White Paper
LiveMessage: Communication, but more intimate

White Paper

Contents

Introduction

The arrival of LiveMessage signals a tectonic shift in how businesses communicate with customers. While there is a constantly evolving array of technologies facilitating Customer Journey tracking, thus far, none are as direct and as personal as the text message. When friends and family want to connect, they are now overwhelmingly using SMS as a platform for these communications. The advantages of texting are obvious: the conversations are ongoing, they are casual, they are easy, and perhaps most importantly, they are intimate. It is time for businesses to enter into a communication ecosystem that aligns with modern customers' actual technology habits. The option to initiate and conduct two-way text message conversations is the next step in providing the very best possible service as businesses seek ever more effectively to shepherd clients along their Customer Journey.

«It is time for businesses to enter into a communication eco-systems that aligns with modern customers' actual technology habits.»

Salesforce has made it possible to do just this with the introduction of LiveMessage. This powerful technology allows businesses to do a very simple thing: communicate with customers via end-user-preferred, textual-based channels. While these certainly include text messages, the response capacity extends to social media platforms as well. Which becomes increasingly important as companies work on brand-management. Up until recently, the CRM technology leader has been able to facilitate interaction between businesses and their customers through a range of communication platforms. However, the CRM has been cut off from texting, the most commonly used, and the most widely preferred modality of all, until now. In so doing, Salesforce has made it possible for businesses to enter conversations in a truly personal way: as singular social entities, not so different than other members of customers' SMS communities.

This white paper explains what LiveMessage is, describes how it works, and explores what customer care problems it solves. It will also make suggestions about how to optimize LiveMessage's performance with Cisco communication technology.

Part 1: What is LiveMessage and What are its Benefits

Industry leader in customer relationship management technology, Salesforce recently acquired Live-Message technology. Salesforce acquired this product in order to add functionality to their already broad suite of customer engagement products. The CRM giant announced that it would soon be possible to engage customers through every imaginable communication channel. Insofar as texting has become a preferred modality of communication, that promise is now a welcome reality.

The advantages to implementing the LiveMessage platform are stunning and decisive:

- Lower business costs & increased agent productivity
- Efficient customer service & improved customer satisfaction
- Better sales leads, higher sales conversion, and more crossselling & up-selling opportunities
- Quick access to customer profile data
- Identifying customer communication channel preference
- Obtaining a 360-degree view customer journey

Gone are the days of sending clunky text messages that require customers to do things like reply "STOP" or "YES". With LiveMessage, not only is it now possible for businesses to initiate two-way conversations with customers, these interactions will take place in the same affective and psychological domain as customers' friends and family inhabit. Currently, even the most cutting-edge customer service solutions involve an array of customer interaction platforms that may include things like phone, IVR, email, live chat, and even some rudimentary text messaging implementations. LiveMessage makes it possible for businesses to interact via private, two-way SMS/MMS and Facebook Messenger with any customer, at any time, and in any place, as long as the business has contact information for that customer. Salesforce has also promised to expand the repertoire of available text platforms in the coming year. Furthermore, Einstein—Salesforce's AI engine—together with IoT monitoring technologies, will provide businesses a depth of customer knowledge and capacity for agile and penetrating communication that will render customer service beyond seamless. Businesses will be able, not only to anticipate customer needs, and to create opportunities to crosssell and up-sell, but they will be able field a wide array of social media brand-mentions, all through the highly personal and universally used platform of two-way text.

Part 2: The Practical Value of LiveMessage

When considering the cost-benefit analysis of using this technology, there is simply no question as to the distinct fiscal advantage it provides. According to Salesforce, the software can be set up within just a day to utilize any 800-numbers already being utilized. Beyond ease of set-up, another advantage of this software is the stunning increase in agent-customer interaction efficiency. When customers have problems, the interactions generated require customer and agent time. Not only is it easy to set up LiveMessage through the existing PSTN contact points, Salesforce explains that the utilization cost for text lines is just ¼ that of phone lines. Furthermore, given that companies have seen a decrease in phone utilization with customers for whom two-way texting is an option, implementation of text communication perpetuates a further decrease in phone line and phone agent utilization as businesses pare down those channels in exchange for text and blended agents. All of this means a tremendous decrease in monthly operating costs.

