



Creating Delightful Cross-Channel Experiences

A Talisma Corporation white paper

Talisma Corporation
January 2016

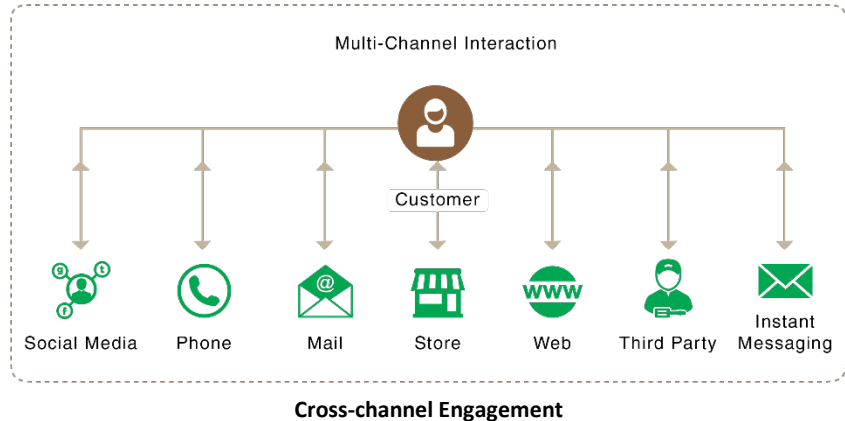
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Learn how to derive and deploy a cross-channel strategy across your communication channels to deliver experience consistency, better engagement and customer satisfaction while improving margins.

Introduction

Good customer experience is more often than not about a broader set of values that incorporate elements from marketing and on-boarding to an ongoing after-sales relationship. With sustained customer engagement becoming an increasingly complex proposition from a



bottom-line stand point, the need to have a cross-channel strategy to render consistency of experience is now more essential than ever.

When a business is servicing customers across channels, there is a scope for service bias to permeate. Service bias happens when a company willingly or otherwise renders better customer service across a certain channel or a combination of channels often at the expense of other channels. In many instances, this bias is so apparent that customers often reach out to such companies on those channels where they are assured of receive better or timelier service.

How it all began

Customer experience was a simple proposition in the last century with two main channels of communication – the humble telephone and a face-to-face interaction. A customer on the move found it difficult to get her query answered and customers were at the mercy of businesses when it came to customer service.

“One of our customers, a leading Indian bank was able to integrate its customer on-boarding and servicing process to gain better customer retention and agent independent operations across channels”.

Things have changed a lot since then. Today, customers have a plethora of choices when it comes to communication. They are not just using multiple channels including instant messaging and social media to communicate but also moving across channels. This makes it difficult to monitor customer interactions and zero in on individual customer preferences. This is where technology comes in. Businesses are using technology to monitor customer’s channel usage history and deploying vast investments to prevent customer frustration.

Promise Vs perception

Relevance of customer experience is often a matter of perception. But since it is directly connected with conversion, businesses cannot afford to ignore relevance. When the numbers are considered (web traffic, campaign success etc.), what matters is the gap between what your brand promises and what it delivers. This gap could widen if there are inconsistencies in customer experience delivered between channels.

Your customer experience is only as strong as your weakest channel. We have often seen instances of companies focusing on cost-effective channels while ignoring ones where cost of engagement is high. In such instances, it is advisable to close those channels which are a drain on your margins or where you cannot deliver an assured level of service. In times when word of mouth and reviews are gaining prominence, it makes sense to ensure service continuity and assurance which in turn will improve brand confidence.

“An Asian auto-giant is using Talisma CEM to offer a unified customer experience to its customers. The cornerstone of this approach is simplified, customer friendly and efficient operations”.

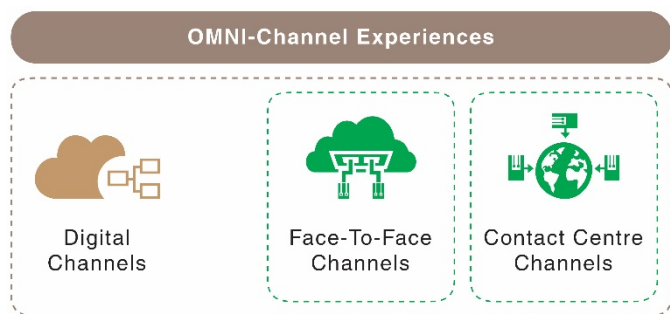
The ‘hows’

Offering a unified customer experience across channels requires applications, processes, workflows and mechanisms to measure and monitor customer interactions. Conversions can be one parameter that can be measured. But to deliver a channel-agnostic customer experience that is consistent and aligned to

customer expectations, businesses need to have a single view of the customer that transcends channels and interactions. So all processes, apps and mechanisms along with front- and back-office have to work in a unified manner leaving no room for engagement islands to appear.

