Does your business have a hidden contact centre?

Many South African small or mid-sized businesses (SMBs) are running contact centres - and they don't even know it. As a result, they're missing the opportunity to deliver the best possible customer experience, and probably affecting their team's productivity and morale in the process.

"Although they generally call it a different name, many of our SMB clients are surprised to find there is at least one contact centre hiding within their business," says Hannes van der Merwe, a senior product manager at managed business solutions provider Itec. "The important thing to remember in today's world is that a contact centre is defined less by the physical space it occupies and more by the customer experience it delivers."

So how can you tell if there's a hidden contact centre within your business? These are among the top signs.

- Do you reach out to people to generate business, or do people contact your business to resolve issues?
- Do you have multiple departments that interact with customers, or do multiple people perform the same function when interacting with customers?
- Are customers waiting for answers that they should be getting in real-time? Do you often have more customer interactions than staff to handle them?
- Are callers often transferred more than once?
- Do you experience spikes in customer interactions during certain times of the day/year?

If you're answering 'yes' to two or more of these questions, chances are you're running a contact centre in all but name. Once SMBs recognise this, they're able to use cloud-based communications tools to increase sales, cut costs and boost customer satisfaction, says Van der Merwe.

IS THERE A CONTACT CENTER HIDING WITHIN YOUR BUSINESS?

In today's world, a contact center is defined less by the physical space it occupies and more by the customer experience it delivers. Use this flowchart to determine if there's a hidden contact center within your business.
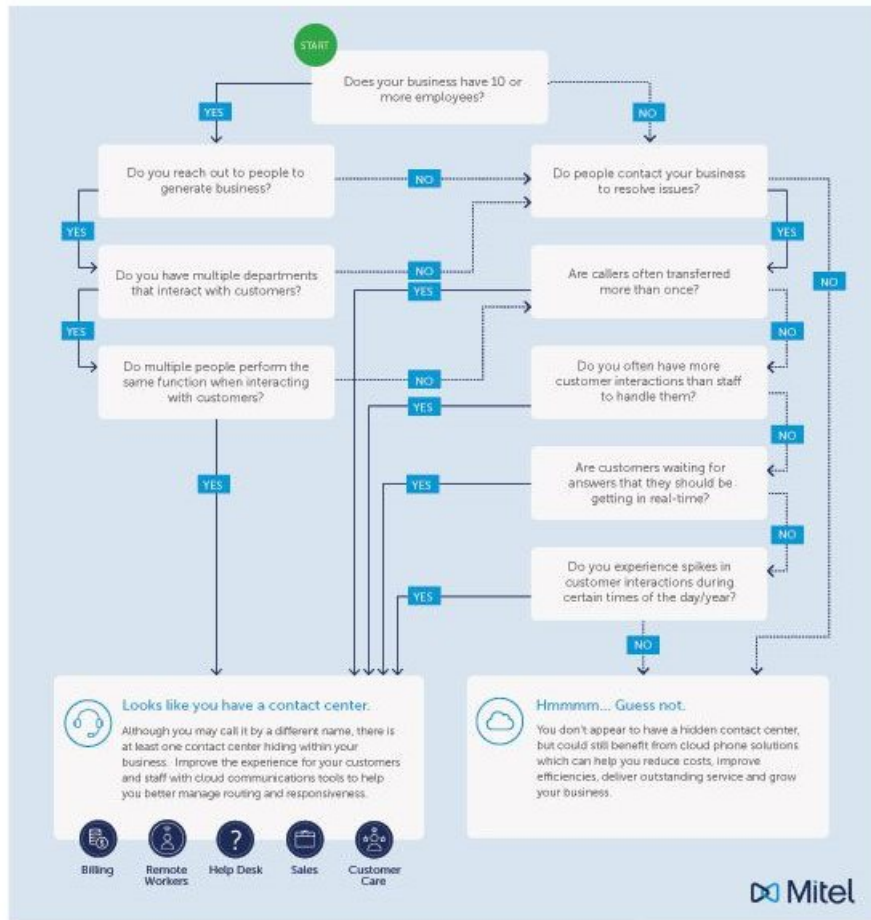
[click to enlarge](#)

"Small businesses don't have the resources to respond to every communication in-/outbound, but missed voice-calls/voicemail/emails/instant-text-message(SMS/WhatsApp) or even social-media communications, often mean lost business and poor customer experience. Cloud-based contact centre solutions provide more effective communication routing and handling, measurable service-levels and grade staff competency accordingly, which means fewer leads are lost and staff have more opportunities to sell or serve, without the need for expensive hardware and traditional contact centre set-ups," says Van der Merwe.

The introduction of AI to the contact centre environment, offer self-service-portals and even virtual agent assistants to enhance the customer experience further.