Reimagining
Customer Experience
Management
for competitive advantage

A guide on how to design the next normal of customer operations, leveraging research from 1000+ customer experience leaders

Webhelp

Think Human

THE EVOLUTION OF
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (CX)

The pandemic shone a spotlight on the fault lines in customer service design, but with the global investments in digital, CX was already undergoing massive transformation. What we are seeing today is a major acceleration of this experience revolution, where there will be both winners and losers.

Managers responsible for this are puzzling with embracing omnichannel communication, automation, predictive analytics and Artificial Intelligence. Once you add Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, and your new store inside the Metaverse, then it becomes clear that this list of customer service trends is almost endless.

And all of this, of course in an environment where 90% of CXM leaders say new working models are here to stay.

SO, WHAT HAS REALLY CHANGED?

In some ways – not much. Analysts have noted the advantages that work-from-home advisors can offer for almost two decades. Offshoring and nearshoring have grown into strategies for finding global expertise and spreading risk. Progressive employers were already exploring hybrid work solutions to improve work/life balance.

The limitations of purely physical contact centers and inflexible workforce management have been obvious for years – look at how many customer service operations struggle with the flexibility required by seasonal changes in customer volume such as Black Friday.

In other ways – everything. While customer service design needed to evolve before Covid arrived, this period has underlined the importance of real change and exacerbated issues around quick-fix solutions. Transformation 2.0 is here for customer operation. Webhelp's research with 1,000+ customer experience leaders in partnership with global industry analyst firm Frost & Sullivan underlined this, with 92% saying they plan to transform their customer operations in the next 12 months.

98% of customer service executives plan to redesign or transform their contact center operation within the next 24 months.

49%
43%

Do you plan to transform your contact center operations in the near future?

6% **2%**

in the next 6 months | in the next 12 months | in the next 24 months | No

DOING NOTHING
IS NOT AN OPTION

The first lesson of the pandemic was that doing nothing is not an option. Retail and hospitality companies across the world proved that a rapid pivot can really work – if your existing business model is obsolete overnight, companies will change, but what happens when the crisis is over?

We are living in a changed world. Whether you are redesigning the experience you want to deliver, or how you deliver it – you cannot aim for pre-pandemic customer service standards in a post-pandemic business environment.

WHAT ARE THE KEY CHANGES TO BE CONSIDERED?

● **Flexibility**
90% of respondents believe it is important to quickly flex and scale their operations in response to changes in customer demand. This ability is now essential for meeting customer demands.

● **Global shoring**
nearshoring and offshoring are strategies that have generally focused on cost reduction, but now there are more important considerations. How do you access a global talent pool? How do you build resilience into your services by spreading geographic risk? Our survey showed that 40% of our respondents expect an increase across all the shoring options, compared to only 10% expecting a decrease – global shoring choices are getting more common and more complex.

● **Work location**
75% of respondents have found recruiting the right advisor profiles to be challenging. With work from home now proven to be viable and secure at scale during the pandemic, it creates the opportunity to recruit from far beyond the office and to embrace inclusivity – offering home-based opportunities allows you to work with many excluded groups of people that find commuting or office-based work challenging.

● **Employee engagement**
With almost one third of respondents saying employee morale as the reason their WFH transition wasn't successful, it is clear the CXM industry needs to think differently. Offering more flexible hours and flexible working locations is a good starting point to create an opportunity to genuinely listen to what your employees want, and to design a working environment that suits them. This can increase engagement, satisfaction, and reduce traditional issues, such as attrition.

