What's keeping You from Workforce Management in the Cloud?

Contents

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Why WFM in the Cloud in 2015?

With the IT landscape transforming at lightning speed, contact centers must keep up to remain competitive. By leveraging cloud-based applications, unmatched efficiencies, unparalleled flexibility and scalability are gained, as well as the richest features and the latest functionality – more frequently released in the Cloud.

Many contact centers are in the process of future proofing themselves by streamlining IT operations, starting with a cloud-based workforce management (WFM) solution for forecasting, scheduling and monitoring – in real time. In fact, WFM Cloud is one of the top-ranking investment priorities for contact centers in 2015 [1]

Outdated, inflexible WFM solutions are being replaced by cost-effective, flexible, cloud-based ones, with powerful functionality – purchasable on a stand-alone basis or bundled in with a platform. With the Cloud a true game changer, enhancing the contact-center landscape around the world, the key question is: What's keeping you from WFM in the Cloud?

If your workload leaves you little time to gather the necessary information to make a well-informed decision, then this eBook should be of help. It will bring you up to speed by addressing 10 typical cloud headaches and answering "Why WFM in the Cloud" as the way forward – and how Teleopti WFM measures up to the task.

1) Fluss, Donna., Aug 21, 2014, "Cloud Contact Centers to Invest in," Connect First.

Does WFM in the Cloud really simplify life? How?

Reasons for cloud adoption are compelling – business, technical, operational and financial. So, whether or not to consider cloud-based applications is no longer the issue, but rather, which one to select.

Practicality is the main driver. Life is just a whole lot easier when someone else implements the technology and takes care of all the hardware, software, upgrades and support. Cloud-based applications also offer a building block approach, where functionalities can be turned on as needed. Finally, deployment is rapid and users can often access the cloud-solution in a day.

☁ Solution

Rest easy with Teleopti WFM Cloud, leaving the burden of IT management in the hands of experts. No more:

- tedious hours spent on buying, replacing, adding or removing hardware/software;

- installations, maintenance, support and upgrades;

- worries about disaster recovery and contingency planning – back-ups are automatic;

- concerns about infrastructure obsolescence;

- server issues or change request forms;

- exorbitant charges for maintenance and upgrades;

- contact-center disruptions with planned downtime, weekend failures or patch repairs;

- yearly license expenses for additional staff only needed during peak periods.

Is functionality the same for WFM in the Cloud and on premise?

It all depends on the vendor in question. Generally speaking, those that do offer a cloud version may be somewhat more limited in their functionality, so you'll have to check this on a case-by-case basis. However some cloud solutions even surpass premise-based ones in functionality as new features are instantly released in the Cloud.

Rapid implementation and anywhere-anytime access to browser-based WFM information is what makes WFM the #1 contact-center productivity tool used in the Cloud today.

Solution

Teleopti WFM is the most advanced WFM solution available in the Cloud. Functionalities in the Teleopti WFM premise-based solution are also available in the Cloud version. In other words, you're getting the exact same solution – with all the benefits of a cloud solution; free and faster upgrades, rapid implementation and cost advantages.

Whether cloud or premise-based, both of the Teleopti solutions have web-based portals which enable managers and supervisors to monitor adherence and rapidly respond to emerging issues; e.g. filling shifts to meet unexpected spikes in call volume – available immediately at their fingertips.

Both give staff easy, instant access to schedules, changes, shift requests, shift switches, performance status and more, allowing agents to stay connected from any location at any time. On-the-go or work-at-home staff can engage dynamically with real-time KPI metrics, communicate with their team, report absence: e.g., preferring a work shift or requesting a vacation. This ability greatly improves work-life integration.

Solution

Teleopti WFM Cloud – lower TCO and faster ROI

Teleopti WFM in the Cloud means zero investment in server hardware and software licenses; zero investment in operating, supporting and upgrading the server hardware and software. Achieve ROI within the first month and lower overall TCO. All new functionality (within the bought package), maintenance, innovation and 24/7 support are included in the user fee, paying simply for as many agents as needed.

Aren't cloud solutions more expensive than premise-based ones?

It's reasonable to assume that the overall costs of a cloud-based solution are greater since maintenance, support and upgrades are included. Yet, this is not the case. According to the Aberdeen Research Group, companies deploying contact centers in the Cloud spend overall 27 percent less on their annual, contact-center costs than those of their peers relying on premise-based systems.

