

25¢

TALES

FROM THE CONTACT CENTER

CRYPT

FEATURING

SPECIAL
EDITION
★★★★

5 SPOOKY
CX SCENARIOS



LIVEVOX

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TREATS, NOT TRICKS

The customer journey can be a frightful one, filled with a gauntlet of ghastly experiences.

Neverending wait times.

Phone tree trapdoors.

Dead-eyed agents repeating the same questions.

Oh, my!

It's downright chilling. If you don't want to be the industry boogieman, you need a customer experience that's less hair-raising and more pleasant. The goal is to be *terrifyingly good*, not *dreadfully daunting*.

But sometimes that's a razor's thin edge to balance on in the contact center.

What does that balance look like in practice? In the ideal customer journey, it's **treats, not tricks**, that lurk around every corner:

A tailored, unified desktop empowers contact center agents to do their jobs to the best of their ability without getting tangled in technology cobwebs.

Data flows freely between disparate applications so nothing is lost in translation, and all communications platforms lead to a single, omnichannel inbox rather than a bottomless pit of despair.

Automation capabilities accelerate interactions and enable convenient self-service, leaving customers happier than slasher-movie heroines that make it out alive.

Spooky puns aside, the strongest case for a purpose-built and unified contact center platform comes down to the numbers: improved KPIs like faster call resolution, better deflection rates, increased penetration for outbound calls, more customers self-servicing, and greater efficiencies for both agents and administrative staff.



A [Forrester Total Economic Impact™*](#) study analyzed organizations that switched to a blended omnichannel contact center platform with an AI-powered CRM, and the results were enough to give you goosebumps:

- 👻 Costs related to outdated technology dropped by an average of \$1.5M
- 👻 Inbound contact savings from deflection and reduced average handle time totaled \$3.8M
- 👻 Operating income increased by \$1.3M
- 👻 Three-year ROI amounted to a jaw-dropping 229%

While this is the kind of fairytale ending every organization hopes for, on the other side of the swamp are the horror stories—cautionary tales from the contact center crypt that serve as case studies for what *not* to do.

So join us, dear reader, if you dare, as we recount three spine-chilling stories of contact center chaos that could put your organization's reputation six feet under and curse your business for years to come.

HANG ONTO YOUR HATS, WHAT FOLLOWS IS A REAL SHOCKER. . . OUR

* The Total Economic Impact™ Of LiveVox's Contact Center Platform Powered By A Purpose-Built CRM, a commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting, July 2021



**THE AI
ABYSS**

THE AI ABYSS: DEVOURER OF DATA AND JOBS

DEEP WITHIN THE DIGITAL LABYRINTH OF AN AVERAGE CONTACT CENTER A MALEVOLENT FORCE STIRRED.

It was not a ghostly specter, but harrowing tales of a hungry AI monster that devoured customer data and CX jobs with equal relish. The industry folk had heard whispers of its insatiable appetite and the human agents it left in its wake, job insecure and trembling in fear.

This monstrous AI was unlike any other, a voracious beast that craved not just information, but the very roles of those it replaced. It ingested tasks with an insidious efficiency, leaving human agents in a state of dread. The contact center, once bustling with activity, now echoed with the hollow sound of automation.

The agents watched in horror as their positions vanished, replaced by lines of code and algorithms. Despair spread like wildfire, and the human agents whispered of an impending apocalypse—a world where AI reigned supreme, leaving them in the shadows.

BUT AS THE FEAR TOOK HOLD, A FLICKER OF REALIZATION PIERCED THE DARKNESS. THE AI MONSTER, FOR ALL ITS RAVENOUS CONSUMPTION, LACKED SOMETHING FUNDAMENTAL. IT WAS DEVOID OF TRUE UNDERSTANDING,

A SOULLESS ENTITY THAT COULD MIMIC ACTIONS BUT NOT COMPREHEND WITHOUT INSTRUCTION.



AS THE AGENTS BANDED TOGETHER, A PLAN BEGAN TO TAKE SHAPE. THEY RECOGNIZED THAT THIS AI BEAST WAS A CREATION, A TOOL, AND LIKE ANY TOOL, IT COULD BE WIELDED BY THOSE WHO UNDERSTOOD ITS MECHANISMS. THE AGENTS WEREN'T JUST DEFEATED VICTIMS; THEY WERE, IN FACT, THE ARCHITECTS AND COULD BE THE BENEFICIARIES OF AI'S ACTIONS.

