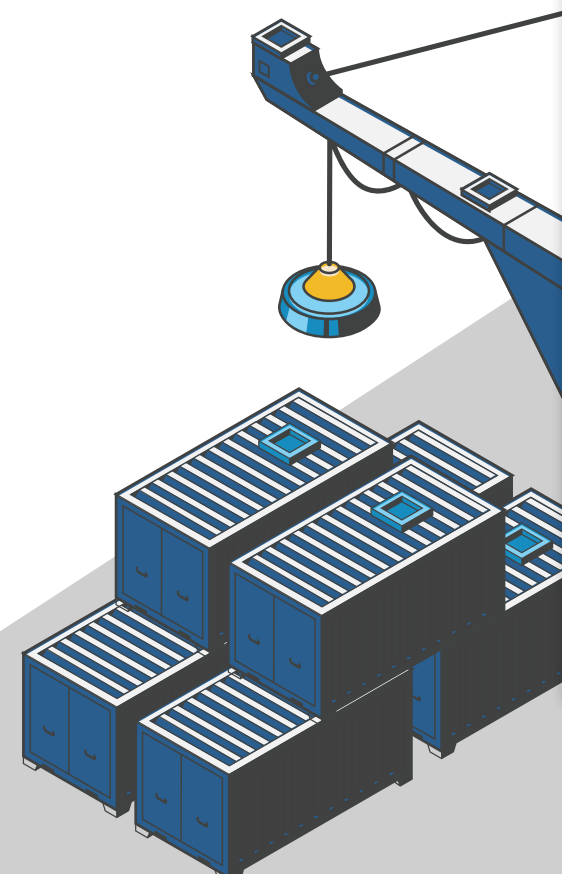# WINNING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE BATTLE IN THE **HYPERCONNECTED WORLD**

PAVING THE PROFITABLE WAY FOR INTEGRATED LOGISTICS

Table of Contents

01 | Introduction

The logistics industry is undergoing massive changes in the post-COVID era. The aftermath of this disruption and continued geo-political uncertainty has seen fluctuating availability[1] and pricing[2] issues. When Gartner asked supply chain professionals for their top[3] logistics priorities, the respondents identified the following:

(37%)
Improve or update technology

(31%)
Cost reduction/cost optimisation

(29%)
Increase customer satisfaction

It turns out that transforming technology is a driver to increasing customer satisfaction through improved CX and cost optimisation.

This whitepaper will discuss the evolution of technology in the logistic industry and how industry leaders can optimise cost to serve their customers. We will also highlight the value Tata Communications can add to logistics providers as they embark on their Connected Customer Experience and Cost Transformation journeys. We will explore the potential for further enhancements, innovations, and long-term benefits that Tata Communications can deliver so that logistics providers' contact centre operations remain at the forefront of excellence and efficiency.

02 | Revolutionise Customer Experience in the logistics industry

The global shipping, freight, and logistics industry is a dynamic, constantly evolving business where technologies are being rapidly adopted. World-class customer service can be both a differentiator and a game changer for logistics providers seeking to carve out a unique position for themselves versus their competition.

In the post-pandemic world, customer behaviour has undergone a profound shift. This requires companies to adapt to changes in consumption, channel shifts, and customer expectations, particularly with increased demand for **speed and convenience.** However, this changing consumer behaviour has placed **new pressures on the cost structures** of logistic companies. Customer service is expensive, and businesses are pressured to find innovative ways to reduce customer service costs while improving customer experience.

For a supply chain leader, this means investing in new-generation technologies to create a connected experience that will increase its customer service team's efficiency, productivity, and effectiveness and provide customers with a consistent experience across all touchpoints. As per a APQC survey report:

- **7 out of every 10 respondents*** agree that the "**Amazon effect**" changed customers' expectations

- **6 out of 10 respondents** observed increased use of digital channels and increased desire for a consistent experience across all touchpoints

  There are two broad levers that can help logistics companies to transform their cost of Customer Experience.

