

Masterminding the Contact Center of the Future

Companies able to deliver a blend of responsive and proactive customer support build trust and strengthen loyalty



Executive Overview

Most companies struggle desperately to keep pace with today's ever-mobile omnichannel customer. Meanwhile, the cost of serving customers continues to rise as companies strain to support customers across multiple channels.

Many companies try to address the cost conundrum by improving processes or reducing personnel costs, a narrow approach to solving a broad problem. In order to provide the experiences customers expect and demand across all channels, companies need to take a holistic approach to customer service. This includes evaluating and making improvements to each of the three components needed to deliver the optimal customer experience: people, process, and technology.

Companies scrambling to deliver on customers' expectations will need to make substantial changes to their customer support capabilities if they hope to attract and retain discriminating customers. "The contact center of the future will need to serve customers much differently than it does today," notes Brian Shepherd, president of customer strategy and technology solutions at TeleTech. "Companies will need to provide customers with frictionless experiences and proactive support that's relevant, timely, and with their preferred level of interaction," says Shepherd.

Sean Carithers, vice president of customer solutions at TeleTech, continues: "In order to serve customers effectively, the contact center of the future will also need to be able to identify customer needs, coupled with the ability to provide support in the preferred channel or channels."

Ryan Swanger, senior vice president of global sales at eLoyalty, a TeleTech company, contends that to achieve this level of granularity, "Contact center associates will need to be able to harness the full range of customer data that's available to provide relevant support at the right time."

For example, a customer visiting an electronics retailer website wants to learn more about tablet computers.



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After noticing the customer lingering on the web page, an associate extends an invitation to chat, which the customer accepts. After further discussion, the associate sends the customer an email with links to additional information, including online customer forums where product ratings and insights are shared (see sidebar on crowdsourcing, page 6).

Unshackling the immutable contact center

A key obstacle preventing most businesses from meeting customers' soaring expectations is the lack of flexibility within the contact center systems used, including an inability to follow customers effectively as they move from one channel to the next. Contact center associates using premise-based contact center systems often have to jump between multiple screens to support customers in different channels since these systems are typically poorly integrated with one another¹. Associates' failure to provide customers with constructive support experiences results in customer dissatisfaction and churn².

To provide this type of seamless and relevant support, companies need a contact center platform agile enough to keep pace with customers regardless of channels used. A cloud contact center enables businesses to provide customers with timely and relevant support across all channels used today – and tomorrow – by connecting disparate support systems under a single hood.

Agile and intelligent contact centers often have a synergistic effect on business performance.³ Customers receive better experiences and are more satisfied after engaging with associates with the right technological tools and access to customer information. Technology is just one piece of the puzzle, however. The contact center of the future will also be completely redesigned to encourage greater collaboration between associates and supervisors (see case study, page 9). Taken together, the ability to provide customers with more transparent and knowledgeable service results in greater customer satisfaction, higher customer lifetime value, more productive and engaged employees, and improved operational and business performance.

“Going forward, there will be higher expectations from employees about the work environment and the tools and systems necessary for them to be happy and productive,” says Ron Wince, president of Peppers & Rogers Group, a TeleTech company. Providing associates with the right tools eases the task of supporting customers effectively.⁴ Attracting and retaining highly skilled and engaged associates becomes increasingly important for companies focused on differentiating themselves through the customer experiences they deliver.

While customers expect companies to know who they are as well as their preferences, the contact center of the future will also need to deliver more proactive assistance. Such pre-emptive support may come in the form of a call reminding a customer about an upcoming medical appointment, an email advising that a favorite brand of tennis shoes is on sale, or an SMS alert from a car dealer that it’s time for an oil change.

Contacting customers proactively demonstrates that a company is acting in customers’ best interests and serves to build trust and strengthen loyalty. To do this,

contact center agents need real-time customer insights about customers’ behaviors, transactions, and attitudes, requiring immediate access to customer information across all channels and business systems.

Industry leaders such as USAA, The Ritz-Carlton, and JetBlue are already distinguishing themselves through the customer experiences they deliver.⁵ Research conducted by Watermark Consulting reveals that customer experience leaders generated cumulative stock performance results three times higher than the S&P 500 Index from 2007 to 2012.⁶

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— Ron Wince, president of Peppers & Rogers Group, a TeleTech company

Is your company prepared to compete?

