

WHITE PAPER

SIX WAYS TO COMMUNICATE BETTER AND IMPROVE THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



macro4.com

CONTENTS

Six ways to communicate better and improve the customer experience

Introduction	3
What is customer communications management?	4
1: Create connected multi-channel experiences	5
2: Take a digital-first approach	6
3: Transform legacy content	7
4: Create a single customer view	8
5: Personalize communications	9
6: Strengthen data protection	10
Key takeaways	11

INTRODUCTION:

SIX WAYS TO COMMUNICATE BETTER AND IMPROVE THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Why good communication matters

Effective communication is fundamental to delivering a great customer experience. It helps you to understand your customers, show how you can meet their needs, and build trust. It underpins every aspect of customer engagement. But it has never been more challenging.

The rise of digital communication channels has put the customer in control. Customers now decide when and where they will do business with you, and if they cannot do it right now, on a smartphone, they might go elsewhere.

Although face-to-face interaction has declined, customers still crave the personal touch. They expect communication that is personalized, and consistent across all channels. And they can set their own boundaries: following a shakeup of global data protection laws, private individuals now have greater powers to control the personal data that informs your marketing and customer communications.

The online world has opened up new markets and business opportunities, and removed the old barriers to entry such as geography and high start-up costs. But these new freedoms also bring pressures. Ecommerce leaders are setting new standards for digital experience. Competitors are now just a click away.

Businesses are exploring how they can adapt their communication strategies and leverage technology to acquire and retain customers in the new digital landscape. This white paper discusses six ways that organizations can improve communications in order to deliver a better online and offline customer experience, and discusses how customer communications management (CCM) technology can help them transform.

WHAT IS CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT?

In the words of research and advisory firm Forrester, customer communications management solutions 'are used to compose, format, personalize, and distribute content to support physical (i.e. paper) and electronic customer communications and improve the customer experience.'

The 2021 Gartner Market Guide for Customer Communication Management explains that CCM 'represents a critical part of the infrastructure necessary to deliver customer journeys across multiple channels and touchpoints.'

CCM software manages customer interactions across all channels. It centralizes control, monitors progress and allows you to take corrective action to keep things on track. A customer communications management system should also make it easier to introduce new channels and integrate them seamlessly with your existing IT infrastructure.



1: CREATE CONNECTED MULTI-CHANNEL EXPERIENCES

Most companies today communicate with their customers across multiple channels and departments – but not always in a joined-up way. A marketing team sending out printed, email, text and social media communications as part of a multi-channel campaign will achieve limited success if it operates in isolation from the rest of the company. It is far more effective to integrate the campaign into the interactions that are already happening with other parts of the business and take the whole customer journey into account to ensure that any marketing offers are relevant and timely.

In practice, however, a connected customer experience can be difficult to achieve. Departments and even product areas within the same business may have inherited a range of different, disconnected IT systems and communication channels, forcing them to interact with customers independently of each other.

A centralized customer communications management platform supports a more consistent approach by allowing teams across the business to create, view and manage communications and digital marketing assets in one place. Business rules are used to decide what messages and documents should be sent to which customer, when, and via which channel, and all communications can have a consistent look and feel. You can tailor the message interactively depending on how customers respond, and redirect communications to an alternative channel if there is a delivery problem or a change in customer preferences.

Integrated communications can be produced by combining content from different areas around the business. For example, a single statement could be created for all of a customer's product holdings, even if the source data is stored in several different IT systems. The CCM platform orchestrates the whole process, managing the interactions between separate systems so that they work together as one. The result is a more seamless experience for customers as they pass from one channel or department to another.

2: TAKE A DIGITAL-FIRST APPROACH

Digital leaders have a digital-first mindset. They design end-to-end digital experiences that are optimized for the channels that customers want to use. And they exploit the full potential of digital to communicate more interactively and build customer rapport. The challenge is adapting existing business processes, systems and communications to succeed in the online world.

Customer communications management software simplifies this transition by working with the outputs you already produce. You can repurpose raw data, formatted data and documents to communicate your message effectively on a range of different channels. The same base content, such as a marketing offer or delivery note, could be turned into a one-line text message, a responsive email that works across multiple devices, a web page and the script for a chatbot conversation, for example.

CCM systems also allow you to build interactive online experiences based on your existing content. For example, static documents such as bank statements or utility bills could be enhanced by adding personalized charts that customers can click on to view their current and historical spending or usage patterns, and the data can be extracted into budgeting tools for further analysis. Adding value to traditional documents in this way encourages customers to keep returning to your website and increases opportunities for relationship building and upselling.



3: TRANSFORM LEGACY CONTENT

Many older business systems produce important documents that are still used today – everything from reports, contracts and correspondence to statements and shipping notes. Originally designed for print, these documents are often in fixed formats that are difficult to modernize, whether that means adapting them to work with digital channels, adding personalized messages, or applying current corporate branding.

Making the necessary changes to the legacy system itself can be costly, risky and time consuming, if it's possible at all. Replacing the old system completely is a longer-term option but it won't help if you want to improve communications now, rather than months or years down the line.

Customer communications management platforms offer another alternative, which is to revamp legacy content outside of the legacy application. This approach is much quicker as it avoids having to update or replace the original application.

