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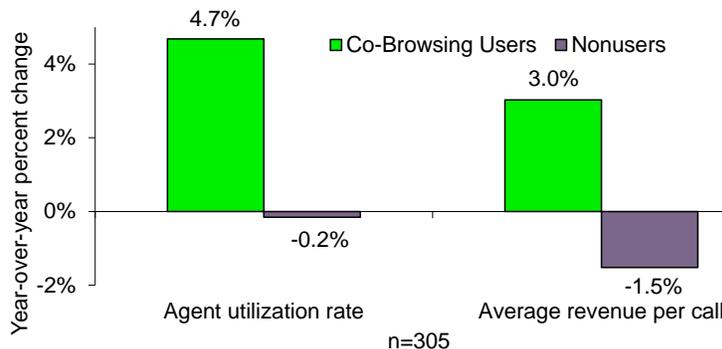
Co-Browsing in Customer Service: The Path to Just-in-Time Customer Engagement

The rapid pace of innovation in technology tools and channels continues to alter the business landscape. In addition to empowering customers with myriad resources that influence their purchase and loyalty decisions, the rapid emergence and adoption of technology tools provides organizations with numerous opportunities to enhance the experience of their customer. One of these tools is co-browsing (see sidebar for definition) — a key technology enabler utilized by 129 businesses participating within Aberdeen's July 2013 *Contact Center Optimization: Use Data to Deliver Superior Customer Care* study. Findings from this research show that co-browsing users enjoy superior results across key metrics, such as driving incremental revenue through referrals made by loyal customers, and improvements in annual company revenue. This report will outline the reasons behind these performance improvements, as well as identify the key differentiators that help companies establish co-browsing as essential to delivering just-in-time customer service.

A Profitable Venture: Co-Browsing in Customer Service

Customer service organizations utilize numerous measures to assess their success in delighting their clients. Some of these measures are focused on tactical areas such as making better use of agents' time, as well as generating more revenue from each interaction — a key aspect of transforming the customer service organization from a cost center into a profit center. Figure 1 below illustrates that co-browsing users enjoy superior year-over-year performance gains in these key areas while their competitors report worsening results.

Figure 1: Co-Browsing Users Enjoy Superior Year-over-Year Performance Gains Results



Source: Aberdeen Group, July 2013

Analyst Insight

Aberdeen's Insights provide the analyst's perspective on the research as drawn from an aggregated view of research surveys, interviews, and data analysis.

Definition: Co-browsing

For the purposes of this research, "co-browsing" refers to the ability to have a service provider and customer jointly navigate an application (e.g., web page, digital document, or mobile application) on a real-time basis through the web. Both the customer and the agent can access the content through numerous modalities, including desktops, tablets, and smart phones.

In addition to a joint view of the same applications, the parties involved in the co-browsing session can also interact with one another through numerous communication mediums such as voice and video through functionalities such as "click-to-call" or "click-to-view."

While screen share is often a part of the capabilities related to co-browsing, it only allows one party to command control of the application whereas co-browsing enables both parties (customer service representative and client) to command control.

Use of co-browsing allows customer service representatives and contact center agents to better understand the context of each customer issue and solve them appropriately. This is facilitated by the agents' ability to control client applications remotely upon being authorized by the customer to co-browse. For example, when filling out a detailed mortgage application a confused customer can take advantage of the co-browsing functionality whereby the agent would navigate the same application form while speaking over the phone with the client. Such interaction enhances the agents' view of customer problems and allows seamless handling of issues. The time saved in handling these requests ultimately improves agent utilization rates — measured by the fact that co-browsing users enjoy a 4.7% annual improvement, compared to a 0.2% decline by non-users.

Enhancing agents' view and understanding of customer issues through a co-browsing session also helps agents identify additional products and services that can help clients reduce the likelihood of experiencing similar issues. For example, the same mortgage applicant can be offered a one-on-one session for an extra fee where they can complete documentation with an expert. Besides satisfying customer needs, this also helps companies generate more revenue from each customer contact — a metric where co-browsing users enjoy a 3.0% annual performance gains while non-users experience a 1.5% decline.

