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# IT Managers' Guide to Cloud-Based Contact Center Infrastructure

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## Introduction

IT plays an important role in the world of cloud-based contact center infrastructure – automatic call distributors (ACDs), dialers, interactive voice response (IVR) systems and intelligent virtual agents (IVAs). Just as IT resources are needed for most on-premise system implementations, they are also required for most cloud-based initiatives. IT staff should be actively involved in the system vetting and selection process, reviewing and approving security features and capabilities, performing or assisting with the integrations, designing and developing reports, and configuring and maintaining the solution on an ongoing basis. If a company has required IT resources to support their on-premise contact center solution, they will need similar assistance with a cloud-based solution. The difference is that IT's role in a cloud scenario will be more strategic and dedicated to security, integrations and system administration, and less to taking care of the hardware and software. The purpose of this white paper is to debunk the myth that IT resources are not necessary to assist with and participate in the selection and ongoing management and administration of a cloud-based contact center infrastructure solution.

## Similarities and Differences between On-Premise and Cloud Contact Center Implementations

The phases and steps in a contact center infrastructure implementation are the same regardless of whether the solution is on-premise or in the cloud. What differs is who is accountable for the activities in the planning, implementation and maintenance of the system. The biggest difference between an on-premise and cloud-based solution is the responsibility for the technology, the hardware and software.

When it comes to cloud-based contact center infrastructure implementations, the vendor is responsible for taking care of the hardware and for developing, maintaining, enhancing and upgrading the software. The vendor must also keep their environment up and running so their clients can conduct business.

The enterprise user is responsible for designing and configuring all components of the contact center infrastructure solution, just as they would be if the system resided in their own data centers.

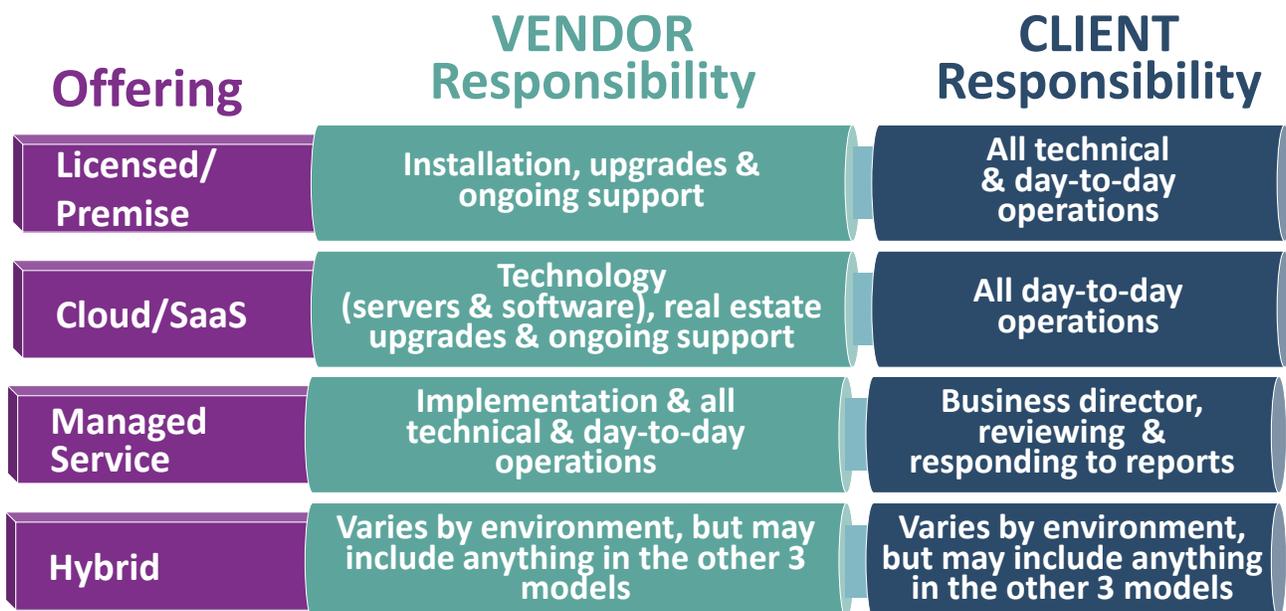
**Myth: Cloud contact center infrastructure vendors will take care of the design, configuration, ongoing administration, reporting and day-to-day operations of the system.**

**Fact: Enterprise IT resources and business users are accountable for the design, set-up, ongoing support and day-to-day operations of their cloud-based contact center infrastructure solution.**

This includes deciding what types of transactions to handle (calls, emails, chat, text, social media, video, etc.), selecting carriers and making sure they have the proper connections and bandwidth, setting up the necessary security and auditing functions, designing the interaction flows, building the self-service applications (auto attendant, IVR, website, mobile, etc.), setting up routing and queuing, defining agents, creating dashboards and reports, and managing all of these capabilities on an ongoing basis.

