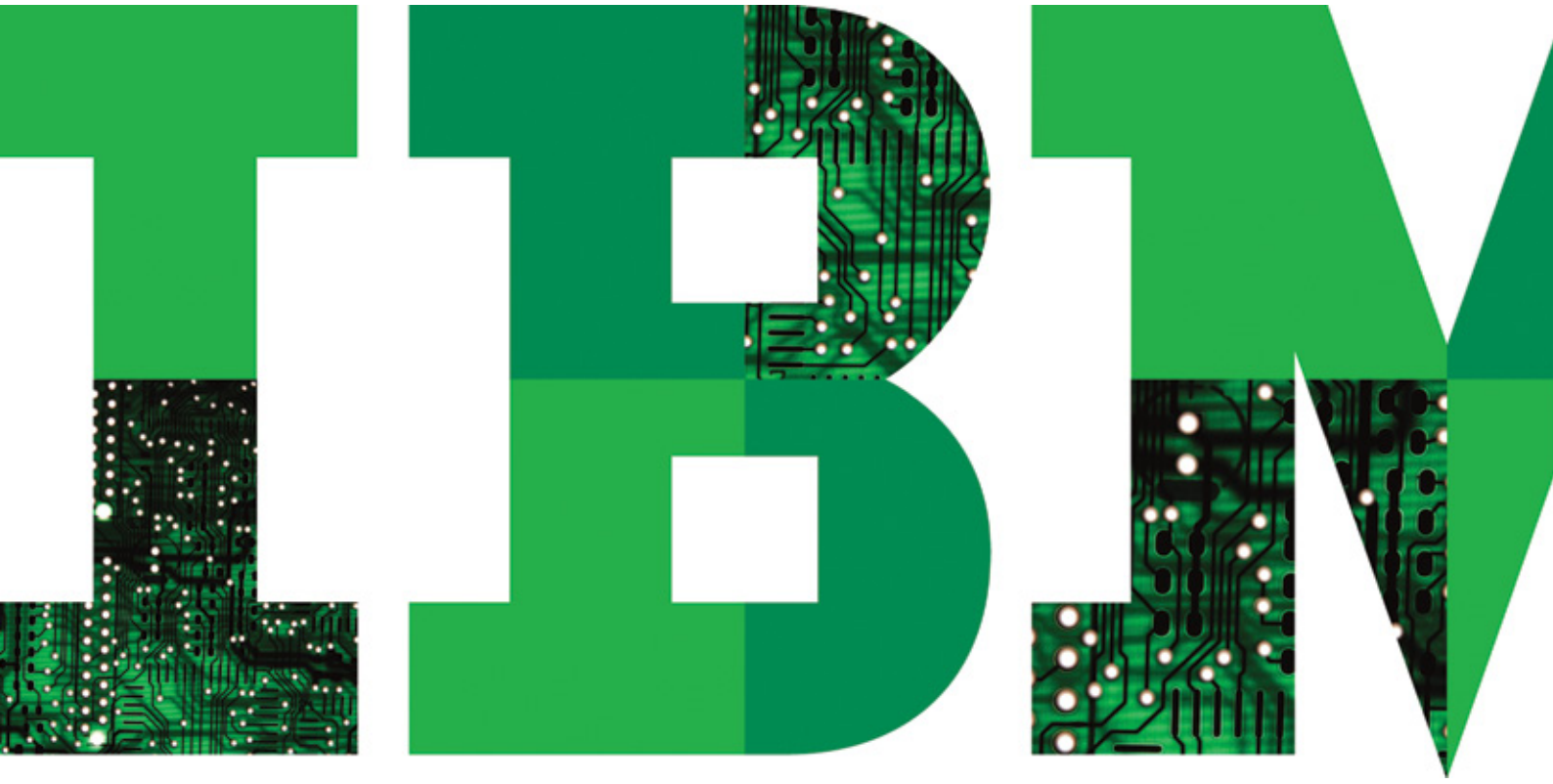
IBM Global Business Services
Thought Leadership White Paper

June 2011

Smarter Channels

Which channels will you bet on?



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Executive summary

Within the last few years we have witnessed unprecedented growth in the choice of channels that customers can use to interact with a business. What was a fairly straightforward collection of predictable interactions – face-to-face, mail, phone, fax, web – has become far more complex with the advent of mobile, social media and virtual worlds. Couple this complexity with customers' unrelenting desire for an integrated, end-to-end multichannel experience and the need for organisations to shape and manage the right channel mix has never been more urgent.

IBM's recent research confirms our belief that while the accelerating pace of channel innovation and transformation is generating substantial challenges, it is also creating opportunities for organisations to redefine where and how they want to compete.

