

The Connected Digital Experience: Why it's great for your customers and your business

The challenge: Deliver throughout the customer lifecycle

When Cisco meets with companies like yours, we continually hear how organizations engage with customers over time, referred to as the “customer lifecycle” or “customer journey.” Everything from the customer becoming a prospect to buying, receiving service, and repurchasing is part of that journey.

But here's the challenge: If you don't deliver at any point during the customer journey, you could lose that customer. All the hard work you've put in could be at risk.



of consumers say they are more loyal to organizations that are easy and simple to contact¹



buy more from companies that make it easier to do business with them¹



But two out of three consumers say it is exhausting dealing with customer service¹

¹ “Chat, tap, talk: Eight key trends to transform your digital customer experience,” Cisco/BT, 2017

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The opportunity: Connect the dots

A large majority of consumers prefer to do business with companies that are easy to work with, yet two out of three consumers say it's typically "exhausting" dealing with customer service. What an opportunity for improvement!

The good news is that companies are actively seeking ways to improve their customer journey. Unfortunately, the typical journey currently involves a variety of disconnected touchpoints. As consumers, we've all experienced this. For example, we notice an advertisement for a special promotion, yet when we contact the company, they seem unaware of it. This could be a disconnect between marketing and customer support, yet breakdowns also occur even within the same business function—and especially in the contact center.

It happens all the time. We call a contact center, and an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system prompts us to enter our account number. Yet when we're transferred to an agent, in many cases they ask us to repeat that same information. How frustrating, not to mention time-consuming! Don't forget that wasted seconds quickly add up in busy contact centers. And the problem only gets worse across channels. When was the last time an IVR system or a live agent was aware that you called because you had difficulty filling out a web form?

As consumers, there's little that frustrates us more than when a business has no idea how we interacted with them previously, or why we're contacting them now.

What causes these disconnects? We must understand the problem in order to find a solution.

The landscape: Silos of systems

If you remember back to the 1990s, businesses sought to merge voice and data and bring the network together on a single backbone. This was largely successful. On top of those networks, businesses added multichannel customer care such as email and chat to their existing voice-based call centers. The problem is, in most cases, those care channels never converged; they look like swim lanes in a pool. Since then, the challenge has only increased as companies have added video, mobile, and other interactions to the customer journey.

It's important to realize that the technology exists to integrate these channel silos. But difficulty, cost, and time normally prevent it.



61%
of consumers will change how they contact an organization depending on their situation¹



8%
But only **8%** of organizations have all channels connected, and just 22% have most channels connected²



44%
of businesses think channel management is too difficult²

The reality is that consumers interact with businesses over time and different channels. The consumer views this as a single, connected journey, but the business typically sees isolated, disconnected events. Is it any wonder consumers are frustrated? In the end, the consumer will either recommend the company or not based on their experience of how well the company delivers across the span of their journey.

Solution: The Connected Digital Experience

So how can your business or organization deliver an exceptional customer experience and differentiate yourself from the competition?

The answer, Cisco believes, is by offering what we call a **Connected Digital Experience**, enabling you to deliver contextual, continuous, and capability-rich journeys for your customers, across time and channels.

Let's unpack that:

CONNECTED means...

- You can connect people to people, people to things, and things to things.
- Consumers can connect with your business when and how they choose— from self-service to assisted service—with your business having the information needed to deliver differentiated, relevant service.
- Your business can now connect front-office and back-office operations with your digital channel strategies for continuous care throughout the customer journey.

DIGITAL means...

- Your business can achieve a competitive advantage through your internal and external operations. This can include digital-enabled automation, simplification, orchestration, acceleration, and insight.
- You have the capability to reduce costs and improve service throughout the customer journey.
- Your customers can easily interact with your business via digital channels such as mobile apps, email, and web chat, with seamless, contextual escalation to live assistance.

EXPERIENCE means...

- A positive, start-to-finish care journey for you and your customers.
- You can successfully drive to new outcomes, such as lower customer effort and higher net promoter score.
- You can finally address the key areas people cite as their top concerns with customer care.

¹ "Chat, tap, talk: Eight key trends to transform your digital customer experience," Cisco/BT, 2017

² "Global Customer Experience Benchmarking Report," Dimension data, 2017

Traditional contact centers have largely operated on models of cost and human resource optimization. The Connected Digital Experience helps ensure that efficiency and effectiveness are **no longer mutually exclusive**.



81% of companies recognize customer experience (CX) as a competitive differentiator, yet just 13% rate their CX delivery at 9/10 or better²



67% of companies can now track customer journeys in some form²

Connected Digital Experience highlights

Cisco offers contact center solutions that can empower your business to offer a Connected Digital Experience to your customers. Some enabling capabilities include:

- Omnichannel intelligent routing for all media, including voice, video, email, and web chat
- Universal queuing of all media, including task routing that allows experts and back-office processes to be integrated into customer care operations
- Built-in, industry-leading Context Service, allowing businesses to keep track of previous customer interactions to provide faster, better-focused care
- A gadget-based agent desktop that gives care providers ready access to all the information they need to help customers more quickly and with greater accuracy
- Email and web chat that are now part of every standard agent license in the Cisco® Unified Contact Center Enterprise (CCE) product line (which includes CCE, Packaged CCE, and Hosted Collaboration Solution for Contact Center), and with each Contact Center Express Premium agent license
- Out-of-the-box omnichannel reporting
- Single sign-on for all applications

Characteristics and examples

The Connected Digital Experience brings three overarching characteristics to your business. Let's examine each and explore specific examples of how they can benefit you and your customers.

