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Simplifying CX Complexity for Revenue Acceleration

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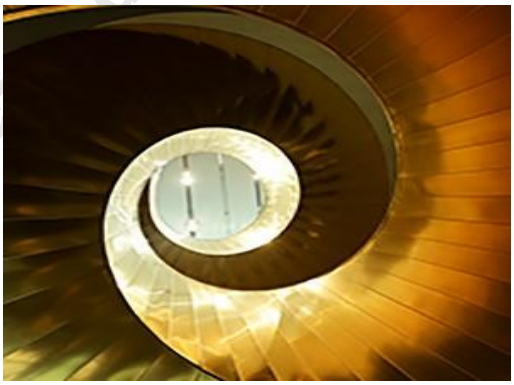

Customer service isn't a new concept, but in the digital age the concept—and perhaps the very definition—of the customer experience has changed dramatically. For starters, the customer has changed. Today, customers are so dependent on connectivity, it's become integral and paramount to living their lives. Even a small service interruption can cost them, and you, dearly. Today's customers also have a multitude of choices. They can churn with a quick Internet search and few clicks in a mobile app, leading to revenue loss. And in some poor CX examples, churn in mass.

To complicate things further, the definition and dynamics of the customer have changed. For those offering CX solutions, the customer is the Communications Service Provider (CSP). Within the CSP, there are multiple internal customers, such as Customer Service, Finance, Sales and Network Operation departments. CSPs also have third-party partners and entire ecosystems that need to be managed, and served. Then CSPs have their end-customers, which can be a combination of residential and enterprise customers. Enterprise customers have their own internal customers and other end customers to serve. This interconnected and multidimensional spiral of customer relationships increases the complexity and raises the stakes significantly, with a singular issue creating a cascading impact to CX.

The challenge CSPs face is that the customer journey has become increasingly complex, with a proliferation of options. Today it's about delivering on what a multitude of providers' end customers want—including enterprise end customers, internal customers, and partners. Gaps in system integration and explosive growth in data volume mean CSPs struggle with a bevy of obstacles, from swivel chair management to managing access to multiple systems, which ultimately decelerates service delivery and slows revenue.

Another key challenge of delivering superior CX is that it involves many different and disparate systems, such as BSS, CPQ, CRM, ERP, OSS, product catalog and more. Add in disparate point solutions within each of these areas, and things get even more complex. Point solutions offer focused functionality, but with lags and gaps in data, analytics, and integration, they don't provide the necessary operational visibility or KPI tracking. Managing, inputting, and analyzing third-party and multi-source data decelerates business opportunities, adds additional complexity, and opens the door to manual errors that create spiraling CX issues.

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To complicate things further, customers don't care about the complexity. Their expectations remain the same. Customers want an easy and enjoyable experience. They want to easily buy the services they want, where and when they want them, and they want them to work well. They want choices and value from you and your partners. If issues arise, they want them quickly, and ideally proactively, addressed and rectified.

Pipeline recently had an opportunity to discuss the current state of CX complexity with CloudSmartz' Chief Marketing Officer Matthew Ray and co-founder and chief technical officer Manjeet Dhariwal. CloudSmartz was the winner of the 2022 *Pipeline* Innovation Awards, in the category of Innovation in Digital Transformation, which was judged by those that use and influence the adoption of innovative technology. We discussed the challenges CSPs face—and the opportunity to accelerate revenue by simplifying CX complexity.

Simplifying CX and Accelerating revenues

Addressing CX complexity requires a different approach—one that considers the multiple dimensions of customers and their experience. CloudSmartz's Acumen360™ Digital Customer Experience platform includes core foundational modules with configurable features that integrate with CSPs' existing environment, data sources, processes, and systems. The platform is built for the rules, roles, and permissions that serve personalized views to various internal customers. By aggregating customer, product, network, service, and system information into a single source of truth, Acumen360 automatically simplifies the inherent complexity of CX—ultimately accelerating the delivery of services, and revenue.

Ray emphasized the transformative visibility enabled by its platform. "Acumen360 creates a single pane of glass and then makes it dimensional. It creates a singular master view providing a single source of truth, from which you can create as many multiple tailored views as you want or need for different roles." This includes the ability to create multiple tailored views for end customers, internal customers, and partners. "It's really unlimited. The information can be sliced and diced in as many ways as possible, all tying back to individual or departmental roles, rules, and permissions." This functionality enables different views for different customers, as well as provides function-specific views for customer service, sales or finance, for example.

Acumen360's flexibility comes from its composable architecture. In 2020, Gartner coined the term "composable business," meaning "creating an organization made from interchangeable building

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blocks." In a dynamic, post-2020 world that demands resilience, composability enables rapid scale and adoption, free from vendor lock-in and the constraints of legacy platforms. CloudSmartz has embraced the concept of composability with a composable architecture designed to conform to existing service provider environments, enabling integration with existing software such as Oracle, Salesforce, Microsoft Dynamics 365, SugarCRM, and others.

