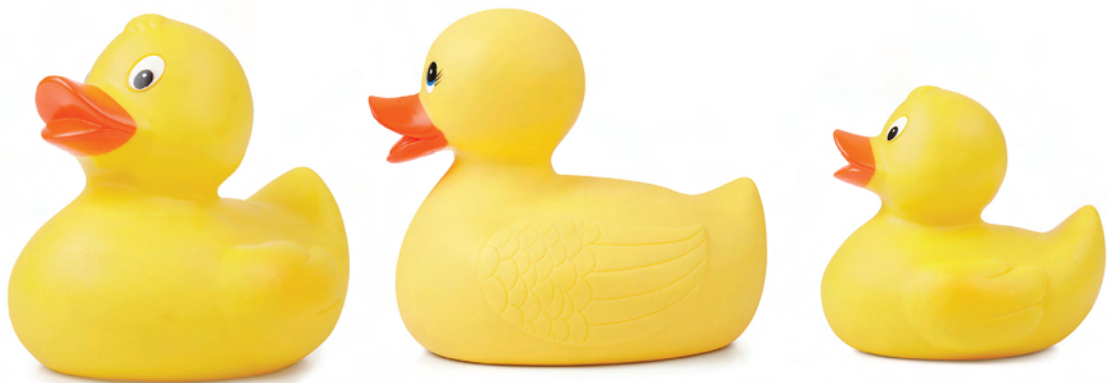


The Need for Integration

Aligning online and phone-based communications to cut costs and enhance the customer experience



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Foreword: Greg Thomas, Sales Director, Invomo

If one can adequately capture the myriad challenges facing businesses in a single phrase, I'd argue for: 'Achieving more for less'. Whether downturn or not, delivering the same or improved service, for reduced expense, is a core imperative. In the customer contact arena, this has seen organisations focus on offshoring and outsourcing phone-based communications. And, of course, using the internet to automate customer service.

The Web has transformed the customer contact landscape, slashing transaction costs and delivering convenient 24/7 service. However, there are common faults apparent in the services offered by some websites (discussed in the following section of this paper), which impair the full potential of the online customer experience. Recognition is growing of one critical issue: the fact that many companies' online systems have evolved independently of their telephone operations.

Lack of integration between these channels impacts business performance; Harris Interactive reveals that the consequence of abandoned online sales transactions could impact US retailers to the astonishing tune of \$47.6 billion in 2009. While we cannot know the exact circumstances of the problems, I propose that if the lost shoppers had felt they had a very simple way to resolve their issue, perhaps by instantly connecting to an informed agent, a good deal of this revenue would be safely in the till.

This paper examines how to close the gap between online and phone (landline and mobile) channels for customer contact, with section two focusing on how new and evolving technologies can help realise this objective. The analysis touches on phone-related technologies, IVR systems, speech recognition and hosted applications that deliver a range of advantages. These include cutting call centre costs, enhancing services, freeing agents to focus on value-added calls, and collecting data from phone and web-based contact to improve products, services and marketing; in short, achieving a good deal more for less.

I trust you enjoy the paper and hope it helps you to 'put all your ducks in a row'. If you have any comments on the analysis, I'd be delighted to read them. Please send observations to marketing@invomo.co.uk.

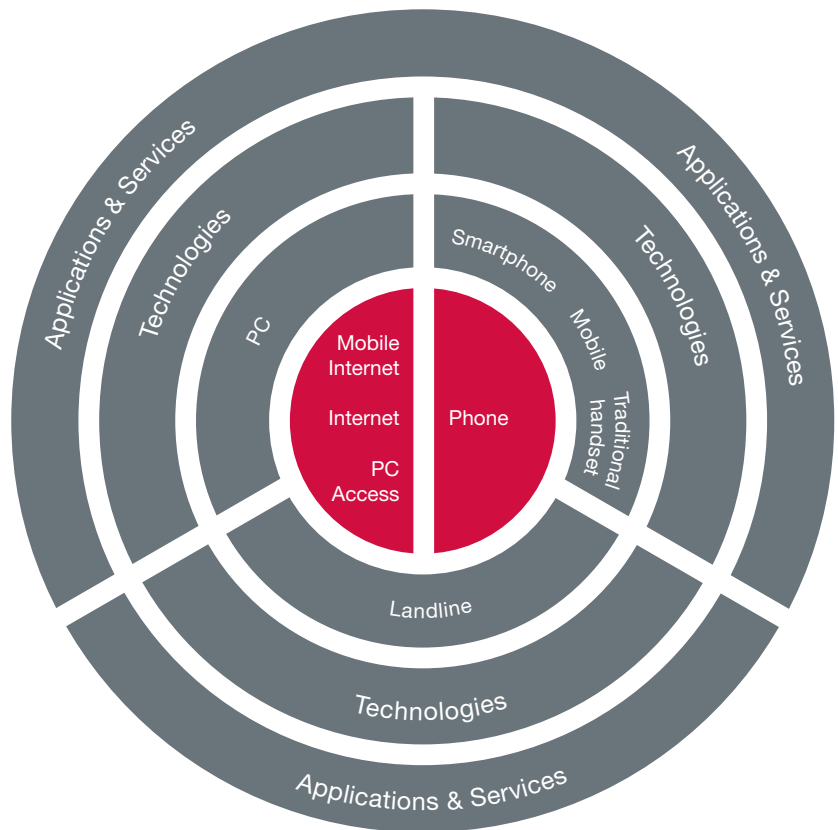
¹ 5th Annual Survey of US Online Customer Behavior sponsored by Tealeaf: <http://www.tealeaf.com/Harris/>

