

What do people really think of Skype for Business in the contact center?

WHAT DO OUR TWITTER COMMUNITY THINK ABOUT SFB FOR THE CONTACT CENTRE?

An Enghouse Interactive Whitepaper

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WHAT DO PEOPLE REALLY THINK OF SKYPE FOR BUSINESS IN THE CONTACT CENTRE

Do enterprises really understand the benefits of Skype for Business?

The new age of digital communications is creating a raft of new challenges for customer-facing businesses today. Customers are increasingly connecting with businesses through tools they are familiar with as consumers. So we're seeing growing usage of social media tools and smartphone devices, especially amongst younger, more tech-savvy consumers. At the same time, though, traditional modes of interaction, such as fixed line telephony and email, remain robust and in widespread use, particularly with the older generation.

Fueled in no small part by the continuing rise of digital communications and social media tools, customers also increasingly want personalized service. They expect the businesses they deal with to have an intelligent understanding of their problem and to act quickly to resolve it. In light of this, businesses increasingly appreciate that they need to ensure the service they offer customers addresses these trends.

To do that, they need a unified communications (UC) approach, integrating tools like Skype for Business that support Omni-channel integration and draw on the skills across the business to deliver optimum customer service. They will also need to learn more about the customer; capturing their 'digital DNA' to gain a better understanding of them and from this connect to a customer contact solution and connect the entire enterprise to the customer.

To be digitally connected we asked some of our twitter followers their opinions on Skype for Business for the contact center

NB: All the twitter comments are expressing their own opinion and not necessarily that of their employers'.

How QMS Call Recording Operates

QMS employs a distributed-services architecture that is ideal for single and multiple-site deployments. The QMS solution is scalable to thousands of users and can be managed from any location via the Web-based QMS client interface. Flexible storage options allow administrators to store calls on local servers or on network storage locations.



Building a Solution With Skype for Business

Once businesses have taken the decision to adopt unified communications and are conscious of the need to capture their customer's DNA and start to make use of it to drive benefits across the business, they need to address the issue of how best to achieve it.

One of the key ways is through Microsoft Skype for Business, implemented as part of a unified communications approach. More and more business today is viewing this as the answer. Many previously had Microsoft Lync -a proven telephony platform, in place, so migrating to the enhanced functionality afforded by Skype for Business is a natural evolution.

And it's certainly proving to be a successful solution so far. According to recent information from managed services provider and consulting firm, Unify Square, Skype for Business is poised to exceed 100 million enterprise seats by 2018, if it continues on its current growth trajectory.

More than 4,000 companies have begun using Microsoft's new services since the company integrated Skype into Office 365 in July, with the total figure growing 20 per cent each week.

The change from Lync to Skype for Business will certainly be a disruptive force in the market, empowering users and fueling the Microsoft "connect people everywhere" strategy.

" Even though Lync offers rich unified communications options, it does not provide sophisticated contact center functionality. A list of system requirements and respective offerings was compiled and, following extensive analysis, the Enghouse Interactive was the clear winner, primarily because of its excellent price-performance ratio."

Sandy Abrahams , IT Director, HELLY HANSEN

Rolling out Across the Business

Other organizations are taking the decision to switch straight to Skype for Business, attracted by the myriad of business benefits on offer. To get the most from the approach, they are not just implementing it in the contact center but rolling it out across the whole business, allowing other departments such as help desk, customer service, sales and HR and collections also to be available for customer interaction

The Evolution and the Step Forward

The migration strategy is key for vendors. They need to get over the potential objections around questions like shouldn't Skype be Free and should I trust it for my mission-critical contact center?

The move to Skype for Business is often tied into the move to cloud for many businesses. Indeed, the change represents an evolutionary step forward, signaling a real focus on web-centric communications. It's very well-aligned with Office 365, with a clear path to increased cloud capabilities, including PSTN-to-cloud connectivity and voice/video for business in a cloud-offered framework.

But each organization needs to decide how much cloud they want, answering key questions like:

- Do I need an on-premise PBX or communications server?
- How do I integrate cloud-provided functionality with my own back-office systems and data?

Not surprisingly, most businesses continue to choose a hybrid approach, combining some use of cloud with some use of on-premise, and integrating systems and data to maximize value and reliability.

With Skype for Business, Microsoft is very strongly endorsing this approach. As Zig Serafin, corporate VP for the Skype for Business team says,

"We are enabling cloud plus on-premises hybrid options so that you can rely on our cloud when you need it without having to give up what you want to manage on-premise."

Zig Serafin, corporate VP, MICROSOFT SKYPE FOR BUSINESS

How Businesses Benefit from Migration to the Solution

Today, we are seeing businesses benefit in a whole host of ways from moving to Skype for Business. Ultimately, it's about better communication across the enterprise, but it's also about the ability to deliver service cost-effectively, empowering the customer and the business alike.

The use of Skype can significantly reduce the cost of interaction for customers especially when compared with calls from mobile devices. Being aware that they can interact free of charge with Skype significantly reduces customer frustration if kept waiting, which in turn increases the likelihood of the engagement progressing smoothly.

And by supporting this ease of engagement and increasing its volume and level, the business gains a valuable insight into the digital DNA of its customers, the way they want to interact and their particular likes and dislikes.