Future prognosis – the next three to five years

Our research suggests that five trends are likely to play out over the next few years:

- Customers will gain even more control over how they interact with organisations and each other
- Mobile internet will dominate communications, marginalising the more expensive traditional channels to focus on 'relationship' building
- Channel distinction will disappear for customers as they converge onto single devices (e.g. smartphones), and organisations will have to provide consistency across channels
- Trust and security will be basic requirements
- Relevancy and 'mode' will be key differentiators for attracting and keeping loyal customers.

In summary, within three to five years, customers will expect to do what they want, when and how, enabled by invisible, flexible technology.

Today's challenge – the 'traditional' business model

Today, very few, if any, organisations are demonstrating a consistent, cross-channel customer experience, despite the fact that doing so is technically feasible. In our experience, the constraint is business rather than technical. Often we find organisations treat channel deployment as a 'tactical' decision that can be switched on (or off) quickly and easily. Some see certain channels as a way of building a 'barrier' between customer and organisation – perhaps to avoid revealing its inadequacies. Others manage channels separately, sometimes with competing objectives – for example, some retailers have store or field staff competing against internet and/or contact centre teams for sales.

This is generating an enormous amount of wasted effort, time and money. We still find that more than 50 percent of calls into contact centres can be avoided by 'getting it right' first time. With a cost spectrum across the channels ranging from more than $100 down to less than $0.1 per customer interaction, choosing the right channel is critical to commercial success.

Some aspects of traditional business models need to be challenged and re-defined to exploit the opportunities these trends present. Customer-facing leaders consistently tell us that they do not really understand the explosion of new channels and new media, they cannot afford to invest in excellence in every channel and do not know which channels to invest in and which to minimise. They want to know how to align products/services, customer segments and channels with their brand positioning.

The need for organisations to shape and manage the right channel mix has never been more urgent.

Recommendations

From the experience we have gained with numerous multichannel transformations, both in IBM and with our clients, we make two recommendations for those who want to tackle this challenge and exploit its enormous opportunities:

1. **Put channels on the strategic agenda** – give executive responsibility for your multichannel strategy: determine and invest in the channels aligned to your portfolio of brand positioning, target customer segments and product/service set.
2. **Choose a 'Smarter Channels' approach** – understand your target customers' real preferences for how they want to interact with you and each other. Bring channels into the core of your operating model, unifying the customer experience. Based on your business strategy, propositions, target customers and brand, select the channels in which to excel.

In this paper, we bring together IBM primary research, the views of recognised experts, and insights from our numerous client engagements across the world to shed light on the key trends we think will influence channel preferences over the next five years. We address some of the challenges and considerations organisations face as they determine how best to prioritise and invest in their customer-facing channels and we identify the areas where we believe organisations can delight customers, reduce their cost–to-serve and thrive in this demanding environment.

An explosion of complexity?

At the last count, we identified more than 25 discrete channels available for organisations to interact with their customers (Figure 1). It is no surprise that with this broad selection, there have been significant shifts in the way that people and organisations now engage.

Consider the impact of mobile devices alone: we now have global availability, improved usability, Internet access and personalisation via tailored platforms and applications. Mobiles have delivered worldwide connectivity at a startling rate, transforming the control and immediacy with which customers can access information and perform product and price comparisons. Social networking, blogs, tweets and online peer reviews have amplified and accelerated word-of-mouth to such a degree that a single message can make its way to millions within minutes. Citizens used mobile devices to mobilise support for the Chinese earthquake victims in 2010 even before the government had asked for help.

Ford Motor Company generated more than four million YouTube views, and three million Twitter impressions that resulted in 50,000 people (97 percent non-Ford owners) expressing interest in buying the re-vamped Fiesta before it was even launched[1]. Mobile technology played a significant role in the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt in early 2011[2].

60% of UK people prefer to use the phone with family and close friends.

— Customer Experience Services, July 2010

As channels continue to proliferate, channel choice is becoming a 'norm for customers... and harder for organisations to 'get it right'.

