



UC and Contact Center Platform Integration Drives Business Success



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Chief Customer Officers Find Issues with Running Disparate UC, Contact Center Platforms

For decades, many companies have operated their contact centers as an island—disconnected from the rest of the employees, often in separate buildings and using different communications and collaboration technologies.

The result of this approach is becoming more evident in the hiring of Chief Customer Officers (CCOs), who are analyzing data to understand how to improve customer experience (CX) and associated business metrics.

CCOs have reported the following with running disparate Unified Communications (UC) and contact center platforms:

- 1. Higher costs to run different platforms. With different platforms from different vendors, companies spend more to train and certify their IT staffs. In addition, they are not able to leverage economies of scale for network access, security policies, management, and licensing.
- 2. Lower First Call Resolution (FCR). One of the top Key Performance Indicators for agents is FCR, or the ability to resolve customers’ issues or questions on the first call, without requiring them to call back. When agents can’t tap into the vast resources of experts throughout the company to help close a sale or resolve a customer complaint, they are less likely to resolve the issue on the first call.
- 3. No leverage of analytics and reporting tools, or employee expertise. Aside from the aforementioned issue, the contact center contains a wealth of information that typically isn’t leveraged by the rest of the organization. For example, the analytics and reporting on customer feedback, complaints, sales, and more can help with product development plans, marketing campaigns, or sales strategies. What’s more, employees in the contact center can add more insight based on their conversations with customers by participating in team collaboration workspaces. That can’t happen without an integrated platform.

CCO Job Description *Executive-level individual with ultimate responsibility for **all customer-facing activities and strategy** to maximize customer acquisition, retention, and satisfaction. Often works closely with Chief Marketing Officer and head of sales. Creates “**customer-first**” mentality across the organization, in large part through **analyzing data** of customer ratings, sales, sales through digital channels, etc.*

Does your company have a Chief Customer Officer?



Building a Bridge

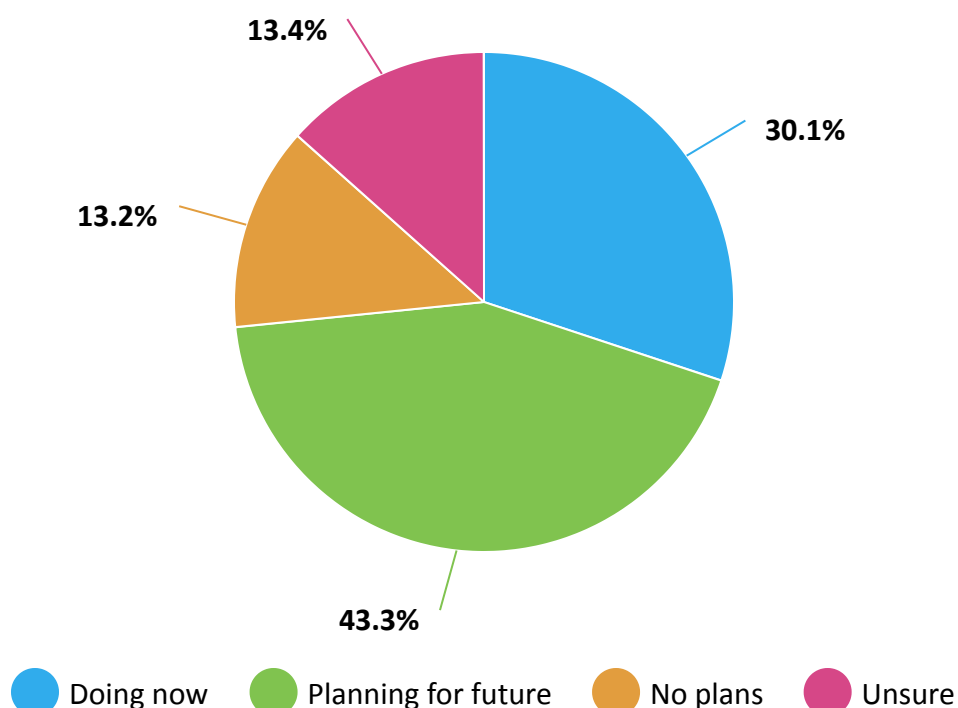
CX and IT leaders continue to build bridges between their UC and contact center platforms.

