UC and Contact Center Platform Integration Drives Business Success

metrigy

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# Companies Hiring Chief Customer Officers to Improve CX

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, as companies are hiring Chief Customer Officers (CCOs), who are analyzing data to understand how to improve the customer experience (CX) and associated business metrics.

CCO Job Description

An executive-level individual with ultimate responsibility for **all customer-facing activities and strategies** to maximize customer acquisition, retention, and satisfaction. Often works closely with CMO and head of sales. Creates a **"customer first"** mentality across the organization, largely by **analyzing data** of customer ratings, sales, sales through digital channels, etc.

Chief Customer Officer Status

4.1%
6.7%
4.1%
32.3%
11.3%
41.5%
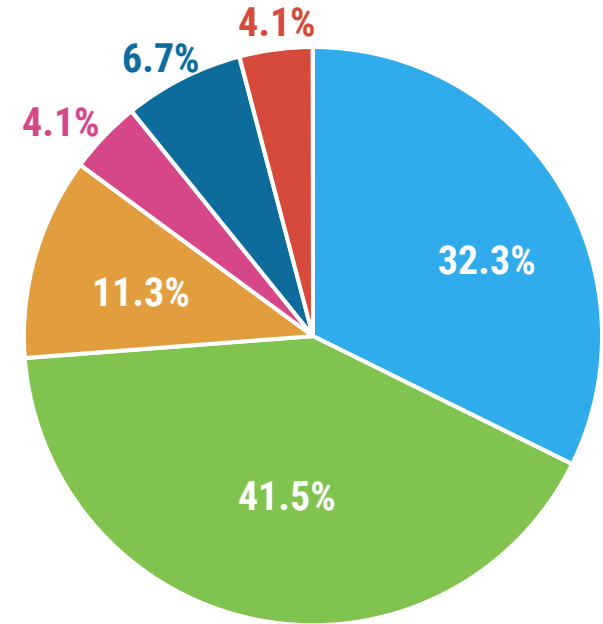
Do you have a Chief Customer Officer (CCO), or an executive-level person in charge of customer experience?

- ● Have one now
- ● Planning for 2021
- ● Planning for 2022+
- ● Evaluating
- ● No Plans
- ● Unsure

CCOs Uncover Problems When Contact Center and Unified Communications Aren't Integrated

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

Higher costs to run different platforms. With different platforms from different vendors, companies were spending more to train and certify their IT staffs. They also did not leverage economies of scale for network access, security policies, management, and licensing.

Lower First Call Resolution. One of the top Key Performance Indicators for agents is First Call Resolution (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.

Not using 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 integrated platforms.

Building a Bridge

CX and IT leaders have started to build a bridge between their Unified Communications (UC) and contact center platforms, in recent years.

A business reason didn't always drive that move. In some cases, they use Managed Services Providers (MSPs) for their employee communications and collaboration platforms, and the MSPs suggested bundling in contact center licenses for cost savings. The MSPs may have integrated two different platforms, which provided some value even though employee interfaces differed.

In other cases, they bought services from pure cloud providers, who recommended the same bundling. But even when bundling came from the same vendor, they may not have been using a common platform for all the applications, including voice, meetings, team collaboration, and contact center.

By the end of 2020, though, **62.8% of companies said they had done some level of integration between UC and contact center**, but the extent to which they leveraged it varied considerably.

State of Deployment: UC/CC Integration

- Yes — 62.8%
- Planning for 2021 — 13.4%
- Evaluating — 6.4%
- No Plans — 9.1%
- Unsure — 8.3%
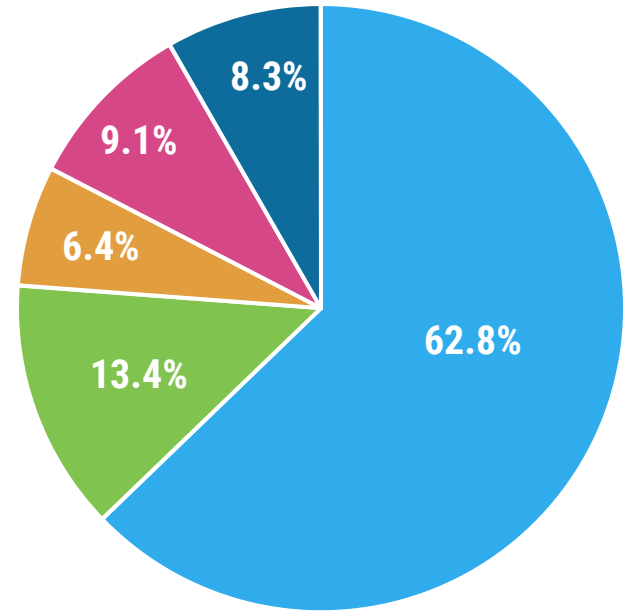
A Single-Provider Integration Doesn't Always Mean Same Native Platform

61.9%
have integrated UC and contact center and are now using the same provider

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, reduced training costs, 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 essential to evaluate single-vendor solutions and whether they offer their UC and contact center services on a single platform, instead of separate systems.

