

How to Implement a Successful Omni-channel Strategy and Solution

By VONAGE STAFF

Now, more than ever, deploying an effective omni-channel strategy is critical to business success. According to research by the Aberdeen Group, companies with strong omni-channel customer engagement retain an average 89 percent of their customers, compared to just 33 percent for those companies without.

Although many market solutions claim to offer a complete omni-channel solution, most fail. They focus on digital channels while excluding voice in the contact center. As a result, businesses end up with an inferior multi-channel approach, rather than a true omni-channel solution.

If your business is looking to deliver a more complete customer experience, this poses two questions: What elements should you consider as you develop your omni-channel strategy? And what do you need to look for in your solution?

Chat, social media, mobile apps and social media are all essential to modern customer service. However, by neglecting voice in the channel mix, the contact center is at risk of becoming disconnected from digital channels. Customers will struggle to find the human support they need, agents won't have a full picture of past transactions and management will lack the visibility needed to boost the customer experience (CX).

This means a successful omni-channel solution must address the needs of the three main stakeholders in any CX relationship: Customers, agents and managers.

Customers

There will always be make-or-break moments in the business-customer relationship that require the skills of a human agent. With digital channels set to handle common and easy-to-solve service problems, this means agents will increasingly be left to deal with more complex and emotionally charged issues. Consequently, omni-channel solutions must provide a seamless customer experience across digital channels and include clear escalation paths to voice.

Agents

Every omni-channel solution should consider the agent experience, enabling the same consistency provided to customers. Agents managing digital and voice channels should have complete visibility of cross-channel interaction history. They should also be able to use a single interface for all operations and not need to switch between platforms to handle the different channels.

Management

Ensuring your omni-channel solution employs a single routing engine for all digital and voice channels is essential for sales and service managers. Ideally, the solution should tightly integrate with your CRM, providing a solitary source of truth for all interactions and data. This will allow managers to implement overarching KPIs while accessing timely insights for applying training, forecasting and scheduling that boosts CX.

Employed correctly, a single routing engine will allow managers to use a common intelligent routing system. Governing all channels, this will allow your business to control and prioritize which agents receive which interactions.

The four-step checklist for finding a successful omni-channel solution

To make sure customers, agents and managers are catered for, there are four key areas you need to consider when comparing and contrasting omni-channel providers: Channels supported, the role of your CRM, handling of routing and data visibility.

Channels supported

Self-service technologies such as chatbots offer customers 24/7 accessibility and businesses speed and scalability. Despite these benefits, a trusted human advisor still trumps a machine in the most difficult customer service scenarios. Whatever capabilities your solution offers, voice channels must be included to offer a truly dependable omni-channel experience.

The role of your CRM

Businesses should not have to choose between their CRM and contact center solutions to enable conversations to seamlessly flow across channels to deliver a consistent experience.

Connected customers enter and exit conversations across channels. As they move from social to a chatbot and then to voice, it's crucial that you maintain the context between every interaction. Ensuring your provider draws on the same CRM-sourced data for voice and digital channels is, therefore, key to equipping agents with the insight needed to deliver a consistent customer experience.

Handling of routing

Most multi-channel contact centers use a queue-based routing system for inbound calls. Employing a single routing engine for all your digital and voice channels means your omni-channel provider should be able to help you deploy skills-based routing.

When a customer interacts with your business, if you need to escalate a complex query to voice, this means you will be able to match the customer with the rep best suited to meet their needs. The upshot is that hold times are reduced, customers don't get passed around agents, and rates of satisfaction soar.

Data visibility

For complete visibility to manage your business, consolidated real-time and historic reporting for customer interactions is essential. Moving to an omni-channel solution, your provider must place CRM integration at the heart of your operation.

Creating this clarity allows managers to understand interaction activity across all channels, with satisfaction scores, first contact resolution (FCR) and activity KPIs all tracked together. This level of data visibility means your business can spot opportunities and challenges early, solve problems quickly, and access the insight needed to keep agents motivated.

Concluding thoughts

The contact center stands at the forefront of managing customer relationships. As self-service and digital channels are used increasingly to handle simple requests, agents will be needed to diffuse the complex and make-or-break service scenarios. In this shifting context, voice remains a crucial channel and a fundamental part of any omni-channel solution. When picking a provider, channels supported, CRM, routing, and data visibility are subsequently crucial to ensuring the needs of customers, agents and managers are catered for.

Please fill out the form and we will be in touch with you shortly.

1.844.324.0340