That move isn't always driven by a business reason. In some cases, Managed Services Providers (MSPs) used for their employee communications and collaboration platforms bundle in contact center licenses for cost savings. The MSPs may integrate two different platforms, which provides some value even though employee interfaces are different.

In other cases, they buy services from cloud providers that recommended the same bundling. But even when bundling comes from the same vendor, they may not be using a common platform for all the applications, including voice, meetings, team collaboration, and contact center.

By the end of 2024, 30.1% of companies said they had done some level of integration between UC and contact center, with another 43.3% planning to integrate in the future.

What are your company's plans to integrate your contact center platform with UCaaS?



Single-Provider Integration Doesn't Always Mean Same Native Platform

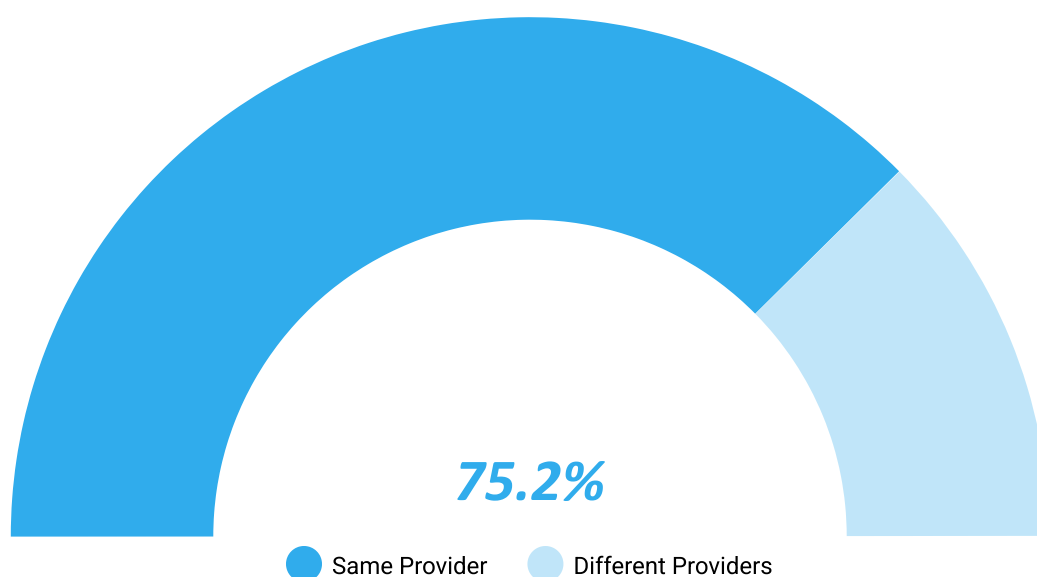
When companies decide to integrate their UC and contact center platforms, they must determine whether they will use a single provider or multiple providers. Most IT and CX leaders like the idea of using a single provider because of the value of consistent user interfaces, economies of scale, and common features.

That said, vendors that offer both contact center and UC don't necessarily offer a cohesive solution. Internal product development teams work in siloes, sales teams aren't incented to sell both solutions, and the interfaces and underlying code may be wildly different because of mergers and acquisitions.

It's important to evaluate single-vendor solutions and whether they really offer their UC and contact center services from the same platform, rather than simply from the same logo.

Thus far, among the 30.1% of companies that have integrated UC and contact center, 75.2% are using the same provider. If buying both platforms today, 61% say that contact center carries more weight than UC platform in vendor selection. More commonly, this is a cloud provider, though some do integrate on-premises platforms with the same provider, as well.

