

VISUAL ENGAGEMENT: THE ROI OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE EXCELLENCE

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Seeing is believing. This is particularly true when creating great customer experiences. In this report, we highlight the business value companies realize by using technology that enables them to visually interact with customers across digital channels.

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Definition: Visual Engagement

For the purposes of this research, Aberdeen defines visual engagement as a form of customer / company interaction enabled by any technology that helps organizations visually interact with current and future customers through digital channels. The technologies that provide this capability include, video, screen sharing, [co-browsing](#) and [WebRTC](#).

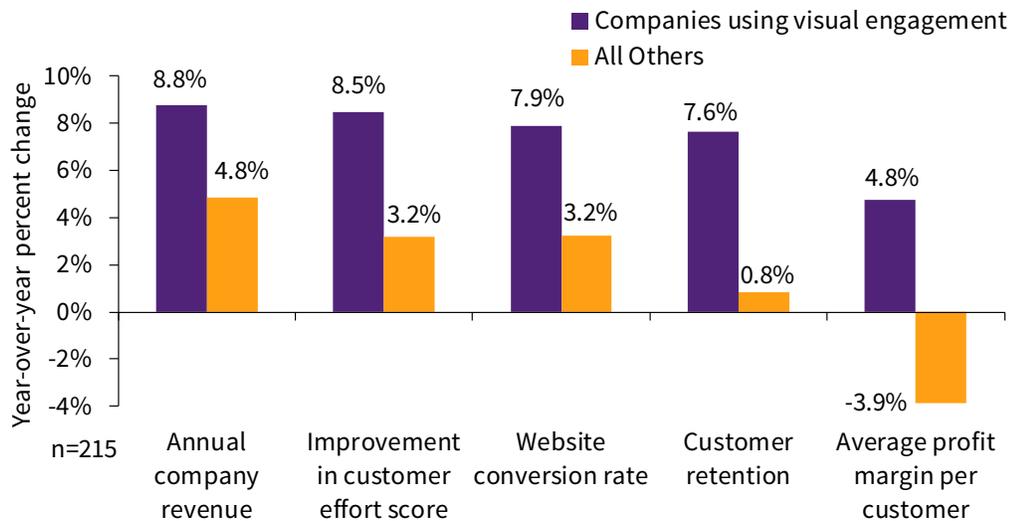
Visual engagement reduces customer effort and gives customer support agents enough context to properly address issues.

Many companies think of customer experience management (CEM) as a sophisticated mix of processes and technology. In reality, creating happy customers simply requires getting the basics right, specifically, managing the perceptions that make up the buyer experience.

Aberdeen surveyed 215 organizations for our study, [Omni-Channel Customer Care: Best-in-Class Steps to Success](#) (December 2015). Among those companies, 126 indicated that they use technology that enables visual engagement (see sidebar) with customers. In other words, 59% of businesses surveyed already enrich their technology toolbox with solutions enabling contact center agents and customers to see the same view at the same time.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the annual performance improvements companies using visual engagement tools observe, as compared to All Others.

Figure 1: Investing in Visual Engagement Improves Annual Performance Gains



Source: Aberdeen Group, April 2016

Considering these findings, we see that the benefits of visual engagement fall into two categories: financial and operational.

Financial Gains

When investing in technology, companies naturally look to the value it will provide the business and its shareholders. At the highest level, this translates either into growing revenue or reducing costs. The above figure shows that visual engagement capabilities in CEM programs enhances financial health. Businesses employing visual engagement tools enjoy an 83% greater year-over-year increase in annual company revenue, compared to All Others (8.8% vs. 4.8%). This growth in revenue is a result of contact center agents being able to view customer issues in real-time and within the appropriate context. Along with helping resolve issues, these tools also enable reps to provide cross-sell and up-sell recommendations tailored to a customer’s unique needs.

Findings illustrated in Figure 1 also reveal that companies with visual engagement capabilities enjoy double the annual

59%

of businesses have already incorporated visual engagement tools in their CEM technology toolbox.

