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Delivering customer experience through multiple touch-points



Touch-point Experience or as it is popularly referred to as Moment of Truth is central to successfully building customer loyalty and enhancing overall brand experience. Hospitality industry, especially renowned hotels and airlines, has worked on this parameter considerably to achieve sustained leadership in a highly competitive market place. In fact, riding on consistent Touch-point Experience delivery, some of these brands have been able to command premium pricing for their offerings, for which the customers are willing to pay.

A mobile phone is a unique product in this context. For any consumer, it is a highly personalized device which is always on. This device is capable of fulfilling a whole range of needs catering to voice, internet, VAS, mobile banking, social media etc. Given this, the challenge for an operator lies in dealing with millions of subscribers at once and yet build and offer a sustainable differentiated touch-point experience.

While the onus of providing a differentiated touch-point experience lies with a mobile operator, the mammoth task of constantly connecting and serving customers 24x7 cannot be accomplished alone.

This requires engaging and synchronizing their effort with an external ecosystem for fulfillment of a complete telecom experience for a consumer.

A typical touch-point ecosystem, in addition to network capabilities, consists of retailers who are majorly responsible for sale of new connections, recharge vouchers, special value packs, value added services etc.; content service providers who offer various value added services through a telecom service providers network to consumers and help them fulfill their entertainment, educational, informational, social and functional needs and finally after sales service support channels which includes direct company stores, third party retail points, call centers (outbound and inbound) and self-help channels.

In order to build a well-designed and superior touch-point experience at each of these interfaces, an operator must consider dealing with the ecosystem in the following manner:

a) Retailers: Retailers are either dedicated brand outlets, multi-brand telecom outlets, or over the counter selling outlets for recharges, accessories etc.

In case of dedicated brand outlets, the ability to standardize look, feel and delivery of services can be achieved through a proper service design, contract guidance and regular experience monitoring by dipstick audits. Multi brand outlets and over the counter resellers are brand agnostic. . However, since they operate in a competitive open market situation, for them attracting footfalls relies on their reputation with their existing clientele as well as their location.

Telecom companies can partner with these outlets on a collaborative basis for enhancing their customer touchpoint experience skills, as well as give them access to trouble free backend after sales support channel for their products.

b) Content service providers: While they reach out to the end consumers using a telecom providers network, the ownership of experience of the service still remains with the telco. To enhance the touchpoint experience in this area, a number of actions can be undertaken by an operator:

- Contractually bind content providers on the quality of service parameter for subscription based services; this should include periodic checks and reports on accessibility, accuracy and experience feedback mechanism
- Establish an independent third party evaluation mechanism for key services consumed by customers
- For event based services (one time trial packs or web link based content), ensure a mandatory double consent mechanism for consumers to prevent any inadvertent charging

c) After sales support channels: Ease of accessibility to these channels, knowledge and training of frontline staff and a robust customer interaction capturing mechanism are key to building a good touchpoint experience here.

d) Network experience: Since network is a 24x7 service for a consumer, all telecom equipment vendors have started to deploy CEM (Consumer Experience Management) tools which look at customer experience parameters like call drops, data session breaks, echoes etc., in a far more granular manner to proactively correct any technical gap or problem. Coupling this with customer complaint data suggests priority improvement area from a customer experience perspective.

In order to ensure the entire engine of experience delivery is working well, a well-defined maker & checker system to keep a constant vigil on the experience being delivered on ground is crucial. The Maker is a supervisory level validation checklist of key experience delivery process steps. On the other hand, the Checker is an independent third party internal or external team for validation of critical touch point areas to provide assurance to the stated experience delivery objective. Along with this, the tooth to tail ratio of telecom operator towards front-line servicing is critical. For instance, at Aircel, 65% of our on-roll staff is customer facing which reinforces Aircel's focus on customer service.

A well designed Experience Architecture and 360 degree implementation and monitoring is key to constantly Raising the Bar in this journey.