves multiple back-and-forth messages. These are service-level-type contacts with staffing considerations like those of chat.
- **Interactions that can be deferred.** This approach involves addressing inquiries or issues that do not require an immediate response. In this scenario, staffing is response-time oriented, like that for email or outbound contacts that are scheduled.
- **Outbound.** Here, the organization contacts the customer—in a mobile setting, often proactive through text or a call. Like traditional outbound calls, these interactions are easier to manage and incorporate than customer-initiated contacts, but must be staffed and managed nonetheless.

The overall message to contact center leaders is this: Don't leave mobile to chance. Engage with your organization in creating and rolling out services your customers need and want; update your customer access strategy; restructure your organization as needed; and plan and manage workloads as they evolve. Take the mystery out of mobile, and tackle it head on with all the oomph and know-how you've put into other customer-facing services. Your mobile customers (which will likely include just about all of them!) will thank you.

Brad Cleveland was one of two initial partners in and former longtime President and CEO of ICMI; he currently serves as Senior Advisor. A sought after speaker and consultant, he has worked in over 60 countries, and is author/editor of eight books, including Call Center Management on Fast Forward (new edition released May 2012). He can be reached at bcleveland@icmi.com

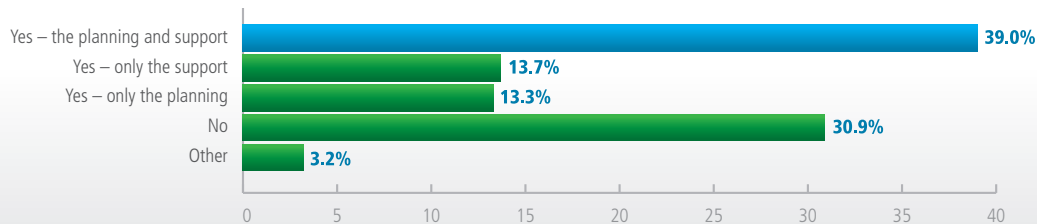
Although there may be some challenges to implement, the contact center views the cost implications of mobile customer service optimistically. Although 27.1% weren't sure how it would affect them long-term, 38.6% expect mobile to save them money and lower their contact center costs. 20.8% felt that there'd be no impact, and only 13.6% actually thought it would raise contact center costs.

Do you expect Mobile customer service will impact the costs of your contact center in the long-run?



The contact center plays a vital role in the success of a Mobile Customer Service Strategy, yet they are not involved 30.9% of the time. It was promising to see that more centers are part-owners of the Strategy - both planning and support (39.0%), while another 26.9% claim to have responsibility for one or the other. This is encouraging, although the shared support is proving to be a challenge for contact centers, as evidenced later in the report.

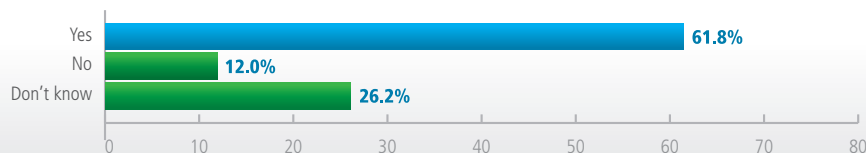
Does the contact center own any of the Mobile Customer Service Strategy?



THE 2013 MOBILE CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY REALITY

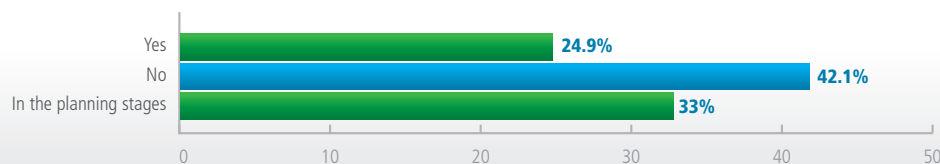
Overwhelmingly most (61.8%) companies feel that a Mobile Customer Service Strategy is a competitive differentiator for them. While 26.2% claim they didn't know if it would be, only 12.0% said that it was not.

Do you feel a Mobile Customer Service Strategy is a competitive differentiator?



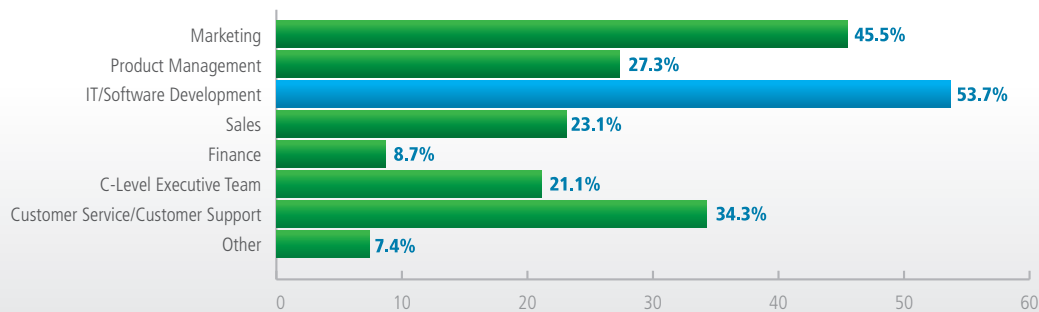
Interestingly enough, the data shows that only 24.9% of organizations currently have a 2013 Mobile Customer Service Strategy, with another one-third (33.0%) in the planning stages. That means that almost 14% are supporting mobile customers without a tangible plan in place!

