The four CX challenges we know you're facing right now

(and what your peers are doing to solve them)

ORACLE

Introduction

The world of customer experience is facing immense change – and there could be a heavy price to pay for businesses who struggle to change with it.

Customers are demanding more human, empathetic service, and at the same time, advances in technology are increasing both employee demands for remote working options and customer needs for innovative customer service solutions.

Our latest series of webinars on customer experience has revealed just how far the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated both of these trends, taking away traditional working and support structures whilst massively boosting the demand for human interaction and personalised service.

In fact, 97% of respondents in one of our recent webinar polls confirmed they're now working entirely from home – just as customers are seeking better, more human engagement.

As we look forward to a post-COVID world, how can professionals responsible for customer experience plan and prepare for challenges, both existing and new, to create CX strategies fit for the future?

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How do you adapt your CX to meet the rapidly changing needs and demands of your customers?

A rapid re-emphasis of CX priorities in recent years has brought a shift in what customers expect of business. Customers now want the 'digital trifecta' of instant service 24/7, the right answers, and personalised service.

Of these, the growing importance of personalised and intelligent service is most significant. The customer experience now matters more than pricing or products, with a recent PwC survey showing that 1 in 3 customers will leave a brand they love after just one bad experience – whilst 92% would abandon a company after two or three negative interactions. Another of our recent webinar polls, however, revealed 26% considered their last experience of customer service to be poor, with 48% rating it just 'OK'. That has to change.

Service is no longer just 'part' of the wider customer experience – it's the crucial moment of contact between customer and brand that can make or break the customer relationship. This shift has been exaggerated by ongoing demographic changes. The arrival of so-called Gen-Z'ers on the scene, for example, requires an entirely new approach to customer experience. With Gen Z representing a staggering $44bn in spending power – and estimated to make up 40% of US consumers as of 2020 – it's not a market you can ignore.

Gen Z is all about authenticity: they want the truth – not just robotic placeholder answers – and they want and value human interaction from brands, rather than being sent a link, or told to find information elsewhere. And while they're happy to wait and are more sympathetic to small problems and hiccups, they want genuine answers – not half-baked solutions.

In these circumstances, business as usual won't do. But that doesn't have to mean more burden for businesses and their employees. New conversational interfaces and technologies like chatbots can use complex logic to serve customers and drive dialogue just as well as a human advisor.

Logistics company Hermes UK's bot Holly saved millions of dollars and reduced call volumes by half during the busy pre-Christmas period in 2019, freeing up human agents to deal with trickier issues. Holly proved so successful she even started receiving fan mail.

Audiences and their priorities may be changing – but using smart technology to deliver a truly authentic customer experience will help you keep pace with them.

40%
Up to 40% of US consumers are made up from Gen Z

Top Tip
You must make your customer service more human and authentic: the next generation of consumers value truth and honesty highly and are more pragmatic in their approach. Give them what they need, honestly.

Chapter 2

How do you react and adapt to change in days and weeks, not months and years?

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought new urgency to these problems – accelerating us years into the future, practically overnight. But another poll from our webinars revealed over two thirds (67%) of businesses had no robust working from home strategy in place when the pandemic hit – leaving them unprepared for change.

The rapid shift to remote working has affected businesses in numerous ways. With employees working from home, and customers using a variety of platforms to find information, where business takes place and how communication happens has been forced to change.

Added to this, a significant number of employees have switched roles internally to help field extremely large call volumes thanks to the pandemic. That's caused a changing sense of what customer service is, and how it should adapt.

In Italy for example, e-commerce sales rose 81% in a single week, according to McKinsey. Clearly COVID-19 forced shops to close and drove shoppers online, but this demonstrates the need to be adaptable to sudden and rapid shifts in consumer behaviour.

Top Tip
Coach the coaches: team leaders need new skills to coach their employees remotely, and you need to consider how you maintain team spirit and morale to ensure your people are happy and engaged.

But this has proven no excuse for slip-ups. Wherever and however the business is now operating, the experience still needs to be seamless. Each interaction must be context-aware throughout the journey – from chatbots, to live chat and email – regardless of where your employees are based.

Lockdowns and quarantine procedures have added extra pressure, making it vital to get the right services to those who need them most – especially the frail and vulnerable. Businesses need to be able to prioritise and route enquiries effortlessly without overloading existing personnel, even when facing huge increases in call volumes, and even when working remotely.

Automated customer-facing platforms and easy-to-use back-end systems can carry a large part of this extra weight – but time is of the essence. One large US state we worked with, which was hit hard by the pandemic, trained 1,100 employees in just 5 days to respond to a surge of coronavirus-related enquires.

