

Best Practices | Click-To-Callback Bridges the Cross-Channel Gap

Click-To-Callback Links the Web and the Phone

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Customer escalation from Web to phone doesn't have to be painful. This technology taps existing telephony infrastructure. Unlike voice over IP (VoIP), which requires customers to have working PC microphones and firms to have IP connections to their call center switches, click-to-callback requires little additional technology.

Customers just enter their phone number and preferred callback time into a Web pop-up window and the click-to-callback app places the request into the call center's outbound phone queue. The resulting call travels over existing phone lines, so little new equipment is required.

Requires few new skills or training. While online chat requires extensive agent retraining, new script development, and a different set of agent skills, click-to-callback lets existing agents do what they're already good at: talking on the phone. The only new skills potentially required of agents involve understanding the Web applications that customers use and how to use technology to push URLs to the customer's browser to guide him toward his goals.

Is ready for VoIP whenever users are. Only 4% of consumers today use voice over IP for phone service — a small minority, but an ambitious and tech-savvy one that high-tech vendors may want to tap. Not a problem. Click-to-callback technology also supports VoIP powered talk-by-PC, using the same calling service and infrastructure. However, the vendor acknowledges that only around 10% of callers select the talk-by-PC option today.

CLICK-TO-CALLBACK IS A WINNER For a Web-to-agent bridge, click-to-callback is the easy winner over VoIP and chat. Why? The service: Boosts cross-channel conversion rates. Dell Financial Services screens online credit applicants for both credit approval and identity verification. Some approved applicants fail online verification, even though they are the true applicant. Prior to implementing click-to call back service, the lender lost about 90% of approved but unverified applicants — people who were ready to spend money but bailed out of the process after failing.

After placing an button on the form to provide a click-to-callback option, the lender now verifies — and converts— 55% of these applicants via phone. The cost to Dell Financial Services? A little more than \$1per call.

Balances customer value and call center load. Giving customers the choice to escalate from the Web channel to the phone is a good thing.⁶ But just posting a

phone number on the Web site leaves firms blind and out of control: They don't know which customers are hopping channels at any given moment, and they can't throttle back call center activity based on agent availability or customer segment. By contrast, firms can control a click-to-callback button's availability based on resources or customer profile.

For example, Continental Airlines makes the feature available based on the member's One Pass frequent-flier program level. Ensures continuity of experience. Great cross-channel customer experiences hinge on continuity. Customers deserve seamless transitions between channels that maintain the context of a single interaction without redundant quizzes for information.

Click-to-callback fits the bill. The service allows Web programmers to pass a case ID or other context variables to the CTI (computer telephony integration) layer of a firm's contact center.

The result? The agent gets a screen pop with the customer's information and Web site location, allowing her to pick right up from where the customer jumped. Correspondingly, the services can also allow an agent to push pages to customers to guide them toward their goals — even if the agent doesn't have Web access.⁸ Is traceable.

Before click-to-call, firms had to use heuristics to credit the Web's influence on online commerce. For example, if a customer receives an email marketing message, goes to the retailer's Web site, then calls to order onto the phone, the phone channel typically gets 100% of the revenue credit, and firms undervalue their other channels.

To counter this, some firms try complicated heuristics like “if the customer received an email within 48 hours of calling, then credit also goes to the email/Web campaign.”

With click-to-callback, the act of clicking a button and placing a call request is a Web event that firms can easily track with Web analytics packages like Web Side Story or Visual Sciences — so they can correctly measure the influence of all channels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PUT CLICK-TO-CALLBACK TO WORK NOW

Low cost, simple technology, and organizational ease make click-to-callback a must-have for any significant multi-channel business.

Some advice from our interviewees and vendors on making this technology work. Give the phone preference over chat. Online chat sorely lags behind the phone in

customer satisfaction ratings. Former chat poster children like Lands' End have quietly repositioned click-to-callback as the most prominent channel-bridging service. Most sites that ordered chat before ordering click-to-callback now post the latter capability as the default contact choice.

The effectiveness of using existing agents, skills, and phones to rescue stranded customers and a typical doubling of the unassisted conversion rate more than pays for the agent interaction.