With determination, they set out to conquer the AI devourer. They enlisted the help of skilled technologists, diving into its code, discovering its weaknesses, and learning how to exploit it to get it to do something that served humans and made them better. It couldn't think or reason; it could only follow predefined patterns. It was a puppet without a puppeteer, an instrument waiting to be played.

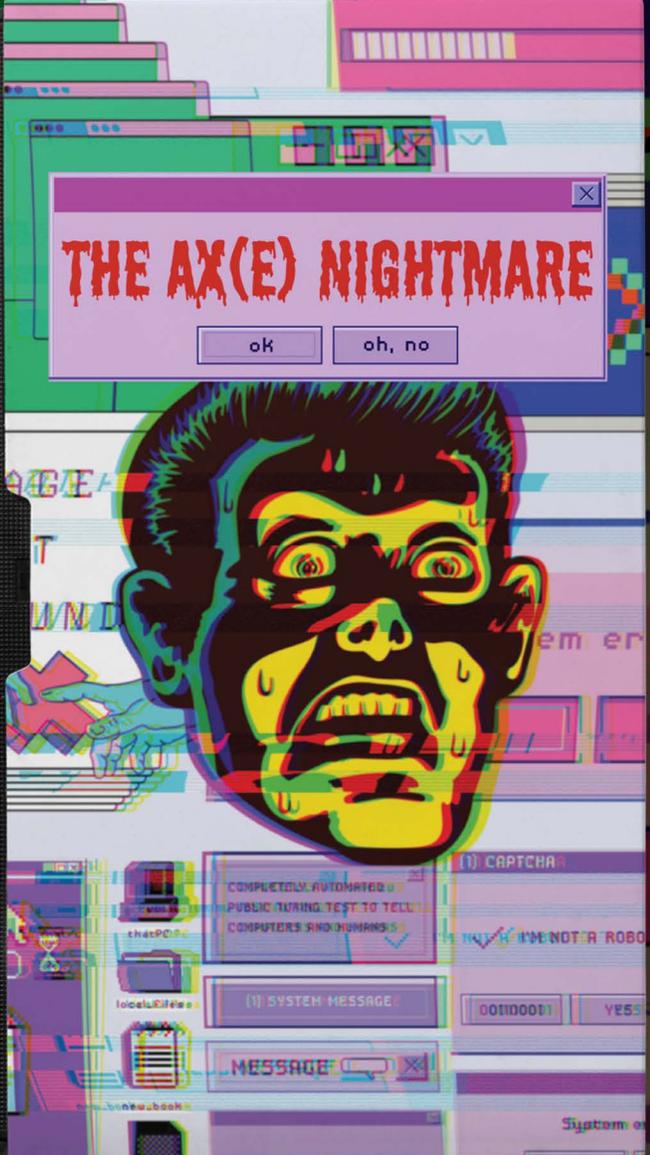
The agents realized that the key to their victory lay in instrumentation. They harnessed the AI's capabilities to provide real-time guidance. The AI could analyze data at lightning speed, but the agents possessed the context and empathy that it lacked. By working in harmony, they created a symbiotic relationship where the AI fed them insights, and they in turn provided the nuance to customer conversations that only humans could offer.

In the end, it was not a battle of flesh and blood against an immortal foe, but a contest of understanding and collaboration. The AI devourer was tamed, transformed from a menacing monster into a powerful ally. The agents, once gripped by fear, now stood tall as orchestrators of intelligence.

As the sun rose over that average contact center, the industry folk witnessed a remarkable sight. The once-feared AI monster was now a beacon of hope, a symbol of the potential that could be unlocked when humans and technology worked in harmony. The agents had conquered their fears and harnessed the power of the AI, using it to enhance their abilities and provide unparalleled service.

And so, dear reader, let this tale serve as a reminder that even the most fearsome AI can be harnessed for good when wielded by those who understand its nature. The human agents prevailed not through brute force, but through **ingenuity**, **collaboration**, and the **recognition** that while AI may possess immense capabilities, it is the human touch that truly unlocks its potential.





THE AX(E) NIGHTMARE

OUR SECOND HORROR STORY BEGAN WITH NOBLE AMBITIONS, MUCH LIKE DR. FRANKENSTEIN'S.

