



Customer Experience Panel

Conducted: June 2006

Participants:

Bob Steelhammer, Vice President Ecommerce, Cingular Wireless

Renee Rodgers, Vice President, Avaya.com

Frank Infanto, Vice President Healthcare Services Systems Delivery,
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

Moderators:

Michael Friedenberg, CEO/President, CXO Media Inc.

Bill Seawick, CMO, Interwoven

Topic: How to deliver a relevant, consistent, on-brand experience to every customer every time they interact, no matter how or where the interaction takes place so that it is accurately aligned with the customer's current stage of the customer lifecycle, geography, language and culture.

Question: How do you define the role of customer experience for your organization?

Blue Cross: Whenever we interact with our customers, through any touchpoint we offer, we have to understand who they are, how they prefer to communicate and what we're giving back to them. And we have to send a consistent message every time. We don't have one particular kind of customer; we serve several different constituencies, including patients, healthcare providers, brokers and plan administrators. From a branding perspective, we need to make sure our branding is consistent across each of these groups, as well as across each channel they might use — call center, Web site and so forth.

Avaya: We look at it from a marketing perspective: How do end users see our brand online, offline, in the technicians who come to their site, in the items they discover through search? Are they getting the same messaging and communication across their entire lifecycle? Lucent, our predecessor, had a lot of inconsistent Web sites; our customers wanted to see us more consistent across global markets. We can't let internal company factors influence the fact that it really is the customer who has final say over whether they leave our Web site or continue the experience. We're selling technology, so it's important for us to show innovation on our own site and provide an experiential aspect to that.

Cingular: Every touchpoint we have, from the browser to the handset to the brick store, is part of the customer experience we deliver. Half of the visitors to our Web site are existing customers; the other half are prospective customers — so our customer experience extends to them as well. National retail also comes into play. Wal-Mart, Best Buy — our presence within their Web sites and stores has to have the same messaging, branding and value proposition as on our own properties.

About half of our current customers use online account management. I want to increase that — how do I get people to check minutes, pay bills and upgrade their plan online? If someone goes over their limits, I need to be able to upsell more minutes. We have an internal program called "Customer Rules": what would you want to get as a customer? Treat them as you'd want to be treated. At the end of the day, they vote with their dollars.

Question: What are the main challenges you face in delivering a better customer experience and how are you overcoming them?

Avaya: We operate Web sites across the world, as well as a number of internal sites. For our external-facing sites, it's all about marketing and end users. Internally, we serve a broad constituency of employees and partners with different needs. It's essential for us to maintain content consistency and parity across these channels, not just for customers, but for the many other stakeholders we work with. You have to be militant about keeping your organization aligned around the brand. On a global basis, we have a broad, integrated marketing team that includes a senior editor-in-chief in each region who monitors everything we do online to make sure it's consistent. From a content creation standpoint, people are becoming more aware of metadata as they work, so they're becoming more consistent as well.

Blue Cross: It comes down to ownership. If we give our people tools to collaborate easily and manage the assets they use, we can help build a culture of customer experience. Before we started using MediaBin for digital asset management, things were all over the place. The same is true for our customers. We want to give them the tools to manage things online, from medical policy to documentation, for providers as well as subscribers and their family members.

Cingular: One of my first stops when I arrived at Cingular was to visit the CMO. Previously, ecommerce was kept separate. We decided to change that and to better leverage each other's messaging. Now, we meet regularly to talk about our campaigns well in advance and discuss how to link them across traditional and online media. We're agreed on a set of practices around look and feel to make sure we're keeping our brand clean and consistent. Like it or not, in this position, you have to be a control freak. And you have to have the right tools to manage the content your customers see globally.

Question: Customer experience is a broad topic. What have you done that you're most proud of?

Cingular: We've undertaken a site redesign effort spanning all of 2006, and it's all about customer experience. The new site is a cross between mass customization and personalization. Essentially, we need an infrastructure that will work for 34 million subscribers, but also provide a unique feeling and experience when someone logs in to check their bills, like listing information about the specific device they have and how they can interact with it. The site will also be customizable based on people with different plans, with opportunities to cross-sell and upsell based on their own behavior patterns.

Avaya: We've redesigned our external presence by taking a portrait of our internal corporate operations, then turning it into a market-driven Web site. People can learn basic facts about technology, do more in-depth research, take in an online briefing and connect with Avaya anywhere in the world. This has helped drive a 20 percent increase in global unique visitors to Avaya.com.

Blue Cross: We're also doing a redesign, but what we're proudest of is that, for all the different people in our organization who operate through one or more touchpoints, they each have a set of tools and processes to get where they need to go.

Question: Everyone always wants to know about ROI, TCO and metrics like that. How do you measure your success to make sure what you're building is working?

Cingular: Customer satisfaction can be measured in several ways, including third-party research as well as trends in customer churn. Those are two areas we look at daily. If we're rolling out something new on the site that has to do with customers, we'll often do A/B testing and redirect a portion of our site traffic to a different experience to see how they compare.

Avaya: We use customer satisfaction research for both our company and our online presence, and also measure brand awareness around the globe through online surveys. This is supplemented with customers'

opinions about our online content; measurements of the health of our site since this can influence the other metrics; and site traffic.

Blue Cross: We also conduct external surveys, including monthly surveys of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Internally, we focus on satisfaction and productivity. We provide our employees with tools and applications to get their work done, and to meet the different needs of the constituents they work with. If we can increase their productivity while keeping budgets and headcount steady, that shows us it's working. After we've implemented something, we'll go back and look at are we being more consistent, are our customers more satisfied and loyal?

Question: Where are you in terms of implementing better customer experience management? How far have you made it on that roadmap?

Cingular: From a customer acquisition standpoint, we're getting an A+, best in our industry. But in B-to-B, maybe a C+. By the end of the year, though, we'll be approaching world class there as well. During the holiday shopping season, our churn rate, acquisition and who we're stealing customers from — that's what will tell us how we're doing.

Avaya: On the marketing side, we're making great strides. Now, we're starting to work on end-to-end support and other applications that customers interact with on a regular basis. It's time to go beyond marketing and start to integrate across those applications.

Blue Cross: From a channel perspective, we're doing a great job in direct contact, growing interactions with our customers over the Web. We're not just an insurance company that pays bills; we're also a healthcare company, we do wellness management, that whole range of services. Once people start to look at you differently, they use different channels. We want to get that whole continuum in sync, so regardless of which channel you use, you'll get the same brand, the same messaging, the same quality of experience, everything reinforcing and extending everything else. That's what customer experience is all about.