ONEDIRECT

AIRCEL

CASE STUDY

Turning a Customer Service Challenge
into an Opportunity

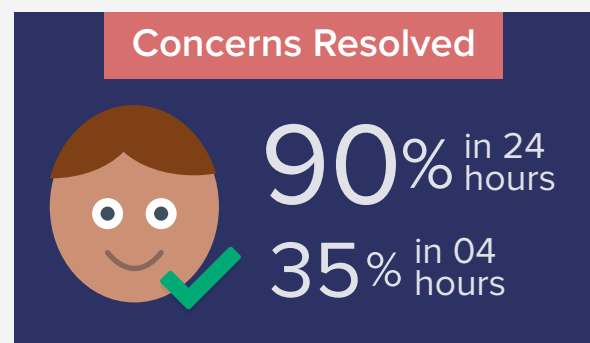AIRCEL

At a Glance
Aircel

Company Background

Aircel is one of India's leading innovative mobile service providers. The company is a pan-India 2G operator with 3G spectrum in 13 circles, BWA spectrum in 8 circles and is credited with the fastest 3G roll out ever in the Indian telecom space. As a young data led telecom player, Aircel has constantly been at the helm of introducing innovative and value for money products and services for its customers, which are industry firsts, be it the Aircel Pocket Internet, taking the first step in making 3G affordable for the masses, being the first telecom player to introduce Facebook Voice Updates on Aircel, and many more. The Smart Pocket Internet data plans by Aircel truly changed the way mobile internet was perceived and consumed. The company has been the proud recipient of coveted awards such as Voice&Data Special Leadership Recognition in 'Customer Service' category, ET Telecom Award 2014 for its innovative customer care research model, Aegis Graham Bell Award 2014 for 'Innovation in Marketing Campaign', Data Quest Award 2014 for 'Excellence in Implementation and Use of Technology for Business Benefits' and the Brandon Hall award in the 'Best Leadership Development Program' category.

http://www.aircel.com

Wins for Aircel

- 50% reduction in response time

- 75% reduction in average closure time

- 80% increase in satisfaction/closure index

- Improved customer satisfaction across the business

- Complaints on private platforms increased from 40% to 65%

- Improved accessibility for customers in rural & fringe area of towns through retailers

- Alternate channel created for service reach from call centres to retailer points and social media

Concerns Resolved

90% in 24 hours

35% in 04 hours

The Story
Process Innovation

Context

To enhance its customer experience and in order to analyse its customer support issues, Aircel divided its subscriber base into three tiers, forming a pyramid. The upper two tiers represented premium customers, who had started embracing social media to resolve issues. It was also observed that the total actionable web mentions were growing to form a bigger pie of the total offline and online actionable mentions, as prime customers increasingly started warming up to social media.

Majority of the customers in the base tier, however, were from rural India. These customers felt more comfortable in approaching neighbourhood mobile stores to resolve their queries, put forward requests, and register complaints, rather than reach out to the company's call centre. The Indian Telecom industry for that matter, has been adding more subscribers in rural areas, as opposed to urban areas. TRAI reports in 2015 showed that the YoY growth in rural wireless subscribers was twice the YoY growth in urban wireless subscribers.

Goal

With the steady uptake in Aircel's rural subscriber base, it became extremely important to make customer service more proactive in rural areas. The challenge accepted by Aircel was to deliver a stellar customer service experience, despite logistical barriers such as lack of on-ground customer support in most of these places. Therefore, Aircel roped in neighbour-hood corner shops—given the ease of access and comfort level of subscribers in dealing with a known, local person who speaks the local dialect.

Meanwhile, the team at Aircel was also looking at ensuring that the prime customer segment got premium customer service across all channels. As this customer base was increasingly getting active on social media, the objective was to proactively serve them online, have an all-round social media strategy to enhance customer service and experience, and monitor how much buzz the marketing initiatives were generating online.

Implementations

- Intelligent technology that accurately zeroes in on mentions across all sources on the web, including in vernacular forums.
- Multi-lingual web-based platform, to enable an intuitive workflow that quickly captures complaints.
- Smart communication/notification channel between 23 telecom circles.
- Analytics and a number-driven approach, and a robust feedback-capturing mechanism, to identify and plug process loopholes.

Approach
Aircel and OneDirect formed Joint Action Team to define the process.

