

WHITE PAPER

MOBILIZING THE CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERIENCE

MOBILE BUSINESS CONTACT



INTRODUCTION

Contact Centers have been used by businesses for customer engagement and retention for decades. Many of the solutions in place have run their course, and the latest socioeconomic circumstances have brought forward gaps as well as new requirements that business need to accommodate. In this paper, we examine the different factors businesses should consider when upgrading their solutions or considering contact center technology for the first time.

In times of crisis, people turn to businesses they trust. In the contact center space, the 2020 global pandemic has shown growing demand from both consumers and businesses.

On the consumer side, support requests have increased, in some cases more than doubling. Requests for remote work and learning have seen a 216% uptick as businesses, schools, and even families try to stay connected.¹ The airline industry has seen a 199% increase in customer service activity, as customers have had to cancel or modify flights, obtain service updates and report issues. Even grocers have seen a 39% rise, with more consumers opting to stay home rather than going into stores. The Zendesk CRM platform, which handles a number of verticals and companies, has reported a 20% increase compared to last year at this time.

On the business side, flexibility has become the change factor. Representatives need to be able to work from home rather than the office. Spikes in demand force businesses to quickly enable additional representatives, or subject matter experts, for a temporary amount of time. Sometimes, brands need to open dedicated channels. For example, some banks and credit card companies opened dedicated hotlines for those impacted by the social distancing measures.

Business that depend on customer service need to be able to respond to this environment and the future “new normal” that settles after a global crisis. Unfortunately, many legacy systems are ill equipped to meet today’s needs due to their reliance on physical infrastructure, limited employee mobility, restrictive device access, and poor on-demand scalability. A modern, cloud-hosted customer engagement solution can alleviate these changes.

MODERN CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT SHOULD BE CLOUD-HOSTED

Deploying a cloud-hosted solution provides numerous advantages. By moving the solution to the cloud, the business does not need to depend on physical infrastructure, which can require an upfront investment and can fail at an increased rate as the solution ages. Cloud-hosted systems are typically configured in high availability, geographically redundant configurations that provide greater reliability and uptime, increasing availability of the businesses to respond to customers. Since the solution is

offered in an as-a-service model, there is no hardware to purchase or maintain. Businesses can transition from a CAPEX model to OPEX.

A cloud-hosted system is generally more flexible than on-premise. Delivered in a pay-as-you-grow model, businesses can easily scale up or down as needed. This can be crucial for businesses that have eminent needs due to unexpected circumstances, such as the recent social distancing, or that have seasonal spikes throughout the year.

In addition, a software as-a-service (SaaS) model provides these additional benefits:

- Faster time to market
- Reduced support burden
- Seamless software upgrades

MODERN CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT SHOULD HELP FUTURE-PROOF THE BUSINESS

Solutions built 10, 20, and 30 years ago were not designed with today's communication habits in mind. The 1990s saw the rise of SMS and the Internet, which decreased consumer reliance on voice as the only channel to interact with a business. Today, consumers expect to interact through web chat and social media as well.

A recent survey of university students between 18 and 23 years of age showed that nearly 98% of them preferred to communicate on their phones using text-based methods (text messaging, messaging apps, or social media), compared to just over 2% that preferred to make voice calls.ⁱⁱ When interacting with a business, the same preference is true for millennials: 63% prefer to begin customer service interactions online instead of using voice.

The use of social media for customer service is relatively new in the broad context of contact centers. However, this feature will become increasingly more important: 80% of adults between 18 and 34 years of age would view a business favorably if it offers a social media channel for customer service.ⁱⁱⁱ This number drops to 59% for those between 35 and 54 years of age and 35% for ages 55 and up.

As businesses look to reduce costs and increase the speed of service interactions, chatbots have become a popular option. Using a chatbot in place of a live representative can automate simple tasks such as balance inquiries and service details: 63% of all consumers view this capability as favorable, provided that there is an option to escalate to a live representative.^{iv}

Decision makers looking to upgrade their legacy systems should carefully consider the channels they want to offer now, as well as the channels they might need later. Consumer preferences will continue to change over time; businesses need a solution that can future proof their investment for tomorrow.

