Harness the power of a UCX to meet modern customer demands

By Jeremy Osborne   18 May 2021

The change in how customers and brands interact over the past decade may seem gradual, until we look back and actually see how drastic this transformation has been. This change was especially profound during the past year as we faced the unprecedented new reality ushered in by the global Covid-19 pandemic, which demanded that businesses digitise the way they do business, almost overnight.

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Organisations now find themselves in a situation where the modern customer demands personal engagement – immediately – by way of real-time communication. They also demand instant gratification and expect businesses to be always available, from anywhere and, most importantly, over customers' preferred communication channels and devices.

The Covid-19 pandemic has unduly accelerated the need to meet these requirements, both from a business and customer perspective, and that is what's currently driving the increasing adoption of a unified customer experience (UCX) approach by organisations.

From a practical perspective, a UCX entails enabling a customer to communicate and interact with a single brand over multiple channels. The goal is that the customer must be able to continue the conversation seamlessly with an organisation at any point and over any channel of customer's choice.

In the past, organisations faced the challenge of trying to collate all the responses and information provided by a customer over multiple channels and know that they are interacting with the same person. This is regardless of when or over which channel the customer chooses to continue the conversation. The essence of a UCX is that customers must be able to use any communication channel they choose, on their terms.

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Bridging the gap

To successfully implement a UCX, an organisation must acknowledge and bridge the gap that exist in the communication needs of the customer versus the way brands used to traditionally communicate. There are four dimensions to this gap.

Firstly, customers expect businesses to resolve their issues very quickly and they want to do this via traditionally person-to-person communication channels that will result in immediate responses. Until recently, many businesses did not fully realise how important speed is in terms of responsiveness. This is a reality that they must catch up with.

Secondly, the customer wants to communicate with a brand over their preferred channel, but often an organisation restricts communication to voice, email or via a website. Hence, many brands fall into the trap of prescribing to the customer which channels they must use.

Thirdly, customers don't want to have to repeat information. The customer may be hopping between channels, but that's because they want to use the channel that works for them at any particular time. However, they don't want to repeat any stage of the process. Businesses must be able to recollect customer information at every step of the way of interaction, over different channels.

Lastly, customers want to reach a customer service touchpoint digitally or online, while many organisation are invariably still providing traditional contact centre or customer service options.

Importance of an omnichannel

The role of the omnichannel is fundamental to providing an effective UCX, as it is a single platform or interface that integrates every possible communications channel a customer may use to communicate with a brand and simplifies the process of switching between channels. From an organisation's perspective, an omnichannel approach will link all the channels used by a customer and collate all communication into a single stream of information for the company to process.

To provide a UCX, organisations must personalise their customers' data profiles. It is therefore crucial to ensure that you capture the necessary information at every step of the customer journey, over any channel. Organisations must thus have the processes and solutions in place and to collect and collate this data to have a single a single view of the customer, their needs and behaviours.

Many organisations fall into the logical trap of thinking they need different providers for every unique channel they want to integrate. This means separate agreements, separate integrations, separate processes and support. This quickly adds up

and uses up a lot of time and money.

Committing to an omnichannel strategy allows an organisation to grow its communication platform in the future through a single interface, with a single provider that enables speed to market and direct savings and efficiency when it comes to managing customer data.

Businesses must acknowledge how much things have changed and that this rate of change will continue to increase. Choosing the right solutions provider can help businesses respond to customer needs and to keep pace with that change.

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