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interactions
talking with customers

The collaborative customer: an evolution

Rob Allman discusses companies are looking at how to harness the dramatic shift in consumer power and turning it to their advantage.



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This Quarter: we shine a light on **collaboration**

We are in the middle of a customer revolution where customers are driving businesses to become more customer focused.

Contact centres are the pivotal point of interaction between organisations and their customers and are continually adapting to enable a more collaborative approach to customer relationships. In this thirteenth issue of Interactions, we look at the success stories, challenges and realities faced by businesses across the globe that are trying to keep up with higher customer expectations and demands.

Over our 25 years in the industry, the face of the contact centre has changed dramatically. In the drive to provide 24/7 support to customers anywhere in the world across multiple channels, the contact centre is one of those environments that changes more than most. And contact centres are still evolving as organisations aim to provide more convenient customer experiences and reinvent their communication processes.

Today's customers are changing and expectations are rising. In our first article, we probe how the demand for convenient experiences is pushing companies to reinvent their customer communication processes and be more customer focused.

Given that the contact centre is the most emotional point of interaction that companies have with customers, the work that contact centres do has become increasingly responsible for the enterprise and its customers.

At any point in time, your customers could be commenting on your organisation, products or service without you being aware of it. Our second article examines the very real world of social media and how to manage the flow of information across social media channels. Organisations have realised that by scanning the entire social media landscape, they are able to see where their customers are, what they are saying and how to use these networks to improve the customer experience and their brands.

As consumerisation of video continues to grow and user adoption rises, our final article questions how businesses can use video to their advantage in contact centres. With personal adoption of video far outstripping that of business, the potential risk of falling behind leaves organisations in an uncertain dilemma.

Companies are looking at how to leverage video to add to the customer experience without being a simple replacement for what's already working well.



I hope that you find this edition of Interactions interesting and informative in suggesting new ways of adding value to your customers' experience. Please feel free to pass this on to any of your colleagues who might be interested.

Best wishes,



Martin Dove

Managing Director,
Customer Interactive Solutions

The collaborative customer an evolution

As customers demand more convenient experiences, companies are being pushed to reinvent their customer communication processes. In the drive to become more customer focused, organisations are ensuring their interactions with customers are more collaborative and on customers' terms. Companies are looking at how to harness this dramatic shift in consumer power and turn it to their advantage.

This renewed focus and investment in communication and collaboration means customers will be able to receive information anytime and anywhere, through any channel. Connected customers have already adopted social networks, text messaging, cloud-based services and video and expect businesses to provide more than just a professionally answered phone call or well designed website.

The contact centre is a pivotal point of interaction between organisations and their customers. Because the contact centre is more responsible for this relationship, there is a move towards consistent and single architectures between companies and their contact centres. Enterprises are also shifting away from batch communication to delivering more personalised content over multiple channels.

Dimension Data's General Manager, Customer Interactive Solutions (Australia), Rob Allman, explains that changing solutions and a more evolved contact type is forcing businesses to revisit the traditional view of contact centres.

"Customer awareness influences how different functions and capabilities in a business are viewed. As a customer, the concept of different channels, brands, different organisations and a real drive for immediacy creates an expectation of what the business should be doing. This customer revolution means contact centres have to cope with the challenges of meeting these new demands".



"Companies are enabling customers to interact easily with customer service agents, pass information electronically and complete business transactions on the run."

Blurring lines

To support customers, companies will have to provide increased access through multiple channels at any time, from anywhere. Already the lines are blurring between customer groups, touch points and the way businesses are structured. And as companies get to grips with social media, the enterprise model of customer relationships will be reshaped.

Smart devices, pervasive video and social media have given new power to customers and outdated communication approaches are being replaced. Companies are enabling customers to interact easily with customer service agents, pass information electronically and complete business transactions on the run. Social media campaigns are also delivering a higher and more immediate impact than traditional marketing.

Conventional silo views of customer segments are falling away and there are more crossovers in activity between the front and back office. As Allman explains, the role of the contact centre continues to evolve to reflect its vital role as a touchpoint to engage with customers.

“The increasing strategic importance of the contact centre and its reporting values and functions are driving other business areas to show the same level of transparency and accountability to deliver better productivity and service. Hand in glove with this business evolution are the enabling technologies and trends that have emerged which are driven by customer expectations and demands”.

