Leading online provider of hotel accommodations

One-stop shopping source for hotel pricing, amenities and availability

Overview

The need
The online provider of hotel accommodations was ill equipped to fully benefit from customer feedback because the information provided often lacked the detail required to identify and fix issues.

The solution
The online provider of hotel accommodation combined IBM Tealeaf CEM solutions' unprecedented visibility into customer behavior via a unique replay ability with OpinionLab solution's page-specific VoC feedback to create a comprehensive optimization solution.

The benefits
Improved the business value of customer feedback by providing visibility into customer experience.

Resolved major issues stemming from minor upgrades, thereby improving customer conversion and retention.

With services spanning 60 countries around the globe, this leading online provider of hotel accommodations gives travelers one of the widest selections of accommodation on the net, including both independent and major chain hotels as well as self-catering in over 145,000 properties worldwide. The company's services include risk-free bookings, rewards programs and access to more than 1,000,000 guest reviews.
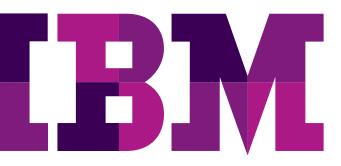
To optimize their customers' online experience, this online accommodation provider relies on a powerful combination of IBM Tealeaf Customer Experience Management (CEM) and OpinionLab Voice of Customer (VoC) feedback solutions. As a result, the company has significantly improved its customer conversion, satisfaction and retention.

The online travel industry is often considered the most competitive market on the web. Consumers are savvy and shrewdly price conscious, and many sites provide similar inventories. Factor in that companies in this industry are often forced to compete aggressively on price, and it is understandable why so many travel sites struggle to differentiate their offerings and achieve long-term success.

However, innovative travel companies have established competitive advantage by focusing on their customers. For this hotel accommodation provider, one particularly effective approach has been to embed customer listening (known as Voice of Customer, or VoC) into critical business processes. The premise being, successful site optimization decisions begin by listening to the customer.

Challenges
Many sites today are black boxes of customer experiences. E-businesses have precious few clues as to why customers succeed or fail. After all, there is no brick-and-mortar storefront at which to observe real-time

"The combination of IBM Tealeaf CEM solutions and OpinionLab solutions is great in theory and even better in practice. The ability to tie together customer feedback with actual site experiences has really taken our optimization efforts to the next level"

— VP Global Analytics & Optimization, leading online provider of hotel accommodations

shopping behaviors, making improvement efforts time consuming, challenging and based largely on guesswork. And while VoC solutions produce significant value for sites today, they do not provide a comprehensive, customer-centric optimization solution.

Compounding issues, many e-businesses are ill equipped to fully benefit from customer feedback, as they are often unable to act on the information. For example, customers might allude to a problem in the booking process but unless they provide specific details, the e-business is hard pressed to identify and fix the issue. This cycle of inactionable feedback perpetuates poor customer experiences, site abandonment and unrealized revenue opportunities.

A better approach

To tear down the black box that surrounds online customer experiences, this hotel accommodation provider turned to a powerful combination of OpinionLab VoC and IBM Tealeaf CEM solutions for a comprehensive optimization solution. By collecting page-specific VoC feedback, OpinionLab enables the hotel accommodation provider to pinpoint issues and notify key stakeholders in real-time, while IBM Tealeaf CEM solutions offer unprecedented visibility into customer behavior via a unique replay ability – a page-by-page, browser-level recording of the actual customer experience. With OpinionLab providing the initial indication of customer struggle and IBM Tealeaf CEM solutions affording the ability to fully understand that feedback and measure the business impact of site issues, the hotel accommodation provider can now quickly resolve nearly any source of failed online experiences.

Win 1 – Improved the business value of customer feedback by providing visibility into customer experience.

Problem

Feedback submitted via OpinionLab identified a significant customer issue: visitors were struggling to complete the registration process and were unable to book reservations. However, it was unclear from existing tools what caused the issue within the booking process. The hotel accommodation provider needed to remedy the problem quickly because hundreds of customers were impacted each day.

