Customer Collaboration

What You Will Learn

This white paper, intended for business decision makers, describes Cisco's strategic vision for Customer Collaboration, which will lead the next wave of growth in the customer care industry. Covered topics include how businesses and organizations can take advantage of the following four elements to improve their customer care with a more proactive engagement model:

- Social media
- Network-based recording and analytics
- Video
- Web-based collaboration desktops

Background

Today, we are sitting at the edge of a major transition in the customer care market. The manner in which customers prefer to interact with companies is changing substantially, and businesses of all sizes are challenged with providing customer care **in the manner in which customers wish to be served**. This provision goes far beyond what many have termed the "multichannel contact center" and into the realm of what Cisco calls Customer Collaboration.

Customer Collaboration combines traditional contact center technology and processes with important additions in critical areas to enable businesses and organizations to build deeper relationships with their customers - strengthening loyalty and generating additional revenue. Customer Collaboration empowers businesses and organizations to escape from the largely reactive mode of traditional call centers and instead embrace a much more proactive engagement model with their customers.

Simply put, Customer Collaboration creates customer intimacy and delivers business value, and Cisco - the worldwide leader in unified communications - is leading the way.

The Four Elements of Customer Collaboration

Cisco is leading the development of Customer Collaboration solutions in four primary areas: social media customer care, network-based multimedia capture and recording, new agent desktop paradigms, and focused video solutions (Figure 1). These areas build upon **existing** Cisco customer care capabilities and innovations in speech self-service, presence-based enterprise experts, multichannel customer care, and virtual contact center routing and reporting.

Figure 1. Enabling True Customer Collaboration: Combining the Power of Today + Future

The Social Web

Consider first the explosion of the social web. From Twitter to Facebook to YouTube, people worldwide are engaging in an ever-increasing number of online conversations and interactions. And part of that conversation is consumers talking about the companies with which they do business. Sometimes they say good things, and sometimes they complain. The question is: are companies listening? And can enterprises react to both the good and the not-so-good comments coming from customers in social media? Cisco believes that leading-edge organizations will incorporate the ability to capture, analyze, and prioritize customer conversations originating in the social web and then assign the most relevant interactions into the workflow of customer care representatives. This paradigm provides order to the often-chaotic world of social media conversations, and allows businesses to respond in an organized and measureable way (Figure 2).

Figure 2.   Social Customer Engagement
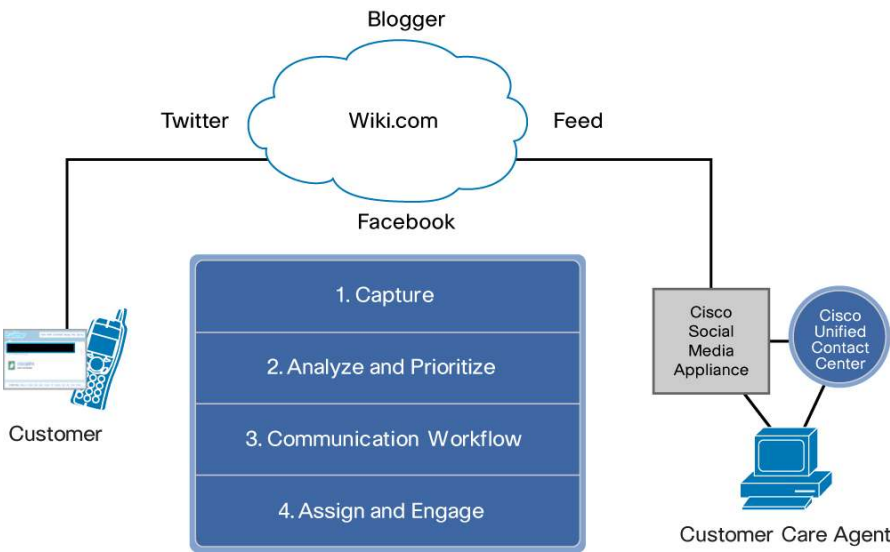
Engaging in social media customer service is a journey, with a sensible migration path for businesses and organizations that embark upon it. Those that begin the path reap certain benefits, but the true rewards come from those that progress along the path, moving steadily to the upper levels (Figure 3).

Figure 3.   Social Media Customer Care Maturity Model

Level 1 companies are silent when it comes to social media. They listen only.

Level 2 companies use Facebook and Twitter to put out the same messages they communicate on advertising channels. With Level 2 we see examples where customers tried to reach out to the company on social media by posting on a Facebook wall or sending an @reply on Twitter, yet they were ignored.