Among Those That Have Integrated UC + Contact Center, 75% Use Same Provider

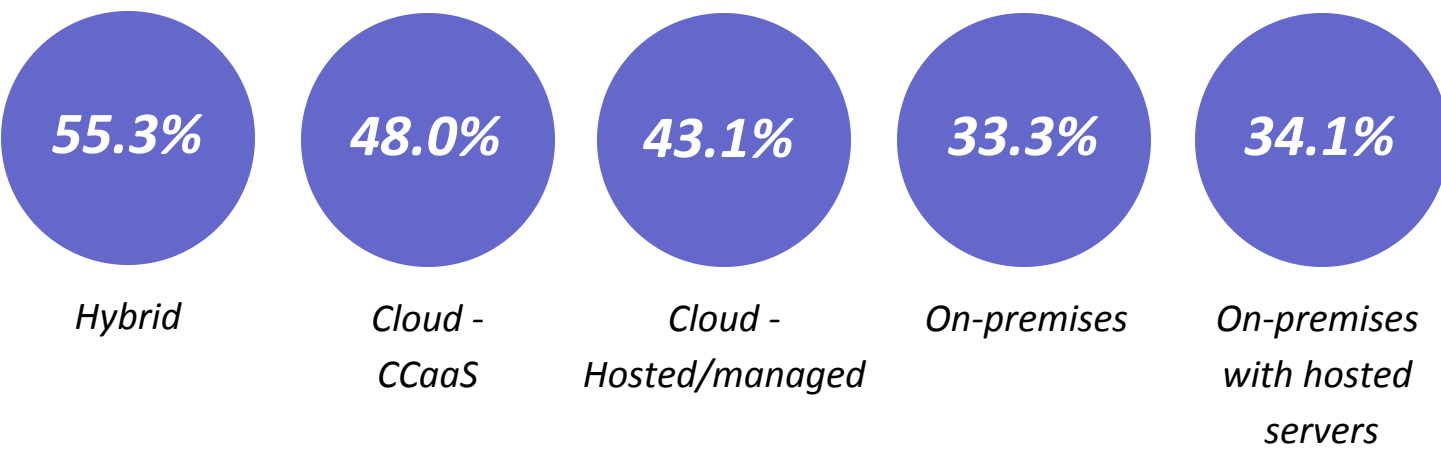


Cloud Architectures More Common With Integration

When considering integrated UC and contact center solutions, architecture decisions are paramount. In some cases, organizations have a complex on-premises contact center with a provider that doesn't offer UC services, along with an on-premises UC platform. So, the thought of moving both to a single provider, whether on premises or in the cloud, can be daunting.

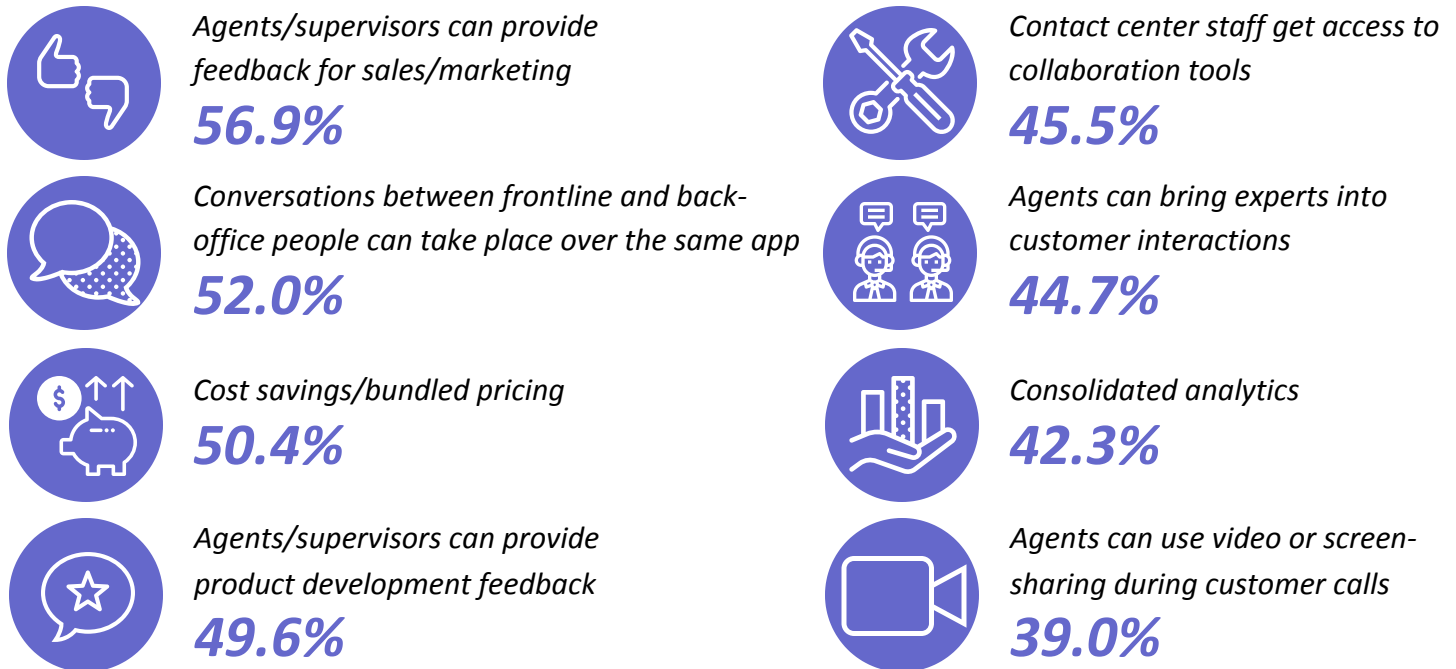
In our research, the majority of companies (55.3%) that have integrated UC and contact center use hybrid services, followed by cloud services (48.0%). The integration for cloud services often is handled by the cloud provider, whereas much of the integration work for on-premises architectures falls on IT staffs. Only 33.3% of companies that have integrated UC and contact center have an on-premises architecture.

