For organizations of all sizes across all verticals, “customer experience” is at the center of every business strategy. Research clearly shows that customers are willing to pay more for a great experience and consider it an important part of the purchasing process. Yet the experience of the customer is dependent on many things—particularly, the experience of the employee.

Why? Even in an increasingly digital, automated world, human interactions are still an essential part of the overall customer experience. Ensuring employees are best enabled to deliver those interactions effectively is as critical as the customer experience itself.

This has ushered enterprises into a new era of experiences; one that encompasses not only the experience consumers have in the marketplace while transacting and interacting with organizations, but also the experience employees have in the workplace where they work to serve customers in these marketplaces.

These experiences represent the best of both humans and technology: real people interacting with and across the organization in a personalized, connected and intuitive way, enabled and augmented by advanced technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning and automation that drive better, faster collaboration, information sharing and decision making. The right technology, implemented in the right way, creates intelligent experiences that matter for customers and employees while driving measurable increases in revenue and decreases in operational costs.

Avaya’s approach to enabling intelligent experiences for customers and employees is built on three key concepts:

- Channel independence facilitates natural connections
- Enterprises serve customers, not “just” contact centers
- Real-time insight, not data, drives right actions
1. Channel independence facilitates natural connection

The customer experience is something that should just “happen.” Consumers don’t need to know how or why, other than that they are getting the service they need anywhere, anytime on any device with interactions occurring the way they want them to. As omni-channel adoption continues to grow, consumers should be able to seamlessly move between traditional and digital channels; the channels themselves being virtually irrelevant so long as they are best suited for the user at the right moment. The conversation, the connection, the experience…it all should just flow.

Similarly, employees shouldn’t have to think twice about how they’re able to access information to assist those customers or bring a professional from outside the contact center into the conversation. Whether a task or workflow is manual or automated, all that matters is that it’s fitting to that employee at the right moment to drive the best outcome.

A great example of this is delivered through the Avaya Agent Scripting solution, which provides agents with on-screen, step-by-step guidance for navigating customer interactions using an intelligent interaction flow scripting capability that defines contact flows for both inbound and outbound interactions. In this way, agents are guided and empowered to handle interactions, from collecting customer information to determining the next step in the interaction. This is particularly important, with recent research from Nemertes showing that 74% of companies are expected to have live agents handling only complex or specialized interactions by 2025 (compared to 58% of companies today).

The result: faster, better and easier service for customers; improvements in compliance and cost-efficiency for organizations; and higher satisfaction and engagement for employees.

2. Enterprises Serve Customers, Not “Just” Contact Centers

The contact center is the hub for human connection in today’s increasingly digital, e-commerce-based environment, but the customer experience doesn’t start and end in the contact center. It extends the entire organization: beyond the contact center, to and through the back office, across all departments and lines of business.

Looking at the back office, a 2017 global research study from Verint found that there are 2.5 to 3 times more employees in this area of business compared to the contact center. Yet in many cases, the back office is operated and managed separate from the front office, including the contact center.

This lack of alignment causes significant issues that affect the experiences of both customers and employees. For example, Verint’s research shows that delays and errors in the back office are the second biggest influencer of customer dissatisfaction, and only 20% of back offices receive automated alerts when service goals are at risk. This kind of communications disruption not only impacts customers receiving timely delivery, but also the well-being of contact center staff. It’s for reasons like this that 56% of successful companies are integrating contact center with unified communications, compared to 37% of all others, according to Nemertes.
A great example of how this can be addressed is through the Avaya Teamspace widget, which provides an open, rich media chat messaging capability that enables faster, easier, real-time communication and collaboration between customer service agents, consumers, and back office functions. The solution ensures the right resources, regardless of where they are in the organization, are engaged to address customer queries quickly and effectively. Agents get automatic access to a list of contextually relevant experts, including their availability via real-time presence, being able to seamlessly bring them into customer interactions as needed.

The main benefit: more productive and engaged employees across the customer journey—beyond the contact center—to directly impact first contact resolution and improve customer satisfaction.

3. Real-time Insight (Not Data) Drives Right Actions

There’s a difference between mindlessly collecting data and mindfully using it to create real impact.

There is a fundamental gap in organizations’ understanding of the importance of their customer data versus their ability to successfully leverage it. For example, a recent Harvard Business Review article cited that although 83% of organizations rate the ability to translate data into actionable insight at the right time is important, only 22% believe they are doing so successfully today. Similarly, although 80% believe data accessibility (right data to right people at right time) is important, only 21% believe they are doing it successfully today. When looking at AI (the core driver of the above-mentioned applications), 22% of companies say they are hurt by the technology because their data set is inaccurate or not useful.

What’s needed is better visibility, in real-time, into the insights from all available information to improve the customer and employee experience.

A great example of how this can be addressed is through Avaya IX Insights: an open, modular extensible dashboard that delivers rich business insights in real-time from multiple data sources (in and outside of the enterprise). This dashboard is enabled through a single, unified, browser-based interface to drive faster intelligence, decision-making and experiences across the enterprise. For example, Avaya IX Insights enables users to easily view campaign performance through deeper insight into components like campaign revenue achieved to date, conversion rate, and scheduled callbacks, as well as the ability to identify “champion agents” and those who are underperforming. In so doing, this enables organizations to seamlessly develop agent and campaign best practices to drive the best possible outcomes.

The results: faster and smarter resolution to customer impacting issues and/or complaints; faster and easier access to critical business insights for better decision-making and results; and more effective use of all resources across the organization.
How to Make it Happen: Next Steps

Avaya brings to market a collection of capabilities that enable intelligent experiences for customers and employees across the entire enterprise: beyond the contact center across all areas of business including lines of business and customer experience management. These capabilities—individually and combined—enable intelligent experiences by supporting the above three concepts: natural connection; enterprises serve customers, not “just” contact centers; and real-time insight, not data, drives right actions.

In doing so, these solutions address the challenges organizations face every day: reducing (and with the goal of eliminating) poor customer and employee experience, minimizing poor brand image, and managing high operational costs.

About the Author

Natalie Keightley is the Solutions Marketing Director in Avaya International, located in Europe. She has a deep knowledge of trends and enablers in the customer service industry and is passionate about how technology can help enable better experiences for customers and employees alike.

About Avaya

Businesses are built on the experiences they provide and every day millions of those experiences are built by Avaya (NYSE:AVYA). For over one hundred years, we’ve enabled organizations around the globe to win—by creating intelligent communications experiences for customers and employees. Avaya builds open, converged and innovative solutions to enhance and simplify communications and collaboration—in the cloud, on premise, or a hybrid of both. To grow your business, we’re committed to innovation, partnership, and a relentless focus on what’s next. We’re the technology company you trust to help you deliver Experiences that Matter. Visit us at www.avaya.com.

Sources:

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At the end of the day, every experience matters: those of your customers, employees, partners, ...everyone. And in many ways, the communications and collaboration technology they use to deliver that experience matters more.