- Transforming the Connected Customer Experience

- Transforming the Connected Network Infrastructure

  Let's look at both these levers

[4] https://cloud.esker.com/fm/others/apqc-report-optimizing-customer-service.pdf

03 | The Connected Customer Experience

3.1 | Orchestrating the Connected Experience

The secret to delivering exceptional customer service

In this digital-first world, a connected experience is not a choice anymore but is critical for businesses to drive innovation, productivity, and consistent customer service across all brand touchpoints. Consistency in customer service creates a positive experience and builds customer trust and loyalty. In this Hyperconnected Ecosystem, two key elements that drive a connected experience are the **Connected Customers** and the **Connected Workforce**. Enterprises can drive a compelling and differentiated experience for their customers and workforce as shown below.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Create a seamless journey: Provide a consistent experience as customers transition between channels

Faster and better response: Empower customer-facing teams with the right information and tools to address customer needs promptly to avoid churn

Invest in self-service options: Enable simple issue resolution via conversational virtual assistants

Expand communication channels: Provide multiple channels for customers to engage with a brand on their terms

Minimise customer effort: A 360-degree customer view for effective customer engagement

WORKFORCE EXPERIENCE

Boost productivity: Provide training to front-line staff to handle customer queries efficiently

Provide a positive environment: Lower turnover rates reduce agent workload, thus ensuring continuity in customer relationships and service quality

Simplify agent connectivity: Utilise call routing to ensure customers are put in touch with the right person to resolve their issues easily

Provide 360-degree customer view: Enables personalised conversations that can result in crosssell / upsell

3.2 | Understanding and optimising customer service costs

Focusing on delivering a great customer service experience improves customer relationships and reduces the cost to serve. Well-integrated contact centres provide their agents with a comprehensive picture of customers and their needs. This enables focussed, contextual interactions, faster and more efficient responses, and reduced repeat conversations.

A US-based contact centre solution provider- RDI Connect, has developed an illustrative model to calculate the contact centre operation cost. As per this analysis, per hour, per employee cost of running a contact centre is USD 33.76, with the cost breakup as follows:

Cost Component	Definition	Hourly Cost/per employee	Calculation Assumptions
Wages	Cost of compensating Contact Centre Representatives (CCR)	**USD 15.00**	-
Benefits	Such as health care, dental care, life, disability insurance etc	**USD 3.45**	Employee benefits are ~25% of base cost
Supervision	Around 25% more than its CCRs (plus benefits)	**USD 1.54**	Supervisor paid 25% more than rep = USD 23.06 per hour/15 reps per team
Shrinkage Cost	Time the CCR is not logged into the system and unavailable to work. It can range from 15 to 40%.	**USD 4.00**	Shrinkage factor of 20% (i.e., full-time employees are available for customer interaction 32 hours (40 FT hours X 80%) each week)

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Cost Component	Definition	Hourly Cost/per employee	Calculation Assumptions
Utilisation	Utilisation is the difference between available-to-work time and actual time spent working.	**USD 2.00**	10% of USD 19.99 (fully loaded agent rate)
Training/Quality Assurance	Cost of CCR training and ongoing CCR development	**USD 0.23**	Assumes one FTE per 100 CCRs for Training/QA. Training/QA earn 25% more than CCR = USD 23.06 per hour/100 CCR's
Attrition Costs	Wages, training costs and turnover costs due to attrition	**USD 5.00**	25% additional cost burden due to 25% attrition with a base cost of USD 23.06
Facilities	Facility cost consists of direct space used by the agents, Triple Net Charges (NNN) (Insurance, Tax, "common space" space that is shared in the facility), and utilities costs	**USD 1.10**	At a cost of USD 17 per square foot for base rent, NNN USD 10, utility USD 5 =USD 32 per square foot per employee* 72 square feet per employee=USD 2,304 annual cost for Facilities per person / 2,080 payroll hours per year=USD 1.11 per hour cost per person/ workstation
Overhead (Equipment and Management)	Equipment (licenses, telecommunication usage costs, hardware and software purchases) and indirect management costs	**USD 1.44**	Assumes 1,000 employees and USD 1MM in annual costs (licenses, telecommunication usage costs, hardware, and software purchases), i.e. USD 1,000 per employee/2,080 hours per employee= USD 0.48 per payroll hour cost due to Equipment Management Cost is estimated to be USD 2MM in Management Support for 1,000 employees (i.e., USD 2,000 per

*Assuming that an employee will cater to ~10 calls per hour, the cost-per-call rate will be around USD 3.4

Reducing costs doesn't mean compromising on customer service quality; it is about driving more efficiency into existing processes and resources without damaging the employee experience or service capacities. It might seem challenging to maintain a balance between customer service efficiency and superior customer experience, but it can be done by:

Consolidating the technology stack

Automating low-effort tasks

Providing customers with self-service options

Creating processes that shift demand to lower-cost channels

Achieving this balance is feasible, and businesses can realise significant costs and handle customer inquiries more effectively. Let's see how this can be achieved.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Automation: Conversational AI can automate contact centre customer interactions through online chatbots, voice assistants etc. This will lead to reduced time errors and improved cost efficiency on repetitive customer support interactions, thus freeing agents to focus on more involved customer matters.

