

Announcing the SOCAP Customer Engagement Framework

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Today's constantly changing marketplace requires organizations to have accurate assessments of their current state and solid plans for future success to continue to grow and prosper. A maturity model can help provide a snapshot of existing customer service operations and a roadmap for the future. Although maturity models are not a new concept, the concept is growing in usage and popularity as more organizations look for ways to assess their current state, differentiate their position in the market and plan for ongoing growth. At a minimum, maturity models provide:

- ✓ A starting place
- ✓ A common language
- ✓ A way to define a current state and improvement roadmap
- ✓ A framework for prioritizing actions

SOCAP believes in the value of maturity models to help its members identify strengths and gauge opportunities to improve customer engagement. This paper includes information on SOCAP's maturity model history, announces a new, more robust tool and offering and shares the results of the recent pilot test of this new tool.

The Beginning: Background

Ten years ago, SOCAP developed a Contact Center Maturity Model (CCMM) that offered a body of knowledge on the strategic direction of contact centers. The CCMM provided SOCAP members with a new way to look at contact centers, understand and optimize their performance and plan for future enhancements. The tool proved to be helpful and many in the SOCAP community benefitted from several uses of the CCMM, including strategic planning, onboarding new employees, communicating the consumer engagement function and elevating the role it plays within the larger organization. As time passed and the market and business conditions changed, the report lost its effectiveness.

Fast-forward Ten Years: Today

SOCAP, again in partnership with customer experience experts CX Act (formerly TARP Worldwide), developed a broader and more strategic model called the [SOCAP Customer Engagement Framework](#) (CE Framework). This robust Framework provides a view of where companies fit in a maturity continuum and outlines a roadmap for future improvements. While the CCMM benefited contact centers for several years, SOCAP's mission has developed beyond the contact center alone. With SOCAP's expanded emphasis on the broader field of Customer Care and Engagement, the [CE Framework](#) tool reflects this evolution.

Today's enhanced Framework was designed to provide SOCAP members the ability to assess their current customer engagement status function and point the way for future enhancements. It also allows our SOCAP community the ability to dig deep into their present day-to-day processes and methodologies, understand where they are, benchmark against best practices and forecast future improvements.

Additional benefits of the [CE Framework](#) include:

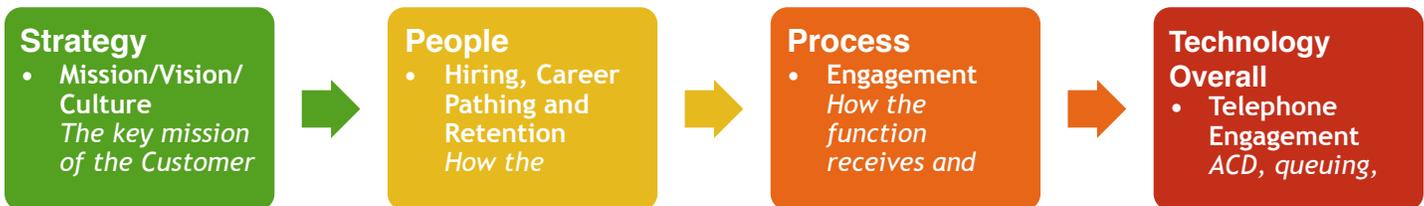
- ✓ Strategic planning direction
- ✓ Guidance relating to the organization's continuous improvement journey
- ✓ Strengths and areas of opportunity to help customer care organizations develop and optimize their function
- ✓ Assistance identifying where the customer care department fits relative to others, including a roadmap for improvement
- ✓ A common language for customer care and engagement within the SOCAP community

The [CE Framework](#) assesses the four categories of Strategy, People, Process and Technology, and assigns four different levels at progressively higher maturity: Transactional, Standardized, Optimized and Strategic

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Asset. The Framework associates various characteristics that are typical for each category and phase of maturity. It focuses on the belief that the maturity of the customer engagement function is an evolutionary process, provides a current-standing snapshot and outlines actions that can be taken to help the organization further move up the continuum.

Description of CE Framework Categories and Subcategories



After members complete an online assessment, a customized report outlines where their organization fits within each of the 4 categories and 17 subcategories (identified in the table above). A company can have varying levels of maturity for each of the different categories. Therefore, the [CE Framework](#) provides the opportunity to review all the different areas of the customer care and engagement experience and determine a strategic plan; this plan identifies the levers that need more immediate attention as well as the elements that require near-term and long-term focus, based on company-specific business objectives.

