

# Building a **FUTURE-FIT** CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT MODEL

A WNS South Africa PERSPECTIVE



# Building a Future-Fit Customer Engagement Model

**DATA-DRIVEN DIAGNOSTICS AND TECHNOLOGY KEY TO DIGITAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE TRANSFORMATION.**

Social media has become deeply integrated into our daily lives, with most people becoming itchy when they're unable to scroll through a newsfeed for a prolonged period. This 'always-on' characteristic ingrained into the persona of the modern population, together with the rapid advancement of technology, has left many organisations behind in terms of the level of engagement their customers demand.

This rate of change will only accelerate. There is no doubt that by 2020 the world of customer service will be transformed by changing needs and new styles of interaction between customers and companies. At the centre of this digital revolution will be the way in which customer service is delivered across a growing ecosystem. In the wake of the Internet of Things, a digitally connected world will give rise to the Internet of Customer Service that will be catalysed by Millennials and Generation Z customers and evolve exponentially into the future.

## Satisfying customers of today vs. tomorrow

Today, the ecosystem for many customer service operations is sadly not future fit. Not enough is being done to avoid

the burden of customers resorting to the old phone call. Customer service is at an awkward inflection point where some companies are doing an amazing job of being at the forefront of customer experience technology, while others are still struggling with the basics. It's only a matter of time until the game changes entirely because of improved technology and connected devices backed by data and insights. The risk many companies face is that customer experience will become an even greater differentiator, which can lead to a disastrous impact if not designed well from a customer centricity approach.

In the future, customer experiences will be much simpler. That is not to say traditional channels will evaporate, they will just be used less. The future customer prefers self-service options, and will decide when they need human interaction, be it face-to-face or telephonically. What is important is to make these channels readily available for the customer to use at their discretion.

Customers know that they are in charge and they demand mutually respectful engagements. They want rapid resolutions that can be obtained conveniently – most often digitally. If they don't find it, they'll simply move on. Customer service expectations are rising at a rapid rate, often faster than companies are willing to adapt.

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## The levers driving customer experience transformation

**Customers are digital.** They increasingly make use of digital channels more than ever before. Often to the frustration of customers, they would prefer even more digital interactions than what companies currently make available on any social media platform.

**Mobile is everything.** In fact, Millennials believe that if it's not on their mobile phone, it didn't happen. Utilising interaction channels that are optimised for mobile is critical to the success of a future-fit customer experience. Some examples of on-demand mobile customer interactions include, Live Video and Chat, multi-device enabled applications with self-service functionality, as well as push messaging and notifications to update customers on their query resolution status.

**Cloud-based customer interaction solutions.** The future will see a greater

adoption of Computer Telephony Integration (CTI), which allows computer and telephone systems to interact with each other. It provides a data-driven approach to service customer needs and can achieve a 50% productivity improvement through intelligent call routing and virtual agents backed by Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. In addition, Interactive Voice Response (IVR), Voice-to-Chat, and video will also become more deeply integrated into customer engagements.

**Multi-channel integration and consolidation.** Multi-channel integration

and consolidation is critical to transform current customer experiences into future-fit agile operations. Social media will be leveraged even more as a preferred channel for customer service. In fact, Facebook made a huge customer service push with the launch of Facebook chatbots offering customers the ability to make simple transactions. Even the use of What's App customer interactions is steadily growing as a channel in South Africa, according to the 2016 BPESA Business Process Services Key Indicator Report.



## How to build a future-ready customer engagement model

Adding a slew of additional channels using outdated infrastructure and legacy systems is likely not to benefit customer experience, despite it being the most natural reaction to the rise of digital. Adopting the use of more modern customer service technology that is founded on continuous innovation is a recommended approach and will soon become the standard.

It is clear that many companies are under pressure to meet the existing demands of customers and are actively relooking their contact centre operations. Qualified data will drive the decisions to transform the customer experience and progress to a future-ready state.

Unfortunately, to the disadvantage of lagging companies, the rate of change is fast accelerating. As a result, this presents a growing range of new risks for these companies to mitigate.

In order to reduce the impact of these risks, companies can begin building a future-ready customer engagement model by embarking on a transformation journey by considering the following:

“Qualified data will drive the decisions to transform the customer experience and progress to a future-ready state.”

1

### TEST THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PROCESS

By mapping the customer journey and understanding the various personas dealt with, companies can get a clear view of the experience customers undergo. This helps to prioritise areas for improvement.

2

### DETERMINE CURRENT MATURITY OF PROCESSES

Every company finds itself at a different state of maturity. Taking a look at the maturity of current customer service processes, technology and people helps to highlight the gaps in achieving the desired future state.

3

### UNDERSTAND CHANNEL CONSISTENCIES

Where inconsistencies exist, achieving a seamless, standardised experience across all channels should be given priority. Collecting and leveraging customer data is critical to these improvements.

4

### UNDERSTAND PERSONALISATION NEEDS AND VALUES

Customers are unique, and they consider themselves an individual - not a generic. Customer segmentation, in terms of personal preferences, as well as customer lifetime value should be determined to deliver impactful customer engagements.



“Critical to the success of customer experience transformation is a sober inspection of the maturity of the current customer service capabilities and its alignment to the company strategy.”

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## Co-create a diagnostic-led customer engagement transformation model

To begin the customer experience transformation journey, organisations need to assess the current state of their customer service operation. By conducting a diagnostic assessment, companies can accurately navigate their current challenges and design an achievable transformation framework to meet future customer demands. Critical to the success of the implementation is a sober inspection of the maturity of the current customer service capabilities and its alignment to the company strategy. In order

to achieve these strategic goals, companies need to fully grasp the interdependencies between their systems, processes and customer engagements.

