



## White Paper

# Building Blocks of Next-Generation Customer Experience

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## Executive Summary

As competition increases in the telco landscape, communication service providers realize they must change their business model in order to retain customers and increase revenue. We see a shift in service providers' priority where the focus now is primarily on the customer, which means improving the overall customer experience by making it easier for the customer and adding more value to their lives. With the proliferation of smart devices, today's subscribers are more demanding than ever as they want service anytime, anywhere and how they want it, as well as quality of service (QoS). Not only do subscribers want QoS, but they also want personalization as they expect operators to know their personal preferences so they may receive more pertinent offers and improved customer experience. In a nutshell, service providers are demanding a next-generation customer experience layer that enables them to be personal, preemptive and proactive.

But this is easier said than done as service providers are still grappling with many pain points that prevent them from providing an optimal customer experience. Some examples are costly transformation in other areas that prevent them from focusing on customer experience, old swivel-chair methods across many desktops and multi-product catalog and ordering systems. However, one of the biggest pain points is that business/operation support service (BSS/OSS) stacks do not sufficiently address the core gap in customer experience. Dated BSS/OSS legacy systems have disparate silos of customer data that prevent an end-to-end view of the customer. These systems are also not dynamic or agile enough to handle new and future services; in the end, that will take a toll on service agreements and ultimately be detrimental to the overall customer experience.

A customer experience engagement layer allows a complete view and channel management across a subscriber's lifecycle and addresses the core gap in customer experience by improving the overall customer experience, as well as the front-office employee experience. This layer also sits on top of, and complements, the BSS/OSS layer, which does not address these customer experience issues. Every operator has a customer experience engagement layer, but, in this optimal scenario, the layer must be adaptive, flexible, scalable, open and have multi-channel and multi-device capabilities.

With the right building blocks for a next-generation customer experience engagement layer, operators will be able to optimally serve their customers. The layer should be able to continuously collect, aggregate and serve as a resolution point for issues provided by other platforms. It should also have advanced analytics that will enable operators to have a more contextual insight of customers. And a next-generation customer experience engagement layer should be able to provide proactive notification and preventive care, streamline data management, have a single active knowledgebase and have social channel insight to give operators control over their online branding. Additionally, the layer should also have processes that allow for a more efficient experience for both the service provider's employees, as well as its customers, by enabling employee collaboration, a seamless channel experience, mobile self-care applications and create a streamlined agent console and a customer community.

## Rising Customer Experience Expectations

Today's subscribers are more demanding as the proliferation of devices such as smartphones, tablets, Internet-enabled TVs and gaming devices have created a climate in which subscribers want service anytime, anywhere and how they want it, as well as QoS. Subscribers want not only service availability and quality, but also continuity and access across all their devices, as well as a superior customer experience across all channels, from the call center to the retail store to the website.

The epicenter of a holistic customer experience strategy will depend on intelligent and insightful integration of a variety of customer-related data sources. In a world where more and more customers interact and talk about their experiences and issues online, online brand management has become big business. Operators that ignore what customers say about them in unstructured environments risk swift and widespread brand damage. Operators today have no choice but to take actionable insight and better serve their customers, and ultimately convert them into brand advocates, resulting in increased Net Promoter Score (NPS).

NPS has been gaining traction for measuring brand loyalty and advocacy among service providers. The concept of NPS is used to ascertain how customers feel about the services they are receiving from a brand in a bid to turn potential detractors into promoters and brand advocates. From an industry benchmark standpoint, NPS ranking of communications industry is much lower than other industry verticals, which clearly indicates that service providers have much work to do in order to convert their customer into their brand advocates.

NPS is becoming an important metric for measuring customer experience by most service providers, and many CMOs are being measured internally with respect to their organization's NPS. First contact resolution and brand awareness continue to be critical key performance indicators (KPIs) used by service providers to measure customer satisfaction. Service providers are also looking at channel transaction value, channel gross margin, channel sales conversion and customer channel shopping frequency, etc., metrics as crucial KPIs for measuring cross-channel customer experience.

**Figure 1** shows the results of a survey of 60 global operators who were asked to prioritize their customer experience KPIs. As the figure shows, 85 percent of the respondents made customer experience their top priority. It is interesting to note that other customer centric metrics such as NPS (65 percent) and cross-channel customer experience (73 percent) are also gaining importance in the eyes of the service providers. These are all a clear indication that operators are shifting their priorities and focusing on providing a superior customer experience.

With this notion of superior customer experience comes that of personalization. Subscribers expect operators to know them as a person and be able to understand their needs in terms of their household's devices, data plans and what services may or may not interest them. They expect their service provider to give them offers that are relevant to their needs and preferences in terms of what kind of content they stream, what types of games they prefer and what type of data plans they need to support all their interests.

