

# Avaya Creates Unique Mobile CX Solution

**In a category-breaking move, Avaya finds a way to deliver contextual information along with mobile calls destined for the contact center.**

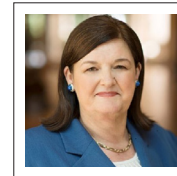
At Avaya Engage in January, Avaya pre-briefed analysts on a new mobile customer experience solution it planned to announce at Enterprise Connect in March -- and so it has.

Avaya this morning introduced Avaya Mobile Experience, a patented cloud-based service for which it essentially becomes a provider of toll-free "8XX" numbers for the contact center customer. When a mobile user dials the 8XX number for service, the Avaya software is able to send the call directly to the contact center rather than having to pass it to the fixed network.

Wanting to learn more about why Avaya developed the solution, I followed up with its creator, David Chavez, vice president, architecture and innovation, in a telephone briefing. Today's contact centers are optimized to handle landline callers. When a customer calls into the contact center using a toll-free 8XX number, a company can gather and use caller ID and geographic location to route the call to an appropriate automated or assisted resource. While "free" to the caller, the company pays the carrier for the time spent on each 800 call. And, in a world of omnichannel interactions, the 800 number remains voice-only (unless a contact center adds another service provider, such as messaging company Webtext, to the mix, he explained.

The problem, as recent U.S. government **data** demonstrates, is that more than one-half of American homes (52.5%) had only mobile service during the first half of 2017--an increase of 3.2% since the first half of 2016. And when a mobile customer calls using an 8XX number, the caller ID is unreliable. Since mobile operators don't base calling plans on geographic area code, most consumers don't change their mobile numbers if they move.

For me, the fact that area code doesn't equal location has meant I have had a "714" mobile area code even though I haven't lived in southern California for a dozen years. Routing my calls based on that area code is not only unreliable, it can lead to delivery of bad customer service. Such is the case for my mobile carrier, which continues to offer me customer service only during the 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. window -- in the Pacific time zone. And companies that call my mobile number trying to market Orange County, Calif.-based lawn or home security services are wasting resources.



Sheila McGee-Smith, who founded McGee-Smith Analytics in 2001, is a leading communications industry analyst and strategic consultant focused on the contact center and enterprise communications markets. She has a proven track record of accomplishment in new product development, competitive assessment, market research, and sales strategies for communications solutions and services.

## MOBILE-OPTIMIZED CALL FLOW



This diagram shows the difference Avaya Mobile Experience can make. Step one involves a company either porting its existing 8XX number to Avaya or creating a new toll-free number. From there, using an online configuration tool, the company decides which of three scenarios happen when it receives an inbound call from the number.

1. This scenario is the most feature-rich outcome. Avaya Mobile Experience detects a mobile device and offers a smartphone-based interaction. If the customer opts for a mobile experience, the toll-free call ends, and the Avaya software sends an SMS message with a link that allows the customer to proceed via text or mobile app.
2. In this scenario, if Avaya Mobile Experience recognizes a mobile caller but the customer declines a mobile experience, the caller continues to the contact center. But unlike a typical landline call, the Avaya software can present the agent with augmented mobile context. The possibilities include the home location of the caller or the billing address -- either of which could be used to route the customer based on meaningful location information. Also, because this is a known mobile caller, the company can choose to apply specialized routing treatment.
3. Calls from the landline network continue directly to the contact center.

The first customer will begin using Avaya Mobile Experience this month, with an additional five to 15 companies added in a controlled introduction starting this May, Chavez said. If all goes as expected, he added, the service will become generally available later in 2018. He didn't provide reference names, but I wouldn't be surprised if initial customers come from the retail industry, where helping a mobile customer with an issue in real time can make the difference between a sale and no sale.

From a geographic perspective, Avaya Mobile Experience will initially be available in the United States and to Canadian customers dialing U.S.-based 8XX numbers. Nothing technically prevents Avaya from offering the service in additional countries, Chavez reported. But obtaining agreements with individual carriers and in-country regulatory bodies would not be trivial, as it never is.

For me, one of the most important aspects of Avaya Mobile Experience is that it showcases Avaya's deep knowledge of carrier networks. Part of this expertise comes from its AT&T heritage. Twenty years ago, Chavez was a Distinguished Member of Technical Staff (DMTS) at Bell Labs, a title that carries significant prestige to those of us who started our careers at AT&T. For other readers, DMTS in its day held the panache of today's Cisco Fellow title, held by, for example, **Cullen Jennings**. Many DMTS who started their careers at Bell Labs still work at today's Avaya, especially in technical roles. The other part of Avaya's carrier expertise derives from its two-year-old **Zang**, the combination of acquired Esna assets and platform-based communications capabilities (similar to those from Twilio).

At Avaya Engage, company executives promised a new, more nimble company. Avaya Mobile Experience speaks to a more innovative company as well... an attribute it's nice to be applying to Avaya again.

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