



# Managing the future of customer experience, today

Why it's time for Enterprises to get Social

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**This paper discusses the changes and challenges in managing Customer Experience today and how businesses should prepare for a future that is driven by customer-determined contact. We reflect on how a combination of systematically-applied process mapping, plus CRM technology that connects to social media to understand and manage their customers' journey is critical to organisations achieving increased revenue and improved customer retention.**



**There is a material and ongoing shift in the way that customers choose to interact with organisations that they buy from, and regardless of your personal position on social media, your business will have a requirement to figure out how to make the most of the opportunity that it presents, and fast.**

Customers are expecting a personalised and efficient experience through their choice of communication channel and it may not be a channel that your organisation is currently equipped to deal with, from a process or technology perspective. Forrester<sup>1</sup> states that organisations must “provide cross-channel customer service in the way that customers want to receive it.”

Research carried out by Conversocial<sup>2</sup> shows that 78% of people polled believe that social media is the future of customer service. Why write a letter that takes a day or two to arrive, and which you cannot see the progress of, when you can fire off a tweet that is visible to the whole world? With individuals able to take to Facebook and Twitter to voice their opinions swiftly, and publicly, an organisation that isn't able to respond, or responds poorly, can end up with a PR disaster on its hands.

But this is not just a customer service story. Consider the sales function within your organisation. They are likely to be remote users, have a number of devices such as a smartphone, tablet PC and laptop, and be expected to provide timely information to the business regardless of location or device. By return they are going to expect a working environment with tools and applications that enable them to do exactly that. Under these circumstances, the only way in which your business is going to capture the data it needs on the activity of your sales force and the pipeline that it is generating is via user-friendly sales tools that work across multiple devices. Miss one of these areas and the process becomes onerous, slow and inaccurate.

And what about lead generation and marketing? As organisations begin to take process and technology

steps to be present where their target customers are, social media will have an increasingly important role to play when it comes to new business. In a typical 'cold' sales interaction such as a telemarketing or email campaign, a response rate of less than 3% is not unusual. Compare this to a 2nd degree connection approach via LinkedIn and the yield will be in the region of 67%<sup>3</sup>. Because the information about the person making contact, their credentials, and those of their organisation are present at the point of interaction it greatly increases the likelihood of the recipient to respond, and crucially the potential to make a sale.

This shift in customer behaviour and power is forcing changes right up to board level in many organisations. It is evidenced by companies that have created new roles such as 'Customer Success Manager' and 'VP of Customer Experience' (over 1,500 in the UK alone according to LinkedIn). They are acknowledging that CRM is not an 'electronic rolodex', and that focusing on Customer Experience is a critical component to the success of their business.

So when your customer wants to interact with you on their terms, expects a personalised experience and is highly attuned to overt sales and marketing messages – how is your current CRM system going to help you deliver what your customer wants?



**1 Source:** The Forrester Wave™: CRM Suite Customer Service Solutions, Q3 2012

**2 Source:** [http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/social-customer-complaints\\_b31090](http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/social-customer-complaints_b31090)

**3 Source:** LinkedIn

# Preparing for the Future of Customer Experience – Challenges Facing Businesses Today

**To help us explore the challenges facing businesses today in delivering against customer expectations when you have legacy CRM processes and systems, we spoke with a number of businesses and industry connections about their experiences and what they think the future will bring. During the course of these conversations we identified the following common themes:**

## **1. A 'joined up' customer experience can be seen as too difficult**

With customers wishing to determine how they interact with a business, companies can find themselves unsure of how to manage five or more channels of customer interaction and still keep a 'single view of the customer'. More channels means greater chances of duplication, the potential to send incorrect or poorly targeted information, and the risk of frustrating a customer who expects you to know their full history, regardless of who they contact in your business. Consider also how your business will manage and respond to positive or negative customer sentiment about your brand, expressed outside of your standard communication channels. Systems that were designed to perform well in a 1990's call centre environment are not equipped to cope with the response speed and consistency across contact points that customers expect today.

## **2. The original solution does not fulfil the requirements of the business**

Many of the original enterprise CRM solutions claimed to have industry specific functionality 'out of the box' leading customers to believe that they could simply 'switch on' CRM. In reality, complex business requirements and unique business processes led to high-cost, multi-year project implementations. A number of organisations we spoke to have moved from applications such as Siebel, after describing how functionality that was promised as standard required heavy configuration which led to projects being delayed, abandoned or restricted to a single department. The combination of not planning current and future customer interactions, plus an application that requires man-days rather than minutes to manipulate, led to wasted money and missed opportunity.