Changing channels

Customers expect a consistent experience across different media. For companies to move away from a silo view of customers, businesses need to approach process design from a holistic and cross-channel perspective. Allman explains that in order to manage customer interactions, organisations are under pressure to look at customers in new ways.

“They are no longer able to look at customers in large segmented models and people are now viewed in micro segments. This means companies need to understand what they’re talking to them about and understand what their customers are thinking in the wider world”.

Customer interactions are increasingly triggered by events captured through social websites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM) and websites and enterprises will have to manage conversations across these channels. In a

multi-channel world, customers use more than one channel per interaction. By using analytics, organisations need to understand the behaviours of different client segments to determine how to apply the appropriate solution to that specific customer or micro segment.

Allman reminds us that the telephone continues to play a very important role in multi-channel and media usage, but the emergence of new channels is vital to what is being offered.

“The reality is that whether buying a product or a service, customers will increasingly use web, social media and mobile devices.

There is also more traffic on social media than any other channels. Interestingly, the people using multiple channels also spend more and are better educated, but have the risk of being a higher churn group. This is why the first step in this area is understanding customers’ channel behaviour and then managing it appropriately”.

“Social media enables businesses to build passion for their products and services but they cover more than customer service and reputation management. Many companies today already consider it unthinkable to embark on marketing campaigns without Twitter or Facebook.”

One such example is in the realm of social media where companies are able to gain a real-time insight into people's minds. The tools used to monitor social networks are able to track trends, brand awareness, hot topics, customer mood and competitor activity. Their ability to alert companies about unhappy customers makes great business sense when it reduces complaints and costly calls to a contact centre.

Social media enables businesses to build passion for their products and services but they cover more than customer service and reputation management. Many companies today already consider it unthinkable to embark on marketing campaigns without Twitter or Facebook.

"Emerging channels are also creating different landscapes",

adds Allman.

"More web channels break down geographical barriers and bring groups together that aren't geographically linked. In emerging countries, the channels being used will create a different landscape. One example is in Africa where low penetration of landlines means mobile access to content for customers and different presentation of the same function and capabilities. The behaviours aren't necessarily different, only the device".

There may be things that impact on a specific group which help enrich how organisations interact with and manage those customers. As Allman explains, a proactive approach means using information about niche groups to determine the content and context

of why they're contacting the organisation.

"It may then influence how they are routed and how the immediacy of that client is managed. It also means making provision for connections from Facebook and Twitter into organisations and dealing with them professionally with the correct content knowledge and understanding".

This will influence workforce planning decisions in how businesses understand and plan for social media activity. Customers may use click-to-call or web chat and organisations will have to devise collaboration strategies for those events that aren't bound by traditional channels.

Meeting expectations

To meet customer expectations, businesses have to optimise processes from the front to back office and ensure they are governed by service level agreements (SLAs) and combined with the right knowledge tools, skills and trained staff.

Organisations should equip their employees to meet increasing customer expectations. Many employees already use tools in their personal lives such as text messaging, instant messaging and social networks, but are unable to use them when responding to customers.

An end-to-end process must place the agent at the centre of the process and build communication around it to define the customer experience. SIP-enabled architectures will become the norm and will allow for greater continuity across channels and the use

of chat, video and other forms of collaboration.

Allman says that now more than ever, companies need to look at processes from the outside in.

"This means offering more channels to solve a single query and offering a more collaborative end-to-end experience.

By delivering personalised content to any channel the customer prefers, businesses can pave the way for improved customer retention and reduced acquisition costs, while increasing the lifetime value of customers. Given that it is eight times more expensive to acquire a new customer instead of retain an existing one, it is hardly surprising that enterprises are looking for ways to meet these expectations".

Allman says there is also a connection between what technology vendors are doing and what customers expect.

"Organisations are looking internally at how to improve productivity and consistency in the customer experience across all channels. This means working out how to integrate the contact centre using the things that have been successful and extending the principles of routing, information and visibility end-to-end throughout the organisation".

Knowledge Management and Workforce Management solutions are being broadened to reflect people's desire to see disciplines end to end. The same applies to quality and performance management, MIS systems and event routing that incorporates self service and

extends the solution from the front to back office.

