

Enabling Lifetime Customer Relationships.

# Effective Strategies for Unifying Customer Communications

Leveraging Your Unique Customer Exchanges to Stay Ahead of the Competition

WHITE PAPER:

CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT



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## ABSTRACT

TRANSACTIONAL COMMUNICATIONS ARE HIGHLY INVOLVING, RECEIVE EXTRA ATTENTION AND GET OPENED 95% OF THE TIME. FOR DECADES, MARKETERS HAVE ENCLOSED OFFERS WITH STATEMENTS AND COST-EFFECTIVELY INCREASED THEIR BOTTOM LINE.

IN TODAY'S MULTICHANNEL ENVIRONMENT, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF TRANSACTIONAL COMMUNICATIONS HAS BECOME DIFFICULT. WHEN COMPANIES COMMUNICATE WITH CUSTOMERS VIA SILOED COMMUNICATION CHANNELS WITH NO INTEGRATION BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS, CONFLICTS IN MESSAGING CAN ARISE, WHICH RESULTS IN A POOR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE. INBOUND COMMUNICATION MAY ALSO BE IMPACTED IF INSUFFICIENT DATA LIMITS A COMPANY'S ABILITY TO ASSIST CUSTOMERS.

TO ACHIEVE CONSISTENCY IN MESSAGING BETWEEN DOCUMENTS AND ACROSS CHANNELS, COMMUNICATIONS MUST BE CENTRALIZED WITH ALL TOUCHPOINTS INTEGRATED. BUT THIS CAN BE DAUNTING, BECAUSE SO MANY SYSTEMS, PROCESSES AND DEPARTMENTS ARE INVOLVED.

ORGANIZATIONS ARE FINDING NEW WAYS TO DEVELOP CONSISTENT MESSAGING, UNIFY CONTENT AND USE RULES-BASED LOGIC TO INCREASE RELEVANCE.

IN THIS NEW PARADIGM, DIGITAL AND MOBILE DELIVERY IS ENABLED FOR BOTH OUTBOUND AND INBOUND COMMUNICATIONS USING DELIVERY PLATFORMS THAT SUPPORT WEB, EMAIL AND PRINT. COMMUNICATIONS ARE PERSONALIZED AND SENT IN EACH CUSTOMER'S PREFERRED CHANNEL, CONVEYING TO CUSTOMERS THAT YOU ARE SPEAKING TO THEM, WHICH BOLSTERS CAMPAIGN ACCEPTANCE. WITH UNIFIED END-TO-END COMMUNICATIONS, CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY INCREASE, AS CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT IS TRANSFORMED INTO A PROFIT-BUILDING ENGINE.

# ESTABLISH YOUR BUDGET, UNDERSTAND YOUR AVAILABLE CHANNEL VOLUMES AND YOUR CAPACITY TO DEPLOY COMMUNICATIONS ACROSS CHANNELS.

## The Power of Transactional Communications

An InfoTrends report<sup>1</sup> notes that “Transaction documents are better read and understood than direct mail since they are often part of a trusted relationship between a supplier and consumer.”

Today’s transactional documents have evolved beyond billing statements to include:

- Renewal agreements
- Leasing documents
- Settlement notifications (such as a credit or bill adjustment)
- New product orders
- Product change confirmations
- Daily activity statements
- Product portfolio booklets

To maximize cross-sell and up-sell opportunities and enhance customer relationships, companies now have the ability to add “trans-relevance” to the transaction documents they send to customers.

Transrelevant communications get more attention than direct mail due to the trusted relationship mentioned above, which stems from the fact that the recipient expects to receive communications, opts in and is therefore more likely to respond.

Marketing through transaction documents is highly effective because of their unrivaled 95% open rate. These documents receive more attention, and therefore more involvement, because they are sent by a trusted source. Due to their functionality, they are viewed more than once. Transactional marketing is also extremely cost effective, as these messages and documents ride along with mailed statements. A 5% increase in customer business can actually translate into as much as a 50% increase in the bottom line.

