White Paper

September 2015

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Will Your Customer Journey Map Bypass the Call Centre?

The Rise of the Customer-Centric Marketplace

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Introduction

Happy customers are not found. They are created. They emerge out of various encounters with your company. The sum of these encounters is known as the 'customer experience'. This is something that should be managed throughout the customer lifecycle to ensure that it is a consistently positive experience. A positive customer experience produces an engaged customer; someone who is likely to make future purchases and for this reason the customer experience is increasingly seen as the key to competitive advantage in every industry and especially the retail sector.

The digital age has created the agnostic customer who functions at the centre of a multitude of channels, mediums and touch points that must be managed to achieve "real" customer engagement. In this environment the company must inspire the customer's interest and manage behaviour and experience through a positively controlled end-to-end lifecycle. They need to know the correlations of customer interactions, sales activities and communications.

As this paper will show even the best relationships can be fragile ones, dependant on good experiences throughout every customer touch point across the business. A common mistake is to assume the sales department is primarily responsible for managing this relationship.

Understanding customer experience can be challenging because most companies, whether SMEs or multi-site organisations, now operate through a range of channels known as 'omni-channel'.

Knowing the customer

If the primary business goal is to achieve a positive customer experience, the most useful way to capture this vision is by creating a Customer Journey Map (CJM).

Creating a good customer experience is all about knowing what the customer wants and how the customer wants to obtain it. This may require re-engineering to achieve the enterprise-wide agility needed to fulfil this goal. It will certainly require future investment in digital and data assets. Some companies already make wide use of social networks, mobile devices and e-mail to reach customers but future success will require retailers to make bigger investment in analytics and data visualisation in order to fuse raw data from omni-channel activities. Only by this means can they

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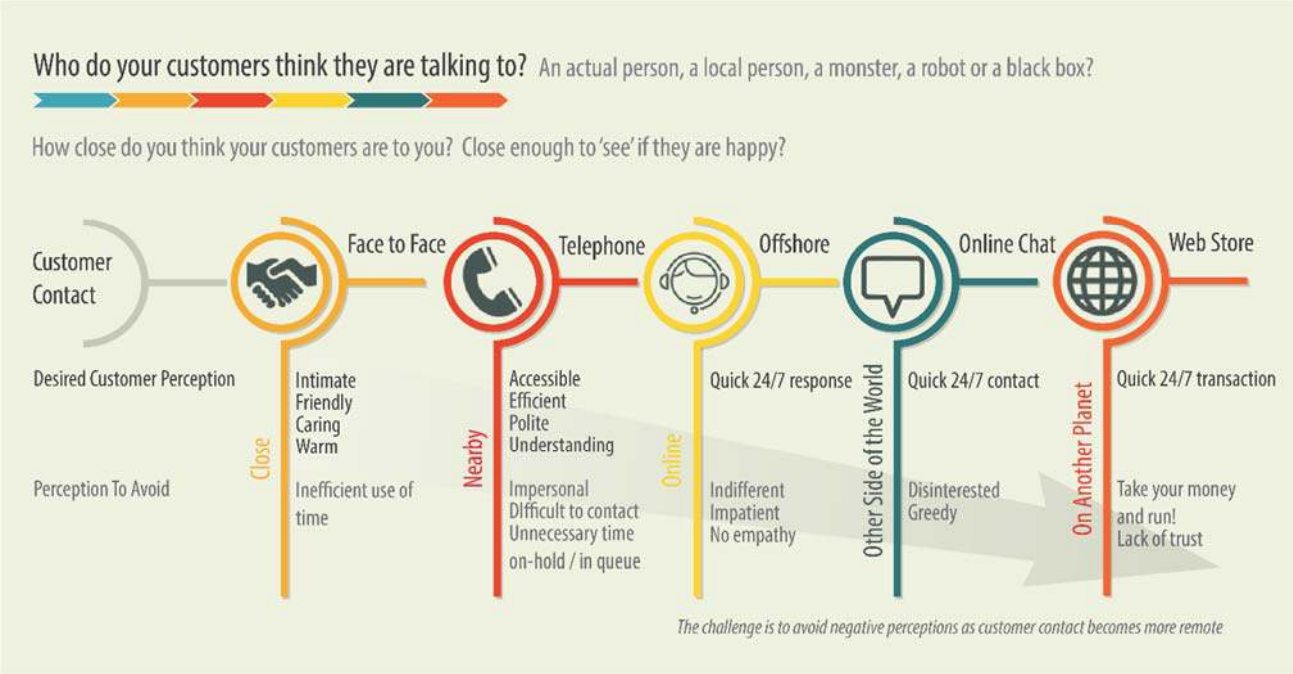
drive future engagement effectively - having gained a coherent picture of the customer.

