Hewlett Packard
Enterprise

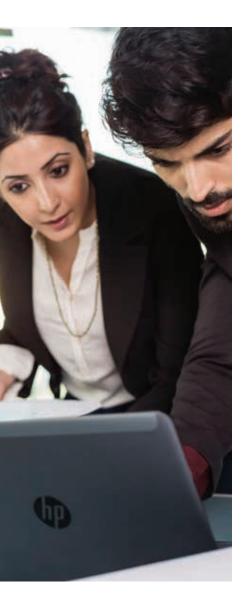# INVESTING IN an Improved Customer Experience

Technology advances are enabling organizations to understand and engage with customers in ways that were not possible just a few years ago. Nearly universal connectivity, along with mobility, social media, cloud computing, "as a service" delivery, and business intelligence and analytics are creating new expectations on the part of customers and the businesses that serve them.

With the rapid adoption of handheld mobile devices, customers expect to be served at any time, wherever they may be. And they expect their interactions to be positive, simple, fast and productive. Enterprises serving these customers need to understand each customer's needs and interests, and be able to optimize their offerings.

For IT professionals, it's a brand-new paradigm. It means focusing on people and not technology. The success or failure of an implementation is no longer dependent on successful user acceptance testing, but on the adoption rate of the application by customers. IT must adopt new technologies and approaches to build the infrastructure required to address this new mode of customer engagement.

Customer experience is about how, where, when and why communications happens in this connected world. From the standpoint of the business, three interconnected activities must come together to drive an improved customer experience:

Understanding   Engaging   Responding

Here's how each of these plays a critical part in delivering an improved customer experience, with specific use cases of how progressive organizations are already innovating and reaping the benefits.

Understanding Client Behavior

Organizations are starting to better understand their customers by capturing and extracting meaning-based information from a wide range of sources.

In addition to using information from their own customer databases, organizations can now examine peer-to-peer conversations going on within social media. They can also reach out to customers through social media and engage with them in real time to elicit additional understanding of what they may want and need.

As organizations learn more about what drives customer behavior, they can use that information to deliver better services, specifically through the innovative use of information technology.

One example is a large multinational manufacturer of printers and copiers, which set out to "re-imagine" how it operated customer support. The goal was to expand and improve services while also reducing costs. Working with an outsourced supplier, the organization built a knowledge database that workers use to share information about calls and how they have solved customer issues. The information gathered in the database can now be used by the research and development organization to better understand customer needs and concerns.

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In addition to building the knowledge database, the organization was also able to add support for additional language capabilities, which was a critical goal for addressing the needs of a particular growth region. Services were improved dramatically, while costs were reduced by approximately 10% and operations were consolidated from three support facilities to two.

Another example of a company developing a deeper understanding of customer behavior and responding with a sophisticated IT solution is an organization in the business of providing funeral planning and concierge services. The organization understood that its customers needed to make complex, costly decisions quickly during a difficult emotional time. It partnered with Hewlett Packard Enterprise to develop an online solution that provides customers with on-demand research, tools and consultation services.

As the organization's services grew and its needs changed, Hewlett Packard Enterprise helped the company migrate to a new customer relationship management (CRM) tool, which is delivered through a Software as a Service model. The company has reduced the costs associated with managing the CRM function by 50% while enabling self-service capabilities that provide decision makers with instant access to the latest data about the business, supporting more informed decision making and an improved customer experience.

Engaging Customers

Enterprises with the right infrastructure in place can use real-time information to engage with customers and improve their experience. For example, with the shared knowledge database in the use case cited earlier, the organization has been able to improve communications, understanding and engagement with customers by giving support representatives access to real-time insight into the customer experience.

Beyond that, as companies begin to integrate traditional contact center channels with new channels such as social media, they will be able to improve the customer experience by leveraging big data analytics to not only understand customer needs and demands, but also engage with customers on completely new ways.

An example of a company using technology advances to improve customer engagement is a major transportation authority in Europe. Working with outsourced partners, the agency offers customers reusable plastic smart cards that they can use for any transport service in the country, including light rail, heavy rail, metro and taxis.

The agency has dramatically improved customer engagement by allowing users to register their cards and utilize an online portal to view their journey history, claim refunds and send emails to a customer engagement management center. The agency benefits by being able to view usage history, analyze information on travel patterns and further engage with customers through technology.

Another large government agency in Europe turned to an outsourced solution to dramatically improve customer engagement through the creation of a card account that enables the simplified payment of state benefits to more than 3 million people.

Users can check balances and collect money at any time, and the use of electronic transfer has streamlined the process of opening card accounts for customers. A workflow management system automatically tracks and manages all recipient correspondence, while an Electronic Benefits Transfer banking engine manages payments made into card accounts.

Responding to Customers Through Social Media and Other Means

Information technology allows organizations to respond faster than ever to customer questions, interests and demands. IT can now utilize technologies to bridge the gap between what customers and users are thinking and the ability to create products and services that better meet their needs.

By integrating social media with traditional contact center channels, organizations can not only deepen their understanding about customer behaviors, but they can also use analytics to detect buying patterns. This way, they can suggest other products a customer might like or they could employ cloud technology to enable mobile applications that offer services to users at any time and in any location.

As one example, HPE has been able to incorporate social media to address specific business needs, including:

• A differentiated service experience.

• A growing customer preference for easy social media- based support.

• An interest in integrating social media into the support experience with dedicated social support services.

• A desire to improve customer online information support.

The organization has implemented a targeted social media listening and monitoring program. The solution provides shared insights with contact center agents and deploys social media analysts and support staff to proactively address customer concerns. The solution also provides regular reporting on listening outcomes. As a result of the new social media solution, the organization has:

• Gained new interaction channels with increased customer satisfaction.

• Reduced costs and improved productivity by disseminating proactive communication of answers to common questions.

• Developed a deeper customer understanding to drive product improvements and shape customer service efforts across all channels.

Conclusion

Technology is rapidly changing the paradigm by which organizations understand and interact with customers. Technology is also quickly altering the demands and perceptions of customers, who are increasingly placing higher expectations on the services they receive, whether from businesses, government agencies or any other entity with which they engage.

Savvy organizations and their IT departments recognize that they must embrace these new technologies in order to effectively understand, engage and respond to customers in this new era of customer service. The technology underpinnings of this new era include cloud computing, mobility, social media, big data analytics and security. By working with a partner that understands this new paradigm and has the expertise in pulling all of these technologies together, organizations can get on a fast track toward investing in an improved customer experience. Now is the time to get started.

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