

Improving Customer Experience with the Third Wave of Enterprise Communications

An eBook by Blake Morgan



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Customers have made it clear: experience matters more than price. In fact, many experts predict that in the coming years, brands will be competing almost solely on customer experience rather than price¹. Customers are willing to pay more for a better experience, but very few companies have the technology and processes to enable the engagements that drive best-in-class customer experiences². In order to deliver superior customer experience, organizations need to evolve beyond their historical approaches and differentiate through more intelligent, collaborative, and simple employee and customer engagement.

One of the quickest ways to ruin a customer experience is to ask customers to repeat themselves or to fail to have answers at hand. Most companies have fragmented infrastructures with disparate solutions for voice, contact center, collaboration and conferencing, which result in incomplete customer views, lengthy time to resolution, and overall dissatisfaction for both customers and the employees serving them. More importantly, these disparate systems lack the contextual information from current as well as prior interactions and systems of record data (e.g. CRM, ERP, Billing, etc), requiring customers to repeat themselves and leading to tremendous frustration. Likewise, when contact center agents work in silo's with no support from peers or subject matter experts, their most likely answer to customers' complex questions is "I don't know."

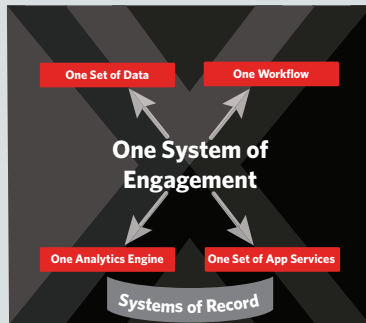
Having a robust employee communication and collaboration solution is fundamental to solving these challenges and delivering exceptional customer experience. Employees responsible for customer service and contact center operations using disparate systems with disjointed customer data only invites confusion for the customer. Customers expect superior service, which comes from being able to solve their problems quickly however and whenever they choose to engage. Companies that can create an integrated and efficient communications, collaboration and engagement system can differentiate themselves from their competition.

EXPERIENCE

- 1 Beerman, Joanna. "14 Customer Experience Stats That Just Might Blow Your Mind." Salesforce, 1 May 2017, www.salesforce.com/blog/2017/05/14-retail-customer-experience-stats.html.
- 2 Moore, Michele. "8 in 10 Consumers willing to pay more for a better customer experience as big business falls short on expectations." Capgemini, 28 June 2017, www.capgemini.com/news/8-in-10-consumers-willing-to-pay-more-for-a-better-customer-experience-as-big-business-falls/.

Wave 3

One Cloud Engagement Solution
All customers and Employees
Interactions







Wave 2

Point Cloud Products
Comms, Collaboration,
Contact Center



Wave 1

-  On-Premise
-  Telephony
-  Video Conferencing
-  Contact Center

Waves 1 and 2 of Enterprise Communications

For the most part, companies recognize the need to deliver a compelling customer experience³. But many companies simply don't have the tools to do it. More interaction intelligence is needed between employees and customers.

The old ways of thinking about and addressing customer experience are simply outdated. In Wave 1 of enterprise communications, employee and customer engagement software was on-premises with contact center, telephony and video conferencing requiring significant upfront capital expenses and highly customized solutions that were complex to implement, maintain and scale. These systems were expensive and predated today's mobile-first world. These systems also often operated independently, creating challenges for customers looking to easily move from one communication mode to another with all contextual data shared. For example, a one-to-one call between a contact center agent and a customer can be easily escalated to a video conference with a subject matter expert to quickly solve a customer's issue. These disjointed systems required custom integration, wasting significant time and resources and resulting in missed opportunities.

Wave 2 represented the move to the cloud, with a series of point cloud products that each worked within a limited functional footprint. These cloud delivery offerings, such as unified communications, video meetings, messaging, and contact center as a service, was a step in the right direction, as organizations received quality point solutions that led to both increased productivity and lower total cost of ownership. However, each system still worked on its own and integration was complex and costly. Employees and customers were able to interact through cloud telephony or messaging, but that interaction was siloed both in terms of the experience as well as where the data around that experience was stored. As a result, gaining insights that spanned both systems of engagement with systems of records proved very challenging for organizations. Likewise, customers would often have to repeat themselves every time they engaged with an organization, whether that be around a new issue or as a result of moving from one channel of communication to another.

³ Frichou, Flora. "5 Reasons Why Customer Experience Is The Pulse Of Every Business." Trust Pilot, 23 Aug. 2017, blog.trustpilot.com/blog/5-reasons-why-customer-experience-is-the-pulse-of-every-business.