This means that subscribers want operators to be more intuitive and able to meet and predict their needs. If an operator can meet the demands of today's subscribers, it will be able to retain them and ideally increase ARPU through its more targeted up- and cross-sell offers and personalized care. In addition to personal-

ized service, subscribers also want to be rewarded for their patronage, and that is where loyalty points serves as a win-win for both the subscriber and operator. Service providers obviously need to obey the code of conduct that the FCC has mandated in context of Customer Proprietary Network Information (CPNI). Though use of that information without customer permission is prohibited by FCC, aggregated customer information can be utilized by service providers for their marketing and customer retention purposes.

**Figure 1: Customer Experience KPIs**



Source: Heavy Reading

Self-service or being able to set one's own parameters is another capability that subscribers are looking to. The feeling of having more control, as well as transparent visibility into their account, helps subscribers stay loyal to their provider. With self-service comes the rising importance of self-service mobile applications as subscribers want to be able to access their account from any device at any time. In the end, today's subscriber has more devices and services at their fingertips, and they want quality, consistency, transparency and rewards. In order to stay competitive, operators will have to meet all of these needs.

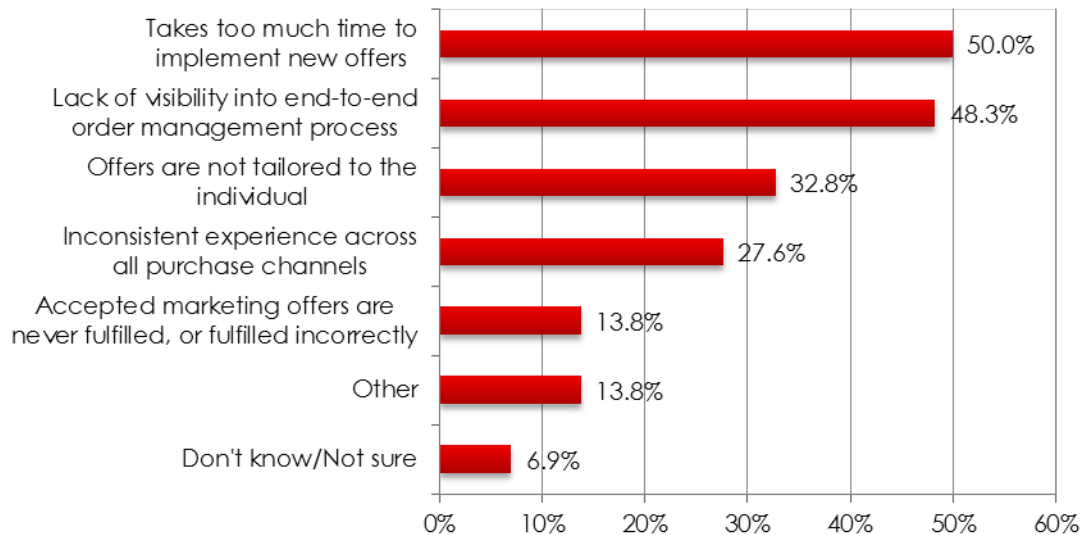
## Operators' Customer Experience Pain Points

Enhancing customer experience is a major corporate-wide initiative for most operators. When every operator has similar networks and services, they can only separate themselves from the pack based on how well they can manage their networks and services – especially if excellent management translates into a superior experience for their customers. Many operators' initiatives that we witness are centered around 4G rollout, personalized service launches, innovative bundled strategy, customer loyalty programs, etc.

The success of a company in delivering a superior customer experience depends on their ability to align their business processes across multiple internal operational silos and collaborate with multiple enterprises, from content providers to supply chain partners to selling partners. There is no longer a linear relationship between companies and customers: it is now in a complex ecosystem with changing and evolving relationships. Leading service providers continue to make smart investments in the capabilities that enable them to gain significant advantage over their competitors in the areas of marketing, selling and fulfilling configurable and/or complex products and services.

Despite their good intentions to focus more on a superior customer experience, operators are still encountering many pain points that prevent them from doing so. For example, **Figure 2**, which is based on a 2013 *Heavy Reading* survey result of 55 unique global service providers, illustrates the primary hurdles that are inhibiting service providers from offering and fulfilling more personalized service bundles to its customers.

**Figure 2: What are the main hurdles for your company to be able to offer and fulfill product and service bundles that are unique to each customer's needs?**



Source: *Heavy Reading*

In this survey, operators cited pain points such as lack of visibility into end-to-end order management process, offers that are not tailored to the individual, incon-

sistent experience across all purchase channels and accepted marketing offers that are never fulfilled or fulfilled incorrectly.

As clearly indicated by the survey results, the reason why operators are having so many pain points is that they must deal with present-day and future services that are more dynamic, with different types of connections, from a wider range of devices and applications. Hence, it is crucial that operators bridge the gap between their customer experience needs and their BSS/OSS capabilities, especially since future business models are not yet clearly defined, and the flexibility to adapt as quickly as they emerge will be critical to remain competitive. In that environment, operators' OSS/BSS will have to be agile so the operators can embrace new business strategies rapidly and dynamically. However, traditional OSS/BSS systems were not built for handling these experience-driven service level agreements, user experience KPIs or dynamic personalization needs.

