What to look for when buying an agent desktop

By Cecilia Jofré
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Today's contact centre agents deal with a large number of cutting-edge technologies, which are moving forward in leaps and bounds. Thanks to the powerful solutions now available, business can be conducted faster pushing the number of transactions being processed upwards.

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The desktop that agents use is incredibly important, as it is through this terminal that they access the information they need to properly address customer needs.

Sadly, the agent's user environment has become increasingly complex as it brings together many systems - in fact, it is not uncommon for contact centre agent desktops to contain ten or more distinct applications. These applications deliver a broad range of functionality and power; however, they don't always work in the same way that the agents are used to, nor do they always follow the existing business processes, or sometimes even "co-operate" with the other applications in the environment.

Using the right technology has led customers of South African owned integrated solutions specialist, Intuate Group, to improve agent productivity. Based on Intuate's experiences and those of Noble Systems, for which Intuate Group is a preferred partner, here are a number of tips for when buying the right agent desktop.

Ease of use

By sourcing an agent desktop that provides easy access to tools and workflows, contact centre agents will be able to work more efficiently and productivity will increase.

To do this, it is important to ensure that the solution combines flexible scripting features with an intuitive, graphical layout

interface and WYSIWYG design tools, to make it easy for contact centre managers to build sophisticated agent screens and to unify the agent desktop environment.

Additional features to help streamline agent processes and enrich the customer's experience include account ownership, payment processing, appointment setting, call transfers, soft phone features, IVR menus, personalised messaging and software integration..

Also consider agent desktop solutions which support browser-based environments, as these reduce reliance on hardware and limitations on software, and support the "contact centre without boundaries" philosophy that allows agents to work from virtually anywhere via an internet connection.
Simple scripting tools

Choose an agent desktop that enables contact centre managers to develop sophisticated applications, screens and scripts, with intuitive desktop design tools and a point-and-click environment. This will allow managers to build customised workflows without advanced programming knowledge or expensive technical assistance.

Your supplier should also include:

- mouse-driven navigation tools for building screens with flexibility for screen pops, text boxes, radio buttons, check boxes, and list views;
- selectable colours, graphics and messages by campaign;
- on-line help windows, built-in maths functions, data validation; and
- multi-level logical branching.

Unify the environment

Ensure that agents have a single interface, which integrates all external applications behind the scenes. Agents should be able to launch webpages, receive screen pops from databases, automatically transfer to other applications, whilst having the look and feel of familiar systems; all of which will reduce the agent's learning curve and call handling times, whilst increasing efficiency and productivity.

A unified system can also be used to guide agents through the correct process within an interaction, dynamically moving the agent through the appropriate decision tree. This may assist in attaining the required adherence from a compliance point of view, but will also help to optimise resolution in each and every call.

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