



# Customers do not think in terms of channels

They do expect a connected customer journey

# Contents

Executive summary	3
Disconnected vs connected customer journeys	4
Barriers to understanding the customer journey	8
Understanding the end-to-end customer journey	10
Customer-centricity and innovation	12
Cross-channel collaboration – breaking down the silos	13
Be digital-first	14
The role of empowered and engaged employees	15
Technology is an enabler, not the solution	16
The key technology investment areas	18
Conclusion	19
Webex’s connected journey vision	20





# Executive summary

**Customers use a variety of channels to interact with organisations to purchase the goods and services they want. They expect their experience when dealing with a brand to be seamless and personalised to their needs, regardless of which channels they choose to use.**

The pursuit of omnichannel experience has been the ‘holy grail’ for organisations in their attempt to provide seamless and personalised experiences. Having an omnichannel strategy is about creating a seamless brand experience for customers by ensuring that your brand is presented the same way regardless of which channel the customer decides to use.

Recently, the pandemic accelerated the shift to digital channels, making customer journeys increasingly complex. As we move forward, companies that adapt to the changing needs and behaviour of customers will recover and grow more rapidly than competitors that don’t. It’s now more important than ever to provide customers with a connected journey to improve the experiences they have with your brand.

We interviewed a range of independent experts and practitioners from a variety of industries on why organisations need to create connected customer journeys.

# Disconnected vs connected customer journeys

**A customer journey is the set of experiences that a customer goes through from the moment they start interacting with your brand. Whether the various touchpoints the customer encounters on that journey provide a seamless experience or a fractured one, depends on how well your organisation can identify and respond to customers at any given stage of the journey.**

The entire ecosystem that influences the journey must be understood and assessed. Your customer's experience may be impacted by your partners and intermediaries as well as any influences from across your own organisation, intentional or not.

Phil Murphy, VP of Operations, TTEC comments, "A connected customer journey delivers streamlined, simple, and

delightful experiences to customers. When a customer interacts with a brand through any channel of their choice, the brand responds to them in a customised and personalised way that feels right and shows an accurate understanding of their intents or needs".

Aaron Fadelli, Senior Global Leader of Contact Centres for Flight Centre, says, "A connected customer journey ensures that all customer touchpoints and channels are considered - digital, telephony, face-to-face, along with self-service and knowledge base. Each of these interactions plays an important part of your CX (Customer Experience), but should not be treated in isolation. If deployed correctly, customers will not feel like they are dealing with departments or silos within a business".



***"A connected customer journey delivers streamlined, simple, and delightful experiences to customers"***

**Phil Murphy,  
VP of Operations,  
TTEC**







# 69%

of customers expect connected experiences. The importance of customer experience and understanding the connected customer journey have become critical to business success - *Engage Hub*.<sup>1</sup>

Jamie Romanin, Director, Webex Customer Experience Practice APJC, Cisco, observes, “Unfortunately we lack a connected customer journey across the majority of the interactions we have with an organisation. Overwhelmingly we experience journeys that are fragmented, repetitive and cumbersome. Our journeys are disconnected because the interactions we have, regardless of channel - email, social, voice, mobile app, etc, are siloed and many organisations are not utilising journey data platforms to link the experience.

Unfortunately, in the pursuit of what we like to call omnichannel customer experience, many organisations have missed the point. Their focus has centred around the internal management of different customer channels rather than designing holistic

experiences from the point of view of customers”.

If you’re not connecting your customer channels and sharing data, then you are going to have problems. Romanin warns, “Many organisations utilise a variety of channels, but run by different departments. Outreach to a customer might come via marketing on one channel, while inbound calls via voice are handled by a separate customer service team”.

“Most companies have been successful in giving customers plenty of options to communicate and interact via a variety of channels. What a lot of companies are failing to do is connect those channels as part of an end-to-end customer journey”.



## You may have heard frustrated customers ask:

Why do I have to remember my booking or confirmation number?

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Why don't you already know what the last agent told me?

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Why can I do some transactions online, but not others?

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Why do I have to give you the same information I just entered into the IVR?

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Why can't you help me (in this channel)?

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Customers become frustrated when there isn't a seamless handoff from one channel to the next or when they feel like they are being forced to change channels. A disconnected journey leaves the customer with a fractured and frustrating experience.