- USD 80 Bn reduction in agent labour costs by 2026 with conversational AI deployments within contact centres - **Gartner**

Integrated software and cloud-based contact centre services: Several studies show that the cloud is winning the battle against legacy premise-based contact centres. While leveraging the cloud offers increased agility, flexibility and scalability, businesses can save on the costs of the on-premise setup. With the cloud, agents can work remotely, thus saving the costs associated with leasing or maintaining an office. Moreover, with Customer Relationship Management (CRM) integration, it becomes easier for agents to offer omnichannel support and handle customer inquiries more efficiently and quickly.

15% to 40% IT operating cost saving for enterprises that opt for cloud solutions - **BCG report.**

Companies can reduce the cost of ownership by **77%,** maintenance-based call centre costs and expenses by **7%,** and IT staff costs by **14%** by opting for a cloud system instead of an on-prem solution - **Call Centre Studio.**

AI-powered central knowledge base: With all information at a single source, agents can quickly retrieve relevant information and offer accurate and faster customer responses, thereby improving the First Contact Resolution (FCR). Improved FCR implies improved agent productivity as they spend less time dealing with repeat calls, thereby lowering operational costs.

14% increase in agent productivity due to generative AI assistant - **Stanford University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.**

3.3 | Use cases of automation and cloud adoption in logistics contact centres

200% revenue growth with a cloud solution (Read more)

Steam Logistics, a US-based third-party logistics company, adopted Nextiva's cloud communication services, enabling it to scale its operations rapidly. Nextiva's services allowed the company's salesforce and customer representatives to:

Work from anywhere

Transfer calls from fixed telephony to their own mobile phones

Handle multiple calls at once, take calls after work hours and transfer calls to teammates

Rapidly set up new accounts and add new lines/users

Get real-time insights on sales rep performance

200% business growth and 107% employee growth achieved in one year.

Moving to the cloud significantly reduced facility and maintenance costs (Read more)

DHL transitioned from an on-premise system to VCC Live's cloud-based solution, thus enabling its employees to access contact centre software anytime, anywhere, making work-from-home a reality. This helped DHL reduce facility and software maintenance costs and increased agent productivity and effectiveness.

63% reduction in call volume with self-service channels and automation (Read more)

UPS engaged its customers digitally with effortless self-service options. Customers can track package delivery, coordinate alternate arrangements such as pickup at the store, route to different locations, make payments, or upload documents. This is a perfect example of proactive customer service with an easy option to connect with the contact centre.

30% increase
in customers' preference for self-service channels

63% reduction
in calls made to the contact centre

04 | Transforming the Connected Network Experience

Logistics providers address global supply chain needs. As a result, the cost of the network that underpins all digital programmes, including the Connected Customer initiatives, cannot be separated from the overall cost to serve discussion.

4.1 | Networking in the logistics industry

Few businesses need robust, global connectivity solutions like the logistics service provider. In an era where enterprises demand real-time shipment information, logistics providers must connect every element of their business, from trucks and warehouses to containers, ships, aircraft and more. The diversity of the connectivity needs is often reflected in the complexity of the networks that support logistics providers.

A key enabler of the Connected Customer Experience is instant data availability from multiple sources for contact centre agents and other customer interaction systems. This requires a network that can transport data from diverse sources and offer a platform for seamless, high-quality customer interactions. But with each passing year, the cost of these networks grows at a rapid pace.

4.2 | Primary cost pressures on logistics service providers

There are four types of cost pressures that logistics companies must manage when it comes to their networks.

1 | Cost of network media

According to GlobalData, the cost of most network media, from SD-WAN to Managed Network Services, is poised to grow at a CAGR of 8% until 2027. This means that technology leaders must strive to optimise their architecture and procurement strategies to stay ahead of the cost curve.