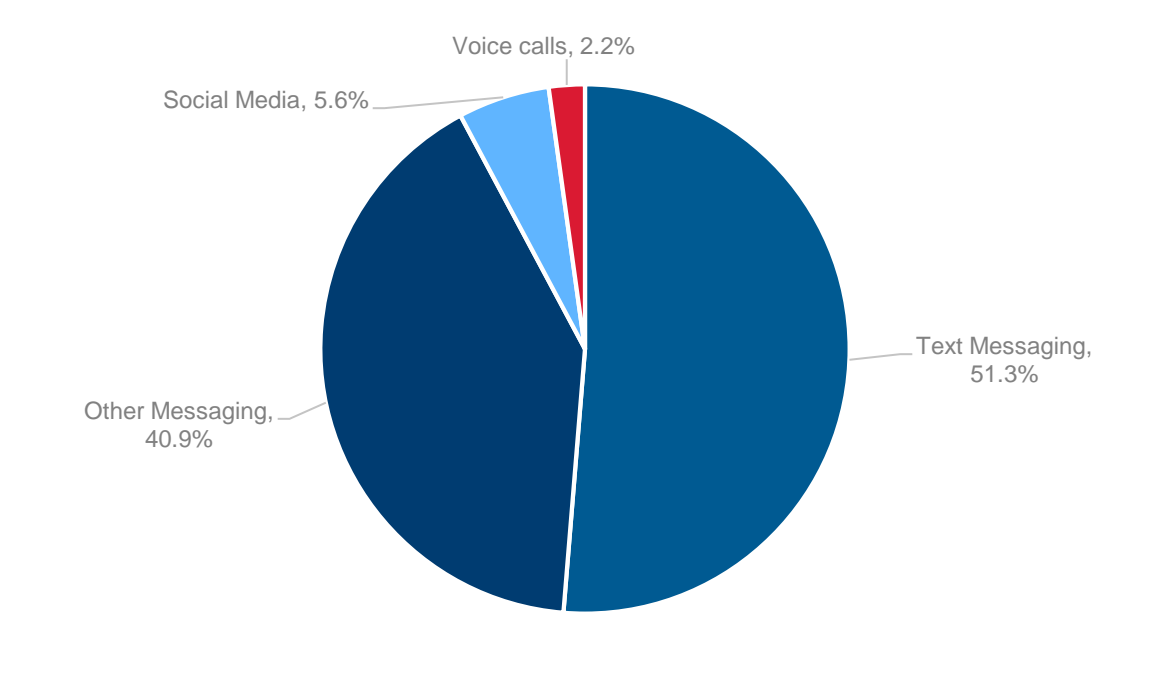


Figure 1 Communication preferences for age range 18-23

MODERN CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT SHOULD ALLOW FLEXIBILITY FOR SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

In 2018, a report revealed that 80% of the workforce did not sit at a desk.^v Prior to the 2020 social distancing measures, 68% of workers reported that they telecommuted at least once per month.^{vi} Today, more people are working remotely than ever, and this trend may continue permanently for many industries.^{vii}

Businesses need a customer engagement solution that provides location flexibility. Representatives and subject matter experts need to be able to access the system regardless of their location. Many solutions can provide access for representatives that have an existing Internet connection, or they can set up their systems to manually forward calls to a list of phone numbers.

However, representatives need the flexibility to control how they connect to the system, rather than depending on an administrator, and they also need the same level of information they can access in the office. If a screen pop with customer information is configured, representatives should still have access to it if they have a computer, as well as controls to transfer calls, toggle call recording, and add dispositions.

The same is true for supervisors. Routing calls off the system typically means a loss of visibility. A good solution should be able to track all calls, regardless of how they are routed, and allow supervisors to monitor live calls, view call statistics, and access call recordings.

There are also privacy concerns when calls are routed through personal numbers. If the representative is using their personal number, customers will see that number. A modern customer engagement solution should hide that number and only present the company number.

