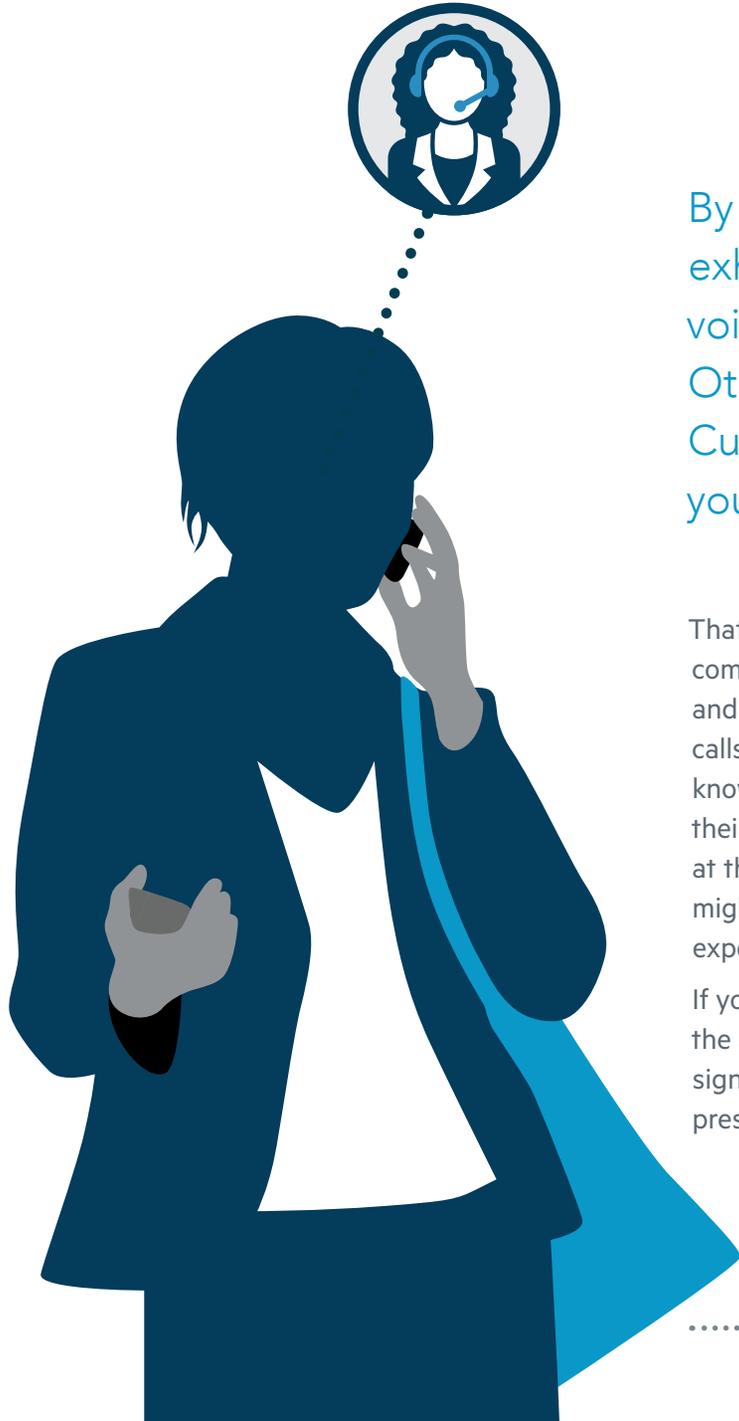# Smarter Support for the Complex Conversations

Skype Subject Matter Experts

Five9

By the time your customer calls your business, they've likely exhausted several other channels. Over the past six years, voice has transitioned to primarily an escalation channel. Other digital channels now comprise most initial interactions. Customers search for their answers through self-service on your website and via online forums.

That leaves your contact center with the complicated issues, the hard to answer questions and the more demanding customer support calls. Your contact center agents need a bigger knowledge base and smarter tools to do their job. They need to leverage every resource at their disposal. Even then, those complex calls might require something extra – a subject matter expert (SME).