Aircel realized that the company needed the requisite infrastructure to listen to all its customers and empower themselves with actionable customer data, to achieve the desired customer-centricity in both the segments.

That's when OneDirect came into the picture and a Joint Action Team was formed. Taking into account the complexities and challenges involved in serving these two extremely dissimilar sets of subscribers, the Joint Action Team realised it was extremely important to tackle these two groups with different processes.

The first existing process which was revamped was the manual monitoring of social media platforms, which earlier led to missing out on a number of brand mentions in the online space. The coordination was being done using Excel sheets and emails, which complicated the escalation system, often resulting in mentions getting lost in an infinite loop.

It was thus decided to deploy a technology platform that would firmly connect all online interactions a customer has with a brand, with capabilities to manage a holistic ORM operation; along with built-in integrations to leverage the power of the web, throughout the brand. This is where OneDirect's technology came into the picture.

On the other hand, it was observed that whenever a rural customer had a query, request or complaint, he/she often went back to the retailer to resolve the problem at hand. The retailer, therefore, needed to have easy access to the back-end support of Aircel, to get the issue addressed without having to negotiate a complex escalation process, where the probability and cost of missing a complaint in the loop was high.

Upon analysing the different possible solutions in detail, the Joint Action Team decided that the right answer was to empower the retailers in rural areas.

The team noticed that a device that most telecom retailers will possess was a smart phone. Therefore, having a mobile-based customer service app could become a game changer in this domain. This led to the development of 'Mobile Sewa Kendra' - a mobile app-based platform that was deployed across 2,000 retailers in rural areas.

Technology Deployed

OneDirect Workflow Engine

OneDirect Indic Crawler

OneDirect Social Feed

Mobile Sewa Kendra

Solution

OneDirect Intelligent API integration with Aircel internal CRM.

We, at OneDirect, discovered that brands with traditional technology platforms to manage ORM operations were missing out on 40% of the brand mentions. These 40% mentions were mostly found in third-party Indian blogs and forums and were found to be particularly high for the Telecom sector.

The OneDirect Indic Crawler is a custom blackbox technology, built for the Indian context. The technology uses complex Natural Language Processing algorithms to track and process mentions from over 1,000+ Indian forums and websites.

We identified 147 Indian websites that were to be crawled for mentions. Once the integration was done and the technology deployed, the effect was immediate.

The OneDirect Indic Crawler post quality control magically brought all brand mentions on these Indian websites into the workflow engine, while our social monitoring tool brought in all brand mentions on social media, that were worthy of action, into the workflow engine.

These mentions were then logged as tickets in order to build accountability in the system. As a result, Aircel customer services today manages its entire ORM operation from a single dashboard, where team members can easily respond to tickets and resolve them, without having to go back and forth over elaborate, complex protocols.

While catering to the rural segment, it was important to deploy a platform that would be user-friendly, available in local languages, and also which worked efficiently on a 2G connection.

The app structure was designed such that a complaint could be addressed in just 3 simple steps. This air-tight complaint capturing mechanism leaves no scope for a complaint to be lost in the loop. The deployment of this platform was met with a tremendous response and high level of acceptance. As a result, retailers have wholeheartedly embraced this app to provide valuable feedback, leading Aircel to consolidate its position in terms of customer satisfaction.

Going Forward

Based on the project outcome, Aircel and OneDirect have decided to continue innovation to bring in more and more effective web-based solutions, wherever the user base is high, to ensure a premium customer experience.

A highly effective customer-centric organization has to be tuned to serve its market in the best possible way. An 'internet savvy' customer needs a responsive social media management, while a customer in semi urban/rural area needs a personalized 'high touch' handling at the front end.
We are glad to have got OneDirect as our 'Customer Experience' partner, who have brought in their technology offerings, combined with a young, energetic and enthusiastic team, who were willing to learn and innovate with us, to deploy creative solutions for serving both these segments.
Mobile Sewa Kendra, an application that was developed jointly, has gone on to win the Voice & Data - Telecom Leadership award for innovation in Customer Service, in March 2015.

Alok Kumar
Chief Service Delivery Officer, Aircel

About

ONEDIRECT

OneDirect is building a horizontal platform for connecting Indian consumers with businesses. OneDirect is a Customer Experience Management platform that helps brands to manage their customer experience across all online channels and on mobile.

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