



# CEM: When customers become advocates

In the days of national telecommunication monopolies, carriers often did not treat subscribers as full-fledged 'customers', or at least not as people they needed to please to stay in business. Subscribers could either accept their experience of service quality or receive no service at all. This industry attitude lingered subconsciously for a long time, even after competition grew fierce. Carriers considered themselves technology companies, and while competition produced marvellous technical innovations, the focus was not really on how these affected the customer experience, satisfied diverse customer needs, or fitted with differing lifestyles. The tail was wagging the dog. But, says Paul Gowans, attitudes are changing fast in the brave new world of exploding IP traffic, flat-rate billing, and plummeting revenue-per-bit. Customer Experience Management (CEM) is all the rage.



There are two entirely compatible methods for coping with depressed revenue-per-bit. One is to improve the ratio by increasing operational efficiencies. The other is to offset it by retaining profitable customers, acquiring new customers, and selling all of your customers lucrative new services.

Technology companies might be inclined to focus on the first method, which is certainly important for any business; genuine service providers will focus on both, understanding that operational efficiency goes hand-in-hand with effective CEM. In a low revenue-per-bit environment, market share is king, and this requires more happy customers.

It is hard to define the perfect customer experience, but it's easy to test: Perfect experience will transform mere subscribers into loyal customers and then into advocates for your company, generating referrals and profits. Your customers will sell your services for you.

What constitutes effective CEM? Even with state-of-the-art network equipment and brilliant engineers, your efforts will count for little without accurate, actionable information on the customer experience. But how do you get it? And how do you use it to produce customer advocacy?


## Separating the information from the noise

With the growth of mobile services such as **Twitter, Facebook** and **YouTube**, and with the evolution of high-bandwidth radio access such as HSPA, HSPA+ and LTE, the volume of information is increasing exponentially. Although your passive monitoring systems should be capable of collecting comprehensive, end-to-end data on all

transactions, there is simply too much traffic to analyse completely. Indeed, approximately 80% of monitoring data is never examined.

Carriers can cut the volume by using monitoring tools to simply count successful transactions, while storing and perhaps exporting more detailed data on when problems occur, with context before and after the event. But what is far more important is that you separate the information from the noise.

Your tools must provide comprehensive, real-time and historical customer analytics, proactive KPI monitoring to spot service anomalies early, and reactive capabilities for rapid root-cause diagnosis and troubleshooting. Critically, CEM solutions spot service issues in real time and should indicate what services are used, the frequency of use, and who is using them. This will enable you to prioritise customer care to ensure that popular services delivered to the iPhones and Blackberries of high value corporate customers, for example, are accessible and fault free. In addition, actionable information will allow you to make far more efficient use of your staff and highly paid engineers, and you can export reports to planning departments making decisions about multi-million dollar capital investments.

One cautionary note: Since experts expect global IP traffic to continue to explode – **Cisco** predicts traffic to exceed 667 exabytes by 2013 – make sure your monitoring and customer-assurance solutions easily scale. It is pointless to buy a system that works for a million customers using two or three services when in a few years you may have three million customers using 10 services. You want customer advocates today, and many more endorsing additional services tomorrow. 



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