

Mobile & Wireless

How to Command the Mobile Customer Experience

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Table of Contents:

1. How to Command the Mobile Customer Experience
2. Create a Consistent, Innovative Experience

How to Command the Mobile Customer Experience (Page 1 of 2)

Today's mobile market is glutted with device manufacturers, publishers and carriers who are all vying for coveted customer mindshare. It's the end of an era for many mobile carriers who have long enjoyed the luxury of exclusively owning the mobile customer experience. Here, Knowledge Center contributor Nahid Giga offers three tips on how carriers can cooperate with mobile device manufacturers and publishers to deliver a better mobile customer experience.

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Today, scores of companies ranging from Apple to [AT&T](#) to Google are positioning themselves as mobile retailers and providing consumers with a seemingly bottomless well of plans and features. There's no doubt that today's mobile [customers](#) are enjoying the wide array of new options now available to them. After all, until now, consumers had somewhat limited choices when it came to making mobile buying decisions.

So, how can carriers rediscover the benefits of their former [mobile](#) monopoly and thrive in this new atmosphere? Let's look at three steps:

Step No. 1: Embrace mobile's inherent symbiotic nature

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The first step is to embrace mobile's inherent symbiotic nature. Though device manufacturers, carriers and publishers are all essentially competitors, no one player can truly deliver value or a complete mobile experience without enlisting the others.

For instance, publisher Google aims to offer handsets with its Android [software](#) stack but will be unable to successfully venture into this arena without the partnership of a carrier. Similarly, carrier AT&T seeks to move into the publisher space by developing mobile portals but

cannot do so without a device OEM. And, in perhaps the most well-known example, device OEM Apple has positioned itself as a budding publisher thanks to its growing application store. But Apple cannot move forward without a carrier.

It is clear that until one player can clearly dominate all three of these key roles, the [customer experience](#) can only be delivered through cooperation and collaboration. Companies that understand and accept this reality are sure to be poised for success.

Step No. 2: Smart partnering

In light of the first step, the second step for success is smart partnering. While your company's marketing messages should emphasize your unique strengths, your behind-the-scenes focus should be partnering to address your weaknesses. It all boils down to the "3 Fs": Form, Functionality and Features—where does your company excel?

For Apple, their exterior focus has been on superior usability, aka *form*, while they have partnered with AT&T for network *functionality*. Meanwhile, the company's strategy for growth has centered on creating an environment where anyone can create great content via its application store *features*.

[Next: Create a Consistent, Innovative Experience >>](#)

How to Command the Mobile Customer Experience - Create a Consistent, Innovative Experience
(Page 2 of 2)

Step No. 3: Create a consistent, innovative experience

Resource Library:

- [Increasing Your Productivity with Mobile Deployments in Today's Economy](#)
- [Seven Ways to Deliver Value with Unified Communications](#)
- [Gain Your Competitive Edge Through Mobility In 2010](#)
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Finally, the third success key is to create a consistent yet innovative experience. After all, consumer expectations are higher than ever; no longer is customer satisfaction based on simple factors such as network coverage, available handsets and price plans.

Instead, the customer experience is defined by device (features and functionality), network (speed and coverage) and content (format and richness). With this plethora of options literally at their fingertips, consumers seek

reliability, convenience and innovation that meet their needs.

Consistency is also of vital importance—consumers have a notoriously short-term memory, and one bad experience can virtually wipe out a long record of great experiences. The good news is that by partnering to deliver the optimal customer experience, the combination of device-carrier-publisher can unlock a tremendous amount of data and information. Leveraging that data constructively is sure to open up a wealth of new experiences never previously imagined.

As we move toward this all-inclusive mind-set, it becomes clear that no single player can provide a singular experience that will win in the mind of the consumer. Instead, smart and savvy cooperation between the proper players is a sure conduit to delivery of a superior, holistic experience that will resonate in the mind and memory of the consumer. The ultimate end result? Increased loyalty to all players and a shared command of the customer experience.

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