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## Letter from the Editor

By: [Scott St. John - Pipeline](#)

There are those companies that give tremendous thought and lip service to what they do, and then there are others that focus on how to better serve their customers. The latter values its customers and the experience they have with them. The former, not so much. In the end the customer experience (CX) is nothing more than the relationship businesses have with their customers, and there is a direct correlation between how valued the customer feels, and how much customers value the company and the services it provides. And like all relationships, it takes work.



Customers are the heart of every business. Without customers, businesses die. Yet, all too often companies pawn off their precious customer relationships to lowest-cost, third-party, or self-service channels. Or they fill customer service roles with underqualified, ill-equipped, rude or obtuse people. Or they rush to adopt the latest and greatest customer care technology, as if that will somehow be able to demonstrate to its customers how much the company truly values them. Seems a bit ironic, and trusting the heart of your business to any of the above can prove to be a fatal mistake.

Take a moment, and just think about it from a human-relationship perspective. If someone close to you - for whom you cared, loved and valued tremendously - needed you urgently, would you give them no other option than to call through an Intelligent Voice Response (IVR) system, where their call is likely to be dropped, they must authenticate multiple times, and talk to three people in two different countries before they reach you? And that's if they can reach you at all. Would you direct them to a web page or customer resource center, where they can try to figure it out on their own? I don't think you would. But some of [the world's largest companies do this](#) to their customers every day without giving it a second thought.

I recently had the opportunity to discuss this topic with Vinod Muthukrishnan, VP & COO of Cisco's Webex Customer Experience Solutions. He's a sharp guy and he gets it, and what's more is Cisco seems to get it too.

“The best call center experience you have ever had is the one you never needed,” Muthukrishnan said. “The question is, how can businesses use predictive, proactive, and intelligent engagements to prevent the need to come to you in the first place?” He went on to say, “technologies, such as AI, shouldn’t be a hammer looking for a nail - but should be applied to where they have the greatest, tangible impact to the customer experience to achieve the desired business outcome.”

He continued by saying that technology can be used for things that fall outside of human capabilities, such as providing 24/7 support, and in areas where businesses can scale to both better serve customers *and* reduce costs. “There are 100 things you can do to improve your customer experience, but 90 of them will break the bank,” he went on to add. “The key is understanding which areas will have the greatest impact, then it’s just a question of which technology will best address them in the most profitable, value-accretive, and productive way.”

When technologies are properly applied to the customer experience, it’s a transformative shift. The transformation begins by prioritizing specific pain points within the customer experience, with better empowered people and technology. That, however, begins with an intimate understanding of your customers, on an individual and collective level. And, if you have tens of thousands or millions of customers, that’s no easy task. And that’s what makes this edition of *Pipeline* so important.

In this issue of *Pipeline*, we explore the evolution of the digital customer experience (DX/CX). In a special showcase article featuring Etiya, we examine how [AI and customer digital twins are taking personalized CX to the next level](#). ServiceNow provides a [roadmap for achieving tangible CX results with Generative AI \(GenAI\)](#). NICE suggests that [AI-powered experiences may be the key to future growth and relevance](#) for CSPs. Carol Borghesi challenges conventional thinking with an [analysis of the shifting CX/DX landscape](#). TransUnion examines the [balance between price and protection](#), predicting a new era of value differentiation in telecom. Tollring reveals how CSPs can [harness analytics for unified communications to revolutionize the customer experience](#). Nokia looks at [how 5G and AI are being used to transform public safety](#). Optiva highlights [how digital-first MVNOs are harnessing AI to transform CX](#). And iconectiv explains [how Rich Business Messaging \(RBM\) can be used to boost sales and foster brand loyalty](#). Finally Dr. Mark Cummings rounds off the issue with an in-depth feature on [the agentic AI user experience](#), to ensure GenAI only does what it’s supposed to do. Plus, we bring you the [latest news across the communication and technology industry](#) and [more](#).

We hope you enjoy this and every issue of *Pipeline*.

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