

Customer Communication in the Digital Age

This whitepaper talks about how customer communication is carried out in this digital era.

Digital customer communication has enabled customers and businesses to make optimum use of social media channels for establishing **bidirectional communication**.

It also describes how FCI's CCM or **customer communication management platform** solution has applications in industries such as banking, healthcare, insurance, telecom, and utilities.

Technology has brought a digital transformation in customer communication.

Now, communication is becoming versatile, and digital customer communication can ease various operations in businesses. The paper will also highlight digital customer communication trends followed today, driven by Artificial Intelligence and Data Science. With continual advancements in these fields, changes are expected in these areas that will shape customer experiences in an entirely new way.

Customer communication for businesses in the digital age

Any business is incomplete without customer communication. Customers are the central point of the business, and with the world coming under the increasing influence of digitalisation, communication strategies have changed too. With emails, social media, and other digital technologies becoming prevalent, brands have been making their communication strategies digital and engaging. These steps guarantee a better customer experience journey.

Along with smoothening business operations, digitalisation has resulted in more choices for customers. Additionally, technology fosters deeper customer relationships.

An effective digital communication technology needs to be frictionless, relevant, timely, and non-intrusive.



Although there are innumerable ways of digital customer communication, the challenge lies in coping with customer preferences that vary with shopping channels and choices.

A report from Narvar suggests “more than 80% of shoppers prefer receiving emails from brands, and 40% want brands to communicate via multiple channels.”

When communicating with consumers through digital channels, businesses need to build intimate engagement between the brand and consumers and remove all friction in the process. Let us now discuss the various aspects of customer communication in this digital era, communication management, and the customer communication management platform that FCI offers to make communications friendlier and mitigate hassles in business processes such as billing and ordering.



Introduction

Today's digital arena demands interactive and real-time dynamic communications for organisations to adapt to new opportunities and challenges.

Digital communication can be anything from the email notifications popping up on the computer screen or your mobile phone buzzing with a text message to a messenger notification on your tablet or a ping from a twitter alert on your notepad interface. From user-centric customer communication, where users have complete control over what they want to hear and read, to communicating knowledge-driven data, digital age communication has undergone numerous paradigm shifts.



Information sharing or reporting of data is now real-time, and people want messages to be shared interactively without any editing or mediation. Short and smart infographics tell stories in a better manner than long paragraphs. Messaging platforms enable rapid communication and assist an organisation's team members in being agile and responding quickly as part of internal communications. In addition, social media platforms enhance external communication by highlighting key discussion points with hashtags and key people tagged with the '@' symbol.

Phone calls, taking the place of video conferencing, are the new norm to improve communication and enhance customer experience. Moreover, customers expect the information to be personalised as they like to feel valued and appreciated. Chatbots and social media platforms promote customer engagement with customised responses.



With the increasing scope of digitalisation, it is advisable to be transparent in communication along with ensuring personalisation. The main factors giving more power to customers are technology innovation and the growth of the internet. Users have numerous ways to engage with a brand while evaluating products, comparing prices, and giving feedback. With this change in consumer behaviour, businesses need to change their strategies with the customer engagement process. Thus, digital portals come into the picture for carrying out customer communications. FCI offers a dashboard that is accessible to customers to offer a 360-degree view of communication analytics.

Research shows that about 80% of enterprises will soon have digital capabilities for their customers via portals. These digital portals enhance customer communication efforts and extend control over the communication process, offering more cross/upselling opportunities. In addition, the integrated dashboard helps in tracking the customer communication process to develop better customer understanding.

Evolution of data-driven customer communication for businesses

Customer communication comprises the messages that organisations send to their customers to promote their offerings or for passing on business transactional communication.

Reach Customers More Effectively

- Personalize customer communication.
- Adapt communication to trends.
- Increase customer loyalty.



Increase Efficiency

- Precisely measure the success of campaigns.
- Invest media budget in a focused way.
- Concentrate on key personas.



Improve Performance

- Significantly increase the success of campaigns.
- Encourage purchase decisions by creating personalized offers.

