

How To Successfully Transition to A Cloud Powered Contact Centre

WHITE PAPER



Introduction



Cloud computing for both consumers and corporates is now commonplace. That's not to say adoption is evenly distributed. Or that most contact centre are already cloud powered. They are not.

But the 'on-premises' model and vendor appetite to keep evolving it is running out of steam. And that's before customer and colleague expectations around how things 'just need to work' are taken into consideration.

It is likely that the next phase of contact centre migration will ride the same thermal as broader organisational cloud adoption. McKinsey estimates \$8 out of every \$10 in IT spend will go to cloud services. In other words, cloud is becoming the default model unless the unexpected happens.

The benefits are compelling: an ability to scale without having to buy and configure hardware, consolidated vendor management, accessibility from anywhere, adaptability to fluctuating demand, professionally managed servers updated with the latest technology and application versions, cost efficiency, and rapid recovery from cyber-attacks.

Of those, the one most likely to attract the interest of customer focussed decision makers is access to latest capabilities. The old contact

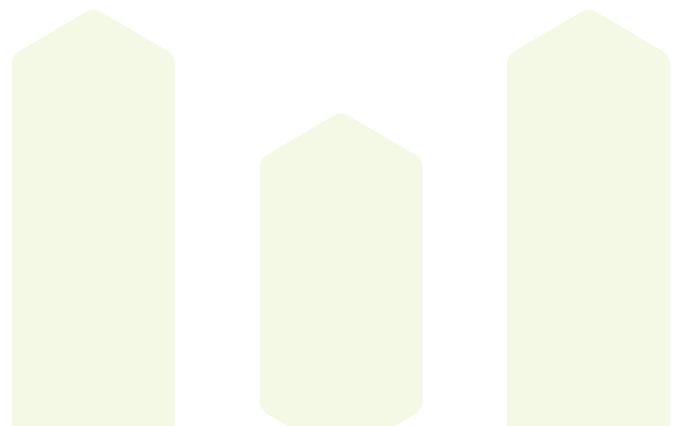
centre capex model of having to live with declining functional relevance, only rejuvenated every five to seven years, is defunct as a viable strategy.

There are many reasons to move on:

- **Customer expectations now evolve too quickly. Disruptive service models are increasingly common as barriers to entry fall. To remain competitive and relevant, organisations need the capability to continuously trial and scale better paths to customer outcomes.**
- **Organisations must be able to orchestrate experiences for individually recognised customers in an AI first world. Legacy infrastructure does not offer a credible roadmap to that capability.**
- **Technical debt is a drain on resources and budgets for many. Inflexible integrations need modernising. Point solutions need uplifting into an ecosystem of data, workflow, and communication able to support end to end customer engagement.**

In organisations committed to investing in customer experience and service which are recognised as critical to their customer growth and retention strategy, these transitions cannot happen fast enough.

Here's our white paper on how to successfully migrate to a hybrid cloud-based contact centre model which lays the foundations for these capabilities.



Barriers to Successful Migration

There have been plenty of lessons learnt since the early days of cloud adoption that can be used to shape your own plans and ensure success. Here are some of the commonly reported ones which are avoidable once understood.

1. Lack of Strategic Planning

The first mistake is insufficient strategic planning and roadmap. A 2023 Accenture report found that 42% of companies struggled to realise their expected cloud migration benefits due to inadequate planning. Successful migrations are guided by a detailed assessment of how things work today, current and future stakeholder needs, and full understanding of organisational challenges.

2. Missing The Full Opportunity

One of the benefits of time invested in strategic planning is a growing realisation about the full opportunity when migrating your contact centre. This might start with an ambition to 'lift and shift' the existing operating model but ends with a North Star description of a multi-year journey of transformation in terms of customer, colleague, and organisational benefits.

3. Underestimating Migration Complexity

Another consequence of insufficient planning is a lack of awareness around technical and operational complexities. Many assume that moving a contact centre to the cloud is simply a matter of transferring data. The reality, as a 2022 Gartner report reveals, is that 60% of cloud migrations exceed budget and schedule due to unanticipated complexities.

