



MindTouch: Bringing Knowledge to Customer Interactions

A Frost & Sullivan Companies to Watch Excerpt

Companies to Watch in Customer Contact,
North America, 2019

INTRODUCTION

The Companies to Watch is a companion piece to Frost & Sullivan's 2019 Contact Center Buyers Guide (K234-76, August 2019), which examines the core areas and suppliers in the North American cloud/hosted contact center market.

In the 2018 Cloud Contact Center Buyers Guide, Frost & Sullivan noted 3 primary trends driving the customer care industry: the adoption of cloud as standard; the continuing move toward omnichannel delivery within the context of digital transformation; and a focus by providers on developing solutions that address the needs of a changing workforce.

These trends continue unabated in 2019, with further refinement. Of particular note are the following:

Hybrid Cloud. Cloud is still a given, but hybrid is a hot topic as outlined below. Companies are using the cloud not just to host contact center services but also to get a head start on innovation when rip and elevate isn't yet an option. As such, providers have adapted by:

- Continuing to bolster on-premises offerings so customers can get additional value out of their existing operations.
- Creating and stocking app stores for third-party cloud applications to deliver innovation for cloud customers and to supplement on-premises systems.
- Ensuring tight integration between cloud and on-premises applications.

WEM. Workforce engagement management made its debut as one of the key trends driving the industry in 2018 and 2019. Listen, Free, Motivate, Empower, Protect, and Enable are all descriptors of design considerations for workforce engagement.

AI. The industry has finally reached the edge of the hype cycle for the umbrella term artificial intelligence

(AI) and is actively harnessing a set of AI technologies to infuse intelligence across the customer contact landscape. Just as important, key providers in this guide are learning how to properly market and position their AI wares in addition to building professional services and consulting resources to assist customers with strategic AI plans.

Frost & Sullivan found that these trends are continuing to drive deep change in the industry; for buyers, that means the competitive landscape remains as complex and difficult to navigate as ever.

COMPANIES TO WATCH

A more recent addition to the Contact Center Buyers Guide is a Companies to Watch section with a sampling of companies that Frost & Sullivan has identified as representative of the changing nature of customer contact—each with the potential to take customer care to a higher level. These companies were in either an emerging area without enough traction to warrant a separate market share and forecast report or an entirely new category.

One such emerging area is knowledge management (KM). For over two decades KM has been used in enterprises to create, manage and disseminate knowledge about people, processes and technology. The right KM platform blends content such as product documentation, user guides and manuals, FAQs, help and support documents, technical content and other information, for use in supporting customers and the agents who assist them. When applied to the contact center, KM can also supply additional insights into the customer journey that can be added to the vast amount of data generated by customer interactions.

For example, in a technical support scenario, the data about the equipment, history and actions associated with troubleshooting issues, best practices and interaction history, specifications, and other information are all sources of knowledge that can be mined to improve the customer and agent experience. This area is increasingly important given the changing nature of consumers who self-serve to purchase and troubleshoot before escalating to a live agent, and who increasingly demand higher levels of service once they get there. The area also has gained in importance as available information increases in volume exponentially every day, making it difficult to access without the proper tools.

Good knowledge management solutions, fueled by technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, have the potential to dramatically affect both customer and agent experience by providing the right information at the right time on self-service channels and during customer/agent interactions. With quick access to the right information at the point of need, these solutions can reduce call handle time, increase operational efficiencies, increase case deflection, reduce costs, and ultimately improve customer and agent satisfaction.

MINDTOUCH PROFILE

Market Challenge

Companies too often develop knowledge databases in different departments that are disconnected from other data resources. The result is silos of knowledge that are not easily searchable, scalable, or accessible from a variety of access points, such as mobile devices. This is a persistent issue despite companies' ever-increasing desire to harness more information and insights about customers, and allow customers to self-serve and get their own answers.