NETWORKING COSTS CAGR (2022 - 2027)

Source: GlobalData, 2023
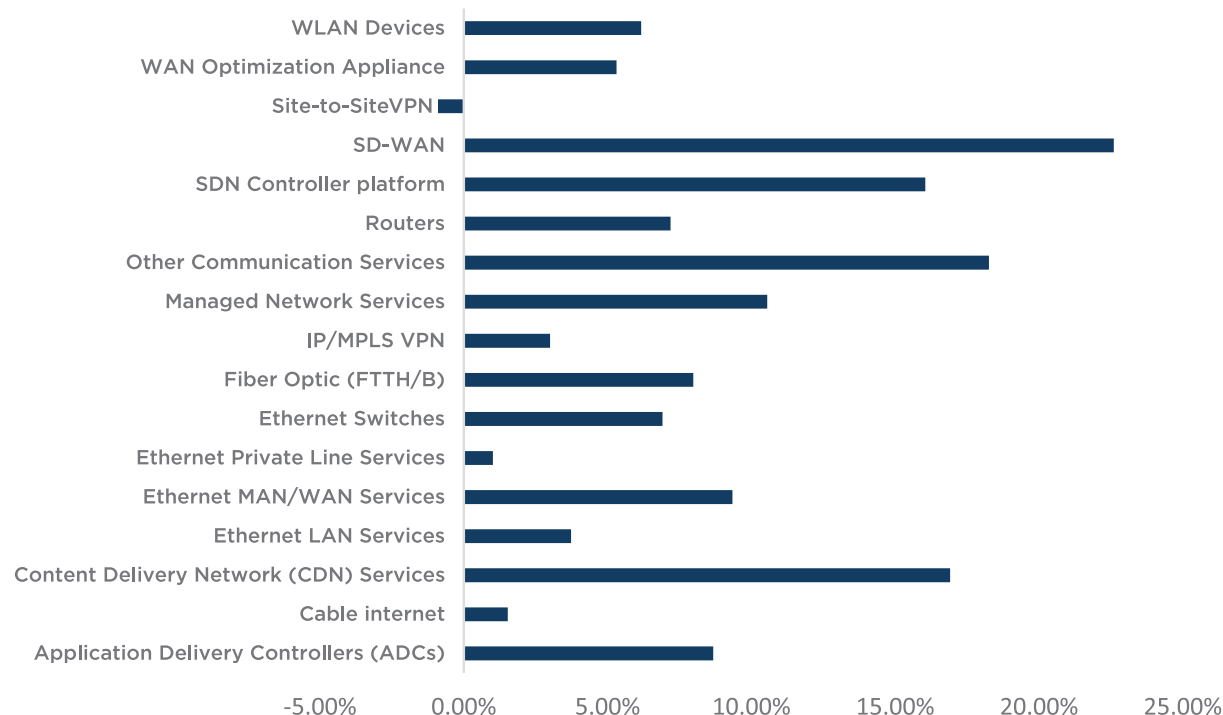
2 | The rising cost of cyberattacks

With the rapidly expanding digital estate, cyber risks are higher than ever. And these cybersecurity events are expensive. According to **IBM's Cost of a Data Breach Report 2023**[5]**,** the cost per data breach in the transportation industry increased from USD 3.59 mn in 2022 to USD 4.18 mn in 2023, owing to the highly connected nature of the sector and growing digitisation.

Preventing cyberattacks is not merely a consideration of digital security – **it is about managing Business Risks** that ensure service continuity and near-zero business disruption in the event of a security breach. Digital security ensures that logistics enterprises can continue to innovate while securing their operations, applications, and data from cybercriminals.

Failure to adopt such an approach can have several far-reaching real-world consequences. For example, KNP Logistics Group, a privately owned UK-based logistics company, declared insolvency after suffering a major ransomware attack in June 2023, which affected key systems, processes, and financial information. (Source)

[5] IBM's Cost of a Data Breach Report 2023

3 | Opportunity costs of unplanned downtime

In a digital-first world, every step of the logistics value chain is powered by technology – from booking orders shipments and generating airway bills to tracking shipments, providing customer updates, and generating invoices needed for customs and other authorities. And when parts of the digital estate are unavailable, the business is as good as being shut down.

For example, Amazon's warehouse operations in the US were halted in December 2021 when an AWS outage resulted in e-commerce giant's logistics network going down, making processing and shipping orders in much of the US impossible during the run-up to Christmas. (Source)

4 | Increasing costs of digital transformation initiatives

The supply chain and transportation industry is at the forefront of adopting digital initiatives to drive business transformation. According to the **Global Market Intelligence's Supply Chain Digital Transformation Enterprise Survey 2023**[6]**,** digital transformation initiatives aim to address critical business problems like delivery delays (46%) and fuel costs (39%). The former has a direct impact on CX and brand image, while the latter directly impacts the bottom line and is an important contributor to meeting service providers' ESG goals and commitment.