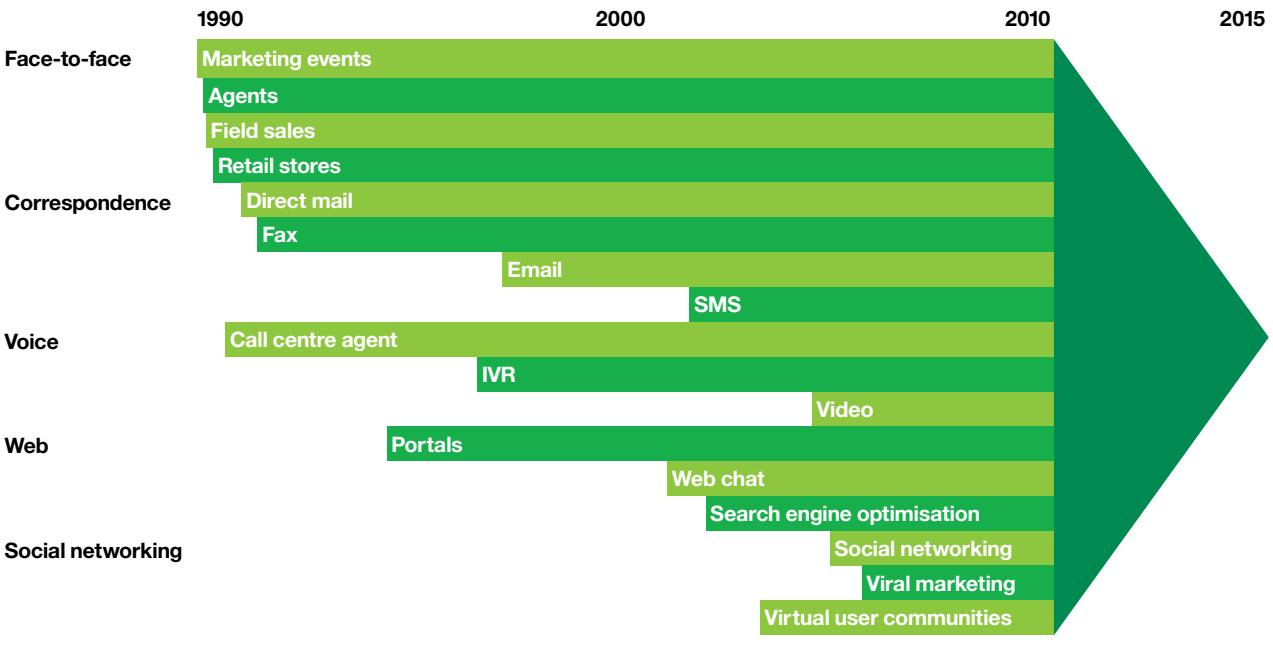

Figure 1: A history of key channels (non-exhaustive list)

Both the proliferation of channels and the immediacy of access that mobile technologies give have led to significant changes in customers' buying behaviours and how organisations fulfil them. It is important to note that this is not simply a matter of more channels from which to choose. Rather, each channel provides a different set of characteristics that are attractive to customers and suppliers for different reasons at different times. Furthermore, customers use the options available to them according to their preferences in different ways: some people have a preference to talk, whilst others prefer correspondence – and this can change significantly according to the type of interaction or the situation they are in. The customer channel requirements then need to be balanced against the organisations' desire to optimise profits by providing the best channel mix to generate sales and customer loyalty and the lowest cost-to-serve. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach, but for most, there may be a few that are best suited.

77% of UK adults are now online, 60% every day.

— ONS, August. 2010

What will happen in the next three to five years?

As organisations decide which channels to invest in for the future and how they are deployed, we predict the following trends will have a significant impact on customers' channel preferences and buying behaviours over the next three to five years, and should be taken into consideration.

18% of adults do not use the web in the UK – 90% of these are aged 65+ years.

— ONS, August .2010

Communication, interaction and consumption will be dominated by the Internet

Within the next three to five years, the Internet will be the omni-present underlying architecture for customer communication. Its cost, quality and benefits of interoperability will mean that most channels will be Internet-based. The Internet offers such formidable cost advantages that – provided the customer experience can be cracked – it will tend to win out in all those cases not needing rich human interaction, and even some that do. Examples include video conferencing, the wider acceptance of digital signatures which will eventually replace the need for paper faxes, and Skype as an alternative to connecting over the phone. We expect EDI will fade like the video cassette to be replaced by secure Internet services, while 'whitemail' direct marketing will become marginalised in a niche 'low volume' channel.

'Social media' is here to stay

The recent and prolific rise in social media has created an irreversible shift in the way we acquire and share information. The use of easy-to-access tools that enable digital communication, collaboration and sharing of digital assets means that we can now broadcast, source and distribute information across our trusted networks more quickly and easily than ever before. Fundamentally, consumers are now in control without the need to reach out to retailers, manufacturers or service provides to determine how suitable a product or service might be.

Facebook overtook Google as top US destination site, August 2010.

Today, approximately 80 percent of online users have an account on a social networking site such as Facebook[3]. Social sites are becoming a primary destination for users and represent the next stage in the evolution of customers' online experience, serving as control points for managing and enriching people's digital lifestyle. They bring together user-generated and professional content, communication tools and services, online connections, applications and collaborative tools ranging from blogs and podcasts, to wikis and widgets (see Figure 2).

The positive effect of this can be enormous for organisations as exemplified by Ford.

Social media itself is not a fad or trend, it is here to stay. Organisations must adapt and adopt strategies that fully exploit the opportunities it provides.

23% of UK Internet time is spent on social networking and blogs.