If your contact center does not have access to the specialists in your business, you could notice significant delays between customer calls and prescribed resolutions from your support teams.

More complicated calls could negatively impact your first call resolution rates. But what if you could use your existing Skype for Business solution with your contact center to conference in experts as needed?

In this ebook, we will explain how you can integrate Skype for Business with your contact center to facilitate a stronger support architecture through SMEs. We will outline how to optimize your solution and create a support strategy that improves resolution speed, customer retention and reduces operational effort.

Is your contact center separated from the other areas of your business?

Routing Calls Outside the Contact Center

Where does your contact center live in your organization?

Is it on an island, separated from the other areas of your business? If so, are you really maximizing the efficiency of your business?

Today, many contact center agents act as operational switchboards, not just fielding the easy calls, but also determining who outside the contact center is best to solve a customer dilemma. If the call cannot be solved in the immediate contact center, typically an agent will route to an additional department, manager or interactive voice response. That is progressively the case. However, customers aren't very patient and are quick to hang-up if re-routed several times or placed on a long hold.

73%
of contact centers say they've witnessed increasing difficulty of inbound requests.[1]

60%
of customers believe that one-minute is too long to be on hold.[2]

72%

of US online consumers prefer to use a company's website to get answers to their questions rather than contact companies via telephone or email.[3]

81%

67%

| 2012 | 2015 |

Use of help or FAQs on a company's website increased from 67% in 2012 to 81% in 2015 among US online adults.[4]

32%

of contact center call volume comes from customers who have to call back to get their inquiry or problem resolved.[5]

34%

of customers are likely to go to a competitor if their inquiry or problem is not resolved in the first call.[6]

Modern customers are self-sufficient. They tackle most problems through Google, Youtube and other self-help sites. The call-first mindset has greatly diminished, and customers will often expend all other options before reaching out to an agent. When a customer calls your contact center, it's typically a last resort.

Complex inbound calls can lead to longer call times, fewer first call resolutions and a higher percentage of calls that require an expert. If you are using a disjointed routing system, your contact center agents could be sending your customers to voicemails, IVR labyrinths and into forwarding loops. Without a bridge from your unified communications to your contact center, your agents must lean on blind dispatch. Once the customer leaves the contact center, there is a much higher chance that the call will terminate prematurely, without an immediate resolution.

Without a bridge from your unified communications to your contact center, your agents must lean on blind dispatch.

FIVE9 TIPS:

Contact centers should start to re-evaluate their KPIs to solve for more complicated customer conversations. The days of quick in-and-out call queues are fast diminishing. As the contact center continues to evolve to an escalation channel, managers should plan for longer call times and transition focus to first call resolution. The goal should still be fast, efficient service. However, contact centers should focus on first call resolution rather than burn through the call queue. Clearing a call queue too fast could just force callers back in line at a later time. In fact, according to research 32% of contact center call volume comes from customers who have to call back to get their inquiry or problem resolved.

A Stronger Support Architecture with Skype

How can Skype for Business work with your contact center?

Skype for Business expands your agent's referenceable address book. With an adapter appended to your contact center, your contact center agents can tap into your entire business. Agents can use the familiar Skype format to determine which experts are currently available, discreetly message them via chat, or conference them into a call or chat to speak to a customer directly.

The Skype tool helps your contact center, but what are the incentives for SMEs?

The act of connecting the contact center agent to the expert via Skype does not create more work; it creates more efficiency. Complicated questions outside your agents' remit will always make it elsewhere in your business. With the Skype for Business UC adapter, your business can tackle all customer requests as they happen.

Agents without access to SMEs push calls to hold, voicemail or back to an IVR. They delay a resolution for the customer and create a greater risk of attrition. Without an ability to solve complicated problems in real-time, inefficiency compounds; your contact center becomes more complaint oriented and less solution based.

What value does this bring to your IT team?

Your IT team wants to maximize every investment and keep your communication network simple. That is why it makes sense to connect Skype with your contact center.