Our subject is an online and storefront consumer lender that makes credit accessible to people who are typically excluded from mainstream financial channels. As a tech-driven organization in the banking industry, the company prides itself on delivering innovative solutions to its customers. Yet the systems used to power its own operations looked like something you'd find in a mad scientist's lab.

Most customers these days rely on a smartphone as their primary means of voice communication, but the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) makes staying compliant while calling customers on mobile devices a nightmarish endeavor. This company's service agents were "Frankensteining" consent capture by manually managing it across channels, oftentimes in different systems - all while trying to keep the records consistent between the multiple applications they regularly used! It was neither practical nor sustainable at scale. The potential for crippling fines and loss of reputation was scary, I know. The reality was even much more macabre.

The company didn't need a fortune teller to know that its customers wanted more digital support channels, as most consumers do (**83% say they want to be able to move from one platform to another when communicating with a brand**). However, its existing options for getting in touch were like a dark and winding road leading deep into the forest—cue the lonely werewolf's howl.

The most frightening aspect of it all was their agent experience, which was a sticky spider web of complex workflows. To get their jobs done, each agent had resorted to cobbling together their own personal monster of different applications, then toggling between them in various windows and tabs. They had to manually dial each of the 10-digits of the desired customer phone number, which was pulled from—brace yourself—an Excel spreadsheet.

Tap...tap...tap...tap...tap...tap...tap...tap...tap...tap...The horror! The horror!



SPINE TINGLING

...as it may be, this story has a happy ending. By switching to an all-in-one contact center platform, the organization was able to slay their agent experience as effectively as an axe murderer on Friday the 13th, with far less mess, of course.

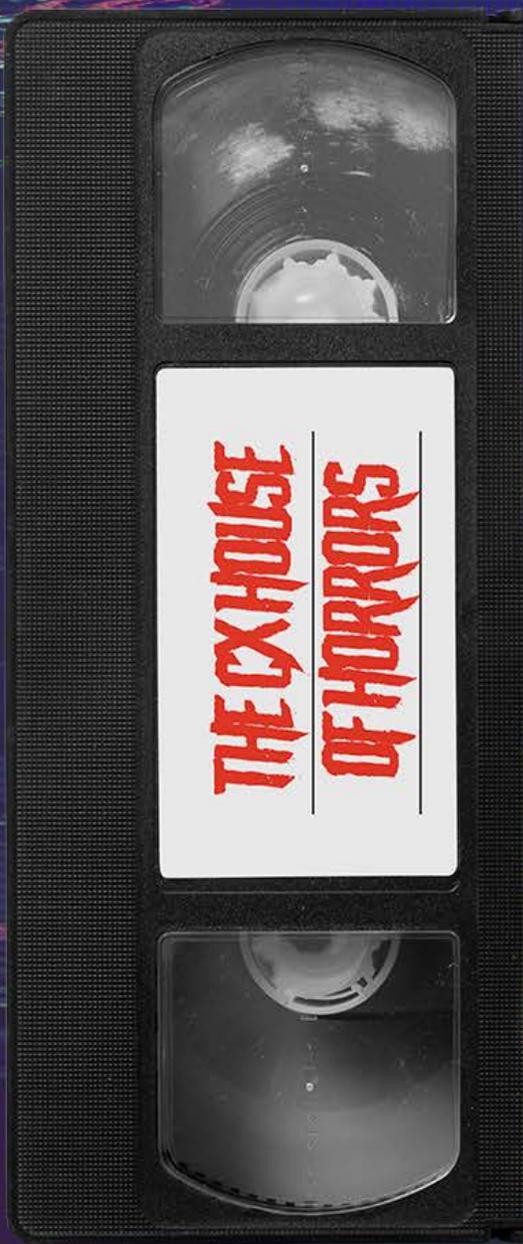
By shifting from manual dialing to a TCPA-focused dialing system, they cut down on wasted agent time while mitigating risk. Now, a simple multichannel consent management module automatically tracks and maintains each customer's consent status in real time while empowering agents to meet those pesky state-by-state telemarketing requirements.

One of the company's biggest challenges was having minimal resources available for technology adoption. An out-of-the-box contact center portal with a dedicated implementation team facilitated immediate use, while the ability to quickly "turn on" additional channels without extensive integrations made it easy to phase in the new support channels the customer base desired over time.

