

Cloud-Based Customer Communication Management

Cloud CCM

It is hard to avoid the buzz around “The Cloud” these days, and for good reason. Using the cloud to access information, storage and services can dramatically lower your costs, improve flexibility and workflow, and bring about better business performance overall. As a result, more than half of U.S. businesses now use cloud computing. Analysts predict that cloud-based services will account for over 50% of the demand for managed IT services in 2013. Companies find immediate cost savings with the cloud because there are no up-front costs, and as business grows, the service infrastructure grows with demand.

The Next Big Thing

We believe that cloud-based Customer Communications Management (Cloud CCM) is the next “big thing” in cloud computing. Communicating with customers is not as simple as it used to be and cloud CCM provides both the technology and the platform to make it easier and more effective. Let’s face it: The reign of direct mail and printed correspondence is over. Consumers now interact with businesses primarily through social, mobile and online systems. As a result, managing the “customer experience” is more complex and more important than ever before; and no longer a print room or back office burden, but rather a strategic imperative for business success. Customers expect and demand a smooth, relevant and helpful experience no matter what how they interact with you. Cloud CCM gives companies the tools to do just that.

Multi-Channel Management

In the past, companies controlled their brand messaging and customer correspondence by communicating via paper. The static, one-way communications channel was straightforward, but often uninspiring. These days, effectively managing your customer’s experience across multiple communications channels is critical. But it is difficult to achieve if you rely on antiquated systems, disparate pockets of technology, and isolated people and processes. Cloud CCM provides the answer with a platform to manage communications across all channels – email, online, social, mobile, and even print – to keep pace with customers and consumers who now regularly use multiple and social networks as part of their everyday lives.

It’s About Engagement, Not Technology

The fundamental benefit of Cloud CCM is that it is a platform to enable more strategic and thoughtful activity behind how your company engages with customers on an ongoing basis. While Cloud CCM has plenty of impressive technology behind the scenes -- and we’re experts at every gadget and piece of code that makes it work -- we believe that the real world benefit is about engagement, not technology. Cloud CCM can drive deeper levels of engagement by centralizing disparate systems and processes surrounding transactional, marketing, and social communications that improve customer and brand experiences. But gaining real world benefit from Cloud CCM requires a new mindset.

Cloud-Based Customer Communication Management

Generating results requires a strategic approach to manage *customer engagement* rather than a technical focus on managing *customer communications*. It's more about the degrees and effectiveness of engagement than it is about multiple channels of output or the array of technology used to get it there.

Care for Your Customers

Cloud CCM provides a platform to take better care of your customers and that ultimately translates in to better business success. In the rush to acquire new customers it can be easy to overlook the critical need to maintain and maximize relationships with existing customers. Ironically, it cost six to seven times more to acquire a new customer than it does to keep an existing customer. And the average spend of a repeat customer is a whopping 67 percent more than a new one. Cloud CCM helps build a social community of customers that are happy with their experience with your company, will likely come back again, and are more apt to refer your company to friends, family and coworkers.

The CAR²E Model for ROI

How do you build business ROI with cloud CCM? One way is through the CAR²E model, a pattern for strategic activities using cloud CCM. OMI has created this return on investment model to measure the success in the following five areas:

Consumption

Business revenue depends on consumption. In the end, customers must “consume” something – products, services, information or technology – and if your business does not inspire consumption you may be as well close up shop. Even the best product or solution will fail if there is no demand for consumption. Indeed, technology companies in particular are guilty of adding features and complexity to their products more quickly than their customers develop the desire to consume them. Attending to consumption means ensuring that you have a product people want to buy, and you are maintaining the demand of customers to consume it.

Adoption

Once customers have a reason to consume your product or service, it is important to drive further adoption. In other words, driving the continued purchases that take your company beyond the initial customer need. One good example is found by examining the Amazon Kindle. Once a consumer purchases the Kindle device (hardware) the first download experience defines how encouraged that person is to become a repeat customer. Amazon works



Cloud-Based Customer Communication Management

hard to make sure that customers have a good shopping and download experience, and by virtue of being part of the “Kindle community” online they encourage customers to adopt multiple and repeated purchases. That activity flows directly into the next phase of the CAR²E model: retention.

Retention

One pressing question for businesses today is not how to reach more customers, it's how to keep and sell more to the customers that they already have. Customer retention is essentially important for growing a sustainable business. According to the Harvard Business School, increasing customer retention rates by 5% increases profits by 25% to 95%. Clearly, taking great care of your customers is more than just the right thing to do - it's also good business sense. Business of all sizes and from all industries should consider the effectiveness of customer loyalty strategies, if they exist, and how those strategies work to drive revenue creation.

Revenue Creation

Growing your top line through customer communications is not about the type of output (paper vs. not paper) or the number of channels used to communicate (social, mobile, online). Indeed, revenue creation requires more than just increasing the number of communications you produce or the delivery form your campaigns may take. It is about identifying prospects and markets where you can have long term success selling your products or services, and then aligning your efforts behind activities that create revenue. The CAR²E model reinforces the fact that if products/services ultimately do not drive revenue creation the business model may not be sustainable from the start.

Engagement

How well you engage a customer has a lot to do with how well your business will perform in today's social media-driven market environment. Indeed, mobile technology and social media point the way as viral approaches cut down on the expense of acquiring new customers, but only to the degree that companies do a good job in managing the engagement. Neglecting to take advantage of even the most routine communications can be devastating when every customer engagement is an opportunity to improve brand loyalty and revenue.

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Cloud-based CAR²E

One way to leverage cloud-based CAR²E is through the new *366° Degrees* platform from OMI. *366° Degrees* is a Cloud-based communications management tool that brings all of your customer communications into one easy to use platform -- no matter what form they take. You can easily do things like message personalization, target segmentation and in-depth campaign analytics. Easily reach across communication channels in social media, mobile and online formats and then quickly analyze the effectiveness of those social connections. With our integrated print service, *366° Brand Direct*, you can even take full control of your printed materials as well; the streamlined workflow creates customized marketing pieces at considerably reduced cost while you manage and improve all of your customer communications. Find out more today by visiting www.omi.co

Let's build a better way to engage customers together!