Findings from Aberdeen's January 2012 [Customer Experience Management: Using the Power of Analytics to Optimize Customer Delight](#) research sheds further light on the business impact of co-browsing on improving financial health of the organization. As depicted in Table I below, data from this [study](#) indicates that companies using co-browsing as part of their service delivery activities enjoy 16.8% annual growth in company revenue, compared to 9.7% by non-users. This provides further validation that supporting agents with just-in-time service delivery capabilities enabled by co-browsing tools increases the profitability of each interaction as well as the financial health of the business.

Table I: Year-over-Year Performance Improvements (continued)

| Performance Findings (n=252) | Co-Browsing Users | Non-users |
|---|-------------------|-----------|
| Annual company revenue | 16.8% | 9.7% |
| Number of positive mentions through social media channels | 13.8% | 3.4% |
| Revenue from customer referrals | 5.9% | 1.5% |
| Customer win-back rate | 4.8% | 0.6% |

Source: Aberdeen Group, January 2012

It's important to note that the payoffs associated with co-browsing tools go beyond the profit and loss statement, extending into the all-important need

to drive customer delight. To this point, the findings depicted in Table 1 show that by establishing better visibility into the context of each customer need, co-browsing users are well-positioned to win back clients who weren't satisfied with their prior interactions with the business. Furthermore, co-browsing users enjoy far more business generated through satisfied and loyal customers referring their products / services, compared to organizations not using co-browsing tools.

In the next section, we'll observe the key activities that help companies successfully incorporate co-browsing into their customer service programs.

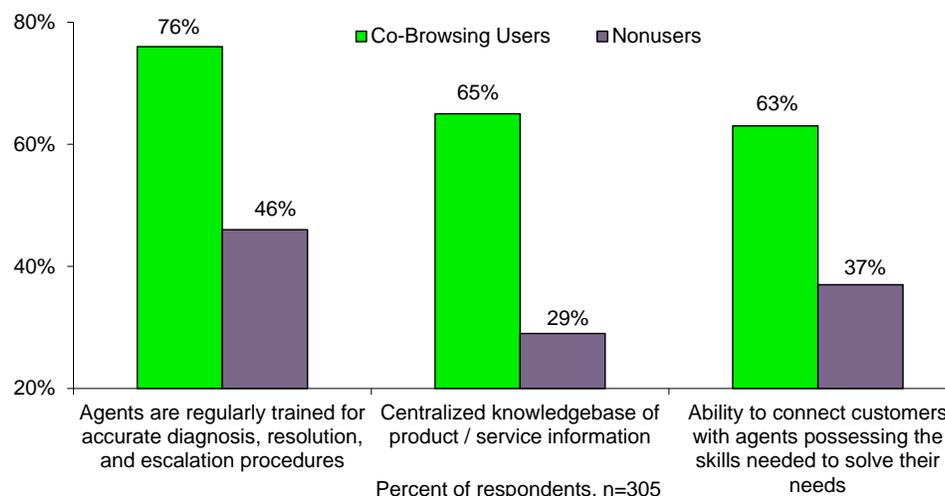
How to Implement Co-Browsing within Customer Service Efforts

Organizational processes and performance management activities form the two primary building blocks of service-oriented, co-browsing technology deployments. To implement just-in-time customer engagement — addressing precise customer needs when and where clients seek support — companies need to ensure that they can connect the right customer with the right agent possessing the skills and expertise to solve their needs. In our prior mortgage application example, not every contact center agent may be knowledgeable about every type of application process. As a result, it's critical to ensure that businesses identify the competencies of each agent, and establish skills-based routing in order to match the right client with the right agent — an activity deployed 70% more regularly (63% vs. 37%) by co-browsing users compared to non-users — see Figure 2.

Mobile Co-Browsing

Research shows that 59% of co-browsing users currently deploy mobile capabilities where customers can manage a mobile website or mobile application together with a contact center agent. This functionality is further enhanced through options such as “click-to-call” or “click-to-chat” through which customers can communicate with the agent during the co-browsing session.