Take the example of a legacy finance application that produces basic statements – simple lines of text in an old print format. You could bring that document into a customer communications management system, redesign it to look exactly the way you want, and use business rules to conditionally add new content such as a personalized marketing offer. The new communication could be transformed into multiple digital formats automatically and, if physical documents are still required, into new print formats too.



4: CREATE A SINGLE CUSTOMER VIEW

Customers become more loyal when they receive a truly personal service and feel genuinely understood by an organization. Creating this depth of understanding is a continuing commitment that requires detailed, up-to-date knowledge. It involves bringing together all information for every person you do business with to create a single customer view: a complete picture of each individual, including their behavior, transactions and preferences.

Unstructured information, such as inbound and outbound documents, emails, text messages, social conversations, audio, video and chat interactions, is an increasingly significant part of the single customer view. Today, unstructured information accounts for over 80 per cent of all corporate data. Consolidating it can be challenging as it comes in diverse forms and is difficult to manage in a mainstream database.

Customer communications management systems can capture all of this information, classify it by customer and store it alongside other key data as part of a single customer view. Artificial intelligence can be used to classify content with less effort, and information can be retained for the long term to provide a complete customer history.

If a customer starts a chat conversation, sends an email and then phones the contact center, the detail of those interactions becomes part of the single customer view. A customer service agent can pick up the conversation and continue seamlessly at the next interaction, delivering a better experience that leaves the customer feeling more satisfied.



5: PERSONALIZE COMMUNICATIONS

Personalized communication is becoming the norm, and customers expect it. Research by McKinsey in 2021 found that 71 per cent of consumers expect businesses to provide personalized communications and products tailored to their needs, and 76 per cent get frustrated when that doesn't happen.

A customer communications management solution can help you to build personalization into your communications by using rules-based and AI-driven automation to:

- Trigger personalized communications in response to customer actions and reactions, such as how they reply to a text message, complete a web form, or interact with an employee
- Use white space on transactional documents such as bills, statements and delivery confirmations to add personalized informational content and marketing messages
- Integrate with analytics platforms and customer profiling systems to drive personalized communications across multiple channels

CCM systems can also combine automation with human interaction, creating personalization at scale while ensuring that the human touch is still there at key points during the customer journey. For example, you can build a flexible process so that interactions are handled by automated communications and chatbots when they are straightforward, but are escalated to customer service agents when they are more complex, or if the customer becomes emotional.



6: STRENGTHEN DATA PROTECTION

Any customer communications strategy must have security and data privacy at its core.

Cyber attacks and data breaches have increased significantly in recent years. The GDPR has had a far-reaching effect on data protection practices, and new data protection laws are coming into force around the world. Customers now have greater rights over how their personal information is handled – including preventing its use – and organizations that fail to protect data adequately face stiff fines and loss of reputation.

More than a legal obligation, taking a rigorous approach to data protection can also be good for your brand by building public trust. Research conducted by Macro 4 found that 41 per cent of UK consumers are more likely to do business with companies that are more transparent about the way they use personal information.

In addition to generating the relevant and timely communications that are expected by customers in exchange for granting access to their personal data, customer communications management systems ensure that the large volumes of customer documents and other unstructured data flowing through your organization are managed securely, and in line with global data privacy regulations.

A modern CCM platform provides data security and compliance features such as digital signatures, biometrics and granular access rights; encrypted and tamper-evident data storage; and data redaction and data disguising to prevent exposure of personal information. By centralizing control of customer information it also simplifies the process of responding to data subject access requests and makes it easier for customers to view their own data.

Knowing what data you have, the individual it relates to and where it is located is the starting point for handling personal information in a compliant manner. CCM software automates the process of discovering, classifying and managing personal data, and allows you to identify special categories of data requiring additional protection. You can also set multiple data retention, access and deletion rules to comply with regulations in different geographical locations and regulated industries.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Customer communication matters more than ever. Digital leaders have raised the bar and customer expectations are rising. To keep pace, organizations should consider new ways to exploit digital channels and transition to a more personalized and connected approach. Customer communications management technology works with your existing communication systems and processes to help you make improvements quickly, and enables you to:

- Create a more seamless and enjoyable experience for customers as they interact with different parts of your business, and on different channels
- Build interactive digital experiences that increase engagement and drive up revenue
- Overcome legacy challenges and present a modern face to your customers regardless of the underlying systems that you use
- Leverage the whole range of information you hold on customers to deliver a more responsive service that's tailored to their needs
- Combine automation with the human touch to achieve personalization at scale
- Protect personal data in line with global regulations and build customer trust

To learn more about customer communications management please visit www.macro4.com/CCM

Tel: +44 1293 872000

Email: market@macro4.com





ABOUT MACRO 4

We are a global software and services company, focused on solutions that drive digital transformation and enhance customer engagement. We help organizations to deliver better multi-channel experiences, personalize customer communications and drive greater value from their corporate content.

As a division of UNICOM Global we benefit from being part of a major provider of integrated software and hardware solutions with over 50 corporate entities throughout the world.

Learn more at www.macro4.com/CCM

CONTACT US

EUROPE

Tel: +44 1293 872000

Email: market@macro4.com

USA

Tel: +1 973 526 3900

Email: market.usa@macro4.com

macro4.com



Trademarks and registered trademarks: www.macro4.com/trademarks

© Copyright 2022 All Rights Reserved. Macro 4 Limited – a division of UNICOM Global.