These mission-critical and capital-intensive initiatives depend on a secure, performant, highly reliable, cost-effective network.

[6] Global Market Intelligence's Supply Chain Digital Transformation Enterprise Survey 2023

05 | Hyperconnected Ecosystems powers Connected Experiences

Customers want a consistent experience across the board, no matter why or which channel they choose reach out. Businesses must weave together different touchpoints and integrate multiple channels to build a Connected Customer Experience. This necessitates that the entire ecosystem is hyperconnected to support immersive interactions involving customers, workforce, partners, and the broader business ecosystem. Such an ecosystem can empower businesses to optimise their operations, elevate customer experience and achieve competitive advantage.

Hyperconnectivity has three principles:

Real-time
CONNECTEDNESS

Always-on, Anywhere
CONNECTED

Seamless
COLLABORATION

5.1 | Building blocks of a Hyperconnected Ecosystem

Connected Workforce:
Enable employees to work together seamlessly and productively with reduced digital friction.

Connected Customers:
Elevate customer experience across all touchpoints by interacting with customers on their terms – anytime, anywhere, any channel.

Connected Solution:
Empower supply chain partners to collaborate seamlessly for better operational efficiency.

Connected Infrastructure:
Build a digital supply network that is more efficient, notices problems faster, and responds automatically to mitigate the impact of issues by harnessing the power of IoT.

5.2 | Delivering a winning Customer Experience while optimising Cost to Serve
A roadmap for logistics providers

So far, we have discussed how a positive customer experience can drive customer retention, satisfaction, and loyalty. Let us dive deep into strategies logistics providers can adopt to achieve success in customer experience.

TATA COMMUNICATIONS

5.2.1 | Omnichannel communications with a Customer Interaction Suite:

With Tata Communications CX can be transformed by unifying all marketing and sales engagements, support operations and customer journey workflows under a single Customer Interaction Suite (CIS). Customers seek prompt issue resolution through their preferred channels. Whether it is delivery notification, cross-selling, or reward/loyalty programmes on a channel they love, every touch point becomes a driver of CX and brand impressions. There are two elements to Tata Communications CIS:
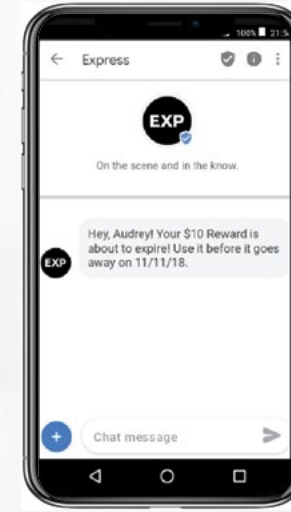
Cloud Contact Centres:

Tata Communications InstaCC™ harnesses the power of world class contact centre solutions to enable quick, contextual contact centre interactions with customers. With tight integration with CRM and omnichannel capability (with voice, video, email, and chat support) logistics providers can combine data from multiple sources and provide the agent with the information needed to provide definitive, personalised interaction.

Cloud Communication Platforms (CPaaS):

Customers don't have to reach out to contact centres every time if they have or can obtain the information they need via alternate methods like SMS, OTT apps like WhatsApp. Tata Communications DIGO, a CPaaS platform provides the necessary tools to run and manage omnichannel campaigns centred around mobile communications tools. It slo offers programmable voice services and enables contextual customer intereactions. This ensures that customers have instant access to the information and services they need while optimising contact centre usage by reducing the total call volumes.
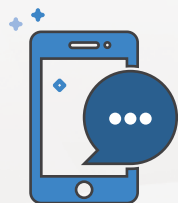
ORDERING AND UP-SELL   *DELIVERY AND RETURNS*   *REWARDS AND LOYALITY*

Here are some of the ways omnichannel communications can transform CX.

Text Messaging for Logistics:

To maximise customer convenience, logistics providers can provide easy options, like SMS and in-app chat, which can improve communication on the move. You can use these solutions to inform customers about invoice payment reminders, new deals, etc. With automated SMS messages using programmable SMS, logistics providers can enable seamless mass notification delivery to update customers on package status, estimated delivery times or potential delays.

Remove the digital divide:

With different teams owning different channels, many logistics providers experience a digital divide across roles, product/service lines or geographies. It is necessary to remove this divide and deliver a cohesive and comprehensive experience across all customer touchpoints. Aligning customer interactions at every level of the business ensures customers see your business as one company. A customer's poor experience on one channel will define her overall experience with the brand.