Company Background

Founded in 2005, MindTouch was the brainchild of Steve Bjorg and Aaron Fulkerson, who met at the Advanced Systems Research Team at Microsoft. Their goal was to design a user-friendly knowledge system that could scale; extend into CRM software, websites, product interfaces, and other data sources; and was easy to set up, manage, and use. Most importantly, however, it had to be optimized for customer self-service.

MindTouch's first premises-based solution was released in 2007, and the company went all in with a cloud-based solution in 2011. Today, the privately held company is headquartered in San Diego and has approximately 100 employees supporting 340 customers in 30 countries. It also has 43 million active users a month, with about 10 million daily interactions. The company is growing rapidly, with annual recurring revenue growth in the range of 30 to 40%.

The Knowledge Answer

MindTouch explains that its solution is “an enterprise-grade AI-powered knowledge management platform that enables organizations to intelligently capture, manage, extend, integrate, and optimize content across all channels and devices for an improved CX, increased agent productivity, enhanced operational efficiencies, and reduced costs.” The solution enables companies to provide a solid customer self-service strategy and uses ML to continuously improve. It also allows agents to provide faster and more accurate service, with fewer escalations to higher-tier support. Continuous improvement also supports training.

The Platform

The MindTouch Knowledge Management Platform is a multi-tenanted software-as-a-service solution built on AWS. MindTouch offers pre-built integrations with SAP, Zendesk, Salesforce, SugarCRM, and Genesys PureCloud so functionality can be directly embedded into familiar agent desktop user interfaces.

For customers who want to self-serve, the platform offers Google-optimized content, giving them the ability to use a familiar search tool to get the answers they need. Additional

self-service can be found on a company-branded knowledge portal that mimics the look and feel of the company's main website while providing personalized content based on search history and identity. If self-serve isn't sufficient and the customer decides to submit a trouble ticket, MindTouch can push possible solutions to try one last time at the point of ticket submission. If the customer does submit a ticket, MindTouch will pass along search history and journey information, along with suggested answers, documents, or links to data, to assist the agent with problem resolution.

One of the most attractive features of the platform is its extensibility. The platform was built to provide content wherever and whenever it's needed, including feeding it to chatbots and VAs (e.g., Google, Siri, Alexa), embedding it into mobile applications, or providing answers directly to IoT devices at the point of customer interaction (e.g., refrigerator or in-dash car displays). MindTouch TouchPoints ensure ease and speed of extensibility by providing integrations to web properties, communities, and social channels.

From inception, MindTouch built its platform using highly scalable microservices and serverless technologies. MindTouch has applied these technologies to automatically scale up or down based on site traffic and resource needs, ensuring consistently high performance. This has resulted in virtually unlimited scalability, with its platform typically handling 60 million web requests daily, serving content in the form of web pages, search results, and integration of API data. The company's highly scalable platform has netted prominent customers in verticals that traditionally generate large amounts of content due to their diverse product lines, such as retail and high-tech. Electrolux, Moen, Whirlpool, Ericsson, Hitachi, 8x8, Verizon, Vodafone, and Jaguar Land Rover have all taken advantage of the MindTouch platform.

Significant platform features include:

- Rich graphics, videos, and URL links
- Personalized, permission-based content that is served up so only the appropriate person or group has access to it, and only a single article needs to be kept up to date
- Micro content from a large document for better Google self-service results and optimized AI, bot, and IoT device consumption
- Suggested/recommended content based on user behaviors
- Guided content framework that provides a logical site structure for a better user navigation experience
- User analytics that help organizations build content based on terminology that customers use for a better search experience

A typical platform deployment can be accomplished in weeks. The Electrolux system, for example, had to work in 32 countries and 23 languages, and across 9 brands—and be an

integrated service to solve technical support questions. The implementation included the import of 45,000 documents, yet only took 12 weeks from signature to going live.

The MindTouch platform is KCS v6 verified. KCS is a methodology for creating and maintaining knowledge that enables service and support organizations to deliver greater value faster and with more efficiency. The platform's most recent enhancements include a MindTouch Capture Manager connector that extends KCS capabilities into the Salesforce Service Cloud interface to further speed knowledge creation and optimization.

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