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Total Experience Management for Competitive Carriers

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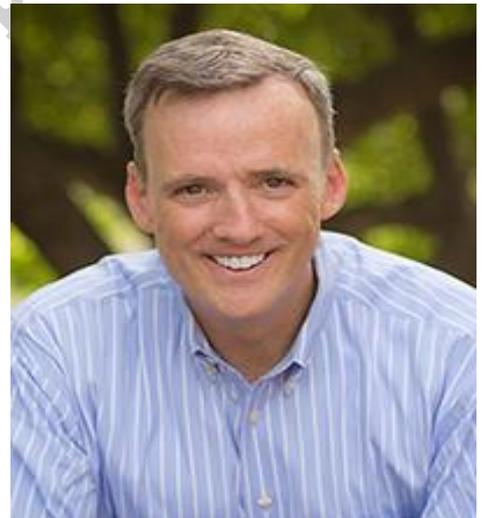
In the rapidly evolving competitive-communications landscape, focus has shifted to a new customer-centric approach. The rise of Customer Experience (CX) has become paramount for the success of competitive carriers, as networks and services have become increasingly commoditized. Serving as a former executive for competitive-carrier companies, and now as the CEO of [GOCare](#), I have witnessed this CX transformation firsthand.

Today, we are also seeing a surge of network investments for broadband expansion fueled by government programs and private equity firms. Incumbent and competitive operators are extending their wireline and wireless networks in many areas to meet the growing demands for high-quality bandwidth.

Carriers are also contending with evolving network technologies comprising a mix of fiber, copper, 5G, and other network technologies just to remain relevant. This network transformation is coming at a time when efficiency is critical, and the customer's digital experience is quickly becoming the last-standing competitive differentiator.

Gone are the days when customers had only one choice of carrier. Today, customers can churn with a few simple swipes on their smartphone screen. At the same time, customers' expectations have changed. Customers now want a rich and personalized Digital Experience (DX) across their preferred methods of communication, for better communication and control, and ideally without engaging directly with a customer care agent.

To remain both relevant and competitive, carriers must deliver an exceptional experience. They need to earn the loyalty of their customers. But carriers must do more than pay lip service to CX and DX, and even go beyond basic customer-experience tools such as web pay, intelligent voice response (IVR), chatbots, and social channels--some of which often deteriorate the customers' experience, negatively impact the business, and degrade operations.



CX and DX channels must work in concert to improve both customers' and employees' experience. This means carriers must consider the Employee Experience (EX), too. By having a unified approach to CX, DX, and EX, carriers can ultimately achieve a superior total experience (TX) that truly sets them apart. But it's difficult and may be impossible to achieve without a unified communications platform.



Creating superior TX with a unified communications platform

Today, digitally native customers expect the same level of convenience and efficiency from their CSP as they experience from Amazon or Netflix. To provide this, competitive carriers must embrace an omni-channel digital experience that allows customers to interact with them seamlessly across multiple channels with digital self-service options, eliminating the need for lengthy interactions with Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) other than for complex issues or questions that can't be automated.

Today's customers desire a seamless experience (regardless of communication channel) providing them with intelligent control including real-time information based on their personal preferences, profile, services, usage, and network details. If customers need to engage with a CSR, the experience should be smooth, seamless, and pleasant. Customer-care representatives need to have full visibility into the customer's issues and the right tools and accurate information to achieve first-contact resolution. To deliver on this commitment, GOCare does not replace or eliminate any systems. Rather, we integrate with our clients' many back office vendors to leverage the investment in, and power of, those systems so our clients (and their customers) realize the best possible experience possible. At GOCare, we recognized the need for an integrated, easy-to-manage unified platform to empower CSRs to deliver superior and seamless customer service. Our unified experience platform aggregates information from various systems, including network management, billing, CRM, and payments, into a single unified communications platform. This unified platform ensures real-time updates and provides a single source of truth for CSRs and other customer-facing workers. It gives them access to crucial details like outage status, upcoming appointments, and billing information, eliminating the need for customers to repeat their stories to multiple agents or endure frustrating, failed transfers.

We are keenly aware of how difficult it is to get TX right. We've taken our decades of competitive-carrier experience and incorporated it throughout our platform. Our unified experience platform has been specifically designed to address key carrier pain points, and our success-based engagement model links our customer success to our own. We're delighted to have helped our customers reduce calls by up to 50 percent, missed appointments by up to 75 percent, and time to payment by up to 60 percent—all while improving efficiency, increasing productivity, automating routine customer requests, and improving the effectiveness of customer communications. And we couldn't have done it without decades of experience as operators ourselves and focus on customer experience.

Good CX plus EX equals TX

Happy employees make for happy customers. You can't truly create a great customer experience without a great employee experience. When embarking on a CX initiative, employees need to be considered key constituents. According to [Gartner's estimations](#), organizations that prioritize providing a superior total experience—encompassing both CX and EX—will outperform their competitors by 25 percent in satisfaction metrics for both customer experience and employee experience by 2024.

Automating repetitive tasks to reduce high-volume, low-value customer inquiries is key when providing a superior customer and employee experience. We've found that proactive text messaging that incorporates intelligent automation is one area that can improve both the customer and employee experience. Customers prefer personalized, direct communications that provide automated options for common requests. This also alleviates burdensome calls for CSRs, so they can better serve customers with more complex requests.

