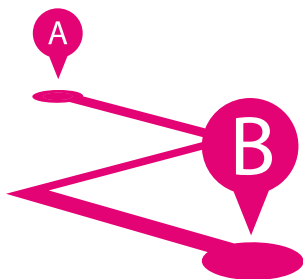




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**“PRESS FORWARD.  
DO NOT STOP,  
DO NOT LINGER  
IN YOUR JOURNEY,  
BUT STRIVE  
FOR THE MARK  
SET BEFORE YOU.”**

— GEORGE WHITEFIELD

**T**he idiom “get the show on the road” alludes to a theatrical production going on tour,” according to *The American History Dictionary of Idioms*. It has come to refer to getting things going and moving in a forward direction. I am sure that many of us have alerted our teams, families and loved ones to “get the show on the road” at some point.

When it comes to customer experience, it is time to take a hard look around at what supports and what hinders getting the customer experience show on the road.

According to a recent Forrester study, 92% of companies view customer experience as one of their top priorities. This is supported by additional study information presented at G-Force by Forrester Principal Analyst Kate Leggett that sales and customer service are the top departments for software strategy and investments in 2014.

If you were asked today what software would enhance the customer experience, how would you answer? If you enter into a trance state while evaluating your response, it is time to get down to business or the show will be on the road without you or your input.

As a leader in delivering on the customer experience promise, you must recognize that process is the *underpinning* of excellence. Nearly all obstacles to the desired experience reside within one process or another. Since processes in most companies rely heavily on systems and software, it is important to be fluent in both. You do not need to be able to articulate a particular system or software; but you must be able to document succinctly the requirements that facilitate the desired outcome. It is difficult to “get the show on the road” without thinking through the critical requirements that must be met.

It is important to understand that, very often, internal IT departments do not necessarily maintain an awareness of contact center-specific technologies. Therefore, there is an incumbent responsibility to keep up with systems, tools, software, etc., that you might recommend to aid in process reengineering. (You might also consider referring them to some of the relevant articles published here to aid in the discussion.)

I have observed situations in which IT had no idea what a “smart desktop” was or why it would help, where “speech analytics” was a total mystery, and where no attention was paid to mobile apps. Many IT departments are spending time and money on IVRs when SMS messaging is the definitive customer choice. This is especially true for the next generation of customers who (by the way) are already here and will choose companies that make their channel of choice available.


This is a no-fault issue. The contact center is unique and has unique requirements that do not apply to the majority of users within the enterprise. Forming a partnership with IT becomes a critical success factor in gaining access to smart, new technologies. The contact center and IT must work collaboratively to facilitate investment in systems and software that support the customer experience.

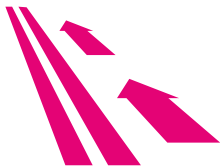
Today, it is becoming increasingly important to relate customer experience success to how easy, effective and pleasant it is for your customer to do business with you. This is the new lens through which to view the impact of process on experience. One quick way to discover obstacles is to ask the front line. This is a sure-fire way to get the show on the road! Agents are the ones with the greatest exposure to what frustrates customers. Ask for input; see what themes

emerge around how easy it is to do business with your company. This ought to launch not only issues around systems but around crossfunctional relationships, management practices, etc.

Contact center leaders are reevaluating whether a metrics-based analysis of contact center performance can determine if things were actually made easier for the customer. Objectives around call duration or number of calls handled don't make things easier. In fact, they often make things more difficult because the front line is focused on metric performance rather than on customer experience. Don't get me wrong: Metric accuracy is critical for successful management planning—getting the right number of people in the right place at the right time. But targets for the front line neglect to consider the negative behaviors that emerge and damage the customer experience rather than support it. Metric measures are quickly becoming out of step with today's contact centers.

Speaking of being out of step... I remain in stunned disbelief that contact center leaders continue to tell me that their marketing departments launch campaigns without notifying them! When, pray tell, will these same leaders start ASKING? If you know of a deficiency that creates issues, it is imperative to challenge the status quo. The fact is, if marketing is not notifying you, it is not because they intentionally want to do you harm. It is worse! You are simply not on their radar—and that, my friends, is a problem you can solve. All departments share in the promise of delivering on the customer experience. Hence, collaboration is one of the human factors necessary to overcome obstacles and make it easy for our customers and prospects to do business with us.

How effective are you and your team at identifying process issues and preparing recommendations to resolve them? Only you can answer that question. All I can say right now is, "Get the show on the road!" This journey is under way! 



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