Data-driven, multi-channel customer communication provides businesses a personalised and relevant customer experience, delivered via the customer's preferred engagement channel. With proper implementation, this digital customer experience will elevate the overall lifetime value of the customer, as it helps in getting results with higher customer loyalty, lower customer churn, and more up/cross-sell opportunities.

Implementing and managing data-driven customer communication can be challenging for businesses. Businesses manage digital content and delivery channels with a variety of IT systems. These IT systems that are operated in isolation result in patched IT infrastructures, making it difficult for businesses to make the most of the opportunity of data-driven customer communications. Often, small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) indicate that data management is the main pain-point in customer communications.

FCI's CCM solutions help in addressing these challenges faced by companies. They assist with producing a personalised and high-volume output of communications. The solutions support customers with issues in data management and with patched IT infrastructures.

A few trends in data-driven customer communication that have been influencing businesses are detailed below:





Hyper Personalised Ad-Hoc Communication

A business study found that “80% of customers are likely to purchase products and services from brands, which offer a personalized experience.”

Thus, customer journey personalisation has been one of the critical aspects for businesses in the form of personalised chatbots, emails, SMS, and personalised batch communication. Personalised messages benefit both customers and businesses. Customers get frequent real-time, personalised messages for offers, and the resulting higher volume of buyers is beneficial for the company.

Personalisation is implemented in the way customers interact with businesses. The digital space allows you to connect with your customers via communication channels such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, or Telegram for promotions, order updates, and other personalised messages.



Chatbot Correspondence

Chatbots have helped enhance customer experience journeys and are ultimately benefiting businesses. They enhance customer experience by solving customer issues. Chatbots are operable 24/7 and are effective for generating leads and converting potential customers across the globe. They store customer data and maintain a customer history to be analysed for valuable insights on customer choices. Besides, they also increase customer engagement and save costs for organisations. This is the reason why “50% of businesses are willing to spend on chatbots more than mobile apps.”

A study suggests, “Investment in AI and automated correspondence chatbots can reduce operational costs by up to 30% of the total value.”

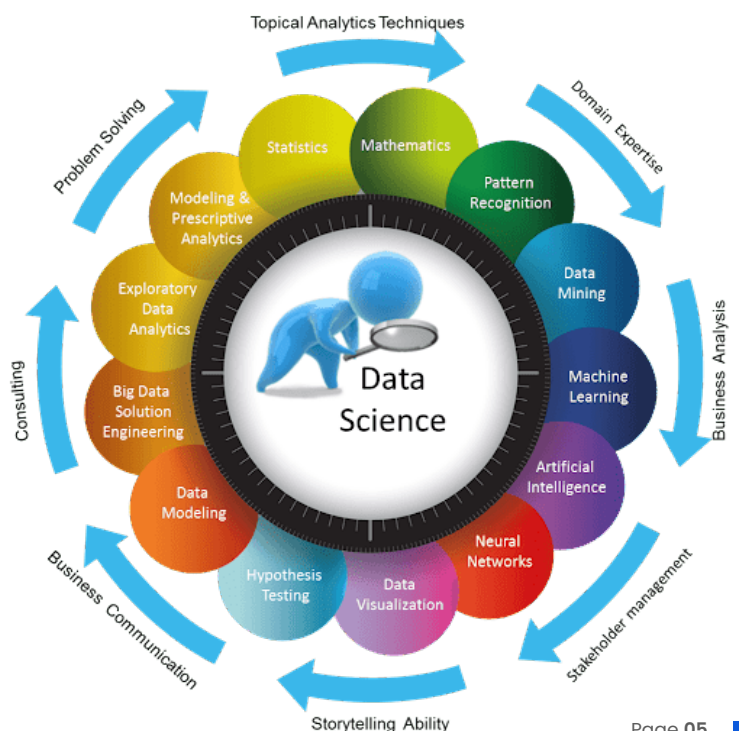


Data Science and Analytics

Data Science has been gaining prevalence in recent years due to several factors, including the omnichannel communication platform they enable that supports data munging of critical customer data.

