Everything You Have Been Told About Work-From-Home Customer Care Is Wrong

How Gig-Economy Care is Delivering When Traditional BPOs Can't

We are going to put you in a time machine and transport you from the 1990s to the 2020s. On this trip, we will have a frank discussion about how technology is fundamentally changing customer care. The hard truth is that today's business process outsourcing (BPO) strategy is largely built on a 30-year-old view of the world. No matter how much technology, security, and workstyles have progressed, the tenets of how BPOs support your customers haven't really changed.

In this paper, we will analyze how the systemic design of traditional BPOs **accepts failure as standard operating procedure**, with customer experience, resource management, and cost control all suffering as a result.

We will also show you how a future-is-now, work-from-home customer care platform is using the data science, virtual workspaces, and the gig economy to blow away old paradigms and help brands transform the nature of their relationships with their customers.

...learn the truth

MISCONCEPTION:

The Great Big Building

Back when "The X-Files" was the biggest show on TV, if you wanted to access technology of any type, you had to head to the office.

If you were working during that period, your primary access to a computer, software, and the internet probably happened in an office. There was no broadband, no 5G, and no cloud.

Consequently, brands looking to provide support to thousands of customers rented a big space, outfitted it with rudimentary technology, and built cubical farms that could house hundreds of agents. This design was driven by the limits of technology at the time.

Yet, in the presence of this astounding world of possibilities, BPOs still utilize the same basic design principles they have since people were listening to Vanilla Ice.

We live in a vastly different world now. Lightning-fast broadband is available everywhere. The average individual owns eight connected devices. The entirety of human knowledge has been digitized and is available instantly on any smart device. People are in constant conversations on multiple channels at all times, which is expected to grow to 13 by 2022 [i].

Sure, ACD systems have moved to the cloud and agents engage with customers via more channels, but traditional BPOs still invest millions of dollars to bring people to a central location – the bricks and mortar contact center.

BPOs sink roughly 15% of their budget into facilities and technology [ii]; and with attrition in US call centers being around 26% [iii], traditional BPOs accept that roughly a quarter of that technology is not being used at any point.

Let's look past the staggering costs of hardware refreshes, software licenses, and tech support. Let's also look past the fact that these infrastructures make it very difficult to deploy new technologies quickly at a time when customer preferences and innovation are moving at lightning speed. What can't be overlooked is that COVID-19 exposed how these rigid technology models caused BPOs to lose up to 80% of their capacity because they couldn't shift to a work-from-home model.

Antiquated technology models are driving operational inefficiencies that are hurting your brand. With all the considerations around hiring, learning, scheduling, and performance management, BPOs' use of technology drives inefficient use of resources, impedes response times, and leaves customers frustrated.

...learn the truth

TRUTH: Virtual-First Customer Care Technology

Welcome to the future. Broadband access and high-quality computing devices are highly accessible and affordable today [iv]. This dispersed technology infrastructure has massive potentials for customer care and Arise Virtual Solutions is at the forefront of harnessing that power.

Arise has created a secure, cloud-based, technology infrastructure that connects brand customers with highly qualified, gig-economy Service Partners working remotely. A successful 30-year history of innovation leveraging emerging technologies has allowed us to create the most responsive, efficient, and secure, virtual-first platform in the outsourcing industry. We have engineered innovation into every inflection point of the customer engagement to assure quality, security, and speed.

First, we have developed the only custom-built virtual workspace in the outsourcing industry, the Arise Secure Desktop. This combination of hardware and software allows the network of gig-economy Service Partners to securely access brand systems from any computer. This means incredible speed of deployment, secure control over the work environment, and reduced overhead costs.

> **"Arise validates over 3.6 million individual attributes every month to ensure security and quality experiences for customers."**

Arise then uses engineered automation to authenticate every aspect of the Service Partner engagement. A Service Partner's identity, location, device, bandwidth, and current engagement agreement are all validated before every session. Arise validates over 3.6 million individual attributes every month to ensure security and quality experiences for customers. This level of control assures Sevice Partners are prepared, both technically and from a knowledge perspective to deliver great service.

