

Improving CX... What vs How

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The advent of internet, mobile and social media transformed the way we live and interact with our family and friends. And we now expect to use the same means and devices to interact with companies. That changed the world of business.

It is now a hyper-competitive world, where companies are no longer competing within the boundaries of their cities, regions or countries. They now have to go head-to-head with companies from all over the world.

A new breed of customers emerged on the first decade of the 21st century. People that are always connected, better informed, extremely demanding and constantly sharing. From anywhere, at anytime, using any device.

To satisfy this type of customer, companies are looking to improve the Customer Experience (CX) they provide. And for that they are listening to what CX gurus have to say. Amongst many opinions, some are very common:

a) “Be where your customers are” – meaning, you should be on social media. Create a Facebook page and Twitter profile, etc.

b) “Customers prefer text-enabled conversations” – meaning, you should open new channels. Offer Live Chat, SMS, etc.

c) “Be trustworthy and transparent” – meaning, provide a service that makes your customer love and be loyal to you.

This is great piece of advice. It tells companies “What” they should do. But it does not tell them “How” they should do it. So many companies get stuck not knowing how to go about this “improving CX” stuff. Many questions arise...

a) What happens after I go to social media and a crisis comes in my direction? How can I manage or even prevent that?

b) Are the new channels going to overload (even more!) my contact centre? Do I need to hire more agents to deal with chat and SMS?

c) How can I, as a company, build trust? Moreover when conversations are increasingly less face-to-face or voice? I can't even build a human rapport!

This is where technology can help. But be careful! Without a proper consulting exercise, and a specialist support, companies tend to get it wrong. They usually go and buy new (and cheap) application(s) to cope with the need.

Invariably this leads to failure. It only makes companies increase head count in the contact centre, increase disruption between teams/departments/channels, and consequently deliver a poorer service, ultimately losing customers' trust.

Technology is like a nuclear weapon – when in wrong hands... What companies need is to work alongside business solutions specialists that know the various options in the market and how to align the technology with the business. Finally complementing the “What” with the “How”.

A customer-centric/omni-channel strategy and platform needs to be put in place. That platform should be able to receive and manage interactions regardless of the channel, in order to allow agents to work cross-channel.

It should enable proactive, consistent and authentic interactions, that ultimately drive trust. It should allow companies not only to be where their customers are but also to monitor and engage them via their preferred channel.

It should give means to better communicate via these new channels, and collect all data and information necessary for agents to better know who, when and how they are talking to, delivering a truly personalised and convenient service.