Therefore, an optimized customer experience engagement layer must sit on top of, and complement, the BSS/OSS stack if an operator wants to provide a superior customer experience. Without this optimized engagement layer, operators will endure the following pain points:

### **BSS/OSS Stack Doesn't Address the Core Customer Experience Gap**

In order for operators to provide superior customer experience, they must be able to capture and understand the information and events that can affect a subscriber's experience in both real time and a predictive manner. Legacy, as well as modern day, BSS/OSS systems both have gaps and are currently collecting disparate silos of customer experience-related data. For example, BSS handles or views customer data via interaction channels while OSS collects customer data via service management channels.

Hence, there is a lack of an end-to-end view of the customer data across networks, channels and the different lines of business. As a result, operators are viewing their customers piecemeal and this causes a disjointed customer experience, especially as a customer moves from a self-service site, to a call center, to a retail store, for example, even within the same line of business and network offering. This affects the customer experience negatively as a customer may have to go through multiple tiers of touch points to get the right information.

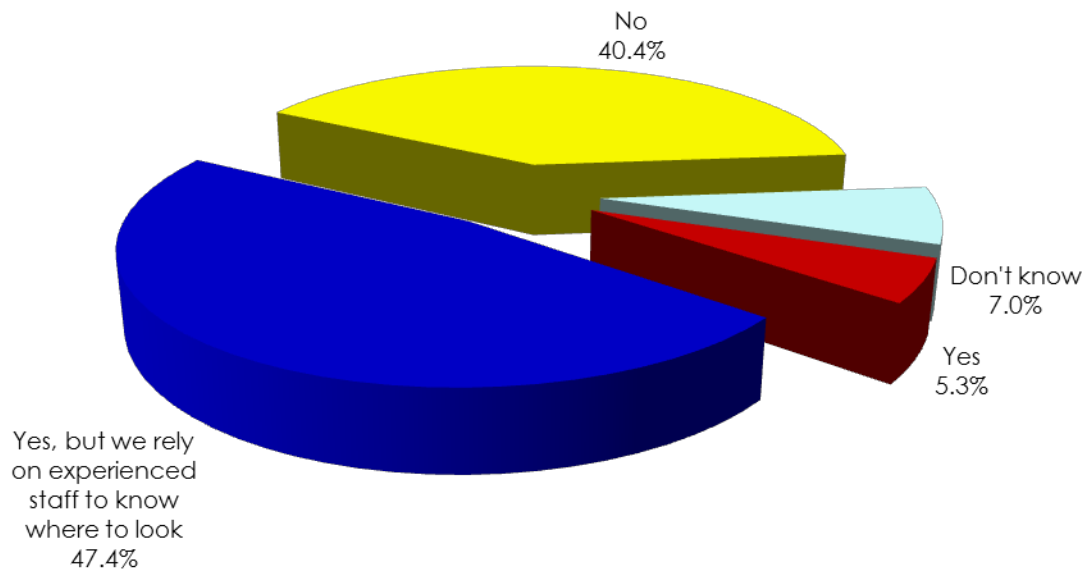
### **Lack of 360-Degree View of Subscriber Across All Channels**

Siloed data across disparate lines of business is a major pain point for operators as it does not provide a 360-degree, cross-channel view of the customer and does not allow for consistency across all lines of business.

Recent research by *Heavy Reading* reveals that operators admit their current operations do not provide a cross-channel view or service to customers. Service providers also admit that they lack an end-to-end, subscriber-centric order visibility across channels and touch points.

In a recent *Heavy Reading* survey of 56 unique global service providers only 5 percent of respondents mentioned that they have 360-degree visibility into the status of orders (**Figure 3**). An inconsistent experience across all purchase channels can be frustrating for a subscriber who finds they have to repeat their information over and over to various channels such as the retail store or call center.

**Figure 3: Does your existing system provide 360-degree visibility into the status of orders?**



Source: Heavy Reading

### Multiple Product Catalog & Ordering Systems

Dated order management systems are hard coded and static and witness to failed orders due to manual processes. These dated systems are not agile enough to support new services or rapid changes in the network. In terms of hindering customer experience, many order management systems also have outdated information in their product catalogs. Not only is the information outdated, but there are multiple catalogs, which causes inefficiency.

A lack of integration with alternative channels, such as self-service portals, mobile apps, retail stores, social media, etc., with order management and other back-office systems creates more operational inefficiencies as it forces the operator to re-key customer information into back-office systems for provisioning. In the end, these inefficiencies will cause errors and order fallout, which a subscriber will find most frustrating.

