Digital Workplace Service

First Cut
Number: 2018-FC03
May 01, 2018

Topic: UCC, Cloud Contact Center

Issue: How are UCC platform and Cloud vendors evolving to meet market demands?

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Cisco Launches Customer Journey Platform, Doubles Down for Contact Center

Summary: Cisco announced a new Cloud-based addition to its Contact Center, branded as the Customer Journey Platform (CJP), which integrates automation and supports multi-channel communication with customers.

Event: Cisco provided an in-depth overview of its Customer Journey Platform during its April Collaboration Summit. Cisco also hired a new and experienced General Manager for Customer Journey Solutions, Vasili Triant.

Analysis

By leveraging its US $2B BroadSoft acquisition, Cisco is doubling down on its Contact Center business with the launch of the Cloud-based Customer Journey Platform. With a refreshed product line that focuses on enhanced Customer Journeys, Cisco now has a range of Cloud and on-premise offerings that existing customers and new prospects will be attracted to.

Cisco Hires New General Manager

Cisco's Customer Journey Platform Business Unit is headed by new General Manager Vasili Triant, who joined in February 2018. Triant is a battle-tested executive having served as SVP of Sales at Serenova, and later CEO.

BroadSoft Acquisition Marks Push for Contact Center

Cisco has put any concerns to rest about how it plans to leverage its BroadSoft acquisition. Cisco has significant market share in on-premise Contact Center. With BroadSoft's Cloud-native Contact Center offering, Cisco will be able to take advantage of the growing demand for Cloud offerings.

Cisco will make it easy for customers to acquire collaboration calling and Customer Journey Solutions. Enhanced and integrative pricing offerings, called Flex Plans, will be available fall of 2018.

Automation and Seamless Multi-Channel Communications at the Center

The various components of the Customer Journey Platform highlight the need for flexibility within UCC platforms and the move towards automation that integrates with seamless switching between communication methods and devices. Automation capabilities (via Chatbots) can quickly escalate a situation to involve a customer service agent.

Cisco's Customer Care Platform can speed up a customer support journey via auto-recognition of a customer's identity so that they can bypass a series of questions before speaking with an agent. Other examples that Cisco shared included the ability for the platform to recognize and identify solutions for connected devices, such as a car or a motorcycle, to quickly help users troubleshoot. This shows that Cisco is

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leveraging its investments in IoT along with its customer care to significantly shorten the time to problem resolution. We expect other vendors to copy this approach over time.

Consolidation in UCC and Contact Center Will Continue – Cloud is Making Waves

The need for on-premise Contact Center providers to add more Cloud offerings is driving market consolidation. Besides Cisco's BroadSoft deal, Avaya recently acquired Spoken Communications, a Cloud Contact Center provider with Content Analytics. Other Cloud Contact Center vendors who could face acquisition include:

- 8x8
- Five9
- TalkDesk

Prediction: *By YE 2020, 60% of standalone Cloud Contact Center vendors will merge or be acquired.*

Aragon Advisory

- Enterprises that already work with Cisco now have a path to the Cloud in addition to on-premise options.
- Cisco's new CJP offers flexibility, integration with AI technologies, and provides multi-modal communication for more effective support experiences.
- Enterprises that currently have on-premise contact center capabilities should also evaluate how they can extend or improve overall support by adding Cloud Contact Center for specific support use cases.

Bottom Line

Cisco is an established leader in the Communications and Collaborations market and is emphasizing Customer Journeys as part of its renewed focus on Contact Center. Automation has become a focal point for CJP and Cisco is responding to the need for more intelligent applications. Enterprises should evaluate Cisco's new Cloud-based CJP, as well as others. Aragon expects to see more acquisitions as part of a go-to-market strategy.

Related Aragon Research

- The Aragon Research Globe for Unified Communications and Collaboration, 2018: Shifting to People Centric Collaboration
- Predictions for Digital Business Platforms (DBPs), 2018
- The Aragon Research Globe for Web and Video Conferencing, 2017

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