

WHITEPAPER

Making Customer Service and Digital Contact Center Solutions Future-Ready

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Introduction

In today's competitive world, every organization wants to retain their customer base and make sure their customers will buy their product or services repeatedly for sustainability. However, customers have multiple options to buy the same product or services from different brands as per their requirement.

Organizations have perceived that customers are extremely sensitive when choosing services or buying products with high ROI. The digital world has given customers the ability to conduct a preliminary analysis, comparison of product features, considering other customers' post-sale services feedback, etc. before making a purchase decision. Similarly, social media and digitalization have provided trustworthy sources to customers to find the right product and services as per their exact needs. Customers are using social media and third-party trusted sources to find solutions to their problems on their own. Consequently, they are less dependent on brands and service providers. Due to this, organizations are facing a substantial disconnect with their customers.

Furthermore, customers are looking for multi-channel interactions. Social media and AI have enabled such interactions. If an organization fails to establish customer engagement across channels, this creates a significant customer disconnect. Ultimately, this leads to a loss of customer loyalty and retention.

To bridge this gap and maintain customer loyalty and retention, organizations need to provide fast and excellent services as per customer expectations. To provide prompt and excellent services, organizations need to digitize customer service centers, open multiple channels of interactions, adopt predictive customer service, and provide "value enhancements" throughout customer service.

This whitepaper provides insight into the importance of setting up customer service and digital contact centers that are future ready.

How to make customer service and digital contact centers future-ready?

Every organization needs to follow a three steps approach to set up their future-ready customer service and digital contact center as shown below. This is a gradual process and takes time.



Figure 1: Three steps for future-ready customer service and digital contact centers

2.1









Reactive customer service

Reactive customer service is like providing services to customers when they contact you through limited channels like email, phone calls, etc. This is always a communication initiated by the customer when they face issues or need some help. In this set up organizations do not reach customers proactively. It gives a disjointed brand image. For example, a customer may call the call center to check his request status, to raise an invoice concern or to check about a delay in delivery, etc.

Setting up reactive customer service is the first step towards continuing customer satisfaction and loyalty. In reactive customer service, various aspects of setting up the customer service can be decided based on organizational needs, customer base, market size, spending, budget, etc.

As it is the first step towards setting up customer service center, there may not be connected systems, a focus on process automation, knowledge base, or use of AI. Therefore, the average time for case resolution will be higher. It means lower productivity and higher costs.

This set up has challenges like:

			
<p>Only provides reactive engagement with customer.</p>	<p>Focuses only on transactional activities.</p>	<p>Sub-optimal customer experiences.</p>	<p>Limiting multichannel and self-service availability.</p>
			
<p>Increasing operational costs and less profitability.</p>	<p>No personalized communication and experiences.</p>	<p>Disconnected journeys.</p>	<p>Less customer satisfaction and retention.</p>

To overcome such challenges, organizations need to shift to predictive customer service.

2.2

Predictive customer service

Predictive customer service is the second stage of taking your existing customer service to the next level. In predictive customer service, data is the building block. Data is collected from diverse sources, within or outside the organization. This data needs to be processed accurately for personalized and predictive analysis.

Typical examples of predictive customer services are:

01

Package delivery is delayed by a few hours/days

02

Reminders for invoice payments

03

Pre-approved offers

04

Suggestions for the next best actions to be performed on purchased product or services, etc.

According to a Gartner report, organizations should consider a “Dynamic Customer Engagement” (DCE) approach to build predictive customer services. The DCE approach is based on data analysis to provide personalized and proactive customer service.



Figure 2: DCE framework

Transform Your Service and Support Experience With Dynamic Customer Engagement, John Quaglietta, Philip Jenkins, 6 October 2020: <https://emt.gartnerweb.com/InGw/globalassets/en/sales-service/documents/trends/transform-your-customer-service-org.pdf>

As the DCE framework suggests, the operational model of service organizations should focus on:



Organizations need to spend in order to collect customer-related data at the enterprise level and from various external sources. This data needs to be analyzed to deliver customer insights. The organization needs to build a strong CRM and analytical platforms to deliver customer insights.

To build, maintain and monitor outcomes of the CRM and analytical platform, investment in people is important. Organizations either re-train their own employees or hire people from outside the organization to take care of the people aspect.

Cross-functional activities and collaboration with people are important aspects of the process area in DCE framework. Customer-centric solutions and achieving organizational goals can be taken care of when proper processes are defined, implemented, and improved over the period. The process aspect plays a significant role in “value enhancement” as well.