## Transactional Marketing Today: Multiple Customer Connection Points

Current transactional marketing has evolved beyond mailed statements to encompass all customer touchpoints:

- **Call center** staff must have 360 degree knowledge of the customer’s history to help the customer and ensure each customer feels satisfied and appreciated. Then a rep can move the relationship forward by presenting the next best action and personalized, relevant offers.
- **Company web sites** are bolstered with increased functionality, enabling customers to self-service their accounts. Alternately, customers can be directed to general URLs or PURLs (personal URLs) to accomplish such tasks as apply for a credit card or upgrade to a better product or service. PURLs offer tracking ability, which companies can use to gather customer information on what the customer is looking for and whether presented offers were suitable to that customer. This customer understanding can be leveraged to create even more targeted offers and extend the relationship going forward.
- **Email** is another touchpoint that can be infused with rich, relevant content utilizing inbound and outbound tracking. A lot of action needs to occur around that email with front and back-end processing to make sure that an overall experience is occurring, with inbound just as critical as outbound.
- **SMS/MMS notifications** (texts) can be utilized to notify customers that a document, email or credit card is on the way. They can also be used to confirm a recent transaction or to verify their email address.
- **Print and mail** provides event tracking capabilities through the use of Intelligent Mail® barcodes (e.g., to inform a customer to be on the lookout for a credit card mailing). Advance notification can be sent via a different channel such as email or SMS. Intelligent Mail can also help companies determine when their customers have moved. By profiling those customers and acquiring psycho-demographic and survey data, it may be determined the customer information has changed and that customer could benefit from different services, with company messaging changing accordingly.

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- **Social interactivity**, too, can be leveraged to understand your customers more fully and note status changes in their daily life and activity. A change from married to divorced, for example, can impact company risk tolerance, how that customer is addressed and which offers are presented.
- **Mobile applications** are changing daily and can be used in combination with QR codes to send customers to web sites and present offers, to increase customer participation.

## Channel Management Painpoints

### Lacking Details

Information about customer interactions is not detailed enough. Every interaction is different and must be date/time stamped and segregated by channel with channel preference noted. This helps companies better understand customer activity by channel and the likelihood the customer will buy something through a particular channel.

### New Media and Technologies

Managing communications has become increasingly difficult with new media and technologies coming aboard in quick succession. Companies need to fully understand how many of their customers have smartphones and whether their customers are using QR codes, to ascertain which new media are relevant to their customers.

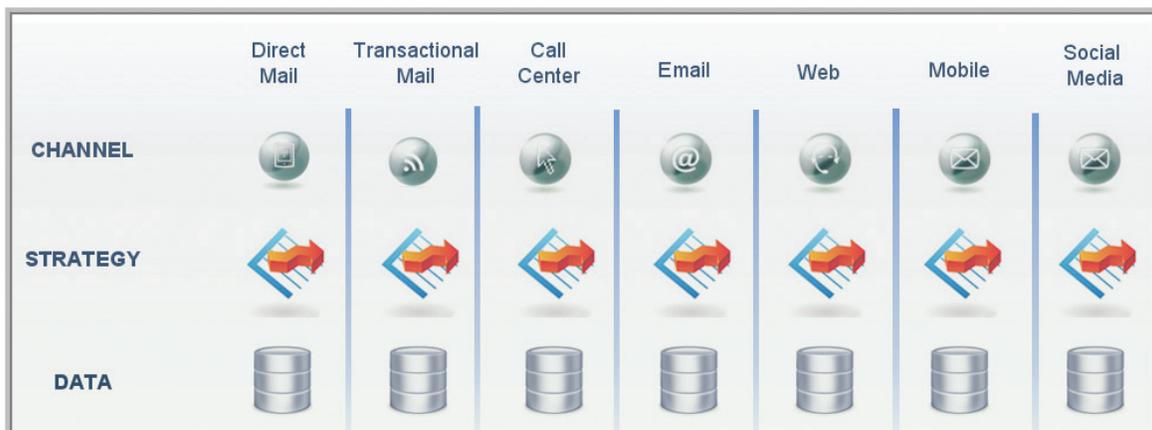
### Siloed Communication Channels

Siloed communication channels can result in a poor customer experience when there is no cross integration between departments. With companies sending hundreds of communications to customers, on average, all touchpoints must be integrated so that there are no conflicts in messaging and across channels. Companies must ensure customers are not receiving uncoordinated communications and no dead links exist that could bring the customer experience to a halt. Communication channels need to be pulled out of their silos by a group of people or a committee with an enterprise-wide view.