Figure 2: Key Capabilities to Use Co-Browsing in Customer Service



Source: Aberdeen Group, July 2013

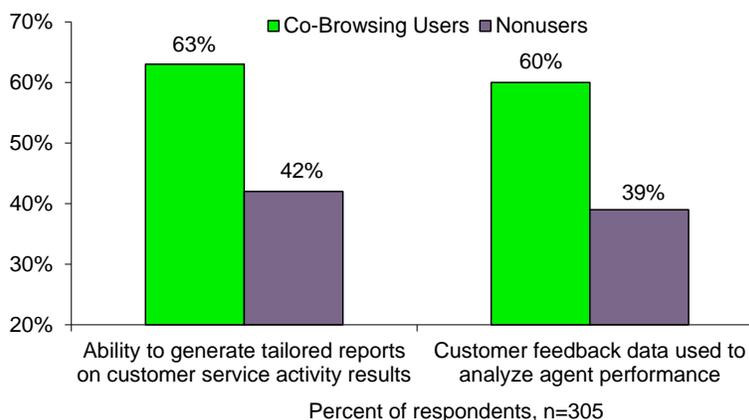
Building the framework and executing the processes that help companies connect the right parties (agents and customer) within a co-browsing session should be an ongoing effort. As customer needs and the technology

tools (e.g., operating systems) involved within service interactions evolve rapidly, agents need to be trained regularly on how to accurately diagnose, resolve, and escalate client needs through co-browsing evolving technology systems (see Aberdeen’s July 2013 [Workforce Optimization in the Contact Center: Secrets to Improve Agent Performance](#) study for further analysis on agent training and productivity). To this point, businesses deploying co-browsing tools as part of their customer service programs are 65% more likely (76% vs. 46%) to provide such regular training, compared to their peers. This enables agents within these businesses to continuously enhance the skills they need to solve customer needs.

Success in co-browsing isn’t solely driven, however, by matching the right customer with the right agent or regularly enhancing the competency skills of agents. Data shows that co-browsing users are also far more likely (65% vs. 29%) to deploy knowledge management systems that allow their agents seamless access to key product and service information. When agents face an issue they are not familiar with, this capability empowers them with relevant and timely knowledge needed to address client issues. In the context of our prior example, if during the co-browsing session the agent found that there was an area of the mortgage application where the agent needed additional information, this data can be gleaned through the knowledge management system to quickly and accurately respond to customer needs.

Once businesses lay the groundwork through establishing the above-mentioned organizational capabilities that enable effective use of co-browsing, the next step in the journey is measuring the performance of these activities. Regular measurement of co-browsing activity results is critical, as it helps organizations gain visibility into how co-browsing contributes to customer service excellence. As demonstrated in Figure 3 below, co-browsing users utilize tailored reports 50% more widely (63% vs. 42%) than their peers to track and measure the results of their customer efforts. These reports can be personalized based on numerous criteria (e.g.,

Figure 3: Manage the Performance of Your Co-Browsing Efforts



Source: Aberdeen Group, July 2013

nature of issue and customer demographics) and yield crucial insights that enable firms to better understand their strengths and weaknesses in solving customer needs.

Tailored reports allow companies to analyze their performance across numerous key performance measures. These range across metrics indicative of operational performance (e.g., average handle time and agent utilization), to customer service excellence (e.g., first contact resolution and customer retention), and financial health of the business (e.g., revenue per co-browsing session). While regular tracking of operational and financial results is critical, delighting clients in [the era of empowered customers](#) requires companies to be laser focused on customer satisfaction. As such, co-browsing users are 54% more likely (60% vs. 39%) than their peers to capture customer feedback data, and to incorporate it within their regular assessment of agent use of co-browsing activities. The resulting intelligence helps firms monitor agent skills in addressing customer needs effectively through co-browsing tools. Any poor results associated with a specific interaction would help contact center supervisors identify areas where the agent needs training.

