



MOBILE CUSTOMER SERVICE - REDEFINING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE BATTLEGROUND

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¹ Comscore – March 3, 2016, <https://www.comscore.com/Insights/Rankings/comScore-Reports-January-2016-US-Smartphone-Subscriber-Market-Share>

² ZenithOptimedia– November 23, 2015 - <http://www.mediapost.com/publications/article/263176/smartphone-penetration-reaches-56-globally.html>

³ Ericsson Mobility Report – February 2016 - <http://www.ericsson.com/res/docs/2016/mobility-report/ericsson-mobility-report-feb-2016-interim.pdf>

⁴ Statista – July 2015 - <http://www.statista.com/statistics/276623/number-of-apps-available-in-leading-app-stores/>

That was then, this is now

Twenty years ago, businesses seeking to improve the customer experience only had a limited number of touch points to consider. Most customer interactions involved one of three scenarios: face-to-face in a retail store or corporate office; over the telephone; or in writing delivered via the postal service. Needless to say, the set of options has exploded.

Today, businesses serve customers through many digital channels, including e-mail, SMS, social media and corporate websites. Much of this is driven from mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets — the use of which is exploding. 198.5 million people in the U.S. own smartphones (79.1% mobile market penetration)¹ while smartphone penetration reaches 56% globally². The growth isn't slowing either, with an expected 6.1 billion smartphone users globally by 2020³.

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To support the explosive popularity of these mobile devices, wireless carriers are building a worldwide communications infrastructure capable of delivering affordable, advanced, interactive services on a truly global scale. With today's high-speed, high-bandwidth cellular networks and ever-expanding coverage areas, resource-intensive features like real-time, multimedia streaming and videoconferencing are now readily available to mobile device users the world over. This high-intensity network enables smartphone devices that are always available, always connected.

There is a new generation of mobile applications that take advantage of the current mobile device hardware and telecom infrastructure capabilities. There are more than 1.5 million applications available in the Apple app store alone⁴.

Mobile device applications are profoundly affecting the way customers want to interact with businesses. But many mobile applications provide no convenient way for customers to request additional assistance.

Many of these applications help businesses interact with their customers. These applications are also having a profound impact on the way customers want to interact with businesses. In many cases, customers want the choice to serve themselves. The implied convenience of “an app for that” has become part of today’s culture. In many ways the smartphone isn’t a phone; it’s a computer that happens to have a phone application installed.

In this paper, we share our thoughts on mobile customer experience and how to weave it successfully into your overall omni-channel customer strategy to help you gain competitive advantage in your market.

**Mobile self service needs to be immediate,
seamless, effortless.**

Mobile devices are redefining customer experience

Businesses have long understood that customers value both time and convenience. Recent research finds that 87% of consumers BUY MORE from companies that make it easy to do business⁵. Businesses also know that each customer interaction offers the opportunity to improve loyalty and brand perception by delivering an experience that is both engaging and rewarding. The meteoric growth of mobile devices both expands the number of opportunities and raises the stakes for failure should the experience fall short.

In 2015, mobile Internet usage surpassed that of the desktop⁶. With this tipping point, providing customers with mobile access into sales, service and support has become an essential part of doing business. Customers want access to information such as the best price, a store location, post-purchase support information or quick answers to other questions regardless of their location and activity. Mobile devices give them the channels - voice, mobile web, SMS, text chat and video - to get this information while on the go. In fact, 71% of customers would like apps that allow them to communicate with service staff while online, including web chat, video, phone or messaging⁷. With convenience a major factor driving customer habits, companies that embrace mobile service will have a compelling competitive advantage that differentiates their brand in the market.

While mobile apps are useful self-service aids, they don’t necessarily provide a convenient way for customers to request additional assistance should they require it. In those rare cases when an app offers a “Contact us” button to connect the customer into the contact center, the contextual information surrounding the

⁵ Dynamic Markets, Avaya Research, 2014.

⁶ Comscore - Mobile Internet Usage Skyrockets in Past 4 Years to Overtake Desktop as Most Used Digital Platform - <https://www.comscore.com/Insights/Blog/Mobile-Internet-Usage-Skyrockets-in-Past-4-Years-to-Overtake-Desktop-as-Most-Used-Digital-Platform>

⁷ The Autonomous Customer 2015, Commissioned by BT and Avaya, 2015.



The smartphone is really a portal connected computer with a phone application installed on it.

session is often lost along the way. More often than not, customers have to revert to traditional methods of contact, such as a phone call, when the app doesn't satisfy their needs. The challenge of finding the customer service number, possibly navigating through an interactive voice response (IVR) menu, and then repeating an activity already undertaken on the mobile app can cause unnecessary frustration for the customer.

Therein is the opportunity for contact centers. To be successful, mobile self service needs to extend beyond the mobile application to the heart of the contact center. Companies that fully integrate mobile self-service apps into their omni-channel contact centers can differentiate themselves from their competitors. A seemingly little thing such as providing customers with a visual option to request a callback within the mobile application, for example, can fundamentally transform the customer experience. A customer who can request additional assistance, see when an agent is available, or schedule a more convenient time for a callback is an empowered, happier customer. Add the rich array of contextual information that mobile devices and applications provide today - updated in real time as customers interact with their mobile devices - and you have a powerful, integrated, immediate customer experience.

