2020 CCW Nashville - Unymira

Unymira is a division of Aspera Technologies Inc. and part of the USU Group with offices in the United States and Germany. Its Knowledge Center platform provides a comprehensive knowledge base for contact centers that empowers customer facing agents with relevant, easy-to-use to understand knowledge so that they can provide better, more efficient customer service. Chris Rall, Sales Director North America, offered insights on the company's capabilities.

How does your knowledge management platform help improve contact center performance?

Our goal is to provide a better customer experience for a company's customer. We work to centralize all its internal knowledge in one place so we can help them bring this content to different channels. One of the challenges is that businesses quite often have knowledge siloes which is confusing from an overall customer journey perspective. A website visitor often gets different information than they would from speaking with a company rep. This can be a huge problem because then the information provided is not transparent and it's unclear what is actually correct.

Can Knowledge Center be accessed at any point across channels?

Usually, the first step we do is called knowledge mapping. We identify where a company's knowledge is currently stored, which is often in multiple places. Then we centralize this information in one single place. The good thing is businesses can segregate content within it to more easily administer data and distribute it to different channels. When a business is in charge of its work content, they can take one piece from their overall content stack for their website, another piece for their chatbot and another for their IVR while all of it is available to their agents.

So, when the platform is in place, do all updates go throughout the organization?

Yes. When the data is centralized in one location, as soon as you update it, it is instantly available in every channel. Whether the data is internal or external, it comes from the same source. We want to avoid customers getting different information or answers in different channels, for example on the phone versus on the website.

On the self-service side, the customer sees the same information as the agent does, although the agent might see additional internal information that can be suggested as next-best-action.

Have you found that when customers can access a more robust database, they call less frequently because they are able to better self-serve?

There are two things that we see quite often. Usually, what we see internally is that the overall phone experience improves. Some customers may still call first, but since the agents feel more confident they can provide accurate information quicker , that helps the business from the customer experience side.

The second part of this is if the organization can provide the right information on the website, it not only reduces call volume, but makes for happier customers. In the 21st century, fewer and fewer people want to pick up the phone anymore, especially for simple FAQ information which involves a response to a single question. Sometimes, it also depends on the industry and what is the product that they are inquiring about. Utility and mobile phone bills are something that people can just look up without a call, but a credit card bill is more personal and variable, so people still want to call to have a more deep-dive conversation with an agent.

In what ways does having information more easily accessible benefit the agents? Are they happier having this type of system?

The number one challenge is the search. When you're talking about a knowledge base, what agents expect is a more Google-like experience. We all know it from our personal lives; usually when we search something, we type in a keyword and are able to easily find the information we need. We try to duplicate that for agents so they're confident the information is accurate and up-to-date—which is what they need to do their job— and they always know exactly where to find it and just need to do a simple search.

The most significant impact that we see-- besides reduced average call handling time and first contact resolution—is the turnover rate. The one constant challenge in the contact center space is having agents leave because they are frustrated. What we have found is that if you provide them one single source of reliable, updated information, the confidence and satisfaction of agents goes up, which translates into lower attrition.

No matter what technology a business provides, the job is still challenging because agents are dealing with customers on the phone and it's an understatement to say that some are not in the best of moods when they call so agents always need to try and maintain a positive attitude. If you combine this with having trouble finding the information need and having to deal with data stored in multiple places, it becomes even more frustrating.

Does having the knowledge base shorten the amount of training time necessary?

One of the advantages we offer from an ROI perspective is that we target the onboarding time for new hires. For one customer, we were able to reduce the onboarding time from six weeks to one week. Since the knowledge base eliminated the need to search many different places and always remember what information is where and because we have incorporated e-learning in the platform, training is far easier and definitely faster.

Agents just need to refer to content that is readily available and combine it with what we call internal knowledge text and they are ready to go. Another advantage is that from the first day agents come into the organization, they are introduced into the knowledge platform which advances their satisfaction level. We offer our own training, sometimes integrated with the company's Learning Management System (LMS), but even if the company doesn't have one in place, the e-learning we provide is usually enough.

If a company deploys chatbots, are they using the same system that an agent or customer would be using?

Once again, we want there to be one single repository of information. In our world, a bot is simply an additional channel to access it. Our bot is fueled by the information from the knowledge base and we combine it with natural language processing so the bot can communicate from the customer side and retrieve information from same base of content that the agent uses.

If a company wants to get started and their information is in multiple places, what is the first step in pulling everything together? How long should it take to centralize it?

Usually, our recommendation that the first thing that needs to be done is to ask the agents what content is being used in their daily activities. Because there might be a lot of information that is not being asked for at all and we don't want to integrate it. The agents are the main stakeholders in the process and can tell you what they need to be successful. Businesses can see where the right information is stored which can then be mapped out and transitioned to the one single source of truth.

The timeframe for implementation depends on the number of documents a company has in multiple locations and number of agents they need to have access to them. Typically, the implementation process takes three to six months. That is of course for the additional rollout and we recommend that they make it a continuous process, so the issue doesn't come up again a year or two down the road. It's crucial to ensure that the information is updated regularly.

What sort of results are your clients experiencing?

In terms of ROI, it's the three KPIs we've discussed: onboarding time is faster, average handling time (AHT) is reduced, agents spend less on the phone because they can quickly find what they need and third the first contact resolution rate (FCR) goes up dramatically. One company said they have a decision tree in place to guide agents through a call step-by-step. This is particularly important for businesses that have a long service process.

If we are talking about the customer-facing side, it's the overall reduction in call volume that fuels ROI. While we can't measure it empirically, it is logical to extrapolate that this also has a positive impact on NPS. It also obviously contributes to lowering customer effort. We carefully examine customer feedback to see if there are any problems and usually see very positive comments.

Businesses need to think about where they are going over the next few years: everyone talks about chatbots, but not all companies are ready to take that journey. If they map out their complete customer journey, it involves different channels and touch points. They need to examine each channel and ask themselves if they are prepared to promptly provide accurate information on it: this includes having the right process, people and technology in place. Having a comprehensive knowledge base is the first step toward delivering a better customer experience.