

# 8 Considerations for EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENTS<sup>!</sup>

A retail company's guide to providing truly customer-centric experiences



## CONTENTS

- CX in retail: Experience is the new branding
- Empathy in CX: The importance of the human touch
- Cloud technology: The key to contextual insights
- Migrating your platform: Crossing the bridge to next-gen customer engagement
- Future-proofing your customer experience: Tech that puts your customers first
- Analytics and insights: Your customers are talking. Are you listening?
- First contact resolution: A barometer of customer emotion
- Your 7 steps to better CX
- The future of the contact centre

## CX in retail: Experience is the new branding

As competition for spend intensifies, customer experience is fast becoming a battleground for retailers. And with lines between physical and digital stores blurring, today's customers expect seamless, multichannel experiences whether they're shopping in-store or online. Now is the time for retailers to accelerate digital-first engagements and embrace new technologies.

For many retailers, this means shifting to online-first models, and increasing engagement through digital channels. These engagements have become essential to satisfying requests quickly, ensuring first contact resolution and preventing customer frustration.

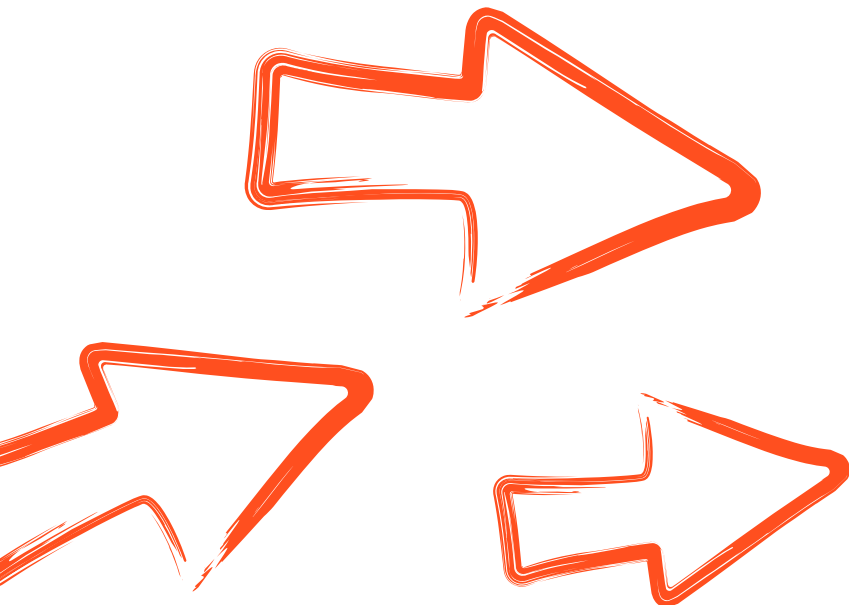
Put simply, the longer your customers are on hold, and the more they have to repeat themselves to new agents on new channels, the more frustrated they'll become. And there's no comparison between traditional telephony and intuitive engagements that span phone calls, social channels, mobile apps and chatbots in a seamless and coherent manner. But if you can't provide these experiences, you can bet your life that someone else will.

Often, that “someone else” will be a retailer who views their contact centre as a source of revenue and growth, rather than a cost centre. Taking advantage of the explosion of new channels and technologies at their disposal, these firms are retooling for an omnichannel world, gaining a holistic view of the customer journey – and quickly becoming industry leaders.

So, what can we learn from these digital-first retailers and the approaches they’re taking? Well, they put CX at the heart of what they do. And, importantly, they’re using data-driven insights to create rich, contextualised experiences that flow seamlessly across channels.

This requires a level of focused, ongoing investment and technological sophistication. But more importantly, a customer-centric model requires a cultural change; the willingness to break down organisational silos, unify objectives and build a solid foundation for implementing new tools and technologies.

Over the next eight chapters, we’ll look at some of the key things you need to consider when building a digital- and customer-first contact centre – from emerging technologies and approaches to new attitudes and cultures.



## 8 Considerations for Exceptional Customer Engagements

# EMPATHY IN CX: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HUMAN TOUCH

# Empathy in CX: The importance of the human touch

Before we get to exploring the technologies and techniques that can transform customer experiences, it's important to understand one of the cornerstones of customer service. In fact, one of the cornerstones of any human interaction: empathy.