AI-Powered WhatsApp chats:

WhatsApp based chatbots are revolutionising customer engagements in logistics by providing frictionless and efficient means of managing a variety of tasks. Some popular uses case are:

Shipment tracking: Customers can get near real-time information on the shipments by enquiring the chatbot.

**Order processing:** WhatsApp conversation can help customers book orders, download invoices, make changes and more.

Scheduling and coordination: Customers can reserve logistics services, schedule pickups and deliveries.

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Focus on First Call Resolution (FCR):

Improved FCR can lead to significant cost savings as customers don't have to make repeat calls for the same problem. When contact centres can combine data from multiple enterprise apps and present this information in an easy to consume fashion, agents can have contextual, effective conversations that resolve customer issues in a single call. Improved FCR can lead to significant cost savings as customers don't have to make repeat calls for the same issue.
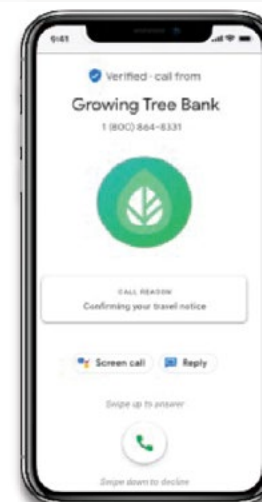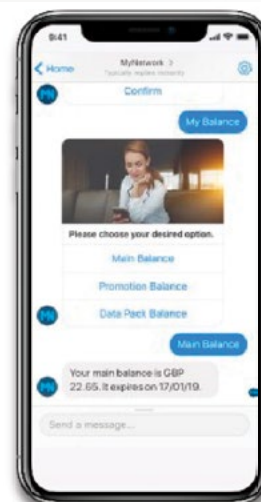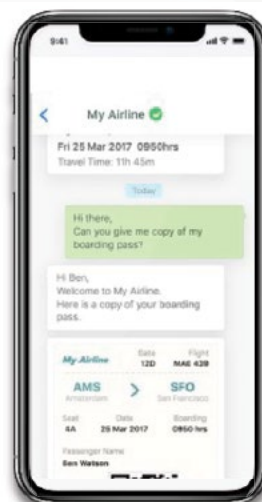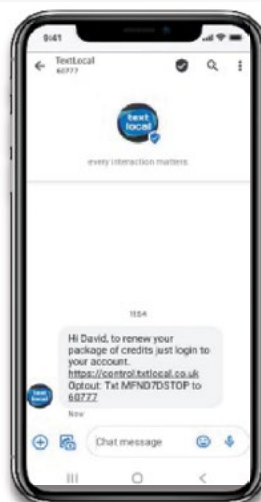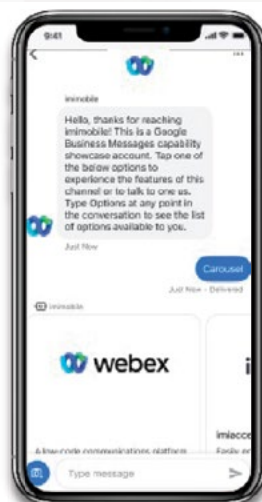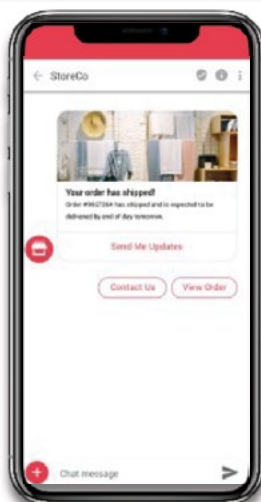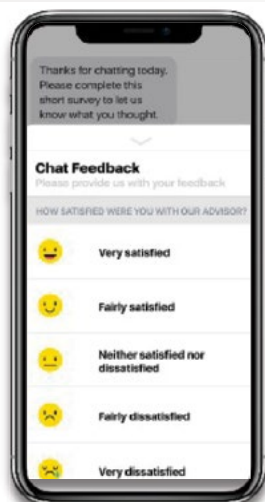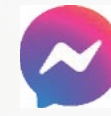
Orders – Appointments – Payments – FAQs – Notifications – Surveys – WisMO – Balances – Offers – Changes - Fraud

Outbound – Inbound – One Way – Basic Two Way – Complex Conversations

5.2.2 | AI-enabled personalised interactions: AI-driven personalisation can revolutionise customer engagement at every touchpoint along the logistics process, from order placement to the final delivery. Using a data-driven approach, logistics providers can understand customers' unique preferences, optimise delivery experience, and offer personalised recommendations across all customer engagement platforms and tools.