If the strategy is focused purely on cost savings, an approach to achieve this could be to find ways to increase agent productivity, streamline workforce management, and reduce the number of customer calls. However, a future-ready customer service operation will require the adoption of clever technologies and the exploitation of data

through predictive analytics in addition. Taking a hybrid approach to customer experience transformation has the ability to increase agility and allow the company to respond to the unpredictable demands of digital disruption.

The individual initiatives undertaken to transform the customer experience needs to be thoroughly assessed and backed by a strong business case to be able to prioritise the activities that has the fastest, and most definite impact.

## Our proven 360-degree diagnostic assessment

One of the key outcomes of undertaking a diagnostic project with WNS is a guaranteed business case with underwritten benefits for each option recommended, such as implementing a targeted operating model.

A WNS diagnostic investigation focuses on transforming a client's existing processes based on immediate and long

term opportunities identified by a team of Six Sigma Black Belt experts.

This diagnostic approach helps to co-create a 'right-fit' solution that meets an organisation's current and future state business objectives and addresses the immediate customer challenges. In addition, it also provides confidence that

existing processes can be transformed and operated in a more effective, standardised and controlled manner and provides a view on which type of technology solutions needs to be designed or built to manage competitive edge.

Some of the key activities that we'd typically undertake are listed below:

1

### CONDUCT A STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

Review and validate existing controls within processes.

2

### ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT BUSINESS PROCESSES

Compare the current-state processes with best-in-class examples and best practices for improvement opportunities.

3

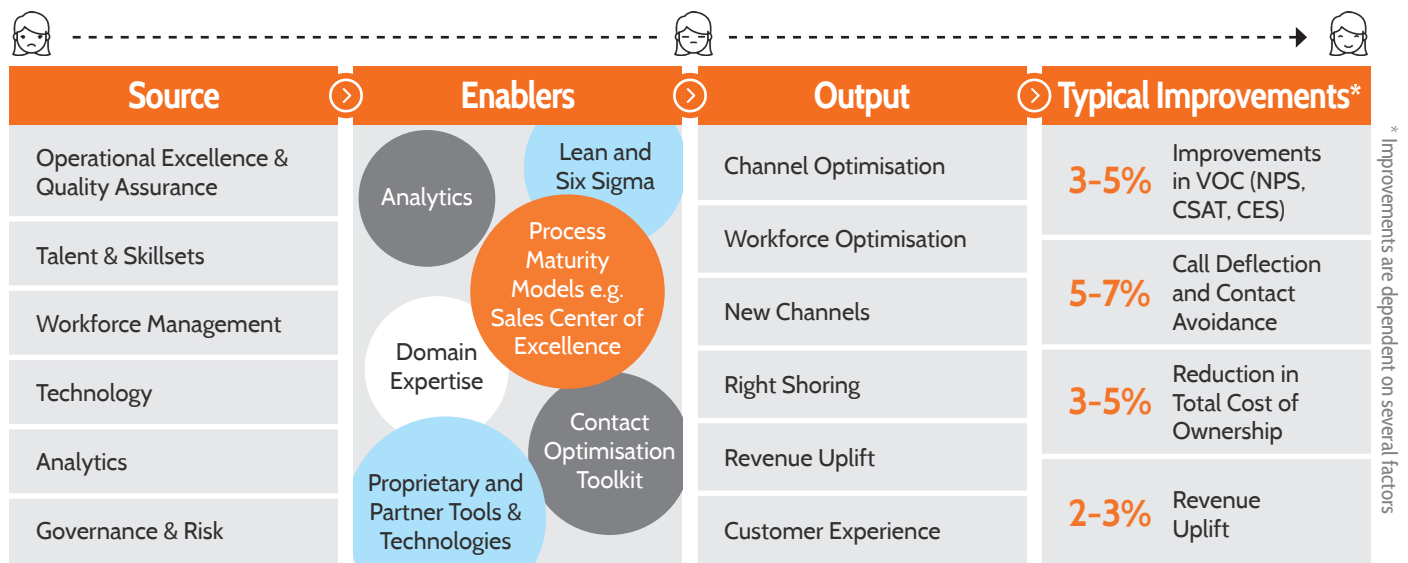
### DESIGN A BUSINESS READINESS MODEL

Define an implementation roadmap for all identified improvement opportunities.

Post the diagnostic assessment, we provide our clients with a roadmap to achieve the business and aspirational

goals, recommend the next best steps in terms of outsourcing (IT, facilities & business services), process ownership,

governance, and business process re-engineering opportunities.



## Our transformational capability beyond consulting

WNS South Africa provides customer experience transformation expertise. Using our diagnostic approach, we assess client processes to co-create a transformation model, and also have end-to-end capability to deliver the

operational requirements. Not only do we re-engineer processes, but we have the people, process, technology and analytics expertise to deliver a solution on the outcome of our diagnostic assessment. ▲



## Conclusion

In the past, many companies have appointed customer service managers who were given the simple task of operating the contact centre as efficiently as possible. This mandate has since evolved and now includes the pressure of generating higher levels of customer satisfaction and repeat purchases by improving the effectiveness of the customer experience. In a digital world, this can be a tall order. To begin addressing these demands, new strategies, practices and tools need to be adopted. Unfortunately, moving blindly into customer experience transformation can be devastating. The answer lies in combining data-driven decision support through rigorous diagnostic assessments and process design that is supported by smart technologies to create a future fit customer engagement model. ▲

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