DMG Consulting, leading contact-center research firm, compared the costs of a fully cloud-based and premise-based contact-center solution over a five-year period. Criteria: single-site contact center with 250 agents, using a multi-channel solution (phone, chat, SMS, Web, social media, fax, video), IVR for look-ups and computer telephony integration (CTI) for screen pops. The cloud solutions amounted to over $ 800,000 in savings over a five-year period.[1]

From a financial perspective, the Cloud permits moving from capital expenses (CAPEX) to operational expenses (OPEX), meaning lower total cost of ownership (TCO). It frees up capital: no more major, upfront capital outlays, ongoing hardware depreciation or IT staff for maintenance and upgrades.[2]

1) Fluss, Donna., Sept 2014, "Analyzing Costs: Contact Center Cloud vs. on-Premise," Connect First
2) Ibid.

Can I integrate a WFM cloud solution with my current premise-based, contact-center infrastructure?

Absolutely. In fact, after core contact-center functionality, WFM is the number one application that contact centers use most in the Cloud today.

With feature-rich functionality (released faster and earlier for cloud based-customers), lower costs and greater profit potential, a WFM cloud solution is an ideal starting point. With a WFM solution in the cloud – the latter an essential driver in the ongoing digitalization of organizations – you won't get left behind.

Solution

Teleopti WFM Cloud: easily integrated

Statistical logging from the ACD/CTI solution is done through the Teleopti CloudLink, which collects the ACD/CTI data and sends it to the Teleopti WFM Cloud.

CloudLink is normally installed locally as a service, with access to the ACD/CTI solution, using https. Teleopti WFM integrates directly with the ACD/CTI solution's web service for real-time statistics. The ACD/CTI solution can be both premise-based and cloud-based.
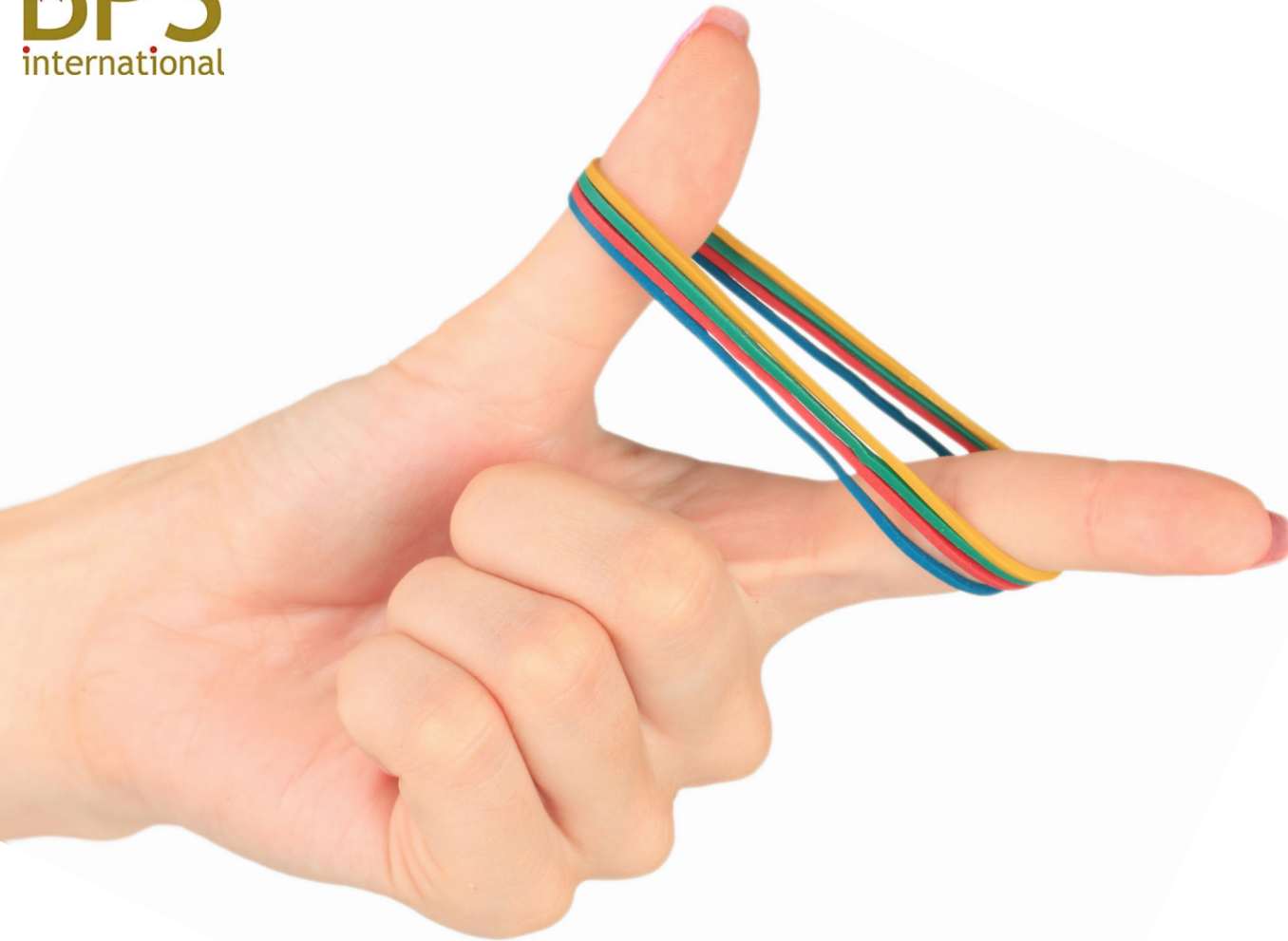
Are WFM cloud solutions flexible and scalable?

