



Customer Engagement: Big Data

Across the world, there is tectonic cultural shift redefining customer behaviour. Today's customers are doing more, demanding more and engaging with companies on their own terms. Businesses are being forced to rapidly change the tactics they use to reach out to and serve customers as they come to grips with the new rules of the road. What's more, the way in which the new customer interacts can be seemingly at random across a growing array of touch points. The customer experience can no longer be 'defined', or relationships 'managed'. We can't rely on a single channel to capture attention, convert, or serve a customer. Yet still today, most businesses 'manage' customer relationships by channel and struggle to understand or serve how customers interact today.

To navigate this landscape, a new set of rules is needed. We can no longer depend on isolated batch processes that defined traditional segmentation-based marketing tactics or Customer Relationship Management (CRM). Today we need to define context and drive relevance in order to serve a customer. A great sales person can do this, but they do not do it by processing a billion bits of past data. They do it by listening and reacting to the context and what a customer asks and tells.

Start with Big Data – then shrink it

Let's avoid the buzz-words. Big data today may be the new oil, and vital to an organization's success, but when it comes to serving a customer, it pays to think smaller. What did I do as an individual and how can you best serve me based on that? The dramatic effectiveness of retargeting and shopping-cart abandonment tools is an example, but of course that is simply the beginning.

Marketers have always understood the value of building up a comprehensive picture of a customer. The problem is that, today, marketing data is isolated in silos and spread across many point solutions from many marketing vendors. And transactional and service data is stored in completely different systems such as the commerce platform, service center and CRM systems. That makes deriving accurate insights difficult, let alone responding to customer needs in real-time. Big Data tools may help an analyst answer a question someone asks about trends and macro customer behavior, but it is the ability to react to context and deliver relevance in the moment that is crucial. A new generation of solutions is poised to help us personalize and react to the context and behaviour of the customer.

Build your processes and solutions around the customer

As hard as it is to react to the context a customer is in, consider the complexity when this is multiplied across the many marketing, experience, transaction, and service channels a



customer may interact with. This requires platforms and tools that can support all channels, but also an enormous change in how organizations think about marketing and customer experience. Even the contact centre, where this all came together around service in the past, today struggles to combine digital and web interactions and commerce. This requires heavy lifting to create a single, centralized view of customer, product, order, inventory and supply chain. It even requires a different paradigm in how content and offers are managed. And it of course requires a different approach to what we send a customer and how their experience from there becomes connected to the context they are in – researching, buying, using, or getting help with a product or service.

Take Nespresso. The coffee giant’s business model is built around the customer experience. To ensure customers experience the best of Nespresso at every touch point, Nespresso controls almost every channel to market, maintaining a direct relationship with the customer, as well as a single view of the customer, product, and order across channels. Simplicity, quality and consistency take on the feeling of a small luxury, and they serve customers and react to preferences across web, mobile, store, and contact center. But of course this is not a phenomenon isolated to consumer-oriented business, this same opportunity and challenge is there for nearly every organization across almost every sector.

It is time for a new vision of customer engagement and new solutions to serve that.