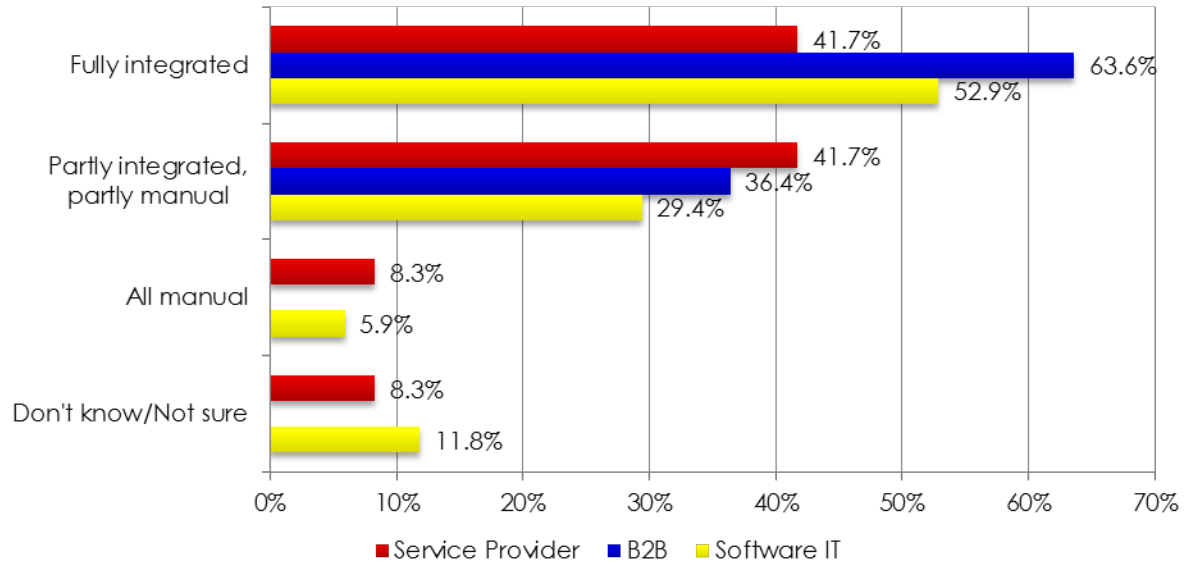
### Dated Swivel Chair Across Many Desktop Systems

The major hindrance of dated systems is that they may require manual processes, which increases the likelihood of human error. Human error leads to order fallout and a tedious re-keying process, which increases costs and order time. Front-office employees, as well as end customers, will be frustrated by inefficiencies caused by these dated systems. Operators cannot afford to try and handle dynamic new services with such dated, manual systems.

In a recent survey conducted by *Heavy Reading*, we compared service providers with business-to-business (B2B) companies and software IT companies. In this survey, we asked respondents whether their sales order configuration and order

capture capability directly integrated with their sales force automation and/or CRM system, or if they have to perform manual "swivel chair"-type integration. As **Figure 4** shows, service providers are behind both B2B and software IT companies in the "fully integrated" category.

**Figure 4: Is your sales order configuration and order capture capability directly integrated with your sales force automation and/or CRM system, or is manual "swivel chair"-type integration performed?**