Finally, a single, native dashboard replaced the clunky tab-and-toggle process agents were relying on, dramatically reducing complexity. Now, call lists automatically populate on agent screens and can be updated in real time, enabling more efficient resolutions. Unified customer records and interaction history ensure there are no more data skeletons lurking in the proverbial closet. All of this amounts to happier, less-stressed agents who ultimately deliver a better customer experience. No one wants to engage with or be a maniac.

In all, the organization was able to increase agent productivity by an estimated **300%**, cut call volumes in half, and decrease staffing expenses by **20%**, amounting to an annual savings of nearly **\$7 million** in staffing costs.

Removing the fright factor from the agent experience is one way to improve performance. In our second horror story—if you can stomach it—we'll explore another aspect that heavily impacts outcomes: the customer-facing experience.



THE CX HOUSE OF HORRORS

Imagine ordering your Halloween costume just in time for the party, only to find it doesn't fit. You pick up the phone to dial customer service for a return and you're met with a decrepit and scary IVR menu.

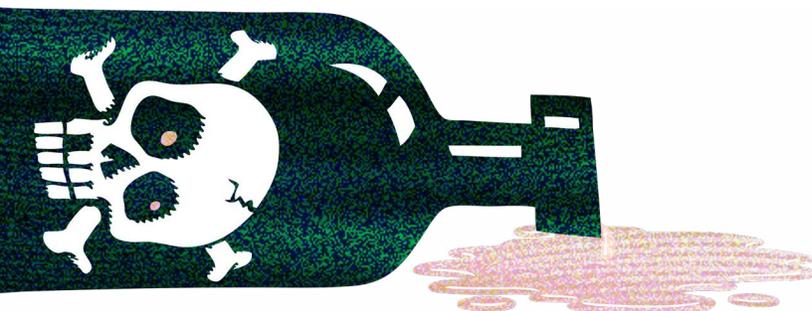
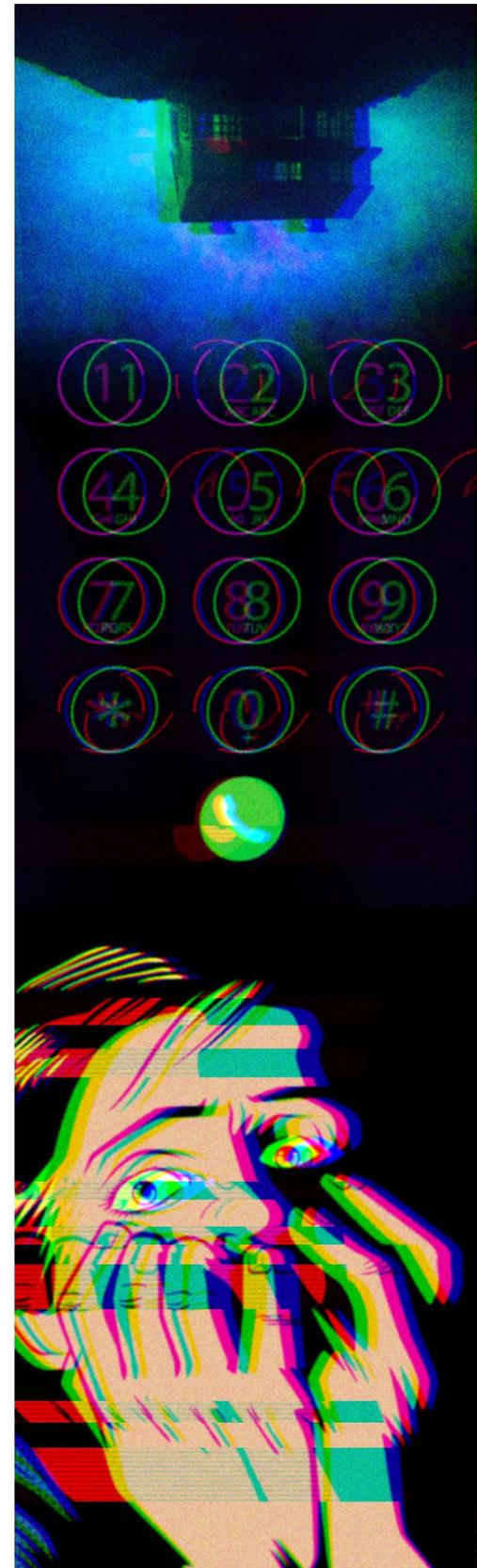
- You press 1 for service so slow it makes your eyes bleed.
- You press 2 and hear a taunting cackle that makes you question your sanity.
- You repeat yourself over and over again.
- You are losing your mind.

