Crack the Mobile Customer Experience Problem

With the growing usage of smartphones, mobile applications, changing subscriber expectations, and networks migrating from 3G to 4G, managing the user experience in the mobile data era is a multi-faceted 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 / dislikes of the demographic for the services provided.

Huge amount of investment is going into the research of customer experience. Analytics has 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 additional multi-digit millions of dollars in the coffers 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 realize those extra points.

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

As outlined in Figure 1, the perception 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 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. Last but not least, 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.

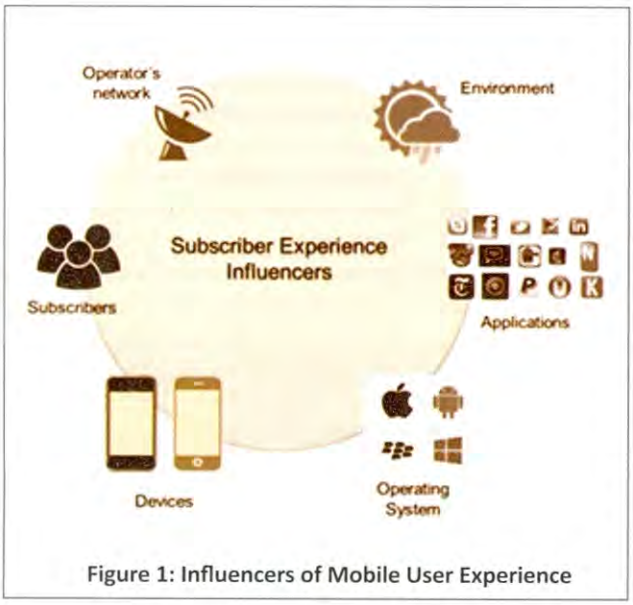

Figure 1: Influencers of Mobile User Experience

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 behavior and correct / incorrect usage has 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 realized. Any vendor who cracks this puzzle will stand out from the competition in this large market opportunity.

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