Does your organization currently have a 2013 Mobile Customer Service Strategy?



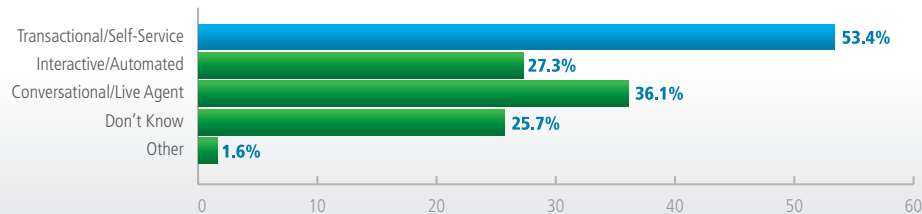
The shared ownership of the Strategy may account for some of the reasons why 42.1% don't have one yet. Depending on a company's internal communication and hierarchy, each department may be approaching the Strategy from a different angle. IT/Software appears to have majority ownership (53.7%), followed closely by Marketing (45.5%). The other key departments of Customer Support (34.3%), Product Management (27.3%), Sales (23.1%), and the C-Level Executives (21.1%) all record strong ownership of some of the Strategy which again implies that there are a lot of competing agendas. Only Finance (8.7%) and the catch-all "other" (7.4%) had percentages in the single-digits.

Who else owns all or a portion of the Mobile Customer Service Strategy?



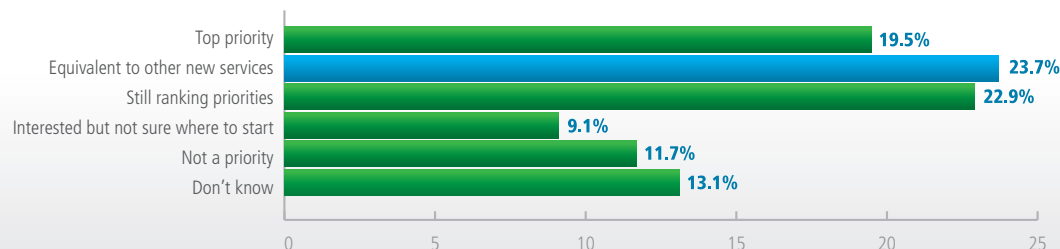
With IT/Software Development being a primary owner of the Strategy, it's not entirely surprising that these current plans are largely based around transactional self-service (53.4%). It seems though, that more organizations are realizing the value of collaboration with their mobile customers, as 63.5% have either live agent or automated/interactive bot components in their plans. This of course increases the complexity of the offering and the higher potential involvement of the contact center.

Is your Mobile Customer Service Strategy...



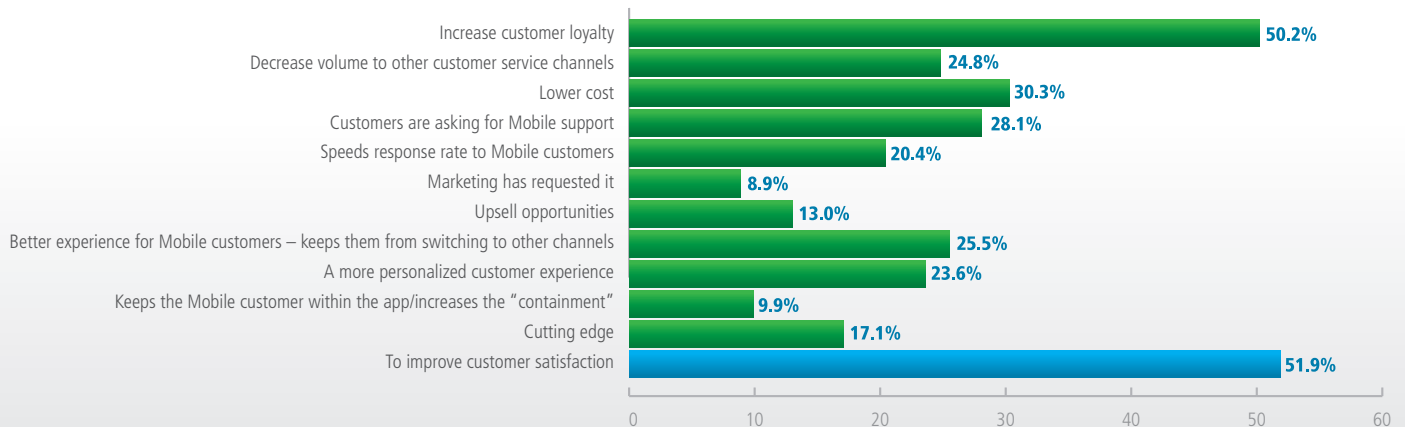
It stands to reason that some of the remaining 42.1% that do not have a Mobile Customer Service Strategy for next year do indeed appreciate the need, as only 11.7% of total respondents said their companies did not rank mobile as a priority in 2013 planning. In fact, 43.1% say that it is either a top priority for their firm or at least equivalent to other new initiatives in the upcoming year. Over 32.0% of respondents expressed interest in mobile, but were still ranking it or working out how to start planning for it. 13.1% had no idea where it fit into their company's plan.