"It's all driven through roles, rules, and permissions," Ray emphasized, "which is the biggest thing, as not everyone has access to everything." With the Acumen360 platform, users are able to incorporate workflow components in and between each system and silo, with visibility and statuses that go back up to the overall platform. "The composable architecture takes advantage of the different roles and permissions of each of the systems, and pieces them together into an overall solution."

Because of the built-in flexibility, this composable architecture lowers the cost of integration and accelerates business process automation for CSPs. "We bring everything together, close the gaps in communication between the different systems, and give them visibility," said Dhariwal. "Then we optimize it, so we're able to accelerate their digital transformation, which ultimately allows them to accelerate service delivery and revenue."

Changing the CX data dynamic

Acumen360 also addresses the inherent data challenges of point solutions that have limited, focused, and siloed functionality. Historically, the data contained within them must be aggregated, populated, and shared across the entire organization. Alternatively, consider the benefits of elevating appropriate customer data to a single overarching operational platform that can be use by those closest to the customer—or the customer themselves—and then populate the data back to point solutions.

To illustrate this, when customers order a new product or service, data is populated across all systems and pushed down to the focused point solutions from the master view within Acumen360. This represents a flip in the push-pull relationship of data between point solutions and other systems. Meanwhile, the singular operational platform continues to pull real-time service data from point solutions back into the platform, the master view, and any tailored views that have been created for internal customers. Additionally, Acumen360 enables integration of rich data analytics from third-party sources, such as related to weather-driven events for maintenance for customer communications that might utilize this data—again serving it up to the tailored views specific to roles, rules, or permissions. Simplifying CX complexity also involves streamlining the purchasing process. Delivering superior CX requires providing what customers want, where and when they want it, through services such as chat-enabled quick Configure-Price-Quote (CPQ), which can be enabled by CloudSmartz's AI-powered Acumen CPQ. Acumen CPQ can be leveraged as a standalone product, as well as a module within Acumen360. This functionality can better serve the growing group of external customers who are looking for a native digital experience, with online buying options and a digital marketplace. It can also serve internal customers and CSRs themselves looking for a quick quote without going through the historically complex configuration process. This can enable always-on sales with real-time data to streamline CPQ and provide zero-touch fulfillment. However, the purchasing process is just the first step in the customer journey and experience.

Ray and Dhariwal also touched on the importance of managing service-level agreements in CX. "It's essential that providers continue to ensure that services work, and that they perform to SLA requirements," Ray stressed, "and provide the right visibility when they don't." Acumen360 showcases uptime for SLA management to help service providers monitor and manage their agreements, even across an ever-more complex ecosystem.

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Driving revenue acceleration with CX

Innovation that improves visibility and brings disparate systems together helps service providers gain momentum in digital transformation across functions to speed service delivery and revenue growth—especially through digital marketplaces. CSPs can use digital marketplaces to allow customers to easily browse and order products and services online for 24/7 self-service purchasing. This sales automation can reduce reliance on human CSRs, improving customer satisfaction both through enablement of self-service as well as by focusing customer service on higher-order tasks like problem resolution. CSPs can also create service bundles and packages—including partner offerings—via a digital marketplace, enhancing convenience and customer satisfaction.

Digital marketplaces also open the door to additional opportunities and revenue streams. Integration with third-party companies ranging from device manufacturers to content providers offers customers more value and a wider range of products and services. "We provide the mechanism for providers to build their own partner ecosystems," Ray said, "which represents a huge opportunity to generate and grow new sources of revenue."

The Acumen360 platform also enables other levers to drive efficiency, increase sales, and accelerate revenue. Using data and analytics, service providers can personalize product and service recommendations for their customers, improving marketing campaign performance, increasing customer engagement, and growing revenue. CSPs can also enable self-service options that allow customers to pay their bills and manage their accounts online, enhancing convenience for customers and efficiency for the business by reducing reliance on CSRs to perform such tasks.

Transforming CX

It's one thing to pay lip service to customer service—and another thing entirely to ensure your holistic CX strategy aligns with the changing dynamics of CX and the reality of customer expectations. But it's a real challenge for CSPs, who face increased complexity created by disparate and disconnected systems and the race to realize new revenue opportunities. Accurate visibility, flexibility, and automation within existing environments are key to CSPs' success.

Understanding what customers want isn't the hard part—delivering it is. Empowering customers and those that serve them with the right CX tools is the first step. From there, CSPs can change the data dynamic—opening the door to a wide range of value that accelerates and increases revenue, and simplifies CX complexity.

You can automatically book an exploratory meeting with CloudSmartz through *Pipeline*'s business introduction service, or visit the CloudSmartz website to learn more about how CloudSmartz issimplifying CX complexity to give CSPs more visibility, control, and the competitive edge.

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