



SMB Buyer's Guide to Cloud-Based Contact Centres

Power Up Your Customer
Communications



What Is a Cloud-Based Contact Centre?

Empowering your team members with cloud-based contact centre tools can help them improve customer service, close more sales and gain productivity. It can also cut costs. This buyer's guide will help you understand how to choose the cloud contact centre solution that best meets the needs of your small or medium business (SMB).

The following pages will cover:

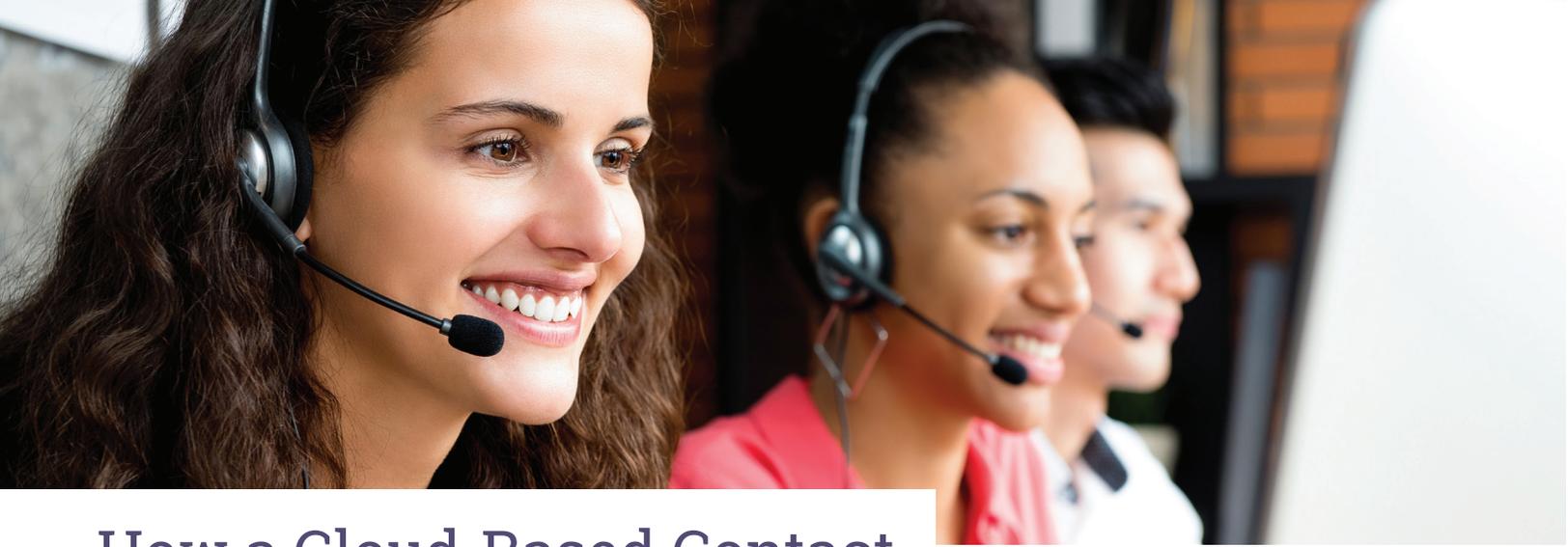
- The range of features available in cloud-based contact centres
- How cloud contact centres help SMBs succeed
- How to choose the right contact centre for your company

Cloud contact centres—in which calling capabilities are delivered via an internet connection—provide a suite of powerful communication tools that enable sales and customer service teams to improve customer engagement, handle calls more efficiently and collaborate with other teams. These systems equip organisations with the latest contact centre technology without the need to host specialised hardware on-site.

When you use a cloud contact centre, there's no investment in infrastructure and operations are the responsibility of the service provider. You can begin using it within days, rather than months. This ease of adoption all flows from the fact that you simply access the technology through the internet.

Cloud-based contact centres offer:

- **Access to advanced features** These include intelligent call routing, customisable interactive voice response (IVR), and integration with customer relationship management (CRM) software and help desk tools.
- **Minimal technical investment** The service provider hosts the service and oversees the maintenance and upgrades of all related hardware and infrastructure. Employees simply log in via the web to use the service.
- **Scalability as demand increases** Additional capacity is instantly available when needed, allowing you to ramp up operations easily. Purchase as many licenses as you need now and add more as your business grows. This makes the service affordable for even very small teams.



How a Cloud-Based Contact Centre Helps SMBs

The right cloud-based contact centre solution can help employees deliver better, faster customer service. Powerful, intuitive features allow employees to work toward sales more efficiently. Better service and more sales can translate to revenue growth for your business, while improved efficiency lowers costs.

1. Better customer experience

Since cloud-based contact centres can help route calls to the right person or team, it becomes faster and easier to satisfy customer demands. Choosing a system that integrates with CRM and help desk tools will give your team members access to information that empowers them to provide better service and quickly resolve problems. Some solutions also let you monitor and record calls to help ensure a smooth experience and identify employee training needs. Other customer-friendly features include allowing customers to request a callback instead of waiting on hold until a team member is available.

2. Increased productivity

Cloud contact centre technology replaces manual dialing with automatic calling and can even filter out answering machines and inactive lines. This means your team spends more time talking with customers and less time dialing. You can also determine the most appropriate routing for incoming calls so that customers reach the right person faster—allowing all service staff to make the best use of their time.

