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End-to-end service is the future of service

Digital continues to redefine service. Digital technologies, digital media, digital content, and even digital data have changed both the culture of service organizations and the expectations of the customers being served. Exceptional service is now the expected norm; it has the power to turn one-time customers into loyal advocates for your products, your company, and your brand.

And digital is the only way to meet these (continually changing) expectations for around-the-clock availability, real-time fulfillment, immediate access to information, and personalized, proactive service—to name a few. Successful organizations will be those that can successfully embrace digital (in all its forms) to transform their service offering.

It is not too late. Customer experience (CX) can be the ultimate business differentiator, and organizations that elevate unparalleled after-sales service as part of CX will see rewards in terms of:

- increased service contract renewals
- sales of more aftermarket parts and accessories
- additional incremental sales
- support for product-as-a-service models and renewals (if applicable)
- increased customer loyalty (thanks to their ability to proactively serve their customers and improve first-call resolutions in the field)
- lower costs through better management of resources, inventory, and repair depots

However, to truly profit from service, organizations shift their focus on the customer—staying ahead of their needs and expectations. A laser-sharp customer focus needs to deliver state-of-the-art digital user experiences, before expectations change again.

73% of all people point to customer experience as an important factor in their purchasing decisions.

Source: David Clarke and Ron Kinghorn, “Experience is everything: Here’s how to get it right.” PwC, 2018.
An illustration—how customer expectations affect field service

Because of digital advancements in other areas of their lives, customers expect field service agents to have all the answers, know the solution to their problem, and have immediate access to the parts needed to make all of this happen. To do so, field service technicians need the digital tools to become fully automated, operate on-the-go, connect with IoT-enhanced devices for immediate data access, and harness the power of predictive intelligence and AI to predict what customers need before they need it.

Integrating these advancements, processes, and technologies into the field service organization also improves internal efficiencies. Field service technicians and replacement workers are quickly becoming short in supply. By integrating field service with other customer-facing applications and back-office systems, organizations can boost their current workforce’s productivity and performance quality.

But let’s move on from the subject of field service, for not every company needs/has a field service group. Success requires exceeding service expectations in a variety of customer engagement channels, including direct electronic communication modes, such as online chat, email, and text; agents and call centers; IoT technology embedded in physical assets; dealers and distributors (i.e. channel partners); counter and salespeople in retail; and social communities.
3 elements a service solution must have to meet customer expectations

To capture customers' hearts and minds through service, organizations need an end-to-end service solution. The three components of this service solution are:

1. Robust suite of service products
2. Seamless integration (leading to a cohesive experience) across front office and back office
3. Availability on a digital platform

Let's look at these components individually.
#1: A robust service solution that covers six areas

After-sales service is when customer loyalty and brand advocacy begin, so service organizations must employ technology offering a complete slate of capabilities. These capabilities include assistance with (see diagram):

1. service requests and case management
2. contracts, warranties, subscription management
3. field service
4. inventory and logistics
5. digital promotions and order management
6. billing and payment
"With Oracle CX Cloud, we’re no longer forced to spend hours sifting through spreadsheets and emails in search of customer contacts and order histories.”

—Sr. VP of Sales and Marketing, manufacturer of specialized connectors and electronic components

#1: **Service request and case management** functionality aligns resources; manages activities, service partners, and service requests; and supports work orders and cases. Intelligent tools supporting this functionality allow service agents to quickly and efficiently resolve issues with full visibility to all touchpoints of a customer’s service journey. Digital capabilities, such as self-service, chatbots, and virtual assistants, handle minor service issues so agents can focus on specific, high-value, customer interactions. Additionally, embedded AI capabilities increase the speed of resolutions through pattern detection and resource identification.

#2: **Contract, warranty, and subscription management** manages product coverage, confirms contract compliance, and captures and manages warranty claims. Customer satisfaction increases because partners, employees, and (even) customers themselves can validate warranty coverage and entitlements before service has to happen. Payments are captured for services provided. Businesses can drive new streams of revenue with AI-powered recommendations for selling, delivering, and renewing contract-based offerings and subscriptions. Tools that intelligently process warranty claims offer greater efficiency and focus resources on claims with a higher likelihood of fraud-reducing revenue leakage, optimizing warranty reserves, and improving supplier recovery.