— UK Online Measurement Company, May 2010

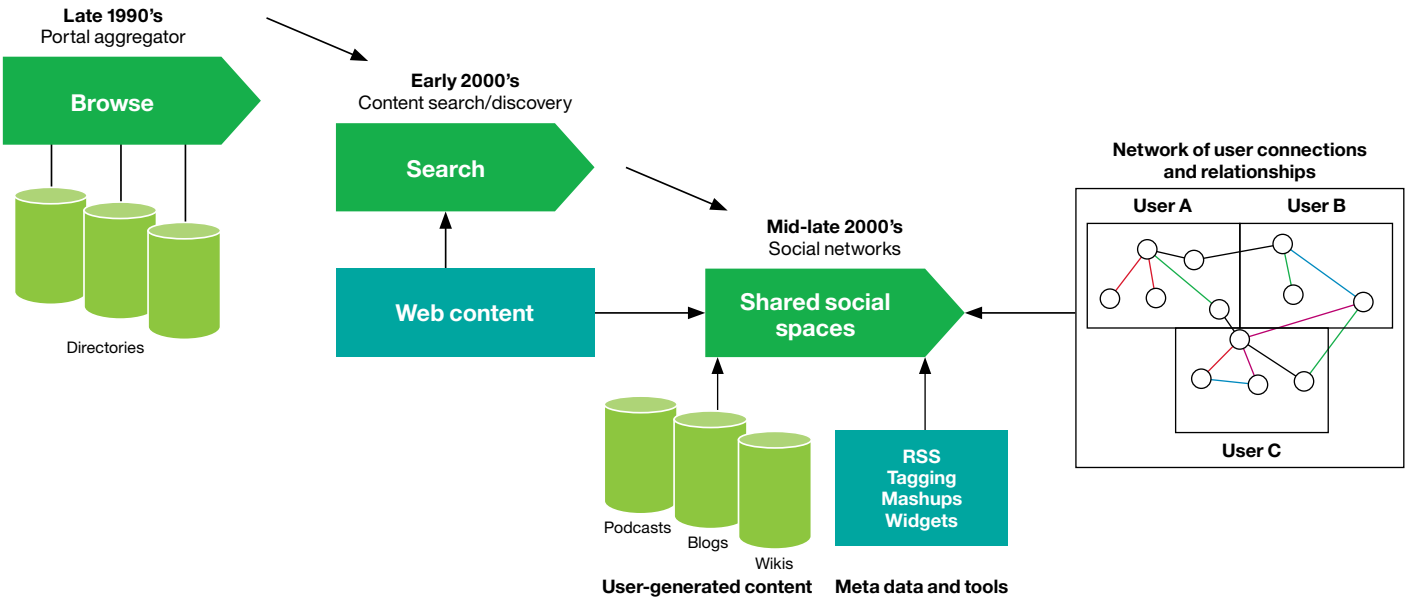

Figure 2: Social networking sites are becoming online portals

Source: Institute for Business Value analysis

People will shift towards 'closed' or 'semi-closed' communities

Customers will spend increasing amounts of time in closed and semi-closed online platforms that require users to register and log in to a service because it provides targeted, relevant and trusted information. Facebook is perhaps the most famous example. These environments may be accessed via the World Wide Web or via an application such as Windows Live or Spotify, both of which use the Internet for data transfer.

Such platforms typically offer greater control over communication and interaction than the wide open web, as well as greater customisation. They are often preferred because they provide better usability and functionality. Furthermore, given that many closed platforms are permission-based and/or users must be invited to register, they are not open to threats from spam and thus appear to offer greater levels of privacy and security.

Harley-Davidson

Harley-Davidson faced extinction in 1983. In 2009, it was a top-50 global brand valued at $7.8 billion. Central to the company's turnaround was Harley's commitment to building a brand community: a group of ardent consumers organised around the lifestyle, activities, and ethos of the brand. Their web presence fully echoes their authentic brand ethos. The ability to drive engagement for both people and their bikes drives Harley-Davidson's success.

These platforms will continue to expand capabilities, features and functionality, enabling users to perform a whole range of interactions and activities from 'within' the platform itself. This could include sales, service, search and communication such as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). In this way, social network platforms will become more than mere additional marketing channels; they could in fact become the main 'go-to' for all remote contact channels in the future.

Smartphone units set to double by 2013 from 2010.

— Morgan Stanley, June 2010

Increasingly, brands and organisations that want to connect, communicate and sell to customers will need to develop strategies for operating appropriately and relevantly in these spaces.

There are nine times more mobile phone accounts than cars in the emerging world.

Customers will expect a highly personalised and customised experience

In time customers will expect all information, contacts, news, applications, services and products to come to them in any easy-to-access location, personalised and customised to suit their individual needs. To deliver these experiences, organisations will need to design content and services that can feed all channels used, whether it is field sales, a store location or the Internet (presented on any device, site or platform). The rising sales of iPhone applications have shown that usability and convenience are of real value.