## **3. The business feels it is unable to take advantage of digital and social media**

You can set up a Facebook or Twitter account in the time it takes to make a cup of tea, but bringing digital and social media into the heart of your business can seem like an impossible task when your business has an enterprise heritage and a ten year old ERP system. However, if you look to the retail sector you will see that truly embracing digital and social media is not only possible, but can give you a competitive edge. The brands who connect best with their customers, provide them with tailored, relevant offers and respond quickly and appropriately to positive and negative online feedback are the ones who are retaining and winning new customers at a faster rate than their competitors. Customer data is their lifeblood, and leveraging it well whilst combining it with a better customer experience across multiple channels is an indicator to other industries on where the future of customer interaction is heading.

## **4. Tools and infrastructure are out of date**

This is becoming a more frequent and urgent concern which impacts a business's ability to service customers appropriately. Legacy systems are often slow, cumbersome, expensive to run and restricted in their ability to be customised. Budgets that could be applied to Business Intelligence or innovation are instead directed to high maintenance fees and costly administration. Opportunities to generate revenue by intelligently connecting with customers are missed because the CRM system does not allow for new media channels, and without a highly mobile intuitive interface, low user adoption rates are experienced which leaves the business with incomplete and out of date information.

Factor in the high costs associated with hiring and retaining developers for legacy systems and you can be faced with not only an out of date application, but an out of date development team.

## **5. Issues for Enterprise customers are still not being addressed by traditional enterprise applications**

In February 2010, Forrester Research published a paper<sup>1</sup> containing the results of a survey of business process and application professionals about their enterprise application installations. It outlined the key problems faced by enterprise companies when trying to meet business and IT challenges using old enterprise technology, and they're all still relevant today.

The paper set out the following as priority areas to address:

### **Finances**

Forrester found that ninety-one percent of respondents considered the high cost of ownership as their primary challenge.

### **Business infrastructure**

Eighty percent of respondents told Forrester that mismatched applications were keeping them from realising their business objectives and that poor infrastructure was inhibiting them in reaching their goals.

### **Difficulty of upgrading**

Forrester found that eighty-seven percent of respondents did not upgrade because they thought it would be too difficult. Unfortunately this led to businesses avoiding upgrades that would ultimately reduce IT costs and provide the flexibility necessary to cope with change

### **Poor cross-functional processes**

Eighty-six percent told Forrester that they had systems with poor cross-functional processes which meant that extending to external partners was not possible. This also prevented collaboration using internal and external controls. What organisations wanted was a system that would allow them to easily make cross-functional processes, adapt to change, enable partner adoption, and bring the benefits of collaboration to their business.

Forrester concluded that "Most customers will not see significant improvements unless they invest in major upgrades or replacements with next-generation packages. This is a challenge for all businesses but one that is not going to change, and this is why we believe that bringing customer experience to the heart of the business planning process rather than treating it as a tactical project yields greater long term results.

1. Paul D. Hamerman:  
"Enterprise Apps Customers Have Issues"  
<http://bit.ly/19Ui7xQ>



**From our conversations with businesses and vendors there were a number of areas that stood out as impacting CRM technology. Here we'll take a look at the most commonly identified trends of Social, Mobile, Cloud and Big Data.**

## Social

At a recent presentation delivered by David Brown (CRM Lead Microsoft EMEA and LATAM) he shared with us research conducted by Microsoft that revealed that on average, prospects don't engage with a sales representative until 57% through the buying process - close to double what it was just 2 years ago. Prospects are choosing to conduct their own research prior to making a purchase. They are less reliant upon a company's sales person for information and instead are seeking data and recommendations from web sites, online forums and (in the case of recommendations in particular) their own social networks.

Combined with the statistics discussed in 'The Future of Customer Experience' in this document, it all points towards companies needing to make a change or be left behind by their customer base.

This is particularly critical for companies focused on delivering an exceptional experience to their customers and to customer service teams in all organisations. The advent of social media has marked the rise of the individual voice, which is far more powerful and influential than ever before thanks to the ability of tools such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook to amplify that voice to reach thousands of people in a matter of seconds. This is not to say that we see social media as a replacement for traditional forms of communication with customers, but rather another channel in an organisation's portfolio of contact methods. Companies building a social media plan into their business should set a goal that focuses on how they can use it to drive better business outcomes related to higher productivity and improved customer services.

## Mobile

For many years mobile has been a significant factor in shaping the way that sales and customer care teams interact with customers. More than ever sales people and other field based workers require instant access to information and insights wherever they are, and on whatever device they choose. Mobile is also becoming increasingly influential in customer care. In 2010, Yankee Group found that 72% of customers wanted to have the ability to ask questions of companies through social media and track the response. Whilst it has long been accepted that calls are more likely to happen via a mobile phone than a land-line, what is different is that today's mobile devices are designed to give users instant access to apps and the internet and with it, customers have an expectation that they will be able to log support calls, search, shop and share via this one device. With a predicted 10 billion mobile devices expected to be in circulation by 2020 (and IDC predicting mobile to be a critical component in the 'Third Platform for ICT Industry Growth'), organisations have to make sure they offer their customers this experience.

