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The Truth About What Customers Want in a Digital World

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New study reveals human nature drives customer loyalty



Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is changing the entire business landscape. Gartner predicts that in 2018, AI will create more jobs than it eliminates, and in 2020 it will become a positive net job motivator, creating half a million new jobs.

Companies that are implementing AI solutions are recognizing operational efficiencies across the organization, including within their customer service departments. Mastercard allows customers to inquire about account transactions via its Facebook Messenger bot, while Amazon Alexa acts as a virtual assistant from right inside consumers' homes. And hotels like Hilton are deploying concierge robots to enhance the guest experience.

The uses for AI are proving to be vast, with more organizations implementing AI solutions than ever. A recent report found that 61 percent of businesses implemented AI solutions in 2017, up from

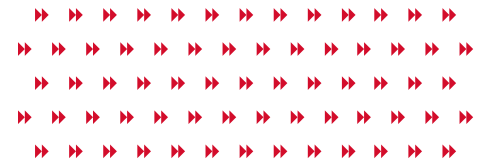
38 percent in 2016. And employees view this as a positive change.

But what about customers? Do companies know how new technologies are affecting their customer experience? While rapid innovation is critical to maintaining a competitive edge, the focus has now been placed too squarely on emerging technologies to deliver exceptional customer experiences. Companies shouldn't stop investing in new technology, but must also recognize that customer loyalty is driven by human nature.

This report from customer engagement and analytics software provider Calabrio includes responses from more than 3,000 consumers in the U.S. and U.K. about the customer experience journey, and what motivates them.

The findings are clear: human nature is how customers think, feel and act—and it drives their digital behavior. To gain their

loyalty, customers should feel heard and have an emotional attachment to the brand—and that can only be created through the human connection.



Down with the mundane



41% of contact center agents agree that new technology implementations mean that humans will have fewer administrative and routine tasks.



Source: *The Health of the Contact Center: Agent Well-Being in a Customer-Centric Era*



“True loyalty doesn't come because of an app. It doesn't come because you have a punch card where after ten punches you get a free sandwich. It is about the relationship. Take away those “perks” and would the customer still be loyal?”

- ***Shep Hyken, Chief Amazement Officer at Shepard Presentations***



Want Customer Loyalty? Appeal to Customer Emotions

Retaining customers and earning their loyalty is more difficult than the initial acquisition. Building that loyalty requires continued engagement and delivering on brand promises. Of course, customers want quality products and services, but beyond quality, purchasing behavior is all emotional. For companies, this means digging into how customers think, feel and behave—and using that information to design meaningful, relevant experiences.

Quality goods matter more than price.

- 61% said a great product or service is the best way to earn their loyalty
- 58% are driven to complain if a product or service wasn't what they expected
- 45% said they buy on price alone
- 20% reported they would complain if the prices weren't competitive

While customers are pragmatic with their pocketbooks, emotions are often more powerful and companies should cater to both sides of the equation. A poor experience or making it too difficult to speak with a human will elicit negative feelings, which can quickly torpedo loyalty and drive customers to complain, and worse, attrition.

Customers want to be heard, and they want to create an emotional connection with brands. By putting a human on the other end of the line, companies can meet customer wants, needs and emotions.



Have your customers' back



50% said loyalty is earned when companies listen and act on a complaint

48% are more loyal when they can get a hold of a company quickly and easily

Are you delivering?

43% would complain if the experience wasn't delivered as promised

31% are driven to complain if they feel like they're not being heard

35% would be critical of a business if it was too difficult to speak with a human



Your People Drive the Bottom Line

To get customers the help they need quickly, many companies are turning to chatbots or other self-service options. In the meantime, many customers crave human interaction.

But don't just focus on the phone. Companies should address individual customer preferences, depending on what customers need at the time, which requires them to be available across communication channels. Not only does this provide more options for the customer, it opens up new opportunities for companies to analyze human behavior and use that information to enhance the overall experience.

However, the phone still reigns supreme. The ability to pick up the phone and talk to a human isn't just efficient, it builds rapport.

Seventy-nine percent of customers believe interacting with a human versus a chatbot or other digital self-service channel is a sign of good customer service. It's also critical to a company's credibility.