● **ESG**
As you redesign your operations, now is the time to think as responsibly and sustainably as possible. Organizations need to factor in thinking around their carbon footprint but also embed techniques like impact sourcing into new models
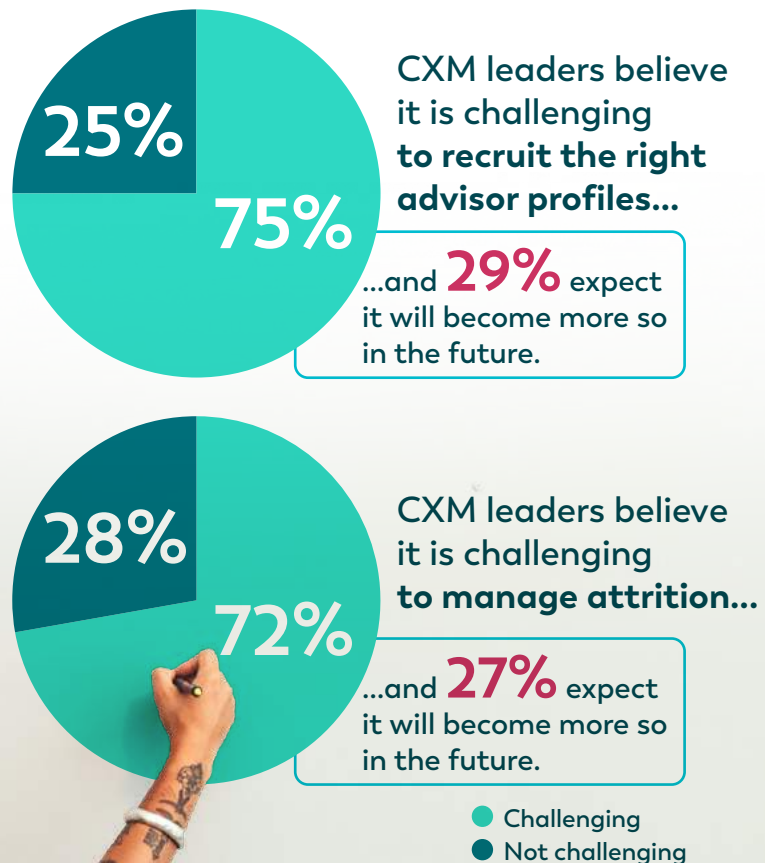
● **Employees and customers have evolved,**
with 87% of respondents having advisors working from home during the pandemic, with 90% of those expecting to keep some degree of homeworking in the future: that's not a return to the 2019 normal.

Redesigning your customer service processes is as much about attracting and keeping talent as it is about delighting your customers – without talent, all other plans are difficult to achieve. 75% of respondents view recruiting the right advisor profiles as a challenge with around a third (29%) of these respondents expecting it to become more challenging in future. 72% believe that managing attrition is challenging, with 27% of these respondents believing that it will get more challenging in future.

Redesigning your customer service processes is as much about attracting and keeping talent as it is about delighting your customers

25%

75%

CXM leaders believe it is challenging **to recruit the right advisor profiles...**

...and **29%** expect it will become more so in the future.

28%

72%

CXM leaders believe it is challenging **to manage attrition...**

...and **27%** expect it will become more so in the future.

● Challenging
● Not challenging

DESIGNING THE RIGHT SOLUTION
FOR THE RIGHT CIRCUMSTANCES

Brands who want to differentiate through experience, and indeed accelerate this differentiation, will need to rely on the right partners. And yet it's true that many more traditional companies in the CXM or Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry appear to be laser-focused on a return to 2019, rather than taking on board how customer service processes have evolved:

● There appears to be a focus on when contact centers can once again be operating at normal capacity

● There seem to be limited ideas for building the flexibility needed to handle extreme events or seasonality

● The focus for some appears to be on delivering most people to a contact center at the lowest possible cost

The sourcing community needs to evolve, not design a roadmap for a return to how business functioned in 2019.

"

The ethos behind Webhelp Anywhere is all about designing the right solution for the right circumstances. For example – for a top worldwide retailer we lead the design and delivery of customer support across their main five markets globally. By working together to enhance their existing onshore and on-site model with nearshore and virtual capability, we improved service delivery, even through peak periods. By designing-in AI and automation tools, we are now helping them to deliver and scale true competitive advantage in their sector.

Matthieu Bouin
Webhelp Group
Managing Director

SO, WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN?