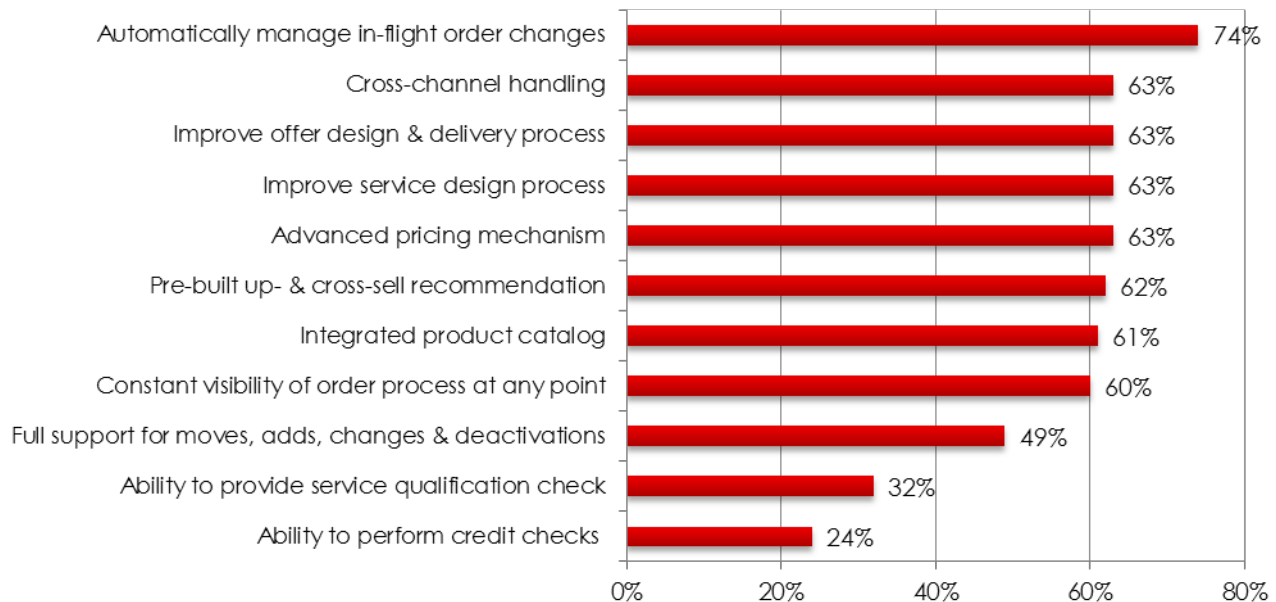
Source: Heavy Reading



## Customer Experience Building Blocks

Operators are well aware they must be proactive in improving the customer experience and have indicated they are planning to do so. For example, a recent survey by *Heavy Reading* indicates that operators are looking to improve their ordering process. Ordering is an important investment for service providers as poor ordering processes leads to increases in order fallout rate, slower time to market of products and services, and inferior customer experience. From offer creation, matching offers to customers, order capture and order generation, through fulfillment across different channels and customer touch points to internal and external fulfillment points, ordering sits at the heart of service providers' transition to customer-centricity. This is an area that service providers have identified and are looking to invest in the next 12-18 months (**Figure 5**).

**Figure 5: Which of the following ordering functions or capabilities does your company plan to add in the next 12 to 18 months?**



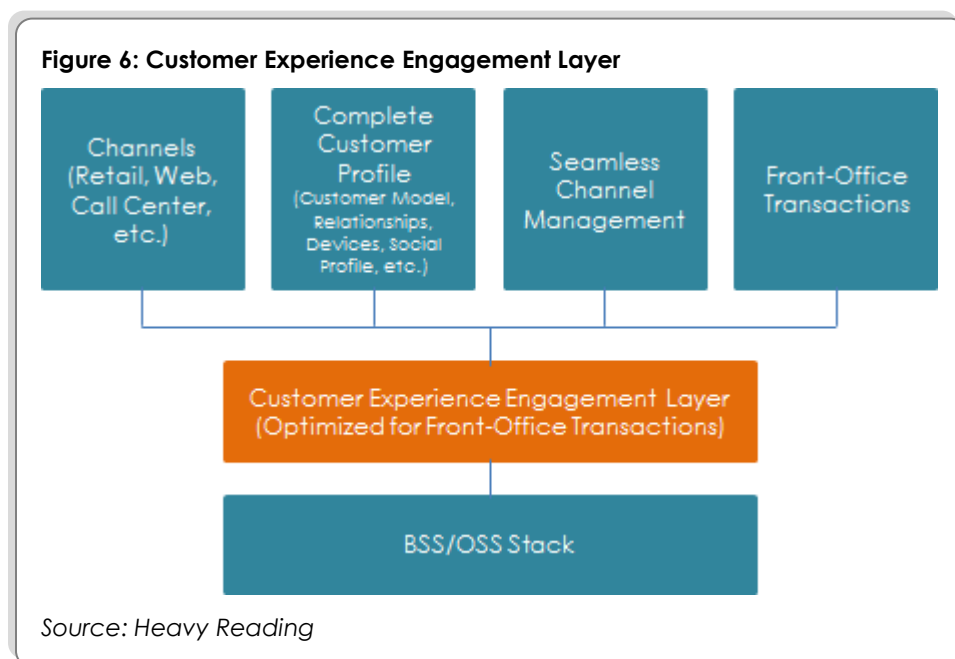
Source: *Heavy Reading*

In *Heavy Reading's* opinion, the true essence of superior experience-driven service providers are companies that believe in the mantra of continuous customer care and that ultimately take initiatives and have the capability to embrace and carry forward this philosophy in a smarter, efficient and proactive way that is more innovative than their competitors' way. We believe that the operator that intelligently manages its customers' experiences can better anticipate their requirements, improve responsiveness, provide a more personalized level of service and reap the benefits in terms of lower operational costs while increasing customer loyalty and experiencing higher profitability.

Operators' ability to serve customers smoothly and efficiently across various channels during their shopping and buying lifecycle, irrespective of the handoffs required, is a key success criterion for satisfying these customers. It is also critical to note that

holistic customer experience initiatives do not end when a transaction is completed. There is clear market demand for solutions that absorb subscriber information, deliver tactical analysis and knowledge about the various interactions based on a business rules, and allow for information sharing so that channel information is synchronized and channels can learn from each other to improve customer loyalty, increase sales and improve the overall customer experience.