Data that is gathered offers insights into the following sets of customer information that businesses should focus on:

- Transactional correspondence
- Customer’s liking and rebuying rate of a product
- How the customer is accessing and navigating the website
- Live chat, conversational email, complaints, and other communications
- Customer segmentation based on the patterns in digital customer experience such as age, location, qualification, gender, etc.
- Customer behaviour in response to price fluctuations and product promotions.
- Customer choices
- Duration for which the customer has been availing of the services



With the data gathered, you can perform real-time analytics to collate the following details:

Customer feedback: The overall customer experience with a product and what they liked/disliked about it.

Customer needs: Sending reminders to customers based on their purchase date of a product.

Customer churn rate: Identifying the reasons for which customers are leaving the customer engagement platform.



Omnichannel Communication Strategy

Customers expect their service providers to be consistent across platforms. Companies are required to make communication as uniform as possible. Hence, they must propagate the same message across all channels, whether it may be Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter. Customers may get frustrated with being treated differently over different communication channels. Hence, an omnichannel platform is a go-to option for eliminating silos.

Digital customer communication results in a streamlined communication process, which eliminates data redundancy, promotes process automation, creates process transparency, and ensures the right controls. Content reused across communication channels saves time, improves channel synchronisation, and mitigates errors.



Cybersecurity

With high-profile data breaches occurring at an unstoppable rate, customers are becoming more conscious about their data and security. Cybersecurity professionals strive to combat these unwanted attacks and safeguard customer data from exploitation. Customers share data based upon their trust in the brand and for securing a personalised shopping experience. Companies are now implementing strict privacy and cloud security practices in communicating with their customers. Companies that respect customer privacy with data attract more customers.



Fostering Bidirectional Communication

Customers seek transparency in business communications; in fact, **86% of customers want brands to be honest**. Companies have been adopting digital mediums to fulfill their commitment to transparency. This can be accomplished by developing customer relations on social media, adopting a friendly tone, and engaging in real-time. Customers expect businesses to be transparent with their pricing and other aspects of the digital customer journey. They also expect companies to communicate their privacy and data protection policies accurately.

Omnichannel digital customer service

The B2B and B2C sectors have officially ushered in digitalisation, and omnichannel digital customer service has become a new benchmark. The reason for adopting this type of digital customer service is to improve overall business communication and the customer experience journey. Now, it's all about offering customer services to track digital communications under one customer profile and no longer about using multiple digital channels for customer communications.

Digital channels for omnichannel communication strategy

Now that we have touched upon the importance of omnichannel digital customer service, here are the channels by which the customer communication strategy can be executed:



Social Media

Social media is becoming one of the most commonly used digital channels by businesses to deal with customers and other businesses directly. The most used social media platforms are Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, and Pinterest. One of the best methods that work here is paid sponsored ads.

Social media applications are a great way to address consumer questions and engage with them. There are digital experience platforms that offer sponsored ads for growing a channel's subscriber base. These ads associated with social media can be useful for getting new followers aligning with the demographic details of the target audience.



App Messenger

App messages are sent to the consumer through a business mobile application. Customers are required to install an app from the app store. They will get app alerts on upcoming sales. Most businesses prefer to build a messenger app and release them on the app stores along with a website to engage their customers. Businesses can use an app for innumerable purposes, such as marketing, sales, and customer service.



Get Found

Businesses can also use search engine results to appear on mobile and desktop platforms when users search for their business online. With services such as GoogleMyBusiness, businesses can get listed to establish an online presence and obtain new ways to interact with their customers directly. These services also offer a customised view of the website, call tracking, messaging, and reviews on their dashboard. With omni digital channels, businesses can communicate directly with their reviewers and respond quickly to comments.



Email

Email is one of the most conventional ways for businesses to communicate with their customers. Emails are accessible through multiple devices simultaneously; hence, your customers are less likely to miss out on any updates. Emails can be used to send notifications and receive customer service agent messages, transcripts, follow-up emails from support queries, or confirm refunds in case of returns.



