

We, customers, demand this from you, companies

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June 2015

The world we live in today is a hyper-competitive, hyper-connected and global world, where the advances in technology gave us more options, more access, and made our expectations higher. People changed their behaviours. We are now always connected, always aware, and always sharing.

The key factors for the changing in our behaviours are the speed at which we adopt new technology, the rise of mobile devices, and the emergence of new channels, in particular the explosion in social media and text-enabled apps. This had a huge impact on the way we interact with our friends and family.

And now we are demanding companies, from which we buy products and services, to do the same. To communicate and interact with us the same way we communicate and interact with our friends and family. And to be available when and where we need them and how is more convenient to us.

Many years ago we would go to the brick and mortar store to buy something or look for help. Then we started to buy in store and ask for support via phone or email. Today we use various channels and touch-points during our journey. Researching in store, buying online, asking for support via live chat.

Companies realised this and started to enable multiple channels in order to deliver a cross-channel experience. But most of the times that experience is not good, because all channels are disjointed. Truth is, as new channels came up companies added them over time, typically using different systems and processes.

Furthermore, companies were putting in place different teams to handle interactions and requests coming from the different channels. The ones that didn't, and tried to cross train all agents and reps, were giving them a herculean task of flicking through loads of different systems when talking to us, increasing the time we waited.

As customers, what we are demanding is an omni-channel experience, where all channels are natively joined up, where it is easy for us to switch between channels, seamlessly transitioning from one channel to the other during a single interaction, quickly and without having to repeat ourselves over and over again.

We want to receive a seamless and consistent experience across all channels. Be able to web self-serve from a mobile app, live chat with an agent if we cannot find an answer, transition to a telephone conversation with the same agent if needs be, and then receive an email confirmation afterwards.

In order to deliver this experience, companies can only do one thing... adopt a true omni-channel platform where all channels (phone, email, web, chat, SMS, white mail, social) are natively joined up. And that encompasses our entire customer journey, from need (Marketing), to purchase (Sales), to support (Customer Service), as well as our voice (Feedback).

There are only a couple of true omni-channel platforms in the market. As most of you know, I'm a big advocate of the Service Cloud platform from Oracle. About which I write in my "Doctor CX" blog.