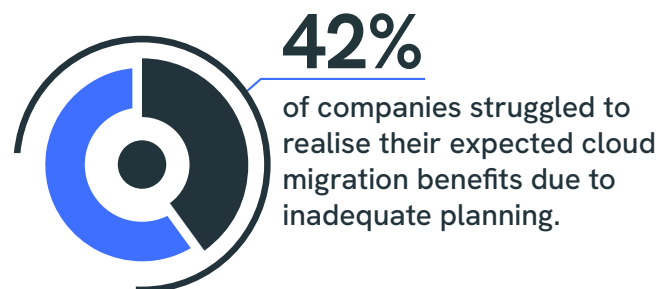
These are often based on integration and compatibility issues. They can cause service disruptions during migration or result in ongoing data silos and manual workarounds. These are avoidable with up front assessment and planning.

4. Inadequate Training and Change Management

It is a common fault in technology projects to underfund the resources and time required to remodel how roles evolve, reskill people to use new tools and workflows and maintain a relevant flow of briefings to all stakeholder groups beyond the core steering team and sponsors. A 2022 Deloitte report found that 68% of companies experienced decreased productivity due to poor change management.

5. Data Security and Compliance Risks

Contact centre migrations can underestimate the complexities of securing customer data in the cloud. Especially when operating within the detailed demands of compliance standards. In 2023, IBM reported the average data breach cost was \$4.45 million: the price of insufficient security measures.



Even if your organisation has a history of successful cloud migration, this might not extend to the specific challenges of contact centres. Therefore, look for partners with deep experience who are qualified as expert guides in helping you make the right choices from the outset. Then able to safeguard and evolve your cloud powered contact centre operating model after migration.

Each of the five areas just highlighted ought to be topics in which a partner brings well organised capabilities: ideally developed in the context of your type of organisation and sector. Why not ask them how they would tackle each one as part of your partner evaluation?

The Planning Phase

Cloud migration is a significant milestone for any contact centre. As mentioned, it is an opportunity to significantly change the dynamic of how things work.

Customer outcomes can be delivered faster with less effort. The user experience in customer facing roles is simplified and enriched with real-time insight and other forms of support. Management decision-making is improved with live, drill down reporting that enables visibility across the whole contact centre estate.

Beyond such operational improvements are significant strategic opportunities as well. For instance, some leaders seize the opportunity to reposition the value of their contact centre(s) to the rest of the organisation. As an insight hub. Or as a revenue generator.

Others grasp the significance of being able to tap into the ongoing release cycle that characterises 'software as a service': using it to innovate and turn their organisations' customer service into a competitive advantage. In other words, contact centre cloud migration is much more than a technology upgrade. It's a transformation initiative and needs to be planned as such with diverse expert input.

The resulting strategy is often organised around the template of an 'As Is' state leading to a 'To Be' state. Ideally, this is expressed as some form of North Star or vision underpinned with a roadmap of milestones and dependencies. Sometimes the detailed roadmap is simplified into a maturity model to help align understanding, calibrate expectations, set goals and report on progress.

Although there is clear value in using common practices and even visiting other contact centres who have migrated to hear their stories, it is important that every organisation identifies and plans for its own unique set of circumstances.

For instance, a young organisation during its scale-up phase might find that rapid growth is challenging them to service more customer demand without an equivalent expansion in headcount. Since they have no legacy infrastructure to consider, a public cloud version of CCaaS (contact centre as a service) is all they need. But how is this maintained?

Their in-house technical team needs to work full time on developing their core value proposition so cannot help supporting their customer service colleagues. In this instance they will need a trusted technology partner to help them troubleshoot operational issues and co-manage their roadmap as they successfully grow.

In contrast, consider an organisation with a multi-national footprint operating within the data and security demands of diverse regulatory environments. They face a distinct set of challenges.

They already have many contact centres. With little to zero interoperability. Each with infrastructure from multiple vendors at different lifecycle stages. This causes management complexity and high TCO (total cost of ownership) combined with operational frustrations around constant workarounds and inefficient workflows.

Their CCaaS strategy will be one focussed on simplifying infrastructure and standardising working practices. No doubt framed within a broader strategic aim of becoming more agile and responsive to fast changing customer needs and competitor threats.

In their case, regulation demands a private cloud solution as the preferred choice. Managing this will require multi-disciplinary teamwork to ensure adherence in a rapidly evolving compliance landscape. And also hiring highly sought after expertise to extract the benefits of personalised customer engagement that modern CCaaS promises.

