

# The innovator's guide to the digital contact centre



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# RingCentral revolution: Changing customer expectations

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# Digital today: So much more than just email and web chat

The digital customer service universe is evolving rapidly.

Contact centre adoption and support for first-generation digital channels such as email and web chat, including video chat and co-browsing, is growing very rapidly.

Mobile apps, while tightly tied to mainstream adoption of smartphones, have been around for a while and are gaining traction, even though contact centre support has been lagging behind consumer adoption.

While first-generation channels are “alive and well,” with chat currently having the highest growth rate of all contact centre channels, customers today are rapidly moving beyond those first-generation channels.

Next-generation digital channels include social platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc. as well as advanced messaging like WhatsApp, WeChat, Facebook Messenger, Apple Business Chat, and many others. Social media and messaging are well on their way to becoming mainstream contact centre channels.

FIRST GENERATION			NEXT GENERATION		
EMAIL	LIVE CHAT	SOCIAL MEDIA	MESSAGING	MOBILE APPS	SOCIAL MONITORING

## The great divide: Shifting to digital

No need for a crystal ball—all you need to do to predict which channels will become essential in your contact centre is to observe consumers and understand the generational differences around the choice of preferred communication channels.

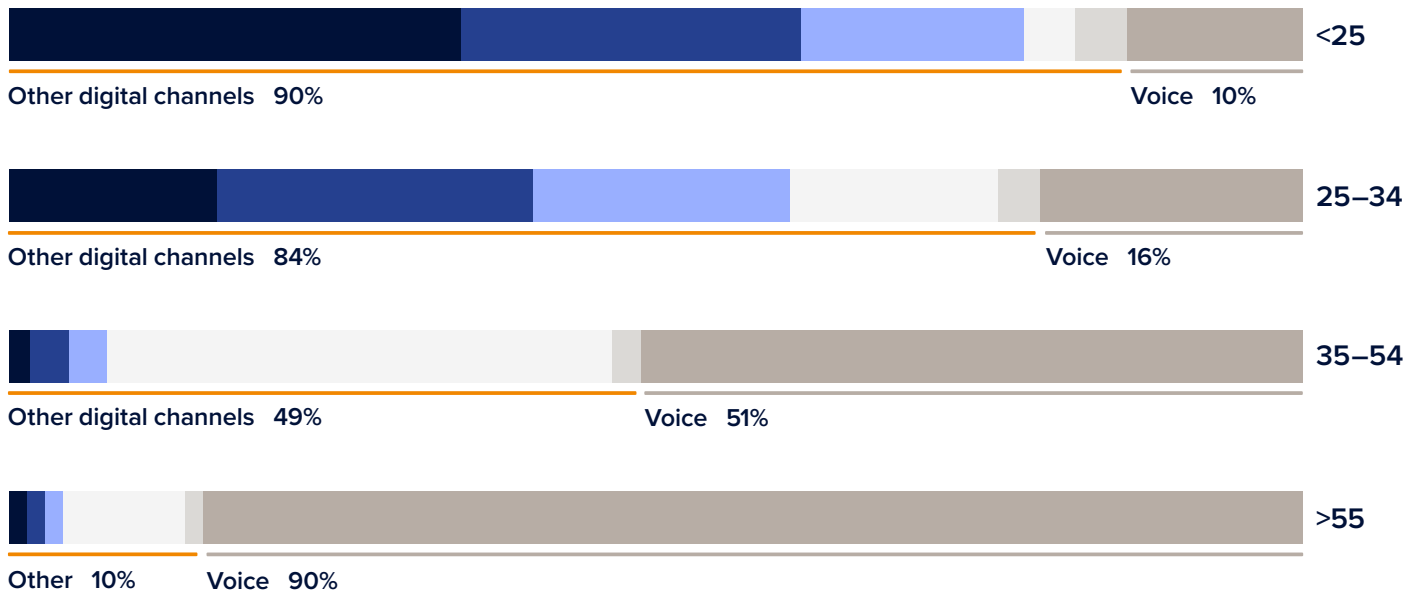
While the voice channel is still widely used, and voice and digital channels need to be integrated seamlessly to address customer needs across generations, research confirms that Generation Z and Millennials have a clear preference towards digital. They predominantly use next-generation digital channels when communicating at a personal level and increasingly use them when interacting with companies.

