Introduction

The swiftness with which smartphones and tablets have transformed the business landscape has been nothing short of astonishing. In December 2011, the Nielsen Co. reported that 44 percent of Americans owned smartphones.\(^1\) Compare this to the 18 percent figure reported by Nielsen for the same statistic just two years prior, and you begin to get the picture. What’s more, smartphone sales have been outpacing sales of traditional PCs since late 2011. In fact, in one quarter, Apple mobile devices outsold Hewlett-Packard’s entire line of PCs.\(^2\)

The impact on commerce has been significant. On Cyber Monday 2011, mobile sales saw a 276 percent increase compared to the same day in 2010.\(^3\) PayPal alone reported a 514 percent increase in mobile payments.\(^4\) Simply put, the smartphone has revolutionized how consumers interact with commercial enterprises, and adoption continues to outpace almost every analyst’s expectations.

But while organizations of all stripes have been quick to recognize the impact of the mobile channel, they haven’t always acted strategically when it comes to putting it to use. Faced with corporate mandates to meet escalating demand for mobile apps and to get a jump on the competition, 91 of the top 100 brands have developed their own mobile applications.\(^5\) In many cases, however, these enterprises have simply ported a subset of their existing Web applications to mobile platforms or, even worse, don’t have any truly viable apps yet.

The interactions these initial mobile apps offer are primarily transactional in nature. For instance, a banking site may allow users to check their balances, or an airline may give the option to check flight status, with no deeper engagement beyond the retrieval of information already available through other channels.

This hasty approach to mobile apps has obscured one of mobility’s greatest strengths — namely its ability to act as the base platform for a multitude of channels, enabling organizations to provide ever more relevant and personalized customer experiences at every touch point. However, if you employ a mobile strategy that recognizes this connection — turning simple, transactional usage into dynamic and personalized interactions that continue across devices, channels, geographies, and time — you can expect your business to thrive. Ignore this reality, and risk being left in the dust by your more mobile-savvy competitors, especially as mobile device users reach their threshold for the number of apps they are willing to use.

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For companies looking to drive more traffic and awareness toward their brands, mobile apps present ample opportunities, including:

- Expanded brand presence
- Marketing and promotion of goods and services
- Reducing costs with increased self-service

Innovative features can gain traction and generate huge attention, though innovation has a tendency to be short-lived. A longer-term approach is to move forward with a well-planned, comprehensive mobile strategy — a strategy that regards mobile as playing a key role in optimizing cross-channel customer service efforts.

It’s also important to keep in mind that rushing to market is not only a short-lived plan, but also one that comes with significant risk. When companies hop on the mobile bandwagon without a well-planned mobile strategy, they risk doing more harm than good; they can potentially create a frustrating and negative experience for customers.

Customers Have High Expectations for Mobile That Aren’t Being Met

While the mobile environment may represent a new frontier for business, it’s increasingly old hat for mobile device users — particularly the 25-to-34-year-olds who make up the largest segment of smartphone users. This portion of the population sees mobile devices as an exciting, indispensable tool — an extra limb, almost — and thus their expectations of what they can and should be able to do with the devices are high.

Unlike with PCs or other technology, there is an emotional connection with mobile devices like smartphones. After all, they are essentially the first wearable computers. So it’s understandable that both business users and consumers expect to be able to use mobile apps quickly, easily, and intuitively — every time.

Unfortunately for many brands, they are disappointing their mobile app users. According to a 2011 mobile transactions survey conducted by Harris Interactive, a staggering 84 percent of U.S. adults who attempted to complete mobile transactions in 2011 ran into problems doing so.

Think about it: How much good is a self-service mobile banking app if a user has no recourse but to abort the process and reach out to the contact center for help when a problem is encountered — especially when the contact center doesn’t have visibility into the mobile session and the user is taken back to the beginning of the business process?

Not surprisingly, customers not only want more, they’re demanding it. Mobile has put consumers in the driver’s seat, and the companies that succeed today and tomorrow will be those that recognize this new dynamic and act accordingly.

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6 The Webby Awards, 13th Annual Webby Awards Nominees and Winners
7 Ibid.
8 Phone Arena, “U.S. Smart Phone Penetration Reaches 44%. Led by Android,” December 2011.
9 Ibid.
The Disconnected Customer Service Experience

You can have the best, most relevant app in the world, but it’s all for naught if your mobile customers can’t get live help when they need it. And the chances of that happening are slim to none when their only options are to call customer service and be put on hold while an agent starts a from-scratch search to connect them with the right information and/or people. This may be tolerable (barely) in the offline world, but for mobile users — who are even less likely to be able to sit out long hold times — it’s simply untenable.

Seventy-eight percent of mobile users rely on mobile apps for customer service. And with 75 percent of apps deleted within the first three days after download, it’s fair to assume that not everyone finds their customer service experience a satisfying one.

Even when mobile apps offer excellent self-service and transactional capabilities, they often fail to integrate the mobile conversation with either the overall customer service strategy or the contact center technology platform. This is similar to the “silo effect” that emerged during the rise of e-commerce. When customer service was extended across phone, e-mail, and chat in the late 1990s and early 2000s, each customer touchpoint tended to live in a different organizational channel, resulting in a profound disconnect between agents.

With mobile apps, it’s all happening again: “blind” calls to the contact center, lack of customer context, and long call times. Customers often have limited ability to view their history and manage their preferences from one channel to the next. And with less customer data at agents’ disposal, companies have fewer opportunities for cross-selling and upselling.

According to one study, if a mobile app offered all of the assistance available through traditional customer service channels, 72 percent of mobile users would rely entirely on such an app for interacting with select companies. In other words, by failing to implement a cross-channel strategy for mobile customer service, businesses are missing out on important opportunities to maximize their mobile channel — not to mention opportunities for delighting their customers in entirely new ways.