If your company has relied on IT resources to handle these functions when using an on-premise contact center infrastructure solution, it is likely they will be required when using a cloud-based solution. One of the biggest misconceptions about cloud-based contact center infrastructure solutions is that the vendor will take care of all aspects of the solution, eliminating the need for IT, reporting and business analysts and for the business or IT to maintain the solution on an ongoing basis. See Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Contact Center Infrastructure Deployment Models**



Source: DMG Consulting LLC, September 2017

## **The Importance of Security**

The top reason companies give for not migrating to a cloud-based contact center infrastructure solution are security concerns. Companies are legitimately worried about placing customer information in the cloud. Given the risk of exposure, these concerns would be understandable if enterprise security were better than what cloud-based vendors provide. Business leaders are not positioned to make these decisions, and should bring their security and IT teams in to assess these capabilities early in the selection process.

## **The Managed Service Option**

Companies that want a vendor to take care of everything to do with their contact center need to purchase a full managed service offering. With a managed service, the vendor is responsible for system design, set-up, configuration and ongoing moves, adds and changes (MACs, as they are referred to in the industry). When using contact center as a managed service, a company hires resources with the knowledge to build and maintain the solution. While there are cases where the managed service vendor puts the contact center hardware and software in their customer's data center, it is more common for the technology to be delivered via the cloud.

## **Internal Resources Required for Cloud Contact Center Infrastructure Implementations**

Figure 2 shows the high-level activities and the resources enterprises need to select, set up, implement, test and roll out a new cloud-based contact center infrastructure solution. Whether a contact center has 10 agents or 2,000, it's a very good idea for the business and IT to work closely together to design and implement the solution. As IT will not have to dedicate time to setting up and testing hardware and loading software, they will have more time to partner with the business. Using a cloud-based system alters the resource equation and frees IT from low-value, time-consuming activities that often slow down contact center implementations.

**Figure 2: Enterprise Resources for Cloud Contact Center Infrastructure Solutions**

Activity	Responsibility
<b>System Selection</b>	
Identify and document business requirements for contact center infrastructure solution	Business, with assistance from IT
Select cloud-based contact center infrastructure solution	Shared by business, IT and security
Validate that system security complies with the needs of the enterprise	IT and security
<b>System Preparation and Set-Up</b>	
Decide which channels to support	Business, with input from IT
Take care of carrier requirements and place orders	IT, with input from business
Conduct quality of service (QoS) analysis	IT
Train IT and business resources to use the selected cloud-based contact center infrastructure solution	IT and business
Decide which internal systems need to be integrated to the new cloud-based contact center infrastructure solution	IT and business
Design interaction flows and routing	Business, with assistance from IT
Design dashboards, reports and audit logs	Business, with assistance from IT
Draft wording for all system messages	Business
Design voice prompter and self-service solutions (IVR/IVA, website, mobile apps)	Business and IT
<b>System Implementation</b>	
Configure contact center infrastructure system, including defining hierarchies, teams, agents, etc.	IT, with input from business
Build out system dashboards, reports and audit logs	IT, with input from business
Build integrations needed for screen-pop and self-service solutions	IT
Build integration for workforce management solution	IT, with input from business
Program voice messages, voice prompter, IVA/IVR, website, mobile apps, etc.	IT, with input from business
Build dashboards and reports	IT and business

Activity	Responsibility
Coordinate with carriers and Respgo to transfer numbers or provision new ones	IT, with input from business
<b>Testing and Training</b>	
Build a test script to validate all system components, routing, queuing, reporting	Business and IT
Conduct thorough system tests	IT and business
Train business analysts	Business
Train managers, supervisors and agents to use the system	Business
<b>System Roll-Out</b>	
Move over the phone numbers or put new ones into production	IT
Cut over from existing contact center to cloud-based contact center infrastructure solution	IT and business

Source: DMG Consulting LLC, September 2017

## Benefits of Cloud Contact Center Infrastructure Solutions for IT

Business managers know their industry, the type of experience they want to deliver, the channels they want to support, the self-service features they want to offer to their customers, how they want interactions to be routed, and the data they need to manage their contact center. But this doesn't mean that they have the skills to configure a contact center ACD, dialer or IVR/IVA. This is where IT comes in; IT resources are excellent at programming, building integrations, designing workflows, developing dashboards and reports, and taking care of ongoing system changes as new needs are identified and agents change.