It’s therefore no surprise that companies are starting to invest in supporting digital channels. This includes both agent-assisted and self-service next-generation digital channels such as chat bots, interaction automation, and self-service solutions powered by artificial intelligence (AI). Actually, the highest growth is expected in the areas



of messaging and AI-driven self-service. Companies need to start offering consumers more ways to connect. Today's consumers expect to be able to use their channel of choice based on the type of problem or issue that needs to be addressed and their current situation.

## Channel popularity in terms of percentage by age group



Dimension Data 2019 Global Customer Experience Benchmarking: "Which contact channel is most popular with the following age groups?"



## Channel support: Today and tomorrow

### Research into current support for digital channels in the contact centre and short-to-medium term company plans paint a clear picture:

Companies are aware of the changes occurring in their customer base and are preparing to address them. If predictions hold true, 89% of contact centres are planning to support messaging and mobile self-service apps within two years. Adoption for social media (92%) and web chat (93%) is expected to be even higher.

It seems safe to assume that customers will enjoy more ways to interact with the contact centre. They get the flexibility to choose their channel of choice based on the issue at hand and their personal preferences and current situation.

## Percentage of contact centres supporting digital channels today and their plans for the next two years

### Messaging



### Self-service/AI



### Mobile self-service app



### Web chat



### Social media



### Website



### Email



Frost & Sullivan 2019 Global Research, Midsized Call Centres Take a Digital Approach

■ Support today    ■ Plan to support over the next two years    ■ No plans

## Next-generation digital is different

Supporting these next-generation digital channels, however, is different in many ways from what companies are used to and have been accustomed to doing for many years.

**Here are some fundamental differences that companies will have to address to get next-generation digital right:**

- Asynchronous interactions are the rule, not the exception —new KPIs are needed to measure success.

- Response times become unpredictable, and it is acceptable for a customer to appear and disappear.
- The duration for each interaction session is much harder to measure.
- Typically, multiple parallel interactions with different customers and different channels are being managed by the same agent.
- Conversations not only traverse multiple agent shifts but may involve many different interaction channels to achieve resolution.
- Every application has a different interface and capabilities, with minimal—if any—standardisation across channels.

## Digital impact on the contact centre

Support for digital-first omnichannel “done right” will impact many areas of your contact centre.

**Here are some examples of what will be needed to evolve your call centre to a truly integrated digital-first omnichannel contact centre.**



### Quality

Support new standards and processes.



### Forecasting and scheduling

Provide new models and algorithms to accurately reflect digital demand.



### Performance

Provide new KPIs that reflect digital channels.



### Omnichannel interactions

Accommodate omnichannel interactions and elevation.



### Analytics

Turn extensive unstructured data into a holistic view of the customer experience.



### Capturing

Enable capturing multiple separate interactions in parallel. Adhere to new regulations.



# Taking the lead: Providing best-in-class digital experiences

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## The impact of digital leadership

Supporting next-generation digital channels in your contact centre affects your forecasting and scheduling. It fundamentally changes interaction routing and handling. Instead of simply recording a call, you need to capture activities regardless of channel and accommodate the fact that agents concurrently handle multiple interactions in different channels. Your quality assurance processes will have to change, as will performance management and analytics.

Today, most organisations providing next-generation digital channel support do so via siloed agents, frequently outside the contact centre (often in marketing).

