



PLAT  MATION

Whitepaper

The best service is no service

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Introduction

Just imagine, an organization where operations and information streams are so transparent that you can predict failures long before they actually happen, and take corrective measures and inform external parties – from customers, partners, vendors, suppliers, students, citizens all the way to service providers, etc. An organization taking preventive actions opposed to reactive, resulting in zero complaints as there's nothing to complain about.

This is what business looks like when you follow the mantra of “the best service is no service”. It will result in more profit because of high customer loyalty and highly efficient operations, yielding considerable cost savings.

But before reaching a state like this, including its benefits, you need to take the right steps. Because transforming regular Customer Service Management (CSM) workflows into great Customer Experiences (CX) alone will not suffice. CSM is not a stand-alone process. You can only deliver great experiences when multiple departments start to work as one.

This is why we take a holistic, phased approach to the Customer Experience. In this white paper, we'll describe this approach, but we'll start with explaining the need and value of a great CX, and how to realize it.

No service?

The experience economy is leading organizations to transform from being product-oriented to service- or experience-oriented. It's all about delivering experiences that are perceived as easy, engaging and meaningful. With this comes a shift in perception: “If I need to report a complaint, it means your services are not up to par”.





1. Why a great CX matters

Customer retention beats acquisition by far

Research by Bain and Company¹ has found that growing customer retention by 5% will increase company profitability by 25-95%! Another study² found that the costs to acquire a customer is 5 times higher than the costs of retaining one. With this kind of statistics, it becomes obvious where companies should invest. But what's the secret to improving customer retention? The answer is simple: a superior Customer Experience.

However, the traditional way to improve customer retention is to interconnect Marketing, Sales and Customer Support. It's intended to help Customer Service by knowing the customer's preferences (via Marketing), and current opportunities (via Sales) to upsell a solution. But this approach is fundamentally wrong! The kind of help you need when pressured by a malfunction is totally different from the advice you need when you want to buy something. Bluntly said, improving customer retention like this just doesn't work.

Consumer-like experiences

Due to the consumerization of IT, customers expect mobile features, interactive portals and swiping functionality. They want easy to use interfaces, accessible

anytime, anywhere and demand transparency (like access to real-time case status). In reality, American consumers spend, on average, 13 hours per year in a calling queue. Two or more calls are needed to resolve a complaint, while there's also a portion that already gives up after the first call. According to a 2017 survey by the Arizona State University³, over three quarters of complaining consumers were dissatisfied about their experience with Customer Service.

Customers leave you in a heartbeat

Everybody has once had a moment where you lost faith in a supplier or product you adored. Think about such a moment. Do you feel the lack of empathy? Do you hear the friendly agent saying why s/he was unable to help because another department is responsible, or the system says you're not allowed to? Just like that, the product you bought after careful consideration turns into a complete nightmare. You feel the rage and promise yourself to never buy products from this supplier again. As customers and consumers, we expect compassion, understanding and a service that actually helps you. We're not interested in the complexity behind it. We don't want to be confronted with failing department structures, knowledge silos and inadequate systems.

¹http://www2.bain.com/Images/BB_Prescription_cutting_costs.pdf

²<https://www.invespcro.com/blog/customer-acquisition-retention/>

³Customer Care Measurement and Consulting, the Carey School of Business <https://www.customercaremc.com/insights/2017-us-customer-rage-study/>

2. Three basic principles

Research shows that customers don't like to queue, and they definitely don't want to phone a company twice for the same issue. True Customer Service starts with the question: how do we make sure customers don't waste their time and energy on us? It's about transforming every contact, even if things went wrong, to a positive experience. For that, you have to follow three basic principles:

1

Welcome your customer

A warm welcome is about offering a way to connect to you that is most convenient to your customer. Often, this comes down to opening coordinated (omni-)channels, where the customer can easily switch channels, without losing case context. And don't forget to treat your customer as a person, not a number!



2

Understand the problem

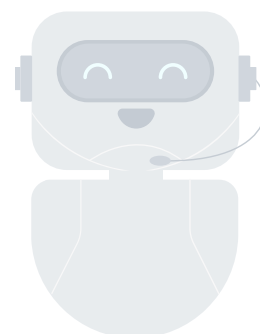
Understanding the problem starts with having the right knowledge of the products and services your customers are using. You'll also need to know what can go wrong and have possible solutions at hand when you interact with your customer.



3

Solve the problem effectively

Solving the problem is something you do preferably right away. Or alternatively, you can impress the customer by solving issues quicker as promised. Or even better, prevent them from happening. After all, the best service is no service!



3. Create interconnected flows

Most Customer Service departments are isolated from the rest of the organization. But if you want to provide a great CX, you need to interconnect all departmental workflows in your organization – from Customer Service, (IT) Operations, Finance, R&D to Sales and Marketing. Ideally, these flows shouldn't be merely reactive and driven by customer interactions, but proactive, or even preventive.

Let's take an IT service provider as an example and look at the differences in the number of steps between reactive, proactive and preventive flows in daily operations:

Reactive

(Good)

1. Customer sends an email to say s/he's having issues with a software product.
2. Customer Service agent checks service health in real time in the portal or on a mobile device and discovers an outage that is already logged in an incident.
3. Service agent links the customer case to the incident, to ensure s/he automatically receives updates to keep the customer informed.
4. Upon resolution, the case is automatically closed, and the customer receives a case resolution notification.