So how do organizations achieve this? Quite simply, they need to accommodate the following three elements within their mobile self service strategy:



Figure 1: Mobile Self Service Should Be Immediate, Seamless, Effortless

1. DYNAMIC, VISUAL, SELF SERVICE MENU WITHIN MOBILE APPLICATIONS

Give customers flexibility in how they initiate contact with your organization, and provide quick, easy and intuitive applications so customers can resolve their own issue or request. Providing customers with easy navigation through a dynamic, visual, self service menu within their mobile applications is essential.

2. ON DEMAND ASSISTANCE, IF REQUIRED

Enable customers to speak to a live agent, schedule a callback at a time that's convenient for them, or initiate web chat with an agent (either live or automated) from within the mobile app.

Mobile applications provide a rich set of customer context that can be used to drive the customer experience in the contact center.

3. SEAMLESS INTEGRATION INTO CONTACT CENTER

Provide seamless on demand assistance by intelligently routing the contact to the most suitable agent or expert based on available context. Automatically provide full context to the agent, including elements such as customer history, app navigation flow, previous contacts, location information, and photos or videos to facilitate the interaction.

All three elements are essential to providing the powerful, integrated, immediate customer experience that customers expect. By meeting those expectations, you can fundamentally transform the customer experience for the better, leading to a more empowered, happier customer.

“Contextual” customer data offers even more opportunities

The importance of context in delivering successful mobile customer service can't be emphasized enough. Much of the ability to successfully offer a seamless, effortless route into the contact center from a mobile channel is dependent on the ability to collect, share and use contextual information. The more a business knows about its customers and their specific requests, the better the odds of providing positive experiences.

The evolution of technology in contact centers

Much of this depends on the technology within the contact center. Technology has long played a critical role in delivering quality information to customer service or support agents prior to, or during, an interaction with a customer. Decades ago, automatic number identification (ANI) and dialed number identification service (DNIS) technologies helped businesses identify who was calling so they could pull up account records, assemble the right resources, or route calls prior to even answering the phone. Later, interactive voice response (IVR) and self-service systems streamlined call handling and contact center routing. After that, computer telephony integration (CTI) further automated the process of aligning customers with the right resources as quickly and efficiently as possible.



The contextual information that businesses can collect from today's mobile devices is dramatically richer and more powerful than ever before. It includes, but is certainly not limited to:

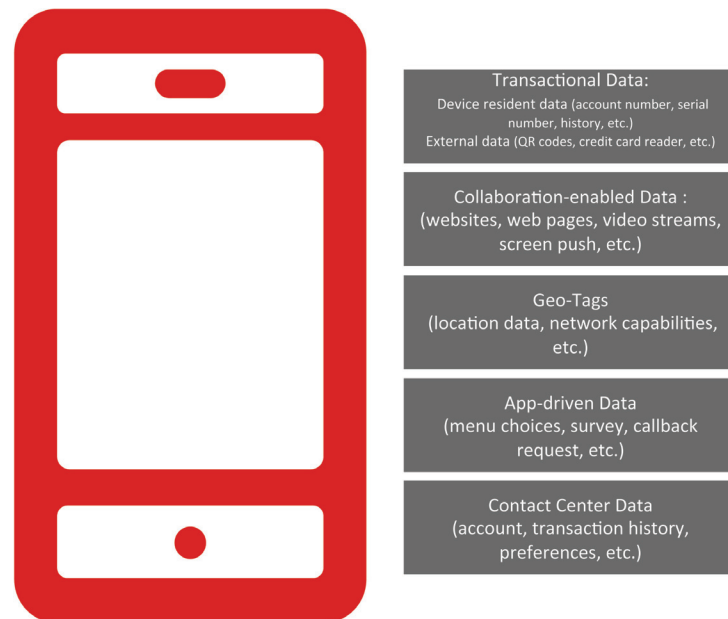


Figure 2: Mobile Apps Provide Rich Contextual Information

- **Transactional data.** Data that has been stored in the mobile device, such as account numbers, sales or service history, or even the customer's IM presence, is extremely useful contextual information. This type of data can also include information that has been acquired from external sources, such as bar codes scanned off product labels or merchant data from credit card readers — all of which gives contact center agents more information and the opportunity to respond faster to customers' needs.
- **Situational or "triggered" data.** If a business can access a GeoTag (geographical information) that identifies a customer's location and the capabilities their phone and network support, that information can help the contact center agent provide a better customer experience. For example, a company can direct customers to the nearest retail location or service center that has the product they want or service they need.
- **Collaboration-enabled data.** The information that the customer views or downloads during a mobile service session, the websites and web pages the customer visits, photos the customer has taken on the device — right through to how the customer navigated through the screens on the app — provide clearer insights into that customer's interests, preferences and needs.