Introducing Wave 3 of Enterprise Communications: Enterprise Engagement Management

Wave 3 of enterprise communications recognizes that the point solutions of the prior two waves failed to meet customer's expectations and introduces a new approach to improve customer experience through Enterprise Engagement Management. It alleviates the problems from the previous two waves by using innovative technology for intelligent employee and customer engagement.

Today's modern customers expect consistently great experiences, and it can only happen with an Enterprise Engagement Management system that puts customers first and makes them central to everything the company does. Customers can tell when they are valued by a brand by how they are addressed, how easy it is to have a question answered, and the attitude and knowledge of employees. This system makes it simple for customers to have a great experience no matter how they contact the brand or what their issue is. Customer experience is built based on a combination of experiences, not a single interaction, so brands should work to make sure every experience delights customers and adds to their positive feelings about the brand.

In an integrated Enterprise Engagement Management system, all aspects of employee and customer engagement are integrated in a connected experience. Instead of multiple systems, there is one system of engagement that includes one set of data, analytics engine, workflow engine, and communications, collaboration and customer engagement solution.

An intelligent and integrated system leads to revenue acceleration and increased productivity. Instead of wasting time integrating multiple point solutions to create a one set of data, the system has data from every customer and employee engagement in one place to create personalized experiences. Organizations are able to leverage artificial intelligence type solutions like natural language processing and speech analytics to capture the voice of the customer and spot trends enabling them to move quickly as customer needs change. Enterprise Engagement Management moves companies towards business process automation to efficiently use their resources. 8x8 is one of the first companies to introduce the notion of Enterprise Engagement Management—this is a new category that will transform how brands interact with its employees, partners and customers.

In order to create superior employee and customer experiences, customers need to be able to contact a brand on any channel and have their context and history known. Employees should be able to harness the collective wisdom of their subject matter experts and employees more generally to resolve customer problems on the first call. Advanced analytics should leverage all engagement and systems of record data so that there can be continuous improvement



enabling each interaction to be better than the last. Brands will continuously learn more about each customer's preferences and construct a personal, context-rich discussion with each and every interaction. In the first and second waves, this company-wide access and insight was nearly impossible. A customer could contact the brand through the call center to work through an issue. However, if the customer was transferred to an employee outside of the call center then the rest of the interaction would be lost to the call center plus the employee wouldn't have a record of the previous interactions or know anything about the customer's history with the brand. Instead of fixing the issue quickly, precious time would be wasted as the customer had to explain everything again to get the right information or resolve the issue.

With Enterprise Engagement Management, communications, collaboration and customer engagement is integrated with all interactions across the organization stored in one place. Communication and collaboration channels are integrated, so employees and customers can engage through whatever method they prefer and quickly be routed to someone who can answer their questions. Systems of record, such as CRM, billing and help desk, are integrated so getting all the contextual information around a customer is easy. Instead of having to wait on hold for the right person, the entire system is integrated for an intelligent employee and customer experience. The data from all employee, partner and customer interactions is also stored in a central system, which means customers don't have to continuously repeat themselves, and their history and preferences are easily available for everyone in the company to see. With this integrated

system, being able to fix an issue on the first phone call to the customer's satisfaction has a much higher probability.

Enterprise Engagement Management can have a huge impact on customer experience by making interactions consistently high quality. Uniting all interaction data in a common source gives employees the contextual insights to better help customers, and it allows customers to have positive communication with the brand. Customer experience is all about the perception customers have of a brand—using an Enterprise Engagement Management system fuels customer perceptions of a company that cares about its customers, takes advantage of new technology, and values its customers' time. A brand's contact center is often at the center of the larger, overall customer journey so being able to derive data intelligence at every step of that journey is critical. For example, a customer shopping for a specific item of clothing calls into a contact center. With access to the ERP data, the contact center agent is able to find the closest store that has the item in stock and transfers the call which leads to a physical in-store sale. Prior to Enterprise Engagement Management, the ability to turn the contact center call into an actual sale would be difficult to achieve. With Enterprise Engagement Management, companies have the data and insights for both easy call resolution as well as complete visibility into the customer journey.

The system also works wonders with employees. To create a strong employee experience, employees need cross-channel visibility, real-time access to systems of record and systems of engagement, and the ability to anticipate needs. It is frustrating for employees to not have access

to the information they need and to not be able to do what they were hired to do—providing a compelling customer experience. With real-time access, employees are empowered to help the company reach its goals and to assist customers in any way they can.

What Brands Can Do

Enterprise Engagement Management seems to be a great solution, but it can be overwhelming for companies to try to adopt it. The first step is for companies to think about employee and customer experience as a complete picture. Instead of compartmentalizing it and putting the contact center in one area, order processing in another area, and in-store experience in another area, everything should work together and be thought of as pieces to the same puzzle.

