

Effective workflow for a multi-channel CX strategy



Expectations for customer experience (CX) continue to rise. Customers compare their experience with your business to their best experiences within and outside your industry. They expect simple requests to be taken care of quickly, and continue to reward brands whose agents succeed in resolving complex issues. Providing customers with options for how to get in touch of course makes sense but, in the end – they just want their issues resolved.

In this CCMA Good Practice Guide we outline how, instead of just offering new contact channels, organisations also need to focus on making sure that their existing channels work well. This means ensuring that your multi-channel CX strategy connects right across the business, automating customer journeys and processes across multiple teams for a much faster resolution. And this increasingly depends on having smart digital workflows in place to underpin your customer service.

Channel proliferation alone isn't the answer

Having multiple channels sounds great, but only if they are all configured to support customers with an effortless experience that can either resolve issues automatically or connect them directly with someone who can. But no two organisations are the same, and there isn't an optimum channel blend that works for all customers.

A recent survey of contact preferences across the marketing, sales and service elements of the customer journey identified 13 separate channels that customers said they would use to engage with organisations. However, the mix of channels varied according to where

customers were on in their journey. And, while website access was the key preference for marketing and sales, email remained the channel of choice after voice for 62% of respondents.

Demonstrating multi-channel CX complexity

Email provides a good example of the potential disconnects that often sit at the core of multi-channel CX. Despite proving a key customer service channel – particularly for people in the 35 to 75 age demographic – research shows that up to six out of ten organisations don't respond to emails sent to their customer support operations. Email response times typically average over 12 hours and, of those organisations that do reply, only one in five are able to fully resolve customer issues raised via email on the first reply.

Offering customer support via email is clearly difficult to manage and scale, with email requests typically costing up to 5x more to process internally than equivalent bot-based messaging interactions. That's why building and maintaining the right workflows needs to be at the heart

of any successful multi-channel CX strategy. This can often require the fixing of broken, manual processes and the opening of information silos in other parts of the business that often hamper a CX operation's ability to respond and interact with customers promptly.

Bringing front, middle and back offices together

Many customer issues still require assistance from colleagues outside of the contact centre. This means that advisors spend too much time identifying and assigning customer issues directly to other departments - such as field service, engineering, operations, logistics, finance or legal. They also must keep track of these interactions through to resolution. Far better if these requests were routed straight through to the part of the organisation that's best placed to deal with issues immediately. Better still for customers to be given access to the information or updates they need to resolve those queries themselves.

This kind of direct, rapid handling of interactions goes far deeper than discussions around channel preference. But with the right customer workflows in place – automated, multi-step processes built on a true task-routing foundation – you can start to scale your customer service responses through both enhanced digital customer service and much greater advisor effectiveness.

Five CX workflow best practices to follow

Adopting an effective workflow approach will require a solution that brings front, middle and back offices together – proactively addressing customer issues and automating the handling of common customer requests. This will require an increased application of self-service with automated solutions, a renewed focus on helping customers to complete requests and get answers fast, and a clear commitment to supporting advisors with the right empowerment, skillsets and training to deal with higher value customer queries. Successful workflow strategies will combine:

- **Completing common requests efficiently** – reducing advisor workloads by resolving simpler contacts through integrated virtual agent support.

- **Advisor empowerment with data and productivity tools** – advisors need easier access to key people, processes and information across the business.
- **Automatic issue resolution** – with automated workflows that route cases directly to the advisors or operational departments that are best placed to handle requests.
- **Connecting customer service operations to the rest of the organisation** – everyone involved needs to be able to track and manage the progress of requests from initial contact through to resolution.
- **Helping customers find answers quickly** – with automated self-service capabilities that give customers much better control over their experience.

Establishing workflows beyond the contact centre

Digital workflows extend service beyond the contact centre to automate customer engagement across departments, and provide the foundation for a more joined-up customer experience. Deployed smartly, workflow-based CX can start to build a virtuous circle of benefits that combine to create a multiplier effect for organisations.

The automation from self-service and tighter integration can lead directly to reduced customer hand-offs, improved AHT as well as greater 24x7 service coverage. Proactively addressing customer issues and handling requests faster will lead to an improved customer experience and greater satisfaction, while advisors also benefit from a fall in low-value interactions – leaving them more time to focus on complex customer issues. Organisations will also benefit from the productivity improvements enabled by reduced case volumes and costs.

Learn more at: servicenow.com/customer-workflows