Three Levels of Maturity in Visual Engagement

Our research revealed that there are three stages of maturity companies employing visual engagement go through:

1. Beginner
2. Intermediate
3. Advanced

Companies in the **Beginner stage** focus on laying the foundation for effective visual engagement with customers. They empower agents with timely insight into customer interactions across all channels so agents can personalize the visual conversations.

Companies in the **Intermediate stage** focus on ensuring compliance, connecting the right customer with the right agent, and surveying customers after each visual interaction to gauge success.

Those that are in the **Advanced stage** focus primarily on optimizing activities to maintain a competitive edge and maximizing long-term results. Tactics here include analyzing the factors driving repeat contact as well as real-time analysis of customer data to guide agents in personalized cross-sell and up-sell opportunities.

improvement in website conversion rates, compared to All Others. This metric indicates the percentage of buyers visiting the company website and ultimately purchasing a product or service. Improvements in this metric suggest that being able to visually assist shoppers on the website (desktop or mobile) helps organizations maximize sales effectiveness.

Users of visual engagement solutions also attain a 4.8% annual increase in customer profit margins, compared to a 3.9% erosion in margins among All Others. This delta is a result of organizations growing client spend while reducing cost to serve. We've already observed how visual engagement helps increase client spend. As for reducing support costs, visual engagement helps agents quickly understand the context of the customer need, thus decreasing the time to handle an issue and improving agent productivity. Improving agent productivity helps contact centers handle more issues without increasing staff, and subsequently reduces costs associated with client profit margins.

An important note to make here is that achieving such financial gains ultimately hinges on organizational maturity in visual engagement. (See sidebar for the three levels of maturity Aberdeen identified for visual engagement programs.)

Companies that begin using this technology, and take the necessary steps towards maturity, also realize improvements in their operational results.

Operational Improvements

Data shows that companies relying on visual engagement achieve 2.7x greater annual improvement (decrease) in customer effort score. Achieving improvement in this metric requires organizations to identify the processes that cause customers to experience longer than needed wait and handle times, frustration big source of customer frustration. Such inefficiency

takes its toll on agent productivity. By giving agents the ability to view and manage a customer's screen remotely, companies minimize the effort on both ends.

Addressing needs in a convenient fashion is rewarded by customers. They stick around. Visual engagement technology helps businesses increase customer retention rates 7.6% annually, compared to a mere 0.8% increase for All Others. Companies looking to retain customers must include visual engagement in their CEM technology toolbox.

Key Takeaways

Using multiple channels is no longer, by itself, a differentiator for businesses when interacting with the empowered customers. Organizations looking to build and maintain strong bonds with their buyers must ensure that they use the right channels effectively. This means minimizing customer effort in getting needs addressed without incurring unnecessary costs.

Findings highlighted in this document reveal that companies incorporating visual engagement technology maximize customer loyalty, grow revenue, and reduce costs. However, those results are not solely an outcome of expanding the CEM technologies used in the business.

Research indicates that there are three levels of maturity when it comes to using visual engagement and that companies in the later stages of maturity are more likely to enjoy the greatest benefits. If you haven't begun your visual engagement journey, we highly recommend you to take the first steps towards becoming a Best-in-Class organization by using visual engagement when interacting with customers.

Companies looking to retain customers must include visual engagement in their CEM toolbox.

Take the first steps and expedite your activities to become a Best-in-Class organization by using visual engagement when interacting with customers.

About Aberdeen Group

Since 1988, Aberdeen Group has published research that helps businesses worldwide improve their performance. Our analysts derive fact-based, vendor-agnostic insights from a proprietary analytical framework, which identifies Best-in-Class organizations from primary research conducted with industry practitioners. The resulting research content is used by hundreds of thousands of business professionals to drive smarter decision-making and improve business strategy. Aberdeen Group is headquartered in Boston, MA.

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