Live Chat

Chatbots are one of the most phenomenal outcomes of leveraging AI technology. When they are used properly, businesses can gain enormous benefits by incorporating them into their business website. AI-powered chatbots reduce the time required for an agent as they are programmed to answer basic, preliminary questions so that the customer gets their queries resolved without an agent in most cases. Live chat encourages businesses to enhance customer engagement through digital channels conveniently.



Text Messaging

Lastly, the oldest method of app-less communication, text messaging, is one of the most commonly used digital channels for efficient business communications. Businesses can use this method of communication in the following ways:

- Sending promotional texts for deals or offers
- Delivery confirmation when order is shipped
- Reminders for payments due
- Follow-up messages for abandoned carts and application forms

FCI's omnichannel communication platform :

An omni-digital channel approach enables all customer communication channels to be tracked from a single account. FCI's omni-digital channel platform improves customer service and offers the following benefits to organisations:

- Improved customer engagement
- Reduced agent-time spent on the phone by eliminating on-hold durations
- Improved customer satisfaction by increasing convenience for the customer
- Gathering detailed marketing and sales metrics

Communicating effectively in the digital era

An effectual communication is the basis of successful relationships between your business and customers, partners, and suppliers. It not only helps in elevating sales but also in fuelling repurchases for the same brand.

Here we present some techniques for communicating well with the people linked to your business:

- Ensure your availability across varied channels
- Enhance your web presence
- Listen to your customers
- Add a touch of personalisation
- Boost your skills and encourage your team too

Let's have a detailed look at each of these actions by which you can improve your business communications :

Ensure your availability across varied channels

The digital world has enabled us to be available across the world without being physically present. It gives businesses the edge to be accessible to their customers through media and all possible communication channels. You can be present in every nook and corner of the world with social media platforms and enable easy access for your customers.

You can do so by optimally selecting the majority of the platforms your customers use within a budget. You need to ensure customers know the path to find you. Some available options include chat, e-mail, phone, instant messenger, and social media. SMBs should use digital channels rather than the phone, as they can be managed with limited resources. This avenue can save a lot of time and is convenient for customers too. Messages on email and social media should always be responded to promptly. You can also make intelligent use of some powerful tools to track customer communication and schedule automated emails and social posts.



Audit your web presence

A website is perceived to be one of the most important tools for customer communication in business. An eye-catching and structured website can perfectly display the values of your business. Customers can get to know about your business and the products and services you offer by having a glance at your website.

A website also opens doors for opportunities to capture new avenues for your business and help engage with your clients and update them with upcoming offers and promotions. For getting the most of your website, you need to audit it and ensure it meets the following criteria to be more engaging and relevant:

1. Your website navigation must be smooth and intuitive for a better customer experience.
2. Your website must be responsive to accommodate all screens and be displayed properly, whether it is a computer or mobile screen.
3. The 'Contact Us' link should be present on every website page, and the content triggered by it should be brand-relevant and evoke brand collaboration.
4. The social media buttons should be in the same location on every site page.
5. The content must be up to date every time customers visit the site, lucid enough to be understandable, and free of any proofing errors. It should be revised regularly.
6. The look and feel must be attractive and should reflect your brand correctly.

Listen to your customers

It is rightly said that "for maximum impact, listen more and speak less." Your customers expect to be heard about their choices and preferences. Remember that listening is a vital part of any business function. To address customers' challenges and pain points, questions need to be answered, and needs must be addressed. Listening in the digital world demands monitoring social media channels for what customers think about your brand.

You must also consider taking customer feedback on what they particularly liked about a product they bought. Demonstrating that you are listening to them can impact your relationships with your clients and business partners positively.

Add a touch of personalisation

Customers appreciate it if they are treated personally when communicating online on a digital channel or even in person. Thus, when you are communicating with your customers, make sure your approach is personalised. Personalisation would also involve responding punctually to the customer's needs, concerns, preferences, purchasing habits, and queries that drive customer behaviour.