Organisational structures based around channels rather than customers are a major contributor to a disconnected customer journey and broken omnichannel experiences, according to Rosie Mills, Experience Design Team Lead at Origin Energy. She says, "Organisations have different teams supporting live chat vs emails vs phone calls, which means that when a customer is using live chat, and wants to call she is then transferred to another team and has to re-explain the issue. Organising teams around customers rather than channels can go a long way towards solving this issue".

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an impetus for delivering 'digital-first' customer experiences. These days, most customer journeys now start online. But this needs to be tempered with a focus on creating a journey that is connected regardless of which channel or range of channels a customer may choose. Mills advises, "The most important thing is for an organisation to have effective collaboration between different business units and customer touchpoints, including visibility of the entire customer lifetime journey, as well as specific event journeys".

Megan Papadopoulos, General Manager Customer Contact at Bendigo and Adelaide Bank, admits that getting this right is not easy. She comments, "Bendigo and Adelaide Bank has been around for 165 years. While that gives us a whole of strengths, it also means a whole lot of older



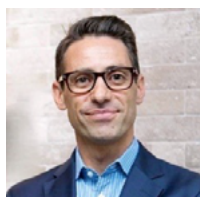
legacy systems as well as of complexity in the business and the way we do things.”

“We’ve worked hard at the bank to reduce complexity in our operations and streamline the number of systems we maintain to reduce hand-off between channels.”

Organisations that fail to understand their customer’s journey will suffer a range of consequences from higher levels of customer churn, low employee satisfaction, and higher call volumes to lost sales and poor reputation. Those who can provide customers with a connected journey will be rewarded with greater customer satisfaction and loyalty, reduced costs in handling enquiries, improved brand reputation, increases in referrals and improved sales margins.

“ *Our journeys are disconnected because the interactions we have, regardless of channel - email, social, voice, mobile app, etc, are siloed and many organisations are not utilising journey data platforms to link the experience.* ”

**Jamie Romanin,**  
Director, Webex  
Customer Experience  
Practice APJC, Cisco



# Barriers to understanding the customer journey

The barriers to understanding the customer journey can include a lack of data and system integrations, breakdowns in process, misguided focus, and inattention to key aspects of the customer experience.

*“Getting staff with the right skills and attitudes and retaining them is a top priority for us.”*

**Megan Papadopoulos,  
General Manager  
Customer Contact,  
Bendigo and  
Adelaide Bank**



Aaron Fadelli, Senior Global Leader of Contact Centres for Flight Centre, highlights that the following needs to be addressed:



Unstructured and siloed data leads to poor decisions and inconsistent processes.



Lack of insight and understanding of the customer's journey.



Lack of a customer-centric culture.



Poor Employee Experience (EX).



Legacy technology and unintegrated data systems that manage different channels.





The ability to identify customers and connect with their preferences as well as their past history across multiple channels and touchpoints is a significant challenge for most organisations.

Mills also emphasises the problems with legacy technology systems and the lack of access to quality data across channels, “Some of the barriers that organisations can face when trying to deliver exceptional customer experience include the limitations

of legacy systems that can make small tweaks and updates to the customer experience challenging”.

“Access to quality data is important, as well as systems that talk to each other, visibility of the whole customer journey, and ways of working that support effective collaboration in support of the best possible customer outcome”.

# Understanding the end-to-end customer journey

**Customers do not evaluate their experiences with a brand as a collection of unconnected transactions or interactions. Their opinions and sentiments towards a brand are built from an aggregate of interactions and transactions they accumulate as they progress through their journey across a range of channels.**

Fadelli advises that organisations need to have clearly defined and agreed customer journey maps and service design blueprints that address which channels will be used and when. He says, “Be very clear about who will use the channel, how they will interact with it, and what customers need from that channel”.

Providing customers with a connected and frictionless experience requires a full understanding of the end-to-end customer journey. Where does it start, where does it end, and what happens along the way? What are the customers’ goals, needs, and pain points at each stage of that journey? Mills says, “To deliver a connected and truly great customer experience, brands need to design for the customer, have a culture of accountability for customer experience

across all touchpoints, and technology platforms that support that”.

Understanding and documenting the entire customer journey allows companies to get a holistic view of their customer experience and what is motivating customers at every stage of their journey.

**“ Be very clear about who will use the channel, how they will interact with it, and what customers need from that channel. ”**

**Aaron Fadelli,  
Senior Global Leader  
of Contact Centres,  
Flight Centre**



# 32%

of customers say they’d abandon a company after just one single negative interaction - PWC.<sup>2</sup>



Murphy, VP of Operations from TTEC offers the following recommendations and advice on how to create and use a journey map to understand the end-to-end customer journey:

## 1 Learn what drives customer engagement

Develop a comprehensive understanding of not only the conscious needs of your current and future customers, but also the sub-conscious drivers that dictate their behaviour.