If the primary business goal is to achieve a positive customer experience, the most useful way to capture this vision is by creating a Customer Journey Map (CJM).

Revealing and costing customer behaviour is a question of 'attribution' and is no easy task in an age of channel-savvy customers whose behaviour online and offline can be highly dynamic. Effective customer engagement is about measuring marketing ROI but do you measure direct, last action or last click activity?

At the moment metrics of customer behaviour are still attributed from channel specific silos. This is because a reliable approach for measuring multichannel customer data has yet to emerge. Nevertheless there are big data attribution techniques that are producing positive results based on Clustering, Logistic Regression and Neural Networks according to a recent report by Accenture[1].

iQube Marketing, a market research specialist, says meaningful attribution starts with your objective. Is it focussed on hard metrics such as sales revenue, margin gross profit, ROI and shareholder value or soft metrics such as net promoter score or brand recognition? This reveals the difference between measures of efficiency, such as email open rate, and measures of effectiveness such as sales volume[2].



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Start with the telephone

If all this sounds daunting there is an easy starting point based on telephone usage because the telephone remains one of the preferred channels of communication for many types of interaction from enquires to purchase and post sales engagement. Again, according to Accenture, direct attribution is a popular approach because it remains the simplest to implement[1].

Poor customer experience is like an iceberg

It is now broadly recognised that the customer lifecycle has moved on from the traditional three-phase process of 'awareness-engagement-purchase' to a four phase process of 'interest-engagement-purchase-advocacy' and customer advocacy should not be underestimated – as the following statistics demonstrate.

Customer advocacy can have a big impact on future success. Statistics from leading companies about the repercussions of a poor customer experience are easily found through internet searches. For example, almost 50% of people share negative customer experiences on social media and a significant number will post negative reviews online dissuading 86% of people from purchasing from these companies. Poor experiences are communicated to twice as many people as positive ones and for every customer that complains 26 other dissatisfied customers remain silent. 78% of consumers have abandoned a transaction because of poor service and 50% will change service provider after a bad experience while a whopping 91% of dissatisfied customers will turn away from a company that failed to meet their expectations.

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Companies may think they deliver good service but given customers' propensity to share bad experiences over good ones, without visibility, how can businesses begin to engage with them and redress or avoid the potential damage that hidden ill will can inflict?

The Customer Journey Map - where does the data come from? Is it reliable?

According to a recent Economist Intelligence Unit report[3] the core focus of business is now on engagement. It identifies four key trends and the first is 'Customer Experience'. It states "A positive customer experience across all touch points is increasingly seen as a company's most valuable asset". A 2014 Forrester[4] report identifies the link between experience and loyalty. This requires a shift of focus from

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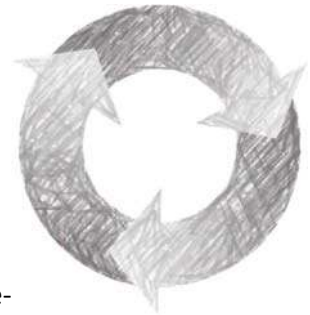
process efficiency to process effectiveness. However, just because something works in principle doesn't mean it will actually work as well in practice.

It is about driving interaction with the customer, managing the experience and restructuring to deliver business gains and improved customer experience through cross-functional co-operation. A Customer Journey Map can make this easier to achieve. This marketing tool describes all the experiences a customer has with the company including intangible responses because satisfaction, excitement, disappointment, frustration, anger or indifference are emotions that trigger future decisions. It will also reveal how easily a customer can do business with your company. For example an unresolved call or failure to tick the basket on an internet site suggests the customer has been frustrated and given up. Analysis of these customer journey moments reveals the experience.

How does the Customer Journey Map work?

