Nurturing an Era of Digital Transformation: Next Gen Customer Experience in the Oil & Gas Space

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The entire planet is connected to computers, smart phones and tablets. The world is changing at record rates and consumer needs are evolving every day.

The ever-changing customer needs can be experienced in new ways – in every industry and sector. Clients and consumers in the oil & gas sector can experience a whole new way of commerce in the age of digital transformation.

Sidharth Mishra, global lead of solutions & services, Energy Vertical, Wipro Limited, says that Wipro has been leading the way for ten years in oil & gas – delivering new technologies.

In the last five years, Mishra and Wipro have focused on building customer service capabilities around customers and operations – defining customers in many different ways – and delivering technology to oil & gas companies to address business problems.

Delivering Next Gen Service to the Oil & Gas Sector

Wipro's solutions span the oil & gas space, but focus primarily on the downstream sector. Disciplines require fairly specialized skill sets - one is more engineering and the other is customer value oriented.

"In my role I am accountable for the downstream business – running facilities and managing customers," Mishra remarked.

But what is this idea around the customer experience and how does an oil company derive value from that?

In an oil company the downstream business, particularly, goes to market with marketable types of products, dominantly fuels (transportation fuels) and lubricants that have the lion's share of the business. There are other types of products like bitumen and sulfur that are sold to the marketplace. These products are placed into the market place in different channels – one is B2B (selling to businesses – small or large) and the other is the B2C channel (directly offering that product to the consumers, people like us who buy and use those products).

Wipro's solutions target the B2B customers and the B2C customers. These two businesses have some similarities, but a lot of differences as well.

But let's back up a little. Let's think of customer channels.

A Journey Through The Life Cycle

Oil & gas companies sell its products, like motor oil for instance, to another customer, like an automobile service center you can find in your neighborhood, that company then sells to the consumer. How does this all intertwine and deliver the best customer experience to everyone involved?

The team at Wipro decided to take a journey to find out exactly how they could become an even more phenomenal next generation digital solution provider in the order to cash space (O2C).

Simply, O2C refers to the business process for receiving and processing customer sales – and it covers B2B and B2C sales. It's all part of the customer care process.

On Wipro's journey, the team philosophically decided it wanted to take the whole supply chain to the time you actually supply the product and get paid for it. That whole life cycle.

Several years back the way this used to happen was a mix of systematic interactions with the customer over phone and email - traditional ways of managing the orders to cash processes.

"About six years ago our clients invested in and we delivered work in which we could create a lot more web enabled and online means for various customers and stakeholders to interact with you through the process where you could go in and make an order and track that order to fulfillment and beyond," Mishra explained.

That was the onset of touchless customer interaction to give sophistication to the transaction process, but also to keep transaction costs down for oil companies so they could pass some of that cost savings on to the customer.

"That was the starting point of the customer experience in the B2B channel. The new era, the digital next generation customer experience, has gotten a lot more sophisticated and analytical over the last few years," Mishra continued.

Customer Value Transformation (or CVT for short)

Wipro made it a mission to develop the most contemporary capabilities in the marketplace.

The customer value can be defined in two ways. One is how a customer places an order to buy your product and services. The other way is to look at the various means in which you are able to influence that decision.

To enhance the next generation customer experience/customer value Wipro deployed an ecommerce capability that is very much like the experience Amazon offers. The solution is able to manage accounts in a very personalized way. It offers customers a space to place orders, track orders, manage transactional documents, download artifacts and merchandising information.

"It becomes like a one-stop shop that is very, very personalized, extremely intuitive, near real time and allows you to go through the entire transaction that you typically carry out," Mishra said. "A person is able to find products, choose

exactly what they need, find out what is available, pricing, figure out how well and how quickly it can be available, place orders, track orders, receive updates on the orders, pay invoices, and get specific product information."

It is high value digital content and provides full ecommerce capabilities. You can do all of this using any channel – desktop internet, mobile phone or tablet.

Top 5 benefits for an oil & gas company that deploy the CVT or customer experience solutions:

1.   **Customer intimacy** – knowing a lot more granular backgrounds of the behavioral traits of your customer. If a customer comes in to place an order, but places only half an order, you can actually analyze that. It gets you closer to your customer.

