

# An In-Depth Guide to STIR/SHAKEN •

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## Preparing for Change: An In-Depth Guide to STIR/SHAKEN

With the FCC's June 30, 2021 deadline in the rear-view mirror, STIR/SHAKEN and call blocking should be top of mind for operators of outbound call centers. The new regulations could have a big impact on your operations because of the increased risks of your outbound calls getting blocked and never reaching your customers.

To help, we've put together this guide to break down what STIR/SHAKEN is, how the new rules impact you, and what you can do to stay focused on compliance and achieve success in spite of these new changes.



## What is STIR/SHAKEN?

According to the FCC, robocalling is the #1 complaint from consumers, with an average of 185,000 complaints filed during the last five years. As a result, in March 2020, the FCC adopted new rules requiring all originating and terminating voice service providers to implement caller ID authentication using STIR/SHAKEN standards by June 30, 2021.

- **STIR:**  
**Secure Telephone Identity Revisited**
- **SHAKEN:**  
**Signature-based Handling of Asserted Information Using toKENs**

**STIR** is a working group within the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), an open standards organization that develops and promotes internet standards. As such, STIR produces guidelines that form the basis of what is referred to as STIR/SHAKEN. **SHAKEN** defines the extensions and industry framework for the deployment and interworking of the technology in service provider networks. To put it more simply, the STIR portion refers to the process of providing attestation that the call is legitimate. The SHAKEN part is more about how service providers should handle the call.

Why is this important? Because STIR/SHAKEN is changing the contact center space with new standards designed to combat spoofed robocalls. In the wake of a continued increase in these types of predatory robocalls, STIR/SHAKEN is aimed at protecting consumers against fraud and abuse from robocalling, providing a stronger stance against malicious robocalling, and re-establishing trust in the communications ecosystem.



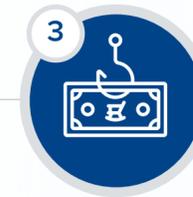
## Quick FCC Facts



U.S. consumers receive  
**100,000** unwanted robocalls  
every minute



**47%** of unwanted robocalls  
are illegal scams



**Fraudulent calls** impact 43  
million Americans each year  
and cost \$10.5B in total losses

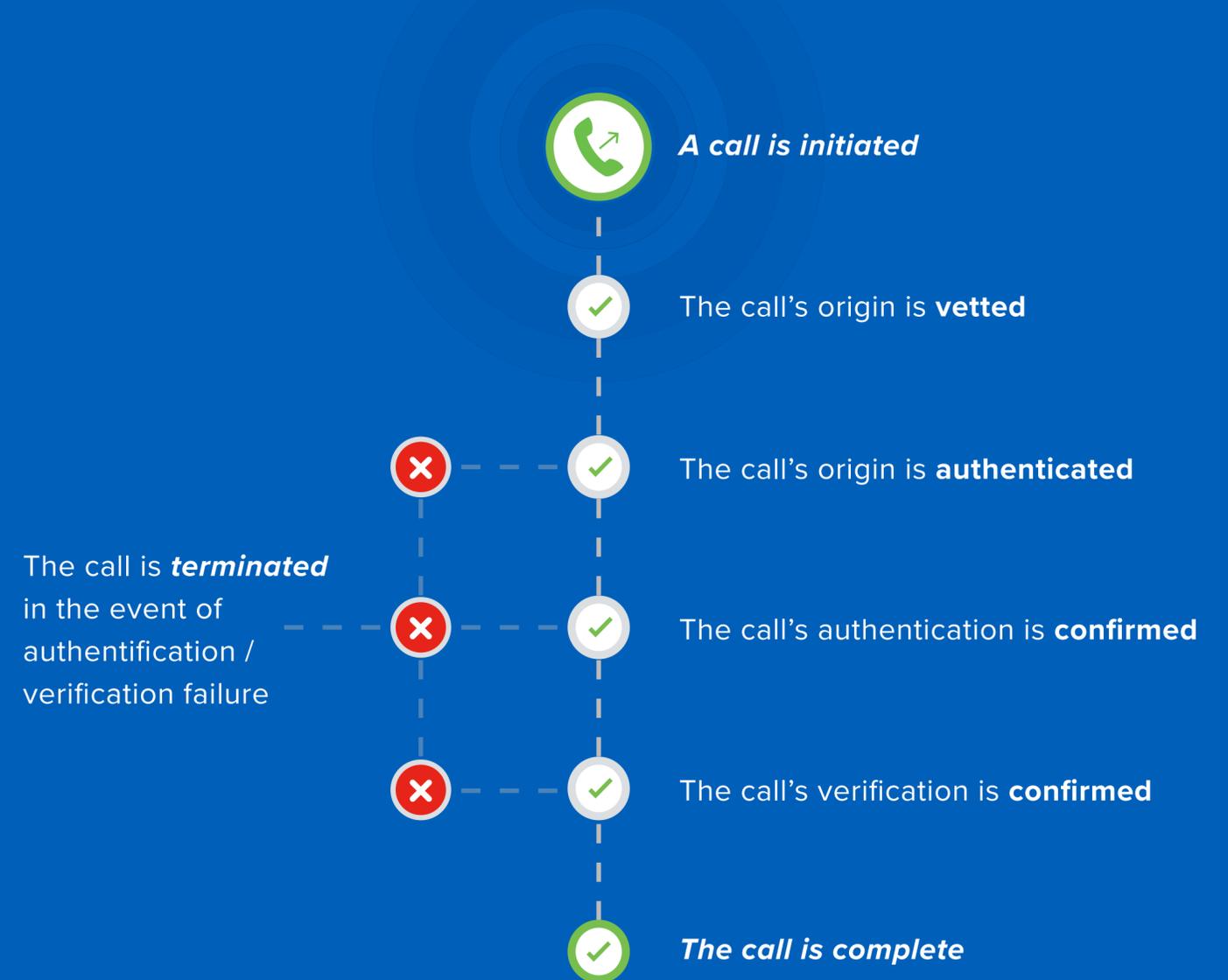
How does STIR/SHAKEN work?