Thus far, though, among the 62.8% of companies that **have integrated UC and contact center, 61.9% are using the same provider**. More commonly, this is a cloud provider, though some do integrate on-premises platforms with the 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.

Our research shows most companies (56.8%) with integrated UC and contact center used cloud services. Cloud services' integration is often handled by the cloud provider, whereas much of the integration tasks for on-premises architectures fall on the IT staff. Only 28.3% of companies that have integrated UC and contact center had an on-premises architecture.

Contact Center Architecture Among Those Integrated With UC
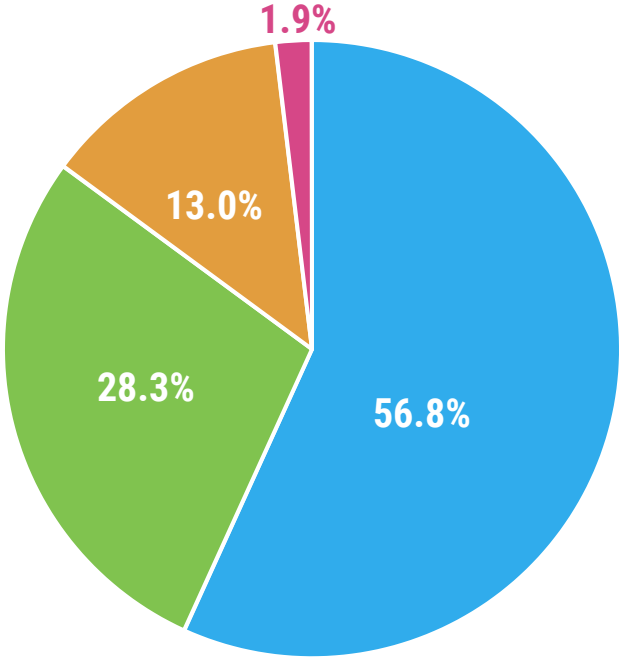
- ● Cloud (CCaaS, Hosted/Managed)
- ● On-Premises (On-site, Hosted/Unmanaged)
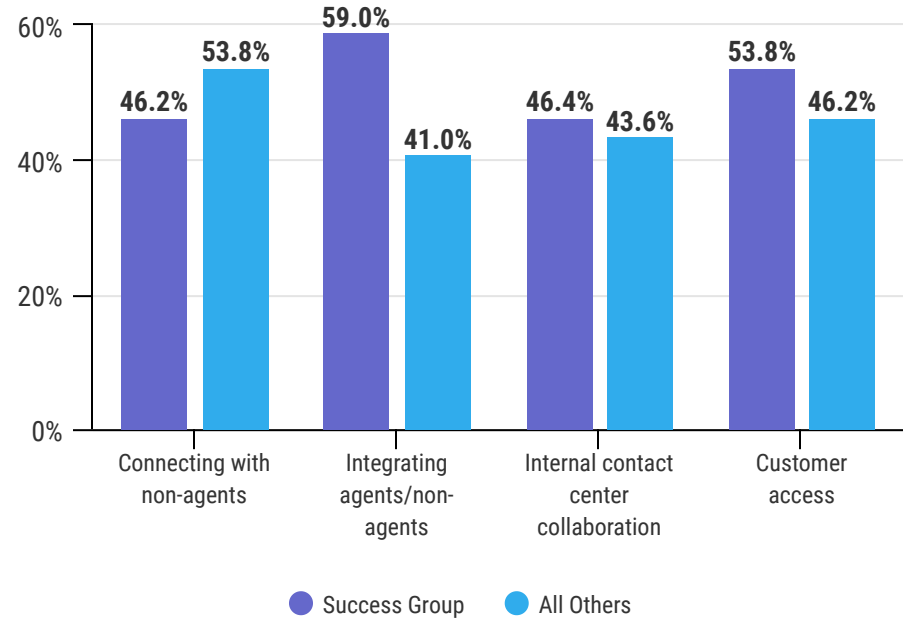- ● Hybrid
- ● Unsure

Why Integrate UC and Contact Center

As CCOs continue to evaluate how to improve CX, they are working with other C-suite members and finding benefits for a variety of employee groups. Among all participants in our Customer Engagement Transformation 2020-21 research study of 700 global organizations, these are the key ways they are leveraging the integration:

57.2%   Using collaboration applications internally for agents and supervisors

56.7%   Integrating agents with other employees to collaborate on projects or key customers

42.3%   Extending access to collaboration apps to key customers

35.1%   Bringing in non-agent experts to address customer issues

How are you taking advantage of contact center integration with UCC?

