The humble telephone instrument has undergone a sea-change in the last 10 years. We've gone from pure analog to electronic to digital. We can now not only use the phone to talk but we can also talk to the phone and instruct it to dial or drop or add a contact. Phones now not only use land based wire and fiber optic cables, they also connect to your customer via the internet. But best of all is its evolution from a block of large plastic to block of slim rectangular 2 x 4 inch digital wonder that is small, rechargeable, wireless and light enough to be put in our pockets and carried around i.e. the mobile phone. Today everyone (well, almost everyone), carries a mobile or cell phone.

I love to be a bit dramatic hence the opening paragraph – I won't bore you with more details except to make a point (and I'm sure you will agree), that the humble telephone has evolved dramatically into a slim featured packed 'smart' device that we cannot live without. If that is the case, why is it that very few companies use the mobile phone to connect with their customers?

The answer I guess probably was with the speed of development of the cell phone hardware and cell phone software i.e. the mobile phone applications. The development happened (and is still happening) so fast, that most company CEO's only saw a blur and have yet to grasp the importance of that little electronic and digital genie out there. A rising number of customers have already begun using the mobile phone in place of plastic to pay for purchases. Indeed, they not only browse products using the cell phone applications, they also directly pay using digital wallets especially designed for the cell phone. More about Flic Social Media

So as the CEO or marketing executive of a company, shouldn't you also respond via the cell phone? When an order comes in your system should be able to recognize whether the order was delivered via the mobile phone and in turn send out a confirmation in the form of a text or multi-media message to that phone. Granted a separate detailed receipt should be sent via email but a primary acknowledgement should go out to the cell phone.



I would however caution about going overboard with embracing mobile applications. Customers view the mobile phone as a personal device. While they don't mind using it to shop, they mind if you start sending advertisements to their cell phone. Also, cell phones are far from standardized. They have evolved so quickly that the neither manufacturers nor cell phone application developers have had time to pause and think about standards. For example, mobile phones manufactured and used in Japan mostly support only Japanese encodings. Those manufactured and used in the Middle East may only support Arabic encoding and so on. So a text message sent out in English might well end up as junk in a cell phone used by your Japanese client. While it is vital that mobile media be added as a means of contacting or responding to your customer, it would be prudent not to spend too much money on it – at least not until the technology is fairly standardized. More about Decentralized Social Platform

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