The corporate website will be repositioned

Increasingly, multiple customer touchpoints will exist beyond or outside the corporate website as customers access content, information and contacts specific to them (and selected by them) via 'closed' communities/platforms. As people's use of applications and third party social networking sites rises, and more organisations gain a social media presence, the corporate website is likely to shift from being the primary point of online contact to being only one of many channels where information and supporting tools and applications reside. Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and others yet to be conceived, will make up the broader repertoire of digital sub-channels in which organisations will need to operate. Maintaining a strong, distinct yet consistent brand image across all channels and across online third party platforms will be a key challenge.

Some of these information and transaction tools may well take on a life of their own. For example, a mortgage calculator or savings tracker, if really useful, could be presented on other content owner sites, or be shared as a useful application in a peer-to-peer environment. Appropriately branded, this could deliver new audiences way beyond the influence of the existing corporate reach. Google Maps and PayPal are existing examples.

Mobile will be much more dominant

Mobile is already widely established, with the vast majority of interactions being voice and SMS. It will continue to accelerate with the onset and wider availability of 3G (moving into 4G) that enables mobile devices' powerful browsers to support data-rich sites.

24% of people in the UK access the Internet on their mobile phones.

— Forrester, May 2009

Data transfer times are becoming acceptable for business users to transfer files and access the Internet, as well as for recreational uses such as video and TV. Mobile content already provides real utilities – an excellent example is Marriott's mobile bookings facility, which generated $1.25 million in the first 100 days of its launch (Forrester, July 2010).

40% of UK mobile users will be accessing the Internet via 3G by 2014.

— Mobile marketing magazine.co.uk, September 2009

With ever-improving 3G, VoIP and mobile device capabilities, allied with increasing social networking and video demand, we believe more people will be connecting to the Internet via mobile devices than with desktop PCs within the next five years (see Figure 3).

43% access the Internet via a mobile device (laptop, mobile phone, etc.).

—ONS, August 2010

Those organisations that overcome the considerable challenges presented by the customers' viewing experience will be the winners – providing functionality-rich applications is not the whole answer. Simplicity and usability will become key drivers of success. A recent survey claimed 34 percent of mobile web users currently find viewing content on a mobile screen difficult. (Equation Research, 2010), and after a bad mobile performance, 44 percent of visitors blame the brand first before anything else (Yahoo! Appetite Study, 2010).