Changing solutions are resulting in the emergence of customer collaboration or knowledge groups. By categorising people into skills types and groups, centres are more able to deal with enquiries effectively. Virtualisation is supporting increased access and putting customers in touch with the right knowledge worker at the right time.

MIS measures are changing to articulate commercial value to the organisation. Net Promoter Scores (NPS) are now seen as the absolute gold standard. With social media driving NPS, effective customer service will result in a referral. For contact centres, this continuum between cost effectiveness and transformation means investment in areas that transform the customer experience will usually result in cost improvements.

Ignore at your peril

Today's customers expect increased collaboration and an integrated experience. Allman says the changing role of contact centres will see them play a part of a multi-channel experience.

“The percentage of non face-to-face communication is affecting the human agent element and has been changing over the past 10 – 15 years with web based channels growing in usage. Where before, research showed it was generational behaviours forcing change, the message today is clear – ignore at your peril”.

Allman encourages companies to see restructuring as a means to keeping their customers.

“The genuine emergence of multi-channel environments for single transactions will demand new disciplines end to end. It will also require a cultural change to manage it and companies will have to acknowledge this shift and get the management pillars in place to ensure it works operationally”.

As a general rule, Allman suggests that when looking at basic operational efficiencies, if you can see it and touch it, you can improve it. Knowing that it is eight times more profitable to retain and grow existing customers, it is worth getting it right. Those businesses that choose to ignore these opportunities could end up handing their customers over to their competitors on a silver platter.

About the author

Rob Allman – General Manager, Customer Interactive Solutions (Australia)

Rob is responsible for the general management of the CIS group nationally with a core focus on providing strategic direction and execution, and fostering strong partner relationships

With more than 14 years experience in the contact centre and IT industries, he brings a wealth of skills to

this role, with experience in areas such as customer management strategies, project implementation, contact centre management and consultancy.

Before joining Dimension Data Australia, Rob was General Manager of CIS for Dimension Data South Africa, where he leveraged his experience as a CIS Consultant. He has held a number of different contact centre, consultant, design and management roles

within Merchants and has established pioneering customer contact solutions within Australia, Europe and Africa that have gone on to win numerous industry awards. He has also presented at the CIS Forum in Africa, Genesys G-Force, and Dimension Data's Forum and Customer Interact conferences. Robert holds an Honours degree in Social Science from Salford University.

Social Media Penetrating the Contact Centre

Consider that right now, your customers could be commenting on your organisation, products or service without you being aware of it. The very real world of social media is posing one of the biggest challenges for businesses today in how to manage the flow of information across multiple social media channels.

Organisations are scanning the entire social media landscape to see where their customers are and what they are saying. By using social media channels such as microblogs, social networking sites, online forums and blogs, companies are looking at how to use these networks to improve the customer experience.

Social media giant Facebook has around 400 million users and popular microblogging site Twitter counts 75 million users to date and growing. By 2015, social media networks will be an integral element of TV viewing experiences and many televisions will come equipped to support broadband internet-based teleconferencing.

Dimension Data's General Manager for Customer Interactive Solutions (South Africa – Western Cape), Simon Cranswick points out that while traditional CRM channels provide a one-to-one experience with customers; social media offers a one-to-one and one-to-many relationship.

“As more new media channels are introduced, the landscape can change dramatically and businesses need to adjust quickly to stay ahead of the curve.

This means enterprises have to set formal processes in place to manage how contact centres organise, distribute and analyse the information they collect from many channels. The goal is for social media to become another stream into the contact centre, being routed seamlessly to the right agent based on content, customer segment and other technical considerations”.

“**Companies** have to accept they have **less control in social media**, as opposed to traditional CRM channels. **This means adopting a different business process mindset.**”



Social media 101

Social media refers to content that is created, shared and used by ordinary people with each other. Forming part of Web 2.0, social media is a large part of the future landscape where businesses and customers will interact with one another.

Because it's driven by customers, companies don't own the channels as they do their own contact centre numbers.

"Instead, they are just another player in a global game", adds Cranswick, "and the onus is on the enterprise to actively scan the social media environment relating to their product or service.

This means companies have to select the relevant sites and formulate a strategy to route and intelligently distribute conversations that need to be dealt with by the right people in a measured way".

