



Five Ways to Optimize Customer Journeys

Using a Cloud Contact Center

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Increasingly, companies are centering their contact center efforts and technology enhancements on improving end-to-end customer journeys. By focusing on journeys rather than individual touchpoints and interactions, organizations can gain full alignment with the customer perspective through their lifecycle of business. In a recent study, McKinsey found that revenues grew 10-15% with a 20% customer satisfaction increase when companies focused on journeys rather than solely looking at individual interactions.

Competitively differentiating customer experience (CX) is at the core of optimizing those journeys – which include purchasing, onboarding, account management and problem resolution. A company which reduces customer effort more quickly, resolves sales and account issues and provides better overall CX – these are actions that often lead to becoming the preferred vendor among its competitors. Being responsive to customers during their different journeys and delivering personalized experiences in this new mobile-first, social-enabled world requires modernized systems for most enterprise contact centers.

Today, delivering great customer experience requires maximizing the time-to-value of enhancements and improvements to contact center capabilities. This means utilizing cloud-based applications and resources to speed up implementation and reduce capital expenditures. In this paper, we will discuss five ways in which you can optimize customer journeys through those new capabilities, leveraging the speed and scalability of the Cloud in the process.

1) Reduce Customer Effort during Journeys by Integrating Silos



Poor customer service and sales assistance comes when different departments or branch operations do not integrate their resources and efforts to support customers. Commonly, different customer touchpoints are siloed and fragmented within the organization across separate lines of business or divisions.

For customers, this often results in being transferred to different departments, having to repeat information, experiencing long hold times due to staff availability problems – and ultimately, receiving poor overall service. Fixing this problem is difficult, as according to Harvard Business Review, the number one innovation killer expressed at most companies is, ‘silos’.¹

Each touchpoint often utilizes different technologies, and usually presents to customers different and unconnected experiences. This leads to poor continuity across the journey, increased effort and resulting disloyalty. In addition, organizations cannot analyze customer experience across journeys with these disjointed technology environments separating journey stages.

A cloud contact center more easily enables organizations to add capabilities, geographic coverage, and capacity as needed. New departmental or branch operations can be added and supported very quickly from the Cloud, with web-based desktop applications used to support distributed agents, and web services utilized to orchestrate integration with other instances and legacy systems. Departmental and other operational silos are more seamlessly integrated together using the Cloud, rather than trying to integrate distributed on-premises systems. Not only does this reduce customer effort during journeys, but it also reduces organizational effort – improving workload management, scheduling and quality control.

2) Better Connect with Customers during Journeys through New Digital Touchpoints

Over 70% of your customers are now mobile and social enabled. Smartphone adoption is now at 70% in the US², and according to Pew Research, 74% of online adults are regular users of social networking sites. Your customers engage daily in conversations with family, friends and colleagues over their mobile devices and social networks. Increasingly, they are demanding that companies they do business with also support communications and connections over these same channels.

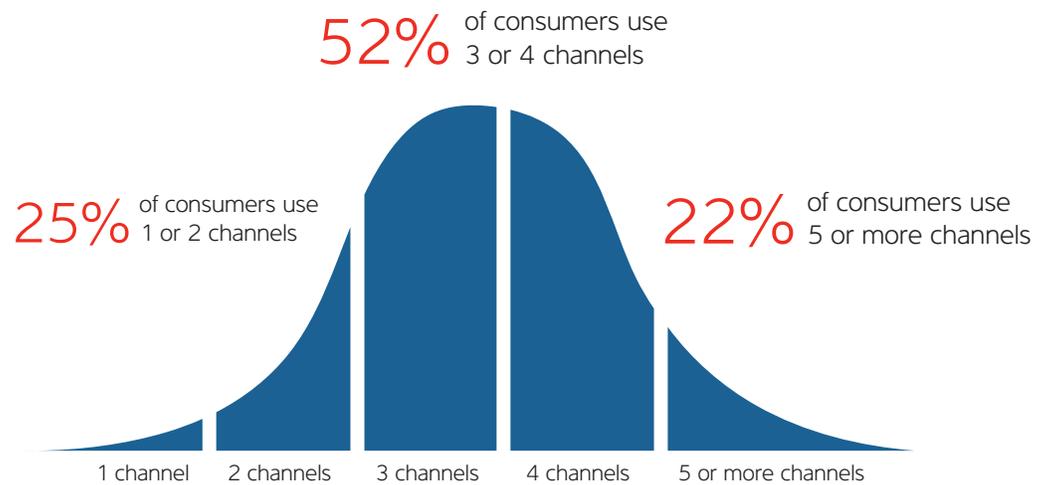
74% of online adults are regular users of social networking