With the right mindset in place, brands should adopt the right tools for Enterprise Engagement Management. These include cohesive systems that can manage all of the ins and outs of employee and customer engagement. Companies like 8x8 are one of the first in the industry to identify and define the opportunity companies have with Enterprise Engagement Management to transform their employee and customer experiences. Hiring a reliable outside vendor makes it easy for companies to be able to provide a strong customer experience.

BRAND

Customer experience is all about the perception.

CASE STUDIES

iCruise

With a goal of consistently exceeding customer expectations, iCruise.com, part of WMPH Vacations, wants customers to call in to get the best experience. Many customers start their cruise booking journey online or through the app for the company's many brands, but most end up calling for a personalized experience. As the company grew, its old phone system didn't grow with it.

The new enterprise engagement management system from 8x8 allows employees to work from anywhere, and about half of WMPH's employees work remotely⁴. The all-in-one solution combines hosted phone service and a hosted call center and integrates with WMPH's internal CRM system, so agents can instantly see what brand the customer is calling about and get a built-in script for every call. Customers who call on a number designated for Caribbean cruises get a different greeting than customers who call on a number for Alaskan cruises. Agents are equipped to ask qualifying questions to get the customer to the right place and help serve them faster. Agents can also reach out to customers easily, such as calling right before or right after their cruise. All the information is housed in the same place, which makes it easy to know when and how to contact customers.

The integrated system also tracks customers' booking histories and preferences. Many customers build connections with certain agents, which can be noted in their profiles so the right agent can take the call. Instead of focusing solely on transactions, call center agents can focus on building relationships and strengthening the customer experience.



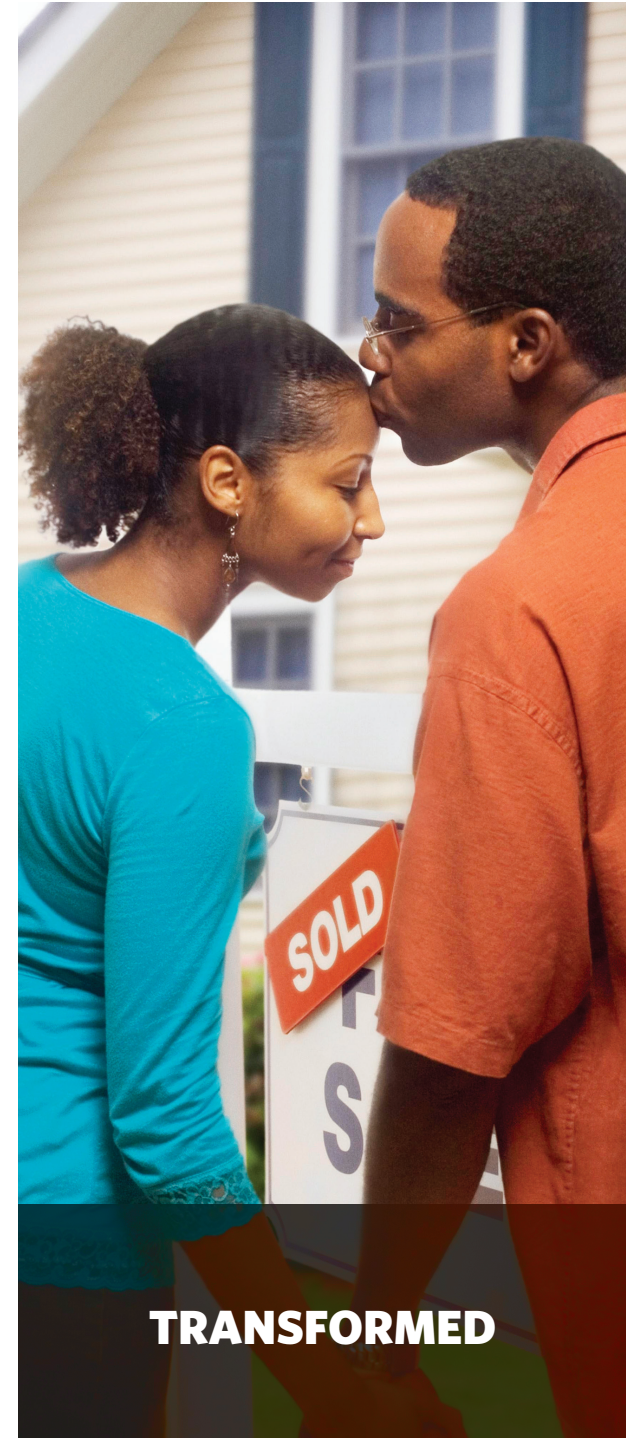
⁴ "Hosted Phone Service and Call Center Software Keeps iCruise.Com Sailing." 8x8, www.8x8.com/resources/customers/icruise.