Supported by insights from **TeleTech** and **1to1 Media**, this white paper will provide organizational leaders with valuable takeaways, including:

- **How** changing business and customer trends drive the need to create the contact center of the future.
- **Why** evolving customer expectations for future support will span across all channels, including voice, social, mobile, email, and chat.
- **How** the capabilities offered by a cloud contact center are designed to meet changing customer demands.
- **Why** the contact center of the future will need to be designed and skilled differently.
- **How** flexible and agile customer support services can generate the types of customer experiences resulting in higher customer satisfaction, greater loyalty, and improved business performance.

Creating a New Model for the Customer Relationship

Customers have come to expect more.⁷ The extraordinary experiences enjoyed by customers with companies such as USAA and The Ritz-Carlton have raised the bar: customers now also expect five-star treatment wherever they do business.⁸

In far too many cases, companies treat customers like a transaction or a financial metric with little regard for their needs or feelings.⁹ Customer centricity must be at the core of all organizational planning for companies hoping to attract and retain customers going forward, with senior executives approaching each strategic decision by asking themselves, "How will this affect our customers?" Business leaders must ensure that the experiences provided to their customers are personalized, relevant, and meaningful.¹⁰

To deliver on these requirements, organizational leaders need to conduct a multi-faceted assessment of their multichannel touchpoints, evaluating the role of the contact center in the holistic customer experience along with the processes and technologies used to support them. The assessment should identify gaps to prioritize projects, serving as a guide to plan a longer term road map for improvement, says Carithers. "Focusing on the customer's journey and identifying the key process and technology dependencies should be the focus of this assessment," comments Carithers.

"Business leaders will need to re-examine the role of contact center associates as brand ambassadors for the company. Associates will need the right skills and tools to meet and even exceed customer expectations. Still, organizational leaders will need to re-examine their views of the contact center and the opportunities it provides for propelling the business forward," explains Shepherd.

"Do you think of your associates as a high-cost labor center or as ambassadors of the company, emulating a Nordstrom's clerk whose mission is to delight each customer?" asks Shepherd. "Companies need to think about the customers and the experiences they provide as the core differentiator. It's no longer simply about competing on product or price."

Going forward, contact center supervisors will also need to take steps to ensure that they're not over-measuring associates' performances.¹¹ "By placing too great an emphasis on operational performance metrics such as average handle time (AHT) and calls handled per hour, associates become rigid, so focused on meeting performance targets that they lose sight of their most important job – to please customers as efficiently as possible," says Swanger.

In order to serve customers more effectively, senior executives need to recognize that the responsibility of serving customers shouldn't fall solely on the contact center. Forward-looking companies are taking steps to ensure that all potential customer-facing employees are empowered to serve customers regardless of where they work in a company, be it accounting, human resources, or information technology.

To provide the type of seamless support that customers expect, an employee servicing a customer requires access to a full range of data to provide a comprehensive customer view. To that end, "sales, marketing, and service need to share customer data, working collaboratively instead of as separate entities," says Carithers. "Companies should also map what the ideal customer interaction looks like, acting on any process, technical, or cultural changes necessary to realize that ideal."

Drawing value from customer data

One of the most effective ways to satisfy customers is by providing personalized and relevant experiences. The use of progressive technologies and techniques make it possible for companies to differentiate the customer service experience.

Each company has a distinct competitive advantage over all other companies: the unique, proprietary information it gathers about its customers. However, the data itself is meaningless unless business leaders and front-line employees are able to extract value from it.

It's not enough for a contact center associate to be able to access basic customer information from a CRM system to authenticate a customer calling in or initiating contact through a digital channel. Customers are multi-dimensional.