For example, if a subscriber texts the keyword “BAL,” our system will instantly check the billing system and respond with relevant information, such as the amount due and the payment deadline. They can then choose to automatically pay their bill using our payment integration from within the text options. Similarly, keywords like “outage,” “appointment,” “paperless,” or “WI-FI” trigger automated responses tailored to specific inquiries with specific automated actions. GOCare works with clients to automate other repetitive tasks to provide customers the flexibility and control they desire and increase employee satisfaction by simultaneously reducing call volumes. This improves the experience for both employees and customers alike.

Proactive and personalized text messaging also plays a crucial role in proactive customer communication, especially during service disruptions. Customers want to be informed by their carriers when issues arise, and they value transparency. Email is less effective if individuals only receive them when they open their laptops. Broadcasting network outage notifications on public platforms like Twitter can be counterproductive and have dire brand consequences. Instead, sending targeted proactive texts ensures that customers receive critical updates, and notifications are only sent to those accounts affected by the outage. By differentiating between public CX and personalized CX, carriers can maintain transparency while safeguarding their brand reputation. It also reduces customer service calls, viral social media outlash, and it diminishes the opportunity for competitors to poach customers resulting from the service disruption.

Developing a complete TX strategy is integral to providing superior CX and EX. And, implementing proactive customer communications, taking a personal approach to CX, empowering customer care with the right tools, and automating repetitive tasks improves customer interactions, streamlines operations, and improves the employee experience at the same time.

Reaping the results of TX

In the competitive landscape of communication services, delivering great digital experiences comes with significant benefits for competitive carriers. These include:

Reducing high-volume, low-value customer calls

One of the immediate benefits of a unified experience platform is the reduction in high-volume, low-value calls. These calls make up 30 percent to 50 percent of all customer-care calls. Most of these calls can be eliminated, leading to improved operating metrics and relief to agents. This also frees up human capital, creates greater scalability, and improves profitability without the need to add resources.

Reducing high-volume, low-value calls with proactive customer communications can also play a crucial role in retaining customers. For example, when promotional pricing ends, customers can experience “bill shock,” resulting in a spike in inquiries, complaints, and churn. GOCare’s solution enables service providers to send proactive notifications to customers, informing them about the upcoming rate changes and the details that will be reflected on their next invoice. By proactively addressing these concerns, call volumes can be significantly reduced, improving overall customer satisfaction, and reducing customer churn due to unexpected rate increases. In one case, we saw this churn drop by more than 60 percent—a direct result of precise and proactive customer communication.

Reducing missed customer appointments

Missed customer appointments are costly for competitive carriers considering the expenses involved, such as hourly wages for technicians and the resources required for truck rolls. On average, seven percent of customers need truck rolls, and as many as 10 percent miss their scheduled appointment. This means competitive carriers lose over \$1M per million customers due to missed appointments. We’ve been able to significantly reduce this by leveraging two-way SMS communications with intelligent automation. It allows carriers to remind customers of upcoming appointments, and enables customers to reschedule appointments automatically, minimizing missed appointments and the associated losses. With two-way SMS, we’ve seen our customers cut their missed customer appointments by 75 percent—saving them nearly \$800,000 per million customers each year. That’s a significant benefit to the bottom line.

Unifying Customer Communications

Customers’ preference for digital channels (webchat, SMS, social media, and email) is growing dramatically. When these channels work together seamlessly, like in a GOCare environment, customers embrace them. Clients have seen adoption of these channels grow from under 10% of customer contacts to around 50%. Handling-time is significantly lower on digital channels than calling—further enhancing efficiencies. Customers are happier being met over the channel of their choosing, record-keeping is improved, and agents are happier.

Streamlining customer payments

Another area where we provide added value through our unified experience platform is by enabling secure and convenient payment options. With GOCare’s pay-by-text solution, customers can easily make payments by texting a specific keyword. This eliminates the need

for CSRs to handle credit card information directly and allows customers to make payments at their convenience without rushing to a physical location or engaging in lengthy phone interactions. This streamlined payment process has shown remarkable results, with customers paying their bills much faster than before. In one scenario we saw the time for payment decrease from over 30 days to as little as nine days. This was a direct result of combining precise and clear customer communication with the power of a unified platform for automated and omnichannel customer payments.

Shrinking high-volume, low-value calls; reducing missed customer appointments; and shortening time to revenue with automated omnichannel payment options are just a few examples of the benefits a unified platform can provide competitive carriers.

Unlocking TX for competitive carriers

Providing exceptional digital customer experiences is imperative for competitive carriers to enhance brand equity, remain competitive, and stay relevant. By leveraging a unified communications platform, CSPs can reduce unnecessary call volumes, streamline operations, and establish stronger relationships with both their customers and employees. However, historically sophisticated CX functionality was reserved for only those that could afford it.

Our deep carrier experience and success-based pricing model ensures that competitive carriers of any size have access to best-in-class CX functionality. We've done this to ensure carriers of all sizes can create an exceptional TX for their customers and employees. By leveraging existing investments and integrating their existing systems into a unified experience platform, carriers can scale faster, accelerate CX initiatives, do more with their existing resources, and effectively compete with larger incumbents by outmaneuvering them on an increasingly competitive landscape.