

Customer experience: Innovation and rollout must get faster



[CUSTOMER CENTRICITY](#) BY [ANNIE TURNER](#) ON NOVEMBER 20, 2017 [0](#)

[Customer Journeys](#) [Omnichannel](#)

Rigas Parathyras, Senior Manager, Digital Architecture, Liberty Global shares some great insights with Annie Turner about how customer experience is evolving, shifting priorities for investment, plus the drivers, benefits and challenges of getting it right.

AT: Liberty Global is a large TV and broadband company worldwide, and a key operator in Europe. Regarding customer experience, a crucial part of being digital, what are your priorities right now?

RP: Digital interactions like ordering services via e-commerce and enabling self-service through e-care continues being a big focus. But, for Liberty Global, digital customer experience goes beyond that; it's about actually consuming the connectivity and entertainment services themselves. Western European markets are moving more towards consuming digital TV services on the web and mobile phones, instead of on the actual TV. We have been investing on extending digitization to the connectivity domain. We have been developing a connect app to help consumers manage their home network. They can measure the strength of the Wi-Fi signal, change their modem passwords and receive recommendations about how to optimize their connectivity in and out of the home.

AT: Can you tell me more about the new channels and who you are targeting?

RP: We developed different mobile apps for ecommerce and self-service, entertainment and connectivity to address the various customer needs.

However these digital-only [self-care] services are not for everyone. For the digitally-savvy consumers with more digital lifestyles and habits we are building propositions where they primarily interact through the web and mobile apps. Their access to call centers is not blocked, but it's not actively being promoted. Typically, older people want to use call centers, talk to technicians and watch traditional TV and we have to be able to provide this to them.

At the same time, while focusing on digital, we still need to enable other channels and invest in call centers and stores. For instance, we are rolling out agent chat functionality and putting in tools allowing retail staff to co-browse offers with customers in shops.

AT: This sounds like you are moving the emphasis away from seamless journeys across channels? It is just too difficult or are there other reasons?

RP: Rather than making all possible journeys seamless, we have focused on optimizing certain touchpoints that bring maximum value. Focus was to enable the right 'magic moments' that make the difference. It's not about the difficulty involved in making everything seamless and available in all channels, but sometimes we may not want to do so. For example, if you use a digital channel, you get better prices and are treated differently; it's an incentive, to encourage and reward customer to use this channel.

Consistent sharing of customer information across all channels and products is still relevant though. And, the criticality of the use case determines how fast customer data is updated across all systems. We are focusing on capabilities within case and interaction management, that are key when addressing most customer issues. By working to link information across all channels, we are moving towards omnichannel care.

AT: How do you decide where to invest?

RP: Liberty Global is very much driven by business cases when deciding on customer experience investments. Linking customer experience to financial benefits is not mature in the industry and it's hard to find best practices to assess the financial contribution.

The company's two key drivers have been to generate additional revenue and ensure continuous cash flow through cost savings and running the business well. But now, we've added something new: Net Promoter Score (NPS) is the third most important key performance indicator (KPI) of our company and currently 20 percent of everyone's bonus depends on how well we do on NPS. So that is one way of making customer experience a more financial consideration and making everyone in the company think about how they contribute towards it.

AT: Where do you find the biggest problems lie?

RP: When launching a service we don't think enough about the operations side. There is continuous drive to get new solutions and products out there, but the organizational and customer processes are not always mature enough to cope with these. For example, sophisticated systems are introduced for automated recommendations based on analytics, while marketers still have a more traditional approach to targeting. Moving forward, businesses will need rely on intelligent IT systems and adapt to new ways of working.

Another problem is how to address customers' needs and expectations while the industry is evolving. If you look at [this case study](#) from a few years back, we used best practices from TM Forum to solve the problem of standardization between our CRM and billing systems. Now, additional investment is needed for new, customer-centric ways of working. Similarly, it took us two years to implement our ecommerce platform, but now we have new requirements for mobile so we might have to redo the whole thing. At the

same time, we have to roll out standardized solutions across the market, which takes time. It's as if we can never catch up – the innovation and rollout cycle has to get much faster.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Annie has been researching and writing about telecoms since the 1980s. Having headed up the editorial team at TM Forum for seven years, she returned to freelancing in 2017. She works as an analyst for Market Mettle and an editor for IoT Now Transport, as well as on ad hoc research projects and articles for specialist B2B publications.