According to Gartner, over 40% of marketers acknowledge that social is one of the three keys to success, along with websites and digital advertising. For companies, social is defined as listening, engaging and analyzing the peer-to-peer interactions between customers, and between those customers and your business. Social analytics are important for insight into activity and trends, as well as to plan action based on both positive and negative sentiments. Social metrics follow customer journeys, impacting product and brand awareness, referrals and lifetime loyalty.

Connecting social activity to business outcomes is the key to leveraging this channel; cloud-based engagement and social analytics tools are the critical elements to making this connection.

In addition, important channels such as web, email, chat, SMS and others must be included – and integrated together – into customer journeys. Conversation context must be carried across journeys so that customers do not have to repeat information or start over with explanations of the purchase or support issues at hand, simply because they have switched channels. Doing otherwise would dramatically increase effort – both for customers and for your contact center – hurting the loyalty of customers and the productivity of your staff.

Realize that 74% of consumers use at least three channels when interacting with an organization during their journeys.³



Clearly, a cloud-based contact center is the best way to add these new digital channels, to quickly support customers demanding interactions using their preferred touchpoint. This enables you to scale channel capabilities from initial numbers of users to the broader customer base as adoption quickly grows.

3) Drive Loyalty during Journeys through Proactive Engagement

Smart companies differentiate themselves not by waiting for customers to contact them, but by proactively reaching out and providing information and status updates in real time. This provides a higher level of customer care, and demonstrates a higher level of value placed in customer well-being.

Two great scenarios for this practice include attempts to close new sales during purchase journeys, and through in-journey notifications of status. The first scenario involves attempts to 'rescue' abandoned shopping carts. According to Baymard Institute, over 67% of all online shopping carts are abandoned, worldwide. 53% of online shoppers cite a lack of human interaction as a reason for abandoning the shopping cart.⁴ This can be rectified by proactively offering assistance during the purchase journey, through web or mobile chat at shopping time, or later via email. Offers to answer customer questions, or put to rest any concerns about product selection or availability, help move shopping carts along to the transaction phase of the journey.

53% of online shoppers cite a lack of human interaction as a reason for abandoning a shopping cart

For onboarding and problem resolution journeys, proactive communications – through email, mobile push notifications or messaging – keep customers informed of status, and help further the relationship between you and your customer. For example, notifying customers of order status, delivery times, service outages, account changes and upcoming appointments – all remind customers that their business, and their complete satisfaction is important to you.

Loyalty is the big benefit you gain when employing proactive communications to turn abandoned shopping carts into completed sales, and turn waiting customers into informed net promoters of your business.

4) Improve Journey Quality through Workforce Management and Optimization

Today's mobile customers are being increasingly supported and serviced by distributed workers. Agents working from home or locations other than the central contact center are best supported in the Cloud.

Internet connections are ubiquitous, and remote workers save you money by not requiring additional on-premises systems and work environments to support them everywhere they are based.

Regardless of where they are located, it is important to optimize their efficiency, improve their availability, and coach them for quality and retention. By ensuring that your employees get assigned to work that is both timely and appropriate to their skill sets, they will be happier doing their jobs. This reduces attrition and the high cost of employee turnover.

Cloud-based workload distribution better manages distributed workforce tasks, as the integration between disparate on-premises systems is easier to implement, more reliable, and more able to scale as needed. Scaling issues are important as seasonal workforces may grow or shrink, and bursting capacity to support special campaigns can be more easily implemented through the Cloud.