## 2 Illustrate the entire customer journey

Establishing a highly detailed view of the end-to-end customer experience is an incredibly powerful tool. An in-depth look provides a holistic visual perspective of the emotional journey the customer is on, allowing you to consider where new value could be created.

## 3 Create a personalised experience

A good journey map should track the emotional state of the customer, including how they may typically feel at any particular point. This provides an opportunity to identify the negative emotional states that you may wish to avoid, or positive emotional states you wish to create in the future.

## 4 Uncover moments of delight

With a current customer journey map in hand, you can now uncover opportunities to create new and unique experiences across key stages. For example, eliminate or mitigate causes of negative experiences – where unnecessary effort is required on behalf of the customer, or where causes of stress, confusion, and frustration emerge.

# 330%

Companies that invested in omnichannel customer engagement have experienced 330% ROI - *Forrester*.<sup>3</sup>



# Customer-centricity and innovation

**You can build as many customer journey maps as you want or implement as many customer feedback systems as possible or undertake a major digital transformation project, but none of these will matter much if you're not able to create a 'customer centric' culture within your organisation.**

As an organisation you may need to question, at a very fundamental level, your corporate culture and way of doing things. This will require the 'buy-in' and commitment from senior management and stakeholders to allow the necessary investment in resources and changes to take place.

The ability of a business to deliver an exceptional customer experience requires one very important thing: a culture that puts the customer at the heart of every decision and action made by the organisation. Romanin advises, "Developing a customer-centric culture is crucial for the success of any CX strategy. It's about putting the customer at the heart of everything you do and every decision about the business that you make. And it needs to permeate throughout the entire organisation."

It's not just about understanding what they want and what their journeys look like now but what they will be in the future?

Customer-centricity is inextricably linked to innovation. Innovating the customer experience means adding more value to the customer's relationship with your business. If you understand what happens at each stage of a customer's journey you

can re-engineer or fix experiences that are fractured, thereby removing pain points for customers. More importantly, it allows you to identify new opportunities to design experiences that delight the customer.

Mendel-Girin, General Head of Customer Experience at the Humm Group, highlights, "Delighting customers increases sales and improves brand reputation among current and potential customers. To keep customers loyal and coming back, you must create customer delight. Customer delight extends beyond customer satisfaction. It's about those little things that wow the customer."

To continually 'wow' customers entails constant innovation. "Business processes and operating models must fulfill customer needs and provide frictionless experiences. To do this in a constantly evolving landscape, the business needs to constantly find new ways to create and add value", adds Mendel-Girin.



# 47%

of digital customer experience executives say that data silos are the biggest obstacle in providing an excellent customer experience

- *CMSWire*.<sup>4</sup>

## Cross-channel collaboration – breaking down the silos

**Organisations can be plagued with functional and data silos across their business operations. Each team works in isolation from the other teams, unable or unwilling to work together or share customer data. Silos can greatly weaken your CX strategy and hamper your ability to provide a connected customer journey.**

The decisions a brand makes concerning its customer experience strategy need to be based on analysing accurate, up-to-date, and complete customer data. The different sources of customer data within an organisation need to be integrated to provide a single version of the truth. Data silos create multiple sources of truth that will duplicate or contradict each other. Departmental structures and policies may be in place that makes sharing data complex and time-consuming.

Ultimately, it means no one has visibility or responsibility for the entire end-to-end customer journey.

A collaborative culture is necessary as various departments across the organisation are involved in delivering the end-to-end customer journey. Mills emphasises the importance of collaboration between the different business units and the integration of the different technology

platforms deployed in creating connected customer journeys.

Mills says, “The most important thing is for organisations to have effective collaboration between different business units that are customer touchpoints, including visibility of the entire customer lifetime journey, as well as specific event journeys”.

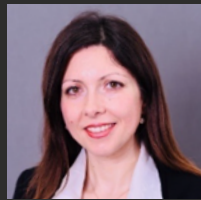
She adds, “It is also imperative that the technology teams implementing the platforms are working in close collaboration with the customer support teams to have a very good understanding of not just the customer needs but also how the customer-facing staff are using the technology.”

