Important Factors To Consider For Your Multi-Channel Strategy

by Andreas Iatridis

There is a shift taking place right now across the entire customer journey. Consumers expect personalised experiences where their voice and opinions are heard. This is a huge challenge which deals with tens of millions of interactions taking place across multiple channels - A challenge which is logistically impossible to track and monitor.

Initially the multi-channel approach was about providing multiple means of contact to your customers no matter where or when they made contact online. This siloed approach was tough for businesses to manage. Today this is simply an approach which is not scalable and is not dependent on company size.

A small business attempting to engage across all channels will encounter issues which will affect both its customers and employees. Low C-SAT across the board. Strategically it would be a valuable exercise to explore (even test) what channels the competition engages on and assess which channels are relevant.

Larger organisations are more complex, but have the logistics to support multiple-channels. Key here is to set a common goal across all touchpoints of the customer journey instead of separate departmental targets for C-SAT or other metrics. Once all teams are on the same page taking a step back to identify the nature of the journey will be easier. Identifying what works versus what doesn't will help to close gaps and improve the overall experience for both the customer and the employee.

In both cases the customer sees one entity regardless of the manpower behind or the tech to support all these interactions. The customer wants a seamless experience across all channels and expects the same delivery/response.

According to research carried out by Deloitte 42% of consumers will express their satisfaction on a positive experience whereas a third of consumers will talk about negative experiences. This is very low and means there is a large percentage of consumers out there who are either dissatisfied or simply not returning. In other words businesses are losing valuable insights which prevents them from improving their approach.

The culture of a company plays a large role here i.e. reactive customer approach versus proactive and subsequent to this how they manage customer engagement across channels. Too many channels equals a more complex structure to manage which is more costly and will lead to dissatisfied customers. Fewer channels will be easier to manage however will impact response times and satisfaction.

The starting point for most journeys begins on a company's website. The combination of marketing, sales and support content needs to be structured/presented in a way that makes it easy for the consumer to navigate. Everything from messaging, pricing and service has to be transparent and easy to find. Great sites promote self-service. The better your product and/or service is displayed online the easier it will be for consumers to take action by themselves. This is what they want.

A great website is paramount to your multi-channel strategy. It is your shopfront where you meet and greet customers, where you offer your service and help them along their visit. Once that structure is successfully built or redesigned, creating a presence on other channels must focus on your customer. The pre and post journey experience must be relevant to where they need to engage and above all ensure that your employees are also taken into consideration. No need to make it a long and over complicated journey.