Contact Center Architecture Among Those Integrated with UC



Why Integrate UC and Contact Center

As CCOs continue to evaluate how to improve CX, they are working with other members of the C-suite and finding benefits for a variety of employee groups. In our *Customer Experience Optimization 2024-25* research study of 544 global organizations, companies that have integrated UC and contact center are leveraging the integration in these key ways:



Value of Integrating Contact Center with UC





	Non-Success Group	Success Group
Agents/supervisors can provide feedback for sales/marketing	45%	62%
Conversations between frontline and back-office people over the same app	39%	58%
Cost savings/bundled pricing	53%	49%
Agents/supervisors can provide product development feedback	42%	53%
Contact center staff get access to collaboration tools	37%	49%
Agents can bring experts into customer interactions	32%	51%
Consolidated analytics	32%	47%
Agents can use video or screen-sharing during customer calls	34%	41%

In our study, we segmented a research success group, comprising those companies that showed the highest levels of measurable improvement in revenue, costs, customer ratings, and agent efficiency. Among the research success group, the top value of integrating contact center with UC comes from enabling agents/supervisors to provide feedback for sales/marketing programs, followed by allowing conversations between frontline and back-office people over the same app.

Same-Vendor Integration + AI = Success

Companies that use the same provider for cloud UC and contact center integration, and also use AI technologies (such as agent assist and virtual agents), show higher success compared to those that use different vendors for their integration.

These companies are nearly doubling revenue for the areas affected by the integration (for example, a contact center that handles a particular product and taps into non-agent experts to help close sales). They also see a 56.6% improvement in their CX ratings and a 37.4% boost in agent efficiency, measured in hours to complete tasks. Cost savings is 14.4%, and is the only area that is slightly lower than on-premises integrations.

	With Same Provider	With Different Provider
 <i>Revenue increases</i>	36.3%	23.1%
 <i>Customer satisfaction improvement</i>	37.6%	34.0%
 <i>Cost reduction</i>	24.6%	17.0%
 <i>Agent efficiency boost</i>	35.3%	27.6%

Don't Forget Change Management

The technical process of integrating the platforms is only one piece of a successful project. The technology may be under a single provider, but if employees don't change their behavior and processes, the move won't serve any purpose. So, be sure to consider the following as part of the overall project:

Map out cultural changes now so that the contact center isn't on an "island," with little interaction with the rest of the company. With the same, integrated technology, think of the new possibilities. For example, product development, marketing, or sales can simply add contact center agents or supervisors to a relevant workspace. If the company is working on the next version of a product, wouldn't it be useful to have real-time feedback from the people who are interacting with customers every day?

Identify career paths for employees. Exposing contact center agents to the rest of the company opens doors to hire these agents in key positions within the company vs. losing them to competitors. They're valuable—they know customers, products, competitors. Keep them in the company, working to lower attrition rates. In Metrigy's *Customer Experience MetriCast 2024* study, the success group for companies using CCaaS showed an attrition rate of 28% or less. On the flipside, employees in other areas of the company may find benefit in assisting customers and may want to move into the contact center.

Identify the rules of engagement. What are contact center and other employees allowed to do when they are able to engage with each other? Define when it's acceptable to reach out to a non-agent expert—and how to even identify those people. Or, make it clear how much of an agent's time product development engineers

Spread the word. Make sure to market the new capabilities to employees so they know how it delivers value to them.