An optimized, next-generation customer experience engagement layer acts as an unifying glue by bringing together complete customer profile information, customer engagement information, seamless channel management and front-office transactions that improves the overall customer experience and empowers front-office employees by providing them detailed customer context data at their fingertips. This layer sits on top of, and complements, the BSS/OSS layer, which does not address these customer experience issues (**Figure 6**). The model allows operators to retain their investment in legacy platforms, however inefficient and antiquated they may be, and uses them to feed requisite data to an interaction management layer for contextual processing based on flexible rules.



Every operator has a customer experience engagement layer, but, in this optimal scenario, the layer must be adaptive, flexible, scalable, open and have multi-channel and multi-device capabilities. The engagement layer includes a complete customer profile and management across devices and services; channels such as retail, Web, contact center, social, mobile, and chat; and capabilities such as ordering, billing inquiry, trouble ticketing, technician work orders and other front-office transactions. This layer can also be in a unified platform in the cloud, and, in the end, it should deliver customer interactions the way subscribers want to be served.

The ideal customer experience engagement layer includes building blocks that deliver a next-generation customer experience. It should be able to continuously collect, aggregate and serve as a resolution point for issues provided by other platforms. As previously mentioned, the customer experience engagement layer

addresses the core gaps that the BSS/OSS stack does not address and gives a complete end-to-end, cross-channel/portal view of the customer. This layer sits on top of, complements and supports the downstream BSS/OSS.

The key aim of the customer experience engagement layer is to monitor, capture and orchestrate customer experience in a continuous manner across different channels so that operators can deliver an enhanced customer experience. This layer needs to be preemptive, dynamic, contextual, user friendly and must be able to correlate contextual information about the customer that is available from the surrounding systems, networks, social networks, etc., and drive actions to prevent problems before they occur and maintain a consistent user experience.

A next-generation customer experience engagement solution should have the following building blocks that enable operators to be personal, preemptive and proactive (**Figure 7**).

**Figure 7: Next-Generation Customer Experience Engagement Building Blocks**

| BUILDING BLOCK  | DESCRIPTION   |
|---|---|
| Ability to continuously monitor and audit                       | Helps to create a contextual understanding of customers and helps in terms of actionable insight  |
| Capture and collection point                                    | Serves as a resolution point for issues provided by other platforms   |
| Use of big data and predictive analytics for contextual insight | Enables contextual profile of subscribers to meet real-time needs and predict future behavior patterns  |
| Social channel insight  | Monitors sentiment on social networks, which is crucial for online branding   |
| Proactive notification  | Reaches out to the customer about service issues and resolution, which customers appreciate   |
| Preventive care   | Serves as communication channel for preventative care   |
| Streamlined data management                                     | Helps operators maintain service levels   |
| Active knowledgebase  | Serves as an interaction layer to reconcile OSS/BSS events, takes action on the correlated events and controls the associated customer interaction events             |
| Employee collaboration  | Customers are able to connect to experts quickly instead of having to track someone down via the phone, email, etc.   |
| Seamless channel experience                                     | Customer's experience is seamless despite multiple challenges such as suspended transactions, continuation across channels, sticky menus and interaction points, etc. |
| Mobile self-care apps   | Subscribers are able to access and set parameters on their accounts via any device, anytime, anywhere   |
| Streamlined agent console                                       | Eliminate the swivel-chair across systems and create a simple and easy experience for agents  |
| Customer community  | Enable customers to help resolve each other's issues  |

Source: Heavy Reading

## **Ability to Continuously Monitor & Audit**

A next-generation customer experience engagement solution should be able to continuously monitor and audit customer data. Since the customer data comes from multiple sources, the solution should be able to monitor events in real time to understand a customer's full context and be able to continually audit all customer-related information such as device, policies, rate plans, transaction details, etc. This helps to create a contextual understanding of each customer and helps in terms of actionable insight.

## **Capture & Collection Point**

A next-generation customer experience engagement layer should be able to collect, aggregate and serve as a resolution point for issues provided by other platforms such as dropped calls, intermittent internet access, video-on-demand (VoD) stutter, inaccurate taxation on a bill, warranty co-payments being charged incorrectly, etc.

## **Use of Big Data & Predictive Analytics for Contextual Insight**

A next-generation customer experience engagement solution must be analytics-driven. Advanced analytics acts as a major enabler for contextual insight for operators as it helps to navigate through the copious amounts of data by analyzing incoming data sources as varied as customer care, product/service/device portfolios, cost and billing, and network service quality to segment customers. This enables operators to meet customers' needs in real time, allows for more targeted up- and cross-sell opportunities and also aids operators in predicting future behavior patterns.

In the context of customer care, operators need to create a robust repository of error fixes, enable proactive resolution of issues by guiding contact center agents continuously to reduce average handle time and have a continuous contextual intelligence update that effectively maintains an up-to-date context map of each customer. A probabilistic engine predicts the trends and likelihood that customers will act – e.g., call, return device, churn, time of bill pay, etc. These must be done on a per-subscriber/per service basis, finding correlations and patterns between events that may affect individual customers.