Customers are emotionally driven. When they have the option to speak with contact center agents, the agents cultivate a personal connection that keeps customers coming back.

When customers call, it's likely that they're purposefully bypassing self-service channels because they want help from a person. And that's when well-trained, empathetic agents make a big difference.

Companies must be anywhere and everywhere. While 58% percent of customers believe that picking up the phone and talking to a representative is the way to get the best and most efficient service, customers prefer different methods depending on what they're trying to accomplish:

- 23% said email
- 10% said website
- 7% said social media



We need to talk

74% are more loyal to a company if they can speak to someone

54% don't trust their issue will be addressed if there's no option to speak to a representative

If there is no option to speak with a person, the company's reputation and business is on the line

43% would consider switching to a competitor

37% would question the legitimacy of the company

46% feel the company really doesn't want their business

People get results

60% feel like their voices are heard when they speak to a live person

56% think their issue will actually get solved

53% believe the issue will be resolved quickly



EXTRACT MEANING AND VALUE FROM EVERY CONVERSATION

Customer data is flowing in through the contact center, but many businesses are failing to capture all this data, and they're missing out on critical customer insights. Too often, companies rely on just one data point, such as customer surveys, to inform business decisions. However, this information alone rarely provides an accurate or complete picture of the customer base because surveys attract those with the strongest opinions, whether extremely satisfied or unsatisfied. In fact, 39 percent of C-level decision makers admit they rely too heavily on just one data point.

With text and speech analytics, companies can unlock a rich source of information about customer sentiment, wants and needs. Conversations are captured, categorized, and then analyzed so businesses can use the insights to make better decisions such as adjusting marketing, sales or product strategies.



Innovation is Critical, but it Must Focus on the Customer

To stay competitive, companies must innovate using new technology. Customers know that innovation is necessary, and they're willing to adopt new tools. However, as companies continue to implement technology, they must keep customer connection at the heart of every strategy.

As AI and other technologies become more common, customers are conscious of the shift. Forty-eight percent note that they've experienced non-human interactions within the last six months. While customers are aware of this new technology, it must prove its worth every step of the way. If technology becomes a source of frustration, customer churn follows.

THE CUSTOMER MUST BENEFIT

76% think that technology helps create a good customer experience. But they don't care unless they see the benefit: Almost half (48%) of respondents only think innovation is important if it improves customer service.

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Stop Chasing and Start Listening

With so many technology options, it's easy to get caught up in the next deployment. To succeed in a digital world, technology must enable human workers to be available to listen and be effective when customers need them most.

Companies must engage customers the right way, at the right time, and on the right channel in order to keep pace with the ever-changing demands of today's digital-savvy consumers.

A Competitive Advantage



Agents are on the frontlines of the customer experience

Unlike technology, they have the power to listen and empathize

They can enhance the customer journey every step of the way

CASE STUDY: FOR A LEADING WIRELESS CARRIER, AGENT SATISFACTION EQUALS A BETTER CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

A top-rated wireless carrier provides no-contract cellphones and service plans primarily to individuals aged 50 and older. With nearly three million customers, the company receives one million inbound inquiries per month, mostly via phone. Recently the company found that agent stress levels and attrition were high due to scheduling challenges—and it was affecting the customer experience. After implementing the Calabrio ONE platform, the company uncovered insights on scheduling that led to real-time staffing decisions and reduced agent attrition.

Calabrio has helped the company decrease agent attrition and implement initiatives that boost employee morale and engagement. Scheduling features ensure the contact center is never overstaffed or understaffed, which relieves stress for both agents and managers.

With Calabrio ONE, the company empowers agents to self-manage their performance via self-assessment, peer-to-peer mentoring and dashboards that clearly display performance metrics. These changes have positively impacted its Voice of the Customer (VoC) score, which the company uses to correlate employee engagement to customer experience.

Benefits

- Forecast accuracy is now at +/- 5%
- Employee engagement is up by 25%
- Team morale is up
- Shorter customer hold times
- Higher customer satisfaction ratings

YOUR CUSTOMERS MATTER, BUT SO DO YOUR AGENTS

Contact center agents are your company's biggest advocates, and they act as a bridge to your customers. It's important to give them tools and flexibility so they are empowered and fulfilled in their roles. By involving agents in overarching business decisions and giving them the right feedback to make critical improvements, they'll be more motivated and capable of building relationships that benefit the bottom line. [Learn more](#) about how happy employees lead to delighted customers.