What importance has your company ranked Mobile in its 2013 planning?



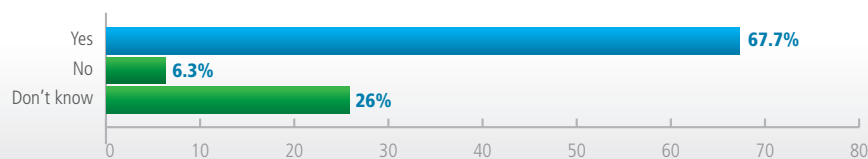
Almost all choices for the question "What are the 3 primary reasons your company is motivated to implement a Mobile Customer Service strategy?" generated double-digit percentage responses. The most-selected was that of improving customer satisfaction (51.9%), with increasing customer loyalty (50.2%) not far behind. Rounding out the Top 5 at a significantly smaller percentage rate were lower cost (30.3%), customers asking for mobile support (28.1%) and a better experience for mobile customers (25.5%). It is again clear that the customer experience is at the pinnacle of the Strategy impetus.

What are the 3 primary reasons your company is motivated to implement a Mobile Customer Service Strategy?



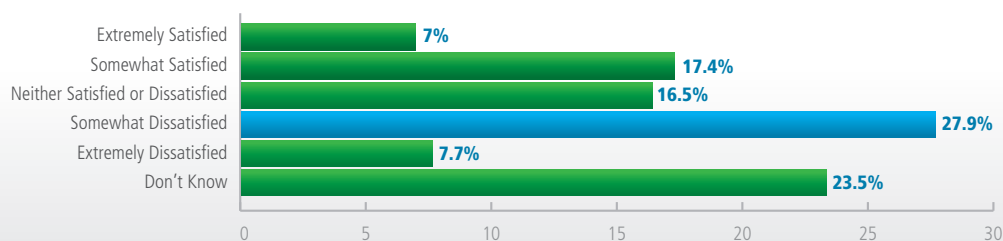
Supporting this notion is the fact that over two-thirds (67.7%) overwhelmingly answered in the affirmative when asked if “mobile customer service options would improve the overall experience for mobile customers”.

Do Mobile customer service options improve the overall experience for Mobile customers?



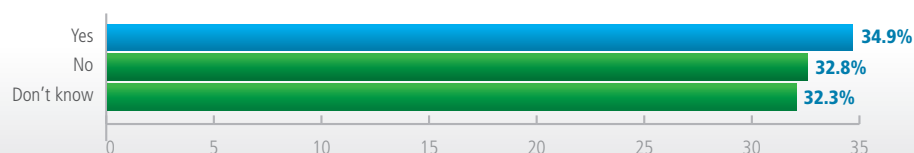
Furthermore, a majority (35.6%) answered that their customers would be either somewhat or extremely dissatisfied if they needed to exit the mobile web app or smartphone app in order to contact customer service. While 23.5% weren't sure of the impact, an almost equal number said customers would be “neutral” – somewhat satisfied (17.4%) or neither satisfied or dissatisfied (16.61%). The high number of “Don't Know” (23.5%) respondents suggests the importance of customer outreach and research in the Strategy planning process.

How satisfied will your customers be if they need to EXIT your Mobile web app/smartphone app to contact customer service using traditional channels (phone, chat, email)?



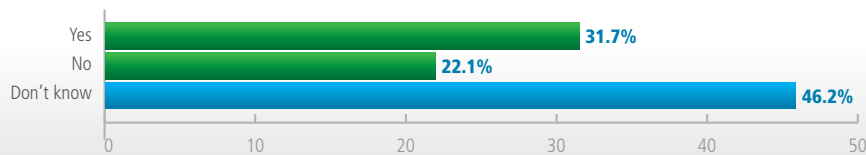
Oddly, when asked about losing customers if they didn't offer mobile customer service options, an almost equal number of respondents didn't think they would (32.8%), as those that either thought they would (34.9%), or didn't know (32.3%). Again, this supports the notion that a Mobile Customer Service Strategy will better help the organization understand the expectations of their customers.

Do you feel you will lose customers without Mobile customer service options?



Alarming, almost half (46.2%) of respondents don't know if there is Executive buy-in on the Mobile Customer Service Strategy, while another 22.1% are certain they don't even have it.

Are you able, or have you been able to secure Executive buy-in for a Mobile Customer Service Strategy?