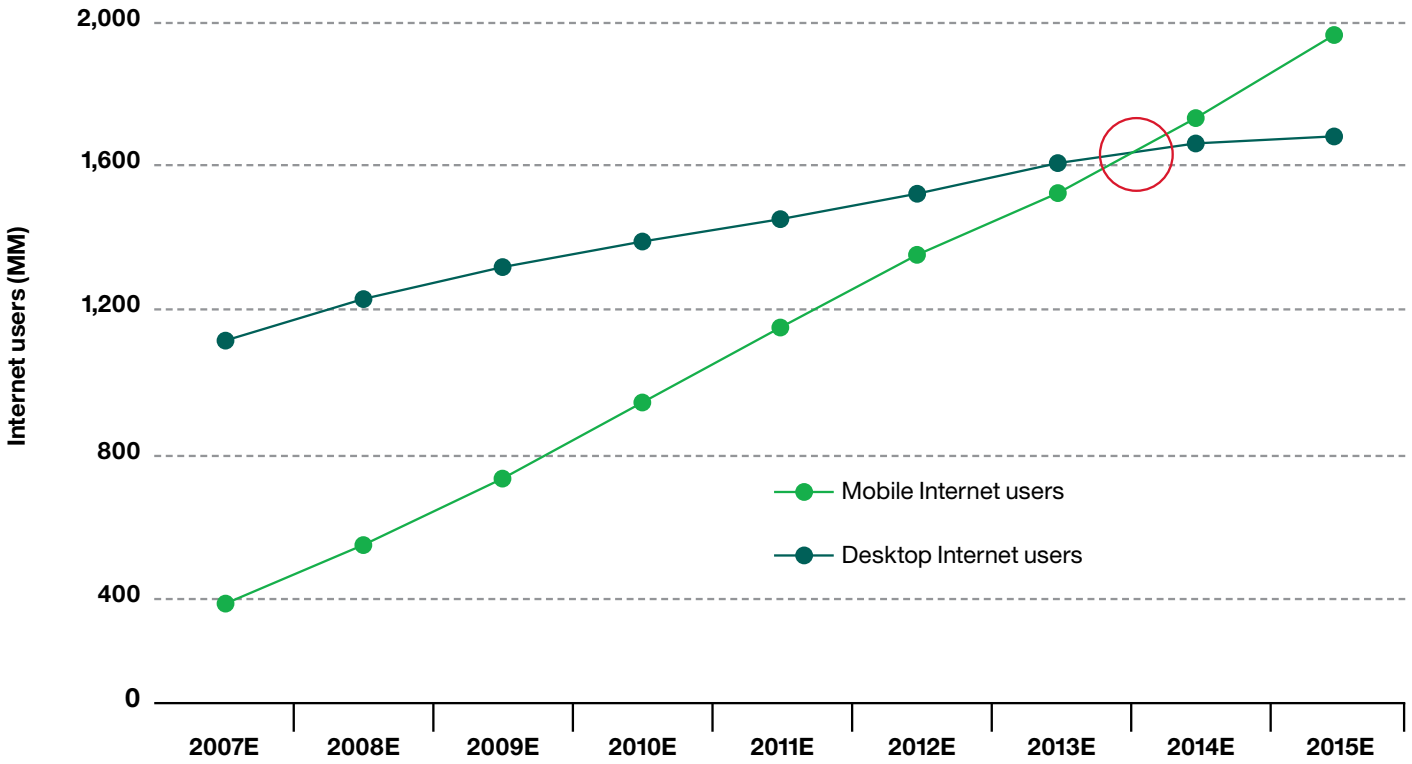

Figure 3: Global mobile vs. desktop Internet user projection, 2007-2015E

Source: Morgan Stanley Research

Devices will converge

Although total convergence into a single device for all customer interactions is unlikely, we anticipate there will be a reduction in the number of distinct devices required to undertake multiple activities. At the same time, the capability of each device is likely to increase, especially amongst those that are Internet-enabled. These devices will start to offer a whole range of new functions and in so doing, could potentially generate yet more customer contact channels. Mobile phones are already facilitating micro payments. The iPad can serve as a 'remote' for smart metering, for example.

As organisations consider their right channel mix, they need to take into account not only the device used (smartphone, tablet, PC, games console), but also the user situation or 'mode' (on the move, at work, on the sofa) and channel choice (instant messenger, email, mobile phone) in order to connect with customers successfully. Whilst devices might converge, there will be greater challenges and opportunities to differentiate as this complexity increases.

The contact centre will become more of a 'relationship centre'

In a similar way that call centres affected 'face-to-face' channels a few decades ago, easy routine transactions – such as checking balances – will be largely automated, with customers only wanting to interact directly with organisations for those emotionally important events, or when self-service channels have not been sufficient. These more complex interactions will have to be managed over multiple channels by representatives who will need a deeper, broader skill set, with knowledge and access to data to support customer requests.

The organisational lines between marketing, sales and service will blur by necessity as customer interactions across multiple channels become more frequent. Meanwhile, the contact centre, already the 'hub' for managing 'assisted' customer interactions (e.g. webchat, SMS, calls, email etc. – see Figure 4), will become the main place where the consistency of multichannel customer experience is driven and understood.

Which of the following channels are currently used in your contact centre? (Overall)