———

«According to Salesforce, single agents can handle as many as 12 simultaneous text chats—as against one phone call or a few live chats»

———

LiveMessage

The bottlenecks to standard communication platforms are well known. Phone calls are incredibly slow by today's standards; most customers don't want to wait on hold for a long time, and most business don't want to staff enough agents that customer wait times low enough not to be a bother. Email may be somewhat more convenient for customers with less pressing issues, but the efficacy of the solutions proposed by agents are often poorly matched to specific, or unusual customer needs (not to mention issues with those customers who prefer talking with language-native company representatives). Live chat is arguably the most effective solutions for businesses insofar as agents can attend to multiple simultaneous chat threads at once, thereby cutting down operating costs. It may still be that there are queues with texts, but the texts are far less time-sensitive than the phone calls. Live chat is also good for customers insofar as they too can attend to the chat while doing other things—such as attend meetings, watch TV, or do other work. However, these sorts of interactions often require that customers are sitting at a terminal that makes chatting easy. Finally, they have to open chat interfaces that may not be streamlined with the mobile technology they may wish to use. Overall, none of these solutions are ideal.

LiveMessage changes all of this. Customers can interact with companies in exactly the same way they do friends and family. They can begin, end, and pick up conversations whenever and whenever is convenient for them. The advantage to businesses is quite similar to those associated with live chat; according to Salesforce, single agents can handle as many as 12 simultaneous text chats—as against one phone call or a few live chats. LiveMessage also means that dropped calls are a thing of the past. Customers texting with agents simply never need to worry about having their call drop, or, perhaps more importantly, being required to repeat information they have already provided to different agents when

calls do drop. Furthermore, businesses utilizing LiveMessage have seen a decrease in phone traffic. This reflects data we already know: customers seem to prefer texting to calling, and will texting if it is an option. This means customers can interact through their preferred communication modality, and businesses can run leaner on agents.

Part 3: How LiveMessage Works

LiveMessage works natively within Service Cloud. This result is that complete, contextual, customer information is immediately available, together with the ability to act or route that information. Specifically, it is be possible to anticipate customers' need before they are even aware of those needs. And, it will then be possible to offer aid, information, and services through the most intimate communication modality available—the text.

LiveMessage functionality will be consolidated with other Salesforce modules so that agents can send and receive texts as easily as they can live chat, email, and talk on the phone. Consequently, managing messaging traffic will be no different than any other form of customer contact accessible through Service Cloud. What is more, LiveMessage will affected through Omni-Channel integration, which makes smart routing possible through standard APIs. For individuals using technology platforms such as those provided by customer service and collaboration giant, Cisco, slick integrations exist that make Live-Message even more viable. They add functionality by providing time-saving features like click-to-message and intelligent LiveMessage routing that ensure the LiveMessage solution is fully leveraged. Middleware companies like Bucher + Suter provide just this kind of technology and are working right now to find ways to ensure LiveMessage works as cleanly as possible for any Cisco integration.

05

———

«Managing messaging traffic will be no different than any other form of customer contact accessible through Service Cloud.»

———

Part 4: What LiveMessage Makes Possible

From a psychological perspective, the promise of LiveMessage is that businesses can interact with customers in the same way they interact personal contacts. Because people widely prefer texting as a platform for communication, this means that texting will feel more natural for customers. However, there is a range of other great reasons to implement LiveMessage. Specifically, the capacity to initiate two-way texts gives businesses the ability to do things like:

- Conduct effective outbound text campaigns
- Respond via text to negative social media mentions
- Automate customer reminders and notifications
- Provide customers with access to knowledge bases and other product information through AI-powered bots

LiveMessage, together with Einstein, makes it possible for businesses to conduct outbound, two-way campaigns that are informed by intelligent market and IoT data analysis. These intelligent, low-touch campaigns are sure to convert the 90% rejection rate typical for call campaigns into many, more effective customer-business dialogues, and consequent sales.

———

«Businesses with the capacity to monitor social media can interact with unhappy customers via text message in order to solve problems.»

———

Responding effectively to unhappy customers who are brand-bashing is tricky business. For platforms like Amazon.com, where the customer review community is deep and influential, it makes sense, and is easy for businesses to interact with customers clearly dissatisfied with their products. However, these sorts of forums are slow, public, and impersonal. Furthermore, a great deal of brand-bashing takes place in social media forums where it is far more difficult effectively to interact with dissatisfied customers. LiveMessage is a fantastic solution to this kind of negative publicity. Businesses with the capacity to monitor social media can interact with unhappy customers via text message in order to solve problems in a way that shows that the company is a) paying attention b) cares and c) is committed to helping the customer find a solution to their problem in a way that is d) unobtrusive and non-confrontational.

Finally, while customers may not want to interact with bots when it comes to service or product problems,

they are very likely to appreciate things like text reminders and notifications for things like appointments and service change notifications. Furthermore, if customers are interested in accessing information through things like mobile devices, doing so will very likely be easier over text message than through a mobile web interface.

Part 5: Two Use Cases

The following two use cases illustrate the efficacy of LiveMessage in interacting with customers and improving customer service.