At its very core, STIR/SHAKEN is all about Caller ID authentication, which is a new system purpose-built to combat illegal caller ID spoofing.

Once STIR/SHAKEN is implemented, voice service providers will be able to provide more accurate caller ID information, giving consumers a better idea of which calls to answer. As explained by the FCC, “Calls traveling through interconnected phone networks would have their caller ID ‘signed’ as legitimate by originating carriers and validated by other carriers before reaching consumers.”<sup>1</sup>

Basically, STIR/SHAKEN provides a digital validation for calls passing through the web of networks. This lets the consumer’s phone company verify that a call is actually coming from the number shown on caller ID.

<sup>1</sup> [FCC](#)



This type of system would make it much harder for scammers to trick consumers into answering their phones by illegally spoofing a caller ID. It would also make it easier for consumers and law enforcement to identify the source of illegal robocalls, with the goal of reducing the number of these types of calls and their impact.

Ultimately, what makes this all possible is call attestation. STIR/SHAKEN has a three-level system to categorize the essential information about the caller into levels of “attestation” for the call. These attestation levels characterize a caller’s right to use a particular number. Calls with the highest level of validation will receive an “**A**” rating, with “**B**” and “**C**” ratings given for calls where the identity of the caller cannot be 100% verified.



- **STIR/SHAKEN**  
Attestation Levels

➤ **A attestation**

*Calls must originate on carrier's own network  
Carrier has directly authenticated the caller  
Carrier has verified caller's right to use number*

➤ **B attestation**

*Carrier has directly authenticated the caller  
Cannot verify caller's right to use number*

➤ **C attestation**

*Carrier has authenticated where it received call  
Cannot authenticate the call source (e.g. International Gateway)*

## How will STIR/SHAKEN impact my operations?

If you're not prepared, the new STIR/SHAKEN standards could have a significant impact on your contact center because of the increased risks of call blocking.

Will your calls be blocked and what can you do about it? How will your calls be signed and do you need to sign your own calls? Will you still be able to reach new customers? These are all important questions to be asking with the FCC's deadline for STIR/SHAKEN less than a year away.

