POWERING EXPERIENCE AT THE SPEED OF INSIGHT

Customer Experience Case Study

Battling rising customer acquisition costs and faced with an inability to meet emerging customer expectations, a global timeshare company engaged North Highland to build its data-driven customer experience (CX) strategy. Across the organization, we created a holistic view of the customer journey, built on a foundation of cross-functional alignment around customer preferences and needs. By structuring objectives around shared organizational goals and more efficient customer acquisition tactics, our team developed a compelling business case for modernizing the data and IT systems needed to target the right audiences, deliver a resonant CX, and build lasting capability for CX differentiation.

CLIENT SITUATION

Our client faced significant market headwinds primarily as a result of shifting generational preferences. A limited product set—paired with disparate data sources locked away in functional silos—compromised the client's understanding of customer needs and, ultimately, its ability to deliver on modern customer expectations. Due to limited data sharing between the marketing and sales organizations, the client missed key opportunities to deliver personalized and relevant marketing campaigns. As a result, marketing messages and materials failed to drive action and compounded customer acquisition costs. In partnership with the client, we helped the organization's leadership team grasp its true challenge: the company collected ample data about customers, yet functional silos inhibited the ability to analyze and leverage it for improved customer interactions.

OUR APPROACH

The client engaged us to drive organizational alignment around the customer and quantify the value of investment in back-end data and technology systems for an improved customer experience (CX). We first conducted a set of stakeholder interviews to gather perspective on the vision for CX, while also identifying the points of disconnect that compromised the organization's ability to leverage data to deliver unique, personalized, and compelling experiences for the customer. North Highland used these points of disconnect as a design stimulus throughout the course of the project, guiding project activities and recommendations to address those barriers.

Using previously commissioned efforts as a basis, our team mapped the end-to-end customer journey and identified the key interactions at each stage of the journey. To garner stakeholder alignment around "one view" of the customer, we engaged stakeholders from all organizational groups to co-create the journey.

For each of the interactions across the journey, we defined who the customer was interacting with (either digital or in-person), and then identified the data either created or consumed at each interaction. We assessed these gaps across four key data dimensions:

- **Descriptive:** data that is demographic in nature, such as gender, age, or income, and that can be used in segmentation activities.

- **Behavioral**: data that represents patterns a customer exhibits while interacting with a product or service and that can be used to tailor products, services, or messaging.

- **Interactive**: data that represents how a customer engages with a digital product or service, such as navigation paths, clicks, and browsing activities. It can illustrate what a customer is interested in from a product or service.

- **Attitudinal**: data that represents a customer's sentiment, opinion, desirability, and overall perception of a product or service. It can be used to design and/or improve upon a product or service to meet customer expectations.

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Then, we treated data as the connective tissue across the organization. Our team mapped the back-stage activities and data flow to connect different functional systems. For each customer interaction, we identified (1) the customer interaction, (2) the data that is captured in that interaction, and (3) where the data is stored for that interaction. Then, our team identified where and how the data was being used to deliver a personalized and relevant experience—as well as where gaps existed.

In this process, we discovered that the client struggled most with data accessibility to facilitate meaningful customer interactions, and then painted a picture of how data-related obstacles ultimately stood as an impediment to revenue. Our work culminated in a business case for the modernization of data configuration and IT systems, helping the client to articulate the ROI of a data-driven CX.

VALUE DELIVERED

We armed our client with a clear roadmap that pinpointed opportunities to enable the delivery of seamless and relevant experiences through investments in data. In addition, we helped the organization directly manage mounting levels of forgone revenue and customer acquisition costs. For example, because our client's data infrastructure had been so antiquated, the marketing team lacked visibility into customers in the week following their purchase, a high-risk period for cancellation. With cancellations responsible for 20 percent of forgone revenue, improved insight will enable the client to tailor customer communications, offers, and promotions to mitigate lost revenue and keep acquisition costs at bay.

Most important, by connecting disparate teams and applying a focus on alignment from the outset, we helped to embed sustainable data-driven CX capabilities through "one customer" thinking. In this new organizational paradigm, every team has a shared vision for CX, facilitating greater collaboration and alignment on the activities needed to reach that vision.

ABOUT NORTH HIGHLAND

North Highland is a global management consulting firm known for helping clients solve their most complex challenges related to customer experience, performance improvement, technology and digital, and transformation. We add value and support our clients across the full spectrum of consulting, from strategy through delivery. We bring the big ideas, then we make them real.

North Highland is an employee-owned firm, headquartered in Atlanta, Ga., with more than 3,000 consultants worldwide and 60+ offices around the globe. The firm is a member of Cordence Worldwide, a global management consulting alliance. For more information, visit and connect with us on LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook.

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