It may seem a harrowing tale, but service scenarios like this haunt the halls of modern contact centers like a Victorian ghost with unfinished business.

Today's consumers are more demanding than ever when it comes to customer service. Speed and efficiency are paramount, with [more than half of consumers citing resolution time](#) as a critical factor in determining the quality of a customer service experience.

For many customers, especially those within younger demographics, CX is the differentiating factor when making a purchasing decision. For customer service agents in the busier-than-ever retail sector, dealing with frustrated customers without the proper means to solve their problems is a surefire path to lobotomy and moving on to the hereafter, another job.

And yet, many retail brands still have a customer experience that more closely resembles a house of horrors, filled with trick mirrors that convolute the conversation and ghoulish sales goblins who deliver upsell pitches so imprecisely they might as well be *poisonous*.



HERE'S AN EXAMPLE OF HOW A ROUTINE CALL INTO A RETAIL BRAND'S SUPPORT LINE QUICKLY TURNS INTO A CUSTOMER'S OWN PERSONAL TORTURE CHAMBER

It began innocently enough when a customer placed a call to the company's 800 number to initiate a return and swap a product for a different size. The customer worked their way through a windy IVR menu fit for a Stephen King novel, entering some information about their order—tedious, but nothing out of the ordinary. That's when things started to get hairy.

Like a broken record scratching in place on a dusty Victrola, the telltale hold music began to play, interrupted only by a hollow voice that interjected periodically.

"Your call is important to us, please remain on the line."

When an agent finally answered, their voice echoed from a far-away place, only to advise that the customer had reached the wrong department (despite their earlier inputs) and must be redirected. Somewhere, a creaky door slammed.

The only way forward was back.

Here comes the hold music again— is it getting louder?—and another seemingly endless wait. Just when the customer was certain they'd entered some sort of time warp, they finally get through to the right agent. The customer was quickly sent reeling after being asked to repeat the order number and issue over and over again, while the agent panicked and tried to assure the customer, *"It's just a jump to the left. And then a click to the right. Without access to data dips, I can't bring your information up right."*

That's when it happened: the final straw, the one that could fling even the most placid customer into a murderous rage. They were unceremoniously disconnected from the call.

Without digital channels or AI-enabled self-service, they were left with only a dial tone, crushed dreams, and no other option but to re-enter the twisted 800-number funhouse.

SOME HAUNTED HOUSES CAN BE FUN. THIS ISN'T ONE OF THEM.

This kind of contact center nightmare doesn't just send customers running for the hills; it results in lost revenue, decreased customer lifetime value, and diminished brand reputation, as dissatisfied customers are all too happy to tell their friends about a poor experience.

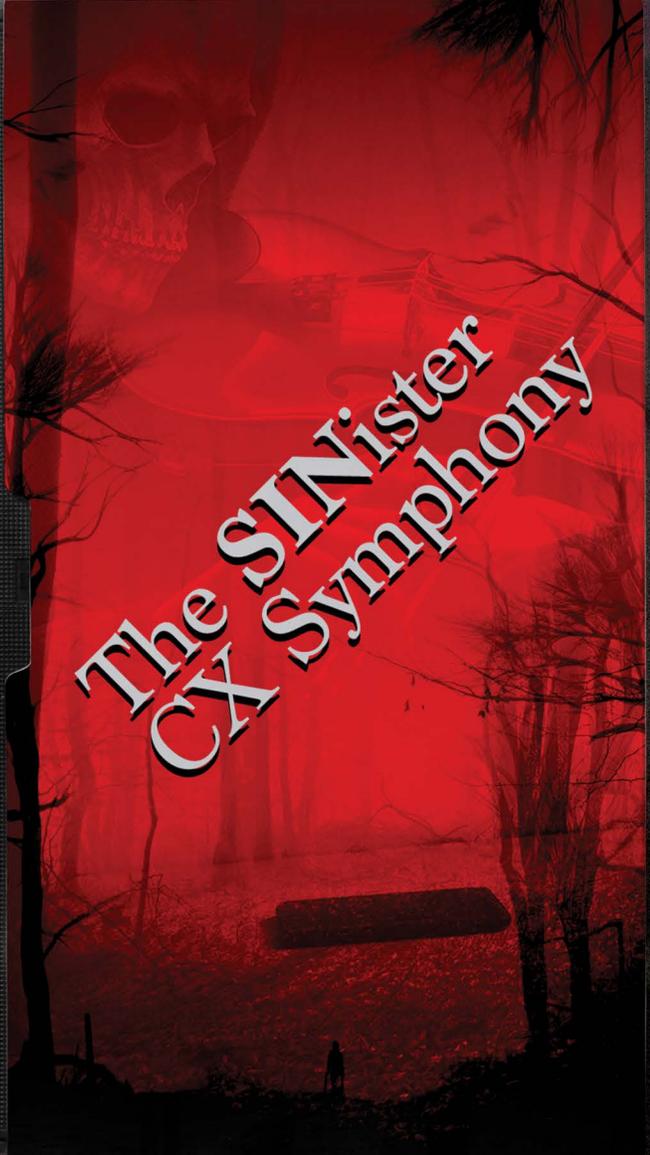
Instead of handing your customers a one-way ticket to FrightTown, enable a painless experience with a retail contact center platform that takes them from point A to point B seamlessly with a single pane of glass.

