Closer to the Customer - creating a social and mobile relationship with banking clients
Introduction

A growing number of banking customers access basic account information through their mobile device, and are looking to extend this further. Individuals are also consuming social media in ever increasing numbers, firstly interacting with friends and family, then expanding to interactions with companies they already have - or plan to have - a relationship with. Mobile and social platforms present real opportunities for financial organizations to get closer to their customer by developing social media and mobile strategies that are underpinned by connected business systems.

The traditional banking model of a corporate headquarters, connected to multiple satellite branches, is expensive and becoming less relevant to many customers. Customers may experience that this distributed structure is prone to duplication of communications and the loss of documents between branches and headquarters. They will certainly be aware that this loop tends to slow things down. On the other hand, some customers will still prefer to visit a branch, and technology can help considerably with their experiences. The branch can be equipped with automated machines for many typical services, including cash withdrawal, check deposits, and the scanning and validation of identification (ID) documents. In the more traditional model it is not uncommon for branch staff to take an ID document from the customer, go into the back office to photocopy it and then return it to the customer. The photocopied document is then put into internal mail to the headquarters. Once received it is likely to be scanned into the ECM system and then validated - a clear duplication of effort. The use of a self-service scan console feeding a distributed capture system and connected to the headquarters system will eliminate the duplication, and can also perform an initial validation check while the customer is still present. A further extension is the use of biometrics, comparing stored customer information with a scan of their fingerprint or perhaps a biometric signature, reducing the need for document ID checks. This modern branch model that utilizes automated machines for the most common transactions also enables the organization to reduce staffing costs, providing further business benefit.

Mobile and Online

Mobile banking has come a long way since its beginnings as a telephone to call-center process. Customers are now able to access their accounts online 24/7, using a range of portable devices, and with no waiting for calls to be answered. The prevalence of smartphones and internet-connected tablet computers is resulting in another shift in how consumers access and expect to access information. Most financial organizations allow customers to perform simple balance queries on their accounts, and set up alerts for when funds run low, but the technology exists to perform a full range of transactions, as well as value-add services such as mobile capture. Even now, the apps with more functionality give a customer multiple-account information (including credit card and mortgage accounts), allow the transfer of funds, including creating a new payee, as well as geo-locating ATMs or nearby branches.

Utilizing the camera on the smart device to scan in supporting documents, or even signatures on agreement forms, is a further logical step, potentially eliminating several loops of mail or email exchange. This immediate capture means that workflows can be triggered in the back-office, with document validation and forms data capture happening immediately. If the customer needs to find different documents, they can be alerted straight away, and are much more likely to follow through. AIIM surveys have shown that mobile and distributed capture can provide a potential improvement in the speed of response by a factor of five times on average. Financial organizations that are able to embrace and integrate mobile device services can benefit from a clear competitive advantage. As we can see from Figure 1, on page two, less than 5% of those in the financial sector are currently utilizing smart devices for customer (or agent) capture, but nearly half can see the future benefit of doing so.
Security

Security for mobile banking is obviously a primary concern for both financial organizations and their customers. Security is often cited as a reason for not deploying a fully functional mobile solution, but since many large well-known banks have implemented such functionality, the argument is beginning to ring hollow. Mobile Device Management (MDM) platforms enable organizations to roll out apps in a secure way.

Multi-channel Communications

Online, mobile, call-center and in-person transactions create a truly multi-channel environment that the financial institution must be able to handle in an integrated way in its workflow and customer support systems. If the internal systems cannot cope with such a dynamic environment then many of the benefits will be lost. It is vital, for example, that call-center staff have full access to all types of customer communication within minutes rather than hours, let alone days. This can be where isolated point-solutions within the business can fall down, compared to an integrated ECM system linked to CRM and the banking system. Multi-channels are also relevant to output management, with customers demanding paper documents, emails, electronic documents, viewable documents on the web, SMS, faxes and so on. Document integration can facilitate simultaneous output across the channels, with multiple templates, branding, and marketing messages.

Social

Social media has had a massive impact in the consumer world but commercial organizations have been slower to adopt this technology. The impact of social media can be significant, especially in the areas of brand image and customer interaction. Social media also presents another opportunity to interact with both prospective and existing customers. Financial institutions can engage with prospective customers, provide information, and answer questions using social media channels that customers are familiar with. Existing customers may find social media an accessible platform through which to ask questions regarding their accounts, but of greater concern to organizations should be the fact that unhappy customers are able to share negative experiences with the wider social community.

Financial institutions therefore need to monitor social media channels and what is being said about them, both positive and negative. This gives the organization an opportunity to quickly contact the customer regarding the communication, but it also requires a strategy for social media monitoring such as integration with marketing and public relations systems. If contact is made with an unhappy customer, it becomes
even more important that the communications record is up-to-date with the latest customer interactions, over all channels. Another opportunity for an organization is to connect the social media monitoring with customer records, providing a powerful sentiment analysis tool, and an even better opportunity to “know the customer.”

*Figure 2: How are you monitoring sentiment on external social media channels?*³
(N=35 Finance and Banking)

**Conclusion**

The communication landscape for financial organizations is changing rapidly with the adoption of mobile and social communications. Organizations which can adapt and change within this environment can expect a clear competitive advantage, by becoming closer to their customers and quickly responding to their needs. Providing customers with a comprehensive integrated solution for online and mobile access will enable them to interact in an engaging way, while also providing cost reductions and process efficiencies. The key message regarding social media is to integrate it into existing functions in a proactive way and develop a clear strategy that is supported by business processes.

**References**

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About the author

Doug Miles is Director of the AIIM Market Intelligence Division. An early pioneer of document management systems, Doug has been involved in their evolution from technical solution to enterprise infrastructure platform. Doug has produced a series of AIIM survey reports and white papers on user issues and drivers for Capture, ECM, Records Management, SharePoint, Social Business, Big Data, Mobile and Cloud.