

Mapping the customer and agent journey in parallel - the latest blog from Teleopti

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Brandon Rowe at Teleopti explores how the customer-service landscape and the role of the agent must always be considered in parallel. Brandon contemplates the need to react to change and nurture the agent's journey to create exceptional customer journeys.

The world of customer service has massively changed and evolved from what it was two decades ago. Gone are the days where an 800 number was the only option for communicating with a company's customer-service representatives. Now, the customer has multiple media choices with which to interact with a company: voice, e-mail, chat, social media and more. As the 2017 Global Customer Experience (CX) Benchmarking Report found, the percentage of voice calls handled by agents in contact centers decreased from 65.7 to 57.7% between 2015 and 2016. To keep pace with this digital transformation and provide optimal service across all touch points, the management of agents equally needs to transform and evolve.

Rise of self-service

Before considering the management/service agents themselves require today, it is important to first look at the expectations that are set upon them by the customer. As companies offer, and customers embrace, web and mobile self-service options, the reasons for a customer to purposefully interact with an agent have changed.

For example when it comes to banking in 2017, customers predominantly use self-service options for transferring money and checking their accounts. This has changed the nature of direct communication between banking customers and their customer-service representatives. Nowadays, these direct interactions only happen when there is a problem, meaning, particularly when it comes to money, there is a distressed customer on the other end of the phone/computer in need of expert advice, pronto.

Who is the Super Agent?

This shift from everyday tasks to problem solving, has created the illusive Super Agent; an agent that has 3 types of expectation on them. In a single contact, the customer expects an agent to know all the steps they have already taken, why they are frustrated, and how to get them an answer in a reasonable amount of time. No pressure.

To help the Super Agent to meet such expectations and challenges, in a constantly changing customer service landscape, contact centers need to be investing in state-of-the-art Workforce Management (WFM) software.

New tools for new challenges

Competence development can no longer be limited to a supervisor going into a room, listening to live calls and taking notes to later discuss with an agent. Nor is it reasonable to expect a manager with a spreadsheet to adequately juggle multi-skilled agents who are dealing with omnichannel interactions. Five-year old WFM solutions that are still predominantly based on voice and Erlang C models don't

include the necessary updates to accurately forecast, schedule and monitor today's omnichannel Super Agent.

So, what do these new tools need to include?

Multi-channel readiness – Being ready to deal with multi-touch customer interactions means there are three factors that must be offered in a modern WFM solution.

1. The option to calibrate different service levels according to channel type.
2. An ability to dynamically load multi-skilled agents into the staffing modules so that agents can work on multiple activities and be used for overflow between channels.
3. Overflow automation to know when to switch agents from email to chat, or when it is more important for them to stay on email, based on SLAs (service level agreements).

Expandability to business needs – A WFM suite shouldn't just offer one-set option that is inflexible for growth and means there is a large degree of wastage in what has been bought versus what is actually used. Instead, the option of add-on modules means a WFM suite can be custom created to business needs; optimizing management capabilities and reducing unnecessary expenditure.

Efficient monitoring – Quality Monitoring systems can now be responsive to certain 'trouble' criteria – e.g. multiple transfers and unusual length – rather than based on random selection and hours spent on manual analysis by supervisors. Plus, with the rise in online transactions and CRM, screen monitoring is fast becoming the new form of quality control. This helps supervisors to monitor and nurture agent performance in an efficient, multi-channel manner.

An agent-focused approach – Agent preferences provide employees with an active voice in the scheduling progress. Similarly, offering tools such as gamification in the workplace gives agents the ability to engage in a fun, game-like environment that has been shown to not only help lower attrition and boost motivation, but provide real-time insights into their performance without needing a managerial overview. The ability to invest in more and more agent-focused modules ties in with this idea of expanding a WFM solution to fit the needs of the center.

As companies face the ongoing digital transformation of their customer service, a roadmap of how each channel fits into the overall customer journey is needed. There should also be the foresight of what all this means for the agent experience, as their journey is likely to impact the customer journey. The key is to help the Super Agent to fly, not flee.

Download Teleopti's Avaya-partnered white paper with Sheila McGee-Smith 'Optimizing the Agent Journey to Perfect the Customer Journey' to explore this subject in greater detail (<http://www2.teleopti.com/l/25502/2017-03-23/c69z7j>)

Brandon Rowe is Director of Marketing at Teleopti Inc

About Teleopti

Teleopti, is a global provider of workforce management (WFM) software, offering a WFM solution that is sophisticated, localised and easy to use. As the largest “best-of-breed” vendor, Teleopti focuses on helping contact centres, back offices and retail stores improve customer service, employee satisfaction and profitability – through optimized, automated forecasting and scheduling with modern features to empower and engage employees.

Teleopti provides everything necessary to effectively manage staff, forecast demand, create schedules automatically, develop accurate and insightful reports and improve overall customer satisfaction.

Founded in 1992, Swedish-established Teleopti has customers in over 85 countries, offices in Sweden, United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom, Russia, United Arab Emirates, China, Germany, Brazil, South Africa, Malaysia, Finland and Norway – and a comprehensive global network of partners. With a record of continuous net profitability for 25 years and with high customer satisfaction ratings, Teleopti serves as a reliable partner

For more information, please visit TELEOPTI (<http://www.teleopti.com>) or contact:

Mary Phillips/Andreina West,
PR Artistry Limited
T: +44 (0)1491 845553
E: mary@pra-ltd.co.uk