Customer journey personalisation can be achieved with a small or even larger customer base, provided the approach is differentiated. You can build a direct rapport with a small group of customers. Dealing with a larger customer base can be quite challenging, and you will need to make an extra effort to keep track of customer purchase behaviour, interests, and choices with personalised messages.

Apart from being digitally available and responding quickly, you also need to sound polite and behave authentically across all digital channels to make customers feel valued. FCI's CCM solutions can help track personalised communications, purchases, and customer conduct to know what they are looking for.

Boost your communication competence and encourage your team too

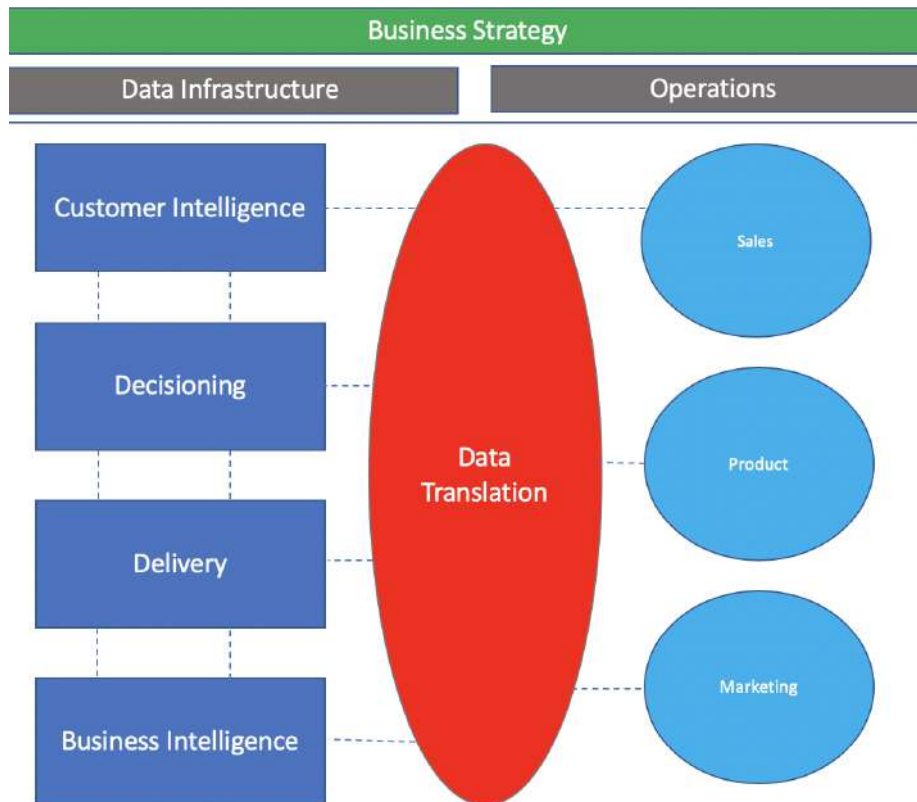
Customer-targeted communication needs to be hyper-personalised and must be improved continually.

A small investment of time and money into communication enhancement can have a significant and positive impact on your business outcomes. This can also lead to employee satisfaction, raised customer base acquisition and retention, and negotiations with the supplier. You should consider training your employees to capture more business and ensure a better customer experience. These training programs can include business communications, effective social media use, and marketing.

The above-mentioned ways can prove effective in improving your communication and take your business to greater heights of growth, productivity, and ROI. Businesses that communicate well make more yields as they can instil trust and build confidence in their customers.

The emergence of digital transactions in customer service

Data-driven interactive communications include facilitating and controlling commercial transactions. These include communications such as order verification and confirmation, purchase invoice, and purchase reminders. Digital technology has been driving business processes, and the volume of digital transactions passed on to customers has multiplied. The diagram below depicts the data-driven customer communication involved in a business transaction.



By amalgamating business intelligence on the digital business front and merging digital data across organisational functions, operations, and IT systems, the customer journey experience can be made more pleasant.