These are all examples of big data initiatives that take into account the massive and ever-increasing volumes of subscriber-related data that must be analyzed in real time in order to meet the demand for ever-shortening decision latencies. The solutions underlying necessary data infrastructure must be able to efficiently support the data volumes, concurrency and query complexities involved, along with a streaming analytics engine that support complex event processing. While the data infrastructure is key, one needs to surround this with information management environment that feeds it with clean, trusted information.

## **Streamlined Data Management**

Customer-related data is spread across different BSS/OSS systems, network, channels, social networks, etc. In order for a service provider to create an up-to-date, accurate customer profile, this demands a unified data management strategy that rationalizes data by removing duplication of subscriber data across multiple systems and also keeps customer data current by synchronizing and

updating data on a real-time basis. This customer data can be enriched with data from external sources for deeper understanding of customers and utilize customer information across all channels and systems.

## **Social Channel Insight**

As the use of social networks is becoming ubiquitous, online brand management has become more crucial than ever. Service providers cannot ignore what their customers are saying about them in such unstructured and dynamic environments. If service providers ignore the sentiment on social channels, they risk swift and widespread brand damage if one negative customer incident is popular enough and goes viral. Hence, social network and sentiment analysis is critical, as it will allow operators to take preventative actions to avoid churn or customer dissatisfaction by providing preemptive service assurance and using feedback and sentiment to better understand their customers' preferences and enhance their personalized offerings.

## **Proactive Notification**

Customers are more likely to recommend their operators to other people if it provides self-care applications and multi-channel personalized notifications based on customer preference. This model enables the operator to engage with the customer based on the customer's terms related to device, time of day, type of messaging, etc. The actionable insight gathered by continuous event monitoring allows operators to provide customer experience actions such as proactive notification. Proactive notification can play a key role in customer experience management and setting customer expectations in case of incidents such as when an operator informs a customer of outages, performs troubleshooting functions, service restoration, etc. Proactive customer care via proactive notification and self-service apps adds to customer satisfaction and should be part of a next-generation customer experience engagement solution.

## **Preventive Care**

A next-generation customer experience engagement solution serves as a communication channel for preventative care. Preventative care with advanced analytics will allow for the monitoring and action that will be required to prevent problems *before* the subscriber is aware of them. Poor performance that is likely to affect a subscriber or group of subscribers can automatically be preemptively diagnosed. This type of analysis must also be done across networks and the variety of platforms. A next-generation customer experience engagement solution should also be able to aggregate the data and relay preventative care to the customer.

## **Active Knowledge Base**

A knowledge base is a repository of information from which users can search and retrieve relatively static information. In this case, an active knowledge base serves as an interaction layer to reconcile OSS/BSS events, takes action on the correlated events and controls the associated customer interaction events. A single knowledge base across all channels serves as a library of information for service providers and is critical in creating a detailed view of subscribers based on which personalized offers, promotion, etc., can be provided in order to deliver a holistic service experience.

An active knowledge base of issues and resolutions that keeps getting enriched and contextualized will help in empowering call center agents to resolve calls swiftly and with reduced handling time. This knowledge and assistance could lead to recommendations and future follow-ups as a next best action activity for the service provider to interact with the subscriber. Also, investing in social knowledge and harvesting support information to enrich information beyond just internal knowledge will be a critical step toward maintaining an active knowledge management strategy. By accessing self-service knowledge base portals, it is possible that end users may resolve issues themselves, but it is typically the answer that service providers want them to get. These operator-vetted answers can be expanded and augmented with communities for information sharing.

## **Employee Collaboration**

Employee collaboration means connecting employees and teams in a more efficient manner so that they have quicker access to one another, as well as each other's resources. Employee collaboration can help enhance holistic customer service and reduce issue resolution time, and for that it should be extended to include partner channels, equipment manufacturers, etc.

The benefit of the model is that additional experts can be pulled into the conversation for "issue swarming" based on demand and based on where the knowledge exists. It is a modern-day intranet, if you will, where interactions can be instant and via the desktop, device, app or social feed. Employee collaboration helps customers get to the right answer more quickly because, internally, employees have improved communication across tiers, call centers, etc., and can also manage events, such as outages, more easily. The customer should not notice the difference but only have an efficient and speedy experience on the front end.

## **Seamless Channel Experience**

A customer experience engagement solution must be able to deliver a cross-channel experience that provides the same seamless experience to customers, regardless of whether it is via the Web, smartphone or retail kiosk. If customers have to repeat their information in a multi-touch buy process, it will not be a good experience. Service providers must have an end-to-end view, as well as pass customer information from one touch point to another.

