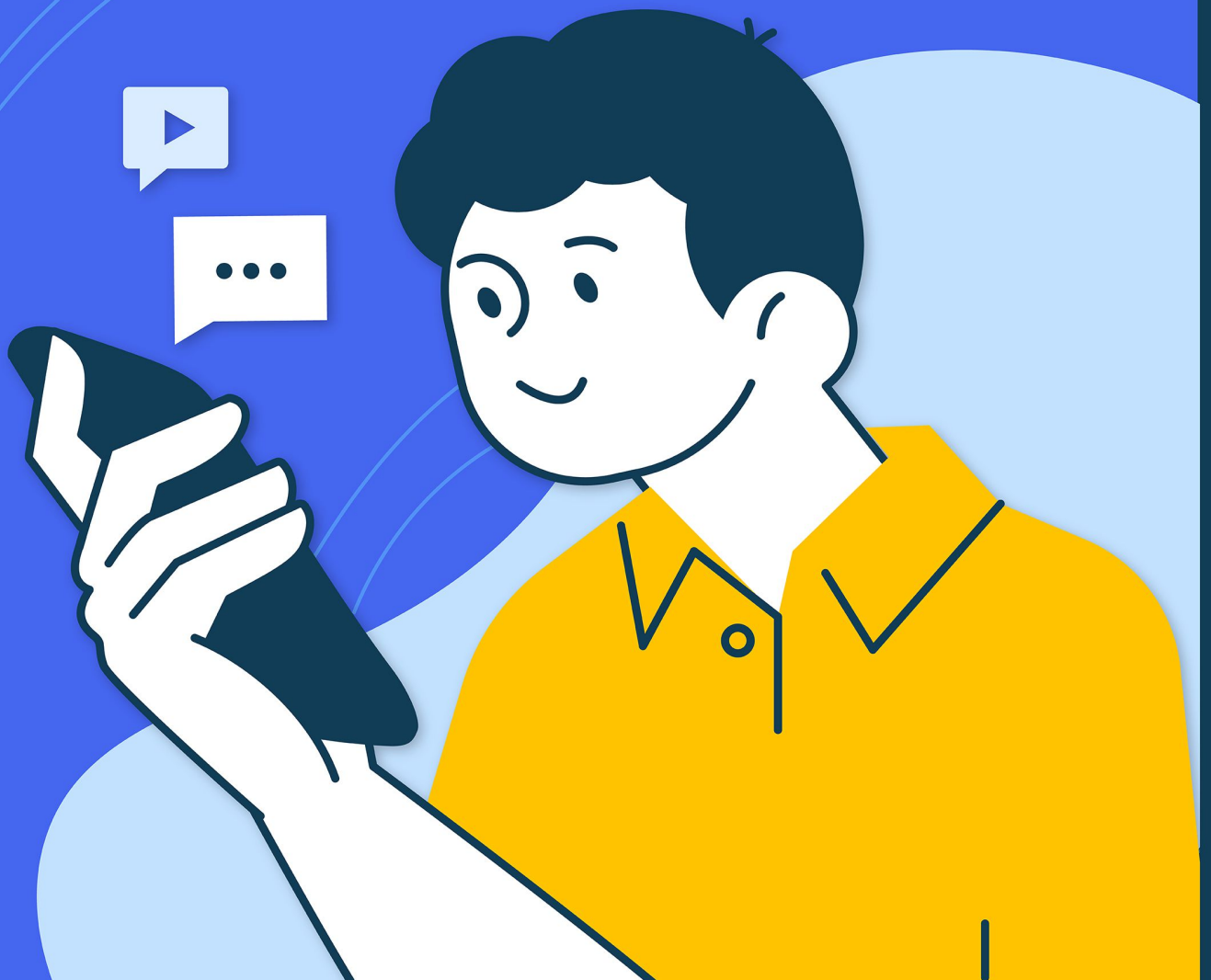


Konecta

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# How Multilingual Hubs Help Build Trust in Customer Care

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# Konecta



## How multilingual hubs help build trust in customer care

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# How multilingual hubs help build trust in customer care

## Introduction

Consumers expect a lot of brands these days, but one of their top requirements is that businesses speak their language. More than two-thirds (68%) of people surveyed by Unbabel said they would switch brand if a competitor could communicate in their native tongue, while nearly the same (64%) indicated they would be willing to pay more for a product or service if support was available in their language.

In a world with more than 7,000 languages, that is no mean feat. In London alone, more than 250 languages are spoken, posing a significant challenge for brands operating in that one city, let alone across many countries. The cost of running customer management in multiple geographies is one issue, but so too is the risk of inconsistent customer experiences.

## Could hubs be the answer?

In our view, multilingual hubs are the perfect solution, when they are done right. Rather than relying on a vast network of customer management operations across different regions, brands can:

- Deliver consistent and efficient services from one centre, but at the same time provide for different languages and expectations
- Operate from a single regulatory environment
- Provide a consistent level of customer experience for each market
- Benefit from economies of scale and share resources, such as management teams and IT systems

- Have more diverse working environments, where staff can experience different cultures
- Offer support to markets where volumes would not be large enough for stand-alone, native language contact centres

The potential benefits of multilingual hubs are huge. But in order to deliver them, hub providers must engage with a range of challenges, including location, culture, people, process design and technology.