June 30, 2021

## Deadline for telecom providers to implement STIR/SHAKEN standards

As an enterprise that relies on both your carrier and service provider, you need to ensure that both entities are being proactive about the upcoming rule changes. Is your service provider proactively engaged in implementing the necessary changes and requirements? Are they collaborating with carriers to ensure there is a plan in place?

The last thing you want to do is assume everything will be taken care of and you don't have anything to worry about as the deadline approaches. Due diligence is a requirement for call center operators to ensure there's momentum toward reaching the goal of applying digital certificates to every call.

Nobody really knows for sure at this point if your calls will be blocked right out of the gate if you don't have a token for those calls. But what will happen is that your level of attestation will be lowered if you don't have arrangements in place to have your token at the highest level from call inception. So when you make your outbound dial, if you leave it up to the carriers, they may apply a lower token level—or no token—on your call which would lower the chances of call delivery. Carriers may end up blocking your lower-level or no attestation calls. They might not. At this point, it's still up in the air.



## More than 500 apps allow customers to flag numbers as Spam, Scam, Nuisance, Political, Collection Call, etc.

What this all means is that by itself, STIR/SHAKEN won't block any telephone calls. But when it's fully implemented, customers and service providers might choose to block calls that come from an unverifiable caller ID. Just ask yourself: when you don't know who's calling, do you answer the phone?



## What do I need to do about STIR/SHAKEN?

To ensure your calls get through to your customers and to start preparing for compliance with STIR/SHAKEN, there are a handful of strategies you can start employing right now.



### Contact your carriers and service providers:

Some telecom carriers and technology service providers, including LiveVox, are offering help with implementing STIR/SHAKEN. Reach out to a trusted partner now instead of waiting until it's too late. You can start by finding out if your technology platform is currently capable of supporting STIR/SHAKEN requirements.



### Inventory your phone numbers:

Which numbers are you going to be using to make calls? Will these numbers cause problems? Before you start making calls, it's crucial to know the answers to these two questions. Every telephone carrier uses data analytics to decide if calls should be blocked—and some carriers are more aggressive than others. If you haven't taken inventory of your outbound numbers, this could potentially lead to AI falsely labeling your calls as spam, which would make it harder for you to reach customers.



### Validate your phone numbers:

Make sure you validate your calling numbers with multiple carriers—and their analytics partners—to help limit call blocking. This is a crucial, can't-skip step in getting your contact center ready for STIR/SHAKEN. At LiveVox, we can provide you with your own caller ID numbers, ensuring that the numbers you're using are legitimately provisioned by your service provider and/or telecom carrier. It's a strong step toward maintaining the highest level of attestation required by the new rules.



### Understand your equipment:

How well do you understand the platform that you're using to deliver calls to your customers? Work with your service provider to ensure your platform is up to date from both a hardware and software standpoint. Without the right equipment, you might not be able to generate and transmit the attestation tokens required by STIR/SHAKEN. With LiveVox, you won't need to do any expensive, complicated, or time-intensive upgrades to successfully do STIR/SHAKEN on our platform.



### Confirm signing authority:

Make sure you're using a technology provider that has signing authority, which is a third party trusted by all service providers. This way, you can know that your calls will be much more likely to receive an "A" attestation rating from the carrier, which shows that the signing authority is fully confident in your use and authority. The best case scenario is that your technology provider already has an implementation plan in place and that they're actively working to make it happen.



FCC Chairman | Ajit Pai

*American consumers are sick and tired of unwanted robocalls, this consumer among them. Caller ID authentication will be a significant step towards ending the scourge of spoofed robocalls. It's time for carriers to implement robust caller ID authentication.*

### What will happen if I don't do anything about STIR/SHAKEN?

Not doing anything is not a wise option. You'd be putting yourself in the worst possible position by not being prepared to ensure your calls are going to be delivered. Sitting on the sidelines will only have a negative impact on your operations.

You could potentially be lowering the level of trust that you have with your clients and their customers who you're trying to contact. This may ultimately result in lower contact rates, reduced client satisfaction, decreased efficiencies across the board, more operational questions from your clients—the list goes on.

It could significantly impact your entire operation if you're not sure if your calls are going to be delivered within the framework that's being mandated by the FCC. You can't sit around hoping and waiting for your service provider or carrier to do something about STIR/SHAKEN. You need to be proactive.



