



Why data is key to enhancing the customer experience

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Most businesses, organisations, and governments are sitting on an abundance of untapped potential – their data. It's no secret that the management and utilisation of large amounts of, often siloed, data is a Herculean job.

The pandemic illustrated the value of data and the far-reaching insights it could bring – from comparing international Covid infection rates, to gauging employee wellbeing during home working – and organisations have seen a step change in the demand for data to drive business decision-making. Organisations understand better than ever the need to get their data under control, and how it can help them overcome their challenges in the long-term.

As part of these ongoing data projects however, it's vital businesses don't overlook the importance of data in improving customer experience, especially as customer expectations are continuing to transform. In fact, improving the delivery of customer services has recently been named a top priority for contact centres going forward, with [98%](#) of operators planning on transforming their operations in the next 24 months.

Data is key for organisations needing to undergo a transformation in customer service delivery. It can provide valuable insight into customer needs, motivations and behaviours, to help inform agile strategies designed to meet ever-changing customer demands.

Collating and analysing data

Understanding what your customer wants is the first step towards improving the customer experience. Data can offer valuable insight into customer concerns and wider industry trends as a starting point, which can be utilised to inform long-term strategies with the customer at the heart.

This data can be collected from a variety of both qualitative and quantitative sources – including customer surveys, market reports, and internal data analytics. Collecting information from a wide range of sources allows organisations to gather a wide range of feedback and get a greater understanding of what their customers want, enhancing their ability to respond to customer needs and requests in the right way.

However, it's not only important to collect data from a diverse range of sources, but to also dedicate time to analysing and understanding the information you collect. Doing so can help provide a richer picture of customer activity and identify wider trends in behaviour, as well as any areas for improvement.

Ensuring data accessibility

While collecting and analysing data is valuable, it's a self-defeating task unless this information can be shared and accessed by appropriate individuals across an organisation; keeping information and insight siloed brings little benefit to a business. To ensure this accessibility, the right tools and technology are key. For example, storing data in a single platform with simple user interfaces and tools makes it available to those who need it, while avoiding the formation of data silos, which slow down analysis and can introduce duplication, inconsistencies and errors.

It's obviously crucial to ensure that information collected is stored securely and protected, especially if the data is sensitive or confidential, through using encryption tools and secure software platforms, and ensuring data protection policies are in place and adhered to. The challenge of making data accessible and usable, without compromising security and data protection, is vital to every organisation.

Presenting and visualising data in the right way

Data can be visualised in variety of ways, but the most effective visuals are often the simplest and most straightforward. Too much data, presented in a way which is too complex will not only turn employees off looking at it, but make understanding the data a challenge.

One of the earliest examples of great data visualisation is Joseph Pierre Minard's 'Map of Napoleon's invasion of Russia 1812-13'. It displays six types of data in two dimensions, including the size of Napoleon's army, the extent of its expedition, and other geographical variables which had a significant impact on the overall outcome for Napoleon's forces. This not only shows how large volumes of data can be analysed, deconstructed and displayed in a manner that is intuitive and straightforward, but how presenting data in the right way can really make a difference to perception, decision and action.

Final thoughts

With many organisations expected to prioritise the delivery of customer experience in the weeks and months ahead, devising a successful long-term improvement strategy can seem daunting. While data may not be the only solution to improve the delivery of customer experience, it is the key for organisations to better understanding customer needs, behaviours, and motivations – helping to inform the future strategies and putting customer at their heart.