Firstly you need to decide on the scope. The Customer Journey Map (CJM) can be used strategically to understand the broad behaviour of an audience or applied tactically to specific marketing campaigns targeting segmented customer groups. It can help multi-site public and private sector organisations understand complex multi-channel customer behaviour and the information leveraged to manage consistently good relationships.



Given the variety of ways customers can engage with your business the CJM helps the company to manage the customer life-cycle experience more effectively. Channel complexity now makes the task of maintaining happy, loyal customers an enterprise-wide task where irresponsible employees cannot hide from digital transparency. Amazingly, despite the emergence of omni-channel marketing, the preferred channel of communication for many customers remains the telephone. After developing an omni-channel presence one multinational entertainment organisation reported that regardless of the £millions they invested marketing and sales every month above and below the line 90% of customers continued to make purchases over the phone. This humble instrument remains the channel of choice in

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many sectors and a large amount of business-critical intelligence can be leveraged from it to inform future success.

Developing a multi-site retail operation

How does customer behaviour inform strategic decision making such as opening a new retail outlet? The three traditional metrics for understanding a well differentiated retail offering are price, range and convenience which, one way or another, is about accessibility and foot fall. Presumably price and range will remain a constant throughout the business but what about location? Are there sufficient enquires from a specific geographical area to warrant the investment in a new store? Alternatively can you optimise business performance by closing a regional outlet without damaging customer good will? Is the value proposition to customers sufficiently resilient that customers will continue to do business with the company even if it means travelling much further distances? The Customer Journey Map will inform the strategic business change.

…Customer journey maps are useful but there is a caveat… there needs to be sufficient data to gain a clear picture of customer behaviour…

Customer journey maps are useful but there is a caveat - especially when making big decisions such as up-scaling or downsizing a multi-site business. There needs to be sufficient data to gain a clear picture of customer behaviour and the telephone will remain the source for significant insight wherever it remains the preferred or significant channel for customer interaction. Telephone activity happens in real-time. You get instant feedback from the telephone which means better and quicker decisions can be made. With call analytics filling the gap business leaders can have the assurance that their decisions are based on a more completed picture of their customer.

It is also important to plot all of a customer's potential journeys through the business not just the call centre, taking into account real-world scenarios as opposed to those that are purely speculated or assumed. Customers (humans) can be both persistent and devious to get the outcome they desire. By the customer simply calling back an hour or two later and speaking to someone else can achieve a whole different outcome for the customer and the business for that matter.

Small costs. Big rewards.

Most companies, whether large or small, can address the issue of managing a consistently good customer experience by introducing a Call Management system as

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a standalone tool or to supplement an existing contact centre solution. The Call Management system may also include some degree of computer-telephone integration (CTI) for managing call recording, call reporting, automated dialling and contact centre type performance analytics and wallboards

Large multi-site companies can introduce or add call analytics to get smart with call data. This gives visibility and insight into every location, asset and resource to transform data into actionable intelligence, helping companies to visualise, understand and better manage both the customer experience and resources - wherever the phone dominates as a source of business.

Why start with the telephone?

The telephone is probably the easiest system to target but is often overlooked. Regardless of investment in other mediums and methods it continues to remains one of the primary channels of customer interaction and so provides a big opportunity to improve the company's performance in terms of winning new customers and retaining others to reduce customer churn. When a major UK-based FTSE-100 builders merchant with more than 900 national branches undertook a series of surveys to analyse the impact of missed calls it discovered in one year out of 14.5 million inbound calls, the bulk of which were to local stores rather than their contact centre, more than two million calls went unanswered. The company estimated this as equivalent to £83.9m based on average sales order/lost basket value.

The best outcomes can be achieved by combining a multi-site call analytics system with a contact centre system. Most would recognise that as much as we would like to, it is not economically viable or practical to deploy a full blown contact centre solution across hundreds of sites, each with just a handful of extensions. It is fair to say that each site, group, team or individual across the business is in essence an "informal" contact centre or agent. If we can find a mechanism to offer some of the features and reporting capabilities of a contact centre, it is possible to ensure the customers' experience is tracked, monitored and handled correctly.