In order to effectively implement the Mobile Customer Service Strategy, Executive buy-in will ultimately be required. When asked what else Executives need to see in order to sign-off, the top responses were:

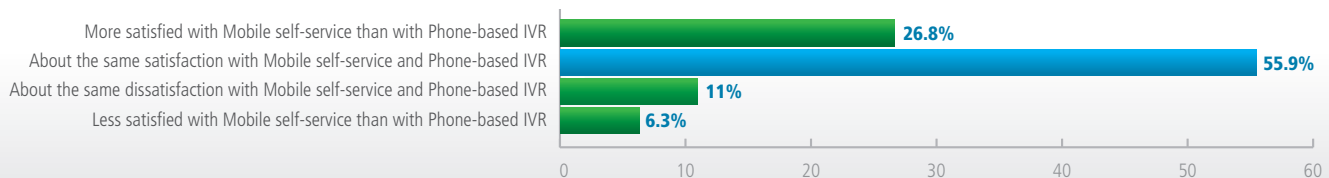
- *ROI to the organization*
- *Better options for cloud services to reduce internal costs and maintenance*
- *Budget*
- *More concrete and verifiable data*
- *Recent case studies showing value and usage*
- *Impact on contact center resources*
- *Potential cost savings and call reduction*
- *Best practices for mobile customer service*

SELECTING SELF-SERVICE

There are so many diverse options for mobile self-service that it can be rather daunting for the contact center and the organization to choose the best path for their customers. Once again the Mobile Customer Service Strategy comes into play, as it can eliminate some poor decisions.

For example, because of advances like visual navigation and location services, mobile self-service should be a less frustrating experience than the traditional phone-based IVR. Yet that is not always the case. In fact, contact centers are reporting that customers usually have the same level of satisfaction (55.9%) for mobile self-service as they do for phone IVRs. Only 26.8% are more satisfied with mobile self-service, and 17.3% are either as dissatisfied or more so with their mobile options.

How satisfied are your customers using Mobile SELF-SERVICE options compared with phone-based IVR self-service?



Part of this may be because of the lack of consistency in mobile self-service options across organizations. While all features received double-digit percentage responses, no one option is widely utilized. The mobile web or smartphone app (25.7%) itself is the most commonly used self-service tool, with customer reviews (23.8%), links to social media (22.8%), account notifications (22.7%), post-conversation surveys (20.7%), automated text responses (19.7%), and location services (19.0%) following closely behind. The next cluster with less than two percentage points separating them were product recommendations at 18.2%, push-alerts (17.7%) and recorded videos (16.6%). Visual navigation (13.85), texting for assistance at 11.8%, and pre-conversation surveys (10.5%) were laggards.

Organizations seem interested to experiment with almost all the above mobile self-service options though, because when asked which ones the company would consider testing, there was less than 13 percentage points between them. Over half (51.9%) of the respondents want to try out post-conversation surveys, while just shy of 40% are interested in location services (39.3%).

What types of Automated or Live Agent Mobile support are you currently using, or would you be willing to test?

	Currently Using	Would Consider	No Plans
Automated, interactive text self-service	19.7%	42.0%	38.3%
Voice/Speech-to-Text Chat	9.9%	38.5%	51.6%
Video/Facetime Chat	6.9%	35.3%	57.8%
SMS/Text Chat	21.1%	44.6%	34.3%
Instant Messaging	23.0%	44.0%	33.0%
Instant Connection to Customer Service from Mobile App/Immediate Queuing	11.1%	55.9%	33.0%
Click-to-Call	19.9%	50.7%	29.4%
Scheduled Customer Call-backs	28.4%	42.6%	29.0%
Texting for Assistance (i.e. Text 'help' to 99999)	11.8%	45.6%	42.6%

What features of Mobile Self-Service support are you currently using, or would you be willing to test?

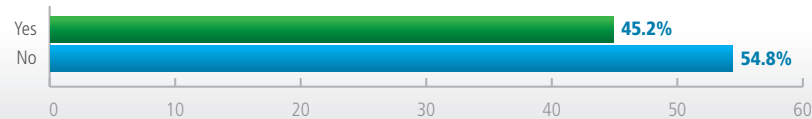
	Currently Using	Would Consider	No Plans
Mobile Web applications for self-service	25.9%	49.4%	24.7%
Customer Reviews	23.8%	46.8%	29.4%
Product Recommendations	18.2%	42.7%	39.1%
Location Services	19.0%	39.3%	41.7%
Push-alerts	17.7%	45.8%	36.5%
Account Notifications	22.6%	47.4%	30.0%
Links to Social Media	22.8%	43.8%	33.4%
Visual Navigation	13.8%	45.0%	41.3%
Recorded Videos	16.6%	40.5%	42.9%
Pre-Conversation Questionnaires	10.5%	48.0%	41.4%
Post-Conversation Surveys	20.6%	51.9%	27.4%

THE ROLE OF THE LIVE AGENT IN THE MOBILE CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY

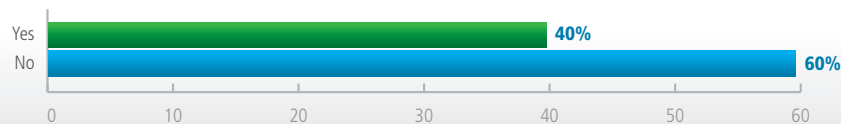
Contact centers still seem unsure of how the live agent best fits within the Mobile Customer Service Strategy.

Of the 38.8% that are offering mobile support, less than half (45.2%) of those have live agents, and there's a hefty 60% saying they have no intention to add them to this channel within the next 12 months.