FCI's take on digital customer communications

We at FCI believe that “effective communications drive great customer experiences”.

FCI's bidirectional, personalised, multilingual, and automated customer communication management solutions help in sanctioning businesses and offering customer services for efficient customer communication. FCI's CCM solutions assist organisations in designing, managing, delivering, and tracking massive volumes of personalised communications across various digital channels from a central channel (omnichannel digital strategy).

We deliver value across the customer lifecycle through our customer experience solutions in all the phases of the customer journey, such as customer acquisition, onboarding, ongoing communications, after-sales support, customer feedback, and cross/upselling. **Below are some features of the services we offer:**

- ▶ We create and deliver personalised customer communication across all digital channels from our centralised communications hub.
- ▶ We obtain real-time data from sources for creating hyper-personalised customer communications.
- ▶ We regularly check how each engagement channel is working for our clients and make efficient use of resources.
- ▶ We conduct campaigns across channels to engage users.

With our omnichannel communications hub offerings, we have been providing industries such as banking and financial services, insurance, telecom, healthcare, and utilities to accomplish our ultimate aim of **'One Brand, One Platform, and One Experience'** with the customer communication management platform.

Over six decades, we have been helping organisations gain a competitive edge in all their transactional, interactive communications such as transactional chatbot, email, HTML, purl, SMS, video, and whatsapp with their customers and imbibe on-demand digitalisation.

FCI industry services for digital customer communications

FCI's efficient digital communication solutions cater to all service providers, distributors, and customers alike, open avenues for greater business productivity, build conversational, interactive networks of customer communication with live touchpoints, and result in digital transformation.

Here are the industries that FCI has been offering services to:



Banking and Financial Services

Customers have been preferring digital channels for mobile banking and accessing their banking and finance information. Personalisation can be applied to the banking sector for messaging, referencing the most recent customer account activity, and keeping a check on customer channel preferences.

A banking app provides a convenient way for account holders to access their accounts. Account-holders can also check their balance, transactions, and any loan details.

Customer communication in the digital world is the key differentiator in engaging customers and customer service. FCI's CCM solutions boost banking and financial services communications by adding a touch of personalisation and automation. The Customer Experience Solutions also help integrate digital onboarding for banks, utilising lost customer data from silos, eliminating printing costs, reducing data risks, and reducing time to market. Most finserv organisations are always in search of communication networks that are faster and more interactive.

FCI also assists financial services companies in offering live omnichannel experiences and quicker and personalised services exchange. For finserv industries, the customer experience journey is inevitable and more important than the transactions. FCI's CCM solutions improve the visibility of customer actions and develop customised, bidirectional communication.



Insurance

The insurance sector can utilise the new digital channels to handle both client and call centre agents and meet higher inbound call volume. Organisations offering insurance technology have been offering flexible, transparent, and direct selling solutions. With conversational SMS, transactional chat, and video, the customer, agent, and other third parties can access a unified digital customer experience.

72% of insurers feel that they can reach customers as per their preference and address service requests faster with a digital ecosystem and accelerating the response time by 57%.



FCI's digital capabilities assist insurance providers in enhancing efficiencies to handle the increasing volume of claims and policies and provide an omnichannel customer engagement experience. Integrating customer engagement channels for an end-to-end digital experience ensures insurers keep up communication with their customers.



Telecom

FCI's digital customer experience platform offers telecom companies a complete solution for handling digital customer conversations and enhancing customer engagement on different channels. Our cloud solutions increase customer satisfaction, improve business productivity, and reduce costs.

We offer businesses of all sizes and backgrounds the necessary opportunity to improve customer care and eliminate silos in their current operations. With our platform, we manage digital interactions and unify marketing and customer communications.

With FCI's innovative solutions and an omnichannel digital experience offering, telecom industries can gain a better customer base. FCI's SaaS solutions enhance customer experience with a value-driven communication platform that ensures hyper-personalised experiences and real-time communications.