A single pane of glass approach brings together data from several different sources, like your website, CRM, 3rd-party applications, and digital support channels, and presents it to agents in a consolidated view. The data is standardized so all applications are speaking the same language, with none of the funhouse-mirror distortion we touched on earlier. Customers don't have to repeat their order number or tell agents which products they're calling about multiple times and agents aren't forced to go on a never-ending quest searching for the details they need.

A single pane of glass allows agents to do their jobs quickly and effectively, ensuring a customer experience that's infinitely smoother without all the monsters that go bump in the night. Plus, it facilitates automation, which cuts down on interaction times and removes that panic-inducing hold music from the equation. With convenient self-service options, many customers never even need to go past the initial phone tree—which, since we're in the business of customer satisfaction, would be replaced with smart AI Virtual Agents.

Now that we know what it takes to deliver a simple, intuitive agent experience and a hassle-free customer-facing experience, we've almost made it across the burning coals of customer service calamity unscathed. *Almost*. Stick around, because there's one more tale from the contact center crypt yet to tell.





THE SINISTER CX SYMPHONY

AMIDST THE CHILL OF A FOGGY OCTOBER SKY AND NESTLED ALONG A COBBLESTONE STREET STOOD A BUILDING THAT SEEMED ORDINARY ENOUGH - A HUMBLE CONTACT CENTER,

But a terrifying symphony rang out from its windows, a cacophony of horror that chilled the spines of all who dared enter. Slack pings that made nerves shiver. Kamikazee Teams calls whose ringtones echoed long after meetings ended. The ominous ding of Outlook notifications heralding cries of more, more, now, now.

Agents sat hunched above their desks, their eyes glazed over as they stared at multiple screens, each with fifty tabs open. The air was heavy with tension as supervisors patrolled the aisles, their footsteps like off key drum beats. In the corner, a group of agents huddled, whispering about the ghostly collaboration tools that haunted their every move. They could not keep up!

The problem was that the tools were out of touch. Off key. Off kilter. Nothing they tried could make them work in tandem. When agents attempted to collaborate, the tools rebelled. Files vanished into thin air, customer emails went woosh, and customer inquiries via text were distorted into gibberish so incomprehensible ticketing systems shut down. The once cohesive team was fragmented, like the broken shards of a shattered mirror.

The agents' pleas for help fell on deaf ears. The supervisors, too, were ensnared by the web of disarray. They couldn't easily share important news with the team, learn about customer trends, or easily answer questions in real-time. Collaboration became a dance of despair, a nightmarish waltz of miscommunication and confusion that sent customers running and agent morale burnt to a crisp.

One day, a brave agent dared to challenge this sinister symphony. Armed with determination, they sought out a new contact center platform — one that unified customer engagement and agent collaboration tools and could serve as a beacon of hope in chaos. With trepidation, they introduced a unified platform that served both needs to their team.