Movement Mortgage

When the fastest-growing mortgage loan company made the switch from a traditional system to a virtual office of enterprise engagement management, the entire company was transformed. The company stands out with its mission to “love and value people”, but it needed technology that kept up with growth and allowed employees to deliver a strong customer experience.

In less than ten years, the company grew from just four employees to more than 3,500, and its old telephony system couldn't keep up with the growth. Even a hybrid environment of four operation centers and 400 branches across the country had issues with poor call quality and latency, which was a major hindrance to the company's customer experience. Instead of working on its main responsibilities and helping scale the company, the IT department spent 20% of its time working on phone-related issues⁵. The phone system was meant to support a company of 500 people, not one with more than 3,000 employees⁶.

With the new connected solution, each of the company's branches that were previously working individually are now connected under a cloud communications platform. That means everyone in the company is connected and things can move intelligently through the loan process. No matter where employees are or device being used, they can deliver a continuous communications experience that keeps them up to date in real time and helps provide customers with the most accurate and consistent information. Hundreds of new employees join the company each month, and they can now be easily on-boarded and get up-to-date training to jump right in and deliver on Movement Mortgage's mission.



TRANSFORMED

⁵ "Movement Mortgage Chooses 8x8 Enterprise Cloud Communications to Support Rapid Company Growth." 8x8, <https://www.8x8.com/resources/customers/movement-mortgage>.

⁶ Schultz, Beth. "Cloud Comms Makes Movement Mortgage Happy." No Jitter, 9 Aug. 2016, www.nojitter.com/post/240171877/cloud-comms-makes-movement-mortgage-happy.



FLEXIBILITY

IWG

IWG is the leading global provider of flexible workspaces. Its companies help more than 2.5 million people and their businesses to work more productively, by providing a choice of professional, inspiring and collaborative workspaces, communities and services. The company has a network of more than 3,100 workspace centres, across 1,000 cities and towns, in more than 110 countries worldwide. Its companies include Regus, Spaces, No18, Basepoint, Signature and Open Office. IWG customers are individuals, start-ups, small and medium-sized enterprises, and large multinationals across all industries. IWG uses its contact center as the main channel for its business. To support its 24/7 contact center capability that allows agents to continuously serve customers from wherever they are, the company needed a reliable and integrated communications management system.

The cloud-based communications system from 8x8 is now in virtual contact centers in 100 countries across six continents and provides an integrated and reliable customer communication experience⁷. IWG has been able to expand its operations now that it has a system it can trust.

The new system is not only driving business growth but also helping customers. A cloud-based solution allows IWG to offer an innovative and cost-effective collaboration service to its customers. The tools have created a flexible and productive customer experience where they can communicate with the brand through a number of channels that all get them the same information. Customers can easily switch between chat, messaging, and voice as they move across multiple networks, which allows IWG to offer the same flexibility to its clients that the clients have in their own offices.

Without a cohesive Enterprise Engagement Management system, companies will never be able to create the best employee and customer experience. Experience matters to customers more than price, and companies that don't put a focus on customer experience will never be able to compete in today's fast-paced and customer-driven world. Customers can easily get frustrated when having to work through different systems or getting different answers or experiences depending on how they contact a brand.

CONCLUSION

⁷ "Regus and 8x8 - A Partnership in Global Business Growth."
8x8, www.8x8.com/resources/customers/regus.

AUTHOR



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Blake Morgan is a customer experience futurist, keynote speaker and author of the book “More Is More: How The Best Companies Go Farther And Work Harder To Create Knock Your Socks Off Customer Experiences.”

Without a cohesive Enterprise Engagement Management system, companies will never be able to create the best employee and customer experience. Experience matters to customers more than price, and companies that don't put a focus on customer experience will never be able to compete in today's fast-paced and customer-driven world. Customers can easily get frustrated when having to work through different systems or getting different answers or experiences depending on how they contact a brand. Companies need to be proactive in getting the right tools to guarantee a consistently high-quality customer experience. Investing in a integrated system of engagement where employees are intelligently connected with real-time customer data will pay off with increased efficiency, empowered employees, and satisfied customers.

About 8x8

8x8, Inc. (NYSE:EGHT) is a leading provider of global cloud communications and customer engagement solutions to over a million business users worldwide. A pioneer in the cloud communications space, 8x8 helps companies transform their customer experience by putting the collective intelligence of the organization in the hands of every employee, with capabilities like instant teaming, intelligent call routing, proactive issue resolution and insight-driven engagement.