Level 3 companies reach out to customers with targeted social media marketing activities specifically intended to create engagement, such as editorial commentary on blogs and Facebook, useful product-related information, and even contests. Level 3 companies typically view service-related questions as an unwanted side effect of their social media marketing activities. Customers who reach out for assistance on social media may receive blanket responses such as "call our call center for help with that problem", or they may receive a specific email address that goes to an inbox or mailer that is not managed with workflow. The result is that the customer service experience on social

channels is precarious at best. Opportunities to differentiate the brand and learn from customers by capturing comments are missed. Even worse, without direct support on social channels problems may escalate, potentially becoming public relations problems.

Level 4 companies have a plan in place to provide customer service through social media - and they have assigned staff with the specific goal of providing such service on social channels. Companies at this level are currently experiencing benefits of competitive differentiation, increased customer satisfaction, and loyalty building.

Level 5 companies proactively try to engage with customers - even those who have not directly addressed them. This engagement could mean searching for existing customers to help, or it could mean proactively targeting prospects who have expressed a need. This proactive approach contributes to customer delight and fosters brand advocates. Companies at this level are also taking advantage of social media for business intelligence, capturing the input gathered on social channels and distributing this information to relevant team members within the enterprise. The end effect here is building a virtuous feedback loop where customer feedback facilitates organizational performance breakthroughs.

Currently, most enterprise customers with whom Cisco has spoken fall within the middle of this schema (at levels 2 and 3), with leading-edge companies falling into the top of the range. As the benefits of social media customer care become increasingly understood, an increasingly large number of companies are making plans to move to the top of the range. This trend is accelerating, because competitive pressures to keep up are especially pronounced in the social media customer care arena because of the highly public nature of the medium.

Multimedia Recording and Analytics

Whereas the social web is one example of real-time intelligence creating improved customer care, a second aspect of Customer Collaboration comes from businesses keeping contact center agents and supervisors up-to-date with relevant information regarding customer interactions. This goal is ideally accomplished by a real-time multimedia recording and processing solution that embeds capture functions in the network and securely delivers customer conversations - including voice, video, and screen data - for use with enterprise applications such as compliance, quality management, analytics, and tagging. Select applications can then feed updates and information to customer care agents and supervisors, and provide valuable data for postcall training and process-improvement activities (Figure 4).

Figure 4.   Cisco Multimedia Recording Architecture
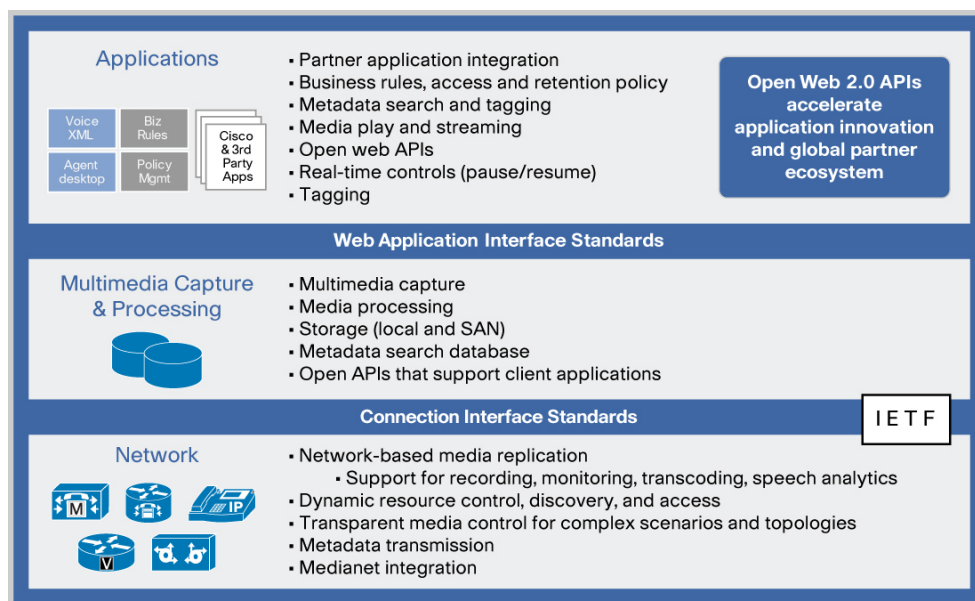
Contact centers handle thousands of customer conversations a day, but unfortunately much of the business intelligence from those conversations is never used, because it is either too expensive to capture or too difficult to mine for useful information. Cisco solves these challenges by recording conversations on the **network** - rather than a device - simplifying the architecture, lowering costs, and providing optimum scalability. Just as important, network-based recording allows the captured media to be quickly available to analytics applications - regardless of location - through simple application programming interfaces (APIs). These interfaces implement open web standards, enabling a new ecosystem of partner value-add applications that can gather useful information from conversations, either in real time or after the call is over.