There's a full range of customer information that's available to companies, including customers' transaction histories, the sentiment they share about a brand's products and services in social media and in contact center interactions, their channel behaviors, preferences, and beliefs. All of these attributes go into forming a more complete understanding of each customer, available for associate use to guide each customer's support experience.¹²

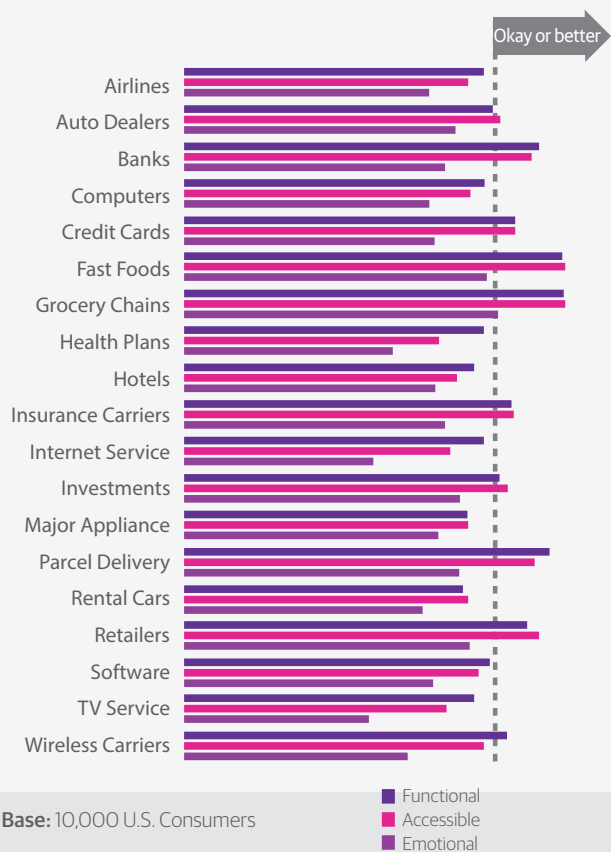
Contact center associates and other employees interacting with customers require a versatile contact

center platform to allow a 360-degree view of each customer across all touchpoints. Providing a comprehensive view of each customer enables associates to make customer insights actionable, highlighting the merits of customer analytics used.

When a frequent flyer calls an airline to check on the status of a delayed flight and other flight options available, the customer shouldn't have to re-identify himself to an associate if he previously entered his frequent flyer number. "Instead of bringing the conversation back to the beginning and annoying the customer, the use of analytics can help inform an airline associate of the customer's identity, recognize that his flight has been delayed, and enable the associate to pick up the discussion from there," says Wince.

Customer Experience: Room for Improvement

Many companies struggle to deliver acceptable customer experiences, much less exceptional ones. The following chart from a 2014 Temkin Group study illustrates how companies across most industries have opportunities to dramatically improve their capabilities.¹³



Source: Temkin Group Q1 2014 Consumer Benchmark Survey, Base: 10,000 consumers

Anticipating each customer's needs

Best-in-class companies not only have a thorough profile of each customer, they're also capable of anticipating the nature of a customer's inquiry. Let's say a customer has viewed product information on a company's web page moments before calling the contact center. An alert can be sent to an associate that he is likely calling to find out additional information about a particular product. When the associate takes the call, she can have information about that product available on her screen to immediately assist the customer.

The use of analytics in the contact center provides additional insights for associates and other employees, improving the customer experience and strengthening business outcomes. "For instance, one of TeleTech's clients, a major telecom carrier, utilized analytics to determine that customers calling about specific topics are at a higher propensity to churn. These insights have led management to develop customized treatment strategies for use by associates to increase its retention of those customers," says Wince.

Gaining the ability to anticipate and proactively address customers' needs will be one of the keys to differentiating the customer experience in the not-too-distant future. Nevertheless, contact centers will still require the ability to respond quickly to customers regardless of the channel or channels they're using. In the next section of this paper, we'll explore how changing customer behavior requires companies to become more nimble, responding logically to customers' cross-channel and omnichannel interactions.

Tearing Down the Walls

The traditional view of the contact center, with all customer inquiries handled by dedicated customer service associates seated in cubicles within the four walls of a facility, is being pushed to the curb. While many companies will continue to operate inbound/outbound contact centers, a growing number of organizations are making use of home-based associates, outsourcing, and smaller micro centers populated by just a few people.¹⁴

Meanwhile, as business leaders increasingly recognize the business value of distinguishing the organization's customer support capabilities, customer service will need to be handled seamlessly by a variety of different functions within the organization. These functions include but aren't limited to, sales, marketing, accounting, finance, and HR.¹⁵

"Because of these shifts, it will become increasingly important that all employees potentially interacting with a customer are armed with the right tools and access to

information to provide intelligent and rapid support," says Swanger. "To make this work effectively, sales, marketing, and customer service will need to work cooperatively to deliver optimal interactions with customers," adds Carithers.

