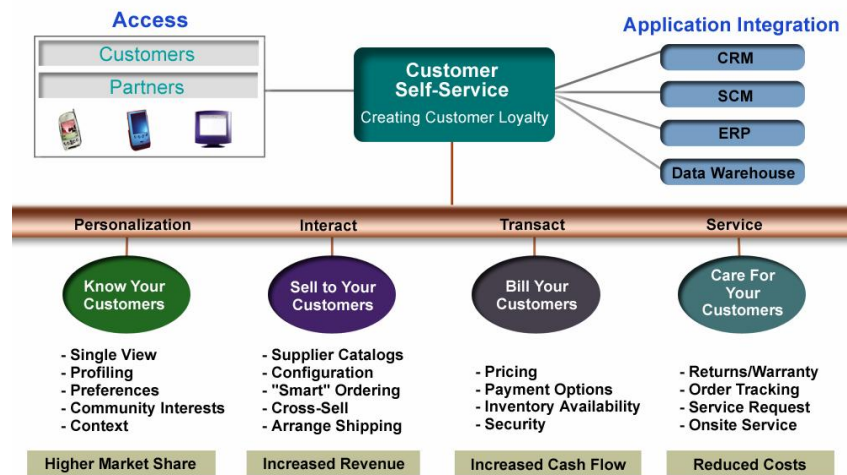




Not too long ago the term 'self-service' conjured up images of cafeteria lines and cash dispensing ATM's. Now, businesses from petrochemicals to cruise lines are utilizing self-service to gain a competitive edge. Self-service allows a business' customers to access its systems and data, enabling them to "serve" themselves with information and transactions formerly only available through direct personal interaction. As they pertain to Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solutions, self-service extensions can enhance any of the three aspects of CRM – sales, marketing and customer service.

A number of enabling technologies, including Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems, e-mail Response Management Systems (ERMS), mobile and wireless products, and even the Internet, have set the stage to produce more pervasive and accessible self-service solutions. But, deploying these technologies is only the beginning. Customer self-service access to your enterprise will add dramatic new dimensions to the customer relationship and stretch expectations to new heights. So, consider the implications carefully:

- Determine if and how customer self-service fits into your enterprise CRM strategy.
- Define the measurable business impact (e.g. increased sales, improved customer satisfaction, higher customer retention, reduced cost of servicing customers) your self-service enhancements must have to deliver the required ROI
- Set priorities among sales, marketing and service applications, based on maximum customer value and business impact
- Determine the impact self-service technology and applications will have on your IT Architecture and plan properly for it



While anticipating the potential customer self-service benefits, you must keep your business goals and objectives aligned with your customers' needs and expectations. Although customers will benefit from using these new self-service channels, they will still expect traditional access to information and services.

Think back to the '70s and '80s when banks were pushing customers out of their branches to use ATMs, only to spend the '90s devising programs to entice them back to cross-sell more services. This shift in CRM strategy demonstrates the importance of using self-service as an added touch point to your customers. Used effectively and in conjunction with traditional channels, self-service can revolutionize your customer relationships.

CASE STUDY

Fortune 500 Transportation Company

The client, a leading provider of integrated logistics and transportation solutions, needed a web strategy that supported its business needs. In order to defend its position as one of the largest third-party logistics companies, it wanted to transform itself into a leading edge supply chain service provider. The client partnered with Hitachi Consulting to develop a web strategy and construct and implement an ebusiness solution that gives the company's customers "one-stop shopping." Within a three-month timeframe, Hitachi Consulting delivered an application architecture and project management methodology that is leveraged by all new projects and a B2B portal that customers use to manage their relationships with the company. In addition, Hitachi Consulting constructed several mission critical applications allowing customer visibility to their supply chain. These include shipment tracking and tracing, inventory visibility and transport order entry. The client now has world-class enterprise web capabilities, which continue to deliver value to the organization and its customers, by providing:

- Increased speed to market on delivering value based applications
- Increased customer satisfaction and loyalty through personalization and "one stop-shopping"
- Higher levels of security and support
- Decreased down-time by transitioning to one hosting provider

CASE STUDY

Leading Cruise Line and Tour Company

The client, one of the largest cruise lines in the world, needed a solution to allow agencies to offer their customers superior on-line service. Essential to their success is the ability to provide superior customer service while successfully handling over 1,000,000 bookings per year. They turned to Hitachi Consulting for a web-based cruise and tour reservation system, a requirement to remain competitive in the travel industry. The newly installed system has enabled the client to build its competitive edge and to:

- Establish an ebusiness presence
- Provide better customer service
- Control call center growth
- Allow travel agents to book directly
- Lower the cost per booking

The functionality of the new web-based reservation system also provides agents with the ability to:

- Find cruise availability around the world
- Confirm the itinerary
- Check room availability
- Obtain detailed pricing information
- Enter specific passenger information (i.e., special occasion and passenger requests)
- Locate specific cabin information (i.e., cabin and ship layout)
- Offer pre- and post-voyage secondary package tours

After the client went live with its web-based reservation system, over 1,256 travel agents registered in less than two weeks. The client's new web-based cruise and tour reservation system offers them the opportunity to build tighter relationships with their travel agencies, which in turn allows agents to provide better customer service to their clients.

About Hitachi Consulting

Hitachi Consulting is Hitachi, Ltd.'s (NYSE: HIT) global business and IT consulting company. We serve Fortune 2000 companies across many industries across the United States. We work with you to understand your needs and to enable and implement key business strategies. We deliver practical solutions to generate demand, ensure supply and help you manage your enterprise effectively. Our commitment to delivering measurable results is unparalleled, as is our dedication to transferring knowledge.

To find out more about how Hitachi Consulting can inspire your next success, please call 1.877.664.0010 or visit us at www.hitachiconsulting.com

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