## No one, single solution

When it comes to location, there is no one place that works for multilingual hubs. Different places offer their own benefits in terms of language mix, culture, costs, and skills.

These are just some of the reasons why Konecta operates 10 multilingual hubs in locations ranging from London and Istanbul to Mexico City and Bogota, serving more than 30 languages.

Having multilingual operations in different locations is key to delivering for each client, offering them the most effective solutions.

## Finding the right location

“Understanding clients’ needs is our key focus before suggesting the best location or locations for a hub,” says Monica Butea, Director of

Operations – Romania Global Clients Division at Konecta. “Understanding which market contributes to the majority of the volume is the very first step.”

For instance, a brand with a large Spanish-speaking market would may consider Konecta’s hub in Barcelona. However, for Eastern European languages in addition to Spanish, Bucharest in Romania may be the best option. If they wanted Nordic or Asia Pacific languages on top of Spanish and Eastern European languages, multicultural London could be the right solution.

Some situations may call for a main delivery site with some languages provided for from a satellite second location. For one of our clients, the team in Bucharest partners with Konecta Czech for Czech and Polish customers. For SodaStream, Konecta’s London multilingual hub provides customer care in France, North America, Poland, Benelux and South Africa as well as the UK, with the team in Istanbul, Turkey, supporting Germany and Austria.

Cost and technology skills are other key influences, alongside any sector specialisations required by a client.

## Providers need to make the right choices too

The first priority is language-sourcing. Access to talented and tech-savvy staff with the languages and cultural awareness required is paramount. This often means locating where there is a good

education system and an ecosystem of universities, colleges, and language schools.

Other factors will include:

- Workforce and property costs.
- The local regulation environment.
- A business ecosystem that draws talent to the area and offers scalability.
- Good transport and communications infrastructure.
- An attractive cost of living and lifestyle for staff satisfaction and retention.

## Challenges will grow, if you don't get it right

Low-cost, high-volume multilingual hubs seemed like the answer to everything a few years ago. All it took was putting a range of languages and nationalities in a room and clients' needs were sorted.

But now it's more complicated. Providers need to expertly deal with multiple challenges including managing customer needs, people, and compliance issues.

## Language ability is just the start for customer needs

Developing trust and empathy with customers is about more than speaking their language. "You have to make sure you understand customers and what they need from the product or service. We tailor our training content to the specifics – not

just language – of each market," says Monica Butea.

These specifics will include factors such as differences in channel preference and average handling times across markets and cultures. For example, data from Konecra's Bucharest hub indicates that:

- Average handling times for Italian and Spanish calls are up to two minutes longer than a call coming in from Germany and Austria.
- 33% of German customers prefer email contact with a company, compared to 19% in Italy.

It is important that KPIs and service level agreements (SLAs) reflect regional differences, and brands and providers need to establish transparent benchmarking systems between markets.

## The importance of people and regulatory issues

Another challenge with multilingual hubs is HR and people management, and the need to have diverse and inclusive workplaces.

Creating that vibrant, international, inclusive working environment where everybody fits in is the real main challenge. Succeeding means that everyone collaborates, takes part in decision-making, has fun, and thrives. Failure to

do so can result in high attrition rates and falling customer service rates.

The third major challenge is regulatory and legislative compliance. Providers need to comply not only in the market where a hub is located, but in the different markets it serves.

## Technologies are changing the landscape

Customer management is undergoing significant changes through digital transformation, but some technologies are of particular relevance for multilingual customer experience. Real-time translation and analytics tools, for instance, are enabling brands and providers to convert real-time text or voice into data, and do real-time analysis.

Brands have literally millions of touchpoints with their customers, but the data they gather has no value if you don't know how to exploit it. They need providers who have the tools and knowledge to support them in doing this, to segment the data, store and use it. Real-time translation and speech and text analytics tools can help in understanding what's happened before, what's happening now and what's likely to happen in the future.

Emerging translation technologies are also changing the economics of customer service. A good example is translation chat and email bots that can help deflect volume for easily resolved

and known issues or for very low-volume products. Monica Butea explains: "Thanks to these technologies native support can be ensured in areas where companies would not be willing or able to invest in resources."

Worldwide brands need providers with capabilities in these emerging technologies and the ability to maximize the opportunities and benefits.

## Change continues at speed

We've talked a lot about digital transformation, but other changes are on their way. They will pose their own challenges and opportunities, and include:

- Remote and hybrid working partners will enhance the talent pool, but present new challenges from a HR perspective. Providers will only succeed by blending in-person team building and training with remote working options that suit their teams' lifestyles.
- The growing requirement for digital expertise and skilled employees will accelerate a switch from high-volume megahubs to specialised boutique centres.

They will combine automation tools with the capabilities to manage escalations and value-added interactions, providing the omnichannel, personalised support customers expect.

**Contact us to find out more**

*Our 11 multilingual hubs work with some of the world's biggest brands, supporting them in over 30 languages and serving a variety of different markets and sectors.*



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