THE BOTTOM LINE
As quality service becomes a key differentiator for customer retention and future sales, companies must take an integrated approach to differentiate their customer service from that of their competitors. This Guidebook explores the experiences of Oracle RightNow customers and highlights best practices they have taken to enable agents to deliver the right answer at the right time, driving increased customer service productivity and increased customer satisfaction.

THE SITUATION
As more and more products become commoditized and customers’ expectations for personalized service rise, many companies are reconsidering their traditional communications channels with an eye to differentiating their service experience over their competitors. It is not enough today to simply satisfy a customer: the nature of the social Web demands that customers receive personalized service, in context, through their choice of interaction channels. If they do reach a customer service representative, that representative must have knowledge of that customer and their relationship history and the ability to proactively offer the right answer or offer to that customer.

These demands are often at odds with traditional contact center and Web site infrastructures:
- In many cases, the call center was designed as the first point of contact and required the agent to access multiple applications and screens to provide even basic information to consumers.
- As e-commerce grew in popularity, e-commerce marketers developed their own mechanisms to answer customer questions and promote the sale of certain items.
- Customer self service and support, if available via the Web at all, was siloed away from any contact center or call center, requiring customers to re-explain their needs if their questions weren’t resolved via Web self service.
- Finally, the rise of social networking sites led many consumers to seek answers and buying advice in domains completely uncontrolled by the seller.

Organizations with aging call centers today are looking for solutions that integrate the best of information from the social Web, e-commerce sites, and Web self service; provide contact center agents with the ability to answer the right question at the right time based on a full understanding of the customer as an individual purchaser; and enable the customer to interact with the seller however they choose, be it by e-mail, phone, Web site, social media, or mobile device.
Moving forward, the ability of companies to provide exemplary customer service will be based on the ability of the consumer to get the right answer at the right time however they engage. The ability of customer service to deliver the right answer at the right time will be judged, very vocally, by customers who share their experience on social media.

THE SOLUTION

Oracle RightNow Cloud Service is designed to support customer interaction by delivering the right answer at the right time. Unlike many solutions that focus exclusively on the call center, RightNow Cloud Service provides support for three types of customer interactions:

- Unassisted, through Web self-service access to a knowledge base, frequently asked questions, social communities, virtual assistants, and e-mail.
- Low-assisted, through the Web, mobile, or social sites with capabilities such as proactive and reactive chat, e-mail, and Knowledge Base guidance.
- High-assisted, which includes phone, potentially in-person service, and virtual services such as co-browsing and click-to-chat features.

Underlying the functionality of the RightNow solution is a common Knowledge Base, customer database, and business process rules engine that facilitate information sharing and reporting across interaction channels. Other features of the solution include:

- RightNow Web Self Service, which enables visitors to find answers online from any device and is self-learning, improving its ability to answer questions with every customer interaction.
- RightNow Intent Guide, which guides customers to relevant knowledge and information by interpreting the intent of their search queries.
- RightNow Guided Assistance, which enables customers to perform complex troubleshooting and other tasks on their own.

RightNow Mobile support enables customers to access self service, loyalty, and other means of engagement from any mobile device. To understand the benefits of RightNow Cloud Service and best practices for maximizing returns from RightNow, Nucleus analyzed the experiences of a number of customers.

KEY BENEFIT AREAS

Nucleus found that an integrated multi-tiered assistance approach to customer experience yielded five main benefits:

- Increased customer service productivity. In Nucleus’s recent CRM Benchmark Report, we found customer service automation could increase service agent productivity by an average of 4.2 percent (Nucleus Research M155 - Benchmark Report 2013: CRM, November 2012). In discussions with RightNow customers, Nucleus found the
benefits could be even more significant because the integrated view of information requires fewer click-throughs and workarounds for agents to get to the information they need. One RightNow customer, for example, was able to decrease call handle times by 10 percent just by simplifying the user interface and reducing the number of screens agents had to access.

- **Reduced administrative overhead.** The same Benchmark Report found that companies could reduce administrative overhead by an average of 3.7 percent. In companies using RightNow for Web self service, the numbers were significantly higher, because they could reduce incoming call and inquiry volumes by 20 to 30 percent.

- **Increased cross-sell and upsell.** Better understanding of customer history and use of the Smart Interaction Hub within RightNow helps communicate the most appropriate answers and offers to customers, increasing cross-sell and upsell opportunities.

- **Reduced customer churn.** Particularly in a Web environment, the ability to rapidly answer a customer’s question is critical to staying engaged. The Virtual Assistant capabilities, as well as co-browsing, tailor customer service responses to customers based on their specific needs and activity to reduce abandonment rates.

- **Increased customer satisfaction.** Nucleus has found that the most important factor in customer satisfaction, by far, is the ability of companies to have an integrated view of the customer’s activity and history regardless of the initial channel of communication. RightNow’s integrated approach makes this possible and reduces the frustration customers often find when they have to reenter information each time they engage via an alternative channel.

### BEST PRACTICES

Nucleus found a number of strategies and best practices that RightNow users followed to provide the right answers at the right time to their customers and prospects to improve the customer experience.

