

# Avaya Contact Center Express — Comprehensive Features, Easy Implementation, Happy Customers

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In a time when virtually everyone is struggling with the mandate to “do more with less,” mid-size businesses and their contact centers are especially familiar with the challenge of juggling growing demands and shrinking resources.

Here's the basic problem: When customers first get in touch with a contact center agent at your company, they expect the same level of efficient, personal service that they'd expect from a Fortune 500 corporation. But the reality is that mid-size companies generally have a fraction of the agents, supervisors, IT administrators, and budgets of their larger counterparts.

It's a tough situation for a mid-size company trying to meet important goals such as happy repeat customers; calmer agents, supervisors and administrators; better service overall; and a lower cost of ownership for running the contact center.

With those needs in mind, Avaya has developed a comprehensive solution that addresses the key difficulties of the mid-size customer. It's called Contact Center Express (CCE), a software solution expressly made for mid-size businesses. Key benefits of CCE include:

- Easy implementation and reduced startup time.
- A comprehensive set of contact management tools out of the box, together with user-friendly customizing tools that let administrators easily add or even develop new applications as needed.
- An overall focus on simplifying the job functions of contact center administrators, managers, and agents.

With features such as a unified desktop display for agents, real-time reporting tools for managers, and a scalable plug-in application architecture for administrators and developers, CCE simplifies job functions for everyone in the contact center without sacrificing customer service. And that results in cost savings and revenue generation for your company.

## Section 1: Easing Implementation And Growing Pains

### THE ISSUES:

Large corporations often have significant employee resources available to deploy contact center technology, administer software upgrades, and implement new applications, but midsize companies have no such luxury. In fact, chances are that the person in charge of the contact center software is the same person in charge of all the other technology projects. IT administrators are spread thin, and they don't have the time to learn a complicated new platform, let alone train the rest of the company on how to use a complicated toolset. Thus, the easier it is to deploy, maintain, and upgrade contact center applications, the better. To that end, an out-of-the-box solution is ideal.

However, contact center IT administrators can be justifiably wary of out-of-the-box, all-in-one "one size fits all" solutions because they want to make sure the contact center can adjust to industry growth, market changes, and any unique needs particular to that company.

### THE SOLUTION

CCE solves this technology quandary with a good balance of simplicity and modularity. While it functions as a stand-alone solution, the software also makes it easy for mid-size contact center staff to add new features and functions as needed – without having to devote significant resources and time to maintenance or training.

Based on Avaya's time-proven Communication Manager/Automated Call Distribution platform, Avaya's mid market contact center solution, is easy to deploy – whether as a stand-alone solution in a green field environment or as an add-on to an existing Avaya Communication Manager system.

In fact, CCE deployment can be much faster than other options. It can take a mere matter of days to implement, from the time it takes to open the box to the time it takes to teach call center managers and agents how to use it. Ease of implementation is especially important for a mid-size business in which the IT administrator is juggling multiple projects in addition to the contact center.

Knowing that most mid-size businesses run on Microsoft-based software, both on the client side and the server side, Avaya pointedly built CCE on Microsoft .NET technology, knowing that this is a platform with which administrators and agents would be most comfortable. CCE uses Microsoft Windows as its client operating system, and it easily integrates with Microsoft CRM software.

CCE also employs a modular plug-in application architecture. It comes standard with a multitude of plug-in applications – from comprehensive customer directories to spell-checking – that provide information access, agent efficiency tools, integration with other desktop applications, and myriad other functions. Adding new plug-ins is as simple as downloading software. But CCE enables the easy addition of customized applications, as well.

CCE is also ideal for companies that embrace the “pay as you grow” model of acquiring software. Rather than requiring companies to add new licenses in units of ten or more, Avaya allows single-license units for its CCE customers. In other words, companies that use CCE can buy new agent licenses one by one, so they don't have to waste money on licenses they don't need.

And for those companies trying to “go green” – financially and environmentally – the Avaya platform supports server virtualization. The ability to run the contact center on a single blade server reduces the company's carbon footprint – not to mention the electricity bill. (Most competitive solutions require a contact center to run multiple hardware servers.)

## Section 2: Making The Contact Center Experience Easy On Customers

### THE ISSUES:

Ultimately, contact centers are all about delivering the best possible experience to your customers. Today's customers want to communicate with your contact center through multiple channels: standard voice calls, voice over IP calls, e-mail messages, faxes, live Web chats and instant messages, and SMS text messaging on their smart phones. And they expect you to communicate with them in the same ways.

Customers also want the ability to make contact at any time of day; even if it's 3am on a Sunday and the contact center is closed, customers at least want the opportunity to reach out via the Internet.