MODERN CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT SHOULD EASILY CONNECT TO BUSINESS PROCESSES AND TOOLS

For many businesses, their CRM platform is their lifeblood. Each customer interaction needs to be tracked. Customer tickets should be opened, assigned, and resolved. When a representative receives a call or message from a customer, they should have insight. 75% of customers expect personalized interactions; the representative should know who they are and what they have purchased.^{viii}

Modern contact center platforms can link with CRM platforms, which provides the representative with a complete customer history as soon as they answer. For a more immersive experience, a computer-telephony integration (CTI) can be installed within the CRM. This allows the representative to respond to interactions directly within the CRM interface, removing the need to move between multiple screens when working with customers.

Businesses that use a CRM platform should carefully consider whether a new customer engagement solution can provide this single pane of glass for efficient customer interactions.

MODERN CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT SHOULD PROVIDE A WIDE RANGE OF API CAPABILITIES

In addition to CRM integrations, many businesses have other tools that, if connected to their customer engagement platform, would enhance the customer experience and reduce the cost of many interactions. Not every interaction requires a subject matter expert. In fact, 64% of consumers will attempt to use self-service tools before engaging with a representative.^{ix}

A versatile API engine can automate simple, redundant, repetitive tasks such as balance inquiries for finance and reservation status for travel. By connecting to the systems that have this data, customers can quickly get the information they need. This saves money for the company by not having to bring on a live representative.

While many platforms have an API capability, businesses should consider how usable and affordable they are – whether APIs are available in a do-it-yourself or professional services-only model.

MODERN CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT SHOULD LIMIT THE IMPACT TO NORMAL BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Many vendors deliver “all or nothing” communication offerings in which implementing a new contact center solution often requires a completely rearchitected voice infrastructure. This can be extremely costly and disruptive to businesses, which likely already have an existing IP-PBX in place that is not yet amortized.

Sometimes it is not a matter of cost and the business requires certain voice capabilities that are not offered in the contact center solution.

Before selecting a new solution, businesses should understand whether it can integrate with their existing voice infrastructure.

MODERN CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT SHOULD ENABLE BUSINESS AGILITY

Organizations need to be able to adapt quickly to market changes, both internal and external. Work habits are generational. Millennials expect to be able to use technology to make work more social and easier.^x Customer engagement tools built for older generations are less relevant to younger workers. Similarly, the modern tools of today will need to continue to evolve as additional generations come into the workplace.

Businesses need to be able to respond to customer demands, which have changed in the past 20 years and will continue to change over time. A cloud-hosted solution can help with this future proofing, with new features continuously delivered to the business. However, many solutions require additional professional services to enable new functionality.

Businesses need to be able to remain relevant in an efficient, cost-effective manner. Relying on expensive professional services takes time and costs the business money. A modern customer engagement solution should allow the business to be agile and self-sufficient, enabling it to continuously build upon its competitive advantages without reliance on outside development.

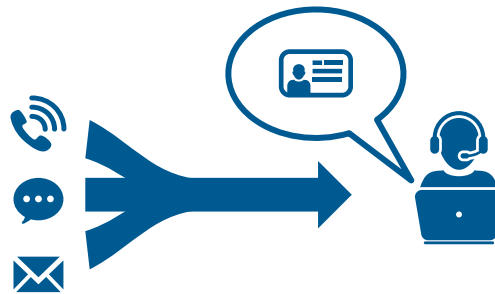
MOBILE BUSINESS CONTACT

Mobile Business Contact is a cloud-hosted, omnichannel, contact center platform suitable for businesses of any size that want to modernize and mobilize customer engagement. Hosted in redundant, carrier-grade data centers, it provides the reliability businesses need to ensure maximal service availability and business continuity. The multi-tenant aspect ensures strict data separation is maintained, and businesses can be confident that their data is secure.

FUTURE-PROOF FEATURESET

Mobile Business Contact is an omnichannel solution that supports:

- Voice
- SMS
- Web chat
- Email
- WhatsApp
- Facebook
- Twitter



The solution takes all these channels and seamlessly delivers them to a single view for the representative, which assists in improving productivity and enhancing customer satisfaction.