In stressful times especially, the value of having an interaction where our feelings are truly understood and acknowledged can't be underestimated. However, there's an argument that the increasing digitisation of customer service can potentially reduce empathy, trading the human touch for the convenience and efficiency of automation. In retail, where personalised, empathetic experiences are the order of the day, this is something we must take pains to avoid.

In a recent survey of over 500 customers, over three-quarters said they believe it's very important that there is compassion and empathy during service interactions. Shockingly, well over a third of those customers told us that their emotional state was neither understood or acknowledged during a recent interaction.

Of those that felt their emotions were not understood, over three-quarters felt negatively about the brand as a result. And the vast majority of those people shared their grievances either online or with friends and family.

So, what does this mean for you? Firstly, it's important to be honest about your current performance in this regard before you begin to explore how you can mix AI insights with empathetic engagement from service agents.

A big part of this exploration will involve identifying exactly when and how technology can play a part, making sure you use it not to replace human interactions, but to augment them. Initially, this means assessing which service interactions can be automated, and which require the human touch. It's a delicate balance, but if you get it right your customers' satisfaction levels, and loyalty to your brand, will soar.

Returns processes, for example, are a key area where embracing AI-powered tools and omnichannel can help you deliver truly outstanding, empathetic service. Predictive engagement can help you spot frictions that could result in returns – such as a customer putting items of multiple sizes in their basket – and you can provide in-the-moment help to proactively prevent them. Should a return still happen, you can advise customers through SMS, walk them through the process using web chat, or even offer up-to-date insight into return status through IVR.

### **GENESYS EXPERIENCE AS A SERVICE**

Our Experience as a Service solution is designed to help you build a foundation of empathetic customer experiences, and give every customer the exact experience they want from every interaction. Whether that's an agent who sympathises while solving complex problems, or quick answers from a bot.

With Experience as a Service, each interaction starts with your customer right at the centre, helping you to gain an understanding of their needs, intent and preferences so you can help them feel remembered, heard and understood.



## 8 Considerations for Exceptional Customer Engagements

# CLOUD TECHNOLOGY: THE KEY TO CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

# Cloud technology: the key to contextual insights

Second to empathy, contextual insight is perhaps the most important tool in providing modern, connected and personalised service interactions.

It doesn't take much for a long and prosperous relationship to turn sour. If scheduled call-backs don't take place, if customers have to repeat problems multiple times to different agents, or if they're not able to use their preferred channels, they might not be customers for much longer. Instead, they'll turn to another retailer that puts digital, joined-up thinking at the heart of its operations.

Digital-first customers expect a seamless transition from one channel to the next. That's the fundamental difference between multichannel and truly omnichannel service. The reality, however, is that many retailers are still missing the mark. Ineffective CX technology strategies, an excess of unintegrated point solutions and apps, and data siloes prevent many from creating consistent, frictionless experiences.

For a customer to complete a single task, such as enquiring about a product or changing a shipping address, it often takes multiple, time-consuming, disconnected interactions. And it's not just customers who suffer – agents expected to handle voice and chat dialogues in the absence of any context are between a rock and a hard place, bearing the brunt of customers' understandable frustration.

That's why one of the fundamentals of a great customer experience is the need for organisational alignment. Cloud technology can provide a vital foundation for establishing this and delivering truly connected service interactions.

With a customer experience solution hosted in the cloud, you can seamlessly unite all your channels, data and touchpoints, and provide your agents with anytime, anywhere access to the information and tools they need to provide truly contextualised services. It also includes powerful microservices and open API architecture – to enable unique, deep customer engagement that will help set you apart.



Moreover, IT management is taken care of for you, and you'll always have access to the latest software versions, tools and technologies. You'll benefit from continuous, weekly delivery of new features and functionality – so you're always equipped to deliver the best possible experiences.

There are other benefits, too. Scalability is rapid and seamless. Costs are lower. Your IT department can say goodbye to battling with complex software integrations and trying to deliver capabilities your legacy infrastructure just wasn't designed to provide. And things like remote working, which has become increasingly important in recent times, is far easier when all your customers and agents are connected to the same resources.

And when things are easier, everyone – from your agents to your customers – is happier.

### **GENESYS CLOUD™**

Currently, thousands of businesses around the globe use The Genesys Cloud™ solution to power deeply connected, meaningful experiences. Our all-in-one contact centre solution helps you create fluid customer conversations across digital and voice channels, predicting and understanding customer issues before they escalate. Or, in some cases, before they even happen.



