Customer, Experience and Multi-Channel

By Luís Melo

December 2013

30 years ago we had only one channel to communicate: the Phone. 20 years ago Email was introduced and became another available channel. In the last decade the amount of channels soared, and now we have Chat, Web Self-Service, Co-Browse, Social Media or SMS. And who knows what the next big thing is.

Customers' channel preference is very diverse. And channel usage rates are changing very quickly in the last few years. Phone and Email are still the primary channels, but lately we have seen that in some areas/sectors/industries, Web Self-Service or Social Media are rising to overtake the "traditional" channels.

Customer's satisfaction with the channel also changes a bit depending on demography or area/sector/industry. Some people are glad to find the answers themselves; others to use guided assistance; others just like to have someone to do it for them. One thing is certain: everyone wants a consistent experience.

Every customer is expecting a personalised and consistent experience, no matter the channel they use to interact. And sometimes they want to start an interaction in one channel and complete in another channel, expecting the experience to be smooth and seamless. Therefore channel silos are not allowed.

Some interesting stats say that a very considerable amount of customers use 3 or more channels for any shopping transaction. The majority of customers use at least 3 channels for customer service related issues. And the average multi-channel customer spends 30% to 50% more than single channel customers.

Companies need to have a platform that enables multi-channel interactions; that provides the ability to respond and engage customers on their preferred channel; that allows the management of cross-channel interactions; that has the same process for handling all interactions from across all touch-points.

Having such a platform will not only increase customer satisfaction and loyalty (driving more sales and profit) but also bring advantages to the companies in terms of cost, efficiency and effectiveness.

Let's have a look at three important topics: Channel of choice; Complexity of the query; Cost of the interaction.

Channel

Companies need to be prepared to offer their customers all types of service, which needs to be consistent across all channels and touch points/devices. Customers need to be able to get knowledge at the point of need.

Self Service	Assisted Service	Social Service
• Search	• Phone	• Facebook
• FAQ	• Email	• Twitter
• Text, Video, Image	• Chat	• Collaboration
• Guided Assistance	• Co-Browse	• Communities
• Virtual Assistant	• SMS	• Monitoring

Complexity

Companies need to know the type of interactions they will have. They need to be aware of the complexity of their customer's queries or issues and what that means in terms of value, resolution and volume.

Simple	Complicated	Complex
• Low Value	• Medium Value	• High Value
• Single Answer	• Specific Answer	• Escalation
• High Volume	• Medium Volume	• Low Volume
• E.g. How can I change my password? What is the returns policy?	• E.g. How do I connect my phone to the laptop? How do I return my product?	• E.g. I cannot pay my order. My order did not arrive. I want to cancel my subscription.

And then be able to rightly map those types of interactions to the various channels available.

Simple	Complicated	Complex
• FAQs • Search • Virtual Assistant • Guided Assistance	• Virtual Assistant • Guided Assistance • Email • Chat	• Phone • Email • Chat • Co-Browse

Cost

The choice of the right channel allows companies to make significant saves. E.g. by replacing Chat sessions regarding simple queries with Self-Service; by replacing Emails regarding complicated queries with Guided Assistance; by replacing Phone calls regarding complex issues with Chat.

High Cost	• Phone (Tech Support) • Phone (Customer Service)
Moderate Cost	• Email • Chat
Low Cost	• Social Media • Web Self-Service