New Opportunities for Business Intelligence

Seven Ways to Deliver a Superior Customer Experience Now

A White Paper

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Introduction

Recent studies confirm that customer service has a profound impact on profitability. Research by Genesys shows that enterprises lose more than $338 billion each year because of defections and abandoned purchases that result from a poor customer experience.[1] When customer service is good, profitability is impacted positively. And that's not all: companies with high service rankings also perform much better in the stock market, according to the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business.[2]

The pitfalls of poor customer service go beyond the financial impact. In the age of social media, organizations have their reputations to consider. One unhappy customer can share his or her opinions with hundreds, or even thousands of potential buyers via Facebook or Twitter.

In this white paper, we'll discuss seven exciting technology innovations that can empower businesses to optimize customer service in today's multi-channel world. You'll learn about customer-facing and mobile business intelligence (BI), predictive and sentiment analytics, master data management, and other tools designed to enhance the quality of customer care by streamlining activities and increasing the productivity and performance of support teams.

Real-world case studies will be shared throughout to demonstrate the significant benefits these technologies add to service and support operations. We'll then highlight Information Builders' business intelligence, integration, and data integrity solutions, which are helping businesses leverage their corporate information to boost customer satisfaction, retention, and value.

[1] "The Cost of Poor Customer Service," Genesys, November 2009.

[2] "Want to Improve Customer Service? Treat Your Employees Better," Knowledge@Wharton Network, March 2012.

Innovative new technologies have emerged to help companies truly enhance the quality of customer care and service. These solutions:

- Exploit the vital information that exists in customer relationship management (CRM), accounting, help desk, and other systems
- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of those in client-facing roles – from field technicians and call center personnel to post-sales support reps and account managers
- Empower customers with self-service access to support-related information, via the channel of their choice

Your corporate information is a valuable asset, one that can help you to deliver high-quality customer care across multiple channels – phone, e-mail, the web, live chat, mobile, etc. Your ability to strategically leverage that information is the key to achieving sustainable competitive advantage.

Turning Big Data Into a Single View of the Customer

Chances are your organization maintains countless different systems, in various locations, that house customer histories, product details, promotions in progress, order and fulfillment statuses, and other information – not to mention data in the cloud, on-premise systems, and from social media sites. If you're part of a larger enterprise, or an organization with a sophisticated multi-channel support strategy, the problem is exacerbated by different lines of business and service teams that frequently keep separate technology assets that store massive volumes of information.

The resulting deluge of big data makes it difficult for your support professionals to locate and use the information they need during a customer interaction. That translates to poor service.

Customer data integration tools unify that big data, bringing it together in a cohesive way to provide faster access to comprehensive customer details, histories, and more. You'll need to choose your solution wisely, because most vendors offer limited data access capabilities. Your integration platform must be able to aggregate, consolidate, and analyze big data – historical and real-time, structured and unstructured, no matter where it resides or what format it is in – to improve transparency into customers and service operations.

You'll also want to seek out a vendor that can seamlessly integrate, move, and enhance data from Salesforce.com and other CRM packages, on-premise applications, and cloud systems, to create a common architecture for reporting and analytics across the entire sales, service, and support cycle. This will allow you to better manage the performance of all customer-facing business operations, and to identify valuable opportunities for up-selling or to address emerging retention issues by building a complete view of each customer based on historical purchasing activity, deal activity, market pricing trends, and other critical data.

Once your big data has been integrated, master data management (MDM) can then be applied to ensure information uniformity among all sources, facilitating the rapid exchange and synchronization of data across the entire enterprise. Are customer ID numbers correct in all

databases? Are e-mail addresses and other contact details consistent? Are naming conventions the same (i.e. Joe vs. Joseph)? MDM addresses issues like these by creating a single view of the customer across all information assets.

Sentiment Analysis

Customers are increasingly using the various forms of social media – Facebook, Twitter, product review sites, and more – to detail and share their experiences, satisfying or not, with vendors they've chosen to patronize or products they've bought. Those sentiments can be targeted directly at the company itself, or shared with thousands of potential customers.