For example, a company can be Optimized for Measurements and Insights, but Transactional for Accessibility. In a situation like this, a company can decide whether there is a return on the investment required to increase the hours of customer support or add additional contact channels to move up the continuum for Accessibility. The Framework helps companies determine whether to allocate resources focusing on other elements within the Framework that will make a greater business impact.

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SOCAP Customer Engagement Framework Pilot

The development of the Framework was anchored in industry research and expertise, with a large amount of SOCAP member input through thought leadership, literature review, deep dive of various research studies, benchmarking reviews and member focus groups. The Framework is populated by an assessment tool that consists of a series of questions about the current Customer Care and Engagement function. Responses to multiple questions are scored to make up the assessed level of maturity for each element that rolls into the category and up to the overall level. In June 2014, 53 SOCAP members participated in the initial pilot test of the Framework and completed the assessment tool. Of the 53 participants, 18% were Transactional, 31% Standardized, 35% Optimized and 16% Strategic Asset.

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Findings To Date

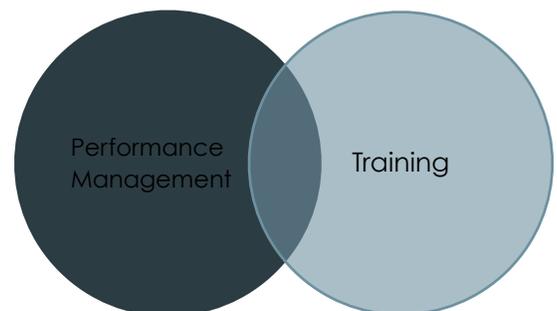
As previously noted, the SOCAP [CE Framework](#) is comprised of four categories: Strategy, People, Process and Technology. Many connections exist between the various elements and categories, with no single area standing on its own. A discussion of the interesting connections between the elements and findings that were identified in the pilot test respondents for each category follows.

Strategy: Mission/Vision/Culture; Organization; Strategic Planning; Accessibility

- ✓ As we expected, a correlation exists between customer accessibility and the size of the customer engagement team. Organizations with more front-line agents generally scored higher on the continuum in regard to accessibility; so, organizations with larger customer care teams offered more contact channels, provided more self-help options and tended to have expanded hours of operation.
- ✓ An interesting area was the correlation between mission and vision and partner relations. Organizations who focus more on partner service-level agreements have more defined partner processes, procedures and check-points. These companies were higher on the continuum in regard to mission, vision and culture.
- ✓ A low correlation was identified between size of consumer care budget and strategic planning. Organizations with varying budgets landed at all levels of the continuum, indicating that budget size is not an indicator when it comes to short- and long-term strategic planning.

People: Hiring, Career Pathing and Retention; Training; Performance Coaching, Management and Compensation; Operations and Staffing Management

- ✓ It was surprising to find that the size of the customer care team had no relation to hiring and career pathing. An initial hypothesis was made that larger teams would have more advanced hiring and career path processes and procedures, but that proved not to be the case. Of those organizations that scored high in this element, both small and large customer care teams had detailed and successful plans in place - plans that also included recruiting and career paths.
- ✓ One of the most highly correlated pairs from the [CE Framework](#) is related to training and performance coaching/management. The more advanced a consumer care organization is when it comes to training and ongoing development, the more advanced they are in coaching, management and compensation. A company is more likely to have stellar processes and procedures in place to measure the performance of their teams, coach and reward if they have a strong training foundation.

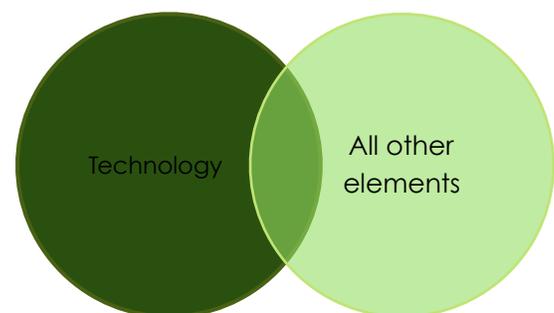


Process: Engagement; Measurements; Insights; Partner Relations; Crisis Management

