



The Next Big Thing in Customer Experience: Orchestrating the Customer Vision



Introduction

From chatbots to virtualization, from AI to automation, we are currently in the midst of so much digital change that we lack the perspective to fully understand it or accurately predict where it will lead. As experience-altering tools and applications continue to proliferate, many believe that the very nature of certain experiences—including the customer experience—will be forever changed. Leaders and stakeholders will need to determine how to best serve their customers in this ever-evolving digital landscape. The impetus to truly understand customers at a deeper level and to make their interactions easy and satisfying is strong. The savviest leaders realize that the best path forward is the one that puts customers in the driver's seat.

A recent think tank discussion hosted by Frost & Sullivan with Cognizant and Genesys addressed CX, tech and other customer contact industry issues, and the thought leaders arrived at the following key insights:



Creating a truly-customer centric enterprise requires more than just the latest digital tools



Deriving deep insights and intelligence from customers should be the cornerstone of a customer-centric strategy



Cultivating a true understanding of customer preferences, pain points, and values is now industry table stakes



A true strategic partnership between the business and service provider will bring the best results



Best-in-class service providers offer more than just deep tech expertise, they work with clients to truly understand their business model



Deriving Unique Customer Insights

Manu Pandey, vice president, customer experience, Swiss Re, states,

“**Cyber-agility, scalability, expertise, and all these buzzwords, are table stakes. I think where we expect our partners to be is fluent in hyper-personalization—custom and targeted experiences using data, analytics, AI, and automation.**”

Deriving unique insights and deeper intelligence from customers is key. For example, helping a policyholder pay a bill more quickly online is desirable, but understanding why they decide to keep their insurance policy is even more valuable. These level-up, deeper insights can be critical to organizational success.





Good Technology Is Foundational... But It's Not the Endgame

The most effective solution providers help companies understand their customers, well beyond an RFP document, journey-mapping, and even baseline technology deliverables. Alpa Shah, global vice president of the customer experience practice at Frost & Sullivan, echoes this sentiment, stating,



The customer expectations baseline is getting higher and higher. How do you differentiate? You've got to get in there and really understand the customer and how the customer is changing. 100%."

She continues, "Besides flexibility, scalability, speed to market, skills, and expertise, businesses must ask themselves what are the core capabilities that the contact center must invest in [to] really understand what the customer wants from a longer-term perspective. You need to understand the processes one by one and develop that relationship with the customer."

Arunprakash B., global offerings lead – customer service transformation, Cognizant, adds,



We have definitely seen that our customers are looking for deep expertise in the customer experience space to drive and build strategy and roadmaps. Global systems integrator (GSI) services come with best practices and learnings from across the globe. Digital and AI services require knowledge about how to enable, manage, and expand, as well as offer clients' strategic input and thought leadership."

While GSIs and the framework they provide have their place, many in the group wanted to ensure that any new systems and processes could ultimately be managed internally and sought to avoid complete reliance on external execution and support.



Designing a Satisfying, End-to-End Customer Experience

Offering a true omnichannel customer experience—one where a customer can seamlessly weave from social media to text to a phone call without having to repeat information—remains elusive for many organizations.

Claire Beatty, senior director, thought leadership, Genesys, states,

“Our latest research, ‘The State of Customer Experience,’ finds that just 13% of organizations worldwide have connected technology and data across the customer journey to deliver truly omnichannel experiences. Everyone else is still on that journey, with fragmented touchpoints that kill loyalty and drive customers away. Leading organizations increasingly view customer experience in terms of orchestration, coordinating every step of every interaction across channels—human and digital—for completely seamless, personalized experiences at scale.”

Silos, different channels, and lack of context when handing over a customer are recurring issues. Understanding the customer journey is critical to designing and implementing an omnichannel experience.





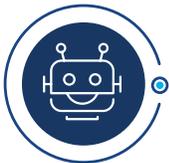
There is no denying that smart digital tools should form the foundation of a customer-centric strategy. These communication tools and time-saving technologies are—or will soon become—key components of a connected end-to-end customer experience. New capabilities include:



Conversational Intelligence—software that uses AI to analyze speech or text to derive data-driven insights from conversations



Data Analysis—systematically analyzing data via statistical or logical techniques to describe, evaluate, and catalog information



Robotic Process Automation—software technology that helps enterprises build and manage software robots that emulate basic human actions

Adapting to New Tools and Overcoming Obstacles

Building blocks like robotic process automation (RPA), conversational intelligence, and the customer data that powers them are necessary to design an efficient, end-to-end customer experience. As Arunprakash B. states, “Every organization is thinking, how can I move from a call center to a profit center? This is possible only if you get that intelligence in the data right and present it in a very proactive manner back to the customer. So, when we speak about a total experience, we speak about an end-to-end experience, including the employee, the business, and the customer... it’s all about data and making use of the data to create intelligence.”

Realistically, some of the issues preventing contact centers from moving to the utopia of real-time conversational intelligence and an omnichannel framework include non-compelling digital strategy, lingering cloud security concerns, and a lack of organizational alignment regarding strategy or technologies to achieve goals. Getting customers to adopt ever-evolving new technologies is another big obstacle. Nafees Anwar, senior vice president –contact center technologies, M&T Bank, elaborates, “[Success] depends on adoption because some people are going to be very good at it and are going to go leaps and bounds, but if you don’t do it right, you’ll probably be taking a step backwards in your overall business.” “If you don’t implement it right, you are going to end up making your customer’s life miserable, so you must tread carefully. You need experts in conversational AI and conversational architects.”



Complementing the Customer Experience

Complementing big technology leaps—and even everyday tech applications—with human assistance was a popular approach with the industry leaders. Agent assist, where machine learning (ML) technology is used to assist agents when they are conversing with customers, is a useful tool for hybrid customer service. Ideally, this kind of technology is used to build a better, deeper relationship with the customer. As Shah states, “This allows you to utilize agents in a better way... We talk about how questions or issues get to the agent, but it’s much more complicated than that. It’s about how you take that call and turn it into something to build that relationship with the customer.”



Genesys’s Claire Beatty provides a slightly different perspective. Her organization sees AI and automation as ultimately orchestrating customer interaction, not just complementing it.

She shared,



“We foresee AI driving every step of every interaction... from understanding where the customer has been, what they’re trying to achieve and then getting them the right resource, whether that’s a person who’s armed with the right information, or just the form that they want emailed to them. Making use of all that journey data to improve the process. We see that AI and automation will be the engine that will power the entire experience. And we call that experience orchestration.”

Whether technology eventually orchestrates the entire, end-to-end customer experience or continues to complement humans, remains to be seen. The important takeaway is that the customer should be the ultimate conductor of the experience. Their preferences, pain points, and even values should be at the center of a process based on trust and flexibility between enterprises and solution providers.

ABOUT THE COGNIZANT AND GENESYS PARTNERSHIP

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To learn more about our partnership and how we help clients address their challenges, [watch this video](#).

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