Consider, for example, how a speech analytics application could detect stress levels in a caller's voice, or spot keywords in a conversation that might not be readily apparent to the customer service agent. The agent could be alerted to these conditions and prompted with ways to steer the conversation toward speedy, successful resolution. With Cisco, gaining valuable business intelligence from customer conversations is no longer an unattainable goal.

Video

The third Customer Collaboration trend Cisco is leading can be called "focused" video for customer care, meaning that video elements are engaged in the call flow only when they truly provide demonstrable value; this scenario saves on bandwidth requirements and minimizes operational costs. Thus, caller self-service sessions might best be supported with audio-only interactive-voice-response (IVR) systems or applications on intelligent devices that then escalate to video interactions when a customer service representative becomes available (Figure 5). Cisco offers such video solutions today with the Cisco® Unified Customer Voice Portal (CVP).

**Figure 5.**   Video Customer Care

If a picture can be worth a thousand words, consider how much time a customer care representative can save by **showing** a caller how to do something, rather than by just describing it. And video lets the caller display information to the representative - such as damage from an auto accident shown through a mobile device.

With video, it is critical to make certain that the supporting infrastructure remains consistent to the maximum extent practicable, regardless of the video endpoints (for example, a mobile device, kiosk, PC, or telepresence). This consistency minimizes operational costs, and provides a consistent caller experience. Cisco video customer care solutions help ensure this consistency by supporting video as an intrinsic capability on the network.

Collaboration Desktops

The fourth example of Customer Collaboration can be found in next-generation agent and supervisor desktops that integrate traditional contact center functions with video, enterprise social software, and business intelligence from recording and analytics. These new collaboration desktops **tie all the pieces of Customer Collaboration together** and integrate them into the traditional agent workflow. Cisco is delivering such a personalized work environment that uses a web-based client with all the power and capability of traditional "thick client" applications (Figure 6).

Figure 6.   Collaboration Desktop "Manage Call" Screen: Integrated Presentation of Multiple Data Sources
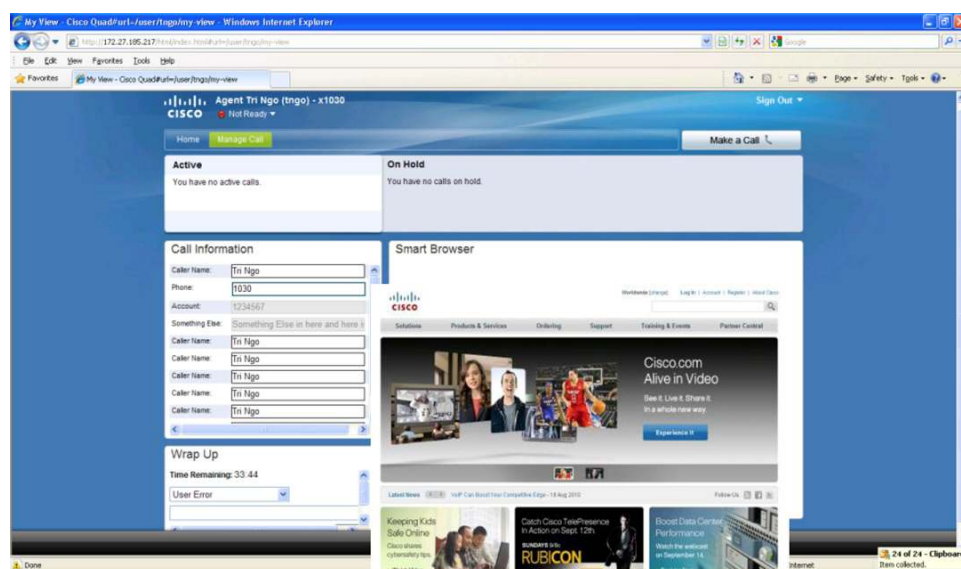
Agent speed, efficiency, and accuracy are paramount in modern contact centers. A second or two saved on each call can add up to millions of dollars in savings for a large contact center over the course of a year. Cisco's new collaboration desktop saves precious time for busy customer service representatives by integrating all the information they need - including the new sources of business intelligence - into a single, customizable cockpit that enables them to help callers faster, better, and with higher accuracy.

Conclusion

Cisco is providing Customer Collaboration solutions in these four areas that can deliver tangible benefits to businesses and organizations by taking advantage of the power of the network and our collaboration architecture. Customer Collaboration is truly realizing Cisco's strategic vision of leading the next wave of innovation and productivity.

For More Information

For more information about Customer Collaboration and Cisco customer care products, please visit: http://www.cisco.com/go/cc.

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