Do you currently have LIVE AGENTS providing Mobile customer service?
(a direct connection to an agent from a Mobile web/smartphone app through click-to-call, IM, email, text, video, etc...)



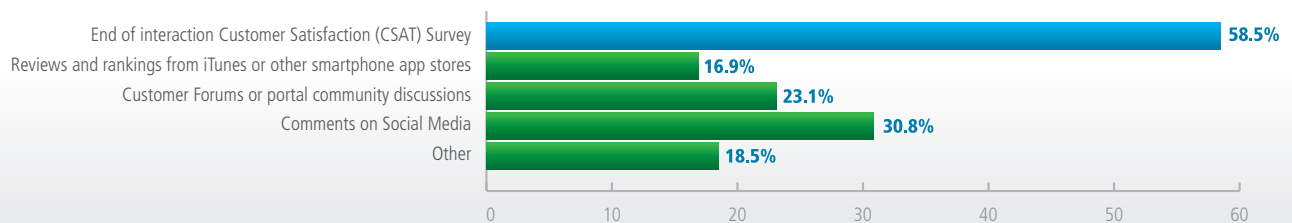
Do you plan to offer LIVE AGENT Mobile customer service within the next 12 months?



Keep in mind though, that even in these situations, live agents often are handling mobile self-service customers through traditional channels if those customers go “off-the-glass” for live assistance. In addition, live agents are also often utilized for reviewing customer forums for complaints or issues, acting as self-service escalation points, and proactively following up on unhappy CSAT survey customers.

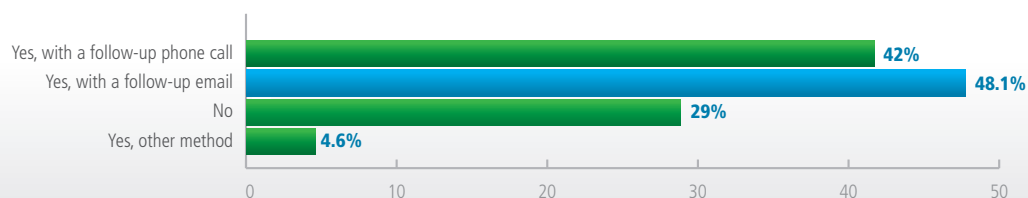
In fact, contact centers that are currently providing mobile customer service rely heavily on their live agents for the measurement of customer satisfaction. While a hefty 58.5% do utilize incoming end-of-interaction CSAT surveys, all other units of computation require moderation. Other mobile CSAT results are acquired through social media commentary (30.8%), customer forums or portal communities (23.1%), and reviews and rankings on iTunes or other smartphone app stores.

How are you currently measuring satisfaction with Mobile customer service?



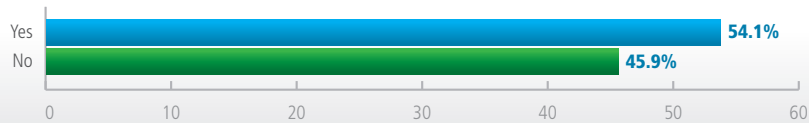
Furthermore, when contact centers were specifically asked how they handled dissatisfied mobile self-service customers, almost half (48.1%) responded they follow-up through email, and equally as impressive were the 42.0% that said through a phone call. A small number said through social media, while 29.0% they don't do any follow-up for mobile DSAT.

Do you proactively reach out to dissatisfied Mobile self-service customers through other channels?

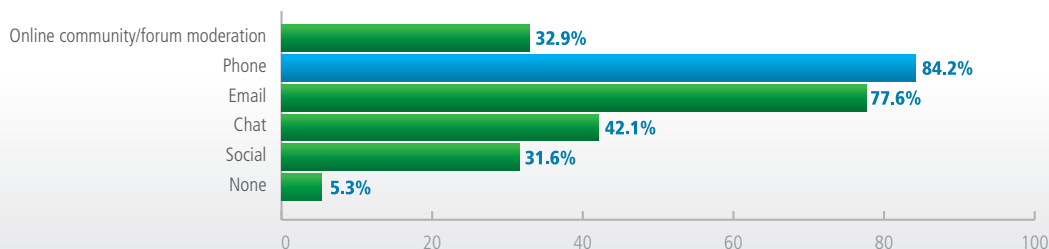


Mobile team sizes vary tremendously, as does the percentage of the contact center's agent population that is trained to handle mobile customer service. It's almost a 50/50 split of, 'yes' all agents are trained for mobile (54.0%) and those that are not (46.0%). It appears though that those mobile live agents are being taken from the traditional contact center, as they are also actively still supporting those channels. Only 5.3% are dedicated to mobile, while most are also handling phone (84.2%), email (77.6%) and chat (42.1%). There was also a substantial amount that is cross-trained with community forum moderation (32.9%) and social (31.6%).

Are all your contact center FTEs trained to handle Mobile customer service?

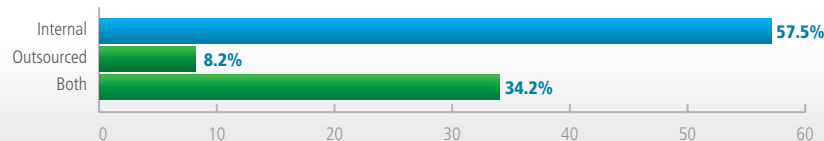


Which other customer service channels does your live agent Mobile customer service team handle?