The Arise® Platform was built for massive responsiveness and flexibility. Our cloud-based architecture allows us to scale IT capacity to meet the needs of brands experiencing high-volume engagement spikes. Because this is a decentralized network, we have no single point of failure which leads to an inherently disaster-resistant design delivering exceptional business continuity.

During the first few months of COVID-19, when brands needed to reroute capacity from BPOs that were closing contact centers, Arise was able to deploy 200% of our normal allocation of virtual desktops, cloud-based voice systems, and network resources without any disruption to security standards. We were also able to launch three new brands in 50% of the standard deployment time, as well as one client from contract to customer engagement in only seven days. This is the true advantage of using a technology-first strategy to deliver customer care instead of bricks and mortar contact center companies that struggle to keep up with technology.

Arise

MISCONCEPTION: The Workforce Management Time Capsule

Once the "Big Building," is constructed, the next job for traditional BPOs is to fill it with people and train them to service customers. In the 1990s, this was accomplished by recruiting in the geographic area of the call center, then scheduling these individuals into shifts that were predicted to match capacity with call volume.
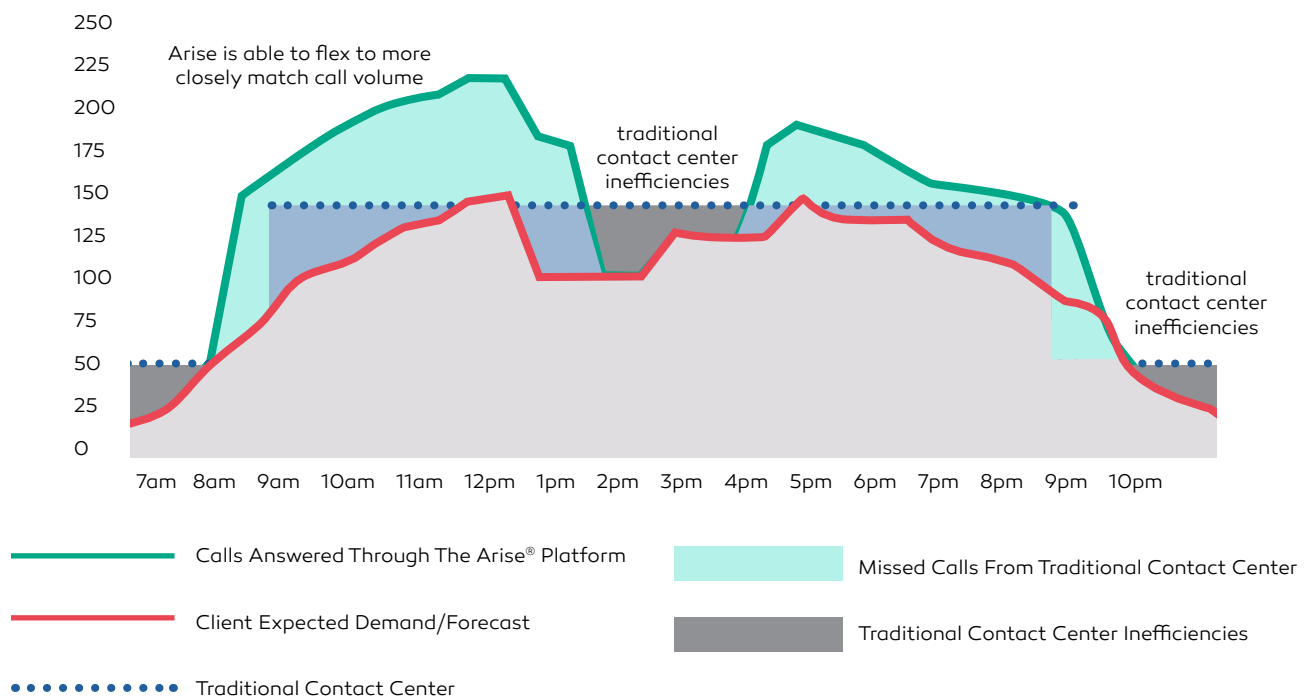
In those days, it was expected that at some points during the day there wouldn't be enough call volume for agents to be productive. At other points in the day, there would be more call volume than agents could handle, which would leave customer calls unanswered. Matching productivity to call volume is called occupancy rate.