*Heavy Reading's* research shows that 70 percent of wireless operators surveyed admitted they do not pass along customer information from one touch point to another. A customer's experience should be seamless despite multiple challenges such as suspended transactions, continuation across channels, sticky menus and interaction points, etc. This means that any user of any channel has the ability to restart a session, in context, and from the point of suspension.

## **Mobile Self-Care Apps**

Subscribers today are able to access and set parameters on their accounts via devices such as smartphones and tablets. This ease of use and anytime, anywhere access is becoming very important, as well as a competitive differentiator in service. Service providers that do not offer such options will be viewed as dated and may experience churn as a result. The whole notion of self-care and the use of such an app all contribute to transparency, giving the customer more control, which makes them feel that they are having a more personalized experience.

## **Streamlined Agent Console**

A streamlined agent console ties into the cross-channel experience, which means that customer data must be viewed holistically across channels and seen on a single dashboard. This eliminates a swivel-chair experience across systems and creates a simple and easy experience for agents. For the customer, wait time is shorter and their questions will be answered more quickly and correctly, driving up first engagement resolution. All this creates a more efficient contact center and reduces costs. This is especially important in today's environment of multiple devices and services under one customer account or household.

## **Customer Community**

More and more, companies are looking to create a community to allow customers to help each other, and this does not exclude telcos. The communities may be formed either via a message board or through a more formal application. The interaction can be informal and cover simple issues or may be more complex and, in some cases, community members may even be certified to help others. This creates an engaging community among customers and also allows for immediate help off-hours. In turn, the benefit for the operator is that it saves them on their overall customer service expenditures while simultaneously creating a positive, immediate customer experience for subscribers. In that way, it is a win-win.

## Salesforce's Customer Engagement Layer

Re-envisioning the customer experience across channels is key to building better customer relationships. Salesforce provides a next-generation front office for communications operators to elevate the customer experience with a focus on delighting customers, differentiating from the competition and cultivating individual customer relationships.

The company accomplishes this by providing a customer engagement layer: a single, nimble, adaptable platform for managing customers and channels that resides on top of existing and next-generation BSS/OSS environments. In this way, Salesforce creates a compelling, seamless experience for customers and front-office employees while leveraging the strengths of the underlying BSS/OSS from a provisioning, service assurance, and billing standpoint.

In the contact-center channel, Salesforce provides a single-agent console for all tasks, where agents can eliminate their swivel-chairs; have clear and simple steps for ordering, billing and troubles; and collaborate with their peers and higher-level tiers via the Chatter employee social network. Agents can have rich customer profiles and recommended offers at the ready, and have the context of all past customer interactions across channels and devices.

In the self-service domain, the company enables the rapid configuration and deployment of customer-facing Web and mobile channels based on a single platform. Salesforce provides a consistent experience and common profile and shopping-cart information across channels, whether the customer is using an iPhone, iPad, Android or other device, or interacting with an agent through chat or phone. Customers can manage key order, trouble and billing information in the form factor of their choice.

Because of the Salesforce cloud model and subscription service, no installation, hardware or capital investments are required. With Salesforce, a service provider can realize the benefits of having an integrated customer-service platform, up-to-date customer information available across all channels and a connected internal service-provider experience – all ultimately transforming the communications customer experience.



## Conclusion

Today the customer experience for consumers is disjointed, reactive and not personalized. Service providers interested in managing the customer experience more effectively need to collect as much customer experience-related data as possible. They must be able to analyze this information to understand the customer experience and especially to detect unexpected and unpredictable events that might pose either an opportunity – for example, to enhance or enrich the customer experience – or a threat.

Service providers understand that a fragmented channel strategy will negatively impact their brand image and reduce NPS. Customers are influenced by Apple's easy-to-use, intuitive model, and they expect a similar experience from other models. As a result, we see service providers paying more attention to their channel strategy in order to provide customers with a superior customer experience. Being able to deliver a superior customer-centric, cross-channel experience will result in financial gain for service providers, as it will generate less churn, enhance their brand image, increase subscriptions, improve NPS, heighten customer satisfaction and reduce calls to call centers.

There is no doubt that the bar is set very high by customers, who are very demanding about their QoS and the offerings they receive from their service providers. Operators realize they must do a better job of providing superior customer service, but wanting and executing are two different things. Inefficient BSS/OSS stacks are one of the primary hurdles why operators are not able to provide superior customer experience as the B/OSS stacks are not agile enough and have siloed data in the various lines of business.

Service providers need to align with a vendor that will enable them to execute the building blocks of next-generation customer experience engagement layer. A next-generation customer experience engagement layer should be able to continuously monitor and audit the events, capture and collect issues from other platforms, offer advanced analytics, provide proactive notification and preventive care, streamline data management, have a single active knowledgebase and have social channel insight to give operators control over their online branding. It should also have processes that allow for a more efficient experience for both the service provider's employees, as well as its customers, by enabling employee collaboration, a seamless channel experience, mobile self-care applications and create a streamlined agent console and a customer community.