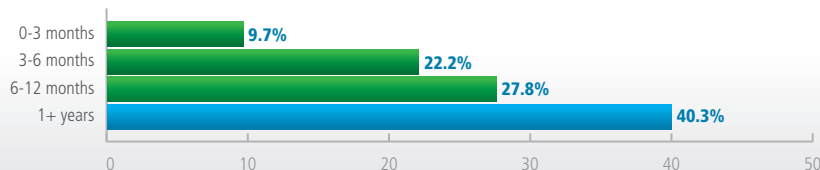
The majority of live agents handling mobile customer service are either staffed internally (57.3%) or through an outsourced/in-house combination (34.3%). Very few contact centers (8.2%) are sending their mobile support solely to an outsourcer. This is not surprising, as new channels are typically initially handled internally until either volume or demand warrants the additional assistance of a partner.

Is your live agent Mobile customer service team staffed by internal employees or an outsourced provider?



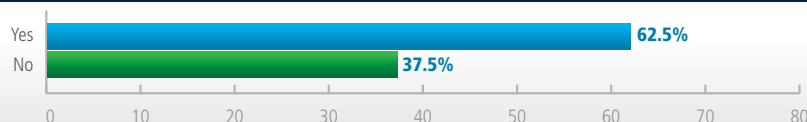
68.2% of centers that have live agent mobile support have been doing so for at least 6 months.

How long has your live agent Mobile customer service team been in place?



The majority (62.5%) are giving the mobile customer service team access to smartphones and tablets to aid in customer troubleshooting.

Does your live agent Mobile customer service team have access to smartphones and tablets within the contact center?



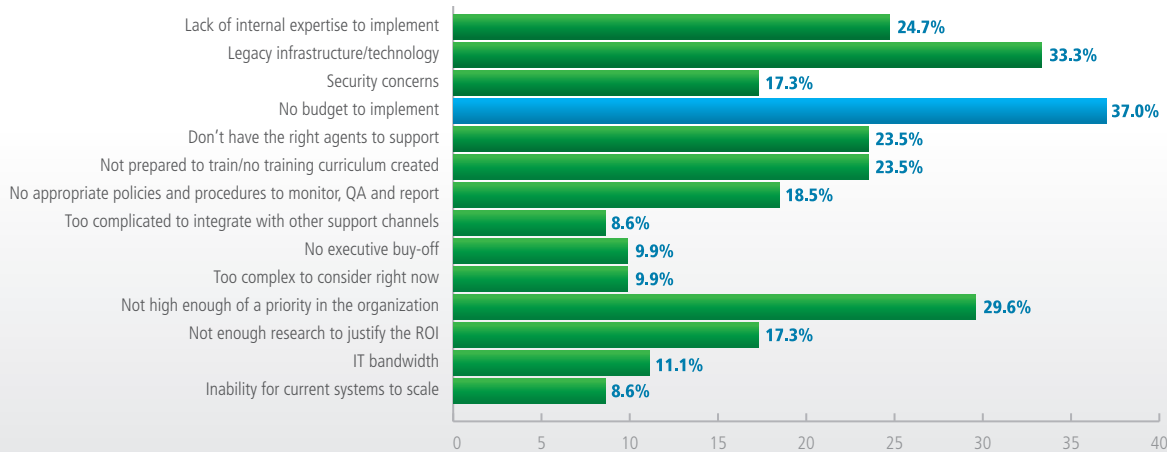
The top responses to “What prevents you from adding Live Agent mobile customer service today?” show that the lack of strategy may be driving the decision-making, rather than customer need or demand.

- *No budget 37.0%*
- *Legacy infrastructure or technology 33.3%*
- *Not high enough of a priority in the organization 29.6%*

The second tier of deterrents are directly within the contact center’s span of control, and are restrictions they could overcome if given the guidance that live agent mobile customer service was a necessity.

- *Lack of internal expertise to implement 24.7%*
- *Don’t have the right agents to support 23.5%*
- *Not prepared to train or don’t have training curriculum created 23.5%*
- *Don’t have the appropriate policies and procedures to monitor, QA and report 18.5%*

What prevents you from adding LIVE AGENT Mobile as a customer service channel, today?



There were no true feature standouts when interacting with a live agent. Scheduled customer callbacks (28.4%), instant messaging (23.0%), SMS (21.1%), and Click-to-Call (19.9%) are the most popular, but none of them are widely used. The most innovative features like instant connections/immediate queuing from the mobile app (11.1%), speech-to-text chat (9.9%) and video/Facetime chat (6.9%) barely registered. Interestingly enough, over half (55.9%) of respondents say that immediate queuing is the most likely feature they will consider for live agent support, while speech-to-chat (38.5%) and video chat (35.3%) rank at the bottom.

What types of Automated or Live Agent Mobile support are you currently using, or would you be willing to test?