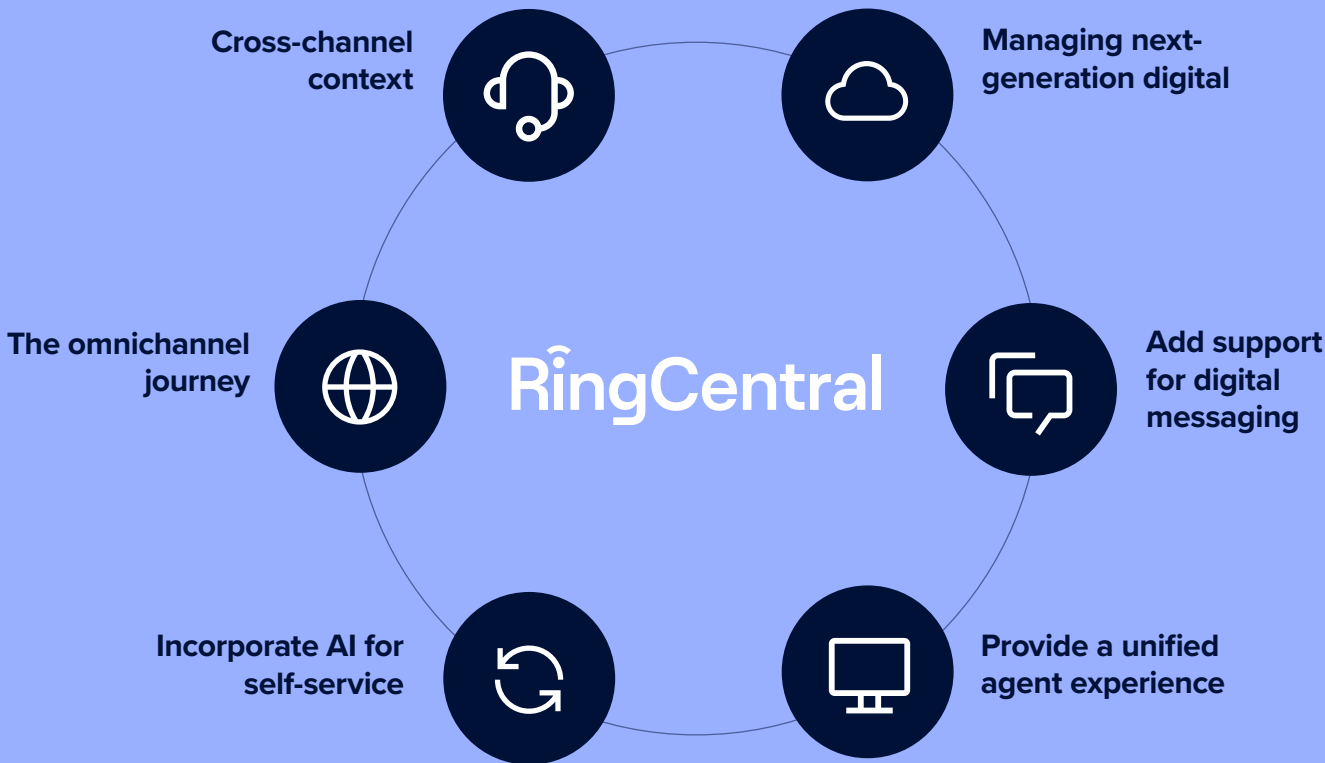
We see the future as blended agents that are empowered to manage omnichannel interactions with customers—within the contact centre.

Positioning your company to achieve digital leadership is essential. Why? Because this is what your customers expect. You need to position your company and your contact centre as the digital leader to fulfill your customers' expectations.

The “secret sauce”  
of digital leadership

Here are the six ingredients that will help you to achieve digital leadership.

Read on to learn about all you need to evolve your contact centre to meet your customers’ digital engagement expectations.





## 1. Managing next-generation digital

**Today in most companies, digital channel ownership is siloed outside of the contact centre. Companies that manage this way face these challenges:**

**Customers typically engage for service.** If they reach a team that cannot resolve their issue, it is likely that they are redirected until they eventually end up with a customer service agent who can help. This impacts customer satisfaction and experience. It also increases interaction volumes with repeat contacts, creating more cost for the company.



**The approach doesn't scale.** Teams outside of customer care will typically dedicate a small number of people to monitor digital channels. But since they struggle to resolve many of the issues consumers are facing, efficiency is a big challenge.

**Customer issues are complex and inconsistent.** Staff assigned to monitor these channels are not appropriately trained nor do they have access to the tools and information required to provide timely and complete resolution.

**Providing a great customer experience requires focus.** For example, marketing might manage social channels focusing on protecting brand reputation. Ironically, their being responsible for customer service undermines the brand reputation because consumers engaging the company via these channels are unlikely to get their issues resolved in a timely fashion.

