Transforming the Customer Experience

The Strategic Direction

In 2011, Avaya endeavored to deliver greater value to customers by innovating web self-service offerings while simultaneously improving margin by 4 points and improving their Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) by 12% and Net Promoter Score (NPS) by 7 points.

Success Factor #1: Leadership and Persistence

From the start, leaders at Avaya set the organization on an ambitious course. They conveyed this vision from all levels of the organization, including the CEO and Board of Directors. After aligning strategy, they tenaciously held their course. They persisted through many challenges, determined to stay the course because they all believed in the vision and knew the efforts would deliver great value to customers. Any organization on this journey should anticipate incredible challenges and implement intense discipline and persistence to keep all members of the organization moving toward the vision.

To help keep everyone motivated throughout difficult times, pre-establish leading indicators to watch. These help to highlight that things are starting to work as expected. In order to manage expectations, leaders at Avaya built models which enabled them to monitor their progress compared to predictions. These models helped determine if things were moving as anticipated.

Also, it is imperative to make sure that your predictions assume many of the traditional measures will move, but not in the direction that is expected. For example, when you move to the web-enabled customer experience, the easier issues are solved on the web and you will have fewer cases. However, these cases coming inbound are new and harder to solve. Therefore, traditional internal metrics will start to go in the "wrong" direction. This is the time when you have to be ready to stay the course. Be persistent and do not turn back unless your data isn't matching your prediction models. It is important that you have prepared your executive leadership for this so they are ready to balance the new indicators against the old measures.

Success Factor #2: KCS

When an organization establishes a goal to transform how customer service is offered, like Avaya did, the capture and reuse of knowledge becomes a critical success factor. For Avaya, the KCS methodology developed by the Consortium for Service Innovation provided the framework they needed to ensure that customers are able to discover robust and powerful knowledge 24x7 through the web channels. This is the best way to deliver value to customers through greater problem-solving efficiency.

The KCS methodology enables Avaya agents to deliver timely relevant content in a cost effective way directly to the customer portal. Huge improvements in internal effectiveness were seen when Avaya enabled all agents to publish their KCS content directly to the self-service portal.

As part of the KCS implementation, Avaya utilized a network of peer coaches to raise the skills of all engineers. It became apparent that engineers advanced their skills in a particular progressive order, so Avaya developed the KCS Proficiency Path, and innovative tools with visual aids, such as spider

Avaya's KCS Proficiency Progression

charts and colored flags, to automatically identify the next most likely learning opportunity for each individual. This enabled the coaches to work effectively by providing a way to objectively confirm that an agent had learned a skill, and which skill to teach so they could take the "next easy step" along their KCS Proficiency Path. Utilizing the tools in this way makes the coaching conversations easier and more consistent across the organization while still being specific and "doable" for an individual – allowing engineers to focus on improving one aspect of their skill set at a time. Progression along the KCS Proficiency Path happens one step at a time, and the methodology watches for backsliding in established skills to ensure solid progression on the proficiency curve.

Success Factor #3: Web Portal Redesign

Leaders at Avaya recognized that to grow their self-service offering, they had to ensure that the web portal facilitated a positive customer experience. To that end, Avaya leaders declared the customer self-service experience a priority and made the decision to redesign the website. They evaluated customer feedback and utilized customer focus groups on content and

ergonomic design to define the features that would create more value. They also worked with the IT staff to ensure the highest level of performance of these systems.

While there were many changes made to the customer web portal, here is an example of one specific change that has proven valuable for customers. Avaya innovated their customer experience using Avaya Automated Chat with the creation of Ava: a highly tuned virtual agent who points customers to available information. When Ava is not able to match an issue to a known solution in the knowledge base, then the virtual agent offers a seamless handoff to a live agent. All previous conversation history, searches, and results attempted are included in the information passed along from Ava to the live agent.

Ava: The Avaya Virtual Agent:

- *Highly tuned virtual agent to solve old issues and recognize new issues*
- *Highly skilled live agents solve new issues, which become new solutions*

Avaya also introduced live agent chat as a communication channel – unusual for a B2B support business – in recognition of the principle that they want to communicate with customers however the

customers want to communicate. Customer reaction has been remarkably positive, despite conventional wisdom that chat is a B2C communication tool.

Transforming to a support organization that enables customer success with web self-service requires attention on the three critical success factors highlighted here. Leaders who wish to make significant changes should start by setting strategic direction, moving forward with an attitude of persistence, utilizing knowledge captured through KCS, and redesigning the web portal to enable a new and innovative customer experience.

Results

Avaya's customer experience transformation exceeded expectations and generated significant performance improvements while delivering exceptional customer service. Avaya leaders created the "Customer Care Optimization Scorecard" to monitor the business during the transformation. According to this scorecard, this business transformation has proven successful for the following reasons:

- Improvements in key business financial metrics

- Customer satisfaction improved significantly
- Huge improvements in the Net Promoter Score
- Reduced top performer attrition
- Phone volume reduced while self-service contacts increased
- Knowledge sharing increased
- Many more resolutions delivered through chat sessions
- Creation of added-value instructional videos with excellent customer uptake
- Backlog reductions
- Time to resolution improvements