

Mobile customer experience management is an eco-system problem

ADITYA DHRUVA

With the growing usage of smartphones, mobile data applications, changing subscriber expectations, and networks migrating from 3G to 4G, managing the user experience is a multifaceted challenge. What could be earlier managed by turning a few network levers and take simple measurements, has quickly turned into an eco-system play.

Customer Experience Management (CEM), as the name suggests, is all about understanding the perception of the customer and devising ways to better it. It is how the customer sees the performance of the service provider and that trend over time captures the likes and dislikes of the demographic for the services provided. CEM is a crucial element in being able to predict churn and manage it.

Huge amount of investment is going into the research of customer experience. Analytics have been taken to the next level, crunching Petabytes of data just to understand the customer sentiment. An increase of customer experience score by a decimal point implies millions of dollars added to the top line of the operator. No wonder operators are spending vast sums of money to insert probes at various points in their infrastructure to get valuable telemetry back to their analytics systems, to help them realise those extra points.

But what is missed in all this is that the subscriber experience is only partly dependent on the operator performance.

Influencers of Mobile User Experience

As outlined in the figure above, the experience is a combination of many factors. As the final connectivity with the subscriber is through the air interface, weather can play a big part in the experience. The operator's network in a particular area, for example, could be going over the capacity, or there could be too many handovers, which causes the subscriber experience to suffer. The applications themselves are to blame many a times, as they are not always developed optimally,



and hog the network unnecessarily. The same subscriber may perceive things differently using different handsets, but in the same conditions on the same operator's network. Even the underlying platform used on the handsets also matters, as an IOS or an Android device may behave differently to a Windows phone under the same conditions.

Positive mobile subscriber experience is not just about the operator doing his bit correctly, but the whole eco-system being able to perform well in sync. Operators need to get insights into how their network is holding up across regions, devices, weather conditions etc. Device manufacturers have to learn how their products are performing in real life, under different conditions as well as compared to the rest of the industry. Application providers require data that show them how good or bad their applications are in dealing with varied device and network situations to improve the end-user experience. And let's not forget that subscriber behaviour and correct, incorrect usage have a major role to play as well in the quality perception.

It is important for any analytics solution to consider the holistic eco-system picture in order to provide the best insights into customer experience. Only then the true potential of big data analytics for improving customer experience can be realised. Any vendor who cracks this puzzle will stand out from the competition in this large market opportunity.

The writer is vice president and head of Messaging and Broadband Solutions, Mahindra Comviva. He can be reached at aditya.dhruva@mahindracomviva.com