Conversely, when customer service owns monitoring and engaging with consumers via digital channels as part of an omnichannel customer service effort, all these issues are addressed. Customer service is staffed for scale, they are customer focused and have been trained on efficiently dealing with customer care issues. They can manage digital-first omnichannel interactions but are enabled to include other channels such as voice when appropriate and can provide feedback to sales and marketing to ensure organisational silos don't exist.

## 2. Add support for digital messaging

Supporting digital channels can be technically difficult. They lack standards. It seems like new offerings are coming to the market on a daily basis, and their use can vary by demographic (e.g., preferences can vary for younger vs older consumers) as well as by geography.

You need a solution that makes it easy to support all channels natively and bi-directionally, including voice, digital and next-generation digital channels. It needs to be simple to activate new channels via pre-integrated capabilities, and it needs to be cost-effective to enable all your agents to manage blended interactions that move between channels.

The screenshot displays a RingCentral customer service interface. On the left, a blue sidebar contains 'Ongoing tasks' and 'Awaiting tasks' sections. The main chat area shows a conversation with Danielle Fugère, who asks if she can fly out of a different airport to Paris. The agent, Alan Moore, responds with a helpful message and a photo of a crowded airport. The right sidebar shows Alan Moore's profile and analytics for North and South America.

**Ongoing tasks**

**Awaiting tasks**

**Tasks Analytics Admin**

**Danielle Fugère 10:24**

Can I fly out of a different airport but still make it to Paris before my 2PM?

**Danielle Fugère**

Hi, I'm at SFO right now trying to check in for my flight to Paris, which leaves in 2 hours. The lines are huge, and I don't think I'll make this flight!

**Grand Travel**

Hi, Danielle. I'd be more than happy to help you with your request today.

Okay, I can get you on a flight out of San Jose airport, which is about 40 minutes away.

**Alan Moore**

4 OPENED 15 CLOSED 96 MESSAGES

**North America**

Canada: 10 places for Quebec, 10 places for Toronto

Mexico: 5 places

USA: 20 places for California, 25 places for New York

**South America**

Argentina: 30 places

Brasil: 45 places

Peru: 30 places

Your message

### 3. Provide a unified agent experience



### 4. Cross-channel context

**Ensuring a simple and efficient agent experience to manage digital-first omnichannel interactions is critical. Your agents need a unified inbox for all interaction channels because it provides:**

- **A single interface:** One inbox for all interactions, regardless of channel, which reduces training needs and speeds up onboarding new agents.
- **A native experience:** Each messaging platform keeps its native features. Consumers usually use certain platforms for a reason. They want to feel that they are being served in a personalised manner in their channel of choice.
- **Agents in control:** Contrary to the traditional pushing of voice calls to available agents, digital handling flows more naturally when agents can “pull” their work from a queue that provides them with interactions that are dynamically prioritised.

The customer context is anything that can help your agents handle interactions better: from access to customer data with insight into the customer history and previous contacts across channels, to understanding the current customer mood and sentiment. As agents are equipped to handle blended interactions, they need to be armed with context that is maintained throughout the customer journey and across interaction channels.

A customer card meets this need by providing full customer context across channels and the complete customer journey. It uses appropriate CRM data bi-directionally to help agents better handle interactions across channels. CRM data can be enriched with context from customer interactions in the contact centre.