Physical changes to the contact center also lie ahead. The fortress of cubicles representing the current look of most contact center facilities "will be replaced by open space designs to encourage greater interaction between contact center associates and supervisors," says Richard Bledsoe, executive vice president of global markets at TeleTech.

"If you think of the physical layout of a contact center, there are little booths where associates are cordoned off from one another," says Bledsoe. "In future designs, there will be more openness and fewer dividers between agents so that they can brainstorm on the challenges they're encountering while opening up greater opportunities to collaborate."

Strength in Numbers: Crowdsourcing

One of the biggest trends influencing how contact centers operate is the growing use of crowdsourcing, allowing customers to receive support and advice from fellow customers and power users of a company's products and services.¹⁶ In the past, contact centers were highly reliant on providing associates with extensive training to cover the spectrum of customer needs. As new digital channels continue to emerge and the velocity of communications has increased exponentially, it's becoming increasingly difficult for associates to keep up with the pace of change in company product and service catalogs.

"While informational tools can be useful in helping associates bridge gaps in knowledge about a company's products and services, the same tools can also be made available to customers willing and able to attempt to help solve a fellow customer's issue," says Bledsoe.

Crowdsourcing offers a number of benefits to customers and companies. Customers are confident about the expertise of fellow customers with product or service experience. In addition, customer inquiries deflected from the contact center can reduce customer support costs by up to 60 percent, according to CrowdEngineering.¹⁷

Moreover, crowdsourcing offers companies a terrific opportunity to be transparent with customers, building trust by providing expanded support options offered by their peers. "Ultimately, the very best customer experience is one where the customer doesn't have to make a phone call to get something done," says Bledsoe.

Delivering the Seamless Omnichannel Customer Experience

Customers are multi-faceted. They may use different channels to support their needs and interests at given points in time.¹⁸

For instance, a customer interested in buying a new car may view product specifications on an automaker's website. From there, the customer might engage in an online

community to see what other consumers think about the strengths and weaknesses of a particular model. She may also call a local dealership to find out additional information about pricing and loan options.¹⁹

However, if the customer has to authenticate herself once she has connected with a salesperson or a contact center associate, this can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction, an all-too-common scenario when channels are poorly integrated and associates don't have a comprehensive view of the customer's history.²⁰

"To deliver the type of frictionless omnichannel support experience sought by customers, organizational leaders need to perform an in-depth examination of the underlying contact systems and processes, reengineering them for today's customer interaction," says Carithers. "Decision makers must ensure a careful balance is struck between prioritizing the anticipated business impact with the upheavals caused by introducing new applications and processes."

"Many companies overlook the importance of change management even when implementing new and better technologies," Carithers continues. "In a contact center, technology is not plug-and-play. It requires sensitivity to both organizational and operational impacts."

Gaining a richer understanding of customers

Analytics-driven and technology-enabled support tools provide associates and other customer-facing employees with information about a customer's complete history at their fingertips. Having customer insights readily available enables associates to provide customers with rapid and pertinent service in the channels of their choice, boosting satisfaction and loyalty. These capabilities may include sharing video tutorials or images with a customer for a technical support call, or making use of geo-location to point a customer to a local office for face-to-face support if needed.

Modernizing the Contact Center: 11 Key Questions

1. What is the agent experience? Is it efficient or burdensome?
2. Are the collective systems performing according to desired SLAs?
3. How well integrated are the systems to provide 360-degree views of the customer, the agent and the overall center?
4. What does the overall technical architecture look like? Is it optimal?
5. How well are the systems being maintained? Are any systems near end-of-life?
6. Are the current systems being utilized to the full extent of their capabilities?
7. Are there barriers to the full usage and adoption of the technology systems?
8. Are the systems providing the anticipated return on investment?
9. How are new capabilities incorporated into the contact center? (i.e., cloud-based offerings, social CRM tools, etc.)
10. How well does the current technology infrastructure support new capabilities?
11. Are the systems available in a redundant fashion and/or in an offsite location, etc. to ensure continuity of operations?