> "Back when you were jamming to *Smells Like Teen Spirit* on your Walkman, you did the best you could to maximize occupancy rate and deliver service levels, but there was no doubt that it was an imperfect science. "

Predictive technologies have improved over the last 30 years, but contact centers still plan on an acceptable failure in occupancy rate of about 17% [v]. Why? First, traditional shift bidding in eight-hour blocks isn't consistent with the way call volumes flow. Secondly, contact centers struggle with call avoidance (shrinkage) and attrition.

So, while these 30-year-old strategies are still widely adopted, they are not delivering the experiences that your customers demand.

Actual Forecast and Resulting Call Volume for Arise Client

Arise is able to flex to more closely match call volume

traditional contact center inefficiencies

traditional contact center inefficiencies

— Calls Answered Through The Arise® Platform

— Client Expected Demand/Forecast

• • • • Traditional Contact Center

▨ Missed Calls From Traditional Contact Center

▨ Traditional Contact Center Inefficiencies

TRUTH: The Power of the Gig Economy

Technology has completely reinvented every aspect of the way we work and collaborate. From the devices to location to collaboration, work in 2020 is vastly different than it was in the 1990s. Arise isn't just building the technology driving these changes, but also creating options and enabling the difference in the way people want to work, to improve customer care across the board.

First, exponential improvements in bandwidth and computing power mean that people can easily provide service from anywhere. Between 2005 to 2017, there was a 159% increase in remote work [vi]. Post COVID-19, executives believe that 89% of the workforce will work from home at least one day per week [vii]. Arise was one of the first companies to recognize the implications this could have for customer care and we built our platform specifically to address this need in the market.

Arise recognized that there was a massive workforce out there that had great experience but couldn't work in a traditional contact center environment. We built our platform to be flexible enough to cater to their needs. Arise attracts entrepreneurs who specifically want more control of the work they do and the times they do it. Unlike traditional BPOs, Arise leverages Service Partners to service customers in small intervals that fit their schedules.

> **"Every month the Service Partners on our platform schedule roughly 1.2 million service intervals to serve the brands they love."**

While some service less and some service more, most Service Partners choose to service between 12-16 hours per week. This desirable flexibility and control open the door to individuals who want to be their own boss.

Service Partners are more mature, an average 38 in age, and have more college and professional experience. Approximately, 83% are women-owned businesses and 55% are minority-owned businesses. About 50% of these individuals live in distressed or rural areas, so work-from-home care provides a great opportunity for them. They choose the brand they love based on their personal experience and deliver exceptional service to customers.

The gig-economy does more than just drive great quality, it also delivers exceptional efficiency. While traditional contact centers book in eight-hour blocks and have a tough time matching capacity to volume, the Arise® Platform provides incredible flexibility because we offer service times in smaller increments. We work with brands to build modern-day service schedules that fluidly adhere to contact volume trends.

Because our network of Service Partners is so broad, in times of extreme spikes in touch volume, we can flex capacity like no other provider in the customer care industry. Since these resources are decentralized and all work from home, they are less susceptible to the normal disruptions contact centers face like storms or emergencies.

As COVID-19 pushed care organizations around the world to the limit, the Arise® Platform delivered amazing results for our brands. While traditional BPO providers dropped between 50% to 80% of their capacity between March and July of 2020, the Arise® Platform delivered 113% of forecasted capacity to our brands. For brands in hospitality, retail, eCommerce and healthcare, Service Partners using our platform were able to deliver up to 600% intraday flex to help customers when they needed it most. The Arise® Platform delivered over 240,000 hours of emergency service to our brands in need during this time.