There are four key areas of social media impacting on a contact centre strategy:

- **Blogs:** Web areas that form discussion groups and commentary around a topical theme, product, service or area of content
- **Microblogs:** A quick medium that shares brief snippets of information to a community of followers following a theme or individual (Twitter)
- **Forums:** Usually websites that provide troubleshooting advice or assistance on product and service issues. It can also include forums where complaints and dissatisfaction are publicly voiced (Hello Peter!)

- **Social Networks:** A website where individuals can communicate with each other or organisations through a common interest such as friendship, fan clubs, relational, business interest, topical issues (Facebook, LinkedIn). Communication typically takes place via posts, e-mail or web chats.

How to use social media

Organisations can realise soft and hard benefits through engaging with customers via social media. Cranswick explains that when a company responds and reaches out to a customer in a virtual location, they feel empowered.

"The soft benefit arises when a customer feels that a company cares enough about their preferences to interact with them in their preferred manner. It's also likely to keep them brand loyal because of a sense of personal engagement".

Social media engagement also delivers benefits to the bottom line. By enabling customers to communicate with the organisation and each other, they can actually lower support costs. In marketing and sales environments, businesses can use social media to trial new products to targeted followers, promoters and even known detractors. Putting a new spin on marketing research, companies can test how these products will be accepted in the marketplace, thus placing less demand on development budgets. Sales prospects can even be identified through tracking responses to social media conversations.

How to make it work for you

Cranswick says the real benefits of an online community kick in when you can help customers across a variety of channels.

"Because social media draws people from several groups, it's important to focus on conversations rather than audiences. Conversation topics can be about a product or service, an industry or customer trend or even a technology innovation. Whatever the subject, multiple groups could join the discussion and could even include competitors. Listening to the market and engaging in the right conversations helps businesses spot issues and opportunities as they arise".

The most important task when implementing a social media strategy is to set up the business strategy and rules that will guide your operations and agents in leveraging these channels.

"Companies have to accept they have less control in social media, as opposed to traditional CRM channels", adds Cranswick.

"This means adopting a different business process mindset".

It's important to be mindful of the tone used in these channels as companies are effectively within a free speech environment. Training is essential and agents must have the right skills and proficiencies to manage social media conversations. As a near real-time channel, companies need to work out

how to provide easy access to subject matter experts in the business. Delays or inaccurate advice can cause real damage to the brand, product or service and can be harder to counter.

Good judgement is essential. It is important to filter out the noise and spam and concentrate on where to add value to the brand and your customers. A poorly judged company input could trigger negative responses and cause an even bigger headache to resolve. Social media has to be seen as another channel with its own requirements that adds value to the existing media offering while leveraging the skills that are used to handling customer interactions.

“Queuing and work distribution is the same for social media as with other channels such as voice and e-mail. Interactions, tags or alerts need to get to the right place and be serviced by the right skill within the right time”.

The right people are central to the successful integration of social media into the contact centre. Cranswick explains that it does

not make good business sense to establish separate dedicated teams which are inefficient and cost intensive.

As with other channels, effective management is critical to measure how the business is doing and how efficiently it is achieving its goals. Performance metrics are crucial to the success of any integrated strategy.

Because social media offers instant feedback, it gives businesses a unique opportunity to get pertinent information to customers and followers in a flash and at little cost. This is why companies need to find out which sites are critical listening posts and which to participate actively in.

The intelligence harnessed through these sites and services should be a feeder into the overall CRM strategy. As feedback is analysed and filtered, it is categorised for action and posted to a queue. Once the right agent with the right skill resolves the issue directly or with an expert, feedback must be posted to the relevant business area to avoid repeat problems and MIS systems must be updated.

Strategising for social media

It is worth choosing a qualified business partner to help develop an organisational strategy that incorporates social media into core business processes. This is especially important in the areas of service improvement and brand development.

High level social media roadmaps should include:

- An analysis of stakeholder requirements in the business – service, marketing and brand development
- The development of a strategy to identify sites, demographics, categories of discussions, event handling, response processes, change management and business intelligence, reporting and measurement, subject matter experts
- The most suitable deployment architectures and engines to listen, analyse, categorise, distribute and measure
- Identification of personnel profiles best suited to handle these interactions and including this within job classification, training and career development structures
- An in-house test capability
- An organisational feedback loop to use intelligence gathered to correct problems and promote successes.