2.3

Important aspects of implementing predictive customer service

Here are the factors an organization should consider for implementing predictive customer service:

- 

Effective and strong use of automation for high-volume/low-effort human tasks

 - RPA (Robotic Process Automation)
- 

AI-enabled knowledge base
- 


Machine agents that work on behalf of human customers

 - Virtual Personal Assistance (VPAs) using AI and IoT
 - Voice biometrics
- 

Omnichannel experience including:

 - Mobile App
 - Customer portals
 - Chatbots
 - AR/VR
 - Video conferencing/video chat
 - Social media channels
- 

Consolidated agent desktop that has access to customer information, customer journey, past interaction details, and provides insights and recommendations on single desktop. The advantages of consolidated desktop are:

 - Increase in efficiency
 - More time to collaborate with customers
 - More time to understand customer needs
 - Tailored solution
- 

Strong collaboration mechanism and tools for service agents
- 

Indirect customer feedback such as analyzing search history and providing recommendations.



Customer voice and **analytics** enable new methods of data collection that help with actionable insights for better customer interaction and service. This includes:

- Speech analytics
- Text analytics
- Machine analytics
- Digital analytics
- Social media analytics
- Customer surveys



Strong analytical tools and platform

- Help to identify customer needs and behaviors
- Identify next best actions

2.4

Success KPIs of predictive customer service

Predictive customer services should focus on KPIs such as:

01

Call avoidance and call deflection

02

Improved first-contact resolution and fewer complaints

03

Improved customer experience, satisfaction, and net promoter score

04

Reduced customer cancels, lower churn, and lower cost to serve

05

Increased self-service containment

06

Improved service agents' performance and experience

Predictive services may prevent customers leaving or impairing the use of products or services. In some cases, it may not be sufficient to make them continue. What can be done to make them continue? The answer lies in providing "value enhancement".

2.5

“Value Enhancement” using predictive services

Predictive service along with “value enhancement” during service interaction improves customer satisfaction and loyalty. Furthermore, it encourages customers to promote products or services by recommending them to others and this increases cross-sell and up-sell opportunities.

To enable “value enhancement” in customer service, organizations must provide:



Training

Customers are high levels of accessibility to huge volumes of information through the internet. They expect service agents to have more knowledge of products or services than they do. Furthermore, organizations have such information available internally through domain users. They only need to deliver this information to their service agents. Organizations need to spend money to train their service agents, so they have the correct and complete information about their products and services, in order to serve customers better.



AI-enabled automation

Organizations need to empower service agents to resolve customer problems quicker to unlock new service revenue streams, reduce downtime and service costs, and increase the customer satisfaction index, while providing “value enhancement” during conversation. How can organizations increase the effectiveness and productivity of service agents during conversation with customers? This can be achieved through AI-enabled automation. Here are some possibilities:



Unified routing of cases to an appropriately **skilled agent** with quick availability.



Generate a **customer 360-degree view** from internal and external source systems to create personalized conversation.



Create a **comprehensive view** of customer conversation **using service co-pilot** for easy problem understanding and faster case resolution, ultimately increasing in customer satisfaction index.



Solving customer problems faster by **collaborating with a cross functional** team in real-time.



Faster case resolution with **AI-driven knowledge base articles** and similar case recommendations.



Improve customer engagement during conversation using sentiment analysis, translation, and transcription to drive positive resolution.



Identify **next-best actions** during conversation and take necessary runtime actions.



Automatically sending personalized **customer surveys** after service calls.

For providing “value enhancement”, service agents can focus on some important tactics during customer interactions. **They can:**



Anticipate their asks, needs, issues, and problems.



Advise them on new features and uses.



Help them to achieve their goals.



Validate their decisions.



Educate them on how to use the product or leverage the service in a better way.

“Value enhancement” has resulted in an increase in customer loyalty towards the organization, advocacy, new purchases, renewals, and spending more.

Futuristic customer service and digital contact center using D365 customer service

Building future-ready customer service and digital contact centers should be an integral part of organizations "predictive" and "value enhancement" strategies. Given the scale of effort for building these strategies, they need individual attention.

The Microsoft D365 customer service solution provides a solid and strong framework for building future-enabled customer service and digital contact centers. It is a cloud based centralized platform built on Microsoft Azure, Office 365 and D365 platform. It is an extensive but pliable solution. Organizations can implement its components/pillars in stacks as per their need.

The solution provides multiple capabilities to facilitate interactions between organizations and customers. Furthermore, the use of AI has enabled predicting customer needs, revenue increase possibilities by identifying up-sell and cross-sell opportunities, improving agents experience, and improvement in processes by analyzing data patterns. Ultimately, this leads to an increase in customer satisfaction.