2.   **Cost to serve** – it brings down your cost to serve, significantly, without diluting the customer experience that you are introducing. Because you are using technology that is extremely sophisticated – using that technology in a cost effective manner using cloud based technologies etc. the cost to serve is low so you can offer a lot more value to your customer.

3.   **Marketing and promotional effectiveness**. This allows you to roll out products, campaigns and offers in more personalized and effective ways by analyzing your channels and segmenting your customers better.

4.   **Scalability** – can be extended to multiple countries and a higher number of customers, but also multiple lines of business. Different sectors have different ways of buying, using the same platform. So the scalability of the platform spans segments, geographies and the customer base.

5.   **Advanced analytical capabilities**. All these platforms are generating a fairly rich set of data points between your customer and yourself through which you can analyze and drive more insights around pricing effectiveness, around product quality effectiveness and manage any kind of customer complaints and customer issues. So this becomes the source of the foundation for a rich data set that can actually give you unique advantages – it becomes a source of added value.

How Personalized Can It Really Be ... Continuing the Journey

Think of a consumer lubricant business – one where you can drive into to get your car's oil changed or a bevy of other maintenance situations.

The old way of customer interaction would be limited because of the type of point of sale solutions – types of service offerings were limited. Technology was a bottleneck, and you could not personalize a customer because you couldn't identify a customer's need.

"It was a straightjacketed approach," Mishra explained. "It was always a desk based interaction because they had to walk in and have a conversation. The business was viable and profitable, but they longed to get into a much richer experience. To redefine the customer experience."

The company mapped out the customer journey from the time they think of getting an oil change. Where are you able to have a conversation with the customer about his needs, but also be more proactive in offering suggestions or newer value to the customer.

The company wanted to be proactive in its ability to improve or add newer capabilities on a more frequent basis.

The solution in three fundamental areas:

1.   The solution should be hosted in the cloud environment so you don't have any dependency to deploy a technology at a field level/onsite. You can change or make improvements centrally.

2.   The whole solution interaction was digitalized so that the interaction is a lot more intuitive when the customer is standing right next to you. You have access to the customer's complete history. The conversation itself is highly contextual. You can have a progressive discussion with the customer regarding exactly what is needed immediately and what additional offers that you can potentially give to your customer.

3.   Providing mobility – moving away from desktop to mobile and tablet devices so you have customer engagement in a very flexible manner.

As a part of this 18-month journey of transformation, Wipro built the solution and it was tested and deployed. Today, that business that took the journey with Wipro is able to have contextual information at their fingertips about the client while having a conversation with the customer. It also has the ability to cross sell or up sale any product or services knowing the customer's habits and history. The oil company and third party will immediately know any loyalty programs or schemes offered that you have in place – conceptualize and deploy rapidly. This was a significant transformation because now the company is able to manage without technology becoming a bottleneck – a completely different way of transforming business.

Evolving Needs, Solutions That Keep Pace

Customer needs will evolve, and the customer's needs are getting conditioned to various factors.

Understanding what is causing the needs – things like electric vehicles and other factors – is important.

Wipro's solutions will keep pace with:

1. **Modularity** – the old way had many solutions in one platform – now there are independent modules in a platform – the ability to change and modify without re-architecturing.

2. **Use of cloud-based technologies** – making changes is easy on a centralized cloud, and faster. Manage a lot more information more simply and agility by deploying from a centralized location. Without infrastructure or physical dependency.

3. **Customer insight** – in the future a lot of customer insight can be drawn from the cloud. Thus, the oil company will have full access and deeper insight and analytic data.

4. **Taking advantage of network connectivity** – making solutions relevant and sustainable with enhanced network security.

5. **Loyalty** – today an oil company has realized that their growth is not going to happen only based on its own value proposition. Partnership models are becoming a lot more innovative with ways of adding more value for customers - like when an oil company partners with your local grocery store or gasoline provider.

Wipro is building into its solutions – and hoping to drive transformation, customer value and loyalty into the future for generations to come – in the oil & gas space and beyond.

Learn to navigate a rapid paradigm shift in digital transformation in the oil and gas field - get ready to help your company evolve. Download this informative White Paper: Evolution or Revolution: IT / OT convergence means a world of possibilities