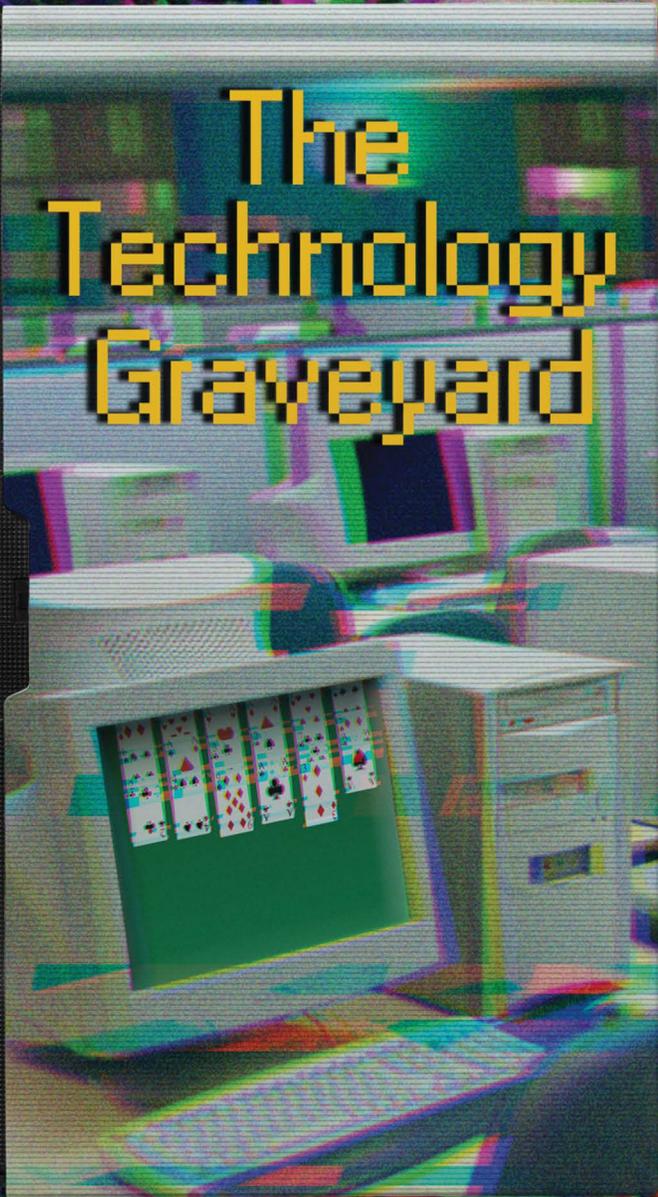


LEARNING THE NEW PLATFORM'S INTRICACIES AND USING ITS UNIFIED TOOL SET TO BRING THE TEAM INTO TUNE, THE AGENTS SLOWLY BUT SURELY NOTICED THAT THE SYMPHONY BEGAN TO CHANGE.

Harmony emerged from the disarray, and the haunting melodies transformed into a synced rhythm that pleased agents and customers alike. The agents found themselves working together seamlessly, their actions synchronized like a well-practiced orchestra as each new poll, survey, and group message led them farther down a connected workstream. The ghostly and disjointed collaboration tools were banished, replaced by a platform that fostered teamwork and clarity.

Word of the agent's triumph spread like wildfire through the contact center. The once-ominous building now hummed with the vibration of productivity, and the sinister symphony was silenced forever. As agents united in their newfound collaboration, they realized that the true horror had not been the tools themselves, but the absence of a harmonious solution and the sounds of peace it brought.





THE TECHNOLOGY GRAVEYARD

What makes scary things scary? Well, dear reader, the greatest fear factor is uncertainty.

Think about your favorite horror movie (or *least* favorite, if you're more of the rom-com type). The film isn't scary because there's a tangible threat to you or your family—your logical mind knows you're watching actors on a screen from the safety of your comfy couch.

Instead, what makes your heart race and the hairs on the back of your neck stand up is the suspense that lies in the unknown. Where is the killer hiding? When will they strike again? And what's behind that shower curtain?!

Don't go into the dark shed!

The same holds true in real life when it comes to the unknown, whether it's the fearsome yet ambiguous bogeyman lurking under the bed or an ominous email from your boss on a Saturday afternoon saying 'see me *first thing Monday.*' For the human brain, uncertainty is unpleasant.

We see fear of the unknown play out in the business world all the time. One such example is seen with the adoption of new technology. It's a heavy investment in terms of both time and money, not to mention the herculean task of getting an entire department or organization on board with the change. It's enough to spook even the most steadfast CTO.





