Take Control of the
Customer Experience

CEM for the Future – Making Use of Objective Information to Deliver an Enhanced Customer Experience

Customer Experience Management has become the latest trend within the telecoms industry. All Communications Service Providers want to deliver a better experience to their customers and to differentiate their offers in tangible ways. The emergence of CEM has been driven by growth of choice from non-traditional players, such as 'over the top' (OTT) providers, offering attractive services and a different kind of user experience. Customers are increasingly aware of alternative services, e.g. voice and messaging, and are able to rapidly communicate their impressions of the experience delivered to a large private and public audience.

The growth of OTT offerings combined with increased competition between traditional operators has created an opportunity for providers to compete by offering the best possible customer experience and not simply on price. In addition, operators recognise that customer retention is a key priority, as subscriber recruitment costs are so high. Customer experience is now recognised as something that has tangible value. Customer experience can be both a differentiator for operators and support customer retention goals.

The impact of CEM has also been felt in operator reporting and the establishment of performance targets. Operators have long used metrics such as Average Revenue Per User (ARPU), Average Margin Per User (AMPU) and Net Subscriber Additions (NSA) to measure their success. Today, operators are increasingly incorporating new metrics such as Net Promoter Scores (NPS) into their reporting. NPS can be a useful measure of loyalty and hence provide an indication of subscriber retention by the proxy of their happiness with their overall experience. However, the subjective NPS information does not provide sufficient data for a successful CEM implementation. It needs to be complemented with information from a variety of other sources. What is also necessary is objective data, derived from the operator's network. Any approach to CEM must include both subjective and objective data from the whole customer life cycle.

> "Objective customer data is the foundation of a successful CEM programme. Its collection and proper analysis will have a profound impact on the long-term profitability of service providers and the experience of their customers"

Objective customer information – a cornerstone of CEM

Subjective information can come from a variety of sources. It can be solicited, in the form of customer surveys, focus groups, as well as unsolicited through social media, spontaneous feedback from interaction in call centres, and other channels. Subjective information is based on customer perception, and in order to turn it into actionable intelligence, that enables improvements, it shall be supplemented with objective information. Operators need objective information in order to place subjective data into context. Objective information can be used to improve customer experience of the network and its associated services, as well as for marketing, sales and support activities. Objective data on customer experience can be captured from the networks, devices and databases deployed in the networks.

Operator networks are complex. They deliver a wide range of services directly and, through data connectivity, enable access to a global ecosystem of services. In order to make this function correctly, operators have to deploy clear processes. Improvements to customer experience often depend on changes to processes and modes of operation, as well as the functionality of network elements and resources. But how does an operator identify which processes require optimisation and how they can be changed?

The best way to identify opportunities for enhancing processes and performance is to understand what services and network capabilities subscribers use, when and where they are using them, how they are using them and how they conform to the expected indicators and performance criteria. The only reliable, scalable means to obtain this objective information is to use real-time Network Intelligence data, captured by probes. Contained within the information flowing across networks is a wealth of data that, when analysed, provides evidence of service performance. It can be correlated with subscriber and device information held in databases to provide reports on individual experiences or behaviour patterns, as well as the experience of subscriber communities and the customer base as a whole. The data can also be correlated to obtain specific metrics on factors that affect performance, such as latency, jitter and delay.

Improving the customer's network experience

It is recognised that network and service quality is a significant factor in customer retention. When asked why they left an operator and moved to another, many customers cite dropped calls, poor coverage and inadequate data speeds, among other factors. All of these factors can be measured objectively and in a proactive manner. With solutions that deliver network insight, operators can specifically search for incidents such as these and obtain real-time visibility of what is really happening in the network. What's more, they can aggregate these reports to derive performance metrics and proactively troubleshoot network elements to resolve them.

For instance, if coverage deteriorates in a cell site, the operator can observe this through an increase in incidents that are caused and take action to remedy the situation before it leads to significant service disruption. Using objective network usage information is the best way to troubleshoot the network and monitor the service quality in a reactive or pro-active manner. This ensures a high quality network and good customer experience that keeps churn to a minimum.

Improving the customer's support experience

Objective information also provides the means to convert customer complaints into a positive user experience. The first port of call for unhappy customers is often the customer service and support line. If agents handling the call have access to information obtained from the network that enables them to verify the issue, identify the problem and provide a solution, they can turn a negative experience into a positive one.

This information can readily be obtained from network probes that continuously capture records associated with subscriber activity. By having access to such information, the chances of resolving the problem during the first call to the support line are significantly increased. In addition to directly affecting the customer experience, the data can dramatically drop support costs by reducing the need to escalate issues and resolving problems faster. It can also create an enhanced perception of customer service that, in turn, will add value.

How marketing can deliver a more positive customer experience

Objective information also has a role in developing and enhancing the effectiveness of marketing. Operator marketing teams need to understand demand for specific services and match this to the information they hold on segments. Correlation of service consumption with customer information such as gender, age and location can enable highly targeted and precise delivery of marketing campaigns, with a correspondingly higher conversion rate.

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The same information can assist product management teams in determining the right products and services to launch, reducing the risk of service failure and increasing the attractiveness of the service portfolio.

Network Intelligence delivers this information directly to product and marketing teams, helping operators create better offers, campaigns and more competitive portfolios, which can contribute to better customer retention and revenue. Similarly, sales teams can track to see if VIP customers and those with SLAs are obtaining the service quality for which they have paid. Proactive account management that delivers a better customer experience can also have a positive impact on both retention and upselling potential.

Conclusion

Today, operators are just beginning to explore the potential to leverage "what, where, when and how" information obtained from real-time Network Intelligence data to complement other sources of information that allow the customer experience to be analysed. Customer Experience Management is now critical. It drives profitability from a number of perspectives – customer retention, reduced service costs, more effective service launch, optimised portfolio management and many more. By acting on the Network Intelligence data and taking steps to differentiate based on quality, end-customers will notice enhancements to their experience. Customers will start to enjoy services, offers and marketing campaigns that are more relevant and more targeted to their needs. Fully exploiting objective intelligence data is a crucial and indispensible element of CEM programmes and the proper collection and interpretation of such data is a key factor for operators to succeed with CEM and enhance their long-term profitability.

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