3. Alignment overview and checklists

This section of the paper includes a diagram and checklist of the technologies and applications that can enhance alignment between phone-based and virtual customer service.

The online and phone integration map

This diagram illustrates the underlying technologies of the phone and internet and summarises many of the applications and services, discussed in this paper, that can be used to integrate the customer's experience.



Technologies	Applications & Services	
Social networking Mobile internet PC transactions	Call me back Abandoned shopping cart notification and callback	Web
SMS MMS Mobile marketing service creation Blue tooth Smartphone aps Location based services	Mobile widgets Microsites Text ads Interactive banners Personalised call campaigns Download - games, screen savers, games Coupons SMS MMS broadcasts SMS quotations Text banking Location based offers	Mobile
IVR ASR Call optimisation Call routing Telephone numbers CLI screening ID Validation Payment authorisation Hosted applications Autodiallers	Reminders Renewals Nearest supplier/service Brochure/information request Competition entries Metre readings Dedicated service contact numbers Automated secure payments 24 x 7 customer service Virtual office Virtual call centre Dialout message broadcast	Phone

Customer service checklist – can these examples help you improve and align your customer communication channels?

Key:

i integration of the communications channels and/or knowledge from your CRM

DEVELOPING NEW CUSTOMERS

- ✓ Create dedicated marketing telephone numbers for a promotion or campaign used in advertisements. Calls can be directly routed to specific agents prepared to greet and take the calls.
- ✓ 'Call back request' embedded in email broadcasts. Use personalised hyperlinks so agents have the contact's details from the database when they make the return call. **i**
- ✓ Publish short codes and key words for automatic text back service for campaigns. Responses can include unique promotional codes, bar-code vouchers, web links, or opt-ins for a free call back. **i**
- ✓ Send promotional texts, e.g. for the nearest service point, a list of approved engineers based on customers' post codes or location-based communications when people come into retail environments. The campaign can also be promoted using ASR systems to field calls and provide services to customers.
- ✓ Use the IVR to highlight the latest offer or campaign in the menu and/or on hold message.
- ✓ Publish telephone number for specific campaigns on relevant pages of the website or with a free 'call me back' option. **i**
- ✓ Ensure abandoned online shopping carts and enquiry forms can be tracked and call centre agents presented with details, using Text to Speech to relay information to them and automated systems to dial the customer. **i**

DEVELOPING LOYALTY

- ✓ Send email or phone appointment reminders for engineer visits, doctors, hairdressers, etc. Response options to text or call to rebook.
- ✓ Check order status by text or automated service. Include the option to speak to an agent or leave a message, for example additional delivery instructions. Messages converted to text for easy processing.
- ✓ No need to publish your hours of service. Call routing to different numbers by time of day to when a live agent is there to take the call. Option to leave a message to request a call back when customer services are open.
- ✓ Supply meter readings to an automated service and hear the estimated month's bill.
- ✓ Send policy or membership expiry reminders by text, email or voice broadcast. Provide response options to cancel, renew, reply numbers that route to an automated service to accept payment.
- ✓ Subscription/mailling list updates or removals. Freephone number dedicated to an ASR application. Text back the subscription number and keywords. **i**
- ✓ Privilege numbers that avoid the queues and recognise the calling number. Based on the latest customer activity on the Web, mobile and email, the CRM anticipates the most likely reason for the call and presents this to the agent's screen. **i**
- ✓ Analysis of campaigns will show which promotions are successful, enabling offers to be refined so that people will value and look out for similar communications.
- ✓ Known return customers to a store or season ticket holders at a football ground, who have Bluetooth switched on, can receive special vouchers or privileges. **i**

Understandably, especially in the midst of recession, deploying new phone-based technologies to complement online customer service may raise concerns over expenditure. However, just as technology is evolving, the

options for reducing the cost of its installation and management are also advancing to make the investment case more palatable. These developments are reviewed in the following section.

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