THE NEW AGE OF SERVICE

Mike Milburn, SVP & GM of Service Cloud, Looks Forward

salesforce service cloud

Introduction

The service landscape is shifting. Consumers today are more connected, informed, and empowered than ever before. The immediate effect of this change? Service expectations are rising: connected consumers expect companies to be just as connected as they are. They expect and demand the ability to solve problems quickly, across any combination of communication channels they prefer.

This presents a fundamental challenge for every company, regardless of size or industry. In this new service landscape, delivering the world-class customer experience that connected customers expect isn't just nice to have – it is mandatory for any business that wants to succeed.

As the Senior Vice President and GM of Service Cloud, I've had the unique opportunity to help define how new technology will shape customer service. Here, I'm excited to share my thoughts on the future of service, and how companies can successfully adapt and thrive in this new service paradigm.

Mike Milburn

What's your overall vision for service in 2015 – not just for Salesforce, but across the industry?

Mike Milburn: The business of customer service is changing and evolving every day as consumers change and evolve. And we are partnering with our customers to provide world-class technology to help them meet these new expectations. Service is the new sales. A company's relationship with consumers is defined by the quality, level, effort, and comfort of the service it provides. I think that message has been in the industry for awhile, but now, with technology and agility, you're able to achieve it. So, companies are truly differentiating themselves, and consumers are making buying decisions, based on the kinds of services that companies are offering. Today, customer experience has surpassed price and product as the key differentiator among brands. What this really means is that your product is only as good as your service.

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In prior decades, service was something that was very hard to stand up, hard to maintain, and very hard to change. In this new world, you have to be able to operate at the speed of your customers. You have to be nimble and agile and create new kinds of service, new kinds of channels, and new ways of supporting your customers – because they're changing rapidly, and they're changing dramatically.

What are the service implications for the Internet of Things?

Mike Milburn: The Internet of Things gives companies an incredible new opportunity to connect and engage their consumers in a personal way. The Internet of Things is about devices and products being connected. The technology itself, like connected thermostats and health devices, is incredible, but what's really powerful is that these devices can send information back to companies that they can use to gain insights into how people are using their products. These insights allow companies to make their service even more personalized. So the part about IoT that I think should be focused on for the world of service is:

What is the recipient of the IoT information going to do, and how do you use this information to engage with your customers on a whole new level?

For example, your doctor sees you once a year and he or she tries to determine if you're healthy or not based on that visit. Well, what if that doctor saw you every day? What would your doctor say if they could look at data from a Fitbit, for instance, and see critical information about your wellness and detect patterns and trends?

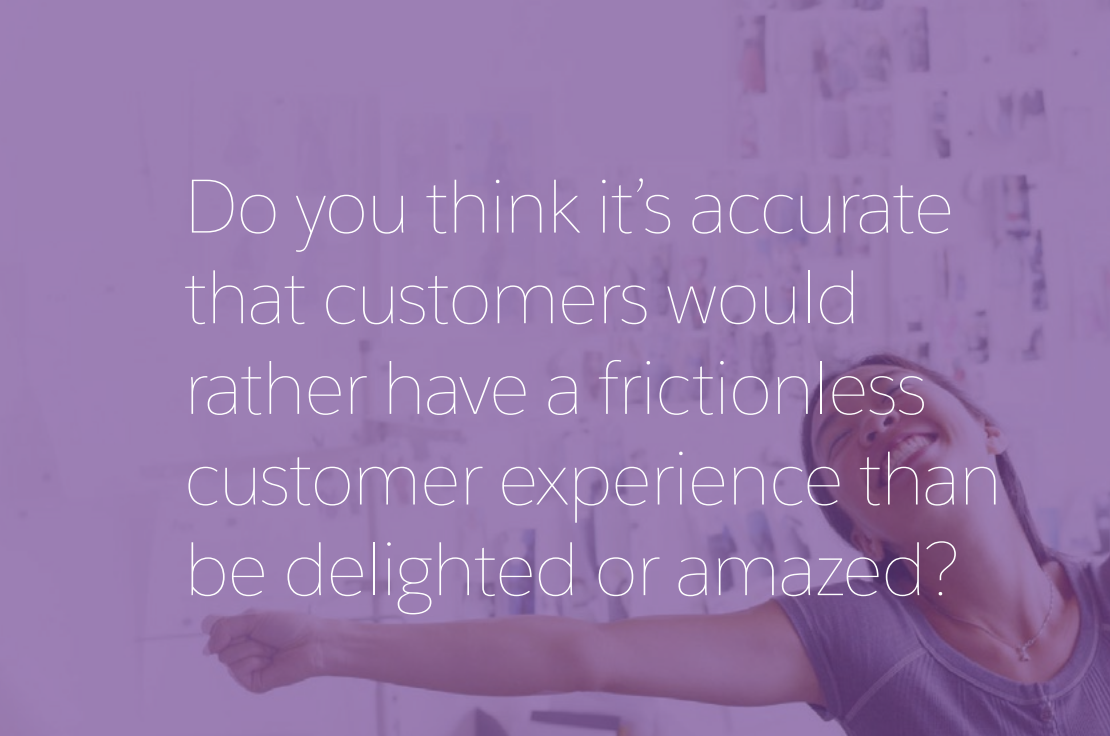# How have mobile devices changed the way companies deliver service?