## Best Practices

### › **What are the best practices for STIR/SHAKEN implementation?**

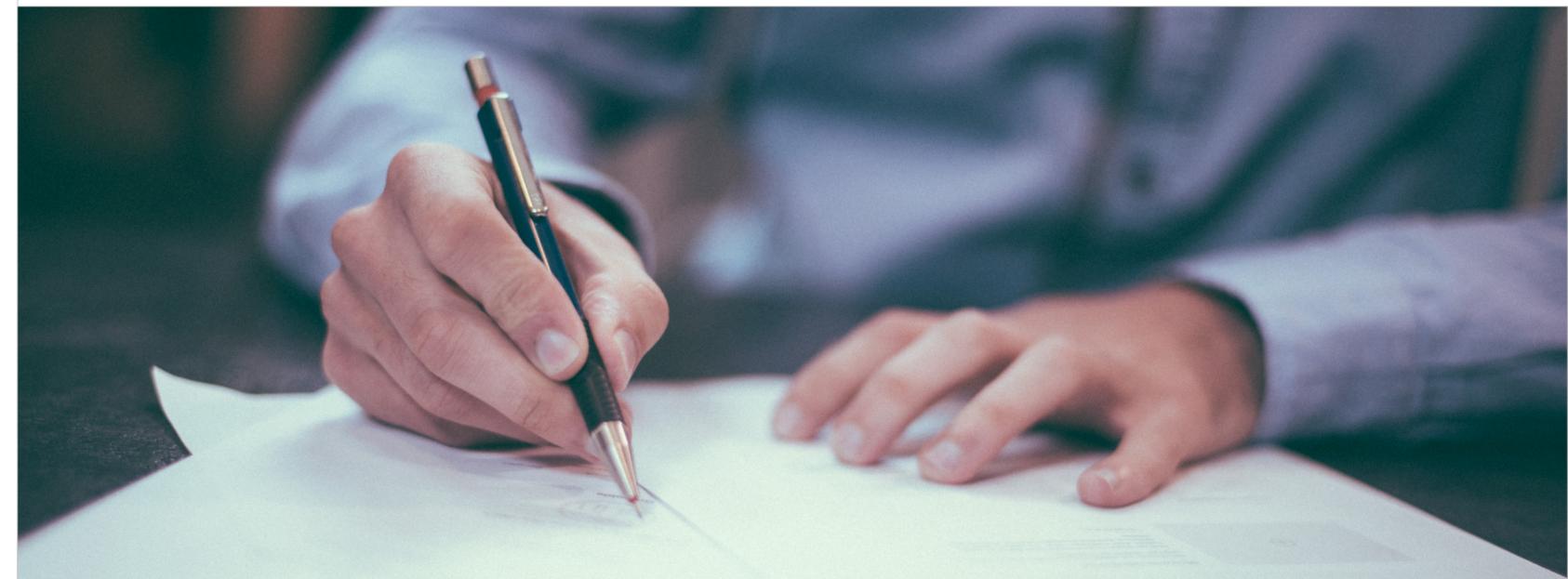
It all starts with your technology provider. Is your current platform capable of supporting STIR/SHAKEN? Do you understand your platform enough to establish trust with your provider? For a contact center, customer trust starts at the core of your operations, and that's with your calling technology.

You need to engage your technology provider and understand what they're doing to get ready for STIR/SHAKEN implementation. You have to know what, if anything, needs to be done with your platform—hardware and/or software—to ensure that you'll be able to meet the new requirements.

It's also important to ensure that you're using legitimate caller ID numbers for your business that are provisioned by your carrier, and that you're authorized to use by your service provider and your clients. If you're not, you can ultimately be fined, with precedent existing in call spoofing and spam calling court cases. There can be real monetary penalties involved for not using authorized caller ID numbers.

### › **The FTC has brought more than 100 lawsuits against over 600 companies and individuals responsible for billions of illegal robocalls and other Do Not Call violations**

Another key consideration is to make sure you're not oversaturating your customers with unnecessary calls. Watch out that you aren't over-dialing because your contact rates could easily go down. Instead, think about adjusting your call cadence or assigning a specific number of caller IDs per agent. The most important thing is to have a flexible strategy that enables you to adjust to changes and maintain your contact rates.