Tools like Skype for Business make it easier for customers and employees to engage across the whole organization to effectively use this customer digital footprint and bring the DNA of the company itself into play to resolve enquiries positively.

Understand the Presence of Everybody Within the Organization

After all, not only does Skype for Business support companies in delivering collaborative customer service, it goes one step further by enabling the business to understand the current presence of everybody within the organization, whether they are available; in a meeting or out of the office for example. Added to this, it further supports collaboration through content sharing; by rapidly routing and switching incoming communications and by handling all types of interaction from voice to instant messaging to audio and video calling. In line with this, Skype for Business empowers the customer even more, by enabling them to initiate an instant message (IM), call or video session to a queue and have the request routed to the agent best qualified to solve it. That's the essence of what we call the connected enterprise, which makes use of the whole organization including the skills of staff in the back, middle and front offices, to deliver the best possible outcomes.

Being able to use the tool to deliver convenient and cost-effective video communications capability is another major benefit for the provider organization itself but also for the end customer.



Video - Is It Really What Customers are Asking For?

Indeed, any discussion of Skype for Business needs to shine the spotlight not on the solution's functional capability to deliver video but on how it enables organisations to answer customer queries and provide them with solutions to their problems.

One-way or two-way video chat is likely to become a fast growing business channel and Skype for Business allows organisations to take advantage cost-effectively and

personalise service offerings to enhance customer engagement. Enterprises increasingly understand this and it's also a trend that is being acknowledged more and more by industry observers, consultants and influencers.

As, Team Manager at a small business dedicated to driving lead generation and increasing sales conversion, says: "Skype is great to have video conferences with, especially when trying to meet the needs of the customer."

That in a nutshell is the appeal of Skype for Business' video capability: the ability to personalise the service to customers and critically to resolve their problems quickly and efficiently as a result.

Skype might be a free service but its key benefit is that it is a service offering that can be tailored to customers' needs.

Resolve Issues First Time

Moreover, Cohan Leon Daley, corporate sales executive EMEA at Insidesales.com broadly concurs with the view that video chat will enable businesses to resolve issues first time as you can see the issues visually, and positively states, "I use Skype, it's a great tool."



Do Businesses Only See Skype For Business As A Video Tool

From our twitter feed, it seems that many businesses are seeing Skype for Business as a video tool only. In a sense, this is the inevitable price of Skype's initial success as a consumer solution. In this environment, its primary use is to establish and maintain visual communication between individuals, who may be geographically dispersed. This is the environment where, even today, many business users first encounter the tool and this inevitably has an ongoing impact on their perception of it.

The reality is Skype for Business is far more than just a tool for video interaction and there needs to be a process of education across the market in order for the real business value to be more clearly understood. After all, while video does have an important role to play in business communications, as we have already referenced, Skype for Business has the potential to act as a complete communications hub turning the contact center into the fulcrum of enhanced customer communications.

Ultimately, the key is flexibility, deploying Skype for Business immediately extends the reach of an organization, enabling them to interact with many millions of Skype users around the world. Moreover, it allows them to contact key customers via a communications media of their choice, whether that is text, video audio or messaging, for example. And the solution's ease of deployment and adoption also brings organizations an array of cost and productivity benefits.

It is this flexibility also that allows Skype for Business to bring far-reaching benefits both to the customer in making their interaction with the organization easier and more efficient and to the business itself, enabling it to leverage the connected enterprise and bring the resources of the whole organization to bear in answering customer queries.

The Most Important Part is Still Getting Service Right

As Mark McDermott, retail customer service consultant from Prosell Learning, puts it: "Get the service offering right, people will pay IF they see/feel it personally."



This is echoed, by Marcio Rodrigues, customer propositions director at Vizolution, "video is interesting but what customers want is help.. resolution.



It's an important point. Technological capabilities will only be of value in this context if they can be marshalled to help the customer achieve faster and more effective problem resolution. Businesses must never get bogged down with technology for its own sake. Instead they need to ensure that they are making optimum use of solutions like Skype for Business to meet customer service needs and to deliver the best possible customer experience.

The Last Word

Every digital enterprise needs a UC or Skype for Business strategy. To really make it work though, they need to ensure it is accessible across the entire enterprise, and that it can effectively presence enable with instant messaging (IM), voice and voice capabilities.

The adoption of Skype for Business also needs to be looked at as part of a wider unified communication strategy. As the lines between various forms of communication are blurring (voice or video for example), businesses need to offer accessible options, route interactions intelligently and constantly manage quality for customers. Skype for Business will enable them to do all of this effectively today.

The ability to link Skype for Business and contact center services as part of an overall offering represents a powerful combination for any solutions provider. And you can see why Enghouse Interactive is certainly a leading light in this respect and can now claim over 280 customer service deployments on Skype for Business - a figure which is growing rapidly all the time.

Learn more:

<http://enghouseinteractive.co.uk/solutions/skype-for-business/>

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Enghouse Interactive's integrated suite of solutions includes multi-channel contact center, self-service, attendant operator consoles and workforce optimization. This wide portfolio places us in the unique position to offer customers and partners a complete, fully featured solution from a single vendor. These solutions support the full range of deployment methods from premise-based to private, public or community cloud and even hybrid requirements.