Use Case 1: Airline check-in problems

Problem: Janet is late for a business flight. As it turns out, because she was late and the airline overbooked her flight, her seat was given to someone else. She is stuck in flight security and concerned that she is going to miss her flight. She knows that calling the airline will take far too long, and the line at check-in was also too long for her to wait. Her only real option is to do her best to make the flight. At the same time, the airline booking system has bumped her and would normally not have any recourse to help her other than to wait for her to show up at the gate to give her the bad news.

Goal: In this scenario, there are actually problems for both customer and service provider. The customer would normally be tremendously inconvenienced by being bumped from the flight. At the same time, being late to her flight creates logistical problems for airline staff and booking. In this case, the option to have fast, easily accessible information that the airline can initiate with the customer opens up an instant channel though which all these problems are instantly resolved. The airline can give away the seat to a customer that is ready to

take it, and Janet can relax, knowing that the airline is aware of her tardiness and would actually be happy to give her seat to someone else.

Outcome: The airline initiates a LiveMessage text to Janet while she is stressed out, wading through security. She now realizes that she does not have to wait on the phone with airline IVRs for 20 minutes to talk to someone—there is someone available to help her via text! The airline inquires as to where she is because they would like to give her seat to someone else. She explains that she is late and likely won't make the flight anyway. The airline books her on another flight, and is able to give away the seat without difficulty. Janet is relieved that she knows she will be on a flight in short order, and the airline is able to optimize its seat allocation: an all-around win.

Use Case 2: Brand loyalty and clout

Problem: Imagine recent college graduate Gary has just purchased a new Subaru Outback to make sure he can commute to work at the tech startup where he just landed a job. After just a month, the engine gasket on the car breaks. Gary is furious and takes to Twitter and Facebook on an anti-Subaru tirade. Subaru, seeking to break into the urban, male, Millennial market sees that this high-profile, sales-target customer is very upset.

Goal: Their goal is both to placate Gary by providing the service he is demanding, but more importantly, to make Gary happy enough that he changes his social media tune to reflect the action Subaru has taken. In this case, Subaru's hope is to send the message to other young, urban Garys out there that the company is paying attention and cares about the demographic. They do this by sending Gary a personalized Facebook message to initiate a conversation about the car. Gary is so used to tex-

ting, he is willing to communicate via Facebook messenger. Gary gets his car fixed for free, but ultimately, feels good enough about his interaction with Subaru that he decides to tweet and post the interaction.

Outcome: Gary is happy. For the Subaru corporation, the interaction means less negative brand image, changed a bad interaction into a positive one, and enabled Gary to become a brand advocate.

Part 6: What LiveMessage Means for Business Communication

If the goal of tracking Customer Journey is to provide a high-touch, low-profile interaction with the right customers at the right times, then LiveMessage achieves that goal in a way that have, heretofore, been impossible. The extent to which texting facilitates communication to the betterment of the customer-business relationship cannot be understated. Customers can enter into dialogue with businesses on their own terms and at their own pace. Businesses can enter a communication space, until now, reserved for more personal interactions. The opportunity to leverage customers' psychological attitude toward the text platform means that companies can begin to walk with clients as friends on their Customer Journey.

At a practical level, it means greater savings in contact centers because single agents can field as many as 12 simultaneous text conversations. It means that fewer, and cheaper phone lines are needed for text-enabled businesses. It means fewer dropped phone calls, because there are fewer phone conversations. And, it means faster issue resolution for more customers per unit time. LiveMessage is an allaround win. The platform simply makes sense for how people communicate, and want to communicate, today. It is faster, it is

cheaper, it is easier, and yet it is more intimate and more effective than any other platform available. There can be little doubt as to the efficacy of this technology and the importance of its implementation for any business committed to increased sales, brand management, and happy customers. The only remaining question is how to implement the technology in a way that streamlines what is possible in this communication and service domain. Here is where solutions, created trusted middleware providers like Bucher + Suter, become invaluable. b+s products make it possible to take a package like LiveMessage and fully integrate it into a Cisco communication backbone such that piece of messaging software becomes a streamlined service provision instrument, optimized for businesses and customers alike. Anyone astute enough to realize how important Live Message is has gotten most of the way there—solutions like those provided by b+s cover the remaining critical gap.

«The opportunity to leverage customers' psychological attitude toward the text platform means that companies can begin to walk with clients as friends on their Customer Journey.»

Part 7: The Next Move

For businesses using or interested in using the Salesforce platform, the decision to set up LiveMessage should be clear. For businesses using Salesforce in tandem with Cisco telephony and communication products, the decision to utilize a middleware solution like that provided by Bucher + Suter, should also be clear: there is simply no better way to integrate the two systems. b+s is one of the most trusted Cisco and Salesforce partners, and exists to ensure that the technology implementation associated with these companies is done right.