Many contact centers need to seamlessly grow (or shrink) to cost-effectively react to market changes. Cloud solutions can easily be right-sized, depending on the size and needs of the contact center at any point in time.

The extent though depends on the particular solution. There are more than 50 WFM solutions on the market. But in general, cloud solutions offer greater flexibility, efficiency resilience and reliability. Today, integration also comes easily with other third-party applications (in-house or external) and also supports "big data" analytics.

If seasonal business patterns require extra staff, scalability is the most compelling argument for a cloud-based contact center. Server capacity can be scaled up or down – in a matter of minutes. Simply pay the low, flat, monthly fee per user for the extra users: no more costly software licenses for extra staff.

The flexibility of cloud technology means that contact centers can finally work the way they want; not as technology dictates.

Solution

Teleopti & Microsoft Azure

Teleopti runs its cloud-based WFM on the Microsoft Windows Azure platform. Having invested over $15 billion in infrastructure since opening its first datacenters in 1989,[2] Microsoft offers unmatched security monitoring and management for cloud resources. Its latest service, the Azure Security Center, permits you to: 1) understand the security state of Azure resources 2) take control of cloud security with policies 3) recommend and monitor security configurations 4) easily deploy integrated Microsoft and partner security solutions 5) receive threat detection alerts, using advanced analytics–including machine learning and behavioral profiling–and Microsoft's vast global threat intelligence assets. [3]

Customer information is not stored in the Teleopti WFM cloud solution: it contains only contact-center data: e.g. performance, forecasts and agent schedules. This eliminates any security risks or breaches. With eight years of cloud implementations under its belt, Teleopti's expertise in data encryption is at the forefront of any WFM cloud supplier.

How can I be sure the Cloud is secure from cyber attacks and data theft?

Although security breaches in cloud environments are a concern, the reality is that cloud-based contact-center solution vendors continually invest in security, and thus typically offer a more secure IT environment than most contact centers operate in. Security and back-up of large datacenters, protecting against data theft and loss respectively, are typically more robust than those of individual organizations.[1]

Already in 2013, the majority of cloud-based contact-center offerings had reached technical and reliability parity with premises-based offerings. Cloud providers today are established, stable and trusted – with sound, proven offerings and security policies in place.

The latest encryption technologies battling data theft are utilized, as are anti-virus and firewalls. Penetration testing (hacking to discover potential hackers' routes) is conducted regularly. With the 'trust' factor established in the industry, security is no longer an issue today.

1) Boden, Pete. GM Security, Microsoft; Youtube
2) Microsoft Azure Regions
3) Fender Sarah, Microsoft Azure Blog, Dec 2015 "Azure Security Center now available"

How do I know if the server capacity and speed of access can handle our needs?

Virtualization technology and infrastructure performance have reached levels today that make applications readily accessible. While it's true that the more data there is, the slower the transmission, cloud vendors typically provide enough bandwidth with reliable round-trip latency – key for real-time applications, such as for voice.

If peak periods require more resources, scaling up is quick and easy.

☁ Solution

Teleopti WFM Cloud – Microsoft Azure muscle

Built on a scalable architecture seamlessly handling growth, Teleopti WFM Cloud accommodates from 15 up to many thousands of agents.

The Teleopti WFM solution runs on the Microsoft Azure platform and the server infrastructure capacity of Microsoft's datacenters is far greater than what a contact center generally has available.

Is the Cloud reliable?
If the internet is down,
do we lose touch with our
schedules completely?

Technology has come a long way and is improving at lightening speed. Cloud vendors offer their services with availability far greater than most inhouse on-premise solutions where downtime is required for upgrades and maintenance, sometimes not possible to do at night time.

Solution

The historical uptime of Teleopti WFM Cloud is 99.9 percent – in other words, exceptionally high reliability. Maintenance, upgrades and support are all part of the flat, monthly user fee.

Microsoft delivers more than 200 cloud services, including Bing, MSN, Outlook.com, Office 365, OneDrive, Skype, Xbox Live and the Azure platform. Microsoft hosts these in its cloud infrastructure, composed of more than one million servers in 100 globally distributed datacenters, supported by one of the world's largest multi-terabit global network.[1]

What about the legal aspects if the datacenter is located in another country?