3.1

Pillars of D365 customer service and digital contact center

Here are the pillars of the D365 customer service and digital contact center:

01

Fraud detection and prevention using nuance:

Enable authentication and authorization of customers and protect customer privacy and data.

02

Multi-channel communication using omnichannel:

Availability of different channels of social media for communication and provide unique experiences during entire life cycle of service requests.

03

Self-service using Power Pages, Chat Bots and Virtual Agents:

Enable 24x7 customer service with self-service portals, chat bots and virtual agents.

04

Case management with intelligence routing using case management:

Next-level case management, route customers to the right agents having the right skills, swift availability, and capacity.

05

Data analytics and reporting using power platform and customer insights:

Analyze data for understating different patterns, provide a customer 360-degree view, and taking processes to the next level.

3.2

Generative AI and co-pilot in D365 customer service

The objectives and functioning of generative AI are different than traditional AI. Generative AI overcomes the limitations of traditional AI and provides next-generation capabilities such as generating data like human-built content, image generation, text generation, etc.

Microsoft has provided the world's first generative AI in CRM and ERP applications using Co-Pilot. D365 Service co-pilot is becoming a game changer in the customer service area. It is increasing agent's productivity and enabling them to provide "value enhancement" while servicing customers. It helps customer service agents to generate a quick case summary, generate quick content, draft email responses, and helps to refer the correct knowledge base and suggest next-best actions which helps to increase CSAT scores and agents' productivity.

Here are some important use cases of co-pilot in customer service:



Agents need **not spend time** reading **multiple knowledge articles** for case resolution.



Eliminates the need for agents to **read lengthy case details** for case summaries.



Eliminates the need for agents to shift through **lengthy transcripts of chat** conversations for chat summaries.



Agents **draft emails in seconds** rather than minutes **tailored to a specific case and customer**.



Get AI assistance while replying to customer emails with **auto-generated email content**.



Agents will be able to **ramp up on the cases quicker** and **accelerate time to resolution** for customers.

3.3

Advantages of D365 customer service and digital contact center

01

End-to-end connected customer service experience.

02

Increase in customer satisfaction.

03

fraud detection, prevention, and risk adjustments.

04

Increase in agent experience, productivity, and cross-team collaboration.

05

Improved customer service-centric processes.

06

Revenue increase opportunities.

07

Increase in customer retention and acquisition.

LTIMindtree builds futuristic customer service and digital call center

LTIMindtree has collaborated with multiple customers across the globe to build their futuristic customer service and digital contact centers. One of these customers with multiple locations, geographies, departments, and service lines and having a huge customer base, faced challenges in serving their customer because of highly manual and disjointed processes and multiple service management platforms for different service lines. The business leadership aimed to build a unique and single cloud-based platform to automate multiple processes from end-to-end which required multi-level dynamic approval provision and multi-department and service line involvement. With their domain expertise, LTIMindtree built a unique cloud-based customer service and digital contact center to provide consistent customer experience, improved ownership of service lines and departments, a high level of SLA accuracy, next-level visibility of ticket resolution, better agent utilization and improved agent productivity.

Conclusion

LTIMindtree has made significant investments across various customer service, digital contact center offerings and building assets using D365. These offerings include consultation in analyzing the current state of customer service and framework to move from one stage to the next stage of the customer service journey. Furthermore, LTIMindtree has invested in defining a road map of predictive and value enhancement customer service, and digital contact center implementation using D365 and Power Platform. As a result, LTIMindtree is in a prime position to help customers amplify the value of their investments.

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Dinesh has 20+ years of experience in Microsoft technology stack. His primary experience is in Microsoft Dynamics CRM, Power Platform and Azure cloud. His expertise is in consulting, implementation, support, and delivering complex programs in D365 and Power Platform area. At LTIMindtree, he is a part of the Microsoft Business Application (D365 CE) practice and heads strategic initiatives in consulting, app transformation and modernization, and delivery.

LTIMindtree is a global technology consulting and digital solutions company that enables enterprises across industries to reimagine business models, accelerate innovation, and maximize growth by harnessing digital technologies. As a digital transformation partner to more than 700 clients, LTIMindtree brings extensive domain and technology expertise to help drive superior competitive differentiation, customer experiences, and business outcomes in a converging world. Powered by 81,000+ talented and entrepreneurial professionals across more than 30 countries, LTIMindtree — a Larsen & Toubro Group company — combines the industry-acclaimed strengths of erstwhile Larsen and Toubro Infotech and Mindtree in solving the most complex business challenges and delivering transformation at scale. For more information, please visit <https://www.ltimindtree.com/>