Separately, your contact center solution and Skype solution have important communication roles. The contact center connects customers with your business. Skype connects the individual departments of your business so that employees can collaborate. Combining the two bridges an operational gap.
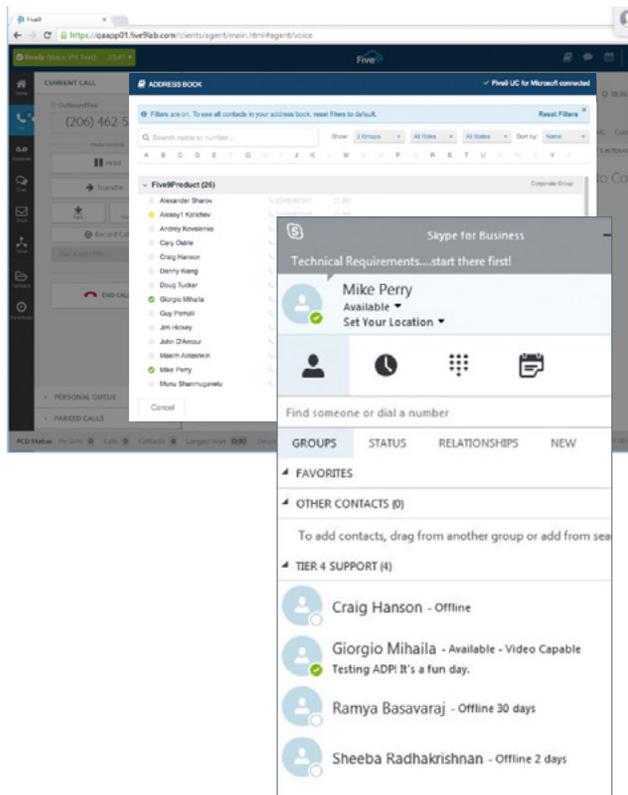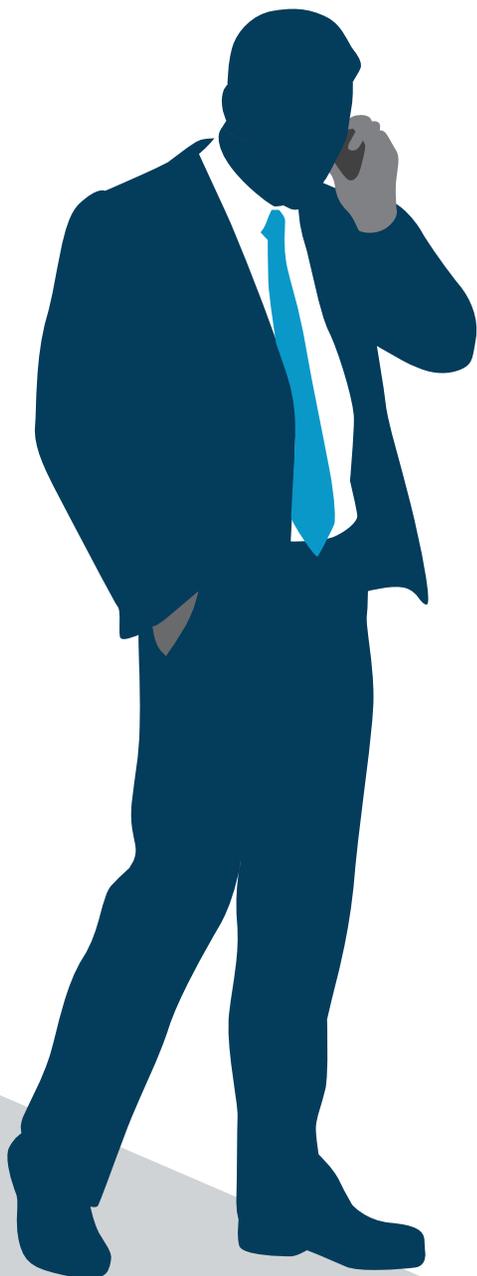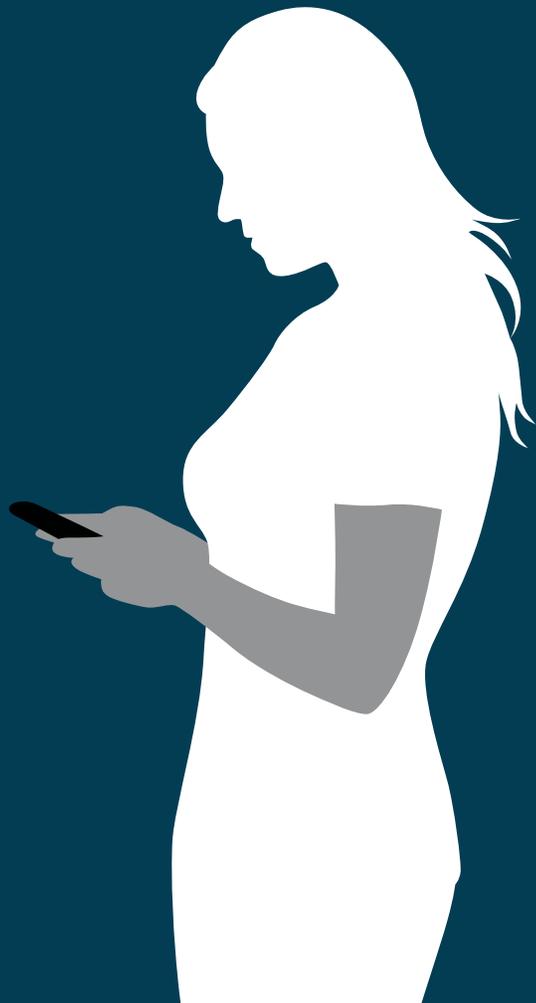
Without a bridge from your unified communications to your contact center, agents have to handle calls alone. Any information not solved in the contact center must be passed on to an expert. The secondary step of moving a conversation out of the contact center increases the risk of lost context. Consequently, your experts will have to either re-query customers more often or operate with less information, increasing the risk of a failed resolution.