Once they do reach an agent, customers don't want to be treated like ping-pong balls, routed and rerouted to different agents and IVR systems, repeating their questions and re-identifying themselves to each new agent to the point of frustration.

### THE SOLUTION:

Contact Center Express makes it easy for your company to provide superior, efficient support to customers from the moment they make contact with the contact center, regardless of whether customers are communicating via voice or text.

As soon as customers make contact, CCE places them (or their messages) into a single unified queue.

Within that queue, the software allows contact center managers to prioritize certain channels if appropriate. For instance, a company may want to provide faster service to customers who are calling from their cell phones than to customers who are sending an e-mail message, and CCE lets you prioritize your response time accordingly. CCE can also prioritize predetermined high-value customers whenever they enter the system, bumping them to the front of the queue.

Once customers reach the front of the queue, it's simple for agents to provide efficient, personalized care for the customer. By providing immediate, cohesive access to individual customer information, the software ensures that agents can serve each customer as quickly as possible, mitigating the need to put them on hold or bounce them to other agents.

With CCE, agents can help more customers in less time. That means it takes fewer agents to serve your customers, which reduces costs for your company. Efficient service, of course, leads to customer loyalty and retention, which means more revenue for your company.

Providing efficient, personalized care requires routing capabilities and the ability to capture and track data throughout the interaction with the customer. CCE's sophisticated built-in routing algorithms use key information – such as a customer ID – to route the customer to the appropriate agent, based on the agent's availability or area of expertise.

Furthermore, CCE keeps track of any information the customer provides, from basic identification information to the reason for calling, so that agents will have that information at their fingertips the next time the customer calls or sends a message to the contact center.

When a call or message arrives at the contact center, the agent receives a "screen pop" – an automatic pop-up window that includes any salient information about the customer, starting with the customer's method of communication.

In case customers hang up before reaching an agent, CCE gives agents the option of calling them back automatically. Customers may also have the option to schedule a callback in lieu of waiting for the next available agent, by combining CCE with additional IVR capabilities.

CCE's ability to facilitate outbound calls and messages also helps agents reach out to lots of customers in little time, making it an efficient tool for targeted advertising campaigns and important company alerts.

This feature "has enabled us to reach out to our customers through proactive marketing," says Tang Jingjuan, manager of the customer service contact center at a major travel agency.

Basically, CCE ensures that your customers feel like satisfied people rather than frustrated ping-pong balls, and that's good for your company's bottom line.

## Section 3: Improving Agent Efficiency And Satisfaction

### THE ISSUES:

Many of the issues that frustrate customers are the same issues that frustrate agents. Agents want to know who a customer is without having to ask – both to minimize waiting time for the customers in queue, and to minimize the time it takes to field each customer request. The frustration grows (and productivity decreases) the longer it takes to identify a customer's need, answer a call, and efficiently solve a customer issue.

Moreover, agents in a mid-size company are generally expected to multitask – dealing not just with multiple customers but with multiple databases. This can lead to major job frustration for an agent who isn't equipped with decent organizational tools – especially during high-stress events such as product recalls. And despite the current economic downturn, agent retention remains a critical business issue. In order to deliver excellent customer service and manage costs, more and more companies are giving their agents the option of working from home, especially

part-time agents whose jobs require them to work odd hours. Successful agents also need to know what's going on with the other agents in their group, whether their colleagues are working from a desk five feet away or from a home office fifty miles away. Situational awareness is important to agents for the following reasons:

- Agents need to make sure that other agents are available to field important messages before taking a restroom or lunch break.
- The ability to gauge how other agents are performing comparatively will naturally improve an agent's own performance.
- And even in situations where all of the employees are located in the same office, agents waste precious job time if they have to pop up out of their cubes like prairie dogs in order to see what other agents are doing.

#### **THE SOLUTION:**

CCE offers all the tools necessary for agents to keep their customers happy, to keep up with their colleagues, and to keep themselves sane. And Avaya knows that with regard to the mid-size contact center, the key to an agent's peace of mind is a well designed, unified agent desktop.

Contact Center Express Desktop combines agent activity into a single, simple unified desktop application, allowing agents to perform their jobs efficiently and effectively

In addition to the preview pop-up windows, CCE desktop offers single-screen visibility to all of an agent's work items, simplifying multitasking, which can often result in shorter call sessions. For example:

- To ensure that each successive interaction with a customer is more efficient and personal, the Unified Agent Desktop provides an automatic view of the customer's interaction history.
- To ensure that agents can easily handle multiple methods of communication, CCE provides a simple interface for agents to interact with customers via e-mail, SMS, and even fax.
- To ensure that agents can easily keep track of their colleagues without losing track of their customers, the unified agent desktop provides real-time statistical information on their own work performance and that of other agents -- as well as a voice presence window that lets them know whether another agent is available, busy with a customer, out to lunch, or gone for the day.
- And to help agents handle multiple channels effectively, CCE provides an auto-text plug-in that allows insertion of predefined text into e-mails or text messages, which is especially helpful during high-volume contact situations, such as product recalls for a retail company or weather alerts for a tourism company.