Naturally, the role of a trusted external partner in this context is different and requires careful definition of accountabilities and integration with this more complex collaborative environment. While our scale-up brand might be able to move through their maturity model in a matter of months, transforming the operating model in our second example is a multi-year programme.

So having made the general point that migrations need to be based on your unique needs, here is some more detailed guidance on effective migration planning. This is based on observations and tips from senior technology leaders on personal lessons learnt from their own contact centre migrations. This is not a definitive checklist or will apply in every circumstance, but it will help kickstart the design of your own planning and migration cycle.

Strategic Planning

- Cloud migration for large contact centres requires careful, progressive implementation rather than aiming for an immediate complete transformation. Security and compliance considerations must be prioritised in the initial stages.
- Migration should be guided by thorough planning and involve all business lines in planning and tool selection.
- Define a North Star that brings the business case to life and reminds everyone about the longer term strategic benefits of the new operating model.

Security & Compliance

- Security and compliance considerations must be addressed at the beginning of migration planning. Work closely with relevant subject matter experts.
- A detailed security assessment is crucial before selecting platforms or vendors. Rigorously verify their security credentials.

- Focus on data residency in the light of data protection regulations. Segregate data into various categories based on regulatory sensitivity.

Technology Assessment

- Identify homegrown applications and connectors that could create technical migration challenges. Map integration requirements for new channels and tools.
- Assess current and required internet speeds for office/home workers.
- Identify cloud options by segmenting workloads suited for public and private cloud hosting.

Implementation Strategy

- Identify feasible workloads for initial migration. Prioritise applications with minimal regulatory impact.
- Prioritise customer and colleague pain points. Focus on breaking down silos during migration to enable end to end journey management.
- Maintain legacy solutions during migration until full decommissioning is possible.

Organisational Readiness

- Ensure proper stakeholder management and set realistic expectations about ROI timelines.
- Plan comprehensive change management. Address stakeholder concerns about cloud migration.
- Secure budget and resources needed to reskill, redesign customer journeys, introduce new contact strategies and working practices enabled by CCaaS.

In addition to these observations and tips there are other changes that need consideration in terms of operational responsiveness. For instance, what's your strategy for responding to any downtime or maintenance? Public cloud users lose control around when maintenance schedules take place. Could this impact your contact centre availability?

Does cloud migration modify your Disaster Recovery plan? Cloud solutions have a reputation for excellent security and data replication measures, often superior to on-premises solutions. In fact, Aberdeen research reports that cloud-based businesses could resolve disaster recovery issues in just 2.1 hours, as opposed to 8 hours for businesses that didn't use cloud services. Nonetheless existing plans need reviewing and upgrading as needed.

Given the importance of data protection and increased threat from bad actors using AI, it is important to understand how cloud solutions can enhance your existing security measures in terms of encryption, access controls, and authentication mechanisms to protect data both in transit and at rest.

As part of this review, think about what happens after the initial phase of uploading on-premises data. How will the daily generation of new data be secured? This could continue indefinitely or for a fixed period until the on-premises architecture is fully retired and data is piped directly into your cloud platform. What's the plan?

To reassure stakeholders, it is worth knowing that security is seen as the top benefit of cloud computing according to 60% of C-Suite executives. This is ahead of cost savings, scalability, ease of maintenance, and speed according to Oracle research.

During migration, how are you going to ensure that contact centre services continue uninterrupted?

This requires careful planning and execution. A typical phased approach includes:

- Pilot programmes with limited scope
- Gradual transition of services
- Parallel running of systems
- Clear rollback procedures

What's going to be your approach? And if things go wrong, what's the escalation procedure? Once you have that figured out, who do you need to rehearse this with?

Technical teams will need to be reorganised with new roles and responsibilities. In larger organisations this might include:

- ✓ **Cloud Operations specialists**
- ✓ **Quality Assurance engineers**
- ✓ **Integration specialists**
- ✓ **Security Operations analysts**

In term of your roadmap, when do these roles need to be discussed, designed, and deployed? Who is involved? What transitional support might be needed?



Recommended Cloud Options

There are a number of choices in terms of cloud solutions which we briefly outline and then explain why one in particular best meets the needs of certain types of organisations.

