

# Virtualisation, enabling modern call centres

 By [Rob Lith](#)

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Virtualisation is a crucial enabler of modern call centres, allowing flexible scaling of capacity that reduces customer service frustrations, as well as cloud-based models that reduce the ownership burden of costly, complex resource management.

A Wikipedia definition states, 'virtualisation is the creation of a virtual rather than actual version of a computing resource for purposes of centralising resource management, improving scalability and improving utilisation.'

## Not restricted in its choice of application

For instance, a host computer, running Microsoft Windows, may host a virtual machine (VM) that simulates guest computer hardware running, for example, an Ubuntu Linux operating system - thus allowing it to run Ubuntu-based application software.

The advantage of this is that a call centre isn't restricted in its choice of application, or alternatively, doesn't have to install dedicated hardware if it doesn't want to compromise on the preferred solution.

Another form of virtualisation, desktop virtualisation, entails separating the desktop function in its entirety from the physical machine. Using this model, users interact indirectly (via a network) with the host computer, via physically different devices (another desktop or even a mobile device). Multiple different users can log in to the remote computer simultaneously.

## Call centre benefits

For the call centre owner, virtualisation enables consolidation of data centre resources, allowing call centres and other enterprises to take advantage of the ease of management and improved utilisation of standard, rationalised infrastructure.

This has several spinoff advantages; including the ability to deploy a small IT team to manage the much smaller, standardised data centre footprint, as well as a smaller carbon footprint.

By contrast, non-virtualised call centres are by their very nature over-provisioned to cater for times of peak performance. They are therefore routinely underutilised, incurring immense upfront capital expenditure and on-going operations and maintenance cost.

Virtualisation can further be deployed on the client's premises by simply slotting into the client's virtual environment, with the benefit of greater control over infrastructure for the client.

## Customer service benefits

In the case of desktop virtualisation, call centres can make use of virtual agents who can work from home in flexible working arrangements that cut down on travel and base camp real estate.

In peak business cycles, remote agents can be roped in on demand, with obvious spin-offs for customer satisfaction and multinationals can deploy a follow-the-sun call centre competency spread across multiple geographies, again with customer service benefits.

Finally, it also places less of a burden on client devices, as all the processing happens on the remote server. This has significant cost benefits.

Virtualisation is the silent enabler of cloud computing, bringing with it a multitude of benefits for the modern call centre and its customers. With it, wasteful infrastructure practices and ponderous customer service are things of the past.

## ABOUT ROB LITH

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