Source: TeleTech

Companies providing exceptional omnichannel customer service can distinguish their brands and strengthen business performance. For example, companies with higher-than-average customer service satisfaction scores have realized 9 percent year-over-year sales growth compared with just 3 percent for companies with below average scores, according to the U.K. Customer Satisfaction Index.²¹

"If you want to survive and thrive, you have to be innovative," says Swanger.

The real-time manager

Technology offers other opportunities for contact center leaders to make customer support more responsive. Cloud-based command center dashboards provide contact center supervisors with a real-time view of associate or operational performance that can be used to take immediate action if service levels are trending down, or to identify a coaching opportunity. These dashboards may be tailored to specific roles; for example, a vice president of customer experience can have a dashboard providing insights regarding changes in customer satisfaction, Net Promoter Score™, etc.

"Reporting will become less interpretive and more actionable, creating a much higher level of agility," says Swanger.

Meanwhile, as new channels continue to emerge, organizational leaders need a contact center platform to enable the company to adapt quickly to customers' channel preferences, allowing organizations to anticipate and respond to customers in the channels they prefer. The insights drawn from data and technology allow contact center leaders to identify and plan for the skills needed by associates along with tactics used to effectively recruit, train, and incentivize.

While the right contact center platform is a key ingredient for delivering the types of experiences that customers expect today and tomorrow, it's ultimately just one of the elements needed to achieve success. Organizational leaders will need to re-think the design of the contact center to enhance collaboration and productivity. In addition, decision makers must re-examine existing processes that make it difficult for customers to resolve issues quickly and easily.

Enriching the Customer Experience via Analytics

Collaborative use of customer information collected by the contact center, indicators of operational performance, and predictive analytics serve to optimize the customer experience. Operational analytics can be used to help company leaders identify better, more efficient ways to serve the customer.

For instance, let's say a contact center supervisor for a bank determines that the NPS® scores for customers in a particular region have dropped by five points over the past few weeks. Customer sentiment shared in email, chat, voice, and social interactions reveals that a high percentage of customers are dissatisfied with the inability to reach associates with knowledge about banking products after branches have closed for the day. Contact center leaders can then use these insights along

with workforce optimization tools to ensure adequate coverage of associates with the right skills during non-branch hours.

Analytics can be also applied against a customer's behavioral and historical data to better anticipate why a particular customer is calling and ensure the right information is immediately available to assist, serving to deepen the relationship.

Many short-sighted contact centers use analytics solely to evaluate operational efficiency, such as comparing the average handle time (AHT) between associates. "Leading companies are using analytics to learn what customers are happy and unhappy about, using these insights to deliver a better customer experience," says Wince.

Case Study: Connecting with the Mobile Customer

One of the challenges many enterprise companies grapple with is the layers of legacy systems and outdated processes that have been acquired or cobbled together over the years. Kludgy, ineptly integrated systems make it extremely difficult for associates to service customers effectively. A study conducted by Sentiment reveals that 42 percent of contact center associates are unable to efficiently resolve customer issues due to disconnected systems or outdated interfaces.²²

One of TeleTech's telecommunications clients in Asia-Pacific faced similar challenges. The company's customer support operations were extremely labor intensive, and the technology it had been using was outdated.

In 2007, TeleTech helped the company relocate the bulk of its customer support activities to a nearby country, continuing to work with the telco to upgrade its contact center operations ever since. The move provided an opportunity for the company to take a greenfield approach to customer support. TeleTech created a process improvement team which evaluated each process touching the customer experience, including those associated with billing and cell phone credit management. These efforts included short process review meetings at the beginning and end of each day covering issues prioritized, actions taken, and follow-through tracked.

"There were a lot of challenges with the way processes were mapped out," acknowledges Bledsoe.

Acting on customer demand for chat support

TeleTech helped the telco identify a strong demand for chat support among its customers after analyzing surveys and other types of feedback. TeleTech demonstrated to the company's organizational leaders what world-class chat support looks like and how it can be used to deliver a better customer experience.

TeleTech quickly provided the telco with hundreds of skilled chat associates who hit the ground running. The use of analytics helped the company determine that customer reaction to its chat support capabilities was very strong. The top-notch chat support capabilities have helped the telco to improve its Net Promoter Score (NPS) and customer satisfaction scores.