INBOUND ROUTING

The inbound automatic call distributor (ACD) router provides numerous routing options:

- Queue-based routing – Customers are placed in queue based on their response to the IVR.
- Skills-based routing – Customers are connected to service representatives that have the appropriate skillset to assist them.
- Language-based routing – Customers are connected to service representatives that are skilled at speaking the desired language of the customer.
- Time-of-day routing – For businesses that operate in multiple time zones and locations, customers are connected based on the local time of the representative.
- Priority routing – Calls can be prioritized based on the caller (for example, a VIP customer)
- Sticky representative – If a customer has a successful interaction with a service representative, the system attempts to reconnect them to the same person for future interactions.
- Automatic callback – If the wait time is longer than the customer is willing to remain on hold, customers can choose to receive a call back once a representative is available.

OUTBOUND DIALING

Mobile Business Contact also features an outbound dialing capability. The manual dialer can be used to proactively reach out to customers and leads. However, as businesses grow, manual dialing can be very inefficient. The automated outbound dialing capability is a useful tool to increase efficiency. The table below describes the different dialer options supported.

Table 1 Outbound dialer options

Dialer type	Functionality	When to use
Manual Dialer	The representative manually enters a number to be dialed and gets connected with the customer.	Lead quality is high Call volume is very low (under 50 calls per day)
IVR Dialer	The system initiates the call and plays the IVR when the customer answers. Based on customer response in the IVR, representatives are connected.	Lead quality is high Call volume is low (under 100 calls per day)
Predictive Dialer	For every available representative, the system places a number of simultaneous calls based on a configured pacing ratio (for example, 5 calls per representative). The system connects to an available representative only when the call is answered. The pacing ratio can be altered based on the call connectivity rate. If less calls are answered than expected, the ratio could be increased to maximize the utilization of representatives.	Lead quality is low to moderate Call volume is high (100 to 900 calls per day)
Preview Dialer	The representative can see one contact at a time and can click to dial when ready.	If representatives need to review customer data and interaction history before connecting Call volume is high (100 to 900 calls per day)
Progressive Dialer	The system automatically initiates the calls and connects to an available representative when the call is answered.	Lead quality is high Call volume is high (100 to 900 calls per day)

MONITORING AND REPORTING

The system provides a robust set of monitoring capabilities. A live dashboard allows supervisors to see a 24-hour view of calls (inbound and outbound) and chats, and representative statuses. Supervisors can monitor live calls using three levels (snoop, whisper, and barge) and view live chat transcripts to ensure representatives are performing satisfactorily.

The system also features a live wallboard for managers. They can view up to date metrics such as average speed of answer, average handle time, and calls in queue, as well as obtain a detailed report on representative performance – calls handled, calls abandoned, time handling calls, etc.

From call detail records to representative productivity, there is a full set of historical reporting capabilities, which can be viewed online, can be generated and downloaded on demand, or can be customized and delivered via email, based on a defined schedule.

The screenshot displays the 'Scheduler Information' interface in the Mavenir system. On the left is a navigation sidebar with options: Home, Dashboard, Inbound, Outbound, Analytics, Chat, Miscellaneous, Dynamic, Reports, and Scheduler. The main content area is titled 'Scheduler Information' and contains the following fields:

- Job Name***: Text input field containing 'Weekly Agent Ref'.
- Report***: Dropdown menu showing 'Call Detail Dump Inbound Online'.
- Report Parameters**:
 - From Date:** Two dropdown menus: 'Current Date' and '-6', with a date '(21/5/2020)'.
 - To Date:** Two dropdown menus: 'Current Date' and '0', with a date '(27/5/2020)'.
 - Campaign:** Red button labeled 'All'.
 - Skill:** Red button labeled '2 selected'.
 - Agent:** Red button labeled 'All'.
 - Location:** Red button labeled 'USA'.
 - Call Status:** Dropdown menu showing 'Total Calls'.
 - Call Event:** Red button labeled 'All'.
 - DispositionNames:** Red button labeled 'All'.