CX needs a redesign because CX is no longer focused on an individual fleeting customer interaction. The contact center has always been the traditional core of customer service design and yet we are now in an environment where building and supporting a customer relationship should last for decades – not just for a single call.

Customers want faster service, and they don't care about the internal difficulties your business has faced because of the pandemic. Two years down the line, does anyone still have any sympathy for an interactive voice response (IVR) message that says: 'we apologize for the delay, this is because of Covid-19?'

Executives with responsibility for designing a customer experience strategy need to be asking several important questions:

- **There appears to be a focus on when contact centers can once again be operating at normal capacity**

- **How do I attract and engage the right talent? How do I build flexibility in my customer service solution so it can react to events such as seasonal demand?**

- **Can a work-from-home strategy help me to improve the environmental impact of my business and build greater operational resilience?**

- **How can all these changes be applied in a way that also improves the performance of our customer service processes?**

TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS EFFECTIVELY AND ROBUSTLY **YOU NEED A PROCESS OR FORMULA.**

> " Webhelp Anywhere is a customer experience solution that includes a method for designing the service strategy that is right for your business, and then underpins the delivery with a consistent ways-of-working, best practice, and a technology platform. We create a starting point for solutioning by understanding our clients' strategic priorities and drivers and matching them to the different benefits, risks and dependencies of each of the options within the nine-box solution framework.

Chris Hallmark
Managing Director,
Transformation Design,
Gobeyond Partners

New geos & markets

New delivery models

Offshore

Nearshore

Onshore

On-site   Hybrid   Virtual
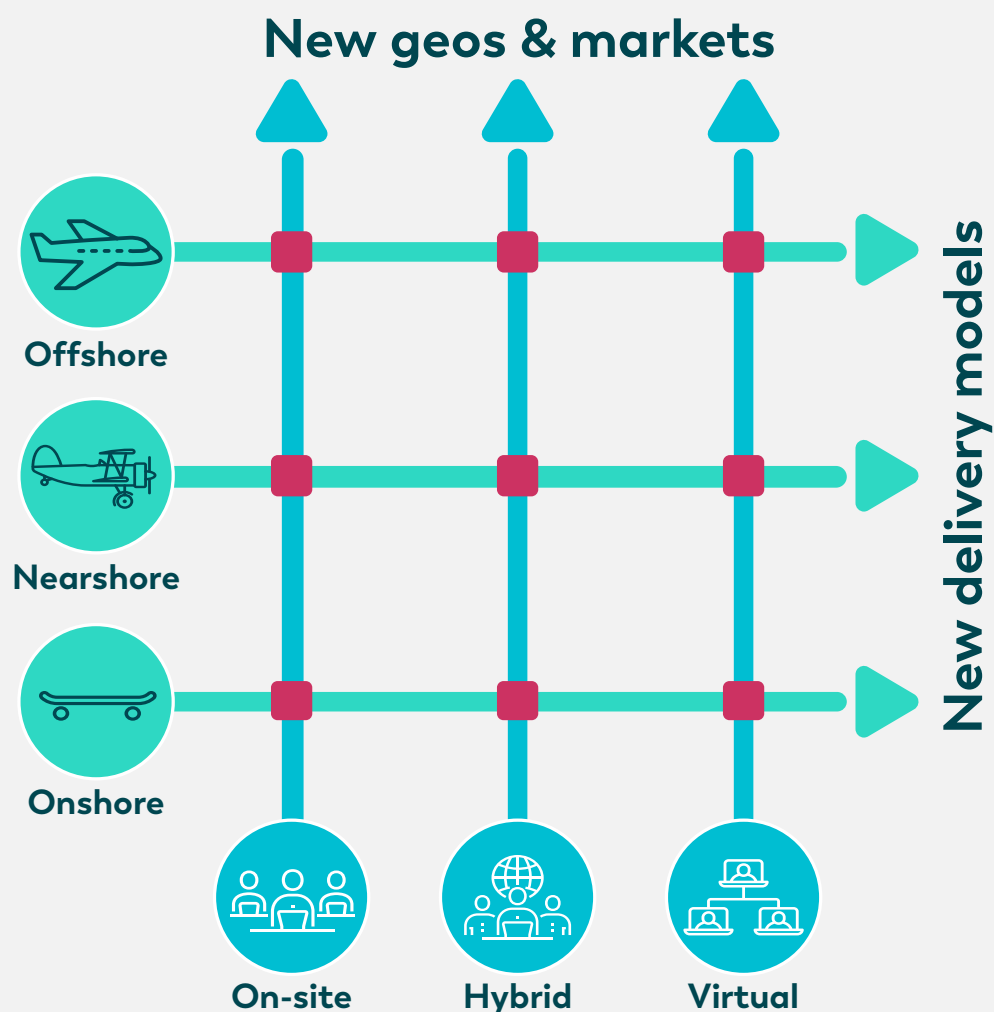
WHAT ROLE SHOULD **NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND PLATFORMS PLAY?**