In addition to the key benefits and activities outlined above, ensuring security of the content displayed within a co-browsing session concerns certain organizations — particularly firms within heavily regulated industries such as financial services, insurance, and healthcare. The ability to provide the customer with the ability to block or allow view of any content (e.g., fields on a form, pages within a website, PDF documents, settings windows, or software programs) is a capability that addresses this challenge and is provided by many co-browsing technology enablers. This provides agents with the ability to view the necessary resources to solve the customer’s issue without creating security concerns for the client. Such deployment of co-browsing tools allows firms to maintain the synchronized joint navigation by agent and customer no matter what rich media content is displayed on the screen.

Key Takeaways to Deliver Customer Service Excellence through Co-Browsing

Today’s customer / company relations are governed by a “new normal.” It is one that provides businesses with numerous opportunities such as incremental revenue through customer referrals and better agent utilization if they adapt appropriately, and threats such as erosion in customer base and revenue if they fail to adapt. This “new normal” is the rapid pace of innovation in technology tools and channels that provides customers with a wealth of information needed to influence their purchase and loyalty decisions. Similarly, the same set of technology tools and channels expand the toolbox of today’s customer service executives, providing them with strategic capabilities that are instrumental in delighting the empowered customers. As outlined within this report, when co-browsing tools are implemented effectively, the use of this technology enabler is instrumental in helping companies achieve a 4.7% annual improvement in agent utilization

Definition: Social Buzz

For the purposes of this research, Aberdeen defines “social buzz” as positive mentions of the company brand through customer-generated content (e.g., tweets and Facebook posts) across myriad social media channels.

rates while generating 13.8% increase in social “buzz” (see sidebar for definition) through satisfied and loyal customers. Ultimately this drives 16.8% year-over-year growth in annual company revenue. Aberdeen recommends that companies implement the following activities in order to achieve similar results and establish co-browsing as a building block of customer service excellence initiatives:

- **Regularly track changing customer behavior.** Customers rapidly adapt their behavior by incorporating myriad tools and resources available at their disposal to engage businesses. By remaining abreast of these evolving preferences, businesses will be well-positioned to train their agents with the most recent technological advancements they need to know to solve customer needs through co-browsing sessions.
- **Deploy a data-driven approach to connect the right agent with the right customer.** This approach, often called “skills-based routing,” is deployed regularly by most contact centers and it applies very well into effectively utilizing co-browsing as an option to deliver just-in-time customer support. Companies deploying this capability are better positioned to help their customers through agents knowledgeable about solving specific client issues.
- **Assess how co-browsing impacts your customer satisfaction results.** Despite the numerous operational benefits associated with co-browsing, the primary reason for which companies deploy this technology enabler is to address customer needs that might be rather complex. Capturing customer sentiment and feedback after each session and using it to measure both company and agent performance in satisfying customers is a key step in helping businesses establish co-browsing as a long-term enabler supporting service excellence initiatives.

For more information on this or other research topics, please visit www.aberdeen.com.

Related Research

[Omni-Channel Customer Care: Empowered Customers Demand a Seamless Experience](#); October 2013

[Next-Generation Agent Desktop: Address the Empowered Customer Trends with Happy Agents](#); October 2013

[Speech Analytics: Making Effective Use of Voice in a Multi-Channel World](#); September 2013

[Social Customer Care: Secrets to Build a Winning Strategy](#); August 2013

[Bringing Customer Service into Marketing: Empowered Customers Make Service Excellence an Imperative](#); July 2013

[Contact Center Optimization: Use Data to Deliver Superior Customer Care](#); July 2013

[Workforce Optimization in the Contact Center: Secrets to Improve Agent Performance](#); June 2013

[The Rising Financial Impact of Customer Service](#); May 2013

[Next-Generation Customer Experience Management](#); March 2013

[Multi-Channel Contact Center: Establishing the Tie Between Mobile and the Customer Experience](#); March 2013

[The Hidden ROI of a Cloud-based Contact Center](#); January 2013

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