Mike Milburn: The presence of mobile devices in the world is astounding: there will be 5 billion smartphones by 2017. A majority of young children have access to a full-time mobile device, and for some it may be the main way they access the internet every day. What that really means for businesses and individuals is that every company needs to think mobile first. In this new world, people expect to engage with companies and brands through apps. And the last thing customers want to do is leave that mobile app to get service, to get help, or find answers to questions they have. As a company, you want to provide service in that app because that's where your customers live, and you want the same experience across every device.

The other interesting expectation that has changed is that customers expect businesses to provide a seamless customer experience across any channel they use. Think of your own customer experiences. It's not unusual for me to use multiple channels when I'm trying to get a question answered. The other day, for example, I was flying across the country from the East Coast when my flight was canceled because of the weather. I got in line at the airport to talk to a rep about getting on a new flight. At the same time, I got on my mobile phone and

sent an email to the airline asking for help. And then, before I even got to the front of the line, I also called customer service to see if they could help me find a new flight even faster. This experience is not unusual for most consumers. And the expectation I had was that they would know that I had emailed and called and that the person I spoke to next had that context of what was happening with my case, no matter what channel I used.

To help companies with this, we recently announced the new Service Cloud Intelligence Engine, an added layer of intelligence in the Service Cloud that fuels smarter customer service with data science. The Intelligence Engine routes these multiple conversations to the same agent, ensuring the best customer experience by giving the agent an omni-channel view across all of these channels. It also looks at the skills of the agents and what cases they've worked on in the past, and uses that intelligence to find the agent who is best suited to help with that case. This new level of intelligence in the tools being used in customer service is becoming essential for the truly modern service organization. And it helps ensure that companies are taking the friction out of the service experience.

Do you think it's accurate that customers would rather have a frictionless customer experience than be delighted or amazed?

Mike Milburn: I think it's entirely accurate. Customer delight is really a false notion – "Oh, we're going to fix all your problems." The reality is, if somebody is taking the time to interact with your company, they're really having a problem. And even if you delight them, they still contacted you because they had a problem. So the best thing you can do is stop them from having a problem in the first place. Some companies spend a lot of time and energy on wowing their customers, but the studies actually suggest that it doesn't do anything for either customer stats or propensity to buy.

Mike Milburn: When customers are more connected, companies need to be omnipresent. Think of your own service experience. If you have a problem, what's the first thing you do? You might call the company; you also might Google or search to see if anybody else has that same problem or issue. You might go on YouTube and watch a video. Now think about what that experience was like 10 years ago: As a consumer, you had relatively little access to information. If you called support or engaged with anyone in support, whatever they told you – that was the answer.

I don't know about you, but I don't know how many times I've had a question and immediately jumped on Google to try to find the answer first before reaching out to the company. This means that companies need to think about being on all of these channels where customers may look for information. And it means that their strategy has to evolve from offering their customers a few ways to get in touch, to being able to see all the ways customers are trying to get in touch and being present on those channels and in those communities.

How is customer connectivity impacting service?

Adam Blitzer
VP of B2B Marketing Automation - Pard..

With all of this connectedness comes a lot more data. How do companies parse through it in a meaningful way?

Mike Milburn: That is a challenge! Salesforce Analytics Cloud provides service agents and managers access to the real-time data that they need to make decisions.

Think about the power of putting analytics into anyone's hands so that they can use that data to make better decisions about how to help customers.

Imagine you're a global brand manager for a consumer company. Every day, you want to see how many incidents are occurring with your product, how many people are unhappy with the packaging, so that you can make decisions about what you're doing from a product standpoint based on the data that's coming in real time from the consumer relations department. That's what I mean by connected. It's connected externally – against the customer who's more connected – and it's connected internally.

