CGS®

Transforming Customer Experience in a Digital World

The Playbook:
How to outpace customer demand
with technology in retail and hospitality

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As digital technology arms consumers with more and more information and builds ever-higher expectations for the customer experience, businesses are striving not just to meet those expectations, but exceed them.

#CustomerExperienceAmbassadors

In the retail and hospitality industries, businesses are rising to that challenge by arming associates with frontline digital technology that employs shopper and guest data to personalize the experience while maximizing the security of that data.

"Today's digitally savvy customers demand more customized experiences in store and online," says Mike Mills, Sr. Vice President Global Sales and Solutions at CGS. "Retailers and other service-oriented businesses have to meet that demand by refocusing on the company's most valuable asset—their associates.

Empowering employees to provide a high level of customer and guest satisfaction is the key to creating growth, profitability, and strong relationships in this hyper competitive environment."

20%

of hoteliers to **enhance guest engagement** by adding **front desk tablets**

Equipping associates with tablets and smart devices lets them stand side by side with customers, so they can walk guests through product details, pricing, even reviews, and tailor interactions to each individual. And as associates learn how to fully exploit these technologies and the skills necessary to better engage with customers, the guest experience will only improve.

This trend toward motivating and inspiring employees through technology and training increases engagement and reduces turnover in the constantly churning customer service sectors, especially retail, where more than 7 in 10 storefronts have deployed mobile POS units or are planning to do so in 2015[1]. The move can also be seen in the plans of 20% of hoteliers to enhance guest engagement by adding front-desk tablets in the next 18 months[2] as well as the intent of 29% of restaurants to rollout tableside payment devices in 2015[3].

29%

of restaurants to rollout **tableside payment devices** in 2015

#MobileExperience

"Mobile Point of Sale technology, touchscreen kiosks and self-checkout allow associates to provide customers with the best, most consistent service possible," affirms Mills. "Because when associates get out from behind the counter, they can fortify customers with the information and support they need to close the deal on the spot."

Not surprisingly, this one-to-one connection between associates and customers is going through something of a resurgence, but providing technology is only the first step. **Businesses must also provide associates with the technical support they need to make the most of these devices as well as the technical and soft skills required to create memorable experiences.** Only then will they be positioned to build a large, loyal customer base.

"CGS's Enterprise Learning group has a long standing relationship with a luxury hotel and resort company to deliver just-in-time skills-building courses," says Doug Stephen, Sr. VP and General Manager Enterprise Learning at CGS. "To meet the changing needs of employees and match a new mobile-friendly customer experience strategy, these customized courses are now delivered via iPads worldwide to over 20,000 employees- enhancing introductory onboarding courses, management, leadership and compliance training.

The result our client has experienced **higher employee satisfaction scores** and an **annual spot on the 100 Best Places to Work For list."**

Next-generation room locks in hotels that allow guests to open doors with their smart phones to be in place in hotels in the next 18 months

41%
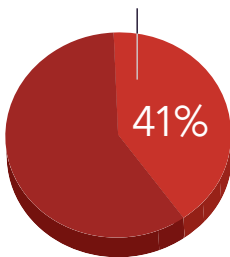
The option of paying for meals with mobile wallet applications to be available in restaurants in 2015

37%
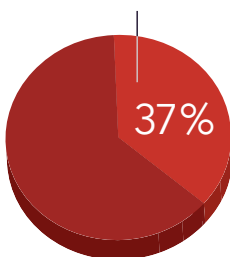
Investing in associates emboldens them to become fully engaged ambassadors between a business and its customers. It makes associates feel more enthusiastic about their work, which, in turn, reduces turnover and builds long-term relationships with customers.

#MakingItPersonal

Another key to creating these memorable customer experiences is making them more personal. Many businesses are accomplishing this by employing locationing technologies (like beacons) to apply customer-specific information, send targeted coupons and offers directly to guest devices, and provide personalized information and service throughout a guests' visit.

Plus, as people develop more digital expertise, businesses are working to further empower consumers with customer-facing technologies that provide greater ownership of the whole experience and boost loyalty even more. Examples of these kinds of guest-facing devices include next-generation room locks in hotels that allow guests to open doors with their smart phones (to be in place in 41% of hotels in the next 18 months),[4] the option of paying for meals with mobile wallet applications (to be available in 37% of restaurants in 2015),[5] and in retail businesses: enabling shoppers with functionality to order out-of-stock items directly from the store or search for them in nearby store inventories.