Silos can fragment the decisions about which technology to purchase, where multiple and overlapping yet unintegrated systems are deployed. Romanin observes, “No longer is the contact centre buyer making the sole decision about which CX technology to purchase. The decision needs to be strategic and based on what the organisation is trying to achieve with its CX strategy rather than the tactical needs of individual departments.”



**“Digital-first is vital for organisations who want to understand the end-to-end customer journey and provide customers with seamless experiences. ”**

**Ayelet Mendel-Girin,  
General Head  
of Customer  
Experience,  
Humm Group**



# Be digital-first

**Most customer journeys these days start online or via a digital channel. It's why brands are prioritising digital experiences and adopting what's referred to as a digital-first mindset.**

This mindset recognises that the digital landscape and buyers' expectations are constantly changing and that businesses must innovate and become agile to keep up with them. Mendel-Girin says, "Digital-first is vital for organisations who want to understand the end-to-end customer journey and provide customers with seamless experiences. Some customers may want direct human touch at every stage of their journey. There are others who want everything to be digital. But, there again, there will be others that want both".

You have to stop looking at customer thinking as linear and begin to think through each of those customer journeys and be very consistent about how you're interacting and engaging with them. Fadelli advises, "Be clear about the service design in each channel you have on offer to customers and how these allow customers to connect, transact or resolve enquiries. Don't have channels just for the sake of it, they must have a purpose and resonate with your customer".

"Customers will effortlessly jump from one channel to another and back again, as part of their journey. A successful omnichannel strategy is about offering personalised and consistent experiences that resonate with your customers across all digital and physical channels".

# The role of empowered and engaged employees

**A well-trained, supported, and engaged employee will be confident, and empowered when handling customer interactions. They will be highly motivated to solve problems and help customers to achieve their goals while acting as an ambassador for the brand and the values it represents.**

Papadopoulos comments, “To provide a great service you need really engaged staff who understand the end-to-end customer journey. Getting staff with the right skills and attitudes and retaining them is a top priority for us.”

Fadelli adds, “Agents need training and a clear understanding of the high-level customer journeys and the customer metrics that are used to measure the

experience of your customers. Agents also need regular feedback on these metrics and how they are performing against them. Coaching programs should be focused on the agent behaviours that influence these metrics.”

The importance of empowered and engaged employees to create a connected customer journey cannot be overstated, as Murphy highlights, “An organisation’s connected customer experience is only as good as the talent behind it. A connected customer journey is the result of the end-to-end management of both CX and EX operations. It is also a product of continuous optimisation of a unified talent, technology, and services strategy”.

Origin Energy invested considerable time and effort into developing and integrating their EX and CX strategies, Mills comments, “The most important thing for people who are serving customers is that they have visibility of the customer experience, and that they are empowered and accountable for helping the customer, regardless of the channel or the nature of the interaction or at what stage of the journey”.

“One of the things that our energy specialists have at Origin is that they can see exactly what a customer sees when they login to their online account, and they have visibility of all the communication customers receive from all platforms. All specialists are also empowered to collaborate directly with the technology and customer experience design team on how to improve the customer journey”.





*“ Technology and business teams need to work in close collaboration to have a shared understanding of the customer needs... ”*

**Rosie Mills,  
Experience Design Team Lead,  
Origin Energy**

# Technology is an enabler, not the solution

**All too often customer experience technology is seen as the solution to a problem rather than the tool that enables it. When we talk about omnichannel experiences or customer journeys, so much of the discussion centres on the technology rather than the value the organisation can deliver to customers.**

Papadopoulos comments, “There’s a tendency to think about customer journeys and omnichannel experience from a tech focus point of view - first and foremost. But it needs to be viewed as a combination of connection to customer and connection to meaning and then how you connect your journeys across data and technology.”

Many of the problems CX technology is meant to solve is not for the benefit of customers but purely for the benefit of the company. In a recent article, Ed Thompson,

an analyst at Gartner, highlights, “some projects can primarily be about improving the customer experience but really it’s doing things to customers that benefit us as a company, and it may be that there are some side effects so that the customer benefits as well... but it’s a side effect.”

CX technology needs to help solve problems and remove pain points for customers as well as provide the necessary tools to enable employees to do their jobs effectively and deliver value for the business. Mills elaborates, “Technology can be a great enabler to help provide a connected customer experience, but what is more important are the values and culture of the organisation around customer service and how that is operationalised and embedded in the organisation. Technology and business teams need to work in close collaboration to have a shared

understanding of the customer needs and pain points and solve customer problems together. The key things that are of most importance are making sure there is a common understanding of the customer journey, there is a culture of accountability for the customer experience, you have connected platforms and quality data, and undertake ongoing measurement and evaluation”.