These issues show that responding to change is now no longer optional – it's a core business competency. In fact, according to CIO magazine, business success is now solely measured simply by how quickly you can access and utilize your data to be more agile and pivot quickly.

1,100

employees trained in just 5 days to respond to a surge in coronavirus-related enquiries

Case Study

ALDA

Business challenge

Aldar Properties PJSC (Aldar) is a real estate developer in the United Arab Emirates. A partner of Abu Dhabi Vision 2030 – the urban planning and development plan for the emirate – Aldar Properties is known for iconic and innovative projects, such as the internationally recognized Aldar headquarters building, the Gate Towers in Abu Dhabi's Shams district, and Yas Island's F1 racing circuit.

To bolster growth, Aldar needed to increase customer service levels and customer retention by improving the experience of residential and retail customers across its malls and other assets. It also needed to find a way to eliminate cumbersome, paper-intensive manual processes and speed up multi-departmental workflows with automation and self-service capabilities. It turned to Oracle CX Service.

Results

Aldar's customer service channels were neither integrated nor automated and the company currently manages around 12,000 residential and retail property contracts with stringent service level agreements (SLAs). Aldar looked for a solution to complement its Oracle CX Sales and Oracle E-Business Suite solutions in order to boost customer service, satisfaction, and retention.

- Aldar has increased its SLA fulfilment to shop tenants and residents through the 24/7 transparency of requests and responses accessible through the Oracle CX Service portal, enhancing the quality of services offered by the property developer

- Aldar saved time, money, and all paper-related resources by migrating manual service-request processes to self-service customer portals managed through Oracle CX Service – all while speeding up approvals, halting document storage growth, better meeting stringent SLAs, and boosting operational efficiencies across the enterprise

- Leveraged the Knowledge Management and Service Catalog items in Oracle CX Service visible to agents at multiple touch points to ensure that shopping mall visitors receive relevant responses to complaints and queries through the cross-channel panoramic view of customers available in the contact centers

"We chose Oracle CX Service for the accessibility and connectivity of running in the Cloud, with no need for capital investment, and the smooth integration with Oracle ERP and CX Sales. I frankly don't think there is an equivalent solution out there; it's simply the leading product in the industry."

Dayan De Alwis, Manager
Manager – CRM and Data Solutions, Aldar Properties PJSC

Chapter 3

How do you adapt to the new normal?

We certainly can't expect things to go back to 'normal.' The pandemic has permanently changed the way we work. Working from home is here to stay, especially for customer service professionals: 100% of those we surveyed in another of our interactive webinar polls said it was necessary to create a robust WFH policy for the future.

And yet, the same survey revealed only 46.7% of them had such a policy. The pandemic has highlighted major shortfalls in CX strategy and has forced leaders to embrace new ideas and look for new tools to help solve the challenge: 41% of those surveyed during one of our latest webinars said they would introduce more self-service options on their websites as a result of the pandemic, with 35% planning to automate more everyday transactional interactions in the long-term. Nearly half (45%) have already introduced new tools since the crisis hit.

The business benefits are clear. 90% of employees believe that flexible work environments boost their morale, 85% feel that their productivity increases with that flexibility, and 77% believe that working from home reduces operating costs.

As for customers, 40% are willing to pay for a better customer

Top Tip
Invest in the agent experience: providing your customer service agents with the right tools to do their job doesn't simply improve customer experience, but helps elevate brand value and supplement future sales.

86%

of customers are willing to pay for a better customer experience!

SPECIAL.T
BY Nestlé

Business challenge

With more than 2,000 brands, operating 447 factories, and selling products in 196 countries, Nestlé S.A. is the world's leading nutrition, health and wellness company. The SPECIAL.T brand is a convenience tea concept launched in 2010 in France and subsequently rolled out across another seven countries.

In its efforts to improve its operations and service to customers, SPECIAL.T recognised it needed to update its infrastructure to streamline and improve interactions between customers and service agents across multiple countries and languages.

Alongside this drive to improve the customer and agent experience, SPECIAL.T was looking for a way to reduce its platform support costs and facilitate more meaningful interactions surrounded in context.

Results

Deploying Oracle CX Service, SPECIAL.T created a singular platform from which to build an entirely new sales and service function founded on information. Customer service agents now have a single user interface for all customer support needs, bringing together the information from all their previous old, non-integrated applications into an easy-to-use tool.