## > How can LiveVox help me with STIR/SHAKEN?

### Finding #1

#### **Break it down:**

We can help you understand STIR/SHAKEN from a technology perspective—both software and hardware. Our goal is to help you simplify this potentially complicated subject.

### Finding #2

#### **Experts at the ready:**

We're here to assist with questions regarding your own STIR/SHAKEN readiness and guide you on strategic and operational best practices. You can reach out to our operational and consulting experts anytime.

### Finding #3

#### **Make smart changes:**

We can help you implement the necessary process or platform changes you need to make on your side, if any, to stay ahead of STIR/SHAKEN. This way, you can start evaluating and evolving now, before it's too late.

### Finding #4

#### **Be proactive:**

To date, we've been actively engaged in STIR/SHAKEN preparations for more than three years. You can be sure we're taking the necessary legal and operational steps, as required by the FCC, to ensure we're ready for upcoming changes—and we can pass that same proactive security posture on to you.

### Finding #5

#### **The right technology:**

As a technology provider, we're already taking the steps necessary to directly interface with STIR/SHAKEN requirements. We're implementing STIR/SHAKEN natively into our IP-based platform to be a direct participant in the new regulations. When you partner with us, you can know your voice technology will keep you ahead of the curve.

### Finding #6

#### **Monitor contact rates and outcomes:**

At LiveVox, we proactively monitor Local Caller ID (LCID) effectiveness and impact on your contact rates for you. By evaluating answer rates and call outcomes, we're able to review trends and give you suggestions to positively impact your operations.

### Finding #7

#### **Ensure verification of numbers:**

We provision new LCID packages with verified phone numbers when needed, ensuring all numbers are vetted before putting them into production for you. This further optimizes the effectiveness of outreach to your customers with clean phone numbers that were not previously blacklisted.

### Finding #8

#### **Configure intelligent routing:**

LiveVox enables you to configure intelligent routing for incoming calls based on the attestation level assigned by the carrier ("A", "B", or "C"). Strategize and handle inbound calls differently depending on attestation level. Use IVR and skills-based routing to fight potentially fraudulent calls.

## > How can LiveVox help me with STIR/SHAKEN?

Finding #9

### **Engage the FCC:**

We've registered with the FCC to proactively implement the STIR/SHAKEN framework. This enables us to provide confirmation for call origination, ultimately helping you to establish better trust with your customers.

Finding #10

### **Measure the metrics:**

We actively keep track of critical contact center metrics for you and proactively minimize the impact of call blocking. This means we're able to evaluate KPIs to ensure you're communicating effectively with your customers and to help you maintain efficient contact numbers.

Finding #11

### **It's all about trust:**

We can help you maintain the trust of your customers with our proactive approach to STIR/SHAKEN throughout the telephony ecosystem, which includes carriers, regulatory agencies, service providers, analytics companies, as well as industry forums and organizations.



## WRAP UP

Two recommendations stand out above all else. First, stay educated about STIR/SHAKEN to avoid any unexpected surprises or challenges. Second, be proactive in your preparations to stay in line with the changes. Keep an eye on the latest updates with the STIR/SHAKEN standards and take the right steps to address issues, especially now that the June 30, 2021 deployment deadline has passed.

**We repeat, don't wait.** Don't be reactive to these changes. LiveVox is here to answer your questions about the new rules and procedures. With the right answers to guide you, and the right partner to help you get ready for STIR/SHAKEN, your contact center, your operations, and your bottom line will be much better off.

