A Discussion with Nectar Services Corp

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Presented By: CrmXchange

In the wake of the postponement of Enterprise Connect, CrmXchange's Managing Partner Sheri Greenhaus spoke with Tim Armstrong, Vice President, Product Management of Nectar Services Corp and Tom Tuttle, Nectar's SVP of Strategic Alliances. Nectar's mission is to help ensure that businesses will be able to provide effective live agent support in an environment where the number of customers trying to reach a live person is spiking dramatically.

Nectar Services recently announced an integration between its CX Assurance and Nectar Diagnostics offerings. Coupling the two solutions enables contact center operation teams to benefit from a cohesive solution for automated testing and troubleshooting, significantly reducing discovery and resolution time from hours—or in some cases days—down to just minutes.

TA: When someone calls into a contact center, they typically have a good idea of what they want to accomplish. If the experience they encounter does not meet their needs quickly, In situations where they want to reach live agents, customers lose patience rapidly if they're not able to quickly achieve that. Thirty percent of global respondents find it to be the most frustrating aspect of a negative customer service experience. Given the longer wait times since this crisis hit, that percentage is now likely higher.

Under the overarching concept of analytics for collaboration and the contact center, Nectar is focusing on three primary workloads.

1. **Monitoring**. Monitoring looks at the health of all the underlying systems that are part of delivering call experiences. Nectar's tools gather telemetry for hundreds of different datapoints —everything from the health of the processor and the CPU to the hard disk that hosts those platform applications to the capacity of voice trunks. When performance telemetry goes outside of a healthy threshold Nectar creates alarms or generates tickets. We have a long history monitoring contact center platforms and have been leading innovation in this space for years.
2. **Troubleshooting**. When someone complains of call drops or poor audio on a call, we allow operations and support staff to easily look up that call. We support the person in the organization who's trying to figure out what happened with that specific bad call. The troubleshooting scenario is something we've been doing for a long time. We have advanced capabilities built around understanding where and when a call went bad. People familiar with contact center operations have come to know terms such as phantom, dead air, dropped calls or one-way audio. These issues are often quite difficult to replicate in a traditional or manual troubleshooting process. Our tools capture quality and detailed telemetry on every single call in the context of that single call – this massively speeds up troubleshooting.
3. **Testing**. Nectar offers a variety of testing tools but, in the context of customer experience for the context center, we lead with our CX Assurance platform. The solution enables the functional testing of whether an IVR is working the way a company expects. For example, CX Assurance is used to test if application integration is operating properly and the processes working correctly. We can test and monitor all of this by calling in from the outside using our cloud-based testing platform. Another scenario is load testing. Can the system accommodate peak loads into the contact center?

Ability to Test

TT: Our ability to test and validate in this market, sets us apart in several ways, whether it's network-agnostic testing or deep inspection into the contact center space. We've been able to successfully leverage our acquisition of Cyclone with large enterprise organizations that had already been using our tools for monitoring and diagnostics. For example, where we had been previously only measuring session quality in the contact center, we are now able to demonstrate strong capabilities around load testing and IVR script validation. Our CX Assurance solution has expanded the depth and adoption of our platform across large enterprises. Additionally, many of our partners, who have traditionally focused on UC, also have contact center practices. They are now able to expand their service or solution portfolio with their customer bases by introducing CX Assurance.

Over the past 45 days, there has obviously been a significant focus shift for most large enterprises and their ability to manage large numbers of remote workers or agents. In the face of the unfolding COVID-19 situation, many companies overnight had to determine how to effectively manage users who were new to "work-at-home". Remote workers can have numerous challenges, including, endpoint or headset config issues, or bandwidth issues as household members compete for bandwidth whether that be for online learning, streaming, game play or video conferencing. We're running into many different scenarios. Nectar can provide a great deal of insight to companies, their contact center teams and the need to pivot in order to effectively manage their new, unique call distribution. Enterprises are taking stock of what they are seeing now and asking us how to best handle the influx of calls.

With our agnostic network testing solution, customers can deploy software agents that sync to a controller in the environment. The software agent and be downloaded easily. We have had customers deploy the software agents on laptops very quickly so they can begin to do some initial testing. It's a relatively short deployment cycle from start to finish. For contact center load and IVR testing, we have automation that can help understand the call scripting. Businesses are changing scripts frequently, trying to buy time by making the users become more self-sufficient through the IVR. Enterprises need to be cognizant of what that script is trying to accomplish and test for the effectiveness of a particular call script. Such evaluations are relatively quick. It doesn't take months or even weeks... it can be as little as a couple of days to a week.

TA: In the context we're talking about, businesses are being called upon to spin up cloud-based contact centers to enable their work-from-home agents. There are several elements we can test almost immediately such as if the calls are routing in the way a company expects them to, or if the IVR functioning the way it is intended. Those are the types of tests we can set up in a matter of hours. The provisioning for setting up a test environment is simple and cloud-based. The next step is building the test, a more time-consuming process that involves understanding what the expected outcome should be. We need to have the map that tells us what happens with each touch of a number on the phone.

A key tool in CX Assurance is Auto Discovery. We are told a number to call and it then listen to all the prompts. It listens to a company's first round of prompts, then hangs up and calls back into the same number again. It then goes to the prompt number and listens to all the prompts there. During this process, everything is mapped. Our software is listening to the prompt from the IVR recording and building out an automated campaign map that speeds up the process. The process is done through voice recognition. Depending on the IVR environment, we can see 70 or 80% of the test campaign built within hours by using the Auto Discovery tool versus someone having to do it manually.

When to do Testing

How often companies should be testing varies on how frequently they make changes. We have one customer that is a health insurance company which makes an average of 150 IVR changes daily over the course of the day. They're running customized insurance programs for a variety of different employers and clinical environments, so it's necessary for their business model that they remain in constant testing phase.

For larger organizations there is often a contact center dev ops team or an individual who manages this function and is responsible for making sure all of the changes to the IVR are working as expected. For regression testing, we suggest testing the scenarios prior to making change, then test right after those changes. For heavily regulated industries, such as banking, insurance, or financial services, monitoring is ongoing. In such cases, testing may occur every day. In other industries, companies are testing a few times a month. The regulated industries have very high value agents, such as trader desks, where any individual call can potentially have millions of dollars associated with it.

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TT: As an example, we have worked with 1-800 Flowers for years and they use our testing capabilities when they're making changes overnight to their network environment. They have a global network of contact centers and with those changes affecting the next day's revenue, they're doing testing before calls begin each day. They also have continuous calls that run all day long, set-up between those contact centers to quickly identify any potential issues impacting the customer experience.

TA: People who aren't aware that testing solutions like ours exist and are continuing to manually test important functionalities. When we ask how they evaluate after making changes, they tell us that they use their cell phones and dial the number to see if it is working. There are multiple issues associated with that type of manual testing.

In the contact center space, we need to establish that there are automated testing platforms available to make sure that company's IVR is working as anticipated and that such solutions offer a very high value proposition. For companies that are aware of automated testing, the need is to make them aware of our differentiators and the things that we are doing, such as the application integration testing. For example, if they are doing a screen pop to a CRM system, when a call is delivered to them, we can test and make sure that is happening as intended. We can validate if the information on the screen pop is the right information. Automated testing and monitoring of a business's published numbers is not only available, but a wise investment in protecting the integrity of a brand.