Journey to 3rd Platform Digital Customer Experience

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COMPETING ON THE 3RD PLATFORM

The ICT industry is in the midst of a once every 20-25 year shift to a new technology platform for growth and innovation. IDC calls it the 3rd Platform. Its growth is built on mobile devices and apps, cloud services, mobile broadband networks, Big Data analytics, and social technologies. IDC predicts 2014 will be a year of escalation, consolidation, and innovation as the transition to IT's 3rd Platform accelerates. The ability (or inability) to compete on the 3rd Platform will reset leadership ranks in the IT market and every industry that uses IT. In the wake of the 3rd Platform, companies are finding they are facing a new customer-type with individual requirements and needs and trying to serve them with systems that are built for mass deployment of a single customer experience.

With consumers spending increasingly more time online, social media, smartphones, and tablet devices are being adopted faster than ever. Digital customers are now consuming digital content via computers and mobile devices, at ever increasing speed. The sheer pace of change the market is seeing on the 3rd Platform means we have to explore new ways to provide customer service and reassess the role of traditional customer service models. However, this requires organizations to understand the full end-to-end customer journey and not just the segments that are controlled by them or their customer services organization. The need to build unified and integrated cross-channel services that are ubiquitous in their availability and proactive in their approach is becoming increasingly important.

This is not only a journey of the end customer, but also of the customer service organization. This document will describe some of the steps taken by leading-edge customer service organizations and share vital suggestions for your successful move into digital customer care on the 3rd Platform.

ADOPTING YOUR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY

Customer experience is in transition due to a number of new technology opportunities that have changed the ways of interacting with customers. The mobile device onslaught will continue in 2014 with sales of tablets growing by 18% and smartphones by 12%. The worldwide mobile phone market will reach almost 1.9 billion units shipped in 2014, including smartphones. The increasing emphasis on smartphones, further penetration into emerging markets, and worldwide replacements will drive growth. Looking ahead, IDC believes that total mobile phone shipments will show a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.0% from 2013 to 2018.

On another level, organizations are struggling to develop a customer experience strategy to support the individualization of the experience using their existing contact center and customer

relationship management (CRM) system. The main reason for this is that they are using a contact center solution that is built for servicing the masses, while the CRM systems focus on effective selling approaches. This will of course have an impact on the customer experience as services need to focus more on supporting the constant availability of the mobile consumer with personalized smartphones and tablets that are able to handle all types of multimedia communications. This situation argues that the best approach is a systematic platform method for customer experience that evolves the CRM system and the contact center solution into a platform that is built to cater for personalized experiences on a multitude of devices.

Swisscom, Switzerland's leading telecoms provider, needed to reduce the time it took to handle customer calls and customers who had entered the wrong information and ended up with the wrong customer service agent for their call. The perceived business value it received from the IVR did not meet its expectations and it saw an opportunity to introduce a mobile app to collect customer authentication and intent in the app, before being transferred to an agent. The introduction led to a reduction in Swisscom's average handling times for both chat and voice. By introducing the mobile app, Swisscom also gave its customers a choice as to how they could communicate. This resulted in better customer experience and helped smooth efficiencies in the contact center as mobile chats had lower average handling times than traditional web chats, while getting a high AppStore rating and positive social media feedback. Swisscom is now able to capture authentication and intent when customers use the mobile app to reach customer service.

One of the new digital channels added to the contact center is social media – a core component of the 3rd Platform. Social technologies will become increasingly integrated into existing enterprise applications in the next 12-18 months, according to IDC. In addition to being a strategic component in virtually all customer engagement and marketing strategies, data from social applications will feed the product and service development process. IDC expects enterprise social networks to become increasingly available as standard offerings from cloud services providers. This will enable enterprises to further embed social into the workflow, rather than having a separate "social layer."

Vodacom Group Limited had to tackle this challenge, as social engagement was increasingly important to its customers. Vodacom is an African mobile communications company providing voice, messaging, data, and converged services to around 48 million customers across 40 countries. In South Africa it has more than 28 million customers and annual revenue of more than $6 billion. Vodacom call centers take more than 16 million calls monthly. In 2010 Vodacom was one of three most tweeted brands in South Africa. It decided to engage with its customers using social platforms to provide network and product information, engage customers and followers in conversations, and answer questions. The integrated Genesys platform supports digital media with the same precision and control as other business processes. Customers now know that Vodacom sees social media interactions as important as answering calls and emails.

