CX demands to be harnessed by analytics

By Deon Scheepers   8 Jan 2016

Gen D, the digital generation, demands more of organisations across a growing number of digital channels. According to Deon Scheepers, manager - sales operations at Interactive Intelligence South Africa, analytics, agility and intelligent contact centre platforms help organisations deliver.

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Understanding the customer more important than ever before

The old adage 'you don't know what you don't know' applies now more than ever. With the next generation customer demanding unprecedented levels of service and engagement, and customer experience the new competitive battlefield, it is virtually impossible for organisations to give customers what they want if they don't know what customers want.

Advanced analytics allows organisations to track the customer journey from the first online price comparisons, through to in-store product assessment, to complaints or queries lodged with the contact centre and comments made about the product or service on social media. It allows organisations to understand where products or services succeed or fail, what trends are emerging in the market, which communications channels are preferred, and what individual customers want. Crucially, advanced analytics allows organisations to make accurate forecasts about future trends, and adapt their products, services and operations accordingly.

By understanding the trends before they happen, contact centres are able to take proactive action and turn potential problems into opportunities. For example, if a telecoms customer has identified a segment most likely to churn, a proactive contact centre can present the customer with a personalised offer likely to make the customer feel valued and more inclined to be loyal to the organisation.

Omnichannel challenges and opportunities

Omnichannel engagement presents organisations with both challenges and opportunities. Because the Gen D consumer fully expects to engage fluidly across a number of channels, be they social media, SMS, mobile voice, web, email, video chat and other channels, organisations must be able to track what was said and what steps of the customer journey took place in which channel. Many organisations are not yet capable of doing so. In fact, many organisations do not yet have omnichannel capabilities at all.

Their challenge lies in enabling omnichannel engagement before their customers move on to competitor organisations. Cloud-based contact centre solutions that support the growing number of digital channels and allow contact centres to aggregate and share data easily are becoming the most cost-effective and flexible way to enable omnichannel engagement.

There are myriad opportunities presented by omnichannel engagement. Once the organisation is equipped to engage across multiple digital channels in a seamless way, it is positioned to start gathering a wealth of data around the customer, their preferences, the customer journey from first engagement to purchase, and what makes the customer more or less inclined to buy.

Analytics in the contact centre space

Analytics can do a great deal more for customer service than just determine what segment likes what product, or how to customise a customer's web page on log in. Effectively deployed real-time analytics can tell the contact centre who is calling, what their previous concerns were, their buying history, and what their value is to the organisation. They can be used to automatically route the call to the customer's favourite agent or to an agent best placed to resolve their query.

Unfortunately however, the Dimension Data 2015 Contact Centre Benchmark Report shows we are going backwards when we talk about customer service. The report says digital interaction will overtake traditional voice interaction by the end of 2016. Social media is the first choice for interaction in millennials but 57% of contact centres have no social media capabilities. The game is changing. The contact centre of the future must become the action hub of engagement, but 40% have no analytics capability. How will you engage with the customer if you don't know who they are?

Analytics can and should be deployed throughout all touchpoints in the customer journey. In voice calls, speech analytics extracts meaningful information from every incoming call, finding keywords and phrases in conversations between agents and customers and helping supervisors manage performance efficiently. With the help of real-time speech analytics solutions a supervisor receives alerts to intervene, prompt an agent to try a different approach or attempt a specific up-sell. Analytics can improve operations and strategic decision-making within the contact centre, forecasting call volumes, assessing agent performance and customer satisfaction, and gauging the effectiveness of outbound campaigns.

Voice as the primary contact centre engagement channel is falling from favour. The next generation consumer typically engages with the organisation through its website or social media presence first, and resorts to phoning a call centre only if he or she cannot resolve a query alone. Thus, self-service and digital channels are becoming increasingly important. Organisations need to ensure that all these channels offer the same high level of customer service and a seamless, consistent experience. Analytics must be deployed across all channels to understand who the customers are, what they are searching for, and which of these channels most influence buying decisions.

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