Boost Customer Experience with Text Messaging

May 09, 2014

By Alisen Downey, Workforce Management Web Editor

The customer experience is on everyone's minds these days. Companies find that now, more than ever, they need to be asking themselves what their audience is looking for and how they want it delivered. One increasingly popular way to improve the customer experience is to offer customers multiple communication channels so that they can opt for the ones they prefer and that are most convenient for them.

For this reason, more and more businesses are incorporating text messaging into their models. But without the right software to handle this extra communication channel, managing it can be a challenge. OptifiNow offers a solution to help businesses integrate text messaging so that sales and marketing teams, contact centers and managers are all in sync with the customer. Recently, TMC had the chance to speak with John McGee, CEO of OptifiNow.

TMC: To start, can you tell me a little bit more about OptifiNow?

John McGee: OptifiNow's software helps sales and marketing teams dramatically improve the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of their revenue funnel. Sales and marketing now work together in a single integrated platform. Now, customer engagement takes place in a seamless marketing communications environment using email, mobile, social media, and direct mail.

TMC: Text messaging has evolved dramatically over the years, from a technology associated with casual exchanges between friends and family, to a powerful and dynamic marketing tool. Why do you think businesses began adopting SMS services to interact with clients and customers, as well as each other? What are the benefits?

McGee: Text messaging has become a staple communication channel for so many. As smartphones have become the standard, most of us send and receive multiple texts within a given day. The ease, efficiency and immediacy of text messaging creates a unique channel for companies to leverage. Quick bi-directional text messages allows companies to communicate in short blasts directly to a customer, prospect or lead using a channel that gets the information directly to the eyes of the customer.

TMC: OptifiNow's new software, Text onDemand, integrates SMS messaging into CRM databases. How exactly does this work, and how can Text onDemand be used?

McGee: OptifiNow's new Text onDemand integrates a complete SMS platform into the entire solution. OptifiNow focuses on providing true multi-channel communication using print, direct mail, email, social media and now SMS. We have integrated SMS capabilities into every possible interaction with a customer, prospect or lead within the OptifiNow platform. OptifiNow allows for both automatically triggered and manually triggered text messages to be created, sent and tracked. OptifiNow provides sales and marketing

management the ability to define specific text messages that can be automatically triggered based upon a stage in the sales pipeline. It also provides a mechanism to create and send a manually triggered text message right from the contact record.

Text messages are maintained within the record history, so that the complete dialogue becomes part of the contact record. Sales teams can interact directly with outbound text messages and see the replies coming in directly into the OptifiNow customer record.

Text messages are tracked and OptifiNow's reporting module Reports onDemand provides a host of real-time reporting that focuses on the effectiveness of this new texting feature.

TMC: In what ways can sales professionals take advantage of this technology in order to boost customer interactions and enhance the customer experience?

McGee: One of the biggest challenges that sales and marketing executives face today is getting their messages seen by the audiences. Email marketing has become so competitive that breaking through the noise is almost impossible. Text messaging provides a direct bi-directional connection to the customer that is unlike any other channel today. Providing customers with short, direct and easy interactions with companies is growing in popularity because you get directly in front of your customers' eyes within seconds from the time the message is sent. No other communication channel provides this direct-to-customer connection with immediate results.

TMC: Are there any benefits to Text onDemand that businesses may not expect?

McGee: OptifiNow focuses on true multi-channel communication. Since companies can integrate all of these channels into their communication strategies, they are finding that the cross-channel communication techniques are bolstering response rates. When companies rely on just one channel, for example email, it is easy for a customer to tune it out. Prospective leads opting out from email cuts the communication pipeline to them. By adopting a cross-channel approach, companies can keep their marketing efforts going and working in the channel that best suits the customer, which will increase overall response rates on the rise.

TMC: What, in your opinion, do you see for the role of text messaging in business moving forward?

McGee: Text messaging is already a popular channel for consumers today. Companies must address this channel as a key element of their messaging strategies moving forward. Consumers will expect it.

Regardless of a company's size or industry, the trend is pretty clear: customers are looking for text message offers, and companies need to meet that demand if they want to maintain a top-notch customer experience.