Listen Up: It's Time to Hear What Your Customers Have to Say

There's no way around it: technology will continue to permeate the business landscape and will bring incredible benefits to organizations all over the world. As companies look for ways to innovate, they can't lose sight of the fact that, to build the emotional connection that creates loyalty, they must listen to their customers. But what does that look like in an increasingly digital world?

AUDIT YOUR TECHNOLOGY STACK FOR OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE

In the race to innovate and operationalize routine functions, companies are always on the lookout for the latest and greatest solutions. However, that doesn't address the existing technology stack.

By performing a complete audit, organizations can build a comprehensive tech stack that takes a people-first approach—and ultimately allows them to hear what customers are saying.

Questions to ask about the technology stack:

- What were the original goals of the implementation? Have those goals changed?
- How does it map to the current customer journey?
- Could this solution be a source of customer frustration?
- Does it make the process of getting to a human easier or more cumbersome?

TAP INTO THE CONVERSATION

From phone conversations to email messages, every interaction with customers is important. However, phone conversations are the strongest tools companies have to build a relationship with customers. If companies aren't analyzing those interactions, they're missing out on understanding customer sentiment. With speech analytics, companies can turn unstructured voice data into rich insights. When those insights are married with data from chat, email and any other channel, companies can finally gain a comprehensive view of the customer.

Why analytics matter.

- Learn about customer wants and needs quickly
- Analyze sentiment and match it to action to understand what customers say versus what they do
- Find out if there's a problem—and determine how to fix it—on a small and large scale
- Take direct customer feedback to every department across the organization

FOCUS ON YOUR PEOPLE.

Customers matter. But so do the people on the other end of the line. It's time that companies focused on the people who are engaging customers every day: the agents in the contact center. [Tweet this](#)

Equip and empower.

- Give agents the right tools to be effective, such as interaction analytics and time management capabilities
- Offer exceptional training and rapid feedback to keep them on the path to success
- Treat them like the knowledge workers they are—ask for their input when it comes to voice-of-the-customer projects
- Empower them with the flexibility to empathize and resolve customer complaints by offering refunds or vouchers to upset customers

*This research was commissioned through VI.GA consulting via surveys with more than 3,000 U.S. and U.K. consumers in May 2018.

About Calabrio

Calabrio is a customer engagement software company that provides analytic insights to catalyze growth through customer service contact centers. The Calabrio ONE® software suite empowers everyone in an organization, from contact center agents to the CEO, with easy-to-use tools that provide a better understanding of the customer. Every customer interaction yields insights that expand customer consciousness, which is how leading companies now drive growth and long-term corporate prosperity.

Calabrio ONE is a unified workforce optimization (WFO) software suite—including call recording, quality management, workforce management, voice-of-the-customer (VoC) analytics and advanced reporting—that transforms the contact center into a customer engagement center and a valuable source of customer insight.



Call
Recording

The clean and simple way to capture every customer voice—across every channel. Create a unified view of the customer, see the big picture with new clarity and leverage comprehensive voice-of-the-customer data to drive key business objectives.



Quality
Management

Highly automated and efficient evaluation of 100% of your customer interactions. Shorten feedback loops and target training to drive better agent performance that directly improves customer satisfaction.



Workforce
Management

Smart forecasting, scheduling and admin tools that drive elevated WFM strategies. Efficiently predict and respond to dynamic customer call volume and deliver a consistently outstanding contact center experience.



Calabrio
Analytics

Sophisticated speech and text analytics engines that harness the voice of the customer—and intuitive outputs that bring that data to life. Leverage predictive and prescriptive insights to deliver value to sales, marketing, IT, product development and business development teams.



Advanced
Reporting

Amazingly integrated reporting and analytics tools that integrate customer and business data from across the organization. Break down data silos, eliminate tedious reporting, visualize critical metrics and see the full story your data tells.

Find more at calabrio.com

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