Understanding the buy cycle along with changing preferences across each stage of the customer’s journey is also essential. A customer who buys from a channel may contact you on a different one when she has a query. There is no way of predicting a customer’s individual preference so it’s better to invest in offering a seamless experience while leveraging the inherent strength of each channel.

“A global white goods manufacturer was able to handle its entire customer interaction load (pre-and post-sales) in a unified manner across channel during a highly successful campaign it ran during a major sports event a few years back on Talisma CEM”.



Many businesses are asking customers to install apps that offer an environment for offering a seamless customer experience. The environment here is under the near complete control of a service provider (though bandwidth may pose a concern). Which is why businesses ask customers to install their apps and incentivise app-based transactions. So apps have become transaction windows of choice but the truth is that web and phone based transactions still account for a major chunk of all customer interactions. Apps actually offer an opportunity to study and understand customers better and the insights generated can be used to improve customer experience on other channels.

Roping in the customer

To facilitate continuity of experience and conversations, businesses should allow customers to define the nature and context of the experience being created. By adopting this approach, the onus for creation of unified and consistent experience shifts to the customers and business can step back and focus their energies on meeting the expectation that arises out of those interactions. With customers in control of their data and engagement, repeat purchases may become the norm rather than exception. For instance, who doesn't love a retailer that allows customers to decide how soon the transaction must end?

But, can businesses allow customers to be in control, when it comes to creating experiences? Surprisingly, the answer is yes. Businesses that have invested significantly in understanding their customers and their preferences will find it easy to allow customers to shape experiences and direct cross channel engagement. The confidence for treading this path comes from knowing that "we know the customer enough to predict the experience being sought by her".

Though it is easy to lose track of the customer across interactions, customer centric companies will find it easy to engage customers even in circumstances where the customer is completely 'in control'. For many this may be unfamiliar territory but then a unified experience represents perception at the highest levels and a high degree of customer sensitivity is not just desirable but essential.

"A British multinational grocery and general merchandise retailer relies on our solutions to integrate back and front office operations across channels. The retailer is able to monitor and track customer cases, hasten resolution and improve loyalty through rules-based workflows".

Towards rendering a loyalty enhancing experience

Here are few things businesses can do to achieve this goal.

- Study the strengths and weaknesses of each channel and identify areas for experience optimization
- Each channel should be able to offer the same view of the customer
- Make product reviews/service available on your website
- Every touchpoint should be aware of what transaction a customer is carrying out on any other touchpoint
- Test your conversion paths, often

In conclusion

Delivering a seamless and unified channel experience is not just an option but is instead an imperative. While it represents better customer experience for the customer, for the enterprise it represents an opportunity to take a huge leap in terms of technology, processes and operations. Beyond the impact it has on margins, such an approach also presents an opportunity to showcase customer experience maturity. It is indeed an opportunity that no business can afford to miss.

- According to MIT's report, "Beyond the Checkout Cart," over 80% of store shoppers check prices online.
- 84% of customers view achieving the right outcome as more important than being able to select their preferred channel: Corporate Executive Board
- Companies with well-defined unified CEM programs achieve a 91% higher year-over-year(Y-o-Y) increase in customer retention rate on average, compared to organizations without them. Such organizations also average a 3.4% increase in customer lifetime value(LTV). Those without them diminish customer LTV by 0.7% (Y-o-Y): Omni-Channel Customer Care research.



About Talisma Corporation Pvt. Ltd.

Talisma Corporation Pvt. Ltd., is the leading provider of Customer Experience Management (CEM) software for a wide range of industries. Talisma CEM enables organizations to deliver an exceptional customer experience on a global scale across engagement channels and interactions. Our solutions improve customer satisfaction by integrating the power of email, phone, chat, SMS text messaging, portal, social media, instant messaging and Web self-service with a robust and mature Web services platform, comprehensive analytics, and an intelligent CRM solution. Talisma serves a variety of industries through its vertical solutions, including financial services, travel and leisure, government, retail, business process outsourcing (BPO), and manufacturing.

Talisma also delivers a combination of advisory/consulting and services support under one roof to enable enterprise level CEM transformation initiatives.

For more information, visit www.talisma.com/cem



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