## Section 4: Simplifying Management And Operation Of The Contact Center

### THE ISSUES:

In mid-size companies, the ratio of supervisors to agents is often larger than in large contact centers. Moreover, contact center managers and agents are often not co-located and can be spread across several regions and time zones.

Managers have to supervise multiple agents who are managing multiple customers via multiple channels from multiple locations. Those managers must analyze all that activity and report the information to their supervisors. To that end, it's imperative that managers have an easy way to oversee the contact center operations.

### THE SOLUTION:

As is the case with agents, managers have an easier time multitasking if they can manage the contact center from one place – even if their agents are dispersed all over the world.

CCE employs a management dashboard that permits call center managers to easily monitor each agent's status and performance in real time; this information helps to facilitate future coaching and training. At a higher level, the dashboard lets managers monitor general activity across the contact center to identify system-wide performance issues.

Managers can use the dashboard to broadcast text messages to agents, and, conversely, to enable agents to broadcast requests for help to their managers – without having to put the customer on hold.

CCE's ability to support and keep track of agents who work from home is key in a time when many companies are actually encouraging telecommuting, either to keep building costs to a minimum or to make it easier to employ part-time agents during peak calling periods.

For example, one automotive assistance organization often calls on home-based, part-time agents during inclement weather, when customers storm the phone lines for traffic information or alternative routes.

“The ability to deploy staff at short notice using the new system is a huge benefit to us,” says David Francis, telecommunications manager of Information and Communications Technology at the organization. “For operators who are able to do one- to two-hour shifts, we can give them an Avaya VPNRemote handset that they can plug into any Internet connection and bridge back to the corporate system.”

While managers have their hands full dealing with day-to-day operations, it's also important for them to maintain historical reports of activity within the contact center – from agent attendance to yearly program schedules. CCE comes pre-loaded with multi-channel statistical real time and historical reports that filter data in a way that makes sense to your company. Reports, displayed in the form of histograms, are readable at a glance.

Of course, contact centers may require individualized reports that don't come standard with Contact Center Express. Fortunately, CCE does come standard with report designer tools, so contact center managers and administrators can configure their own reports as needed, and easily integrate them into the system.

## Section 5: Business Partners Help You Make The Most Of CCE's Capabilities

### ISSUE:

As noted previously, CCE offers a bevy of plug-in applications. But each company has unique needs, and sometimes those needs call for unique applications. The call for customized applications is especially common in vertical markets such as manufacturing, healthcare, education, and transportation.

### SOLUTION:

Avaya encourages the development of customized applications for CCE. Should your team need external support to develop new features specific to your business, Avaya's global network of business partners is ready to assist. Avaya's expert DevConnect business partners are conveniently located near your office, familiar with your business, and well versed on CCE. They will help you create smart, custom application plug-ins that you can easily integrate into your existing contact center applications. Detailed information about the DevConnect program is available online at <http://www.avaya.com/gcm/master-usa/en-us/corporate/alliances/devconnect/index.htm>.

Here are a couple of the successful custom applications developed by Avaya DevConnect Partners, all of which serve to ease operations in the contact center by providing pertinent information to agents and managers:

- Capitalizing on the surge in social networking, one partner has created a Twitter channel for a company's CCE contact center. The application alerts the contact center every time the company's name is mentioned in a customer's "tweet." This gives the company automatic, candid, and free feedback from its customers.
- Another partner developed an application that simplifies access to personal statistics and allows supervisors to customize a directory of dialed numbers based on their skills.

## Section 6: Conclusion

Avaya understands that budget-conscious midsized companies face a seemingly contradictory challenge: finding easy tools to address complex issues – and purchasing only what is absolutely necessary to ensure superior customer service. Contact Center Express meets that challenge. Both an out-of-the-box and a modular solution, CCE prioritizes ease without sacrificing functionality. Essentially simplifying complexity for everyone in the contact center, CCE promises better job performances from your administrators, agents, and managers; improved customer experience; and a lower total cost of ownership for your company.

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## About Avaya

Avaya is a global leader in enterprise communications systems. The company provides unified communications, contact centers, and related services directly and through its channel partners to leading businesses and organizations around the world. Enterprises of all sizes depend on Avaya for state-of-the-art communications that improve efficiency, collaboration, customer service and competitiveness. For more information please visit [www.avaya.com](http://www.avaya.com).



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