	Currently Using	Would Consider	No Plans
Automated, interactive text self-service	19.7%	42.0%	38.3%
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THE CHALLENGES OF MOBILE FOR THE CONTACT CENTER

As previously pointed out, the shared ownership of the Mobile Customer Service Strategy could prove challenging for many contact center leaders, particularly as they attempt to introduce mobile support into their already busy and channel-crowded centers.

Due to their instant access to information, the mobile customer is considered to be incredibly informed. They are also thought of as less accepting of impersonal service than the traditional channel customer. This can lead to higher customer expectations, which was evidenced in the 36.2% of respondents that felt mobile customers did in fact expect a higher level of service than their counterparts. Other demands of the mobile customer include:

- *Faster response times*
- *More customized visuals (like maps and illustrations)*
- *Personalized service*
- *Immediacy of information*
- *Instant connectivity to an agent when needed*
- *Options for “Their Time, and Their Channel” mentality*
- *Single Sign-in to all channels*

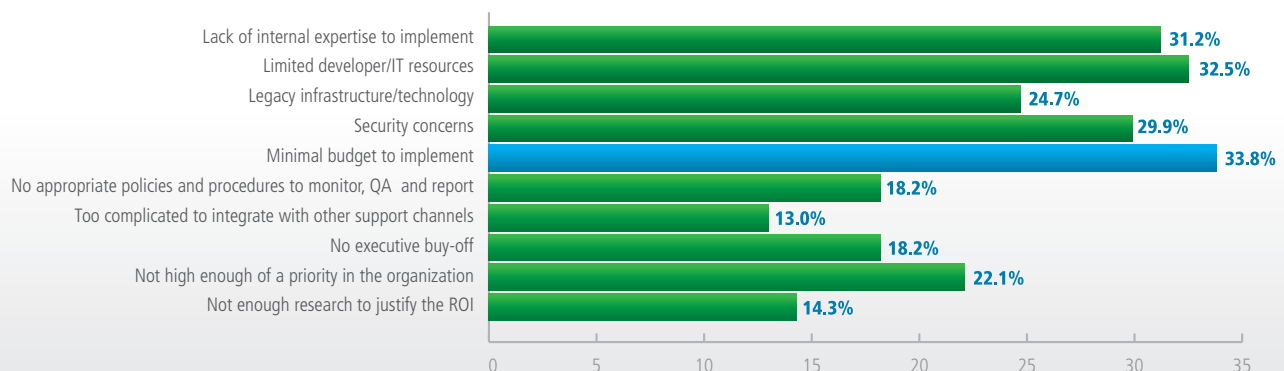
The challenges were mirrored in the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that contact centers are measuring for mobile. There is a heavy preponderance of first-contact resolution (FCR), CSAT, and time-to-respond/turnaround. Some new KPIs that don’t readily exist elsewhere were also reported – no channel handover/device containment, brand loyalty, app usage, app revenue, and reduced call center workload.

Overall, organizations seem to be experiencing the same challenges when implementing mobile customer service, regardless if they opt for self-service, live agent, or a combination of both.

All ten choices for the question “When you implemented Mobile SELF-SERVICE, (either transactional or automated customer service), what were the biggest challenges to implement AT THAT TIME?” generated double-digit percentage responses. The top five were:

- *Minimal budget to implement 33.8%*
- *Limited developer/IT resources 32.5%*
- *Lack of internal expertise to implement 31.2%*
- *Security concerns 29.9%*
- *Legacy infrastructure/technology 24.7%*

When you implemented Mobile SELF-SERVICE, (either transactional or automated customer service), what were the biggest challenges to implement AT THAT TIME?



For those that have implemented live agent mobile customer support, the only additional top concern was that the majority lack appropriate policies and procedures to monitor, QA and report on agent performance.

TECHNOLOGY TO TIE IT ALL TOGETHER

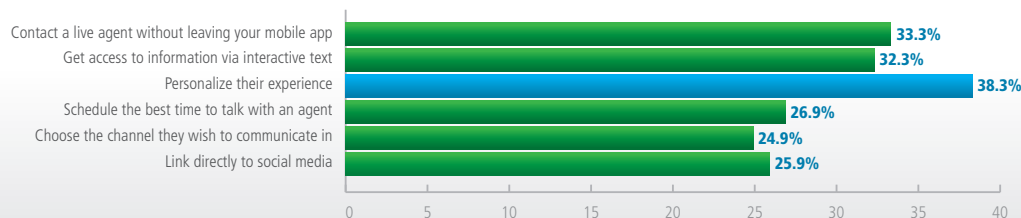
The backend technology platform or suite that an organization deploys within their Mobile Customer Service Strategy is possibly even more important than the actual support features they offer their mobile customers. The technology platform will allow companies to employ the six key best practices of mobile support that were previously identified by ICMI and subsequently justified by the research.

1. *Connection to a live agent directly from the web app or smartphone app*
2. *The ability to schedule a conversation with a live agent when necessary*
3. *Access to information through automated/interactive self-service text responses*
4. *Communication channel options*
5. *Personalized experience*
6. *Direct links between mobile and social media*

According to Martin, effectively implementing such a Mobile Customer Service Strategy takes an understanding of how to build and manage customer relationships in an evolving, multi-dimensional communications landscape. "It's not enough to simply give customers new ways to interact with your business. Customers expect a unified experience and superior service regardless of the communication channel. A best practice is identifying a "design once, deploy anywhere" architecture that eliminates technology silos, duplication and inconsistent customer care."