On a practical note, it is not difficult to imagine the frustration felt by so many customers when so much uncertainty exists concerning whether calls will succeed or be handled in a satisfactory way. Apart from lost revenue there is greater damage to

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the company's reputation and brand perception. It also has a negative effect on branch staff moral and staff turnover. When a significant proportion of callers drop out of the customer journey it is not difficult to image the frustration vented on social media platforms. A Customer Journey Map would reveal where and how these customer lifecycles break down.

In the case of the builder's merchant, the company responded by investing in a telephony performance management system having estimated that even a modest 5% improvement in call resolution at branch level would add £3.3m to its bottom line. The benefits far outweighed the cost. Management benefited from centralising call data from all parts of the business across its multi-site operations. Decision-enabling information can be viewed at local and corporate level. More importantly the implementation from planning to commissioning was completed within six weeks and as an "over the top" solution, this equates to minimum disruption to business for a solution that goes a long way to improving and managing customer expectations.

Now members of staff have enough information at their fingertips in the form of actual performance to KPI's as well as the ability to return calls in an informative manner. They can even recognise the number of abortive attempts a caller has made over a given period of time and prioritise their response. Thus any bad feeling that may begin to fester can be turned into an opportunity through an informed apology. Large enterprises gain even greater rewards when telephone data can be combined with existing contact centre and CRM platforms, to contribute to 'big data' and broader data visualisation solutions. Adding call recording data mining into the mix will provide even greater customer intelligence.

Low cost. High value returns.

Companies do not need to make huge technology investments to gain insight to customer behaviour. Evidence shows that simply displaying call data through a standard web browser to enable staff to make informed responses makes a big quantifiable difference to the quality of customer experience.

Tollring's iC360 suite* with its Telephony Response and Compliance module (TRaC) is one system operating successfully in large multi-site organisations and SMEs. This type of system enables employees using landline telephony to make better informed ring backs. They can see the number of attempts a caller has made trying to contact

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the company, the period over which these abortive calls were made and whether these calls occurred during or outside normal business hours and whether the call was returned in an acceptable time frame (eg. 1 hour). Management and customer-facing staff know if the issues were resolved.

Conclusion

These days many retailers think about omni-channel marketing but the first thought should not be how they might apply latest technology but what works for their customers. Despite the digital revolution, emergence of mobile technology and advances in Social Media, the telephone remains one of the most important channels for customer interaction.

Investment should be made where it delivers best value to both the customer, the sales team and the company and so the focus has to be on the customer experience. Is it good or bad? Can you see it? Achieving these goals begins with a mind shift from what the company can deliver to what the customer wants. Good customer experience leads to customer engagement and loyalty. This means:

- Increase sales
- Healthier customer lifecycle and share of wallet
- More clearly defined value proposition
- Stronger competitive advantage
- Improved advocacy which, like any earned media, attracts wider interest

Two cost-effective, telephone technologies help companies fulfil these goals.

Call management provides a low cost but effective way to manage a good customer experience across the enterprise. Telephony Performance Management Systems provide the insight through 360 degree visibility to business decision making - especially when combined with other channel data in an omni-channel environment.

There is a life cycle of engagement and every customer journey is different in the customer centric world. By looking at the company from a telephone-centric perspective companies have the tools to manage customer lifecycles without major investment or disruption to the business.

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About Tollring

Turning communications into business insight, to solve real business challenges at the touch of a button.

Tollring is a well-established software developer of proven solutions. With offices in the UK and the USA, Tollring specialises in telecoms management software, billing and call recording solutions, delivered on premise or via the cloud. Our award-winning feature-rich data visualisation solutions optimise productivity and maximise profit for nearly 6000 companies across the UK, Europe, USA and Australia, reporting on an estimated 470,000 business phone lines and telecoms devices.

The company prioritises high levels of re-investment into product development and infrastructure. In 2015 Tollring won Data Visualisation of the Year at Computing magazine's Vendor Excellence awards and in 013 and 2014 won the IT Europa European IT and Software Excellence Awards for Big Data, Business Intelligence and Analytics Solution of the Year.

The comprehensive and innovative product suites are developed in-house and delivered via over 850 channel partners (including ICT resellers, SIs, SPs, BPOs and phone manufacturers).

Tollring's portfolio of cloud based and locally installed applications includes:

- iC360 suite telecoms analytics portal for large multi-site enterprises
- icall suite complete call management (call reporting, call recording, CTI and contact team analytics) delivered via the cloud or on-premise

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