“ Organisations need to embrace social media to know what their customers are saying about them or risk being left out in the cold.”

Conclusion

Any company with an interest in their customers should be very interested in what their customers, potential customers and detractors are saying about them. Most people will not readily negatively comment about their experiences directly to an organisation, but will readily tell many friends about it.

Word of mouth and referrals are still the strongest reference for most customers. Social media gives customers instant access to peer reviews and has become the most important input into choosing which goods and services to purchase. With a number of tools available to help collect, organise and distribute social media information within an organisation, companies are able to be even more responsive to customer needs. Using them in the right way helps contact centres improve communication and interaction with customers, expanding their reach and performance.

In building the business case for social media, it's also the single best place to realise a return on investment because the provision of superior service to existing customers is always less costly than acquiring new customers. With their long history of adapting to new channels, contact centres are best placed to integrate social media into their processes and give companies the opportunity to proactively manage what's being said about them.

With social networks and blogs ranking as the fourth most popular online activity (ahead of personal e-mail), two-thirds of the world's internet population can't be wrong. Organisations need to embrace social media to know what their customers are saying about them or risk being left out in the cold.

About the author

Simon Cranswick is General Manager for Dimension Data's Customer Interactive Solutions in South Africa's Western Cape region. He has 13 years experience in the Contact Centre industry with a strong vertical knowledge of the Telco Service provider space.

His experience covers Virtual Contact Centres, Outsourcing, Knowledge Management, Self-service, MIS, Customer Satisfaction and Quality solutions and development of sustainable

Managed Services models. He is passionate about his team's ability to deliver Remote Managed Services for Contact Centres (CC) in offshore markets – and believes strongly in understanding CC operational drivers and challenges. Value propositions are led through business demand and more often than not enabled by key technologies, so his message is "make sure you are including the CC operations in your strategic planning."

Video in the Contact Centre

A Solution Looking for a Problem?

As consumerisation of video continues to mushroom and user adoption rises, businesses are left wondering how to use video to their advantage. The personal adoption of video has far outstripped that of business and organisations are beginning to wonder if they're missing a trick when it comes to organisational efficiency and employee expectations.



These **solutions** and **devices** are **boosting mobility** and **productivity** while **providing** a viable **alternative** to travel through **reduced costs, less personal risk** and the reduction of the company's carbon footprint.

Many companies across the world already use video within their business to drive costs down. More people than ever before are using applications like Skype in their personal lives and its delivery of low cost communication means it has pervaded businesses across the globe.

Video technologies are becoming commonly used within companies. And being as easy to use as a telephone, it has merged with voice communication and productivity tools like instant messaging and presence applications to make video more effective in organisations.

The question for organisations is how to leverage video to add to the customer experience without being a simple replacement for what's already working well. The value of 'talking heads' simply doesn't make the business case for investment and process re-engineer and design.

The rise and rise of video

Today's consumers are avid users of Skype and YouTube. At peak times over 23 million Skype users are online around the world and YouTube serves more than two billion videos a day – nearly double the combined prime-time audience of all three major US television networks.

As Dimension Data's Customer Interactive Solutions Practice Director (Americas) Grant Sainsbury explains, it's worth looking at the big picture when it comes to video.

“Personal adoption of video has accelerated beyond levels that businesses have found applications for. Video one-to-one calling services, devices and video collaboration have been highly consumerised for a long time”.

Consumerisation of IT means people are more comfortable using video and more organisations are seeing its value in enterprise unified communications (UC) platforms. Where effective collaboration and cost are the primary motivators, examples include Dimension Data’s own successful implementation of solutions such as Cisco’s Unified Communications Manager (CUCM), Microsoft® Office Communications Server instant messaging client and its TANDBERG video conferencing network.

Major vendors of UC solutions are already releasing next generation video-enabled UC devices which include tablets such as Cisco CIUS and Avaya Flame to revolutionise the user experience of UC in the business.

These solutions and devices are boosting mobility and productivity while providing a viable alternative to travel through reduced costs, less personal risk and the reduction of the company’s carbon footprint.

Video has evolved over decades to a point where displays are life-size and offer superior quality viewing. Higher definition and lower bandwidth requirements mean more users than ever before are accessing video. Viewing is no longer restricted to laptops, and people are using mobile devices from anywhere to access video at any time.