In addition to these changes to devices, content, and media interactions, communication solutions are moving to cloud architectures that are beginning to replace on-premises installations – relieving organizations of the task of maintaining the actual core system and enabling them to focus on developing new digital customer experience channels. Because there are often legacy systems to account for, developing the new capabilities for your contact center on top of a cloud architecture, while integrating them with existing systems, is a faster and easier way to develop new customer services channels and a way to migrate to future mobile and social customer services and 3rd Platform-enabled customer experience.

HOW TO DIFFERENTIATE YOUR DIGITAL CUSTOMER CARE

Your customers evolve and so does your organization. With similar products and services to your competition, there is a growing requirement to design unique customer benefits. Service is becoming the primary differentiator in a competitive market.

In the socially connected market, customers are changing their behaviors and becoming "brand fans" that engage with the brand as a way to build their own image. This means companies need to grow more intimate relationships by leveraging their business analytics and contact center data with their CRM systems to understand customer behavior, anticipate their needs, and understand customer requirements. Digital media can be the tool to introduce new levels of intimacy.

When entering a new market, Etisalat, a leading telecommunications company based in the Middle East and Africa, needed to quickly build its business by introducing a new cross-channel approach. Etisalat's strategy was to differentiate itself through the quality and innovation of its service. As part of its commitment to customer service, Etisalat offered a transparent pricing model. It also decided to take advantage of new mobile technologies and introduce digital customer care and launch a groundbreaking video chat service for customers alongside its traditional contact center infrastructure. This was the first time such a service, comprising a video IVR and video agents, had been offered in Egypt. Video chat was an important step for Etisalat, and not only because it was viewed as innovative and earned it recognition: it also made it realize it was not enough to support a single channel. It needed a multichannel offer so that its customers could choose how they approached it. The visual service targeted the deaf and mute community, and Etisalat won a number of prizes for it.

Building Your Digital Customer Service Solution

When launching new services, as Swisscom, Vodacom, and Etisalat have done, it is important to view the situation holistically. Service design is an interdisciplinary approach for service innovation. It is an iterative tool to develop services that are competitive and act as a differentiator. Service design is the activity of planning and organizing people, IT, communications, and other parts of service delivery. The overall goal is to provide service with higher quality. The purpose of these methodologies is to design the service based on documented customer needs. The objective is to have a service that is user-friendly, competitive, and relevant. At the core of this process is the ability to understand customer behavior, needs, and motivations.

Service design can help organizations to innovate and improve services to make them more useful, usable, and desirable for clients, as well as efficient and effective for the organization. Some of the key imperatives that underscore a service design led approach include:

- **Better the self-service experience.** A poorly designed self-service solution can push away customers. Use the time the customer spends in the self-service solution to get to know the customer intimately. Understand their behavior and their needs by asking relevant questions early on. Build dynamic scripts to respond to the need instead of using fixed solutions. React to who the customer is, when they are doing business with you, with what frequency, and adapt your responses to their needs, not to your schedule.

- **Improving the web experience.** Do you have the same persona on the web as you have in other channels? Does the customer recognize you on the web or in social media? Use the time on the web to get to know your customers. Use dynamic web features and allow them to customize their experience with you. Be careful to avoid designing web-based apps for

mobile devices as poor copies of your web page. Consider each screen as real estate that you need to optimize for that specific experience.

CONCLUSION

To begin your own journey into digital customer care and innovation of the customer experience, you should first ensure that you have a holistic view of your customers and their needs, behavior, and drivers, not only focusing on the parts of their journey that your organization is concerned with. Other recommendations are:

- **Always stay customer focused, not technology or internally focused.**

- **Define the timing aspect of your solution.** Do experienced customers and new customers have the same need for careful explanation, or should you provide an adapted response depending on how well your customer knows your services?

- **Customer care is individual.** Your solution should see the customer as an individual, not as a group. Their needs are their own and their experience is personal. They are social and share their knowledge of your products and services. Be where they are and join them proactively on their journey.

- **Create your solution together.** Ensure the team includes competence from IT, line of business, and, if possible, your customers. Allow them all to provide feedback to you as the solution develops over time.

- **Prepare for continuous improvement projects.** Customer care is a journey, where your services evolve together with your customer changes.

- **Define a common platform for communicating needs, ideas, and features.** Make sure each term is understood the same way in your projects.

- **Do not be afraid to find out how successful your projects are.** Measure key metrics before, during, and after a new feature is launched. Define those metrics ahead of time and follow them carefully. Let people know how you are doing and what you are doing to improve.

ABOUT GENESYS

Genesys is a global provider of multi-channel customer experience (CX) and contact center solutions in the cloud and on-premises.

The Genesys Customer Experience Platform powers customer journeys consistently across all touch points, 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..

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