- 1. Contextual:** You want to know your customers—not just who they are, but why they're contacting you and how they've interacted with you before. This keeps your customers from having to repeat themselves (which they dislike) and allows you to address their issues faster and with greater accuracy.

Examples:

- The Cisco Finesse® agent desktop quickly delivers personalized information about each customer to your agents.
- Context Service is built into Cisco customer care solutions, allowing your agents to know about the previous interactions customers have had with your business.

² "Global Customer Experience Benchmarking Report," Dimension data, 2017

2. Continuous: Businesses need to connect their customers with the right resources no matter where they are in the customer lifecycle. This can include inbound contacts, proactive outreach, and engagement with experts and back-office assets or the Internet of Things.

Examples:

- Cisco Precision Routing matches your customers' service requirements (language, location, type of service requested, expertise needed, loyalty status, prior interactions, etc.) with the right resource the first time. And it's much easier to implement than traditional skills-based routing from other vendors.
- The Task Routing API enables new types of interactions—such as videos, texts, and events from the Internet of Things (for example, a detected power outage or a traffic incident)—to be routed to the contact center.
- Cisco's Context Service is the “glue” that allows your business to provide seamless, continuous customer journeys by knowing how and why your customers have interacted with you before.

3. Capable: You want a secure, reliable, extensible, capability-rich customer care solution that fits your business needs—including features, scale, and deployment model.

Examples:

- Cisco customer care solutions can be deployed on-premises, in the cloud, or in hybrid architectures. Our solutions support businesses needing just a handful of customer service representatives to ones with literally tens of thousands of agents.
- REST APIs can deliver information from a variety of sources to the Cisco Finesse agent desktop, so your agents have the information they need to better help your customers.
- Cisco Unified CCE's fault-tolerant architecture is the basis for mission-critical contact centers worldwide.
- Cisco customer care solutions are built on Cisco networks—the world's toughest and most secure.

The Connected Digital Experience in action

Setting: Cumulus Financial uses Cisco Packaged CCE in its contact center, with the built-in Cisco Finesse agent desktop having gadgets that support omnichannel interactions with customers. Whether it's a call, chat, email, text message, or other means of contact, Cumulus's agents have the tools they need to handle any interaction. Cisco's Context Service (also included) provides knowledge of prior interactions to agents and automated systems such as chat bots and IVRs.

Scenario:

1. Brian, a consumer, visits the Cumulus website for information on new home mortgages. Summary information about Brian's search is securely sent to Context Service in the cloud.
2. Via the Cumulus website, Brian sends an email to Cumulus asking about the types of mortgages they offer. This results in additional information being sent to the Context Service.
3. Informed by Context Service, Packaged CCE uses Cisco's highly efficient Precision Routing to send Brian's email to Agent Amy, who is proficient in mortgages.
4. Agent Amy reviews Brian's email and opens the Journey tab in her Cisco Finesse desktop to review Brian's previous interactions with Cumulus as captured by the Context Service. Amy notices that Brian is a retired naval officer.
5. It's clear to Amy what Brian wants, so she uses her Solve gadget to find a document that summarizes the types of mortgages offered by Cumulus. She emails it to him, and because of his former military status, suggests he consider the VA loan option. Amy notes all this to the Context Service.

6. Brian reviews the mortgage options Amy sent him. He's leaning toward the VA loan, but has some questions about current rates. Brian is watching a sporting event on TV, so he initiates a chat via the Cumulus webpage.
7. Informed by Context Service that Brian is a promising prospect, PCCE routes Brian's chat to Agent Sandra—another mortgage specialist—rather than to an automated chat bot.
8. Agent Sandra receives the chat and uses her Journey tab to review what's happened with Brian so far. She greets Brian and asks if he needs more information about VA loans. Grateful that Sandra is already aware of his situation, Brian answers yes. Sandra uses a gadget on her desktop to find and send current VA loan rates to Brian. She adds a note to Context Service while Brian ends the chat and completes a quick web survey.
9. A couple days later, Brian is ready to fill in an online VA loan application. He calls Cumulus and reaches an IVR that—informed by Context Service—tells him he's in a priority queue for a loan specialist. Brian is soon connected to Agent Greg, who helps Brian complete his loan application via a co-browse session.

Cisco: Your trusted partner

Businesses want feature-rich, open solutions like Cisco's that can accommodate best-in-class offerings from multiple sources, but it's also critical that your contact center be delivered on time and budget. That's why so many companies worldwide trust Cisco customer care solutions.

Summary

You've just learned about the Connected Digital Experience, which enables businesses to help customers with greater accuracy and efficiency throughout their journey—regardless of time or channel. It's people and devices connecting intelligently and with context, which delights customers and makes them powerful advocates for your brand.

Learn more about Cisco's contact center offerings at <https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/products/customer-collaboration/index.html>.