## Cloud

Cloud has been a major trend in CRM for several years, and has now become mainstream due to the benefits it provides both sales and IT departments within organisations. This ranges from cost and agility achieved through rapid set up and deployment, to predictable pay as you go pricing and 'instant-on' anywhere access. An additional benefit that we have observed is the way it has reinvigorated traditional IT purchasing process, helping organisations get best value and rapid fulfilment.

## Big Data

Big Data relates to taking advantage of increased computing power and BI capabilities to bring together large amounts of data from within a business and across the public internet to glean important insights. In the context of sales, a good example of this is the ability to provide sales people with up-to-date real-time information about their contacts and accounts by combining information from your CRM system with social profiles and third party web services, and surfacing that information in the dependent on where the sales person is in the sales cycle. This is often referred to as 'Sales Intelligence'.

Each of these trends present a range of challenges to organisations when it comes to CRM but what is common amongst them all is that they enable customers to be more empowered than ever and this is what we believe to be the biggest trend of all. Customers today have access to more information, greater choice and more power than ever before. The challenge for businesses is to respond to this empowerment with strong processes and technology to turn it to their competitive advantage.



**Historically, an implementation of Oracle, SAP or IBM as your ERP backbone would mean the purchase of its CRM module and obligatory high-cost support, maintenance and implementation services.**

Customers who acquired CRM solutions from these vendors at a time when CRM was restricted to the call-centre, now face the situation where their CRM implementation is expensive to maintain, unable to connect to or track social media interactions, and unable to react quickly enough to changes in its customer landscape due to cost and complexity. In the case of Siebel customers, they additionally find themselves in the confusing position where Oracle is promoting its own Fusion offering at the same time as promising Siebel enhancements. With user interfaces that are clunky at best, and the need to have in-house or contract programmers (who as they become scarcer become more expensive) companies with legacy CRM systems are reaching a price point that is akin to making a platform, rather than upgrade decision.

eBECS has elected to specialise in Microsoft Dynamics CRM on the strength that it offers to organisations in the three following areas:

### Proven Enterprise capabilities

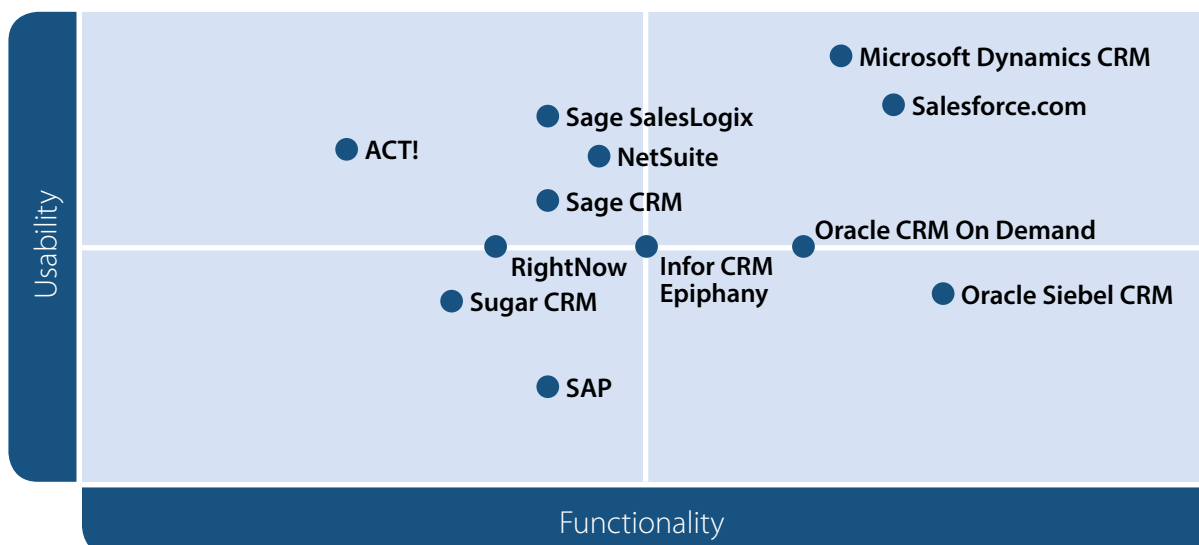
There are more than 3 million seats of Microsoft Dynamics CRM deployed across 40,000 businesses worldwide, and it is used by organisations such as Allianz, Barclays, enterprise rent-a-car, ING, Kuoni, Pfizer, and Microsoft itself to manage and track the millions of customer interactions that they handle in a year. This is CRM on a truly grand scale.

### User adoption

When you are deploying technology to large groups of people it has to be intuitive to even be in with a chance of you achieving the desired user adoption rates. By using a CRM solution that looks the same as (and seamlessly connects to) Outlook, time and costs associated with training are significantly reduced and data capture and quality is far higher than with a legacy application.