5.2.3 | In-app calling for delivery communication: Integrating in-app calling features into enterprise applications can make your customer experience seamless. Modern APIs offer functionalities beyond fundamental voice calling within the application, eliminating the need for a customer to exit the application for support. It also builds trust with customers that calls are genuine, and improves cost-efficiency and call quality, thereby boosting customer satisfaction.

5.2.4 | Customer service chatbots: These can be highly effective solutions to handle a high volume of customer enquiries at once. Some of the top uses cases are: With chatbots, you can reduce the number of customer service representatives that need to be hired and trained, resulting in significant cost savings. Chatbots can help in.

Lead generation

Tracking and delivery information

Automated support and FAQs

Feedback

Chatbots have proven to be highly effective:

79% *of customer queries addressed*

30% *reduction in customer support costs*

- Acropolium

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5.2.5 | Supercharge your agent productivity

With high call volumes, impatient customers and learning curves with new technology, it's easy for agent productivity to fall sometimes. Here are a few strategies on how you can empower your agents to transform operations and drive substantial improvements:

Single pane customer view for all agents: Invest in an agent dashboard that gives a 360° view of all customer interactions, channel visibility and insights to have contextual conversations with customers.
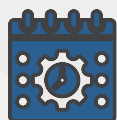
Workforce forecasting and scheduling: Use AI to intelligently forecast and schedule resources to meet customer demand across different periods, thereby reducing cost by eliminating overstaffing and unnecessary overtime.

Long-term planning of resources: Ensure that the right agents with the right skill sets are handling the right contacts at the right time to meet demand.
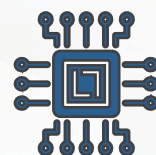
Revolutionise agent experience through gamification: Create an environment of fun, collaborative competition that enhances team performance and allows agents to flourish. Gamification can also help achieve real-time excellence and enable leaders to make smart, data-driven decisions.

5.3 | Creating cost efficiencies in the Connected Network Experience

There are three ways in which networks can be made cost-efficient.

Next-gen connectivity

Network and security approaches

Vendor consolidation
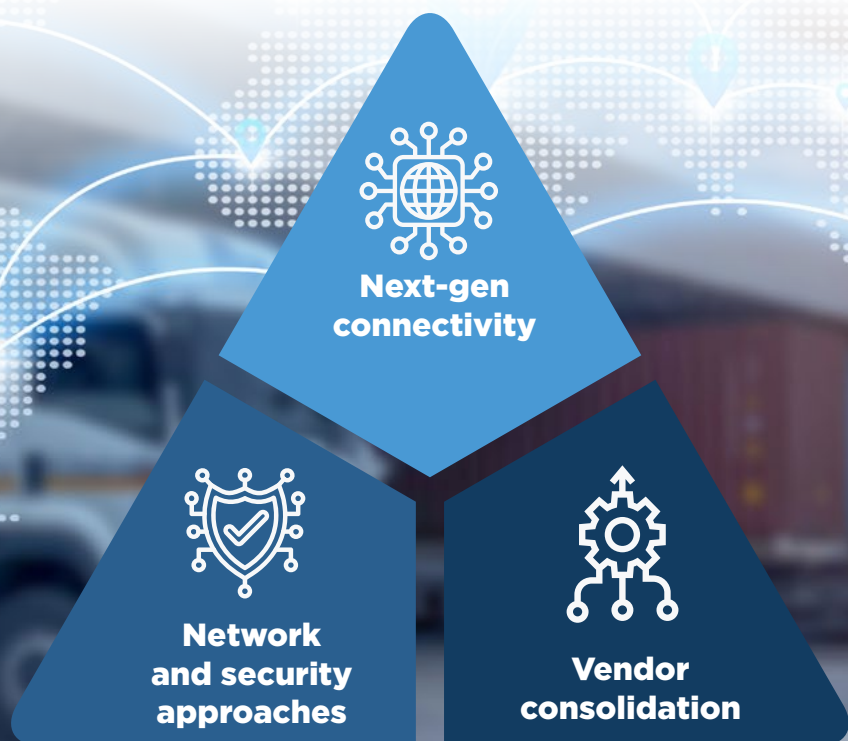
5.3.1 | Upgrading Next-Gen Connectivity

Network transformation from legacy technologies to the latest digital solutions enables lower operations costs, ensures integration with the latest CX initiatives, and minimises opportunity costs due to unplanned downtime.