There is no question that technology has enabled people to control when, where and how they work. Arise has reimagined customer care by creating a platform that can harness this flexibility so you can be there for your customers.

MISCONCEPTION: 8 Hours in Training Class

At the core of any great customer interaction is knowledge. Knowledge of the products, sure, but more importantly knowledge of the customer. To build that kind of contextual knowledge, you need learning and development programs that use technology to deliver the optimal experience to each student.

Unfortunately, many BPOs use teaching methods about as dated as "MC Hammer pants".

In the 1990s there wasn't much of an alternative to classroom training. BPOs would hire a new group of agents and put them in a traditional classroom setting for eight hours a day for four to six weeks. It was a grind. BPOs accepted the fact that 10-20% of each class would leave the program before they ever got on the floor. 24% of contact center executives acknowledge that their company doesn't pay enough attention to their employees' learning needs [viii]. This is because purely instructor-led environments don't appeal to all types of learners. Lackluster training is the number one reason for call center attrition [ix].

Even after agents graduated from class, they still needed tremendous support from supervisors and managers with more experience. How did they get it? Would you believe they raised their hand? Moreover, would you believe they are still raising their hands today?

> "Lackluster training is the number one reason for call center attrition."

TRUTH: Technology-Driven Virtual Learning and Agent Enablement

Arise has built a best-in-class learning and development platform called Limitless Learning™. It begins with the end in mind, building a specific learning journey designed to deliver the business outcomes and metrics critical to the program. From there, interactive curriculum is designed in virtual learning environments that use multiple engagement styles to promote holistic learning. From interactive assessments to gamification, there are modules that will reach every type of learner.

Arise then utilizes virtual-first instructors to deliver best-in-class learning to the Service Partner network. Even after completion and certification, Arise works closely, as a cohesive unit, to analyze performance and isolate areas for improvement. We then carefully curate learning content to continually drive the best results.

This approach has delivered exceptional outcomes. In some cases, we've reduced class time by 30%. We've even driven a 25% increase in CSAT over prior learning methodologies. During COVID-19, Arise was able to certify 129% of learners YOY, which demonstrates how Limitless Learning™ can be successful under the most extreme circumstances.

Arise has been honored with the American Business Awards' Gold for New Product Education - Virtual Learning Solution, as well as the Award of Excellence by the International Society for Performance Improvement. We've demonstrated our best practices and expertise, having held over 12,000 virtual classes with hundreds of thousands of learners across the globe, preparing them to support Fortune 500 and other top brands, on the Arise® Platform.

Arise is also powering the future of agent enablement through AI-powered tools that detect critical phrases and provide auto-generated performance support. This includes analyzing customer sentiment through voice recognition and everything from next best actions to alerting support resources that help is needed. This is how Arise technology continues to reinvent customer care.

TRUTH: The Future of Customer Care

We all love the 1990s. Day-Glo colors. Grunge. In Living Color.
While it is fun to jump in the nostalgia machine every once in a while, we wouldn't be able to survive today if we had to live off 1990s technology. So why would you want to design a customer care program based on technology that originated in the 1990s?

Everything is changed. Communications are instant. Workstyles are fluid. Knowledge is on-demand. Customers want more support on more channels. They want care that is more contextual, personal, and empathetic than ever before. They want a relationship more than a product. They want a better version of themselves and they want your care organization to help them create it. And as COVID-19 has clearly exposed, old models just don't cut it.

The future is virtual.

The future is flexing capacity on-demand.

The future is improved learning so you can be aware of your customers' needs.

The future is enduring relationships where your brand becomes essential to customers.

We all know what the future of customer care is. It is now time to build it.

Did you find this paper valuable? Arise publishes thought leadership content every week focused on virtual-first care. If you would like to receive future articles, *please subscribe here >>*

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