Figure 2 Report scheduler

USER MOBILITY

Running on a WebRTC client either in a browser or a Chrome extension, Mobile Business Contact is inherently mobile. There are no dependencies on a representative's location, as long as they have Internet connectivity. However, Mavenir provides additional options for enhanced mobility:

FLEXIBLE CALL ROUTING

This feature is useful when representatives have limited Internet bandwidth but need to be fully functional. The representative logs in to the client using a preconfigured number (either a mobile phone, home phone, or SIP phone). Inbound call notifications show up in the client, but the call is sent to the other device. This allows the representative to reduce the bandwidth required for calls but still have full functionality.

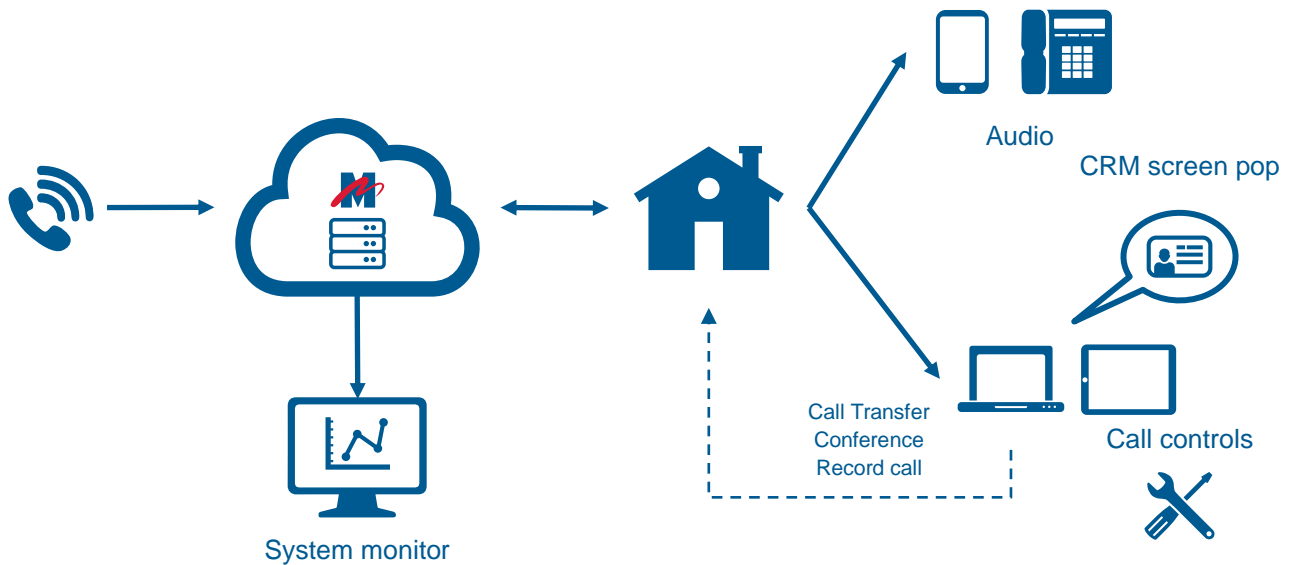


Figure 3 Flexible call routing

Calls are routed based on the rules in the campaign IVR. If other factors (skills, priority) are the same for multiple representatives, the representative with the longest idle time will receive the call.

If the campaign is set up to present a screen pop to the representative, or if the representative is logged into a CRM, the screen pop still appears. The representative can also use the client call controls – call transfer, conference, call recording.

On the supervisor side, the calls are still monitored by the system. The supervisor can still see the representative status and can monitor the call as with any other call. In addition, all the detailed call metrics – speed of answer, handle time, dispositions – are still tracked and delivered to the reporting platform. That way the supervisor doesn't lose valuable data when the calls are routed to a separate number.

To protect the representative's number, for any outbound calls made to customers, only the company number is displayed. A customer will never see the personal number of the representative.

COMPUTERLESS REPRESENTATIVE/EXPERT

There are many scenarios where a representative—or a subject matter expert—is not in the office and/or has limited to no Internet or computer access, but still needs to handle calls. In this case, the representative can still interact with the customer using the computerless mode.

Representatives activate calls to their device by calling in to a special inbound campaign number. Once active, the calls are routed to their device. If a CRM screen pop is configured and a tablet or computer is available, the representative will still receive the screen pop. To deactivate this mode, the representative calls from their device to a separate deactivation campaign number.