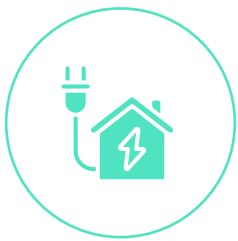
Healthcare

Digital communications help in several ways in healthcare. They include digital interactive information systems, patient and doctor communications, and notifications for an emergency. Digital customer communication applications can help healthcare organisations reduce costs, enhance customer service, and improve the overall healthcare experience.

With digital communications in healthcare, visitors can navigate easily through buildings with interactive wayfinding and digital screens.

Hospitals can improve their safety system by connecting emergency notifications and alarm systems. Implementing CCM solutions will help in modernising patient care. A 'Unified Communication and Information Management' structure digitalises and automates healthcare communication workflows for a value-rich healthcare customer experience management.

Digital systems can provide real-time updates and help in reducing wait times. They can also be used to display donor information and donation campaigns. Back office systems, such as calendars, show the rooms available for admission.



Utilities

Utility customers feel comfortable with digital access and expect high standards of digital communication services. Incorporating digital communications can remove friction in the customer experience journey. For an optimum customer experience, it is required to maintain consistency in the digital channel and tone in a customer journey.

It is important to understand customers' preferred digital communication channels for improving their experience. Critical communications such as service messages or notifications should be hyper-personalised to help the customer comprehend the message quickly. Improving customer touchpoints will not only increase customer engagement but also improve the overall customer experience. Consistent communication with FCI's CCM and relevant information will help build loyal, long, and profitable customer relationships.

Digital customer communication at a glance

In this whitepaper, we have presented the significance of digitalisation in customer communication carried out by businesses. In this digital world, you will be left behind in the race if you do not opt for a digital transformation, as it is the need of the hour with communication becoming more versatile than ever.

We started by explaining why digitalisation is important for customer communication and then went on to explain the need to implement digital experience. We also explained how FCI's cloud CCM solutions could completely meet the purpose, bring more business, and raise organisational productivity. We talked about shoppers' preferences and how they like to feel valued when interacting with a brand. Customers appreciate being treated friendly and do not mind repurchasing when given personal attention.

We introduced various modes of digital communication channels and explained how sales could go up with the proper utilisation of each. We explained all the leading communication channels and how each is important and can work differently for every business area.

We then explained the evolution and trends of data-driven communication, as the core of digital systems is data. We understood that Data Science and analytics are game-changers and how incorporating them can work wonders for businesses. We also talked about the omnichannel customer communication strategy in which all customer communication is handled from a single unified platform. It is one of the best offerings of FCI.

After knowing the technicalities involved in digital communications, we dedicated a section to explain how to carry out communication effectively in an organisation and reap maximum benefits. Digital transactions are also an intrinsic part of customer service, and we highlighted that. No doubt, digital customer communication management makes a win-win situation for the vendors offering it and the users using it.

Lastly, we explained how FCI has been enthusiastically serving industries with their solutions to improve customer communication and thereby augment sales. **FCI has been serving a wide range of industries with a motto to develop brand entities that offer the ultimate customer experience.**

Conclusion

Digital customer communication management is the go-to option for organisations to manage all their customer communication via digital channels, such as social media, text messaging, email, live chat, and app alerts. Digital customer communication is part of the customer communication an organisation carries out over the customer lifecycle, right from making contact and getting to know about a company's products and services to buying, customer retention, and upselling.

FCI's customer communication management platform includes physical touchpoints for establishing customer interactions. The way a customer feels about these digital interactions is an inseparable part of customer experience. For maximum customer engagement, a business needs to send the right message, at the right time, via preferred customer channels. For the best possible digital customer experience, targeted communication is carried out to know about customer history and their digital customer journey. With FCI's phenomenal solutions and decades of expertise, you can leverage and develop automated and integrated customer communication that untangles your business communications for marketing and service using digital channels.

So are you ready to make your business stand at the digital forefront and fully harness the potential of digital customer communication?

Reach out to FCI today.