- ✓ Across the board, most of the companies who took part in the [CE Framework](#) landed higher on the continuum in regard to crisis management. An initial hypothesis was made that it would be driven more by industry (i.e., pharmaceutical companies would probably land higher than retail), but that proved not to be the case. Our final findings lead us to believe that SOCAP organizations are ahead of the curve in crisis preparedness and are fully aware of circumstances that could occur if the proper processes and procedures are not in place.
- ✓ There was a low correlation between the size of the consumer engagement team and how an organization places in regard to measurements. Initial thoughts considered that larger teams would land higher on the continuum when it came to measurement (i.e., more people on the team translated to more individuals able to analyze data and provide insights). This proved not to be the case.
- ✓ As expected, insights process and engagement process are highly correlated. Organizations with more advanced engagement processes characterized by well-documented processes and seamless transition across channels are also advanced with their insights process (e.g., integrated and robust voice of the customer).
- ✓ Interestingly, regardless of organization budget, insights process can still place high on the continuum. Companies with smaller consumer engagement department budgets landed just as high as companies with large budgets when it came to the insights process. This tends to indicate that an effective insights process has more to do with actionability than size of budget.

Technology: Telephone Engagement; Non-Telephone Engagement; CRM, Contact and Data Tracking; Knowledge Management

- ✓ Not surprisingly, mature technology placement tends to be highly correlated with almost every other element on the continuum. Companies who have a more robust technological foundation tended to place higher on almost all other elements within the [CE Framework](#). However, correlation does not mean causality. It is just as likely that organizations that are more mature in other areas of the Framework are also more likely to invest in technology solutions.
- ✓ As you would expect, a high correlation exists between CRM/contact and data tracking and insights. This correlation points to the importance of a company having the infrastructure to collect and report on the data.



Future Trends

When pilot test respondents were asked about future corporate initiatives that will impact their area, the three most frequently mentioned were:

1. Increased involvement with social media monitoring and response
2. Data linkage and integration
3. Increased use of the mobile channel

What the Future Holds: Moving Forward

So what's in store for the SOCAP Customer Engagement Framework moving forward? First, we are excited to announce that the assessment is transitioning to an online tool! During the second quarter of 2015, you will have the opportunity to access the self-service assessment through the SOCAP website. Through the self-service option, you will complete an online questionnaire that will be automatically tabulated and provide a report informing you of your organization's level for each of the 4 categories and 17 subcategories, in addition to suggested actions to move to the next level within the continuum.

Aside from gathering answers to a series of questions, the tool will be built with the ability to share the assessment online among various members of your customer care team - both internal and external (in the event you have partners/outsourcers who handle some of your customer care functions). For organizations who have several people contributing to the assessment, a new feature will allow participants the ability to track input by each member.

Another added feature to the [CE Framework](#) will be the ability to track your organization's progress over time. If, for example, a company would like to take the assessment annually, the tool will retain past reports and allow you the ability to benchmark your own growth. So not only will the [CE Framework](#) provide a roadmap for future enhancements, it will also track your company's success as you continue to move along the continuum.

The self-service assessment will provide an on-the-spot readout providing information on where you placed on the continuum and next steps for future movement. While the standardized readout will provide a good starting point, it can only go so far in providing an understanding of the current state and making concrete recommendations for improvement opportunities. For those companies who would like a more customized approach to get a deeper understanding of their results and opportunities, SOCAP is offering a second option: a facilitated validation and assessment.

This option also starts with completing the same online assessment questionnaire. However, interviews, assessment and analysis by SOCAP's partner CX Act. In addition to interviews and review of processes and reports, CX Act consultants will conduct an on-site assessment and facilitate a half-day, in-person review of the findings and a roadmap development planning session. Please contact SOCAP for additional information or to sign-up for the Facilitated Assessment.

For those companies who have yet to take part in the assessment, your time is coming. Soon you'll have your chance to participate in yet another valuable benefit of being a SOCAP member. And for those who participated in the initial pilot, the opportunity to track and benchmark your organization's progress is right around the corner. The launch of the online tool will prove to be beneficial to those taking the assessment for the first time and for repeat participants. Stay tuned as more exciting information becomes available on how you and your organization can participate and put this valuable tool to work.

We look forward to tracking your success!

SOCAP International
www.socap.org

Founded in 1973, SOCAP International represents a thriving global profession of best-in-class customer care experts across all industries. SOCAP is a member-driven organization committed to promoting customer care and customer engagement as a competitive advantage in business. The Association's members include vice presidents, directors, managers and supervisors of customer care and consumer affairs from top Fortune/Forbes 1000 companies as well as hundreds of business partner organizations. SOCAP provides the educational tools and professional resources to help its members to drive business transformation within their

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companies. Additionally, SOCAP's exclusive network gives members access to thousands of customer care experts across the globe. Visit www.socap.org for more information on SOCAP International.