Nucleus Research conducted a study of the CRM software market and found Microsoft Dynamics CRM out-performed all other vendors for usability.

## Nucleus Value Matrix - CRM



## Future facing

Where consumers lead, businesses will follow – a recent example of this is how employees bringing in better IT equipment than their employers can provide has led to 'Bring Your Own Device' programmes. We see the same happening in social media where customer demand has resulted in organisations creating Twitter accounts and social media strategies, closely followed by major software vendors announcing social media capabilities as additions to existing platforms and being embedded into the next generation of their core offerings.

Microsoft's acquisition of social media experts Yammer and MarketingPilot in late 2012 followed by the purchase of Netbreeze in March 2013 was a clear indicator that social media has made the leap from being a consumer play and is set to become as ubiquitous in business technology as it is in our lives away from work.

We see this as proof that larger software organisations are beginning to take their cue from social media businesses and are making significant

investments to increase the rate at which they innovate and react to market changes. Enterprise social media functionality is already available in the latest Microsoft Office and Microsoft Dynamics tools thanks to Microsoft investing over \$1 billion dollars into R&D every year for business solutions like CRM.

This is not just restricted to how a business uses social media either, with Microsoft making sure that its new social media tools include SharePoint integration, we see the power of Tier 1 Business Intelligence software being leveraged to address the issue that many companies have in quantifying the impact and value of social media investments and interactions.

So when thinking about the future, the question is not one of 'whether your organisation should adopt social media', it's about how you can increase profitability and collaboration and make better, faster business decisions through tools that put the Customer Experience at the heart of your business.

## As Microsoft's Global Enterprise Resource Planning Partner of the Year 2013, eBECS has an intricate understanding of how technology, when properly aligned to organisational priorities and KPIs, can deliver tangible business benefit.

With CRM and the Customer Experience reliant upon, and central to, your core business functions, eBECS' deep understanding of end-to-end ERP enables us to design and deploy Microsoft Dynamics CRM environments that are in tune with your critical business drivers; reliable and resilient yet agile enough to cope with the future demands of your customer base.

We are strong believers in the Lean principle of gearing your business to create value for the end customer and practice this on a regular basis through our delivery of Lean ERP projects. Our strength in this area is such that we have established the 'Lean Centre of Excellence' ([www.LeanCOE.com](http://www.LeanCOE.com)) in partnership with Microsoft, which serves as a collaborative facility for organisations looking to utilise the Lean capabilities within Microsoft Dynamics. This leads us to see that by placing the customer experience at the centre of its business, an organisation becomes more focused on eliminating processes or expenditure that do not ultimately drive greater value for the customer. This has the combined benefits of reducing unnecessary costs and improving the potential for a profitable, long-term customer relationship.

Whilst our customers span multiple industries and each has a solution that is discrete to their particular way of doing business, they each believe that CRM and the customer experience is as important to their business as any other function and its management should be treated with the same rigour and quality control as the rest of their organisational processes.

Bradley Yorke-Biggs, Strategy and IT Director at Aston Martin, explains how critical the customer journey is for him and highlights how even a bespoke car maker with a heritage of making things by hand has to factor in digital interactions with its customers including its Explore iPhone App in order to provide the most appropriate, and therefore profitable, customer interaction.

"We need to determine at an early stage with the customer whether they are 'contacting' us through the app, the website or the dealer network. We need to know the difference, for example, between a 14 year old boy looking on our website for a cap for his Dad's birthday, or a One-77 customer willing to spend £1.2 million pounds on a supercar. There are methods we can now use to help us segment those touch points so that we can build accurate customer profiles, allowing us to talk to customers at a level that's relevant to them and to us as a brand."

Adrian Rooke, Managing Director at Audio Technica, goes on to describe how a combination of a legacy contact system and a third-tier distribution-centric ERP system were acting as barriers to business growth:

"From a strategic perspective, we wanted to make Customer Relationship Management (CRM) central to everything that we do, in order to differentiate us in the market. We recognised that not only did our core business system need upgrading to full ERP but that it also needed to be integrated with a true CRM system."

For more customer stories, please visit the eBECS website:

[www.ebecs.com/customers](http://www.ebecs.com/customers)

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eBECS deliver award-winning Lean and agile Microsoft Dynamics AX and Microsoft Dynamics CRM solutions that focus purely on delivering improved business performance measured by comprehensive business intelligence (BI). Our solutions enable our clients to streamline and integrate processes, improve client relations, maximise sales, minimise waste, optimise the extended supply chain and manage demand-driven operations. We take enormous pride in the breadth and quality of our customer implementations are pleased to be able to a selection of these via our website: [www.ebecs.com/customers](http://www.ebecs.com/customers)

## Want to find out more?

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