As Dimension Data’s Global Solutions Manager for visual communications, Shaun Struckmann points out, there are better cameras, open standards and Application Programme Interfaces (APIs) that allow integration with applications like calendars and e-mail.

“Video capabilities are now also integrated into web interfaces on customer service websites and new devices such as smart phones, video-enabled digital cameras and dedicated devices (like a Flip) are driving consumerisation and the adoption of video”.

A solution looking for a business problem

Sainsbury explains that customer interaction via video is a great solution looking for a problem to solve.

“The question to be asking about video in the contact centre is whether one-to-one interaction could be any more effective and why we are not seeing the same rate of adoption in the contact centre as in business. Return on investment is proven, its growth is unquestioned and there is a gap for video in the customer interaction space. While it might not offer the required level of business security, companies need to accept that video calling will find its way into contact centres”.

For business to consumer point-to-point interactions, businesses would do well to look at where and how video becomes the preferred channel.

“By leveraging automatic

call distribution principles, companies could take high value transaction calls and distribute them to the best resource through distributed workforce and clever design”.

Video can be used for specific transaction types and is a viable solution for managing the distribution or scarcity of specialised human resources. Struckmann observes that there is already significant uptake in video (recorded and face to face) across multiple industries.

The medical industry is able to deliver medical specialist services to far flung areas where there is great need but travel, war or rebellion might prevent access. More efficient resource distribution through video translates into increased access to specialists and using video for follow ups.

The oil, energy and gas industries are using video to reach locations that are unsafe or difficult to access. It is often more viable to point a camera to a problem and enable specialists to diagnose the problem and act on it, instead of having to physically send them in.

In the banking industry, customers are able to personally interact with bank staff via video through an effective remote workflow. Technology solutions are combined with hardware to deliver a truly collaborative interaction while reducing costs through centralising human resources. Just think of remote mortgage specialists who can interact with customers through a video kiosk in the branch.

Making sense of

video content

To get the most out of video, businesses should ask where and how to use video before simply replacing existing communications channels.

Content is the common denominator in all communication, says Sainsbury.

“Without good quality and meaningful content, users will not see the value of video to the interaction. Customers may actually prefer to speak to someone in person. Businesses should take their cue from customers and provide video only where it adds value and convenience to the customer experience”.

Businesses should focus their energies on where recorded video can be useful and could look at the following key areas:

Video queuing refers to the visual alternative to call waiting messages that can be boring or intrusive.

“In addition to the obvious accessibility benefits, a video display of information offers a much richer customer experience while customers wait. And, because it’s better to read and see than simply to hear, menus can be enhanced by pictures to help guide customers while advertising new products and services in a clever way.”

Video content upload refers to situations where companies need valuable information that can serve to speed up often lengthy and arduous processes. Customers could upload important data and streamline business processes while delivering more convenience to customers. For example, if

“Often, **offshore resources are outsourced to third parties to reduce costs and deliver round-the-clock service. This means training can be delivered by product experts via recorded video.**”

you’ve been in a car accident, you could send a video to your insurance assessor.

Video push refers to the YouTube style video clips that provide important help and information to customers. Driven by customers, YouTube is already a valuable repository for in depth information and demonstrations of how-to video clips. Companies that are able to hone in on this could add significant value to their help desk and customer service offerings.

Crossing video collaboration boundaries

In the realm of the contact centre, different types of video interactions could be used for different purposes in the customer experience. Video encompasses one-to-one personal interaction and one-to-many video e.g. streaming on demand or in real-time.

As Sainsbury explains, contact centres can get great value out of using video correctly in their interactions with customers.

“If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a video is worth a million. The impact of being able to communicate content using video and audio is much more

powerful than audio or visual representations alone.

One-to-one interaction is really useful for personal face to face interactions where product expertise and training is required. Often, offshore resources are outsourced to third parties to reduce costs and deliver round-the-clock service. This means training can be delivered by product experts via recorded video”.

Through video push, virtual self support can reduce the actual load on contact centres. By proactively sending information out, customers are able to fix their own problems. Online communities are already dedicated to helping customers diagnose and solve their own problems. This blending of video with face to face and web collaboration will facilitate a more natural alignment between each channel.

Content is key

The failure of video in the past relates to there being little value in the interaction. The quality of content and how it is controlled will be different across public and enterprise spaces and will dictate the appropriate products to use.