3. More effective sales

Connecting with prospects quickly and efficiently can mean the difference between success and failure. Cloud contact centres automate dialing, allowing you to avoid voicemail, busy signals or gaps between calls. Moreover, easy access to customer information and contact histories means your team is better equipped to capitalise on sales opportunities. Spending more time on productive calls and being able to route customers more efficiently may also help boost sales. The analytics tools available through some contact centre solutions provide insights into individual contributors' performance, which can help you manage staff more effectively.



4. Streamlined payments

By automating the dialing process and reducing downtime, cloud-based contact centres enable employees to reach more customers in less time, maximizing the odds of collecting owed funds. In addition, the real-time analytics that cloud-based contact centres provide can help you identify optimal times to place calls. Many solutions also include customisable IVR tools that can simplify the process of taking payments. You can upload recorded instructions to guide callers through your system, collect and store key presses from customers and repeat back information customers have provided.

5. Lower costs

Cloud contact centre services let you forgo the costs of buying and maintaining contact centre hardware. With no equipment on your premises, there's no need to budget for repairs or upgrades. Setup is quick, allowing you to start seeing payback right away. As your business grows or your needs increase, you can easily add users.



9 Features to Look for in a Cloud Contact Centre

Improved customer experience, more productive employees and reduced IT spending are all business advantages that can come from a cloud-based contact centre. But which features do you want or need? Here are some considerations when you're picking a cloud contact centre solution.

- 1. Inbound and outbound calling** The cloud contact centre you choose should allow your team to efficiently make calls and streamline the process of fielding incoming calls. Opt for a solution that includes an intuitive, web-based interface for placing, receiving and transferring calls. It should also provide customisable routing options for inbound calls.
- 2. Multichannel** A cloud-based solution should help you optimise interactions for increased customer satisfaction and agent efficiency. Choose a contact centre that lets you communicate with customers and manage contacts on multiple channels, including voice, email, chat and social media.
- 3. Customisable IVR** The cloud contact centre you choose should allow your customers to connect with the information or assistance they need quickly and easily. Look for systems that you can manage online and that are flexible enough to accommodate real-time changes and updates. Your service should let you upload custom audio messages to help guide customers through your system and easily capture input via voice or key press.
- 4. Multiple dialing modes** A cloud-based contact centre solution should let your team make calls in the way that best meets your business objectives. For example, if maximising call volume is key, consider a service that provides the option of dialing ahead and screening for no-answers so that employees can potentially speak with more customers.
- 5. CRM and help desk integration** A solution that integrates with your CRM software and help desk tools can give your team up-to-date information when they talk to customers. Integration with your help desk software can make it easier to create support tickets and assign them to the person who's best able to assist.



- 6. Ease of setup and use** A solution that requires no in-house IT or technical expertise to set up and manage will allow your operations to continue with minimal disruption. It should be easy to configure—for example, letting you easily import customer contact information and grant specific levels of access to different employees and teams. It should provide an intuitive interface for making, receiving and transferring calls so employees without previous contact centre experience can get up to speed quickly. The service should also scale automatically to accommodate your business as it grows or as you need to increase capacity during busy periods.
- 7. Real-time reporting and analytics** While many contact centre solutions include analytics capabilities, choosing one that provides them in real time can allow you to make on-the-spot adjustments that improve customer satisfaction and results. For example, there may be times when you want to see how many employees are on calls and how long customer wait times are so you can reallocate staff as needed. Drilling into this data can help you discover patterns and trends and then make better-informed decisions.
- 8. Call recording and monitoring** Your cloud contact centre should give you the ability to monitor the customer experience by allowing you to record or listen to calls. Employees should be able to pause recordings when they're taking customer payments or sensitive information and resume recording once they're finished. The service should allow your managers to monitor calls as they happen and jump in to provide additional support if needed. Saved recordings should be easy to find and access for training and development purposes.
- 9. Flexible pricing options** Select a solution that is priced in a way that makes sense for your business needs. If your call volume is more predictable, consider a service with a monthly cost that includes a set number of phone minutes. Whatever type of plan you choose, be sure it includes the other features you may need, such as IVR, analytics and storage for call recordings.

The 8x8 Difference

Companies around the world turn to 8x8 for a secure cloud communications solution that quickly and seamlessly connects team members with each other, their customers and the information they need to provide exceptional service. 8x8 delivers a complete cloud contact centre solution that's tailored to the needs of smaller organisations. Built on a scalable cloud platform, 8x8 offers easy installation and configuration that grows with your business.

Key 8x8 Cloud Contact Centre features include:

- **Multichannel support** for communicating with customers and managing contacts via voice, email, chat and social media
- **Automatic dialing options** that allow representatives to avoid voicemail, busy signals or inactive lines, helping to maximise talk time
- **Inbound calling capabilities** that enhance employee productivity and ensure a smooth customer experience
- **Intuitive setup and configuration** that allow you to be up and running within minutes
- **Seamless integration** with CRM software and help desk tools
- **Real-time analytics** that allow you to make quick adjustments to how calls are handled, along with the ability to monitor contact center performance remotely

Ready for the Next Step?

Contact an 8x8 Solutions Expert to learn more about how your business can enhance customer experience and improve agent productivity with 8x8 Cloud Contact Centre. Call **0333 043 8888** or visit **[8x8.com/uk](https://www.8x8.com/uk)**.



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