► Public Cloud

Public Cloud based CCaaS is a shared infrastructure environment, typically hosted on AWS, Azure, or Google Cloud. The cloud vendor is responsible for developing, managing, and maintaining the pool of computing resources shared between multiple tenants from across the network. Your data and apps are backed up regularly and stored in multiple locations. This minimises the risk of data loss and ensures business continuity.

The price model for public cloud is often on a pay per use basis. Thereby making it the most affordable and utilised option. Public cloud is well suited for organisations looking to save money that don't have unique or specific needs. Although it's important to note that affordability does reach a threshold once elevated levels of sustained workload are reached.

The public cloud model also attracts organisations with limited IT resources as mentioned in our scale up model example.



► Private Cloud

A private cloud model is dedicated to your organisation and only accessible over a secure private network. Benefits are like those of the public cloud without needing to share them with other organisations or users. This means latency and competition for resources are not potential issues.

A private cloud can be managed as an on-premises solution or off-site by a

third-party vendor. However, the first option may not offer high scalability to meet unpredictable demands if the cloud data centre is limited to on-premises computing resources.

The private cloud model offers greater performance, control, and security. It appeals to organisations needing high scalability and efficiency to meet unpredictable demands without compromising on security and performance. As previously mentioned, considerable technical expertise is needed to run a private cloud.



► Hybrid Cloud

This model combines public and private cloud environments, creating a unified infrastructure to take advantage of the benefits that each provide. Organisations might use the public cloud for workloads and data that aren't sensitive. Then contain sensitive data and compliance mandated workloads within their private cloud environment.

Hybrid cloud also offers full access for mobile and remote workers with a seamless user experience between public and private domains.



The Value of a Hybrid Cloud Solution

Which option best suits your needs?
Here's our view.

If you are an organisation that wants to balance innovation while maintaining existing infrastructure. And do so within the challenge of competing transformation priorities, then a hybrid cloud solution enables a much tighter fit in these situations.

Here are some typical scenarios we support customers with.

You need to keep pace with the way today's workforce expects to operate. This means integrating public cloud capabilities such as multi-modal collaboration, meeting rooms and AI assistant services with your existing voice and telephony capabilities which live in a private cloud. How is this achieved?

What's the best way to cloud enable existing PBX systems? Add analogue devices like fax machines and intercoms into your evolving infrastructure? Or do the same with door entry systems or tannoy/paging equipment?

Then there is the business continuity issue of ensuring physical phone systems remain operational during network outages or cloud service disruptions. So called local site survivability enables you to maintain essential communication capabilities when connectivity to cloud services is lost.

This is particularly crucial for healthcare facilities, educational institutions government offices and any organisation requiring uninterrupted communication capabilities. How is this capability designed and maintained?

Some of our clients simply cannot consider a full public cloud migration because of security and compliance demands.

How do they take advantage of the latest innovation in public cloud while maintaining the security and control of private cloud, and seamlessly integrating any remaining on-premise legacy infrastructure?"

Hybrid solutions strike the best balance between these requirements and allow you to:

- ✓ **Leverage blended technology for the best of both private and public cloud**
- ✓ **Protect existing hardware investments**
- ✓ **Maintain mission-critical communications**
- ✓ **Build flexible architecture that combines cloud features with on-site control**
- ✓ **Achieve cost efficiency through utilisation of existing equipment while adding modern capabilities**

That's why we specialise in Hybrid.

So why **Maintel**?

We have deep expertise which translates into reducing risk, avoiding mistakes and getting you there faster.



Solid Solutions for a Dynamic World

Maintel is a communications managed services provider. We empower our clients across the public and private sector to deliver mission critical services and achieve their workplace, service and customer experience goals.

We consult on the design, deploy and manage network infrastructures, platforms and software, including our own, that keep ongoing operations running smoothly and dependably, protecting business as usual, at the same time being flexible enough to adapt.

When customer, employee, the general public and regulatory expectations are ever-changing, choose Maintel. We provide progressive, solid solutions that help you succeed in a demanding, dynamic world.

Our Services

We provide solutions that are not only robust but also adaptable and responsive to the ever-changing nature of the world around us.

Security & Connectivity

Securely connecting your people, partners and guests to your cloud platforms, applications and data.

[Click here to find out more ▶](#)

Unified Comms & Collaborations

Making your people more effective, collaborative and efficient.

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Customer Experience

Helping you acquire, delight and retain your customers.

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