Managing your workforce to support journeys across different channels leads to superior customer experiences. As stated earlier, adding the new channels demanded by your customers is best accomplished – both in speed and in scale – through the Cloud. Workforce scheduling, real-time task management, and employee empowerment and enrichment should be tightly integrated with your contact center environment for maximum effectiveness. An environment integrated with cloud applications which include workforce and quality management, interaction recording of both calls and screens, speech and text analytics, enables clear visibility and insight into customer interactions and workforce performance trends.

5) Protect Journey Data for You and Your Customers' Peace of Mind

As systems move online and customers become more used to interacting with the Cloud, the focus on increased security, data protection and privacy is critical. A trusted cloud environment is one in which the vendor has industry certifications to help guarantee both the security and the availability of data.

Several of the key industry certifications to look for, include:

- PCI DSS 3.0 – Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard, which ensures the safe handling of cardholder information at every step during purchase and renewal journeys.
- SOC 2 Type II – certifying the operating effectiveness of a service organization's controls, helping to bring confidentiality and security measures in line with current worldwide security concerns
- HIPAA Compliance – the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act in the U.S., the standard for protecting sensitive data in the healthcare field
- US-EU Safe Harbor Registration – certifies adherence to the U.S.-EU Safe Harbor Framework developed by the Department of Commerce, in coordination with the European Commission, to protect the privacy of consumer data

- 1 The First Two Steps toward Breaking down Silos in Your Organization, Vijay Govindarajan, Harvard Business Review
- 2 Late Late Majority, Asymco
- 3 Customer Service in a Multi-Channel World, Ovum
- 4 Harris Interactive

About Genesys

Genesys is the market leader in multi-channel customer experience (CX) and contact center solutions in the cloud and on-premises. We help brands of all sizes make great CX great business. The Genesys Customer Experience Platform powers optimal customer journeys consistently across all touchpoints, channels and interactions to turn customers into brand advocates. Genesys is trusted by over 4,500 customers in 80 countries to orchestrate more than 100 million digital and voice interactions each day. Visit us at www.genesys.com or call us at +1.888.436.3797

A vendor who has earned these certifications has demonstrated both the willingness to take data protection seriously, and the resources to implement secure hosted systems in the Cloud.

Maintaining high availability of cloud-based data and applications requires both redundant hosting elements, and geographically distributed data centers. This level of redundancy is extremely expensive and complex to accomplish using on-premises systems. Moving to a cloud-based contact center solution can simplify and greatly enhance business continuity. Your business can take advantage of the resilience and high availability inherent in delivering software as a service.

Providing continuous service in the event of a complete loss of resources in a single region is paramount for business continuity. Core high availability functionality is maintained by hosting an application instance in two different regions. In a mature cloud hosting environment, regional pair instances continuously synchronize data and state information between the active and the backup instances.

The concept of a Service-Level Agreement (SLA) deals with percentage of uptime provided by a hosted application. Most hosting solution providers talk about SLA in terms of “9s” of uptime. For example, an SLA offering 99.99% uptime (“four nines”) translates into suffering only one minute of downtime per week. An SLA of five nines (99.999%) uptime promises only six seconds of downtime per week.

Summary

Customer journey management is a critical part of driving both loyalty and operational efficiencies. There are multiple ways to optimize journeys through a cloud contact center which provide benefits not only to customers, but also to the way your organization becomes more agile and capable of dealing with changing customer habits. As consumers move away from traditional telephones and computer interactions to mobile devices and digital channel connections, your business is faced with not only added contact center requirements, but also new competitive pressures.

The Cloud becomes the great equalizer, as disparate systems are integrated, distributed workers are connected, and new experiences delivered. Channels such as chat, social, mobile and web are quickly adopted to become an integral part of contact center conversations. The silos in your organization begin to work better together – as cloud-based systems are more easily integrated than are on-premises applications, especially when your organization is geographically distributed.

Proactive communications ensure that customers are notified during critical stages of their journeys, and they begin to rely more on your ability to serve and inform them, building loyalty and trust. Employee loyalty also grows as workforce and quality management applications help your staff accomplish more in the time provided, and gain satisfaction from the increased efficiencies in serving customers. Trust is enhanced as the data protection and high availability of your contact center is maximized by a cloud deployment. Overall, the benefits and scalability of the Cloud ensure that the journeys which your customers undertake are always low-effort and optimized for experience and satisfaction.



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