Here are some examples of how network transformation can drive greater cost efficiencies:

- SD-WAN helps reduce costs by delivering savings from switching to cheaper IP-based circuits, rightsizing circuits, consolidating carriers, and reducing deployment costs, as well as IT services and management costs.

- A key challenge of cloud adoption is connectivity that links multiple cloud providers chosen for different workloads. And network charges from cloud providers can become very expensive. The right multi-cloud connectivity solution can optimise the egress costs by upto 30%.

5.3.2 | Integrating network and security approaches

Taking an integrated view of network and security enables a holistic approach to network security and greater cost optimisation. Here are some examples.

- As per a **survey by OMDIA,** companies pursued SDWAN/SSE/SASE with an aim to reduce networking costs (42%) and add more security control (35%).

- According to Forrester's **The Total Economic Impact™ study,** a large enterprise implementing SASE can expect composite benefits of USD 5 mn over three years and an ROI of 218%. Here are the per site reductions due to SASE:

  - **USD 17,300:** Transitioning to network and security appliance and dual broadband connectivity.
  - **USD 18,300:** On technology equipment costs like routers, WAN optimisers etc.
  - **USD 13,500:** On labour costs.

- *Annual savings of **USD 120,000** due to the reduced risk of a material security breach.*

5.3.3 | Vendor consolidation

Having multiple vendors perform similar statements of work across different geographies or points in the network stack is often the result of legacy decisions reflecting a ground reality that may no longer exist. In a world of global suppliers, logistics firms can evaluate consolidating vendors across geographies and adjacent network and security stacks.

Here are some of the ways in which vendor consolidation can help optimise costs:

1 | Cost Savings from preventing cyberattacks and data breaches
Opting for a single vendor who serves as both Managed Service Provider (MSP) and Managed Security Service Provider (MSSP) offers an integrated approach that eliminates the blind spots often found when juggling multiple vendors, thus providing a high degree of visibility and effective threat detection.

2 | Cost efficiency through bundled discounts
Consolidating networking needs will help service providers to offer better discounts globally on account of a more optimised service organisation and volume discounts. Buyers can also streamline their vendor management organisation and reallocate their budgets to meet core needs.

3 | Eliminating challenges associated with implementation
According to a survey by **OMDIA**, the top challenges associated with SD-WAN/SSE/SASE deployments include the overall complexity of deployment project (38%), cost of the solution (39%), migrating security policies to the new environment (33%) and integrating workflows with the service provider running the solution (34%).

06 | Conclusion

The rise of new technologies and changing customer behaviour means that logistics and supply chain leaders must reinvent their customer experience strategy, as demonstrated through various use cases above.

To create compelling customer experiences, it is necessary that your employees, partners, and customers can communicate, engage, and collaborate anytime, anywhere and across any channel, harnessing the concept of hyperconnectivity.

We discussed how a hyperconnected ecosystem can help you integrate different touchpoints and channels to build a connected customer experience that can optimise your customer service costs and reduce churn while enhancing customer and workforce experiences. It's the same for the supply chain - when all the pieces of your technology stack come together seamlessly to deliver a better experience.

However, improving customer experience requires transforming the connected network and security infrastructure that supports the solutions that drive CX, optimises the cost to serve and enables logistics providers to manage their business risk. We reviewed the three strategies for optimising the connected network infrastructure costs. We saw how managing business risk is not just about responding to security breaches but ensuring zero business disruption and downtime due to a cyberattack.

We are passionate about helping you to provide a world-class experience for your customers. We have an established track record of helping enterprises improve CSAT while reducing costs.

TATA COMMUNICATIONS

Let's Connect:

Scan the QR code or **click here** to connect with us and discover how our team can help you reimagine every step of the logistics experience.

About Tata Communications

Tata Communications is a leading global digital ecosystem enabler that powers today's fast-growing digital economy. The company's customers represent 300 of the Fortune 500 whose digital transformation journeys are enabled by its portfolio of integrated, globally managed service that deliver local customer experiences. Through its network, cloud, mobility, Internet of Things (IoT), collaboration and security services, Tata Communications carries around 30 per cent of the world's internet routes. It connects businesses to 60 percent of the world's cloud giants and four out of five mobile subscribers.

For more information, visit us at www.tatacommunicatons.com

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