Technology is no longer an added extra to the process of building a call-focused contact center. It is a fundamental pillar of customer service design and can dramatically affect the customer experience. Technology now supports everything.

● Security has and will become increasingly important as companies manage increasing volumes of data across locations and at-home working models

● The gamification of contact center processes can improve service by creating a fun environment with constantly changing goals.

● Simultaneous translation and conversational artificial intelligence systems, such as Polyglot – Webhelp's proprietary machine translation tool, allow advisors supporting text interactions to work across multiple languages.

● GigCX allows you to build a core team that can be augmented by fully trained temporary advisors, rewarded each time they help a customer, therefore helping to avoid traditional seasonality issues, such as Black Friday.

It is possible to embrace more flexible working environments and locations. Only 10% of respondents do not expect to have any advisors working from home in future and 96% expect that advisors will have the ability to decide where they work – mixing on-site, home, or both.

But to successfully deliver a customer service solution, that offers hybrid and flexible working options, there must be a single technology platform that allows everyone to share information, work together, and feel part of the same team – whether they are at home, in the office, or connecting from a shared office space.

73% of our survey respondents find it difficult to fully integrate disparate communication channels and systems. 73% also find it difficult to keep up with the latest technology requirements and 75% find it hard to deploy CX technology at scale.

> " Technology requirements for the future of CX are evolving and challenging. We have focused our designing our platform to scale operations rapidly and securely, whilst also embedding tools and functionality to give hybrid and remote workers the collaborative tools needed to enjoy a working experience that is as close to their on-site peers as possible.
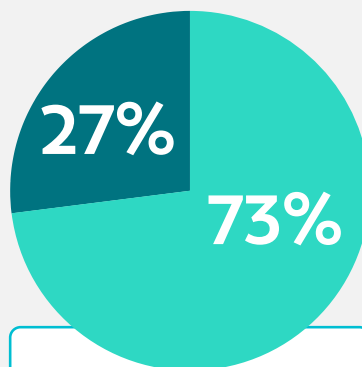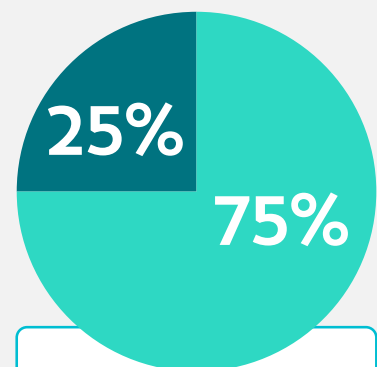
Yan Noblot,
CTO

CXM Leaders must overcome the following challenges with technology

27% / **73%**
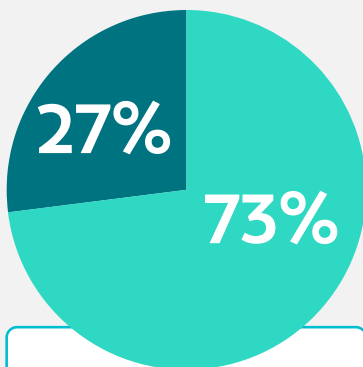
Integrating channels and systems

27% / **73%**

Keeping up with the latest technology

25% / **75%**

Deploying CX technology at scale

● Challenging
● Not challenging

Technology is essential but can be challenging.

