

## Seven Criteria for Identifying the Best Contact Center Technology Partner

Migrating enterprise technology into the cloud has become a top priority for large companies and small to medium-sized businesses alike—and for good reason. Cloud technology lowers the total cost of ownership (TCO) of technology hardware and software, smoothes the cost curve of scaling key organizational functions, and clears obstacles from the road to workforce virtualization. In a recent Aberdeen study of cloud adopters, organizations that followed best practices in cloud migration experienced double-digit reductions in IT administration costs.

However, for many enterprise contact centers with significant investments in existing property, plant, and equipment assets, cloud migration is a gradual and selective process—not an all-or-nothing proposition. Some enterprises will always want to maintain centralized brick-and-mortar data centers. Other organizations with more complex technology requirements need more than just cloud services; they need both quality on-premise solutions and advanced cloud technology to achieve peak workflow and cost efficiency levels. That’s why best practices in IT management are not exclusively cloud- or premise-based, but instead, utilize both to create a cost-optimized, performance-focused solution.

### In general, cloud technology:

- Decreases the time and expense necessary to change the size of a functional workforce,
- Reduces the time to propagate a software change throughout a workgroup,
- Improves the resiliency and disaster-recovery speed of an IT department, and
- Enables organizations to begin the process of workforce virtualization.

### Meanwhile, premise-based technology:

- Offers attractive economics to organizations with existing brick-and-mortar investments,
- Provides on-site monitoring and management of IT assets, and
- Enables proven economies of scale for large organizations.

### Recognizing Leaders in Contact Center Technology

Increasingly, organizations are looking for technology partners that offer a complete cloud solution, a complete premise-based solution, as well as a ‘hybrid’ model that incorporates components of both. “Finding comprehensive services can be challenging. IT executives must sort fact from marketing hyperbole in a rapidly-evolving marketplace,” said Steven Pollema,

A major retailer lowered their operating costs by **\$700,000** annually using contact center technology from eLoyalty.

Senior Vice President and General Manager at eLoyalty, a TeleTech company. “Cloud service providers can offer a broad spectrum of hosted contact center offerings, but little to nothing in the way of on-premise solutions. Traditional technology providers, conversely, have robust brick-and-mortar services, but lag behind the industry leaders in cloud-based technology.”

Fortunately, identifying a vendor that provides true comprehensive solutions, including cloud, on-premise and hybrid technologies, is easier with a convenient checklist of best practices. The top contact center technology vendors will meet all of the following criteria:

- 1.** Your vendor should positively impact the total operating cost and work with your existing business model. Organizations with mature existing IT organizations have a well-developed portfolio of traditional business and IT assets as well as an established base of trained employees—most working in centralized facilities. While some assets may be good candidates for early asset retirement and should be replaced by cloud technology, others may be early in their license period and have substantial financial and operating life remaining. “True technology innovators can ‘dock’ with any existing configuration of tools, technologies and talent to improve the operational efficiencies of the complete system,” said Pollema.
- 2.** Your vendor should enable both near-term gains and long-term evolution. Placing more IT assets into the cloud (and human capital into a decentralized work environment) is an ongoing goal of most contact centers. But while that process is being enacted, leading cloud technology providers can provide immediate cost improvement, migrating capital expenditures to operating expenditures and converting the fixed cost related to asset acquisition into the variable cost of cloud IT management. The result is a planned, staged migration of assets and employees into the cloud, offering fiscal returns and process efficiency gains at every stage.
- 3.** Your vendor should offer consulting services to optimize the workflow process before implementing new technologies. Speeding up an inefficient process simply enables companies to lose money faster. Prior to building a technology strategy, it is vital to revisit the workflow process itself and ensure that any possible efficiency improvements be made first, before IT planning enters the picture. Doing so requires extensive knowledge of (and proven experience in) a broad spectrum of functional best practices. Superior partners will deliver comprehensive services to understand your business before developing a solution. For example, in addition to eLoyalty’s cloud, on-premise and hybrid technologies, they provide process evaluations, service audits, strategy consultants, as well as a roadmap to migrate from on-premise to cloud technology. “Full-service technology partners bring more industry and technology best practices to the table. They are more experienced at turning client data into critical business insights, deliver more proven processes and implementation plans, and use more active engagement models to stay aligned with customer objectives,” said Pollema. “As a result, clients reduce risk, receive effective solutions, optimize deployment timeframes and accelerate their time to benefit.”
- 4.** Your vendor should provide cost and efficiency benefits that scale with your company’s growth. SMBs and enterprises have very different IT challenges and scale concerns, but contact centers of every size share a common goal of reducing their IT operational cost

while improving quality of service. Regardless of your cloud or on-premise IT requirements, a strategic partner should be able to accommodate your changing needs as your company grows and evolves.

