

12 Must-Haves for Cloud-Based Customer Engagement Platforms

When it comes to the level of customer service businesses provide, consumer expectations are relentlessly on the rise. Today's consumers are mobile, tech-savvy and self-sufficient, demanding more and better self-service options, backed up by personalized agent assistance when needed. To keep pace with this evolving customer service landscape, businesses often settle for sub-par solutions that rely on tenuous integrations and custom development from multiple vendors.

To avoid such pitfalls, companies are increasingly turning toward adopting an all-in-one customer engagement platform in the cloud. The following 12 must-haves should be a part of any such evaluation process:

1. All-In-One Platform with Native Interaction Management, Self-Service and Workforce Optimization

Maintaining non-standard, loosely integrated solutions from multiple vendors can be a major source of frustration, tension and unnecessary expense. A single platform approach allows for a tighter, easier integration with enterprise systems and workflows, enabling the organization to provide consistent, context-driven, omni-channel customer experiences across departments and locations.

2. Personalized, Role-based, Single-Agent Desktop/UX Including Custom Widgets

Streamlined user experience for agents, team leads and administrators reflecting individual preferences, work habits and responsibilities, all available in a thin client running on popular web browsers and on all client devices – desktops, laptops and mobile devices.

3. Common UI for Configuration and Administration

A common UI across all capabilities allows administrators to provide services to users based on role-based persona profiles. This enables access to a variety of foundational functionalities like secure, federated single sign-on (SSO) as well as an intuitive user interface for provisioning.

4. Shared Real-Time and Historical Reporting

Real-time dashboards supply contact center and enterprise operations with up-to-the-minute actionable data that can be combined with other business data sources. Historical reporting and dashboards allow organizations to analyze data and uncover trends to improve operations and service strategies.

5. Comprehensive Proactive Outbound and Compliance

Proactive outreach in the form of automated multi-channel campaigns and high-touch proactive customer care via voice, email or SMS is fundamental to keeping customers engaged and informed. Advanced list and campaign optimization compliance enables adherence to regulatory dialing requirements.

6. Modern IVR and Digital Self-Service Fueled by Natural Language Understanding (NLU)

A modern IVR experience based on caller intent prediction, context continuity, and dynamic adaption to caller behavior offers a more “human” self-service experience, while Digital Self-Service omni-channel experiences leverage the latest generation of natural language understanding technologies and smartphone capabilities.

7. Comprehensive Workforce Optimization to Maximize Productivity and Workflows

Multi-channel, skills-based forecasting of interaction volumes and scheduling, combined with multiple staffing scenario development with powerful strategic “what-if” analysis, ensures proper resources are on hand. Real-time and historical employee performance & productivity analysis, manually or automatically initiated coaching as well as activity automation ensure operations run smoothly.

8. A Rich Set of APIs for External Integration with CRM Systems and Enterprise Data Sources

A SaaS (Software as a Service), open architecture with robust APIs ensures organizations can unite systems and operations across the enterprise that impact the customer experience. Among other benefits, customer information can be centrally stored, ensuring one version of the truth as well as the availability of context when it is needed most – at the time of interaction in order to personalize the customer experience. Additionally, workflows can be harmonized across departments and enterprise systems.

9. Continuous Delivery of New Features through Reliable Cloud Services

SaaS deployment, combined with an agile development methodology speeds the delivery of new features without painstaking upgrades, business disruptions and costly professional services. Customers no longer must wait a year or more to receive requested enhancements. And (AWS) cloud services eliminate ongoing maintenance and support burdens from internal IT staff, with a guaranteed 99.999% uptime service level agreement.

10. Smooth Transitions, from Traditional to Modern, from Premise to Cloud

Moving to a cloud platform and adopting new technologies is a sizable undertaking. Careful forethought and good planning can preserve business continuity, protect data assets and shorten end-user learning curves while curtailing professional services expenses. An ease of migration mindset must guide the design and architecture of the modern cloud offering from the very start; otherwise, costly services migration packages promoted by vendors are the only alternative.

11. Market Leadership Awards in ALL Major Categories (IM, Self-service and WFO)

Recognition should not only cover the technology but also the level of thought leadership demonstrated in the marketplace, as well as the quality, experience and expertise of professional services and support staff.

12. Simplified Packaging – Eliminate Expensive A-La-Carte Pricing

Capabilities are presented to align and support customer usage scenarios in a cohesive, comprehensive way rather than forcing customers to pay for individual features, which can add up quickly. In addition, without native capabilities across interaction management, workforce optimization and self-service, it is far from certain that the various capabilities offered through an al-a-carte approach work together seamlessly or share common UIs and services.

Journey to Reimagine the Customer Experience

As Aspect began the design process for Aspect Via™, our new customer engagement platform in the cloud, these 12 considerations were top-of-mind. We hope that by sharing these perspectives enterprises will be aided in their evaluations of SaaS-based customer engagement platforms. While it's simple to offer advice, we realize it has far-reaching ramifications and it can be difficult to figure out just where to start. Aspect has the people, know-how and can-do attitude that gets organizations off to a strong, productive start on the journey to reimagine the customer experience.

Learn more about Aspect Via at www.aspect.com/cec.

Corporate and Americas Headquarters

2325 E. Camelback Road,
Suite 700
Phoenix, AZ 85016
+(1) 602 282 1500 office
+(1) 602 956 2294 fax

Europe & Africa Headquarters

2 The Square, Stockley Park
Uxbridge
Middlesex UB11 1AD
+(44) 20 8589 1000 office
+(44) 20 8589 1001 fax

Asia Pacific & Middle East Headquarters

7 Temasek Boulevard
#08-02 Suntec Tower One
Singapore 038987
+(65) 6590 0388 office
+(65) 6324 1003 fax

About Aspect

Aspect helps enterprises break down the walls between people, processes, systems and data sources, empowering organizations to unite around the customer journey. Our customer engagement center offers native [interaction management](#), [workforce optimization](#) and [self-service](#) capabilities that drive dynamic, conversational interactions and create a truly frictionless omni-channel customer experience. Leveraging all the benefits of the cloud and over 40 years of industry ingenuity, Aspect conveniently and easily connects questions to answers while helping enterprises keep service levels high and operational costs contained. For more information, visit www.aspect.com.

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