



Viewpoint

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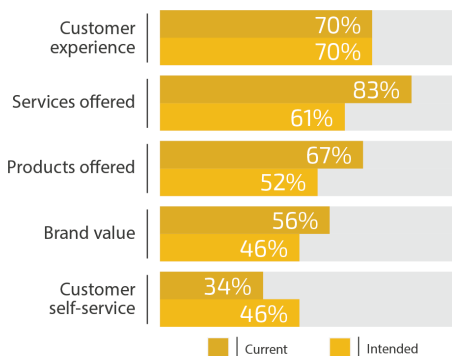
## A Complete View of the Customer Enables a Better Experience

A lot is said and written today about “the age of the customer” and terms such as “customer journeys” and “customer experience” are used in many contexts. However, unlike in the ‘90s, it’s now possible for organizations to develop a more complete view and interact with the customer in a personalized manner. Our benchmark research finds that most organizations (70%) have come to understand that customer engagement and the quality of the customer experience are the way to differentiate themselves from the competition. This involves handling multiple forms of interactions, many of which are digital. The challenge for most organizations is to handle interactions in the context of the customer journey — the relationship the organization has with the customer and the impact interactions have on both customers and employees.

Customer journeys and relationships develop over the course of multiple interactions — phone calls, email messages, text messages, face-to-face discussions, chat sessions, posts to social media and public forums — with marketing, sales, finance and service representatives. They might be one-off or frequent, involve one or more people and technology tools, be close or at arm’s length. They can cover a range of subjects and vary in type (complaint, comment, request, inquiry, thanks). Furthermore, each interaction results in different reactions and responses, largely driven by emotions, that organizations should consider. Is the customer happy or sad? Satisfied or dissatisfied? Likely to recommend or negatively comment about the organization? Likely to buy more or look for an alternative supplier?

### Customer Self-Service Will Increase

Nearly half will offer it to compete better



Source: Ventana Research Next-Generation Contact Center in the Cloud Benchmark Research  
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From an operational perspective, organizations face a different set of questions: Are the employees handling interactions doing a good job? Is handling interactions costing too much? Are interactions delivering expected outcomes? Is digital technology performing as well as it could? The challenge for organizations is to balance both perspectives.

There are many facets of interactions that can generate emotions in customers:

- Was the interaction easy for the customer — how much effort did it involve?
- Was the interaction personalized?
- Was the interaction in the context of previous interactions and the overall relationship?



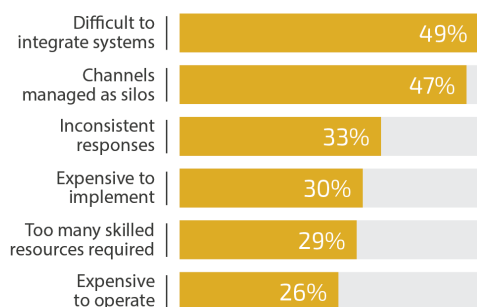
- Was the response consistent with interactions on other channels?

Our benchmark research finds that organizations increasingly recognize they need a more complete view of their customers and all associated interactions. To acquire this, many are adopting advanced analytics that can process large volumes of structured and unstructured data as well as present the outcomes in the form of reports, dashboards and journey maps. These analytics also include predictive and root-cause capabilities and increasingly use artificial intelligence and machine learning techniques to automate processes and guide employees and digital technologies to smarter, more personalized responses.

But analytics by itself is not enough. Our research shows organizations must overcome three key challenges of supporting multiple channels of communication: difficulty integrating business systems (49%), channels of engagement managed as silos (47%) and sharing information so that responses are consistent across all touch points (33%). To address all of these issues, organizations first need an integrated suite or platform of channel management systems that support telephone, email, postal mail, the corporate website, IVR, social media, mobile text messaging, mobile apps, customer-employee collaboration, video and bots. Second, they need an integrated suite or platform of systems that includes workforce optimization (recording, quality management, workforce management, eLearning/coaching and performance management) and multi-dimensional analytics and that at the very least integrates with business applications such as CRM, ERP, knowledge management, and customer feedback and channel engagement systems. Third, they need workflow and employee-to-employee collaboration so that employees can share information and collaborate on the resolution of interactions.

### Issues in Supporting Multiple Channels

Various problems impede customer engagement



Source: Ventana Research Next-Generation Customer Engagement Benchmark Research © Ventana Research 2020; All Rights Reserved

However, before investing in such systems, organizations should first use analytics to identify gaps and issues in their interaction-handling processes and determine what impact these issues are having on customer relationships. This will help identify which new systems to invest in and how each would need to be integrated into the overall systems architecture. Having invested, organizations should then examine how these systems can support process changes, focus training and coaching for employees engaging with customers and implement wider actions such as improving products and services so that customers have less need to engage with the organization. Adopting this comprehensive approach to establish a complete view of the customer will ensure that an organization has the means to improve its relationship with customers, become more efficient and deliver optimal customer experiences.



### Mark Smith - CEO and Chief Research Officer, Ventana Research

Mark Smith, is the CEO and chief research officer of Ventana Research and drives the company's global research agenda. Mark is an expert in enterprise software and business technology innovations including the business areas of customer experience, sales and marketing. Mark covers the digital technology innovation areas of artificial intelligence, business analytics, big data, bots and natural language processing, collaboration, Internet of Things, mobile technology and wearable computing.