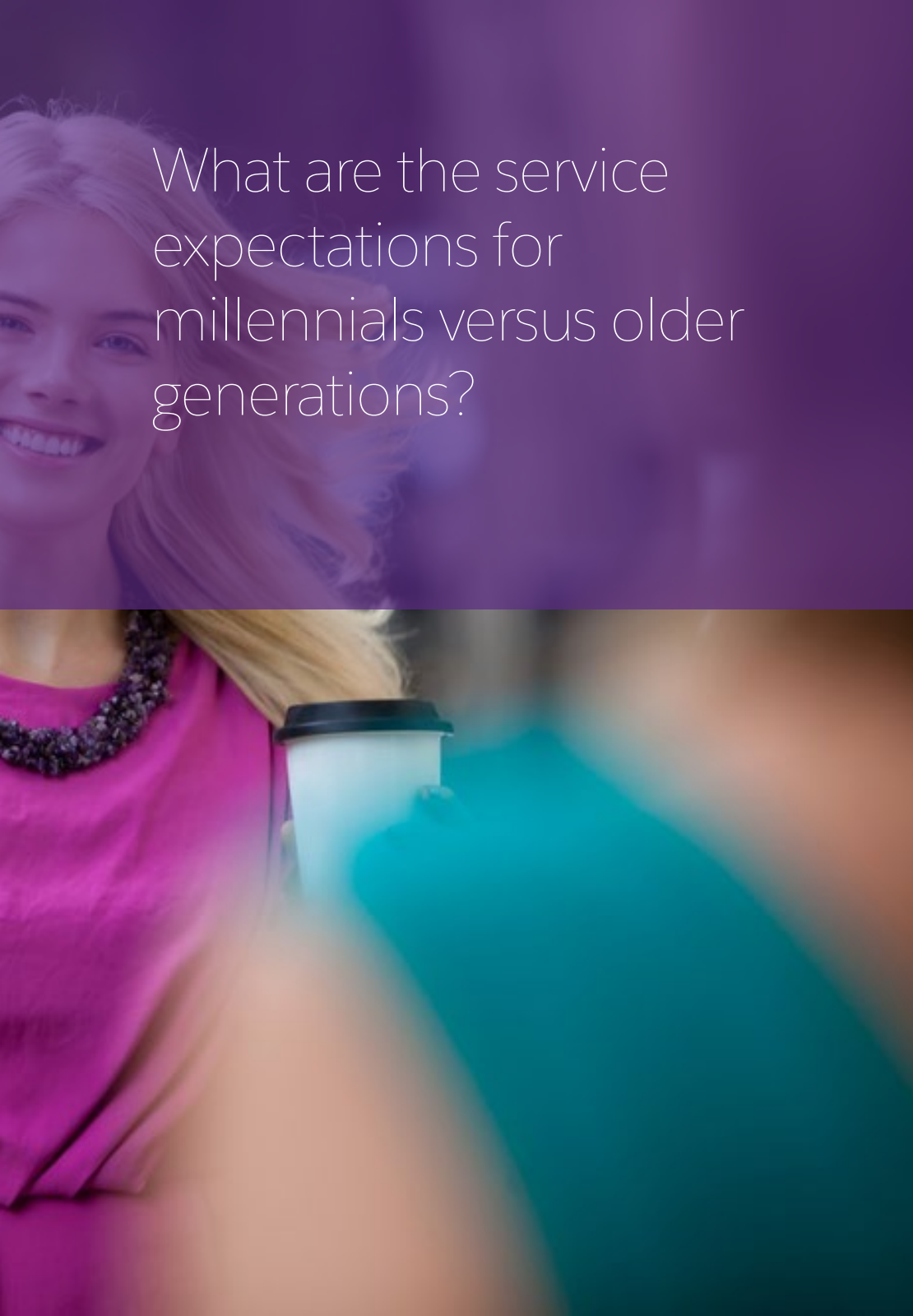# What kinds of data and metrics are most important in this new age of service?

Mike Milburn: In the world of service, there's these dinosaur metrics – first call resolution, average speed of answer, average case time, average handle time – and these have been around for 30 or 40 years because they were based on the expectations that customers had at that time. But customers' expectations are changing. And that means there will have to be a new round of metrics, like second call avoidance, to help companies meet their customers' new expectations.

Let me give you an example. As a consumer, you might tolerate having a problem with your hotel room one time, if they gave you a single bed when you had requested two beds. You might call in to request a change and tolerate that they made that mistake. But the next time you check in, if that's not fixed, you're going to be really, really frustrated, and if you have to call in again to get the same problem fixed, then that company risks losing you as a customer. So the best thing the brand can do is to fix the issue for you the first time so that it never happens again. If somebody calls one time, they should never have to call again – that's second call avoidance.