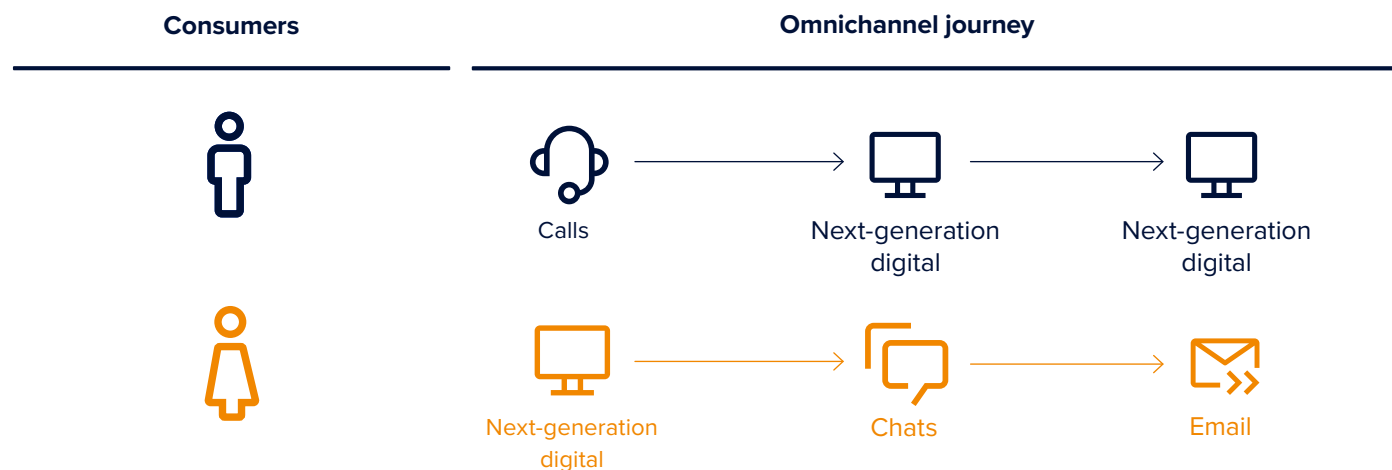
The customer card also provides immediate access to conversation history across channels, as well as customer sentiment. This helps agents to be better prepared before they even start interacting with the customer.



## 5. The omnichannel journey

When supporting true omnichannel interactions, consumers expect to move seamlessly across any channel. In fact, doing so will ensure the most efficient and cost-effective way to solve many problems.

You can imagine using self-service channels to empower consumers to resolve basic tasks on their own. You need to allow them, though, to move to a chat and make or receive a phone call should they have more complex enquiries or encounter a problem.



### Here are some examples of typical cross-channel interaction flows:

- A customer calls the contact centre with a billing issue. An updated invoice is shared via WhatsApp where the customer confirms and pays via a payment gateway right from WhatsApp.
- A customer reaches the contact centre via Apple Business Chat (iMessage) with an enquiry on a new bank service. In order to authenticate the new service, an inbound automated call is placed. The customer authenticates the transaction via voice and confirmation of the new service is sent via email.
- Research shows that consumers want the flexibility to interact with businesses via their channels of choice, but they also expect companies to direct them to the most efficient way to address their question. Increasingly, this is going to involve multiple channels with an expectation for seamless movement between them. Companies that deliver this will meet their customers' expectations.

## 6. Incorporate AI for self-service

Self-service capabilities powered by AI should be used to optimise digital channel handling. Chatbots, for instance, provide containment for digital channels just as interactive voice response (IVR) does for voice.

Begin with simple and repetitive use cases that generate high value and use intelligent routing that understands omnichannel interactions to ensure seamless collaboration between live agents and self-service options.

As with any automated approach, keep in mind that it is crucial to include those channels into the overall fabric of the contact centre just like agent-assisted voice and digital interactions. Allow customers to opt out of self-service and cross over to an agent, but also keep in mind that there can be big benefits in using AI and automation throughout the interaction. For example, agents can benefit from handing off mundane post-processing activities to a bot allowing them to move on faster to the high-value value interaction that requires their expertise.

# Conclusion

The digital revolution is in full swing. If you want to keep up with your customers' growing needs and demands, you need a contact centre solution that enables you to address them.

RingCentral, the world's #1 cloud customer experience platform, can help your organisation to be first in your industry by powering exceptional experiences for your customers and your employees.

RingCentral facilitates addressing consumer expectations to stay ahead of the competition by actively taking on and resolving the challenges of the digital revolution. With RingCentral, you can offer your customers the best-in-class digital experiences they crave, while improving agent engagement and reducing cost.

Do you want to stay ahead of the curve?

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For more information, please contact a sales representative. Visit [ringcentral.co.uk](https://ringcentral.co.uk) or call 0800 098 8136.

**RingCentral**

582595982 11/2020

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