

Best Practice Considerations for Contact Center Technology Support and Management

Today's contact centers use data center resident voice systems that leverage off-the-shelf hardware, standard operating systems, and corporate networks (WAN and LAN) for voice transport. These technologies offer greater agility and flexibility in solution delivery at a more attractive price than legacy systems. The keys to reaping those rewards include effective technology support and management. Use this list to stir your thinking on how to improve your contact center technology's stability.

Strategy: IT and the business align their goals and priorities for technology support and management

- Provide solid vision and leadership to ensure understanding and achievement of common goals
 - Define willingness to invest and tolerance of risks and impacts
 - Balance business needs with IT needs
- Take an enterprise view to optimize efficiency while also considering the unique characteristics of various lines of business or technologies to address mission critical needs
 - Define common processes across sites/groups to the degree possible
- Collaborate across departments in planning, funding, implementation, and reinforcement
 - Commit appropriate resources to all stages of the project lifecycle
 - Make an ongoing commitment on budget and resources to ensure success

Technology Design and Support: Architectural standards, proactive monitoring, and incident management protocols mitigate risk and reduce issues and their duration and impact

- Ensure reliable and resilient technology:
 - Define and apply architectural standards to ensure redundant, reliable, and resilient technology
 - Address risk management through assessments, evaluation of options and tradeoffs, tracking of risk decisions, and review of impacts and results
 - Balance investment in risk mitigation against risk probability and impact
 - Define appropriate processes, tools, and resources to minimize risks cost-effectively
- Proactively prevent and detect issues:
 - Supply appropriate tools, define processes, and commit resources to conduct monitoring and health checks aimed at early detection to prevent incidents and reduce impacts
 - Conduct appropriate testing as part of projects and technology change management to ensure ongoing success
 - Define and comply with all project and change management review and approval processes to eliminate short cuts that create risk
- Restore and repair quickly:
 - Clearly define the processes and gather appropriate information to respond to each incident rapidly and ensure downstream resources can restore, repair, and conduct root cause analysis
 - Provide front line support resources with the tools and information to clear common problems quickly and identify the resources for escalation, as needed
 - Ensure resources with appropriate knowledge and experience are available to address escalated incidents quickly; provide access to the appropriate tools and information
- Analyze, communicate, and optimize:
 - Study process compliance, past events, assessment results, risk decisions and outcomes, and testing and monitoring results to gain new insights that may justify further investments and process changes



- Communicate technology and support performance across the business and IT to ensure common understanding of status, risks, and pain points that require action

Technology Management: Structured processes and assigned accountabilities ensure effective technology support

- Define clear roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities for applying, optimizing, and supporting technology to ensure business success
 - Use groups that are organizationally neutral, providing support to all lines of business; bill back for services at a reasonable price
 - Address oversight and execution using RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) analysis
 - New technology (strategy, planning, projects)
 - Existing technology that requires change and/or ongoing attention
 - Support and troubleshooting
- Define Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between organizations to reinforce accountability
 - Add incentives/penalties, where possible
 - Include technology stability/availability, application performance, IT responsiveness, and business capability metrics (i.e., the ability to receive and handle customer contacts and use contact center resources)
- Ensure good communication and collaboration between groups by creating a strong Business Analyst (BA) role as a liaison between the business and IT
- Divide IT/telecom responsibilities to ensure prioritization and action on strategic and tactical work
 - Assign architect and engineer roles to strategy and projects
 - Assign operations and service center/help desk roles to day-to-day requirements and incidents

Sample List of Support Processes

The people, process, and technology elements of contact center technology support and management address these scenarios:

- New Business Need – e.g., New product/service, project
 - Including planning, implementation, testing, etc.
- Day-to-Day actions – Technology-driven
 - Upgrades (version, release, software patch) and other maintenance
 - Emergency actions (non-trouble ticket)
- Day-to-Day actions – Business-driven
 - RFC (Request for Change)
 - Service Catalog (routine) change
 - Emergency actions (e.g., center closing)
- Trouble Ticket/Issue Reporting and Resolution
 - Severity 1 or 2 (customer and/or center impacting)
 - Severity 3 or 4
- Root Cause Analysis and Optimization to Prevent Recurrence
 - Based on post incident analysis, monitoring and testing outcomes, risk assessments and trouble ticket history and trends that may point to a bigger issue
- Proactive Optimization
 - Based on testing and monitoring results and assessments of technology and risk