## 8 Considerations for Exceptional Customer Engagements

# MIGRATING YOUR PLATFORM: CROSSING THE BRIDGE TO NEXT-GEN CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

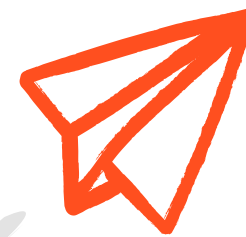
# Migrating your platform: crossing the bridge to next-gen customer engagement

We know what you're thinking. The prospect of retooling and digitally transforming in a large, siloed retail environment can, quite literally, keep you awake at night. Especially when your agents are already juggling multiple portals, platforms and apps. But it needn't be as daunting as it seems.

Whether you're ready to transform your entire environment into a seamless, omnichannel customer experience, or are embarking on a gradual migration to a fit-for-the-future platform, the important thing is to have a clear roadmap for that journey.

It's also vital that you have the enthusiasm and support of everyone in the company. So, talk about the changes that will be made. Show those in marketing the new possibilities and opportunities. And share the details with your technical team to show them that they'll have less work to do, not more.

All of this requires the right level of expertise. So, don't feel that this is something you have to navigate on your own. Finding the right cloud migration partner, and the best platform for your customer service engagements, is a must. With the right people behind you, transitioning from a patchwork of technologies acquired over time to a single, future-ready solution can be virtually seamless. And it's a vital step to providing the personalised, contextualised, omnichannel service experiences that can set your brand apart.





### **GENESYS PUREBRIDGE ASSESSMENTS**

At Genesys, we offer a PureBridge assessment: a half-day programme to help you navigate smoothly from your current contact centre set-up to your desired future state.

We kick off with a discovery session to understand your current environment and show you the art of the possible with a Genesys-powered customer experience. We then map those possibilities to your CX and business objectives and determine the capabilities needed to reach your goals.

You'll leave the session with a unique picture of how your contact centre will be able to create exceptional customer experiences and empower your employees. You'll also receive a personalised migration strategy, with clear steps based on our CX maturity model, tried and trusted by thousands of our customers.

## 8 Considerations for Exceptional Customer Engagements

**FUTURE-PROOFING  
YOUR CUSTOMER  
EXPERIENCE: TECH  
THAT PUTS YOUR  
CUSTOMERS FIRST**

# Future-proofing your customer experience: tech that puts your customers first

Once you have the right platform upon which to build your new customer experiences, it's time to start considering the types of technology you want to embrace.

Today, retailers have no end of options when it comes to the technologies and channels they can implement. However, there's no point simply throwing money at every emerging innovation. It's vital to work out which investments will provide a consistent experience across your different touch points, and which add value without removing the all-important human element of service interactions.

Remember, today's consumers aren't just comparing the experience you deliver with that of your direct competitors, but against top performers in your industry. More specifically, brands like Amazon, who are showing your customers how fast delivery and seamless service is done. That means your customers won't put up with lackluster experiences – your CX platform has to include top-tier digital capabilities.

For this reason, today's 'hot button' topics in CX – automation, machine learning, AI, micro-apps, voicebots and chatbots – will be tomorrow's must-have capabilities. AI in particular can have a huge impact on service interactions. It can automatically collate and categorise data to provide service agents with the information they need to make interactions seamless across channels. It can also be used to power self-service bots capable of providing answers themselves. Or, if the situation needs it, knowing when to pass an engagement over to a human advisor, so you can add that vital dose of empathy.

Get it right, and the results can be dramatic. One online retail leader was able to reduce average handling time by 45 seconds, achieve a 92% member satisfaction score and save \$1.1 million in operational costs within its first year using AI.

However, don't let cost benefits and time savings fool you into making a decision about tech. When thinking about the types of technology you want to implement, it's important to remember that the whole point of your investments should be to communicate more easily and effectively with your customers. Anything that doesn't aid this should be shown the door.

And remember, it's not about replacing or hiding agents. Quite the opposite – it's a way of delivering a personal service supported by technology. We all know the frustration of wanting to talk to a person but getting stuck in a tech loop. In retail, where personalised, human experiences are key to building customer loyalty, this simply won't cut it.



### **GENESYS' AI CAPABILITIES**

Our innovation platform comes pre-loaded with smart app automation, asynchronous messaging, IoT capabilities and Bring-your-own-bot, which blends artificial intelligence and machine learning to enable a deeper understanding of customer interactions across channels.