The 2010 U.S. Census is a great example of this. The U.S. Census Bureau used a hybrid contact center technology solution to create a scalable system that met the project's rapidly expanding needs. Flexible cloud technology integrated with the government's on-premise data collection application and allowed census employees to easily transition from handling 1,000 daily calls to receiving over 200,000 calls—all within the first 20 days of the program.

[Find out what cloud technology they used.](#)

5. Your vendor should offer best-of-breed solutions in both premise-based and cloud services. Most companies claiming to offer hybrid services are actually technology companies with only token premise-based IT experience, or traditional IT vendors offering either loose affiliations with cloud technology firms, or even worse—untested in-house cloud platforms. Without deep experience in both centralized technology operations and robust, proven cloud technology solutions, it is not possible to achieve peak metric performance and operational efficiency in a hybrid solution environment. “As a general rule, look for a partner who has been offering cloud services for more than seven years,” said Pollema.
6. Your vendor should provide total ROI/TCO and key performance indicators (KPI) evaluations for any type of solution. The decision to operate a centralized IT function, a cloud-based virtualized IT service platform, or a hybrid operation is driven by bottom-line data. Cost figures, KPI, telephony and network performance data—they all make up the complete picture of the operating efficiency, quality of service, and total operating cost of technology operations. Leading-edge providers of hybrid, cloud and premise IT services can provide real-time operating data for any configuration of cloud-based and centralized services, along with on-demand access to bottom-line cost reporting. “Even when companies have performance data and customer service information in silos across many different systems, their technology partner should be able to collect it into a consolidated and easy-to-read dashboard that shows managers and decision makers how well their customers are being served in real-time,” said Pollema. “These partners are the true technology innovators that help companies exploit information across its many forms in order to drive competitive advantage.”
7. Your vendor should provide secure and reliable cloud services to any point on the globe. Provisioning a cloud IT solution for an enterprise-level organization does not end at our nation's borders. Often, it requires putting Tier One cloud capabilities on the desktops of knowledge workers around the world, with fully-secured data transmission to and from the cloud. Leading solution providers can offer hybrid, premise-based and cloud-based solutions in all popular geographies, from Eastern Europe to Africa to the Philippines.

Superior cloud contact center services will have centralized data centers and points of presence around the world, so companies can benefit from global access to all major markets.

The best world-wide cloud services will offer:

- 99% system uptime and agent availability

Businesses have  
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- Systems that work with onsite agents as well as with virtual or at-home agents
- Support for both basic, voice-only contact centers and full, multichannel environments

All in all, your technology provider should be more than a vendor. You should expect comprehensive offerings and an innovative partnership to help you create a cost-optimized, performance-focused solution that drives growth and profitability. “Most of all,” said Pollema, “companies should look for a technology partner whose philosophies are steeped in building customer-centric processes that strengthen customer engagement and deepen customer loyalty. When your vendor focuses on the customer experience, your partnership with them will be more meaningful, and your customers will be happier too.”

**About eLoyalty**

eLoyalty, a TeleTech company, is the only Cisco® partner who offers cloud, on-premise and hybrid technology solutions. eLoyalty has expertise in designing, building and remotely managing advanced contact center solutions. With our on-premise technologies, we have installed over 100,000 contact center seats and currently support 70 Global 1000 companies. eLoyalty’s cloud technology utilizes TeleTech’s GigaPOP® cloud infrastructure, which lands calls from over 90 countries, supports customers in six continents in 30 languages and handles 3.5 million customer interactions, 6.8 million VoIP minutes and over 245,000 e-communication interactions per day. Our cloud technology experts have deployed over 150,000 licensed seats and manage over 50,000 concurrent users daily.

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