This trend is evident in a 2012 study claiming that almost one-third of consumers in France are complaining more, now that social media vehicles have emerged. That same report shows, however, that businesses still aren't getting the message: 78 percent of customers state that they never receive a satisfactory response to their comments.[3]

If you want to know what kind of experience your customers are receiving, and how they perceive the effectiveness of your service organization, you need the ability to gather and mine information from various social media sources.

Sentiment analysis gives you the power to leverage the vital intelligence that exists on Facebook, Twitter, and other sites, so you can tap into real-time trends in customer opinion to drive improvement to products and services.

You can benefit further by correlating this data with the information contained in your traditional enterprise CRM systems. This will provide insight into consumer behavior and opinion that can be leveraged to optimize pricing, enhance products to better meet market needs, or develop more successful campaigns and promotions.

Performance Management

Are your call center reps achieving first-call resolution targets and other metrics? How on target is your field service team's first-time fix rate? Do your warehouses and distribution centers regularly meet their on-time fulfillment goals? Without a performance management solution in place, questions like these may be difficult to answer.

Service performance has become harder to track and assess for a variety of reasons. For example, customers are demanding that service be delivered through a wider variety of more sophisticated channels (e-mail, live chat, web self-service, interactive voice response, mobile, etc.), and support professionals are prone to unusually high levels of turnover and absenteeism. Outsourcing – a common practice for support operations – may also compound the problem, as the productivity and quality of third parties are typically difficult to monitor and control.

[3] "Social Networks Driving Increase in Customer Complaints," L'Atelier, July 2012.

Performance management solutions allow your managers to set service-related performance goals, communicate those objectives to all stakeholders, and track achievement towards them. With performance management, organizations can uncover and correct problems before they negatively impact loyalty and retention.

PNC Bank, for example, built a comprehensive performance management environment that transforms a massive amount of raw call center data into intuitive, easy-to-read reports. This allows managers and agents to monitor activities and metrics such as call volumes and abandon rates. Armed with this information, the call center can accurately assess trends and make forecasts, so schedules can be adjusted to handle changes in call volumes, agent performance can be gauged against incentive plans, and more.

Predictive Analytics

The ability to anticipate customer behavior can go a long way towards improving customer service. For example, if you can determine the likelihood of churn among certain client groups, you can proactively implement loyalty programs or develop new and improved services aimed at increasing retention. If you can predict peaks in call volumes, you can ensure that you have enough staff on hand in the contact center to give each caller prompt attention. If you can precisely anticipate product demand, you can adjust inventory levels to ensure rapid fulfillment of all orders.

Predictive analytics leverages trends in historical data to make fast, accurate, and complete predictions about future behavior, events, and outcomes. This kind of forward-facing insight can dramatically improve your customer service operations. In fact, approximately 80 percent of those polled in an IDC survey noted an improvement in customer service-related business processes, or an increase in customer service productivity as a result of their use of predictive analytics.[4]

Elavon, a full-service credit card processing company that offers a variety of payment-related financial services, uses advanced predictive analytic technologies to create an attrition model. The model aims to boost loyalty by predicting when a merchant might defect based on fluctuating payment statistics, such as reduced transactions processed, reduced calls into the transaction center, and other variables that indicate a falloff in services.

Customer-Facing Business Intelligence

The information stored in internal systems may be very useful to your customers. For example, they may want instant access to product information, package delivery status, or billing details, without having to speak to a customer service representative, call-center agent, or other middleman. Making this kind of information readily available via the web or mobile devices can increase convenience and/or provide a value-added service, which helps you forge a tighter bond with your customers.

[4] Morris, Henry D.; Vesset, Dan. "The Business Value of Predictive Analytics," IDC, June 2011.

Only a few BI platforms can handle these types of self-service applications. Most are too complex, too costly, or lack the required scalability and reliability to feasibly deliver information to such a large audience. Some companies try a DIY approach, but find ongoing maintenance and development costly and resource-draining. If you're seeking to deploy a customer-facing BI application, you need a powerful solution that combines scalability and high-performance with intuitiveness and ease of use.