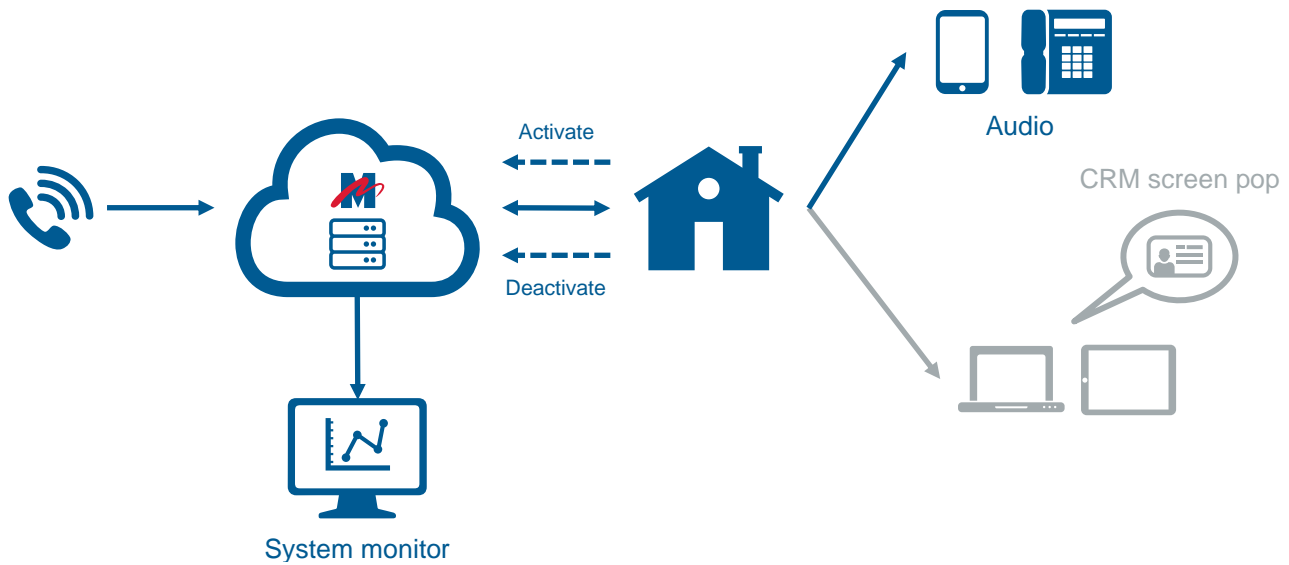


Figure 4 Computerless Representative/Expert

As with the Flexible Call Routing feature, supervisors still have full monitoring and reporting capability, and the representative’s number is kept private.

OFFLINE CAMPAIGN

The Offline Campaign mode provides business continuity upon the loss of office Internet connection by routing all calls for a campaign to representatives’ personal phone lines.

