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Making Customer Experience a Red-rose Experience

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The experiences of 2020 and the Covid-19 pandemic have shown that many transactions have gone digital ([in 2020 global digital sales grew 45 percent year over year](#)) and this means rethinking our approach to customer experience.

A [survey by Catalyst](#) showed that businesses lose more than \$75 billion a year from poor customer service. In another [survey, by Uniphore](#), 68 percent of respondents said they would stop patronizing companies with which they had a bad customer experience. With the cost of new customer acquisition being two to 25 times more expensive than customer retention or upselling, good customer care is imperative for a company's bottom line. It is well known that a good customer experience is directly related to the Net Promoter Score (NPS) of a company. A high NPS leads customers to recommend the service to their friends and acquaintances.



To put this in more concrete terms, consider a case where upselling or repeat business is worth \$100, and a new customer is worth \$1,000. For each unhappy customer, you lose at least \$1,100: the upsell to them, and at least one free referral that they would have given.

Enrich the experience

How can you prevent losing that \$1,100? By enriching the customer experience.

You may have heard one of the various variations of the red rose story, a classic in many MBA programs. Here is a brief summary. A woman has a problem and calls in an expert. In some of the versions it is a plumber, in others an exterminator. As she didn't have a recommendation, she searched (yellow pages or Google) and hired the first one she found. The expert comes, solves the problem and leaves their bill. Sometime later the problem returns, but she does not call the original expert, so she goes back and searches—the logic being that one expert is more or less the same as another. The second one comes and does the job, leaves their bill, a red rose and a note thanking her for her business. The story always ends with the question “If she needs help again, whom do you think she will call?”

Now the implication is that the good service combined with the red rose will make sure she remembers the vendor and will use them again. Implicit is that she will be so impressed that she will mention the story to her friends, and this will lead to more business—all for the cost of a \$2 rose. So, to come back to the difference between the initial sale and the benefits of a happy customer: That \$2 rose potentially leads to repeat business and multiple referrals, which cost nothing. And if you don't think that the customer acquisition cost (CAC) is important, then you need to be reading a very different article, one that talks about things like [Net Promoter Scores](#) (NPS) and why they are important.

But assuming that you already understand why customer referrals are invaluable for your business, we can proceed to the question: how can you improve your digital customer experience?

The keys to improving digital CX

Going back to the [Uniphore](#) survey, the researchers found that 50 percent of the respondents fully expected the organization to have some clue as to why they are calling (known as intent detection). So, let's take a walk through two versions of the customer experience to see which will lead to the red rose experience.

Imagine for a minute that it's a beautiful day and you're driving alone down a suburban road singing along with the radio. You pull up to a four-way stop, see you are the only car there, and proceed through the intersection. A car comes speeding out of nowhere and crashes into you. Your car skids sideways, over the curb, and comes to a screeching halt. You step out of the car, shaken but otherwise unharmed, only to see the entire side of your car is smashed in. You look around and see the driver of the other car is also unharmed. As you move to contact your insurance company, how the rest of this story pans out is entirely dependent upon which road or customer experience your insurance company uses. Let's contrast two approaches.

The Road Over-Traveled

Before making another move, you make sure to first write down the other driver's insurance details. You then pull out your cell phone and dial your insurance company. An automated message answers and tells you to dial 1 for insurance claims. You then reach an automated message that tells you to enter your policy number. You do so, wait for verification, and after a

good amount of elevator music, a live agent answers the call. You then have to give the agent your name, your car details, your location, the other driver's details, and explain what had occurred. A tow truck is sent out and you are left waiting, in which time you take any relevant photos of the damage to your car and your surroundings. You email them in and continue to wait for the tow truck.

The Road Less Traveled

Before making another move, you make sure to take a picture of the other driver's insurance information. You open your insurance app and click "I had an accident." Within a few seconds you reach a representative. Your identity and location have already been verified via the app, and the representative has this information. You explain to the representative what happened and then send them the pictures of the other driver's license and the damage, along with any other necessary photos that they need. The agent collects the sensor data log from the car computer, which has been linked to your phone. They can identify the location of the closest tow truck and tell you, "It will be there in 2 hours. I can send you a pizza while you wait, would you like a diet or regular drink with it?"

Which experience would you prefer to have: the longer inquisition, or the shorter, pleasant and knowledgeable interaction? What would your customers prefer?

Now imagine how this could work for a sales prospect rather than a customer. By taking the context of where they came from on your web page (or email campaign) you can know why they are calling, what item they are calling about, what property they want to view, even what advertisement they are responding to. Thus, their experience will be better, perhaps even the "red rose" type of experience. Let's look at how available technology and processes can make the call center experience stand out.

Making it possible

Only in the last few years have browsers been uniformly capable of handling these kinds of situations. First you need to realize that every customer call starts with a reason and a context of why they are calling. This can be because of an advertisement, some content on your website, or an email campaign; something triggered them to want to call either to ask a question or to place an order. How they call will make a big difference in what you can keep of that context, and what you are throwing away. Under traditional methods, you would either try to know who is calling (but not why) based on caller ID tied to a CRM record. If you want to know why a customer or prospect is calling, you need to assign a different phone number to each page, advertisement, campaign or other outreach program. To know both for a prospect, you need to use a large pool of phone numbers, and assign one per prospect.

As you can see, these can be complicated and expensive, and only have limited granularity. This will not satisfy the "why I called" that customers are looking for in their call center experience. For this, you need

a more flexible and powerful solution. One example was described in a recent *Pipeline* article, [Simplifying Click-to-Call](#):

“Web-to-Call provides data and context. Tools such as Google Analytics, Google Tag Manager, and others provide us with robust insight into how customers use our websites. You are able to track and 'paint' customers and visitors to analyze their usage pattern, assign tracking codes to them and optimize their customer experience. By enabling similar functionality for voice calls, you enable new insights into usage. Perhaps most importantly, these new insights enrich your understanding of your sales and help you accelerate them.”

Using such technology as web-to-call helps your agent know why the person is calling even before they have connected, fulfilling the desire of that 50 percent of prospects (or customers) by delivering the experience they expect. The other 50 percent get a better experience than they imagined possible: their desires are known, met, and exceeded. Now imagine how they will respond and how it will improve that NPS score.

There are other advantages to these kinds of calls. The average call involves at least five minutes of context before the agent can understand enough to help. The right technology can reduce the time an agent is on the call asking those context questions, saving around five minutes per call. Each agent can handle more calls per shift, potentially reducing the staff required for a shift. Not only are you saving agent time, but you are also saving cost. At \$1 per agent per minute, this is \$5 saved per agent per call.

Then there is the reduction of costs on toll-free expenses by shifting to high-definition web calls. And the best part is there will be no need to change your existing systems or retrain your staff.

Finding the red rose for your customers

By looking at your existing processes and how prospects find you, how you acquire customers, how you support them post-sales, and how you get follow-on sales, you can give the digital equivalent of that red rose. This is possible while improving your customer experience, increasing NPS scores (and thus referrals), and reducing costs.

Hasn't technology come a long way since creation of the first call center in the 1960s? Imagine all the red-rose experiences now possible in the era of digital CX.