- SPECIAL.T now has a central knowledge base covering all basic topics from machine error codes to promotions, available in multiple languages and personalised by country to offer customers and service agents a state-of-the-art interaction experience

- The CRM has been integrated with customer engagement processes and SPECIAL.T's e-commerce platform to synchronise customer contacts, orders, and return merchandise in near real-time

- Feedback can now be sought directly from consumers via a portal with live chat, enabling the company to adapt products and services to consumer demands

- Consumers can access purchasing support in their local language for a range of topics such as flavors, preparation recipes, and targeted information for country-specific topics, such as delivery schedules

- Oracle CX Service has also helped SPECIAL.T drive additional revenue through targeted customer offers based on historical consumption

"Managing our customer interactions with Oracle CX Service enables us to move very quickly. Instead of worrying about servers and IP addresses, we can implement best practices, features, and functionalities to optimise our customers' digital experience. The benefits of working with Oracle Cloud solutions are enormous."

Pascal Monnier
IS/IT Manager, SPECIAL.T by Nestlé, Nestlé S.A.

Chapter 4

How to ready yourself for long-term flexible working

Meeting these challenges and thriving longer-term requires businesses to not only deliver more personal and helpful services for customers, but also to find new ways to empower front-line customer service teams as their traditional support and management networks change dramatically.

That starts from the top: the way we lead has to change. Remote working requires you trust workers to do what they need to do without holding their hand. At the same time, you'll need to build the necessary infrastructure to monitor and support them in their jobs from a distance – and offer solid communication tools to maintain company culture.

The good news is that remote working opens up the talent pool, and has the potential to introduce micro-schedules for employees that adapt completely to their lifestyles.

To get to that point, workers need the right tools – and data – at hand. In the experience of Francesco Stasi, Founder and CEO at BotSupply, it's not new technology that holds businesses back – but a lack of understanding of their data and where it sits. When you're working from home, that can be even more complicated.

Novel technologies are here to help. AI technology can power back-end systems as well as chatbots and conversational interfaces, automating not just those all-important customer interactions, but the collection and activation of data around those interactions, too – regardless of platform.

Seamless workflows, connected front-to-back solutions, and omni-channel integration allow employees to keep track of customer interactions, purchases, journeys, and support them wherever they are, whatever device they're using – meaning they never have to waste time tracking down information or switching across different platforms. It's all there ready for them.

It may take time to find the right balance – but with the right strategy, your customers won't even notice you're not in an office.

Top Tip
Embrace working from home, don't fear it: there are many advantages to be found from a working from home model - once you have the right technology in place to support it. Your talent pool is wider when you aren't restricted by a location and your working hours can be much more flexible as you can adapt around your employees' lives.

CGI

Business challenge

CGI Group Inc. is a global, independent information technology and business process services firm. It serves thousands of global clients in offices and delivery centres all around the globe, leveraging a comprehensive portfolio of services.

In Sweden, CGI's mission is to be a complete IT consultant across multiple technologies and verticals. It does this by supporting and hosting a range of different IT environments. Upon taking over the internal support for one of its key customers, it inherited some 300 incidents and change requests per month.

CGI Sweden was looking for a solution to help streamline the management of this new workload, enhance their overview of ongoing customer technical support issues and reduce support times through a centralized knowledge base for all of its IT support consultants.

Results

To help tackle these challenges, CGI Sweden deployed Oracle CX Service and has subsequently reduced response times, saved support consultants' time, and improved customer satisfaction.

- CGI Sweden has saved at least 30 hours each month on a single business customer by enabling its support consultants to work in a more structured and unified way, eliminating unnecessary duplication and enabling the team to spend more time improving the customer relationship

- CGI Sweden has enabled better management of all inbound customer IT change requests through multiple channels on a single cloud system – streamlining customer support and processes and eliminating previous confusion regarding which consultant was working on which customer issue

- The platform provides detailed analytics to senior staff – for example, incident resolution time per technology type – enabling CGI Sweden to adhere to customer SLAs, and better forecast future staffing needs

- Oracle CX Service's rich knowledge database and standard answer functions has shortened response times to a range of IT support issues by providing technical support consultants with up-to-date knowledge at their fingertips

"We selected Oracle CX Service because of its modern multichannel support, flexibility, agility to rapidly improve customer satisfaction, and short implementation time with zero infrastructure maintenance. Oracle CX Service was perfectly suited to enhance our IT support business."

Johan Toresjö,
Director Consulting Services, CGI Sverige AB

Conclusion

2020 has shown us that whatever your business does, it's vital to be ready for what's next.

Customer behaviour will no doubt continue to change, and service will likely continue to drive brand value and dialogue – but the arrival of COVID-19 is a timely reminder that you never quite know what's on the horizon.

Creating a constantly adapting business strategy and sourcing the right tools to help you roll with the punches are critical to being ready for the customer experience challenges of tomorrow. You must factor in the needs of your consumers, evaluate both macro and micro economic factors and work tirelessly to connect data sets to ensure that each engagement throughout the lifecycle is surrounded in context and intelligent options are available.

To find out more on how customer experience is changing, and what you can do to keep up, watch our webinar series here, and find out more about Oracle Cloud CX on our website.

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