Process mapping has also provided other benefits to the telco. "The TeleTech team discovered that the company hadn't been providing its associates with any formal training for the CRM system used. To address this, TeleTech provided associates with live screens to make customer interactions more iterative," says Bledsoe. The new training techniques strengthened associate retention rates during their first 90 days of employment while NPS scores for associates also rose dramatically.

The process improvement efforts also led TeleTech to offer additional associate coaching. In the past, the telco's contact center supervisors used a checkbox approach to monitor the performance of each associate (e.g., whether the associate greeted a customer properly, resolved the customer issue successfully, etc.) After listening to a sample of customer calls, TeleTech helped the telco revise its approach to performance





management and has grouped each of the 50 million support calls the company receives annually into four key areas: system problem, people (associate) problem, policy problem, and technology problem.

"We started to build a knowledge base of recurring problems, analyzing trends for use in associate coaching and process improvement," says Bledsoe.

Raising the bar for potential hires

Over time, the TeleTech team convinced telco business leaders that it needed to recruit contact center associates with better communication and problem resolution skills. To assist with these efforts, TeleTech measured the NPS of employment candidates through role playing and testing. "We give them scenarios and they have to prove that they're good at it," says Bledsoe.

The telco also increased compensation for its associates and has invested in attractive incentives, including opportunities for top performers to receive an all-expenses paid trip to a 5-star resort.

In addition, the company applied advanced technologies to improve the customer experience and strengthen customer retention. For example, TeleTech developed a mobile app enabling associates to troubleshoot a technical problem live on a customer's mobile phone. TeleTech also developed a propensity model to identify which customers are at greatest risk to defect. The model and other operational improvements have allowed the telco to become the only carrier to pick up marketshare in its home country for each of the past three years, rising from third to first in the market for pre-paid mobile subscribers.

TeleTech has also helped the telco to refine and improve its use of performance metrics over the past three years. Previously, the company used a "red/green/yellow" scorecard to grade areas of its operations. The problem was, the metrics would change month to month or the goals themselves were shifted.

"We coined the phrase 'metrics mayhem' to describe the situation," says Bledsoe. "There was a myriad of data that didn't seem material. We helped them simplify the number of metrics they utilized, instead taking a long-term view."

In addition, TeleTech helped company leaders recognize that the customer experience doesn't begin and end with the contact center since customers also interact with employees in billing and other departments.

Looking ahead, TeleTech is working with the telco to consolidate the number of contact centers it operates, reducing from more than a dozen to just a handful, driving additional cost savings and efficiencies while further streamlining customer-facing processes. More recently, TeleTech helped the company redesign the layout of its existing contact centers by tearing down walls around cubicles and offices, creating a more open floor plan to foster greater communication and collaboration between contact center associates and supervisors.

"In the end, it's about providing customers what they want, when they want it," says Bledsoe.

Measuring the Impact on Business Performance

As companies become more adept at anticipating and responding effectively to customer inquiries, the measurements used to track performance also evolve. "Although companies will continue to measure operational performance indicators such as first contact resolution and call deflection, they'll also need to assess whether, and to what extent, the customer was satisfied by their experience with the company," says Wince. This can be achieved by using customer data (transactions, sentiment, behaviors) with predictive analytics to make correlations between customer experience and metrics such as satisfaction, loyalty, Net Promoter Score, changes in customer lifetime value, etc.

Of course, many metrics that will be used to measure customer experience in the future have yet to be developed. From an operational perspective, companies will increasingly measure the total time of interaction with

a customer (e.g., from the time an auto insurance customer has a fender bender, forwards a photo of the damage to the insurance company and then fills out a claim form).

"In addition, the industry will need to devise a metric to determine whether, and to what extent, a customer has had a frictionless omnichannel experience," says Shepherd. "Because the customer experiences hinge on so many different factors and can influence a variety of financial measurements, companies will gravitate towards using a Balanced Scorecard-type approach incorporating a full set of operational, financial, and customer experience metrics."

"Organizations that skew too much towards a focus on efficiency limit themselves in their ability to gain a greater understanding about the impact of customer experience on business performance," says Wince.