Solution

To make OpinionLab's feedback more actionable, the hotel accommodation provider utilized the integration with IBM Tealeaf CEM solutions to map customer feedback to the actual sessions of those vocal customers. What the company discovered was surprising – some customers tried to access the site by re-registering for an

Solution components:

- IBM® Tealeaf® CX

- IBM® Tealeaf® cxImpact

- IBM® Tealeaf® cxView

- IBM® Tealeaf® cxConnect

existing account. Consequently, the system recognized a duplicate e-mail address and returned an error page that kept customers trapped in an endless loop. Based on this eye-opening qualitative information, the hotel accommodation provider redesigned the page and created a "book without registering" option, a completely new feature for their site.

Benefits

With nearly 50 percent of all customers using the new booking option, the feature implementation was a major success. The combination of IBM Tealeaf CEM solutions and OpinionLab VoC solutions enabled the hotel accommodation provider to quickly identify and resolve a significant impediment to conversion and paved the way for a much improved customer experience.

Win 2 – Resolved major issues stemming from minor site upgrades, thereby improving customer conversion and retention.

Problem

To keep its customers engaged, the hotel accommodation provider frequently updates site functionality through weekly minor upgrades. However, after these updates go live, unexpected issues can arise that frustrate customers and impede conversion. After one such upgrade, negative customer comments submitted via OpinionLab skyrocketed, and while page-specific feedback identified the general location of the problem, it did not indicate the cause.

Solution

With OpinionLab providing the initial indication of an issue, the hotel accommodation provider used IBM Tealeaf CEM solutions to determine precisely why customers had struggled on the site. Drilling down into abandoned customer sessions, the company found a problem that would have been impossible to recreate without IBM Tealeaf CEM solutions. Customers who moved between SSL and standard pages experienced a catastrophic error and could not proceed with their bookings. To make matters worse, the issue occurred during the final stage of the checkout process, so customers were forced to restart their reservations from scratch.

Benefits

With the problem clearly identified, the hotel accommodation provider was able to implement a code fix that rectified the issue. As a result, conversion rates and customer satisfaction improved while negative feedback pertaining to the issue subsided.

About IBM Enterprise Marketing Management

The IBM Enterprise Marketing Management (EMM) Suite is an end-to-end, integrated set of capabilities designed exclusively for the needs of marketing organizations. Integrating and streamlining all aspects of marketing, IBM's EMM Suite empowers organizations and individuals to turn their passion for marketing into valuable customer relationships and more profitable, efficient, timely, and measurable business outcomes.

Delivered on premises or in the Cloud, the IBM EMM Suite of software solutions gives marketers the tools and insight they need to create individual customer value at every touch. The IBM EMM Suite helps marketers to understand customer wants and needs and leverage that understanding to engage buyers in highly relevant, interactive dialogs across digital, social, and traditional marketing channels.

Designed to address the specific needs of particular marketing and merchandising users, the IBM EMM Suite is comprised of five individual solutions. Digital Marketing Optimization enables digital marketers to orchestrate relevant digital interactions to attract and retain new visitors and grow revenue throughout the customer's lifecycle. With Customer Experience Optimization eCommerce professionals can turn visitors into repeat customers and loyal advocates by improving the digital experience of every customer. With Cross-Channel Marketing Optimization customer relationship marketers can engage customers in a one-to-one dialogue across channels to grow revenue throughout the customer's lifecycle. Price, Promotion and Product Mix Optimization allows merchandisers and sales planners to make price, promotion and product mix decisions that maximize profit and inventory utilization. And with Marketing Performance Optimization, marketing leaders, planners and decision-makers can model and assess mix, and manage marketing operations to maximize ROI.

Over 2,500 organizations around the world use IBM EMM solutions to help manage the pressures of increasing marketing complexity while delivering improved revenue and measurable results. IBM's time-tested and comprehensive offerings are giving companies such as Dannon, E*TRADE, ING, Orvis, PETCO, Telefonica | Vivo, United Airlines and wehkamp.nl the power and flexibility required to provide their customers and prospects with what they expect today – a more consistent and relevant experience across all channels.

IBM