	Success Group	All Others
Connecting with non-agents	46.2%	53.8%
Integrating agents/non-agents	59.0%	41.0%
Internal contact center collaboration	46.4%	43.6%
Customer access	53.8%	46.2%

Our study segmented a research success group—or those who measured the highest levels of measurable improvement in revenue, costs, customer ratings, and agent efficiency. Among the research success group, the top way they are leveraging integration is by **bringing in non-agent experts to address customer issues**, followed by extending access to collaboration apps to key customers.
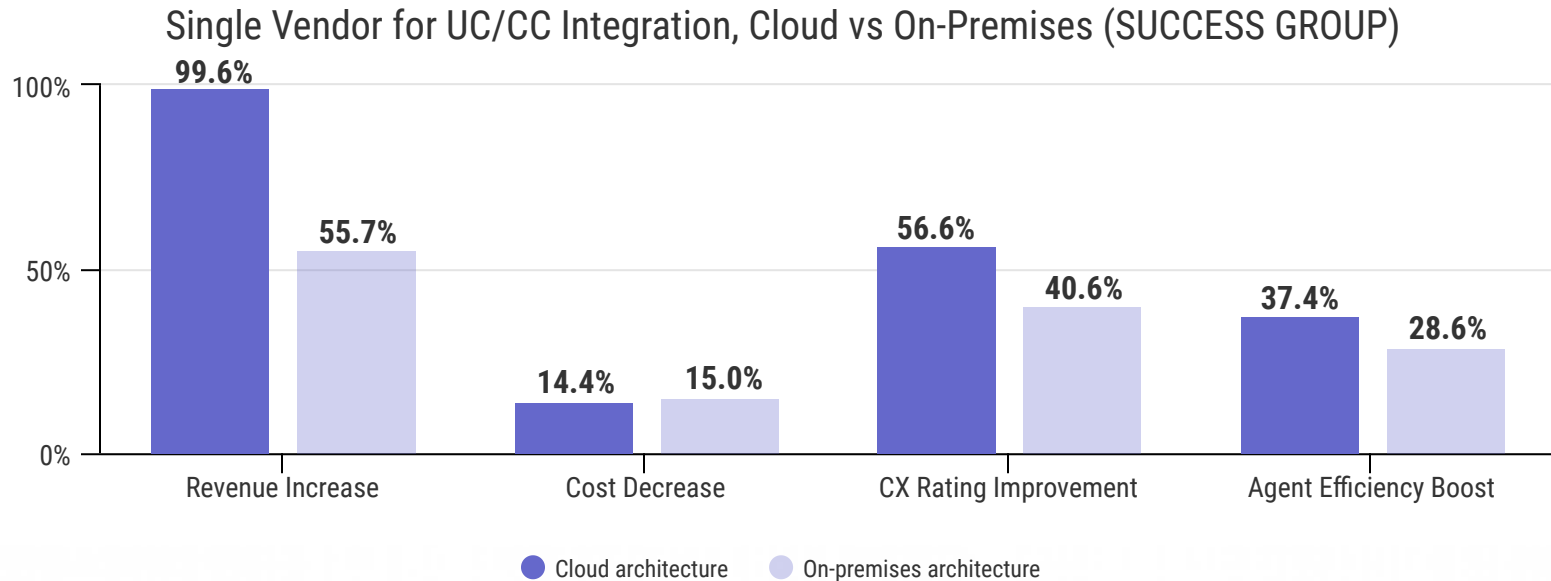
Business Success Metrics With Integrated UC/CC Are Impressive

Among the research success group, we found that those who integrate cloud-based services from a single provider show the highest success metrics.

They 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.

Single Vendor for UC/CC Integration, Cloud vs On-Premises (SUCCESS GROUP)

	Cloud architecture	On-premises architecture
Revenue Increase	99.6%	55.7%
Cost Decrease	14.4%	15.0%
CX Rating Improvement	56.6%	40.6%
Agent Efficiency Boost	37.4%	28.6%

● Cloud architecture ● On-premises architecture

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 that the contact center isn't on an "island," with little interaction with the rest of the company. With an integrated technology platform, think of the new possibilities. For example, product development, marketing, or sales can 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 helpful to have real-time feedback from the people interacting with customers every day?

Identify career paths for employees. Exposing contact center agents to the rest of the company opens doors to hiring 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. Given that the agent turnover rate has increased from 21% in 2019 to 30.5% in 2021, discussing career paths with agents is crucial. On the flip side, employees in other areas of the company may benefit from assisting customers and may want to move into the contact center.

Identify the rules of engagement. By exposing contact center agents to other employees, what do they need to collaborate? Define when it's acceptable to reach out to a non-agent expert—and how to identify those individuals. Or, how much of an agent's time can product development engineers reasonably expect when they need help prioritizing new upgrades?

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