WHEN SHOULD YOU INTRODUCE SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS TO THE CONVERSATION?

1. When the issue requires in-depth information or step-by-step guidance

2. When the problem is recurring despite an initial resolution

3. When the customer has special requirements for the product or service

4. When there is a financial discrepancy

5. When an issue is specific to a geographic region

6. When there is a language barrier

7. When the request involves needed support from several areas of the business

8. When the customer problem requires a high degree of subject matter expertise to troubleshoot

Beyond Just Support

Efficiency

The benefit of a Skype for Business integration in your contact center goes beyond just support. As a collaborative tool, it offers your contact center references that can eliminate guesswork and bolster business. Contact center agents can build their product understanding and chronical issues that appear more frequently. Management can reference communications that have used the conference function to determine if updates must be made to the website FAQ.

Your business can build synergy and start to make incremental changes to improve your bottom line. Together, your experts and agents can build a smarter business model that reduces contact center traffic and streamlines sales and solutions.

Sales

Profit matters to your company. It's not just about preserving the customers you have; you also want to gain customers and increase your sales. Skype for Business facilitates stronger customer engagement in both your inbound and outbound contact center. SMEs can add tremendous value when speaking to a new customer with numerous technical requirements. Also, SMEs can help make your case for a necessary upsell.

By including a third-party voice, you improve credibility in the eyes of the customer. Conference in the experts that speak the customers language, understand their needs and can tackle all concerns so they can buy in confidence. This will insure you have a higher close rate and greater overall customer satisfaction.
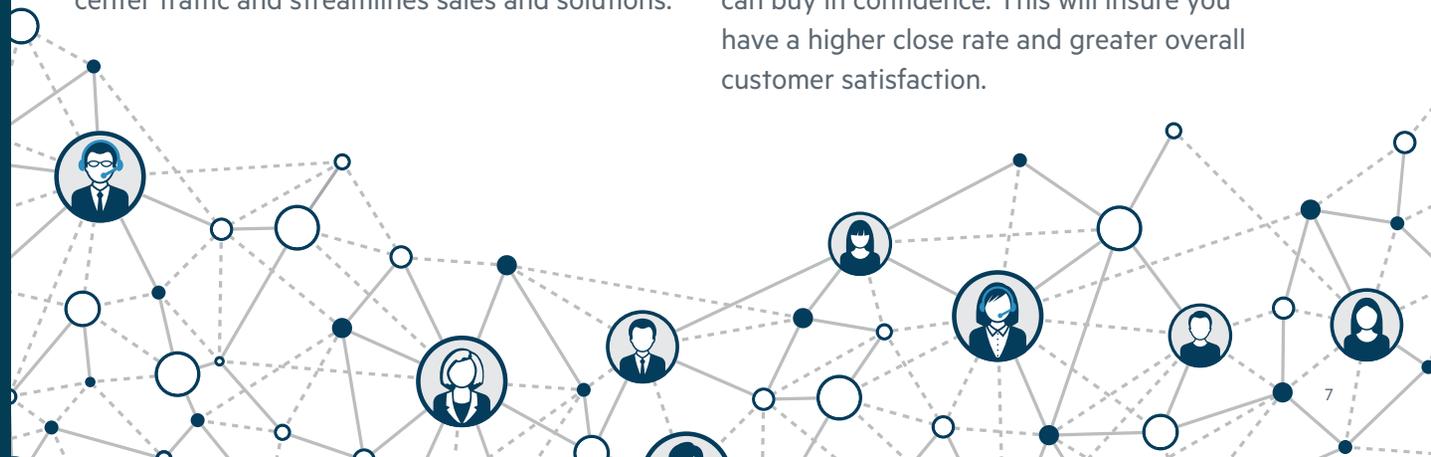
Have multiple routing options for callers based on language, time-of-day and general availability.

Proactive Outreach

Are you tracking your customers habits on the web? Today, many companies are experimenting with the addition of prompted chats or phone numbers. The goal is to grab your customers attention when they linger on a page, indicate desire to buy or act in a way that assumes confusion.

E-commerce integrations between your contact center and Skype for business take proactive engagement to a whole new level. Your contact center agents can intercept customers at crucial points in their research and purchase cycle and help expedite the process. With Skype for Business, your contact center agent can introduce a customer to an expert that can clarify concerns and hasten a close or solution.

Mobile Work

The future is steering us to a primarily mobile workforce. Last year, the percentage of employees working remotely rose to 43% in the U.S.[7] If you're working with a cloud contact center, you may already be transferring some of your agents to a semi-remote position. This is tactic can be helpful for tackling geographic sprawl.

With both agents and SMEs spread throughout your market region, you may have multiple routing options for callers based on language, time-of-day and general availability. With Skype for business, SMEs may choose to activate their availability during a given time-set. But they are not limited to just their desk. Skype maintains a versatile and mobile platform that enables your SMEs to answer questions on the fly. The benefit of increased SME availability means that your agents have more resources more often.

43%
Last year of employees working remotely rose to 43% in the U.S.[7]

Key Takeaways

Your contact center is changing. Your contact center agents' complicated conversations will continue to grow as the let-me-google-that generation gains spending power. If you are preparing your contact center for the future, it is important to consider the benefits of a UC solution like Skype for Business. Connecting SMEs to your contact center can help you improve resolution speed, customer retention and reduce operational effort. Maximize your Skype investment and ensure your contact center agents are using every resource at their disposal to improve customer engagement.

FIVE9 TIPS:

1. Sort experts by role, function and availability

2. Use reports, analytics and call recordings to determine if there are any specific areas that require more experts or attention

3. Use reports, analytics and call recordings to make business changes that reduce the use of SMEs or simplify processes

4. Carefully manage use of SMEs by setting rules for engagement

5. Incentivize experts to help the contact center through gamification

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