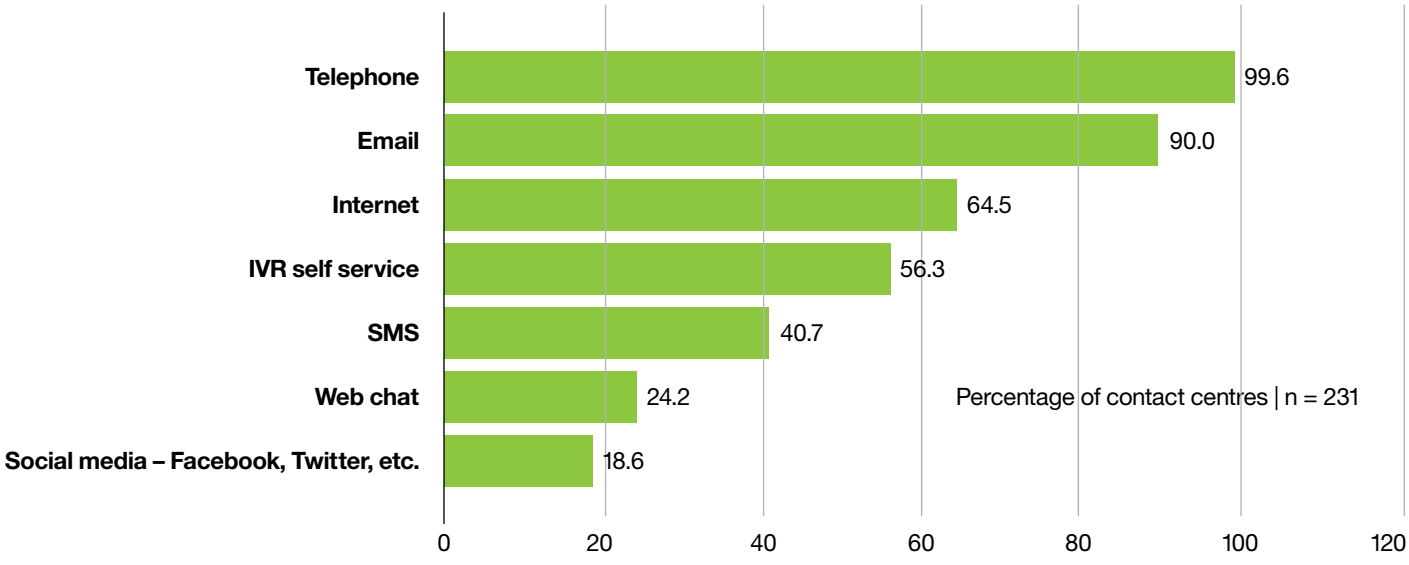

Figure 4: Channel use within the contact centre

Source: Dimension Data, Global Contact Centre Benchmarking Report 2011

As a result, contact centre staff will need to be trained to be communication channel 'gurus': sensitive to the subtleties of each channel, the differing communicating styles needed (depending on location and customer situation e.g., work, family, social etc.) and device used, as well as exemplifying the brand in all customer interactions.

70% of UK people prefer the telephone to contact service providers.

— Customer Experience Services , July 2010

Some organisations, including IBM, are already focusing their 'in-house' (field and contact centre) operations to be 'relationship' managers – supporting high-value customers and moments of truth (such as on-boarding, complaints or retention). We now have additional teams in place responsible for monitoring and proactively engaging with customers via their social media communities such as Facebook and Twitter.

Expect the unexpected

What is certain is that further disruptive factors will appear, each providing a new and unique set of opportunities and challenges to be understood, managed and exploited. Through all this change, the person remains at the heart of it all. To avoid being overwhelmed by continual change, organisations should stay laser-focused on the fundamentals that are driving their customers' expectations, decisions, behaviour and reason for interacting with the organisation. Figure 5 encapsulates our view of the future nature of our customer.

The use of analytics to gain insight into customer adoption and retention of channels, together with the shaping of an internal business culture that is reactive to disruptions, will enable organisations to best position themselves to innovate and exploit new opportunities positively.

Instrumented

They have instantaneous access to information about service providers, products and other consumers' experiences through media channels.

Interconnected

They use multiple channels to interact with other consumers and with their service providers.

Intelligent

They have clearly defined expectations of what they want from service providers now and in the future.

Figure 5: The 'smarter' customers?

How to tackle the multichannel challenge – one problem, three faces

Choosing the best channels for reaching customers was identified as the biggest challenge to digital strategy in a survey by the IBM Institute for Business Value of nearly 500 sales, service and marketing executives across industries in 66 countries, (see Figure 6).

Organisations striving to deliver the right products and services to customers via the right channels at the right time are facing challenges on three main fronts.

drugstore.com and beauty.com

drugstore.com and beauty.com are truly multichannel – websites, FAQs, chat, email, phone and on Twitter as well. They are keeping pace with where their customers are and where they need help. The team is using chat very successfully for high value products, increasing the conversion rates for these products by almost 40 percent when compared with not using chat.

