

# Customer Interaction

## A new and huge market

*The market is constantly changing, the business is moving faster and faster.  
Customers are becoming more and more demanding and are easily frustrated.  
They expect high responsiveness, a personalized approach and consistent answers.  
Nixxis is offering global solutions in this Customer Interaction area...*

## Customers are becoming increasingly demanding

***They initiate contact 24hrs a day through their preferred communication channels, demand responsive service and ask for consistent answers. The image they have of your company is no longer based on mass-marketing communication such as advertising, but on their experience with your responsiveness and quality of answers over the different communication channels.***

### Customers: ever more demanding... and interacting!

Customers nowadays are easily frustrated. They will quickly express their discontent if the responsiveness of your company does not meet their expectations, or if the answers they get are incomplete. Through their social network and media-outlets, your company's unfortunate flaws will be swiftly exposed.

The good news, however, is that frustrated customers, who tend to turn to the competition in silence, will now be interacting with you! You now have an opportunity to recover them. And... an opportunity to review your interaction strategy!

### Customers have their preferred interaction channels

Customers choose the type, amount and information channel of their preference, for interacting with the organization, as opposed to being imposed which one to use.

Some might stick to the phone, others will send an email, start a chat session or may even like to use the self-service capability of your web solutions. What if a consumer does not have access to a specific service, information or product through his chosen interaction channel? He will most likely turn to a competitor.

Nowadays, if you would want to force your customers to use one particular interaction channel, you will obviously fail in giving him the attention he needs and expects.

### Image depends on customer experience

Every customer would want to be approached individually. Budgets once spent on one-way mass-marketing actions are now allocated to interaction strategies, allowing this highly personalized approach.

Every time a customer comes in touch with a company, he has an opportunity to form an opinion. Over time the collective set of experiences will form a picture in his mind, which will ultimately shape the brand's image and its values. Interaction channels are contact points: moments of truth!

### Interaction around the clock

'Nine to five' serving hours are totally outdated. Customers expect service around the clock. Not being able to cope with these renewed demands immediately results in customer loss. Furthermore, customers will no longer accept any disruptions in the communication channels due to technical malfunctions. Such occurrences might be interpreted as an excuse to cloak a lack of organization.

### New generation of customers

The new generation is being raised with state-of-the-art multimedia communication techniques, constantly present in their immediate environment. They see the world through their e-browser. They do not leave the house without their video-enabled mobile phone or PDA.

How does this chatting, text messaging, surfing, and video-conferencing generation affect your interaction strategy? Today they may already represent a consumer group with significant buying power. Tomorrow they might be managers with decision power.

## A company becomes one large interaction centre

***A company's success depends on its speed of response, its ability to use its relevant customer information available, and the speed at which interaction channels are integrated throughout the entire organization. A high performance company tends to become one large interaction centre.***

***In a globalised world, virtual interaction solutions with short implementation times are vital to allow the business to react nimbly to market shifts.***

***Interaction managers are aware that there is no way around the new compelling changes of customer interaction. Interaction managers must convince their corporate leadership of the value of their interaction strategy, and control the value and profitability it delivers.***

### Transactions are based on trust: response speed

Whatever the interaction channel, trust is the critical driver of customers' decision to buy. The first fundamental success factor for an interaction strategy is its ability to guarantee a customer quick response times and service levels across all interaction channels.

### Transactions are based on trust: integration of relevant information

The immediate availability of relevant information about the customer and former interactions is crucial. The 'I am known' effect has an immediate positive impact on the interaction. The second major success factor in an interaction strategy is the integration of the interaction channels with the company's databases and information systems. ...

### Transactions are based on trust: uniform answers across interaction channels

Nixxis has developed the "Nixxis Interaction Engine", a Customer Interaction Hub allowing access to consistent, real time and historical information throughout all the communication channels.

A customer initiates a question through a chat-session, calls one hour later to provide additional information, and the following day sends a follow-up email. The customer is expecting his/her contact attempts to be handled uniformly, regardless of the interaction channel.

