



"Successful companies know good products attract customers but great service keeps them," said Jean Kovacs, Comergerent president and CEO. "Companies must keep this in mind as they move business processes online. In the self-service world of the Web, customers expect a highly personal, flawless, and seamless experience. Anything less is a failure to live up to the promise."

Anything for the Customer: Why Web Self Service Matters

BY JEAN KOVACS, PRESIDENT AND CEO COMERGERENT

Companies make significant financial investments to drive their customers to their Websites.

But then fail to provide customers with a satisfying experience once they get there. Therein lies the inherent paradox that plagues many organization's Web self-service initiatives. Even with the best of intentions, companies may inadvertently replace an accommodating sales team with Web self-service applications that leave customers frustrated and confused.

The failure of many Web self-service offerings is not what they do, but how little they do. Just putting information online about products and services is not enough. This is particularly true where companies have complexity in the products and services they offer and the channels through which they distribute them. Not all businesses 'dwell' in an Amazon-like world where products – generally one at a time – can easily be served up to customers. Most companies have business and channel partners who are part of the sales equation and special warranties or service contracts that work with specific products. All these must factor into the Web self-service experience.

A Web self-service experience should be personal and unique, addressing the interests and needs of the customer. It should enable potential buyers to quickly and easily find, configure and purchase the right products and services at the right price and be easily searchable and intuitive. It should be transactional, capturing, distributing and fulfilling orders promptly and accurately and providing status and details on demand as needed during the fulfillment process. And it should integrate customer service and inside and outside sales representatives in order to unify the 'face' to the customer. Bottom line, Web self-service should provide an experience that lives up to the sales motto 'anything for the customer.'

To provide this experience, a company must:

- MAKE IT EASY FOR CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERS TO CONDUCT BUSINESS THE WAY THEY WANT VIA PHONE, WEB, KIOSK OR IN-STORE
- ENABLE CUSTOMERS TO COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH INTERNAL SALES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS AND WITH OUTSIDE PARTNERS
- ENSURE A SEAMLESS CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE – HIDE THE COMPLEXITY OF THE 'MULTIPLES' SUCH AS PRODUCT LINES, SERVICE OFFERINGS, BUSINESS UNITS AND BUILD-TO-ORDER OFFERINGS, AS WELL AS MULTIPLE BACK-END SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES
- SELL INTEGRATED PRODUCTS AND SERVICES – SEAMLESSLY UP-SELL AND CROSS-SELL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO THE INSTALLED BASE AND PROSPECTS. LEVERAGE SERVICE CONTRACTS TO DRIVE ADDITIONAL PRODUCT SALES AND LEVERAGE PRODUCTS TO DRIVE ADDITIONAL SERVICE SALES
- UNIQUELY ADDRESS CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERS WITH GUIDED SELLING AND CONFIGURATION – ENSURE CHANNEL PARTNERS, DISTRIBUTORS AND OEMS ARE INCLUDED IN THE SALES PROCESS AND TREATED DIFFERENTLY FROM CUSTOMERS

WEB SELF-SERVICE IN ACTION DRIVING BOTTOM LINE RESULTS

World Wide Technology (WWT) is a systems integrator that provides innovative technology and supply chain solutions to the commercial, government and telecom sectors. Before WWT had their current Web self-service solution, they required customers to verbally contact company customer service representatives to place orders and retrieve order status. The original solution was expensive, error-prone and did not achieve a satisfactory level of customer service. WWT wanted an improved Web self-service customer experience including better ordering and sales patterns and promotions tracking and analysis.

Today WWT, powered by the Comergerent eBusiness System™, provides a single, scalable system that improves customer service

and enhances the selling process. WWT customers, each with their own personal storefront, can easily find the products and services they need from a 600,000-item catalog, generate quotes, place and change orders, and view the status of business transactions. In addition, customer employees outside corporate procurement departments now can purchase pre-approved, standardized products. With the new Web self-service offering, WWT's online revenues increased more than 500 percent.

NEC Solutions America, Inc. (NEC), a premier provider of integrated solutions for the Connected Enterprise in North America, wanted to enhance a partner portal and provide a customer outlet store. Powered by the Comergerent eBusiness System, the online stores offer new automated sales vehicles for partners and customers to do business with NEC.

At the new partner online store, NEC channel partners can purchase over 100 products, including projectors, plasma displays and accessories, and check order status. A unique 'hot spotting' feature of the Comergerent parts modeler simplifies the ordering process for over 6,000 individual parts, enabling NEC's Authorized Service Providers to directly order a part by clicking on its image in an exploded product diagram. The NEC virtual outlet store allows the public to directly buy overstocked or discontinued projectors and end-of-life products.

With its new online stores, NEC now provides channel partners and consumers with an automated ordering process that will also achieve savings over the previous manual processes.

Customers have choices. By making the online experience personal, accommodating and flexible, companies can improve customer service, increase revenue and cut costs. And, by leveraging their online eBusiness offering, companies can find additional sources of revenues either from new geographies or market segments or by offering products and services to new channels.