In a highly competitive business, FulCircle, a provider of fulfillment and contact center services, leverages customer-facing BI to distinguish its offerings. An intuitive dashboard known as SmartSuite™ allows FulCircle's customers to monitor their operations at a minute level, performing their own reporting and analysis of contact centers, fulfillment centers, and e-commerce solutions to reveal statistics about calls, orders, shipping, inventory, and billing. With SmartSuite, FulCircle is optimizing its services, and helping clients to run their companies more efficiently.

Mobile Business Intelligence

Your support professionals – sales reps, field service technicians, etc. – are rarely sitting at a desk in front of a PC. Timely and complete information about products, orders, customers, and more must be readily accessible via smartphones and tablets while they're on the road.

Customers also desire more convenience from the companies they do business with. This includes the ability to access information about their orders and accounts via their smartphones and tablets. Organizations should be prepared to work with marketing departments and product management to create customer-facing mobile BI applications.

Not all mobile BI solutions, however, are created equal. Many platforms are not truly device-independent, which means you must build separate BI applications and content for each type of device in use.

On the other hand, there are world-class mobile BI platforms out there that will effectively and economically meet current and emerging mobile BI needs – even as devices and browsers change. These solutions offer more than just simple data access; they make guided ad hoc reporting, advanced analytics, write-back and transaction processing, and real-time business intelligence readily available to any user on her device of choice. This combination of device-independence and advanced functionality will empower you to deliver the richest mobile BI experience possible to your customers, and drive the greatest impact to service quality.

A self-service BI environment allows clients of AJ Logistics, a premier provider of custom warehousing and logistics services, to keep track of all their projects by running activity reports, generating invoices, managing inventory, and scheduling deliveries. The application has optimized customer service by enabling customers to simultaneously track multiple projects, obtain status updates, issue commands, and initiate complex workflows – even from mobile devices such as iPhones and iPads.

Data Quality Management

Data integrity is just as important as completeness and consistency. High error rates in sales orders and other manually entered documents can lead to inaccurate customer details in critical systems – mistakes that can significantly impede service delivery. Even when customer data is initially entered correctly, studies have shown that approximately 25 percent of it will become outdated each year.[5]

Data quality management tools help to solve this problem, allowing you to locate and correct bad information in back-end sources. There are even more advanced solutions on the market that go one step further by proactively preventing bad data from entering and corrupting those systems in the first place.

Cutting-edge data quality tools are helping the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration to provide better service to taxpayers. A single view of each taxpayer (address, outstanding tax notices and variations, liens, bankruptcies, etc.) has been created across multiple accounting and billing systems. Information is edited, matched, and merged dynamically to ensure completeness and consistency among all sources. This allows the state to better assess its economic vitality, as well as the practicality of the taxes it imposes.

Important Considerations for Technology Selection

These seven technologies can dramatically improve the quality of service and support. They empower staff in customer-facing roles with the vital insight required to effectively address the needs of your customers, while empowering your clients with the ability to quickly and conveniently access services on their own, whenever and however they want.

If you're seeking to reap these benefits and deliver the kind of superior service that drives loyalty and retention, you must choose your supporting solutions wisely. Piecing together a bunch of disparate tools to achieve the desired service enhancements will drive up ownership and maintenance costs.

The most effective and economical way to leverage these important technologies is to partner with a single vendor that can offer these and other capabilities via a fully unified, seamlessly integrated platform. The right solution will allow you to take a modular approach to implementing this functionality, enabling you to quickly and cost-efficiently deploy each of the capabilities – either together or separately – as needs change or service-delivery strategies shift.

[5] Sumastre, Michael Gabriel. "Why CRM Strategies Fail (and What to Do About It)," Technopedia, April 2012.

BI, Integration, and Data Integrity: The Power to Improve Customer Care and Support

Information Builders designs and develops high-value solutions that help companies to operate in a more customer-centric fashion, providing unmatched integration of enterprise information assets, dramatically improving the integrity of the data contained in those assets, and transforming that data into powerful intelligence for wide-scale use.

Business Intelligence

Information Builders' WebFOCUS BI platform combines broad data access with unparalleled usability, scalability, and low cost of ownership to make information and analytics readily available and easily consumable to an unlimited number of internal and external users.