The Service Cloud Agent Console was designed to give the agent every piece of information that the company has about its customer, and it's amazing that we have this unprecedented access to data about the problems customers are facing.

But what are you doing with the data you're getting so you can eliminate those problems in the future?

I hope that people are using the data so that they can understand the friction that's occurring with their customers and they're making business changes to eliminate that friction.

What are the service expectations for millennials versus older generations?

Mike Milburn: Younger generations, including millennials, are more mobile, more social, and less loyal to brands like they used to be. What are they loyal to? Their customer experience, which all comes down to the company's customer service.

Millennials are willing to provide more information about themselves, who they are, and what they like, in order to have a better customer experience.

If you think about the car-sharing service Lyft, you willingly give out your GPS information in order to get a ride – you don't even think twice about it, because you know you're going to get the experience of being picked up exactly where you want to be picked up, and because they make it easy and effortless for you. So people are increasingly willing to give up certain information to get better experiences and better services, as long as they get that in a safe and secure way and understand what they get in return for that information.

I've heard you talk about using service tools internally to engage employees. Can you talk about how we can apply this new age of service inside a company?

Mike Milburn: As a customer, you get amazing service from consumer products. But when you go inside of your company and you think about the kind of service that you get from the day you start working, do you have the same experience?

Think about when you have a problem with your laptop, or an issue with payroll. Do you search an internal knowledge base for laptop troubleshooting? Do you visit a peer community, where others who have experienced the same payroll issue can advise you? Or do you end up emailing someone in human resources because you can't find the answer you want?

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This is just one example of how the technology and best practices of customer service can be applied throughout your business – to HR, and to every other department. When you think about what customer service represents, it's all about the best way to engage with somebody. That's where the money's at. So you should be able to navigate internal issues in the same way that you navigate as a consumer – there's a knowledge base, and there's a way to interact with other community members, a way to chat and easily find answers. It's an engagement layer that can be added onto every business function – including HR.

And this world is evolving as well. The first evolution of customer service was a transition from systems of record to systems of integration – from having the right information to actually integrating it into our business processes. Now, we're evolving again. The next phase will be all about systems of intelligence – using data science to act intelligently on the right data at the right time to deliver consistently amazing customer experiences. Think of the impact you could have on your business if you used those same insights and data science to deliver amazing experiences to your employees – how happy, efficient and productive would they be. Doesn't that sound like a place you'd want to work?

Conclusion

In today's connected world, the quality of the customer experience your company delivers is of paramount importance. Your product, after all, is only as good as your service. But exceptional service no longer means solving a customer's problem when they pick up the phone – it's about taking preventive measures and proactively solving potential problems. It's about providing service that the customer may not even see or realize is happening. Service Cloud enables modern businesses to tackle these challenges head-on, and provide exceptional service designed for a new, connected world of customers.
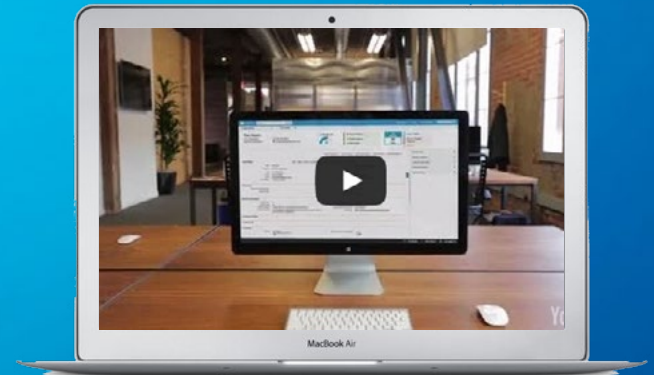
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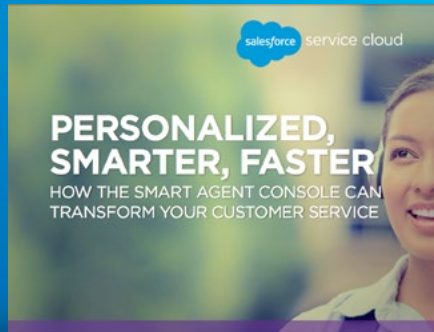
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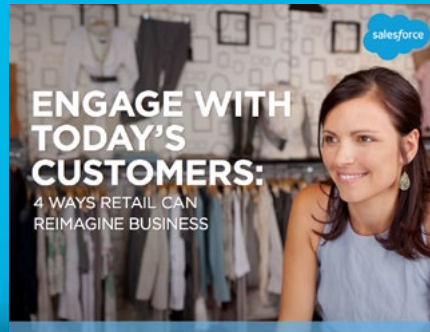
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