## 8 Considerations for Exceptional Customer Engagements

**ANALYTICS AND  
INSIGHTS: YOUR  
CUSTOMERS ARE  
TALKING. ARE YOU  
LISTENING?**



# Analytics and insights: Your customers are talking. Are you listening?

You don't have to be a great listener to process a transaction. But if you want to nurture real loyalty – the sort that inspires customers to rave about your brand – you have to actively put them first.

Maintaining focus on the customer means understanding what each person wants and values, and delivering it to them in the form of a superior experience. No single element of your performance matters as much to retention as the perception of your customer experience as a whole.

For this reason, collecting and analysing customer feedback is a vital exercise. But not every customer is prepared to complete an online survey, and many can't necessarily articulate what they really want themselves.

The key is to make use of the wealth of information that already emanates from all of your channels, including social listening and the digital exhaust trail left by today's online consumers. That way, you can identify not just who your customers are, but what they really want.

Analytical insights can help you become aware of flawed processes, or instances of agents arguing with consumers over their rights. They can also give you a way to measure whether you're meeting your customers' changing needs when many of their behaviours and choices are unconscious or irrational.

At a time when consumers are willing to reward businesses that meet their expectations – and be vociferous about those that don't – it's important that you consider what signals your current CX is sending out. Listen intently to figure out where you can improve. And once you've gathered all your customer intelligence, determine how you'll apply it beyond short-term initiatives to actively transform your culture into a customer-centric one.



## 8 Considerations for Exceptional Customer Engagements

# FIRST CONTACT RESOLUTION: A BAROMETER OF CUSTOMER EMOTION

# First contact resolution: A barometer of customer emotion

Hand on heart: how often does your service team address the customer's need the first time they call? And if they don't, do they realise the ramifications? When a customer is calling to make a claim, a poor experience can magnify their negative feelings about your brand no end.

But is first contact resolution (FCR) the most important thing to your operations team, or have you been focused on driving down time to answer and average handle time (AHT)? Low AHT combined with poor FCR rates can be a sign that you're not truly putting the customer first.

FCR is a key weapon in the battle for consumer trust and loyalty. Customers will forgive any brand a multitude of sins if their problem is fixed without friction, but are quick to condemn brands that pass them from pillar to post.

However, FCR can be a tricky ball of string to untangle – particularly because so many other operational metrics both affect it and are affected by it. To understand opportunities for improvement and gauge your current performance, you need to be able to reliably measure FCR and understand the underlying issues that drive repeat calls to begin with.

Remember though, it's not realistic to believe that every single issue can be resolved at the first attempt without further research, work or collaboration. As mundane tasks are increasingly automated, customer queries will become more complex, and it's not always possible to provide an immediate answer. However, if the caller ends up having to repeat their tale of woe to multiple agents, the experience becomes painful and satisfaction levels plummet.

Some retailers are now taking a pre-emptive approach to improve FCR rates. Using AI-powered analytics across digital and traditional channels, retailers can discover customer intent, and provide fast, targeted resolution.



To do this, you also need to empower your agents to respond in ways that really move the needle on customer satisfaction. With a tightly-integrated omnichannel CX solution, you can harness both the customer's interaction history and back-office data. This gives you the opportunity to intelligently route enquiries to agents with the appropriate service skills, and provide them with full visibility into the what, when, where, who and how, so the customer isn't forced to relate their entire backstory.

FCR is not a quick or easy win. However, it's an important metric to master – not just as an indicator of your contact centre's operational effectiveness, but as a barometer of customer emotion.



8 Considerations for Exceptional Customer Engagements

# YOUR 7 STEPS TO BETTER CX

# Your 7 steps to better CX

We're all somebody's customers. We know how we like to be treated and we've all had experiences that have influenced our opinion of a brand. As the late Maya Angelou said: "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

With that in mind, here are seven steps you should take to help people remember the way you made them feel – for the right reasons:

## **1. Acknowledge the need for change.**

The first step toward recovery is admitting you have a problem and having a deep, heartfelt commitment to solving it. You shouldn't focus exclusively on customer complaints to guide your transformation, though. You should also look at positive feedback to identify what you're getting right, so you can start doing more of that.