#### TAKE ADVANTAGE OF INTEGRATION

Nucleus recently found that 80 percent of the returns from CRM are yet to be achieved, and 50 percent of those unrealized CRM opportunities come from integration, extension, and collaboration (Nucleus Research m132 - *CRM: 80 percent of returns are yet to be achieved*, October 2012). Given the siloed nature of many companies’ customer interaction channels today, taking advantage of the integration capabilities within RightNow as well as the investments Oracle has made to integrate new acquisitions into the RightNow service cloud can drive reduced IT and administrative costs and accelerate delivery of the right answer to the right customer regardless of the channel of interaction.

RightNow has made significant investments in integration since the Oracle acquisition, particularly with the Smart Integration Hub, the ATG Engagement Engine, and Inquira.
Taking advantage of these capabilities and consolidating on one knowledge base for e-commerce, traditional call center, e-mail, and social channels increase consistency and accelerate the delivery of the right answer to the right customer:

- Smart Integration Hub enables companies to leverage customer histories and real-time interaction data to understand the customer profile and align a specific customer with the best agent and content when the customer engages.
- The ATG Engagement Engine’s robust set of rules and workflows for engaging customers within an e-commerce site increases Web site marketers’ ability to bring customers into the right conversation at the right time, increasing conversions and reducing abandonment rates.
- Taking advantage of Oracle Knowledge (formerly InQuira) integration enables companies to expand the breadth and sophistication of their knowledge base with external content and natural language processing and search, enabling low-assist customers to more quickly resolve questions and issues.

One RightNow customer said, “Now all channels can speak to each other and speak into the same incident reporting tool. Before [RightNow], our e-mail management system was awful and the phone was completely separate. From a reporting and contact history perspective integration has been a big plus. It’s a lot more efficient and the customer experience is obviously better.”

HAVE A MULTI-TIERED ASSISTANCE PLAN

Nucleus found that companies taking advantage of the multichannel capabilities of RightNow to fully embrace a multi-tiered assistance plan were able to more rapidly resolve customer issues and increase the productivity of customer agents. The ability, for example, to move from an animated avatar to a live agent while preserving the entire conversation trail for the live agent to view, had a significant positive impact on call resolution times and customer satisfaction.

LEVERAGE A COMMON KNOWLEDGE BASE

Many companies today have multiple siloed knowledge bases between sales, marketing, e-commerce, and support. Integrating these knowledge bases can have a significant impact on customer agent productivity and their ability to deliver the right answer at the right time to the customer. Customers said:

- “Because we can see the scoring system, we can see the effectiveness of various answers across channels. We’re seeing about 500 deflections a month; people are hitting answers and then they don’t have to go and ask a question. Our call resolution times have also gone down.”
- “One knowledge base person could probably eliminate seven agents. People are going online first; they’re doing a Google search and we want to make sure they’re landing on the right content. The platform allows us to tweak that very easily.”
“We’re probably 5 to 6 percent more productive because of the centralized platform, and with RightNow our customer satisfaction went from roughly 70 to 86 percent.”

GET SOCIAL
Taking advantage of RightNow’s investments in social experience modules such as self-service Facebook content creation, support communities, and social media monitoring can help customer agents:
- have a fuller view of how customers are interacting with the company and each other across the social Web
- more rapidly identify and troubleshoot potential service or product issues
- be more proactive in communicating appropriate offers and promotions to new and existing customers.

RightNow users can also take advantage of improved incident collaboration through integration with Oracle Social Network.

FOCUS ON SCALABILITY AND PRODUCTIVITY
Most traditional call centers were designed to manage process and workflows, and lack of integration often meant agents had to access multiple screens or keep written notes or other workarounds to access the right answers for customers. Features in RightNow such as the Message Template Designer and the Smart Integration Hub automate processes to drive greater agent productivity and free up agent time for an increased focus on high-value customers and promotions.

MAKE KNOWLEDGE BASE REFINEMENT AN ONGOING PRIORITY
As products and markets evolve, so do the needs and questions customers have. Although the RightNow knowledge base is self learning, Nucleus found the most successful users spent some time on an ongoing basis evaluating what content should be maintained for internal users and consumer audiences to ensure both agents and customers could rapidly access the most relevant information. One RightNow customer, for example, found that by reducing the amount of public-facing content in the knowledge base by 75 percent, they were able to reduce the time customers spent sifting through information, increasing satisfaction while further reducing incoming calls.

CONCLUSION
As companies consider their next generation of technologies for customer service, they have many new dynamics to consider. Customers expect to be treated as individuals and to be able to interact with companies in the way that best suits them. They expect any point of contact to be informed by their previous history of interactions with the company and to reflect that in the content or promotions that are presented. They expect to quickly
find the right answer or resolution at the right time or they will go elsewhere – and tell the world about it on Facebook, Yelp, and Twitter. RightNow’s focus on integration; streamlined handoffs between low-assisted, medium-assisted, and high-assisted interactions; and focus on agent productivity are designed to arm RightNow customers with what they need to improve their customer service on an ongoing basis.