Romanin concurs with Mills, “What you shouldn’t be doing is starting with technology. You should be starting with an overarching problem statement that answers:

- What do I want my customer journey to look like?
- What do I want my customer to experience when they’re interacting with my organisation?

Once you’ve answered these questions and have designed the type of customer experiences you want to create, you can then start evaluating technology that will

allow you to bring those experiences to life. The range of technology options out there is enormous; it can be a challenge to choose which tech stack will be best suited for your needs.

Murphy advises, “Building a fluid omnichannel customer experience requires an organisation to implement, integrate, and manage fit-for-purpose, best of breed, evergreen technology solutions that solve problems and deliver business outcomes”.

The ability to empower employees and give them visibility of all interactions a customer has had with a brand is critical. Mills comments, “One of the things that our Energy Specialists have at Origin is that they can see exactly what a customer sees when they login to their online account, and they have visibility of all the communication customers receive from all platforms. All specialists are also empowered to collaborate directly with the technology and customer experience design team on how to improve the customer journey”.



20%

of all shoppers that engage in cross-channel behaviour, feel they are forced to switch channels, according to research - *Monash University*.<sup>5</sup>



# The key technology investment areas an organisation needs to consider, according to Murphy are:



## Customer engagement platform (CEP):

A customer engagement platform stores every interaction you have with prospects and customers. Every email, social media conversation, live chat and customer ticket. A CEP gives you a way to communicate and engage with people based on their activity.



## AI and automation:

Automation frees up your front-line team from simple tasks so they can focus on delighting customers.



## Cloud-based contact centre technology:

Gives the organisation the ability to scale up or down quickly in response to the demand and customer preference.



## Analytics:

The right analytics will help organisations continuously improve their CX.



## Unified agent desktop:

Unified agent desktop integrates seamlessly, easily and quickly across all communication channels and external applications, such as CRM systems, into a single and unified interface.



## Intelligent routing:

Intelligent Routing gathers customer inquiries through voice, digital, or social channels and then applies rules to route it to the agent best fit to resolve the issue.

# 42%

of consumers say a seamless experience across all devices and channels is a top expectation. However, only 11% of decision-makers see seamless omnichannel experiences as a top priority - *Wunderman Thompson*.<sup>6</sup>

# Conclusion

**A connected customer journey can include many events and interactions that happen before, during, and after the experience of purchasing a product or service. This journey can be long and stretched across multiple channels. It can be a short journey that's started and finished in a matter of minutes or a journey that takes days or weeks to complete.**

Organisations that fail to create connected journeys for their customers and manage the end-to-end experiences that shape the customer's perceptions will experience:

- Increased levels of customer churn
- High call volumes to resolve issues and handle enquiries
- Lower customer and employee satisfaction
- Lost sales

In contrast, those that provide the customer with the best experience from start to finish along the journey can expect to enhance customer satisfaction, improve sales and retention, reduce end-to-end service cost, and strengthen employee satisfaction.





# Webex's connected journey vision – leaning in to the next generation customer experience challenge

Webex Contact Center remains the foundation for Webex's vision to provide truly connected customer experiences. Meeting the expectations of today's digital customers requires cloud capabilities, not just to support all the requisite channels – both traditional and digital – but to provide intelligent, personalised responses in real time.

This cannot be achieved with a customer service model solely built around the contact centre, nor with premises-based technology which lacks the flexibility to adapt to fast-changing customer needs.

To address this, Webex has evolved Webex Contact Center into a leading CCaaS platform, offering contact centre as a service for all sizes of businesses. Building on having best-in-class CCaaS, Cisco's vision goes further by drawing on their enterprise networking pedigree to approach customer experience from an organisation-wide perspective. This

is very much a next-generation model of customer service that must be developed and managed, not just by contact centre leaders, but also other line of business leaders who are now engaging directly with customers.

The need for connected journeys has never been greater, where CCaaS is but the foundation upon which new forms of service automation will arise, more complete customer journeys can be orchestrated, and richer analytics will evolve to make every customer experience personal. Webex has developed a framework that addresses the complexities of managing this across large organisations, and if this industry report aligns with your customer experience challenges, you should consider learning more about their vision.

[webex.com/contact-sales.html](https://webex.com/contact-sales.html)

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