## **2. Create a clear vision of the customer experience you are trying to deliver.**

Many organisations still have an incomplete definition of customer experience, or functional silos mean that CX has become the proverbial elephant being examined by three blind men. Know what it is you want to achieve, and use that vision to build your roadmap for change.

### 3. Get executive buy-in.

Of course, your CEO or CFO needs to be on board to sponsor any contact centre transformation initiative and lead from the top down. But also consider whether you need a dedicated position – a Chief Customer Officer, if you like – who owns the customer experience and has the authority to ensure the requisite focus.

### 4. Achieve organisational alignment.

People can be anxious about what change will mean to their own work and targets. Consider establishing a CX Council to bring together all departments who impact the customer experience and empower them to work as a single team with a unified vision: putting the customer first, no matter what.

### 5. Get on your (bench)marks.

Once you have mapped the customer journey, start by assessing the current state of your strategy, people, processes and tech. Determine how you are going to measure the change in terms of positive customer emotion, not just reduced holding times or other operational metrics.

### 6. Collaborate to differentiate.

Working with a true solution partner, rather than a generic software vendor, will set you on the right path to true omnichannel engagement while avoiding operational pitfalls. Use their expertise to identify opportunities for business alignment and ways to apply technology to accelerate your transformation journey.

### 7. Build your business case.

A good customer experience will have a positive impact on your bottom line, and that's a legitimate justification for a CX initiative. But you need a solid business case based on logic and metrics rather than intuition. Again, the right partner should be able to shape and inform this process.



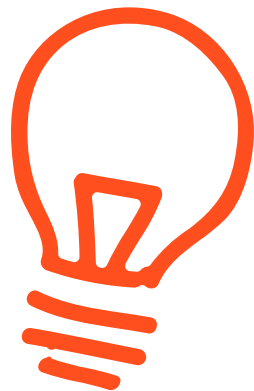
# THE FUTURE OF THE CONTACT CENTRE



# The future of the contact centre

It's easy to feel bamboozled by technology predictions, or by assertions about the growing use of chatbots and AI, connected "things", holographic virtual assistants displacing human agents, or whatever the latest hype may be.

At Genesys, we don't advocate the implementation of technology for technology's sake, or a brutal rip and replace of CX systems every few years. Any investment in the contact centre has to move the needle on customer satisfaction, because simply becoming more efficient doesn't necessarily make you more effective – you just get better at delivering a poor experience.



The automation of routine interactions must be focused on ensuring ease and convenience for the customer, and not simply as a means of operational cost-cutting. Chatbots may allow you to handle a higher volume of complaints, but you need to figure out why so many people are unhappy in the first place. New channels are emerging all the time, but omnichannel doesn't mean jumping on every bandwagon. The goal should be that however a customer chooses to reach out, you're able to convert the interaction into a high-quality, accurate and positive experience every time.

In far too many businesses, CX technology investments are rooted either in internal cost savings or a desire to reduce negative emotions. For us, the contact centre of the future will be one that pays more attention to purposefully and proactively building positive emotions throughout the customer journey.

With this in mind, we work with organisations to identify opportunities for business alignment by assessing the current state of their strategy, people, processes and technology.

We identify gaps and create a roadmap for transformation, supported by financial justification and business plans. And we use our experience to resolve issues faster, apply lessons learned across industries and plan for emerging trends.

We also provide guidance on automation (where that's the best way to serve customers) and help increase teams' knowledge and effectiveness with advice on training, staffing and onboarding – equipping them to handle the complex interactions that still demand that human touch.

In short, we put customers, not just technology,  
at the heart of a successful CX journey.



**For more information, contact:**



SafriCloud

<https://www.safricloud.com/>

[info@safricloud.com](mailto:info@safricloud.com)

031 538 1977



#### **ABOUT GENESYS**

Every year, Genesys® delivers more than 70 billion remarkable customer experiences for organisations in over 100 countries. Through the power of the cloud and AI, our technology connects every customer moment across marketing, sales and service on any channel, while also improving employee experiences. Genesys pioneered Experience as a Service<sup>SM</sup> so organisations of any size can provide true personalisation at scale, interact with empathy and foster customer trust and loyalty. This is enabled by Genesys Cloud™, an all-in-one solution and the world's leading public cloud contact centre platform, designed for rapid innovation, scalability and flexibility.

Genesys and the Genesys logo are registered trademarks of Genesys. All other company names and logos may be trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective holders.  
© 2021 Genesys. All rights reserved.