Provide a New Conversation: Establish a Uniquely Mobile Dialogue

Mobile implies movement, and today’s mobile device users are indeed on the go — roving among channels, devices, and geographies — sometimes even straddling several simultaneously. Likewise, customer-serving employees can be found beyond the four walls of the contact center — working from a home office or traveling to customer sites, stocking warehouse shelves, performing back-office functions, and more. A sound customer service strategy can connect them all.

By arming workers with smartphones and tablets, and linking them all to the contact center, organizations can provide the transparency, immediacy, and responsiveness customers require. In the process, they expose people and processes directly to consumers, facilitating first-contact resolution for issues that previously would have required multiple contacts (and much more time) to address. The results are improved operational efficiency, reduced costs, and better-served customers. Just as importantly, customer support teams can gain new insight into customers’ needs by interacting directly with them more often, more efficiently, and in the high-touch manner that will thrill customers, helping ensure a pleasant experience for all.
To truly take advantage of today’s mobile marketplace, however, organizations need to do more than just add functionality to their mobile apps. They need to transform each and every mobile interaction into a personalized and satisfying customer experience. And to do that, they must engage in a uniquely mobile conversation.

A mobile conversation should go far beyond simple inbound transactions. It should be dynamic and conversational, with the ability to:

- Offer single-touch escalation to service from a mobile app
- Carry accurate context between channels
- Flexibly leverage experts and mobile workers as they become available
- Know preferences and existing work items to personalize the experience

Take that financial services firm again: This financial institution needs a mobile banking solution that can not only pinpoint exactly where a customer is but also carry the context of the conversation across channels. What’s more, that solution needs to be able to route the customer to the same person, retain that customer’s position in queue, and schedule necessary call-backs or appointments.

But how can organizations go about providing a superior experience? For starters, they need to integrate mobility into the enterprise. They then need to turn their transactional apps into conversational ones — incorporating every transaction into an ongoing dialogue. This is the way to forge customer relationships that continue long after a phone call or mobile Web session ends. It’s also the way to provide the deeper customer engagement and stronger brand differentiation that lead to better overall business performance.

Engage Your Customers: Provide a Constantly Compelling Cross-Channel Experience

With a mobile strategy that’s tightly integrated with your customer service efforts and IT infrastructure, a blind call to the contact center becomes a continuation of a conversation that the customer leads through a range of options centered around three critical customer service imperatives:

- **Contact me.** Seamless and secure “click-to-call” capabilities bring cross-channel history and context to every mobile interaction, allowing users to engage with any service channel (including voice, text, chat, social media sites, and e-mail) and select whether they want to call now or schedule a call-back (in other words, no hold times, long or short).

- **Connect me.** Reach beyond the contact center to back-office departments, branch locations, the mobile workforce, and more to connect mobile customers with the resources they require. Leverage analytics, real-time performance management, and employee skill assignments to provide consistently superior service across channels, departments, and devices.
• **Remember me.** With an integrated mobile strategy that extends across the enterprise, you can provide mobile customers with a personalized experience based on their preferences (including channel, schedule, or location) and existing service work items (including service requests, alerts for incomplete steps or tasks, and automated requests and notifications). As a result, mobile customers gain control of the interaction, receive up-to-date information in the app, and are offered location-based services most relevant to them (and most profitable for your business). Blind calls to support become a thing of the past.

There’s no question that an integrated approach to mobile will lead to more profitable customer engagements and higher long-term revenue and profit. To get there, however, you’ll need to bridge the gap between the flat, one-dimensional transactions of the past and the full-fledged, continuous conversations that today’s mobile-savvy customers demand—and you can’t do that with stand-alone point solutions.

### Bridging the Gap Between Mobile Service and Mobile Commerce with the Genesys Mobile Solution

Enter the Genesys Mobile solution. Providing a unified platform with a holistic, cross-channel-aware approach to mobile, the Genesys Mobile solution bridges the gap between transactional and conversational, customer service and mobile commerce. Use it to reap the benefits of the mobile revolution by providing a personalized cross-channel customer experience that transforms every mobile conversation into a dialogue worth sustaining — for both your business and your customers.

While other solutions focus on the organizational, or employee, side of the equation — for example, imposing an application layer between collaborating contact center agents — the engine at the heart of the Genesys mobile solution focuses on the customer. “Following” users from initial contact across every channel, it infuses each step of that journey with innovative customer service elements:

• Escalating from mobile app via phone, text, chat, and more
• Connecting customers with the appropriate resources
• Scheduling interactions with customer service, notifications, and callbacks
• Incorporating context — including transaction history, location, and preferences
• Integrating seamlessly with mobile identification, verification, and social media

As a result, you get the real-time awareness you need to proactively respond to and engage with your customers. The Genesys solution makes it easy to extend the mobile conversation across the enterprise and out in the world so that you can steer your business to success — gaining a competitive edge through a next-generation customer experience.
Conclusion

You want to delight your customer at every point in the customer lifecycle. A smart mobile strategy can go a long way in ensuring that outcome — providing an opportunity to differentiate and grow your business while continually improving the customer experience.

The right mobile platform will:

- Differentiate your brand and drive customer loyalty
- Generate more revenue
- Deliver a next-generation customer experience — turning mobile interactions into conversations — by leveraging context
- Integrate the mobile conversation with your customer service strategy and contact center technology platform
- Improve business performance by extending the mobile conversation across the enterprise

As Mike Brown, vice president of optimization for travel and hospitality pioneer Vegas.com said recently, “Doing mobile, and doing it well, is no longer a ‘nice to have’ offering. It’s now absolutely critical to focus on optimizing the mobile user experience.”