- Powerful BI makes reports, queries, and dashboards available to power users, business users, and even mobile users, such as field service technicians

- Advanced analytics, such as predictive analytics, visualization, location intelligence, and enterprise search provide deep insight into customer satisfaction, contact center effectiveness, and other important service-related metrics

- Comprehensive performance management helps to align service and support strategies with key performance indicators (KPIs), and balance them against risk

- Innovative sentiment analysis enables companies to mine data from social media sites, and analyze it to accurately assess customer opinion

> *"Our customers realize the value of the information we capture from each transaction, which increases supply-chain visibility and brings verifiable value to their bottom lines. By letting customers access current business intelligence via the web, we deliver greater value by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of their shipping activities."*
>
> *Luther Brown*
> *Chief Executive Officer*
> *nVision Global*

Information Builders' intelligence solutions also offer unparalleled scalability, reliability, and ease of use. Companies can rapidly and economically create and deploy comprehensive, yet intuitive customer-facing BI systems that provide an unlimited number of clients with fast, convenient, self-service access to important information, such as account details, order or project status, and more.

Integration

Information Builders' market-leading iWay integration tools allow companies to access, move, and manipulate information from more than 300 types of assets. With iWay, organizations can boost the efficiency of all support-related activities. iWay integration software features:

- A robust integration infrastructure that allows companies to rapidly and economically build broad-reaching integration architectures
- Data integration solutions that facilitate the coordination and cohesiveness of customer histories and other important information across even the most diverse and disparate environments
- A comprehensive universal adapter suite containing pre-packaged integration components that provide direct, native access to a variety of disparate sources, including popular CRM packages such as SAP and Oracle, cloud-based systems, and data collected through social media channels

"The quality and completeness of the data shared with customers is crucial to CenterStone's ability to effectively meet its customers' needs."

Rich Guess
Director of IT
CenterStone Technologies

Data Integrity

By improving the completeness, accuracy, and consistency of vital information, iWay integrity solutions help companies to enhance the quality of customer interactions. This includes:

- Data quality management tools, with an automated rules engine, to create a real-time data quality firewall that proactively preserves information integrity
- Master data management, which synchronizes disparate data sources and creates a single golden record for each customer, patient, or citizen
- Data governance solutions, which provide end-to-end control over how information is managed as it is collected, used, and maintained

Conclusion

Companies that know their customers, and provide them with superior service and support across a wide array of channels and touch points, will promote higher levels of loyalty and retention, and gain a significant competitive edge. Although many obstacles exist, exciting new technologies are now available to empower businesses to create the kind of customer-centric culture needed to thrive.

Many companies have successfully deployed solutions such as mobile and customer-facing BI, performance management, and data quality management to build stronger customer relationships. Information Builders customers like Elavon, FulCircle, AJ Logistics, PNC Bank, and the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration rely on us to help them exploit their corporate information to get closer to customers, optimize the productivity of service personnel, and deliver a superior experience to all clients.

To optimize service levels, businesses must choose the right technologies from the right vendor. The most substantial service improvements will be realized through the deployment of a powerful, scalable, fully integrated platform that allows companies to take a modular approach to implementing the needed features and capabilities.

Information Builders' business intelligence, integration, and data integrity solutions empower companies of all types and sizes to tap into information – no matter how much there is or where it resides – to enhance the quality of customer support and service. From accessing a single view of the customer and analyzing customer sentiment from social media sites, to optimizing the quality and consistency of customer data, Information Builders gives companies everything they need to create stronger, longer-lasting customer relationships.

Worldwide Offices

Corporate Headquarters
Two Penn Plaza
New York, NY 10121-2898
(212) 736-4433
(800) 969-4636

United States
Atlanta, GA* (770) 395-9913
Baltimore, MD (703) 247-5565
Boston, MA* (781) 224-7660
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St. Louis, MO* (636) 519-1411, ext. 321
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International
Australia*
Melbourne 61-3-9631-7900
Sydney 61-2-8223-0600
Austria Raffeisen Informatik Consulting GmbH
Wien 43-1-211-36-3344
Bangladesh
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United Kingdom*
Uxbridge Middlesex 0845-658-8484
Venezuela InfoServices Consulting
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