As an organisation builds out

its video library (which may be initially more internal facing) they need the tools to help do it. They should be clear on the different applications of video, the sharing technology and the content to deliver it. And this means a big shift in attitude to make it work.

Struckmann says companies need to weigh up the value of using public and enterprise spaces for video content.

“Cisco’s Show and Share is an enterprise version of YouTube. It gives organisations the ability to upload, store, search and control access to their video content. While it’s similar to YouTube, the key difference lies in its enterprise-level security”.

Tying this content to corporate teams and work streams is Cisco’s Quad. The Application Programme Interface in Quad adds tremendous value to team collaboration. Clever customisation enables groups of employees to create teambased workspaces and enjoy rich interactions through sharing content, presence and information.

“By going beyond a simple e-mail or video integration, the possibilities are endless and we should see some unique uses for the application we haven’t yet dreamed of”,

adds Struckmann.

However, companies can still use YouTube as a platform or repository for recorded video clips. By embedding links in their website that click through to public portals like YouTube, they can bridge the divide between public and enterprise spaces by using the internet for storage

of intellectual property, where security is less of an issue.

Living in a Web 2.0 world means giving customers an equal voice through online access to the companies they deal with, adds Struckmann.

“This means mixing social media with video, voice and presence information and dynamic skills based routing and delivering video only where it adds value to an interaction”.

A future glimpse for video

The business case for video calls is to find ways of bridging the disconnect between low contact centre adoption and the global consumerisation of video. Sainsbury admits it’s tough to predict when growth might start to rise.

“Companies that seek to achieve or maintain their competitive advantage are thinking about video and how to add value to the customer experience. I believe there is a need to be more creative and progressive if video is to be supported as a channel”.

Once businesses understand how to add value to customer interaction by using video, customers will begin to demand it more. We are on the cusp of a video age – where video will find its way into daily life and become more accepted by all types of customers, not just Generation Y profile customers. Mobile devices are changing to support more video and global mobile technology leaders will lead the way through ready availability of bandwidth and high use of mobile technology.

Users will interact with video everywhere. They will expect their communication sessions to continue seamlessly from context to context, device to device. Video enabled customer care is the future for rich service experiences and ultimately satisfied customers. It is now up to business to find out how they fit into this customer led movement and work out how they can leverage maximum value while delivering an excellent customer experience.

“Video enabled customer care is the future for rich service experiences ...”

About the authors

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Grant Sainsbury is the Practice Director for Customer Interactive Solutions (CIS) in Dimension Data Americas. He is responsible for strategy, sales and services delivery across the CIS portfolio for contact centre clients.

Grant has been with the Dimension Data group since December 2001, joining Dimension Data, UK as a solution architect in the CIS business after working with

Cisco Systems and GeoTel. He has been working in the contact centre space for over 15 years after starting work as a business analyst, systems engineer and developer for complex contact centre solutions in the mid-1990s.

Shaun Struckmann – Global Solution Manager for Visual Communications, Dimension Data (Global) management, business development and solutions go to market.

A Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert (CCIE), Shaun comes from a technology background in core networking and

unified communications. With over 15 years of industry experience, he has installed, tested, designed and sold technology solutions from the leading vendors. His clients include regional banks, school districts, hospitals, manufacturing and many others.

Shaun joined Dimension Data in 2005, and since 2007 has been in the Global Converged Communications business developing solutions, strategies and go to market for managed services, IP telephony and visual communications.

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MOROCCO • NAMIBIA • NIGERIA
SAUDI ARABIA • SOUTH AFRICA
TANZANIA • UGANDA
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

ASIA

CHINA • HONG KONG
INDIA • INDONESIA • JAPAN
KOREA • MALAYSIA
NEW ZEALAND • PHILIPPINES
SINGAPORE • TAIWAN
THAILAND • VIETNAM

AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
NEW SOUTH WALES • QUEENSLAND
SOUTH AUSTRALIA • VICTORIA
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

EUROPE

BELGIUM • CZECH REPUBLIC
FRANCE • GERMANY • HUNGARY
ITALY • LUXEMBOURG
NETHERLANDS • SPAIN
SWITZERLAND • UNITED KINGDOM

AMERICAS

BRAZIL • CANADA • CHILE
MEXICO • UNITED STATES