Connecting the Dots with Customer Experience Value Analysis

How can a company tie customer experience improvements to bottom-line impact? TeleTech and Peppers & Rogers Group have devised a five-step process called the Customer Experience Value Analysis to integrate data analytics with customer value across the entire customer continuum, bringing the financial picture into focus.²³

Step 1: Assemble an Analytic Data Repository. Before companies can estimate the impacts of customer experience improvements, they need to learn as much as possible about their customers. This means not only knowing who their customers are and what they've purchased, but how they interact with the company and how they feel about those interactions.

Step 2: Track all customer interactions. Customers interact with brands based on their preferences at the moment.

Most brands have a mix of single and omnichannel users. For instance, many older bank customers prefer conducting business at a branch while younger customers generally favor digital channels. To gain a clear picture on individual customer preferences, customer interactions across all channels must be assembled in the analytic data repository.

Step 3: Monitor customer experience scores. It may be impractical to measure customer experience with each customer as many are unwilling to provide feedback after each interaction. However, customer experience scores can be inferred based on statistical analysis and applied to those unwilling to answer a customer experience questionnaire.

Step 4: Determine related changes in customer behavior. Once the necessary data elements have been amassed in the analytic data repository, linking a

customer's experience ratings with his or her subsequent behavior is fairly easy. For instance, one cable operator TeleTech worked with is able to determine the impact that different customer service interactions have on the likelihood that a customer will disconnect his service, ranging from single resolved calls, to multiple calls, to escalated calls, to sending a technician for service.

Conclusion

Evolving to the contact center of the future begins with taking an outside-in approach to all customer-facing processes and understanding how each action affects the customer.

"A good starting point begins with taking a holistic assessment and health check of your contact center, looking at all the dependent organizational, process and technology components," says Carithers.

Companies should also gain a deep understanding of what it's like to be a customer receiving support from their organizations.

"I like to use the analogy from the film *Caddyshack*: If you want to be a great golfer, you have to be the ball," says Wince.²⁴ "If you want to be great at customer service, you have to be the customer. That means you must view their end-to-end experiences the way they view it – not just as data and information but truly how they emotionally respond to your business," he adds. Companies can do this by mapping the customer journey as well as understanding and eliminating any pain points the customer encounters.

Successfully deploying an outside-in approach requires commitment from the very top of the organization. "Senior leadership, from the CEO on down, needs to

Step 5: Evaluate customer value impacts. Once all of the incremental behavioral actions have been quantified, they need to be translated into a financial impact. In most instances, this is straightforward. However, in some cases, the financial value of certain purchases may vary (e.g., the actual value of deposit accounts opened by different customers with a bank).

clearly and regularly communicate to all employees that the company's core differentiator is about delighting the customer at every touchpoint," says Swanger. "It's about delivering on the end-to-end customer experience across all touchpoints."

In order to execute on this vision, "companies must also enable associates to act as brand ambassadors to satisfy customers," says Bledsoe. "This means empowering associates to solve customer issues on the fly with the right intelligence and tools to support customer interactions across all channels. It also requires organizational leaders to make a complete cultural mind shift in terms of hiring, recruiting, training, incentivizing, and measuring associates' performance."

Customer satisfaction is a continuous journey. Companies acting intelligently and proactively in designing the contact center of the future can propel themselves to the front of the pack.

Concludes Shepherd, "Companies that are equipped with the right trained associates, adaptable customer-centric processes designed for multichannel experiences, state-of-the-art technologies, and a sound approach to measuring performance position themselves to have a repeatable model for thrilling their customers and separating their organizations from the crowd."

About eLoyalty, LLC

eLoyalty, LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of TeleTech Holdings, Inc., is recognized industrywide for 25 years in transforming customer management environments for a wide variety of multinational clients across a variety of industries. eLoyalty has unparalleled experience and qualifications with managed on-premise and cloud multichannel contact center solutions, as well as virtual store and branch integration. Organizations that require advanced voice, data, and multichannel technologies integrated with customer experience strategy turn to

eLoyalty for consulting and professional services, systems integration, application development, monitoring, managed services, and transformational customer experience solutions. Drawing on relationships with industry leaders like Cisco Systems®, eLoyalty blends their services with industry-leading hardware and software applications to deliver best-in-class solutions.

For more information, visit eLoyalty on the web at eLoyalty.com.

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