When asked if their current technology suite allowed these best practices, 38.8% of all survey respondents said that yes, the customer could personalize their experience, while a third said that a connection to a live agent was possible directly through the native mobile/smartphone app. The final four best practices were within close range of each other – customers can get access to information via self-service interactive text (32.3%), can schedule time to talk with a live agent (26.9%), link directly to social media (25.8%) and choose their preferred communication channel (24.9%).

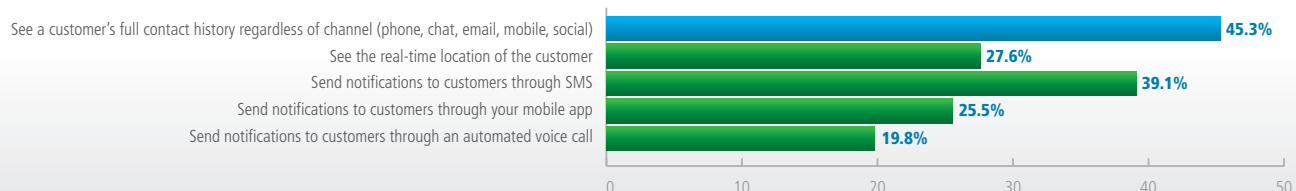
Does your current technology suite allow your Mobile customers to...



The right technology suite will also aid an organization in accomplishing their KPI goals. Metrics like FCR, containment, and CSAT will be easier to achieve by truly integrating mobile into the CRM platform, using features like location services, and proactively reaching customers through automation techniques.

While 39.1% of respondents currently send automated notifications to customers through SMS, and almost half (45.3%) have full channel integration and customer contact history in their CRM, there is opportunity for improvement in the other areas. Only 19.8% provide information through automated voice calls, 25.5% have alerts within the mobile app and 27.6% of contact centers can see the real-time location of a customer.

Does your current technology suite allow your mobile support agents to...



Finally, the right technology partner can lend assistance to combat uncertainty.

Contact centers seem willing to experiment if given the necessary budgets and resources, but are often unsure who to look to for recommendations. When asked "What additional technology do you need to add, plan to add, or are investigating as part of your Mobile Customer Service Strategy?" an alarming number said they weren't sure, didn't know, or needed recommendations. It is clear that guidance is necessary in this area.

CONCLUSION

BUILDING A MOBILE CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY

Contact centers are accustomed to evolving as their customers and channels change. They don't need to go it alone though. In the case of mobile customer support, the needs and desires of the organization and the customers can be translated into a single source known as a Mobile Customer Service Strategy.

Let's face it, as soon as a company develops a mobile web app or native/smartphone app, customers will be expecting some level of customer service through their device. If they don't get it, then one should anticipate that the adoption of that app will be stunted.

Self-service communication channels are viable for companies looking to reduce contact center costs, and provide innovative options for customers. In some situations, live agents will still be utilized for acting as self-service escalation points, and for follow-up on CSAT and community forum conversations.

It's important to note that better usage of proactive self-service notifications can ultimately reduce the dependency on live agents, which again can save costs.

Contact center leaders are acutely aware of the benefits of the Mobile Customer Service Strategy, as they reported being motivated to implement one to improve customer satisfaction (51.9%), increase customer loyalty (50.2%) and lower cost (30.1%).

Choosing the right technology platform to integrate mobile into the other support channels should be a major component of a successful Mobile Customer Service Strategy. To do so, one must properly understand the customer expectations in conjunction with current infrastructure and developer/IT resource limitations.

The Mobile Customer Service Strategy should be used as a tool to convince stakeholders, and act as a guide to properly implementing mobile support. By understanding the resources, budget, customer expectations, business needs, and technology, companies can avoid the common pitfalls. Those contact centers that get involved early in the planning and support of the Mobile Customer Service Strategy will have the best opportunity to provide a desired customer experience.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

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ICMI research sponsors do not have access to research participant information, including individual survey responses.

ABOUT ICMI

The International Customer Management Institute (ICMI), is the leading global provider of comprehensive resources for customer management professionals—from frontline agents to executives—who wish to improve contact center operations, empower contact center employees and enhance customer loyalty. ICMI's experienced and dedicated team of industry insiders, analysts and consultants are committed to providing uncompromised objectivity and results-oriented vision through the organization's respected lineup of professional services including training and certification, consulting, events and informational resources. Founded in 1985, ICMI continues to serve as one of the most established and respected organizations in the call center industry.

ABOUT VOXEO

Voxeo powers personalized, mobile-enhanced self-service and contact center solutions that transform the way companies serve and engage their customers. Provide a rich, unified customer experience across any combination of voice, text messaging, mobile web, smartphone and social interaction channels, without duplicate effort or expense. Voxeo's 100% standards-driven solution and unique design-once, deploy-anywhere architecture reduces the cost and effort of delivering great customer service anywhere, on any device. The impact is improved loyalty, faster return on investment and a significantly lower total cost of ownership. Learn more at www.voxeo.com