For as long as there have been contact centers, there has been contention between business managers and IT. While there are legitimate reasons for the absence of cooperation, it comes down to IT lacking trust in the business, and frustration with IT from the business due to the long delays in making even small system changes, which slows down their ability to be responsive and meet their goals. Using a cloud-based contact center infrastructure solution alters these dynamics and provides benefits for enterprises, IT, the contact center and customers. Figure 3 shows the most common benefits realized by companies when they transition to a cloud-based contact center infrastructure solution. These are the top reasons why more companies are moving their ACDs, dialers and self-service solutions to the cloud.

**Figure 3: Operational Benefits of Transitioning to a Cloud Contact Center Infrastructure Solution**

Benefit	Beneficiaries			
	Enterprise	Business	IT	Customers
Increases cooperation between business and IT	X	X	X	X
Eliminates much of the low value-added work performed by IT	X		X	
Reduces the need for IT resources	X		X	
Provides back-up for IT	X	X	X	
Reduces implementation risk	X	X	X	X
Reduces operating costs	X	X	X	
Simplifies the process of adding new capabilities in the contact center	X	X	X	X
Speeds up the pace of innovation	X	X	X	X
Improves ease of doing business with a company	X	X		X
Reduces friction between business and IT	X	X	X	
Speeds the pace of entry into the digital era	X	X	X	X
Gives companies an opportunity to transform service	X	X	X	X
Improves the customer experience	X	X	X	X

Source: DMG Consulting LLC, September 2017

Figure 3 displays the operational benefits of moving to the cloud, many of which improve the customer experience and reduce operating time and costs. But there is more to this story, as this migration gives companies an opportunity to re-imagine and re-think how they deliver service to their customers.

Many companies set up their contact centers 10, 20 and even 30+ years ago, and have done things the same way for most of these years. Altering a business model, which will happen when they move their contact centers to the cloud, should give companies an opportunity to re-evaluate their service experience, an activity that is essential in this era of digital transformation.

The digital transformation is not just about adding new channels. While this is a “must” activity, the challenge is for companies to figure out how to deliver a frictionless experience as customers traverse touchpoints and channels. Cloud-based contact center infrastructure vendors are leading the charge into the digital

era by making it easier for companies to acquire the functionality they need to deliver an outstanding omni-channel customer experience

## Final Thoughts

IT and business managers and resources need to work cooperatively to succeed with a cloud-based contact center infrastructure implementation. Moving a contact center to the cloud changes the type of IT resources needed and the activities they perform, but does not eliminate the need for technical support. IT's involvement with a cloud-based contact center infrastructure solution is more strategic than with an on-premise system. IT needs to be involved in vetting the solution and making sure that its technical environment and security capabilities adhere to the company's standards, regardless of the size of the contact center. When moving to the cloud, business managers should use the transition as an opportunity to review all aspects of their service in order to speed up their digital transformation. IT and business managers need each other, as they bring complementary skills to these initiatives.

## ***About the Sponsor, Serenova***

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## ***About DMG Consulting LLC***

DMG Consulting LLC is a leading independent research, advisory and consulting firm specializing in contact centers, back-office and real-time analytics. DMG provides insight and strategic guidance and tactical advice to end users, vendors and the financial community. Each year, DMG devotes more than 10,000 hours to producing primary research on IT sectors, including workforce optimization (quality management/liability recording), workforce management, performance management, speech analytics, desktop analytics, robotic process automation, text analytics, customer journey analytics, surveying/voice of the customer, voice biometrics, cloud-based contact center infrastructure, dialing, intelligent virtual agents, interactive voice response systems and proactive customer care. Our actionable solutions are proven to deliver a lasting competitive advantage, and often pay for themselves in as little as three months. Learn more at [www.dmgconsult.com](http://www.dmgconsult.com).

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