Proactive flow

(Better)

1. An IT Operations employee notices an outage on an application server running a customer-owned website. The website is built on a High Availability architecture, so incoming traffic is rerouted to another server. Nonetheless, an incident is created to restore the application server.
2. Thanks to available data relations between infrastructure components (CI), associated services and customer data, the creation of the incident also triggers automatic creation of customer cases.
3. The case is handled by a customer agent, who performs some checks and notices a slight performance degradation. S/he notifies the customer up front and keeps him/her informed while the incident is being resolved.

Preventive flow

(Best)

1. IT services that support customers are monitored 24/7. Any anomalies in monitoring data are detected based on recurring patterns. Employees from Operations are automatically notified about potential issues and take corrective measures to prevent outage.
2. Now and then, the customer might want to check service performance. S/he checks the service health dashboard in the Customer Service portal and discovers zero outages have occurred. Implemented changes are also visible.

4. The perfect match – ServiceNow & Customer Service

The ServiceNow platform provides two core ingredients for realizing a flawless Customer Experience: great workflows and great experiences. Together, these will harmonize and elevate your Customer Service operations.

Great workflows

The Out-Of-The-Box workflows provided for Customer Service Management ensure Customer Service agents have easy access to customer data to effectively handle customer cases. If your business is providing digital (or IoT enhanced) products to customer locations requiring on-site support, Field Service workflows are available too. Customer Service agents can easily route work to IT Operations, because the customer case workflows are seamlessly integrated with IT Service Management workflows (i.e. Incident Management). Real-time visibility of service health is obtained via IT Operations Management workflows. For all other departments that play a key role in delivering an excellent CX, the Now-platform provides building blocks to easily create the required workflows.

Great experiences

Customers expect to interact with Customer Service via engaging digital communication channels. ServiceNow provides an intuitive yet easy to configure Customer Service Portal. It includes options like Virtual Agent, chat, Knowledge Base search, Service Catalog and many other features – available on mobile devices too. For Customer Service agents, an attractive and easy-to-use engagement layer is provided. This layer grants Customer Service agents access to all relevant information on a single workspace, including intelligent features per case, a customer 360° view with data from 3rd party systems, related knowledge articles, possible causes, and more.

Thus, ServiceNow offers multiple out-of-the-box workflows combined with a great user experience on a single and intelligent platform.



5. Taking a phased approach

Earlier on, we talked about the differences between flow levels. In order to create that ultimate Customer Experience, you will need to move from reactive/proactive to preventive Customer Service. But you cannot switch overnight. This requires a phased approach.

We propose to develop and mature your Customer Experience solution by going through the 5 phases below:



1. Reactive phase

Identify the key departments resolving complaints and/or fulfilling requests. Generally, these are Customer Service, Finance, R&D and Operations. Enable easy routing of customer cases to the right department. Make sure all stakeholders are aware of the benefits of a great CX and that they are committed to deliver high-quality service.

2. Informative phase

Customers love self-service, especially when offered via mobile. Create an easy to navigate Knowledge Base – a key building block for a great CX – for customers to quickly find answers.

3. Responsive phase

Simply said: fulfilling standard requests is down-right boring. For customers, it's not even worth waiting for. Therefore, try to automate as many standard requests as possible to improve overall service responsiveness. This will lower your cost-to-serve.

4. Proactive phase

Ensure your operational status (service health) is visible to both Customer Service and the customer and/or its partners. When outages occur, proactively send out auto notifications to impacted customers using their preferred channel. Providing this level of transparency takes courage though, but the rewards are great. You'll see all interactions decrease, leaving you with more time to focus on core activities. Colleagues and customers will be less frustrated, and operational staff is fully aware of which customers they are serving, leading to a higher commitment and improved work prioritization

5. Preventive phase

ServiceNow AIOps powered by Machine Learning capabilities will provide Operations teams the possibility to be notified of outages in advance. This will enable them to prevent outages from happening, thus providing the best customer service. Because in the end, the best service is no service!

6. The benefits

When work flows fluently between multiple departments, you start realizing great Customer Experiences. In case a customer complaint comes in (reactive flow), they are directly routed to the right department. This saves time and enhances customer satisfaction. Research shows that improving NPS and CSAT scores increases customer loyalty and with that, the possibility of repeat purchases, in turn improving a company's overall profitability. Moving away from reactive to proactive flows and even preventive flows will have an even greater impact on customer satisfaction.



Seamless cross-departmental workflows thanks to an end-to-end solution like ServiceNow lead to increased operational efficiency and a lower cost-to-serve. Not having to copy information from emails, portals or make calls to obtain outage statuses will save time and frustration on both ends. Transparency is also a key ingredient that increases efficiency. Equipping Customer Service agents with the right operational data enables them to directly understand the root cause of a customer complaint and prevents repeated contact moments.

Why ServiceNow is the best

- ✓ Transforms all customer interactions into meaningful experiences across multiple touchpoints
- ✓ Provides native support for multiple types of touchpoints, with a fully responsive Customer Service Portal
- ✓ Easy to integrate with other cloud or on-premise applications
- ✓ Machine learning enables intelligent case routing to the correct support department



About Plat4mation

Based in The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, USA and India, we are an Elite ServiceNow Partner dedicated to delivering world-class products and services for the ServiceNow platform. We are driven to realize maximum value in the IT, employee, and customer workflow experiences for each one of our customers. We do this by providing a flawless customer experience utilizing our extensive expertise.

Since our inception in 2013, we have grown to more than 200 employees globally, and we are still growing strong! With a team of specialized consultants, we aim for the highest possible results while creating jaw-dropping experiences for our customers.

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