The Big Data Experience and Next-generation Care

By Nibha Aggarwal

If there ever was an industry that epitomizes the term ‘big data’ both in scale and potential, communications would be it. Service providers sit on massive amounts of data by nature of the business. The potential to turn this data into an economic asset that will allow the business to operate more efficiently, and serve and sell to customers more effectively, is particularly huge. It presents an opportunity for service providers to understand each customer as an individual, pre-empt or mitigate their care needs, and identify the most beneficial moments of truth to offer new products and services.

Pre-emptively addressing care needs, in particular, is a great example for the potential of the big data experience. By mitigating a care interaction, the service provider either provides a more efficient interaction at less cost, or hopefully eliminates the need for the interaction and its associated cost altogether. But beyond this, and arguably even more importantly, the service provider delivered a better customer experience. It’s the better experience that ultimately correlates to the loyalty and revenue generated by that subscriber.

The importance of proactive care is highlighted in a global survey of communication service subscribers sponsored by Amdocs and conducted by Coleman Parkes research. Unsurprisingly, subscribers have high expectations of their service provider, which includes a flawless device and service experience. If subscribers experience any issue using their device or service, their satisfaction drops immediately. Once satisfaction drops, their likelihood to recommend their service provider to family and friends (Net Promoter Score), and willingness to purchase more, drops correspondingly. As it is not realistic to eliminate the occurrence of service and device issues altogether, the Amdocs survey instead asked consumers how proactive care and corresponding notifications would impact the subscriber’s opinion and satisfaction with their service provider. Despite the fact that the subscriber had an issue to start with, if their service provider was proactive in flagging the issue and directing them to resolution, this would help the situation considerably. Even better, if the service provider was able to identify and fix the issue before the customer was even aware of it, they would score high marks, and in fact could even boost that subscriber’s Net Promoter Score.

To execute proactive experiences, service providers must tap into the trove of data that constitutes and maps the customer journey. This requires real-time analysis of a subscriber’s assigned products, services, location, usage, billing, interaction history, social media posts, channel preferences, and the list can go on. But unleashing the power of big data analytics is inconsequential unless that analysis can output and execute intelligent conclusions that are actionable. So what does this look like in the real world?

Amdocs launched a solution in this space to address this very issue. The Amdocs Proactive Care solution processes real-time data from several data sources, applies sophisticated intelligence and decisioning to identify occurrence and likelihood of issues, and then executes context-specific actions to address these issues. Amdocs Proactive Care does three things for an end-to-end process:

• First, it monitors events over the entire customer lifecycle, or journey, to create full customer context. These are events such as account, billing, payments, orders, activations, interactions, etc. It transforms the data, and stores the historical and current information. In addition, the solution continuously monitors events generated by Billing and CRM systems, and other sources, to understand the changes in customer context.

• Second, the solution uses the customer context, trends, and customer behavior to determine the status and characteristics of each individual customer. It then predicts the likely reasons for a customer to call or take actions to anticipate customer issues in real time. Based on this data, the solution identifies the root cause of that problem, and creates the best action
plan for the customer. Based on service provider's policy and business rules, the action is different for each customer.

- **Third, it addresses the issue in real time to proactively execute the next best action.** Once a recommended action is determined, the notification framework is used to execute outbound actions for proactive resolution of issues. In some situations, the action is to pre-emptively fix the issue proactively, to eliminate or shed the potential call – even before the customer is aware of the problem. In some other situations, the action could be to deflect the potential call to lower cost channels to resolve the issue. In situations when the customer does call, the solution proactively routes the call to the right agent. It also guides the agent by performing customer background research, finding root cause of the issue, and directing the agent to resolve the issue.

Amdocs provides a (true) scenario to articulate how their product manifests in the customer experience to improve satisfaction and willingness to purchase more. The example involves Ryan, a subscriber who recently changed jobs. Ryan’s new position has him working from home, which wasn’t the case with his previous employer. Ryan has started to use his mobile to connect to conference calls from his home office. Ryan has a mobile plan for 1,000 voice minutes per month, but using his mobile more now than ever, he reached 70% plan usage before the mid-point of his billing cycle. When he gets his bill he is shocked to see that with overage charges, his monthly bill had nearly doubled. Disgruntled, Ryan calls his service provider to complain and dispute his responsibility for the dramatic overages. The experience has incentivized Ryan to check plans with competing providers, to accommodate his additional use and mitigate its costs.

With Amdocs Proactive Care, the system would have noted the increase in his usage and identified that it was due to a dramatic increase in mobile to landline minutes specifically. The system would further understand the appropriate course of action is to notify him of the risk he will go over his plan minutes and provide him to an offer of $15 per month for unlimited mobile to landline calling. The Amdocs solution would have notified Ryan the first week that his usage trajectory had spiked, and by understanding the root cause of the spike (sudden increase in mobile to landline calling to a specific number, his conference call bridge), would have offered him the unlimited mobile to landline calling plan for $15 per month. Moreover, the offer would arrive by email, which is his communication channel of choice.

By monitoring data sources to understand the customer lifecycle and processing dynamic customer context in real-time with the application of decisioning capabilities, service providers have the ability to change the moments of truth in the customer journey they provide. By doing so, Ryan’s service provider could have avoided embittering a customer and the cost of fielding his call. Furthermore, instead of attempting to remedy the situation with a discount, the service provider missed the opportunity to upsell the mobile to landline calling add-on. Ryan’s service provider did offer the add-on when he called to complain, but unfortunately Ryan was not interested in entertaining the offer until he looked more closely at plans with competing providers.

Amdocs Proactive Care solution demonstrates the ability to compile meaningful insights from existing data, apply customer-specific context, and derive an appropriate and individualized course of action – all without human intervention. The potential this holds for better managing operational costs, while preserving the integrity and trust that is required for customer loyalty, is the next generation of care made possible by harnessing the power the Big Data.