

A new age in customer experience



A well-deployed contact centre offers a comprehensive view of the customer and enhances their overall impression of a business, says **Clinton Cohen**, managing director, iContact

According to Forbes Global Media Company, 89% of companies today compete primarily on the basis of customer experience. And while 80% of companies believe they deliver “a superior experience”, only 8% of customers agree. In other words, focusing on customer experience may be the single most important investment a brand can make.

Call centres are in the frontline when it comes to dealing with consumers. They know that today’s brand battles are being won by companies equipped to offer a dynamic experience – a personal one, that goes for in building long-term brand loyalty.

Essentially, this is a single view of the customer across multiple platforms – call, email, live web chat, social media. These all seamlessly connect and allow the customer to pick up where they left off on one channel and continue their experience on another. It’s an integrated and cohesive approach that keeps the customer at the centre of the solution. Now the customer decides how they want to engage – and the brand needs to be ready for them.

Supporting multiple channels is not new; in fact, it’s something expected by today’s consumer. But, too often these channels existed in silos, working independently of one another. Now it’s a one-stop-shop offering a seamless experience from beginning to end – whether it’s dealing with making a purchase or solving a technical glitch. The experience is consistent and empowers agents with a single-view, in-depth understanding of their customer.

Technical developers are getting it right with bespoke software that balances the human touch with automation. Easy, effective and personalized AI and interactive voice response (IVR) options serve basic customer queries and FAQs. The heightened digital experience eliminates repetitive prompts and any potential customer frustration, allowing them the space to self-serve efficiently. Plus, with all the data being captured, communication can seamlessly flip from chat to bot, always meeting the customer with the relevant conversation. And, as queries get more complex, smoothly integrated handovers empower agents with the customer’s previous engagements, their

history, expectations and aversions.

This 360-degree view of the customer gives the call centre workforce total visibility and the power to deliver a superior customer experience. Plus, it’s now also packed with agent insights that can easily be taken to the next level as businesses leverage the interaction history of the customer to embark on upselling and cross-selling opportunities. Well-trained agents can now make relevant suggestions based on the data they are armed with. In fact, they would be doing customers a disservice by not suggesting or offering them a better suited product option or service offering.

A high-quality customer experience certainly speaks for itself. Never mind agent efficiency, better response times, enhanced personalization and an increased opportunity for profit – a great customer experience will endear the customer to your brand and, above all, create trust. The positive waves that spread organically from this is where the true value lies. Not only will they want to do business with you again, but their family, friends and business network will too.

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