Cloud service suppliers – particularly Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) suppliers – can offer their services over the web to organizations around the world and store all their data in one single country. They can also improve reliability through the geographic dispersal of data storage, reducing their costs (passed on to you).

This raises concern because where the data is stored, it is subject to that country's data-privacy laws, access restrictions and related legislation.[1]

Knowing where a supplier will store your data and what legislation applies to the type of data you handle is therefore crucial. This is not insurmountable. Once you've taken these fundamental steps, you're ready for a successful transition to the Cloud.

☁ Solution

Teleopti WFM is hosted on the Microsoft Windows Azure platform, enabling Teleopti to deploy and manage the WFM solution across the Microsoft global network of managed datacenters.

Datacenters in the Netherlands and Ireland provide services for Western and northern Europe respectively. For U.S. clients, the datacenters are in the U.S. To inquire the data center for your country, check the Microsoft Azure website or contact Teleopti.

Teleopti WFM Cloud does not store sensitive data – according to privacy legislation – in its WFM application whatsoever, so this is not an issue.

1) Rodrigues, Thoran., March 4, 2013, "What US Businesses Should Know About Compliance and Regulatory Issues before Adopting a Cloud Strategy,"

What about regulations and compliance?

Emerging standards and improved solutions from vendors are helping to guide clients and their providers to comply with governmental and industry regulations.[1]

This may be spurred on by recent events, such as the The proposal for a General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) shared liability of both the client and cloud provider for data breaches and violations of the law – a clear incentive for cloud providers to ensure meeting client's compliance requirements.[2]

Solution

Teleopti WFM Cloud runs on the Microsoft Azure platform, which is ISO-27001 certified. Microsoft is the first enterprise cloud provider to receive approval from the EU data protection authorities which validates that Microsoft has implemented the internationally recognized information security controls.[3] The decision applies particularly to Microsoft Azure, Office 365, Microsoft Dynamics CRM and Windows Intune.

1) Oppenheimer, Davi., 2012, "Tackling Compliance in the Cloud", Techtarget.com
2) Acharya, Anjali., October 2, 2014, 3rd point, "Europe's Cloud Concerns" (And What CIOs Should Think About)
3) Out-Law.com, April 14, 2014, "Microsoft in Line with EU Privacy Requirements"

What to ask your cloud service provider

☐ What is your information privacy policy?

☐ Who is responsible for personal data?

☐ How is data being backed up?

☐ Are you experienced in meeting data privacy requirements in my industry and geography?

☐ What is your physical security plan?

☐ Would my data reside on an infrastructure that is shared with other customers?

Conclusion

With service being the most significant differentiator in today's business world, delivering outstanding customer experiences is no longer a luxury nor an exception, but a strategic imperative for all contact centers. The winning formula to help deliver this successfully is new, state-of-the-art, contact-center technology, mobility and productivity-boosting tools.

Considered a novelty a few years ago, the Cloud is now top priority for many organizations. Contact centers are recognizing the compelling benefits of moving their infrastructure to the Cloud: rapid deployment, rapid user adoption, unparalleled flexibility, easier-than-ever scalability, lower TCO, mobility, cost efficiency, and a strong foundation for agility and innovation.

The accelerating demand for cloud-based infrastructure has brought the need for robust WFM solutions, delivered from the Cloud. Besides being the primary productivity tool for contact centers, WFM is the number one cloud–based tool that contact centers are using today, or plan to implement in the Cloud going forward.

Seamlessly digitalizing the enterprise world, the Cloud is here to stay. By taking WFM into the Cloud, you kick-start the journey towards future-proofing your contact center.

Best-fit WFM providers

There are quite a few differences among offers so it's worth investigating. The "2014-2015 Workforce Management Market Report" by DMG Consulting LLC gives in-depth information about WFM vendors, products, functionalities, technology, pricing and service delivery. With nine leading workforce management (WFM) vendors reviewed in detail, the report includes a comprehensive vendor satisfaction survey, measuring and ranking vendor approval ratings across 24 product components and 11 vendor categories. Teleopti earned the top ranking in overall customer satisfaction.

To order the WFM report from DMG, click here!

Or download a free copy of the Teleopti WFM reprint here!

About Teleopti

Teleopti, a top, global provider of workforce management software, offers a world-class WFM solution that is sophisticated, localized and easy to use. As the largest "best-of-breed" vendor, Teleopti focuses on helping contact centers, back offices and retail stores improve customer service, employee satisfaction and profitability – through optimized, automated forecasting and scheduling.

Founded in 1992, Swedish-established Teleopti has customers in over 80 countries, numerous offices around the world – from Beijing to São Paolo – and a comprehensive global network of partners. With a record of continuous net profitability for over 20 years and with high customer satisfaction ratings, Teleopti serves as a reliable partner.
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