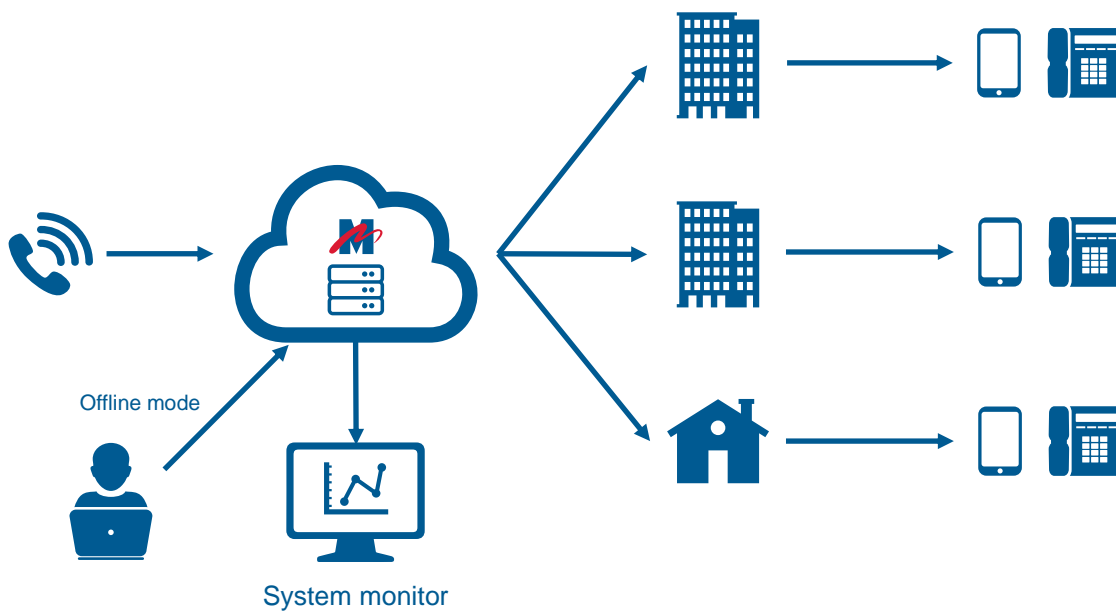


Figure 5 Offline Campaign

Offline mode is configured by a system administrator at the campaign level, by registering the offline phone numbers of the representatives.

When a business disruption happens, the administrator can access the Mavenir Connect administration portal remotely and activate offline mode for the campaign. All representatives that have phone numbers configured will receive calls for that campaign.

As with other modes, supervisors still have full monitoring and reporting capability, and the representative's number remains hidden.

CRM INTEGRATIONS

Mobile Business Contact has prebuilt integrations into the following CRM platforms:

- Freshdesk
- Microsoft Dynamics
- Salesforce
- Salesforce Desk
- SAP
- Sugar CRM
- Zendesk
- Zoho

This enables a single pane of glass for the representative. The CRM displays the customer journey and provides access to service tickets and tracking, and the CTI application allows the representative to stay on a single screen as they interact.

In addition, the flexible API engine can be used to connect other CRM platforms, databases, and other in-house developed systems, provided that they have an API interface.

Many businesses are the result of mergers and acquisitions. When companies combine, they do not always use the same tools, including CRMs. The API engine is flexible enough to combine the data from multiple CRMs into a single, consolidated screen.

IP-PBX INTEGRATION

Mobile Business Contact can integrate with a business's existing voice infrastructure through SIP trunks. This hybrid deployment capability allows a business that is happy with their existing telecom provider to keep it. This limits the impact for the business and keeps the existing customer experience intact.

It also enables businesses with dial plan customization. Calls to the solution can be easily transferred to an internal extension – for example 4-digit dialing.

CONCLUSION

Businesses are struggling to meet the increased demand placed upon their legacy customer engagement solutions. By relying on physical infrastructure, these solutions do not provide the flexibility and scalability that is needed today and beyond. Businesses need a cloud-hosted solution that can provide a rapid deployment to help future-proof customer engagement and business communications, improve worker flexibility, and connect to CRMs and other business tools, while limiting the impact to the business's existing voice infrastructure.

Mobile Business Contact is a modern, full-featured CCaaS solution delivered from a carrier-grade, geographically redundant cloud. In addition to the standard customer engagement features businesses expect to respond to customers today and in the future, Mavenir also provides a set of enhanced Mobile Customer Service Experience capabilities that allow an easy migration to a remote/mobile worker environment.

ⁱ Which-50, [Contact Centres In The Era Of COVID-19](#), 2020

ⁱⁱ Interop Technologies, [The Millennial Mobile Life](#), 2020

ⁱⁱⁱ Microsoft State of Customer Service 2019

^{iv} Forrester, [Don't believe the chatbot hype](#), 2019

^v Emergence, [Deskless workforce](#), 2018

^{vi} Owl Labs, [45 Key Remote Work & Telecommuting Statistics for 2020](#), 2019

^{vii} The Brookings Institute, [Telecommuting will likely continue long after the pandemic](#), 2020

^{viii} Microsoft State of Customer Service 2019

^{ix} Microsoft State of Customer Service 2019

^x Employer Flexible, [Generational Differences in Work Styles](#), 2019