#3: **Field service planning and execution management** should cover all digital interactions around field service; manage, schedule, route, and optimize the field service workforce; and make the best use of partner resources. With a complete mobile solution, field technicians can resolve issues quickly and intelligently upsell, cross-sell, and renew subscriptions. Real-time traffic routing locates service techs in the field and quickly gets them to their next call. This service component also ensures the right parts are in stock at the right locations for rapid issue resolution.
#4: Service inventory and logistics management captures service costs and manages service parts, returns logistics, disposition, and repair depot operations. With this functionality, businesses can easily check part availability and order service parts, all from within a Service Request. They can also manage technician trunk stock to verify the correct parts are always available. What's more, leveraging IoT and AI allows service reps to pivot away from reactive repairs to proactive maintenance.

#5: Digital promotion and order management includes sales and marketing execution to current customers; a digital commerce portal; and CPQ and book solutions support subscriptions, parts, and contracts. Tools in this category save customers, partners, and employees time since they can use digital channels to automate purchases, facilitate repeat orders, check order statuses, initiate returns, and check available inventory. A common order platform captures, configures, prices, and checks availability across all channels and provides a variety of fulfillment options, including direct ship, same-day pickup, same-day delivery to a job site, or pick up from a channel partner. Digital interactive schematic parts diagrams allow customers, partners, and employees to quickly identify needed parts, thereby reducing the number of returns of incorrect orders. Service personnel have more opportunities to upsell and cross-sell by viewing margin, negotiation leeway, packaging options, bundles, and subscriptions.

#6: Billing and payment management identifies billable items, determines warranty coverage offsets, and generates invoices. Organizations reduce errors and days sales outstanding (DSO) by consuming pro-forma invoices from service operations and validating against contracts, warranty, subscription, regulations, revenue recognition guidelines, and tax laws to generate and issue a full commercial invoice. A single platform supports billing processes for a company’s mixed offerings of products, services, and subscriptions. Finally, real-time insights measure the performance of goals and renewal rates.

“We’re not waiting for the customer to call upset with an equipment issue when they’re about to have a party or major event. This is really about being proactive”

— Sr. VP of Sales and Marketing, manufacturer of specialized connectors and electronic components
#2: Full integration across all service-related functions

Customers expect a cohesive experience between products and service, not a series of disjointed interactions across departments. To that end, organizations must break down the walls between the front office and back office and offer service-as-a-continuum across marketing, digital commerce, sales and CPQ, subscription management, service and field service, supply chain, ERP (enterprise resource management), and HCM (human capital management).

This integration allows the sharing of data across systems that supports the convenient and relevant experiences that customers crave.

“Our number one reason for upgrading to Oracle Cloud is to make it easier for our customers to do business with us.”

— Digital Mktg. Mgr., specialty architectural products manufacturer and seller
Supporting a seamlessly integrated, robust service solution is a holistic, end-to-end digital platform that must:

1. Include customer data management (CDM) to collect various customer information elements into universal identifiers, all while retaining the original data sources

2. Be flexible with multiple integration patterns, application, and technical adapters included at no additional cost, highly-available service, and an extensive REST (representational state transfer) interface that configures and manages integrations to a variety of solutions

3. Include process automation to provide businesses with actionable insight and rapid iterations of business process models

4. Have AI and machine learning (ML) embedded in the platform to deliver easy insight, detection, automation, and expert guidance

5. Incorporate IoT functionality to allow organizations to connect, analyze, integrate, and learn directly from their products

6. Offer knowledge management tools that improve self-service capabilities and reduce customer churn by allowing customers and agents to find answers fast

7. Link with a variety of collaboration mechanisms to let stakeholders convene quickly to determine the best solutions
The 4 Cs of Customer Data Management (CDM)

Consolidated, Clean, Complete, and Coordinated

The most effective way to sell is with consistent, shared customer master data. The four elements needed are:

1. Consolidated/centralized data in one location – all accounts, contacts, households, activities, leads, opportunities, quotes, assets, and other customer-related data in one place

2. Clean, accurate data – standardized addresses and automated de-duping of accounts and contacts

3. Complete 1st and 3rd party data – enrich and extend 1st party customer data with 3rd party Dunn & Bradstreet data

4. Coordinated customer 360-degree view – get the most value with a 360-degree customer master across marketing, sales, service, CPQ, commerce, and ERP

“Historically, we operated in many disjointed systems. When we received a service request from a customer, we would spend probably three-fourths of the time trying to understand who the customer was and what products they had. Now we’re able to immediately identify the customer and go into resolution mode. Our customer care is significantly better.”

-CEO, manufacturer of indoor and outdoor scoreboards
A word about AI and machine learning

Oracle Adaptive Intelligent Apps for CX provides, what we like to call, connected intelligence. By applying advanced data science and machine learning to Oracle’s data and a company’s data, the Adaptive Intelligent Apps for CX can react, learn, and adapt (in real time) based on historical and dynamic customer data, such as click-stream and social activity and other inputs, such as weather, look-alike audiences, and Internet of Things (IoT) data. The Adaptive Intelligence Apps for CX helps deliver customized insights that improve with every customer interaction.

For example, in terms of marketing, your organization can now:

1. See when customers received messages (and whether or not they engaged) and use that information to optimize channel and send time
2. Separate most actionable customer data for intelligent messaging that converts
3. Determine the content of emails at the time your customer opens it, allowing you to send more relevant information and build long-lasting relationships
4. Connect the right audiences to campaigns for more personalized experiences

In terms of sales activities, your organization can optimize the selling process by:

1. Following guidance derived from opportunity analysis and account engagement
2. Utilizing Smart Call Points
3. Presenting the right offer and/or taking the next-best sales action—optimized for the individual customer
4. Employ lead scoring and look-alike audience models

For service activities, your customer service team can resolve customer issues faster (and smarter) by:

1. Presenting the next-best service action in the right channel at the right time
2. Delivering predictive product failure, predictive account health, and predictive recommendations
3. Utilizing chatbot (and enhanced mobile, video, and social messaging capabilities) to provide automated answers and interact with customers across a variety of channels

For digital commerce activities, AI-powered capabilities can deliver:

1. Personalized, targeted product and content that is most relevant to the shopper’s immediate needs
2. Smart product recommendations that are based on account data, third-party shopper data, and real-time inputs
3. Intelligent search capabilities that can understand customers and their requirements
4. Cross-channel contextual content
Why choose Oracle for end-to-end service excellence?

Oracle provides an end-to-end service solution that speeds time-to-benefit, reduces risk, and lowers total cost of ownership (TCO).

Reduce time-to-benefit by standardizing end-to-end aftermarket sales, service processes, and customer data; leveraging digital innovations across all channels (IoT, AI/ML, analytic insights, etc.); and offering a modular design that allows for implementation and rollout on your schedule. Business value delivered in phases based on prioritization.

Lessen risk thanks to complete service delivery from a single global platform (encompassing ERP, HCM, CX, and supply chain management [SCM]). This single vendor and common platform model reduces complexity and consolidates data for a single customer source of truth.

Lower TCO since current technology investments and platforms can support future requirements, reducing the cost of integration and data management and simplifying on-going maintenance and update management.

We’re not waiting for the customer to call upset with an equipment issue when they’re about to have a party or major event. This is really about being proactive.

— Home entertainment/audio system manufacturer and wholesaler
Let’s Get Started

Organizations are fighting to stand out—and they’re prioritizing the experience around after-sales service to do so. To create these extraordinary experiences, however, they need an excellent technology platform to help them get there. A digital, end-to-end solution helps address all service issues in a way that’s unified for the brand—and effortless for the customer. The rewards will be loyal brand ambassadors, increased upsell and cross-sell opportunities, and decreased costs through improved efficiencies.

For more information…

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Or, if you’re ready for a demo, request one today.
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