Businesses can expect measurable and quantifiable returns on investments, as well as reputational or brand-enhancement benefits, from expanding contact center access to mobile devices.

- **App-driven data.** When customers make choices from self-service menus on a mobile app, such as reviewing a transaction, requesting a callback or answering a customer survey, businesses can obtain valuable insight into what the customer is trying to do. In addition, customers can provide immediate feedback to help improve the experience, especially when that information can be shared with the company's customer service professionals in real time.
- **Contact center customer data.** Organizations can further enhance the customer experience by using the app-driven data from above in conjunction with customer information they already hold to identify the customer, and prioritize and personalize the interaction accordingly. This can include the status level of particular customers, products and services they have currently, history of past interactions and customer preferences.

Mobility and contextual data — a case study

A real-world example illustrates the usefulness of mobile devices in delivering timely contextual data. For cable TV / Internet / phone companies, many customer service calls that are typically handled by live agents, such as resetting the set top box, can be easily solved by directing customers to take a few simple steps. In many cases, the most time-consuming part of the call involves the agent collecting information from the customer, such as account names and numbers and serial numbers, then walking a customer through steps he or she has already completed. This can result in a frustrated customer.

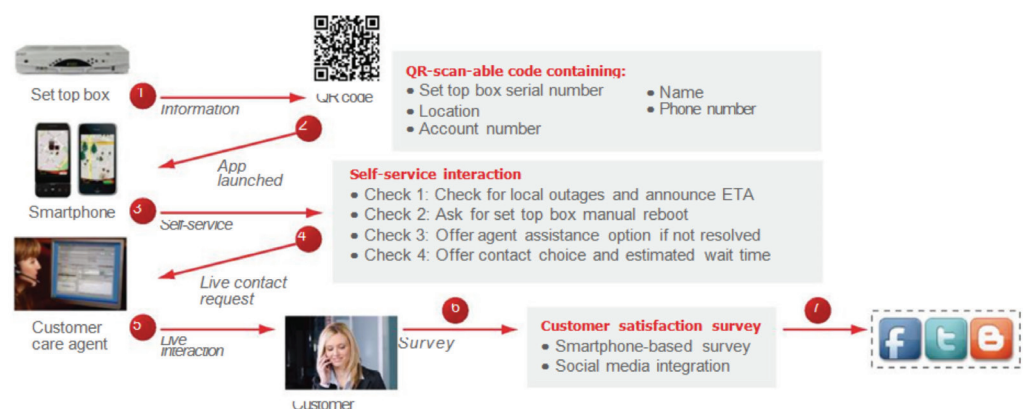


Figure 3: A cable provider uses contextual customer data to enhance customer support journey

In comparison, a mobile app exists today that allows customers to scan a quick response (QR) code attached to their cable set top box using their mobile device. The app collects relevant account and serial number information, and offers the customer self-service advice, such as checking for a service outage or resetting the box. At any time, the customer can request assistance from the cable company by



simply selecting the app option for live assistance. This allows the customer to maintain control of their experience by automatically escalating to live assistance using the most appropriate contact channel, if and when they need it.

When a contact center receives the contact request, contextual information the app has captured during the interaction is made available. This data could include a description of the problem, self-service steps the customer has already taken and photos the customer attached to the request. The contact center's communications systems can assess that contextual data, along with insights gleaned from the company's own customer database and external third-party information, and intelligently route the contact to the best-qualified agent. The system might even be programmed to assign a higher priority to that customer based on the time the customer has already spent trying to solve the issue. After the live interaction, the cable company can send a survey to the customer's mobile device to measure the success of the service interaction.

The possibilities are virtually endless.

Benefits of a seamless, effortless mobile experience

Businesses can expect easily measurable and quantifiable return on investment (ROI), as well as reputational or brand-enhancement benefits, from expanding contact center access to mobile devices.

The biggest benefit of an integrated mobile experience is the impact on the customer experience. Other benefits include:

- Increased customer satisfaction and loyalty — mobility translates into convenience, speed of service and more first-contact resolutions, which in turn contribute to satisfied customers.
- Improved brand perception — early adopters of mobility capabilities will stand out from their slower competitors and customers are more likely to reward this innovation with word-of-mouth and social promotion.
- Operational improvements such as:
 - reduced traffic into the contact center as more routine transactions are handled through mobile self service, and
 - more accurate routing and reductions in talk time by using the rich contextual data from mobile interactions to make better routing decisions, better equip agents, etc.

- Reduced development and support costs - having a single environment for managing the customer experience across the set of supported channels can not only simplify the management and support of the environment but reduce costs as well.

Now is the time for mobility in contact centers

Businesses cannot afford to ignore the impact that mobility in general, and context services specifically, can have on their contact centers. Successfully integrating mobile applications into the organization's customer experience strategy and processes translates to convenience, speed of service, and higher first contact resolutions. Those are vital ingredients for dramatically enhancing the customer experience and customer lifetime value. Early adopters will stand out from the competition, and customers are sure to notice and share their positive experiences.

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