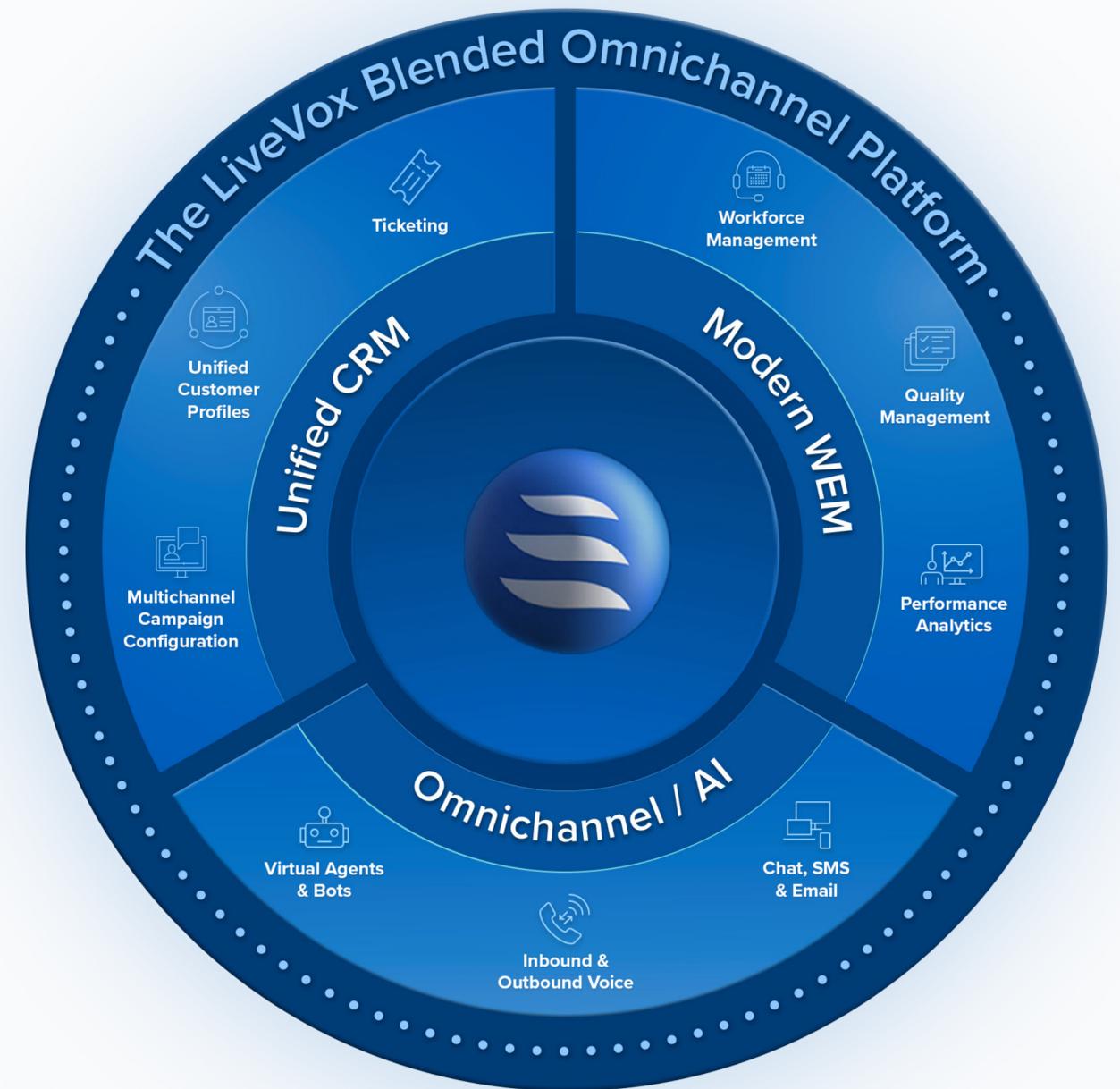


## About LiveVox

LiveVox is a next-generation contact center platform that powers more than 14 Billion interactions a year. We seamlessly integrate omnichannel communications, CRM, and WFO capabilities to deliver an exceptional agent and customer experience, while reducing compliance risk. Our reliable, easy-to-use technology enables effective engagement strategies on communication channels of choice as well as quality management programs to drive performance in your contact center.

*LiveVox clients maximize their potential in an ever-changing business environment with a single view of the customer while also using our battle-tested risk mitigation and security tools.*

With 20 years of pure cloud expertise LiveVox is at the forefront of contact center innovation. Our more than 450 global employees are headquartered in San Francisco; with offices in Atlanta; Denver; New York City; St. Louis; Medellin, Colombia; and Bangalore, India.





**LIVEVOX**

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