It is frustrating to get different answers across the interaction channels. The fact that a customer's question could be routed to several employees, each of them handling one specific interaction channel, is simply no longer accepted. Customers hate to have to repeat themselves over and over again, introducing themselves and their query. And the frustration reaches its climax when the customer finally hears that emails are handled by another department, or that the information is stored in a separate system only accessible to another employee.

### The company becomes one large interaction center

To answer customers' questions, companies often decide to put a contact centre as the front operation of the organization. Rather than solving communication problems, this solution creates customer frustration. What if the customer's question cannot be handled by front-end employees and has to be forwarded to the back office? If back office employees do not feel customers breathing down their necks, they are less tempted to immediately provide answers. Customer requests should be handled by the appropriate employees, who should have all necessary customer information on display along with the call, email, chat... This can be achieved by integrating interaction functions in the applications they work with on a daily basis. In short, a company becomes one large interaction centre that is able to give the customers first contact resolution. The impact on the customer satisfaction is huge.

### Fast implementation and response to peaks

Companies want to develop new markets as fast as possible in countries where these markets emerge. In this start-up phase the whole range of interaction channels must quickly be made available to prospects and customers. Employees need to be equipped with business functionality and interaction channel integrated solutions. Fast and cost-effective implementation of the underlying technology is essential for the success of the new business.

### The virtual company in a globalized world

The 'follow the sun' principle makes it possible for service desks of international companies to be open 24 hours a day. This means that information and infrastructure must be available around the clock, and that technology has to be able to route the interactions in a cost efficient way to the appropriate service desk.

In case of peaks in the number of interactions, technology has to be able to add additional (human) resources without delay, such as home workers, employees in another subsidiary, self serving solutions, etc. The business requires a truly 'virtual' infrastructure.

### Profit / Cost considerations

The share of marketing budgets spent on interaction channels is continually increasing. 'One way' marketing channels such as advertising are losing importance. Interaction managers are entering corporate executive teams, where they calculate the profit and cost of interaction channels. As they have to be able to respond quickly to the whole range of preferred interaction channels of the customers, profit/cost considerations become very important. The interaction should be handled by the employee or device that can secure customer satisfaction at the lowest cost, wherever the location on our planet. Technology should make this possible.

## On demand solutions become imperative

***Corporate leaderships increasingly avoid expensive premise-based systems. They prefer functionality-rich on-demand solutions that do not require large up-front investments and that can be provisioned on a monthly basis with relatively little risk. There is a need for a new generation of 'hosted' customer interaction, for which 'you pay as you use'.***

### Keeping up with evolutions

Technology is evolving so fast that ICT departments are barely able to keep up the pace with developments. ICT projects often come on-stream with technology becoming outdated as they start being used. The "newly" created solution is therefore not only outdated, but also lacks the flexibility and openness in order to be combined with other new communication channels. It is impossible for the ICT staff to become or remain experts in everything and it is impossible to continue hiring new experts.

### Costs out of control

Nowadays, most senior managers would agree with the belief that expenditure on IT is 'out of control' because of complex licensing, new upgrades, maintenance bills and poor project management.

### Duplication costs

Business requires a truly 'virtual' infrastructure. From an economic point of view, it is useless to duplicate equipment in every site, or to employ more resources to operate this equipment.

### Support and availability around the clock

Globalisation of companies demands a centralised management and reporting, combined with a flexible and cost effective local start up of a new business. ICT service delivery and support have to be available throughout the continent, or worldwide, and on a 24/7 basis too!

### Flexible and secure

The tendency towards home working and satellite offices calls for flexible and secure communication tools, to avoid time consuming traffic jams and to increase the quality of life. Moreover, investments in security and redundancy in order to avoid single points of failure are extremely expensive. They are therefore often not considered unless a serie of serious incidents have paid their toll and had dramatic consequences on revenue, profit and company image. Costs in working hours and material to restore normal operations can run very high.