### Old Data

Data can be another weak point when not in real time, fresh or synchronized. If it takes up to a week for data to become available, instances can easily arise where customer service is not up to speed and may even present conflicting information. Customer service is at a huge disadvantage if they are in the dark about a prior interaction, what offers have been presented, offers a customer may have seen in another channel or whether to up-sell. Instead, companies must quickly make fresh data available to all customer-facing employees and transform each touchpoint into a two-way dialogue.

Today, many organizations are taking steps to overcome these challenges. Companies that develop effective strategies for unifying customer communications can create more relevant, more engaging and more consistent customer experiences across every touchpoint.



Siloed channels and touchpoints can cause numerous messaging conflicts

# REPLACE COSTLY AND NON-EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY METHODS.

## Present a Unified Voice Across All Channels

Companies must understand customer preferences, ascertain their customers' preferred delivery methods and deliver in those different mediums. To accomplish this, all information and messaging that reaches customers must be centralized which ensures conflicting messages are not reaching customers.

Centralizing communication across the organization can be a daunting task. This is where technology comes into play:

- Electronic content management (ECM) – centralized content store for everything being delivered to customers, so that email, printed statements and information on the web site all contain similar messaging, with each medium reinforcing the other so the customer is more likely to respond
- Business process management (BPM) – where information that will go into documents is managed centrally
- Change management
  - > Desktop publishing
  - > Word processing
  - > Graphics
  - > Web design
  - > P/G URL generator
  - > Variable data (direct/transactional)

When these assets are managed centrally, all stakeholders can readily approve the content and ensure the appropriate final version goes into production and the correct messaging is transmitted to each customer via their preferred channel.

## Unify content across all channels

To develop a consistent message across channels, specific steps must be taken for end-to-end delivery.

### Discover

Evaluate prior communication performance. Compile everything you know about your customers and identify behavior patterns: how they spend, when they spend, the most appropriate and relevant channel. Ensure there is a consistent message across channels.

### Define

Establish your budget, understand your available channel volumes and your capacity to deploy communications across channels. Define the campaign logic and confirm business rules. Set time frames and determine if they can be met within the campaign schedule.

### Develop

Build customer segments and propensity scores, ensuring customers are selected and scored properly. Construct campaign selection rules and output formats. Create templates to deliver communications. Confirm triggers and campaign timing and delivery.

### Deploy

Merge assets into templates. Pull in data selections. Bring in approved content, make sure it's correct, and construct document composition. Notify stakeholders when the campaign is pushed out. Get customer service geared up. Send to the print provider, email services provider, telemarketing firm or SMSC.

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## Increase Relevance with Rules-Based Logic

When you have a complete picture of your customer base and understand the distinguishing characteristics by line of business, you can bring in several technologies to take this data to the next level and score that customer based on the business intelligence you can gather.

Create a target profile that compiles all the information acquired, including customer spending levels to create a profile of customers to market to that meet your campaign criteria.

Take that target profile and pull in business intelligence, campaign intelligence, survey information and location intelligence to segment your customers into four distinct groups for uplift optimization:

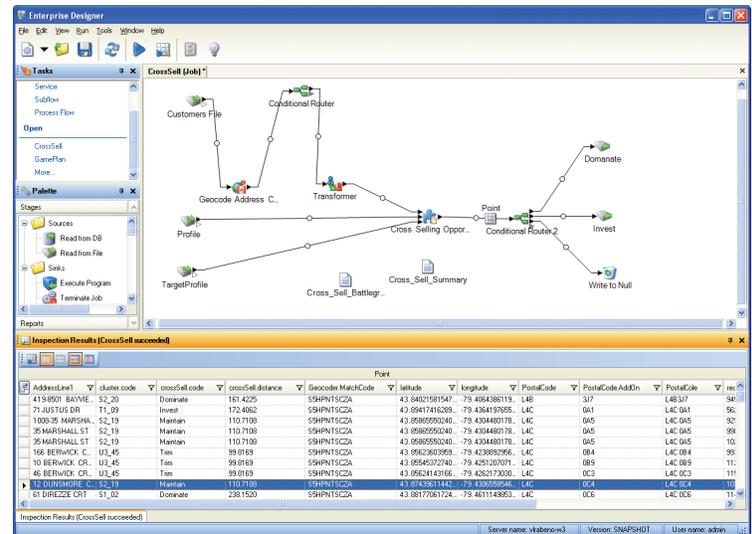
- **Lost Causes** – avoid marketing to this group since they won't buy anyway
- **Sleeping Dogs** – avoid this group as well, since they may react adversely to marketing messages (or even leave you), but will continue as customers if left undisturbed
- **Sure Bets** – why market to this group when they will likely buy anyway?
- **Persuadables** – focus the majority of your resources here, the group that is most open to receiving relevant offers

When variable data is used to incorporate the right messaging and graphics for each customer, your communications are personalized, relevant and convey to customers that you are speaking to them, increasing campaign acceptance.

## Digital and Mobile Delivery

Determine the effectiveness of outbound communications. Measure which communications should be changed or upgraded. Replace costly and non-effective communications with alternative delivery methods.

Monitor inbound and outbound communications to ensure delivery has occurred. For example, if you are getting bouncebacks or unopened or unread emails or text



Drive data through relevance to increase campaign acceptance

messages, processes should be in place to measure this and deliver in another channel after a few days, such as print.

Communication engines that “create once, deliver many” can push content out to print, text, email and URLs using delivery platforms that support web, email and print. You'll need the technology in place for these various platforms for digital and mobile delivery. Deliver batch, on-demand, and interactive communications with technology that supports all of these platforms, as delivering in multiple platforms is essential today.

If you're using color, whether in print or electronics, ensure color is there for a reason, whether to highlight a payment amount or call attention to an offer. Even though color technology is more affordable and therefore more widespread, color should be used judiciously.

Incorporate tracking technologies like QR Codes, Intelligent Mail, 2D and custom bar codes. Imbed PURLs or custom URLs inside QR codes and drive customers to a web site to pay a bill, enroll in a service or take advantage of an offer. If you have enough delivery through mobile to warrant it, consider a mobile application store, as these are popping up everywhere.

# CUSTOMER INFORMATION BECOMES A KEY ASSET NOT EASILY REPLICATED BY THE COMPETITION.

## Transform Customer Engagements to Profit

Today, everything is customized and one-size-fits-all is a thing of the past. Think of how coffee is customized at Starbucks and mobile phones are personalized with ring tones. You can achieve that level of customization with communications as well.

The process begins with profiling and segmentation. Add location intelligence to get an in-depth view of the customer and arm customer-facing employees with relevant and fresh customer data. With this level of insight, you already know what offers you can expect the customer to act on. Customer decision-making is sped up as well, with fewer approvals needed.

When customer service representatives have a 360-degree view of the customer, only present offers that the customer is approved for and mold the next best offer to meet customer requirements, up-sell acceptance soars.

In this environment, overall customer satisfaction and the customer experience markedly improve, boosting customer loyalty and improving retention.

Best of all, customer information becomes a key asset not easily replicated by the competition. Your competitors are not privy to customer activity within your organization. This becomes your motivation to actually build that asset.

TO DISCOVER HOW CENTRALIZING COMMUNICATIONS CAN TRANSFORM CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT INTO A PROFIT-BUILDING ENGINE FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION, CALL 800.327.8672 OR VISIT [WWW.PB.COM/CCMSOFTWARE](http://WWW.PB.COM/CCMSOFTWARE).

## References

<sup>1</sup> InfoTrends, "trans Meets Promo", October 2009



Every connection is a new opportunity™

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