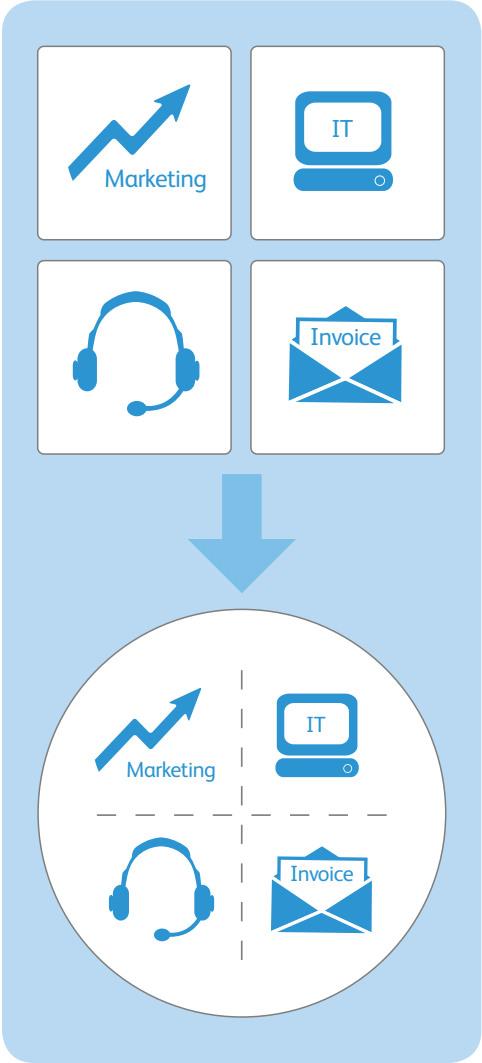
Optimize the Customer Experience

Breaking Down Organizational Silos

Organizational silos are a common pain point that confuse customers, reduce operational efficiency, and hurt your competitive edge.



Even well known and respected companies have inadvertently created walls between customer care, finance, marketing and IT departments often because the breakneck speed of business has forced them to do so. Now they're not sure how to identify where the problems lie, much less how to go about assessing and fixing the problem.

Breaking through organizational silos is critical to reducing communication barriers and operational efficiencies that leave customers confused and dissatisfied with your company. Consider the following questions to see if your organization has silos that are negatively impacting the customer experience.

1. What tops your list of obstacles to delivering a better customer experience?

   If you said 'getting alignment across the organization' you are not alone. A recent survey found that the majority of respondents had walls between their customer-facing groups that negatively impacted customer satisfaction. But instead of looking at customer touch points across the enterprise, companies usually turn to their contact center as the end-all, be-all solution for delivering a great customer experience. This may help, but it won't solve the problem.

   Optimizing customer touch points across the organization helps to break down organizational silos and ensure customers receive consistent, efficient and helpful support each time they interact with your company—regardless of the department. Ensuring that customer-facing groups have access to the same customer information, that they understand corporate messaging, and that they have the resources needed to coordinate efforts across the organization can be the difference between a satisfied customer and one that heads over to the competition.

2. Is customer and business intelligence shared across your organization?

   While most firms understand the value in customer and business intelligence, they struggle to fully leverage this data as a strategic asset. Contact centers hold a wealth of customer information in their case management systems, sales, marketing and finance teams hold key intelligence as well. Unfortunately, the information is housed in separate data bases that aren't shared across the departments. This becomes glaringly obvious when a customer is forced to repeat standard details about themselves and their preferences each time they interact with your company.

Identifying and eliminating communication barriers that prevent customer intelligence from being shared can help measurably boost sales, revenue, customer acquisition and retention. Having access to the same information is instrumental to managing the overall customer relationship. Interactions become seamless to the customer regardless of the channel used or the department.

3. What is your cross-functional communication strategy?

   Often customers receive a different message depending on the touch point they use to engage with your company. Conversations with a salesperson can differ significantly than the message customers hear when they call the contact center or engage a representative on social media channels. Without question, it's a difficult task to ensure all employees understand the messaging and are delivering it consistently to customers.

   Managing isolated operations is not enough ensure customers receive a consistent message and an optimized experience at every touch point with your organization. Instead, using comprehensive assessments and analysis of customer feedback will help pinpoint where the communication gaps and information black holes exist across the organization. The insight gained from the analysis provides the critical data needed to align messaging and the customer experience strategy with overall business goals.

4. Who owns data analysis function in your organization?

   If you have a CRM analytics program in place, you already know it can be an excellent tool to help make better decisions. When used correctly, it provides a good snapshot of your company's current state, including the behavior and preferences of your customers, what they're buying, what they're saying about your products and services and, sadly, why they're leaving to go to your competitor. But unless the analysis is done across the organization, you're probably getting a fragmented picture of the current state.

   A centralized CRM analytics program managed by a 3rd party offers an objective alternative to in-house programs. They have the technology, resource and reporting capabilities to turn massive amounts of 'noise' into relevant data. The key is finding a vendor that understands your business so that the analysis reports can provide actionable data for each group. A report showing high interest and purchase volumes for a new product is great news for the sales department, but it fails to connect the dots to the service department where volume is also high—due customer confusion on how to actually use the product. A well-constructed, centralized CRM analytics program offers a proactive approach to identifying customer dissatisfaction across the enterprise and is instrumental in the decision-making process needed to resolve these issues.

5. How does your organization assess customer-facing touch points?

   Assessing customer touch points across your organization can be a daunting task. If you attempt to do it internally it can get politically sticky and runs the risk of being pushed to the side as the daily business crushes on. Hiring a business consultant can be a long and expensive ordeal out of which comes an assessment, but no means to implement the plan. Engaging a service provider to assess the touch points and implement a plan to resolve the problem seems like the perfect solution. It can be, but there is the risk that the service provider only looks at certain areas to fix, not the entire organization.

   Xerox is a leading service provider who uses an extensive end-to-end analysis to develop customer experience programs and a roadmap for implementation success. An assessment team made up of subject matter experts in 11 organizational areas spends several weeks onsite assessing all interface points across the enterprise. The team looks at operations upstream and downstream to gain a 360 view of operations. This comprehensive analysis sets the stage for identifying silos and inefficiencies across organization—not just those in the contact center.

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