#OutsourceHelpDesk

Moreover, as mobile technology for associates and guests becomes an integral part of the customer experience, providing (both the employees and the customers) the necessary level of IT help desk support will ensure that more transactions run smoothly. But because most retail and hospitality enterprises can't offer the level of service required in house, outsourcing can be a cost effective option for providing necessary support for employees and a better overall experience for customers.

Outsourced technical support desks have the added benefit of providing a team of associates well versed in a wide range of technologies. These support personnel understand the customer experience and can support multiple locations and multiple languages, ensuring a consistent brand experience.

#DataSecurity

Lastly, what customer experience would be complete without the assurance that private data are secure? In response to the threat of sophisticated data breaches that have struck some of the most prominent businesses in the world and the imminent shift in counterfeit transaction liability, a large majority of retail and hospitality industry businesses are improving customer data security through such technologies as EMV (the global standard for secure chip care transactions).

For more than three-fourths (77%) of retail industry CIOs, data security ranks as one of the top three business priorities in 2015.[6] As a result, rather than assume liability for fraudulent transactions and lose the confidence of their customers, **83% of retailers are either EMV compliant today or plan to be so within the next 12 months.[7]** And retailers aren't alone in taking this threat seriously. In the hospitality industry, only **1 in 4 restaurants (25%) say they won't be ready** when the October 2015 liability shift takes place[8] and hotels aren't far behind.

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#ConnectedGuest

The rise of an increasingly well-informed and technologically adept client base has made the customer focus of the already guest-centric retail and hospitality sectors sharper than ever. That's why the most forward-thinking companies are investing so heavily in creating the connected experiences that customers' value. Many retail and hospitality businesses are implementing new digital technologies, but not all are leveraging them to their full potential.

Proper use can lead to benefits like **more engaged employees, more loyal customers, better insights and analytics, and faster service.** Businesses that don't neglect the fundamentals - the right training and support to bolster technology use **will stay ahead of consumer trends and the competition.**

The customers of tomorrow will expect even more. Getting the fundamentals right will lay the foundation and ease the way for rapid roll-out of technologies yet to come.

How CGS Can Help

CGS Learning: CGS's Enterprise Learning group builds and scales powerful workforces through custom professional development solutions that include custom eLearning content, globally-delivered instructor-led training, blended learning courses and learning staff augmentation solutions. We craft innovative solutions that are essential to scaling your people, processes and performance.

100%

SLA attainment for 13 months running for a Fortune 500 department store

Our expert team is comprised of award-winning designers, authored program managers and forward-looking corporate learning strategists. Together, we've developed over 3,500 custom learning courses on topics ranging from corporate compliance training and employee onboarding to leadership development.

CGS BPO Outsourcing: CGS is an award-winning provider of tech support, help desk and customer care services. Our agents are problem-solvers rather than script-readers, and have the experience to support a variety of devices from touch screens, to POS

terminals, handhelds, tablets, kiosks, chip & pin devices, to tableside or room side mobile ordering devices, to kitchen displays, loyalty systems, to mobile check-in devices. In fact, our agents' can-do attitude achieved 100% SLA attainment for 13 months running for a Fortune 500 department store.

With the perfect blend of technical and interpersonal skills, CGS agents are prepared to handle rapidly changing technologies and business needs while making each interaction personalized and enjoyable. We empower employees and care for your customers so you can build long-lasting relationships.

Learn more at www.cgsinc.com

[1] Retail Info Systems News: "Your Last Traditional POS."
[2] Hospitality Technology, 2015 Lodging Technology Study.
[3] Hospitality Technology, 2015 Restaurant Technology Study.
[4] Hospitality Technology, 2015 Lodging Technology Study.
[5] Hospitality Technology, 2015 Restaurant Technology Study.
[6] National Retail Federation: Retail CIO Download "Agenda 2015: Secure & Innovate."
[7] Retail Info Systems News: 12th Annual Store Systems Study 2015: Retail Technology Spend Trends "Making Stores Matter."
[8] Hospitality Technology, 2015 Restaurant Technology Study.