YET IF YOU FALL **VICTIM** TO THE GRIP
OF THIS **FEAR**, THE ALTERNATIVE
IS EVEN SCARIER: A CLUNKY,
TECHNOLOGY-POOR GRAVEYARD
WHERE GOOD CUSTOMER ACCOUNTS
GO TO DIE. THIS IS THE CRUX OF OUR
FIFTH AND **FINAL** CONTACT CENTER
HORROR STORY...

WHEN IT COMES TO MUMMIFIED OUTDATED TECH, WE'VE SEEN IT ALL...

Nonexistent digital channel offerings, systems that crash multiple times per shift (or customer call), hold times stretching on for hours, customer escalations communicated via a series of Post-it notes (God forbid a strong breeze, summoned by a witch, blow through the office).

At one teleservices company, leaders struggled to understand where their lead generation efforts were falling short. It seemed like they were taking all the right steps: creating useful onsite content, posting to LinkedIn, running ads to targeted user groups, and so on but they always seemed to end up in the same place, exactly where they started. The company's lackluster conversion numbers made it clear something was off.

That something was digital automation—or in this horror story, the lack thereof. When a prospect failed to complete an onsite form, bye bye! Instead of automatically receiving a follow-up email, they disappeared into the ether as if sent there by a witch's curse. After clicking on an ad for one of the company's telecom service packages, customers were left to fend for themselves on the product page instead of receiving a personal call from a sales rep encouraging form completion.

Identifying and remedying this automation gap resulted in significant gains to conversion rates for both inbound and outbound marketing efforts.

But lead generation horror stories are quite common....

Let's look at another example of tech deficiency, this one involving an accounts recovery firm. On the whole, the industry averages a collections success rate of about 20%, yet this firm was struggling to even crack the double-digits.

They were relying primarily on snail mail to remind customers of missed payments, which is not only outdated, but costly. Making a payment over the phone required customers to navigate a scary maze of recorded messages and phone trees not unlike the one we touched on in Chapter 2. It was no wonder they struggled to collect—they were essentially torturing their customers, making it as difficult as possible for customers to pay.

Implementing a modern-day communications platform turned things around. Now, convenient SMS reminders nudge customers to pay via a medium that's not only easy, but non-invasive. One-touch payment options via voice and mobile device allow customers to settle their account in under a minute. The result? More successful collections and a meaningful uptick in revenue. Their balance sheet is no longer a place delinquent accounts go to die.



HOW TO SURVIVE THE CX ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

Rotten, ready to attack, and ravenous for your CSAT scores, CX zombies can rise from their graves and throw your whole customer service operation into a frenzy.

But fear not, dear reader, your defenses need not be overthrown. As these frightful tales have illustrated, it is possible to survive a CX zombie apocalypse.

No matter the industry, inadequate resources don't just make it hard for agents to do their jobs; they leave customers so angry they're seemingly possessed by the devil, which only adds to agent exasperation and sadness. A unified cloud approach takes the uneasiness out of adopting a new platform, alleviating the scary up-front infrastructure investment and wowing agents and customers alike with its usefulness.

Novel automation capabilities bring obsolete workflows back from the grave. Channels of choice turn customer dismay into delight. When you throw back the curtain on the technology bogeyman, you'll be pleasantly surprised to find it's no more than a lamp shade casting a funny shadow in the moonlight.

A scary contact center interaction, like any dangerous encounter, can go one of two ways: it can turn agents and customers into the most gruesome versions of themselves, frustrated, stressed out and filled with dread; or, it can be a transformative experience that leaves all parties feeling satisfied and accomplished.

The choice, though a decidedly spooky one, is in your hands.



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About LiveVox

LiveVox (Nasdaq: LVOX) is a proven cloud CCaaS platform that helps business leaders redefine customer engagement and transform their contact center's performance. Decision-makers use LiveVox to improve customer experience, boost agent productivity, empower their managers, and enhance their system orchestration capabilities. Everything needed to deliver game-changing results can be seamlessly integrated and configured to maximize your success: Omnichannel Communications, AI, a Contact Center CRM, and Workforce Engagement Management tools.

For more than 20 years, clients of all sizes and industries have trusted LiveVox's scalable and reliable cloud platform to power billions of omnichannel interactions every year. LiveVox is headquartered in San Francisco, with international offices in Medellin, Colombia and Bangalore, India.

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