THE ROAD TO
CX TRANSFORMATION

Modern customer service solutions need instant flexibility and infinite scalability. They need to flex for seasonality and be ready for challenging business conditions. The new normal for BPO in the 2020s is not a return to the pre-pandemic contact center.

While many customer experience specialists are focused on a return to 'normal', Webhelp Anywhere acknowledges that customer relationships need to be managed differently. Your customers have already evolved and changed their expectations – are you really returning to the past when their focus is on the future?

Contact center advisors can be hired from anywhere, working remotely using secure virtual contact center systems. Data analytics offers deep insight into customer behavior and preferences. Resilience has transformed into more than just business continuity – resilience is now essential in this new reality.

By revising your customer service processes now to acknowledge the experience of the pandemic, you can advance into the post-pandemic business environment confident that your business has evolved to meet modern customer expectations. Every business focused on a return to 'normal' will find that the customer – and employee – view of normal has undergone a revolution.

This modern environment is infinitely more complex. The concept of 'ambient cx' being all around, proactively predicting customer needs, and the virtualization of the contact center – many processes are unrecognizable from just a few years ago. But all of this technology and complexity supports one aim – to deliver a fantastic experience when your customers interact with your brand.

**ONE THING IS FOR CERTAIN.
DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION.**

WHAT IS **WEBHELP ANYWHERE?**

Webhelp Anywhere brings together a codified method to design future CX operating models, alongside a flexible, scalable hybrid-cloud platform to deliver it. Webhelp Anywhere is design thinking applied to CX with the lessons of the pandemic built in.

The approach scientifically simplifies the decision-making process, so you can quickly drop the strategies that will not work – then focus on evaluating which could be used in your business. It also helps you to visualize the impact of decisions such as on-site or hybrid teams, along with geographic location, and exploring flexible options, such as building a bench of GigCX talent.

The allows you to arrive at a customer service strategy that works for your brand, your employees, and your customers. Your design can then be deployed and scaled rapidly and consistently using the comprehensive secure tech platform which covers six elements which we recognize as core to the CX delivery:

Webhelp Anywhere

- **TALENT ANYWHERE:**
  borderless and global recruitment, digital learning, and omnichannel learner journey.

- **ENGAGEMENT ANYWHERE:**
  omnichannel engagement, focus on wellbeing, gamification of engagement.

- **PERFORMANCE ANYWHERE:**
  unique operational standards across each delivery model. Combined with global workforce management this ensure consistency of delivery globally and total visibility through insight-rich dashboards.

- **TECHNOLOGY ANYWHERE:**
  virtual desktops, optional bring-your-own-device operations, collaboration tools to create a virtual team and community.

- **SECURITY ANYWHERE:**
  biometrics, PCI compliance, 24x7 cyber protection specialists.

- **RESILIENCE ANYWHERE:**
  the processes are at-home-ready with a use of hybrid cloud to support any disaster recovery, focus on business continuity as normal.

In short, Webhelp Anywhere is a truly holistic post-pandemic approach to designing how customers interact with your brand in the 2020s.

This whitepaper contains data from an online survey of a qualified sample of 1,124 decision makers in Customer Experience Management (CXM) across 3 regions Americas, Europe and APAC and was conducted by Frost & Sullivan, a leading industry analyst.

Webhelp designs, delivers, and optimizes unforgettable human experiences for today's digital world – creating game-changing customer journeys.

From sales to service, content moderation to credit management, Webhelp is an end-to-end partner across all B2C and B2B customer journeys.

Its 100,000 passionate gamechangers across more than 55 countries thrive on making a difference for the world's most exciting brands.

Webhelp is currently owned by its management and Groupe Bruxelles Lambert (Euronext: GBLB), a leading global investment holding, as of November 2019.

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