– Customer Think.com, October 2010

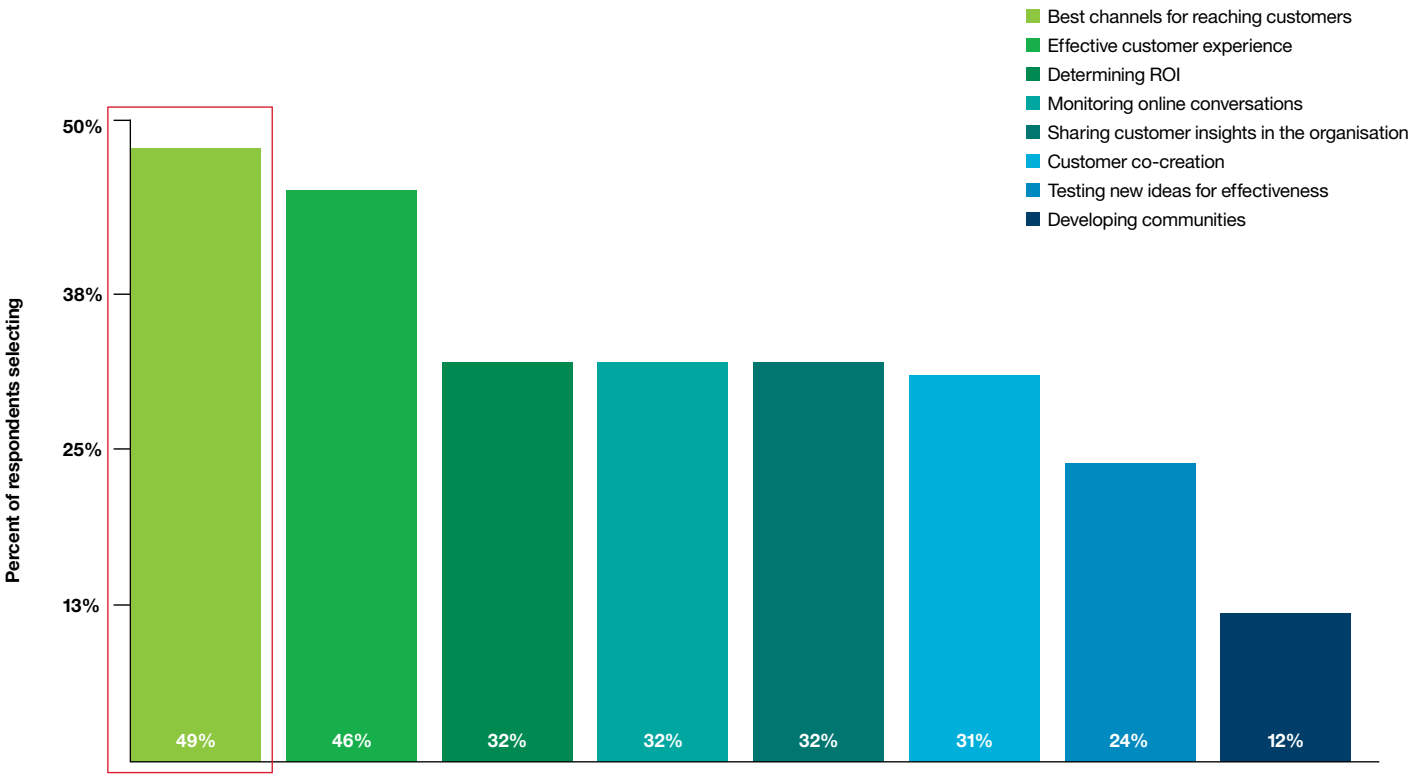

Figure 6: The Institute for Business Value 2009 Global CRMS study

1. A consistent customer experience

Even before the channel explosion, providing a consistent customer experience co-ordinated across multiple channels, has been an ongoing challenge for many organisations.

Traditionally siloed functions, a lack of knowledge and data sharing, and incentives that do not promote customer-centric strategies or cross-enterprise collaboration have resulted in fractured customer experiences from one channel to the next. This ultimately hurts the brand, customer advocacy and the bottom line. The new multichannel complexity merely exacerbates the problem, with customer expectations for a consistent, branded experience higher than ever before.

Even for those that have organised themselves around their customers, it will not be easy to incorporate new channels into the mix. As seen in a number of studies, there are very few organisations who have achieved this 'nirvana' in which customers can successfully complete their goals in each channel offered to them.

Building a multichannel customer experience requires organisations to:

- Gain a thorough understanding of the customer within the context of their lifecycle in order to identify those customer types most attractive to the business.
- Adopt a 'single view of the customer' by integrating various customer insights (e.g., demographic, attitudinal, behavioural, profitability) across the enterprise, instead of holding 'partial' views in individual functions such as marketing, sales or customer service.
- Identify where gaps exist between the customer experience and their expectation across their multichannel touchpoints, and decide how these can be improved to embody the brand promise.
- Understand customer expectations in order to anticipate their behaviour and offer relevant products, services and solutions over the most appropriate channels.
- Dissolve organisational silos and remove internal tensions between channels that may be creating channel conflicts for the customer.
- Ensure that knowledge management and data sharing tools and processes are available across customer-facing parts of the organisation.

2. The value of 'newer' versus traditional channels

In addition to the potential for improved customer advocacy, the substantial cost benefits in shifting customer interactions to less expensive digital channels make companies eager to change quickly in the quest for profit and price competitiveness. The media is full of stories about companies successfully executing this shift to enjoy significant revenue uplift. This creates even more pressure to act. In fact, in the 2011 IBM social media study, nearly 70 percent of executives said they would be perceived as being 'out of touch' if they did not engage with customers via social media[4].

Cost to serve

$/Customer interaction

Field sales:	**>$100**
Telephone:	**$5-10**
Web:	**$1-3**
Social media:	**<$1**

– IBM secondary research, 2010

However, before a value/profitability assessment can be made, organisations need to have a baseline understanding of their current channel investments and the potential opportunities that innovation can offer. This goes beyond establishing a cost/revenue/return on investment (ROI) profitability assessment. Organisations need to also understand:

- Which channels are relevant and valuable to the organisations' most profitable customer segments, both today and in the future.
- The subtleties and nuances that distinguish channels, including the 'rules of engagement' so organisations can evaluate the impact any change would have on customers' behaviour and advocacy.
- Future channel trends and means to determine which ones are likely to last and which may be eclipsed over time.
- The opportunities channels offer to transform the business model – giving birth to new product or service lines, brand-differentiating enhancements, volume growth, efficiencies, or even improved methods for collaborating with suppliers or vendors.
- The cost, time and resources needed to build the necessary capabilities to excel in the preferred channels.

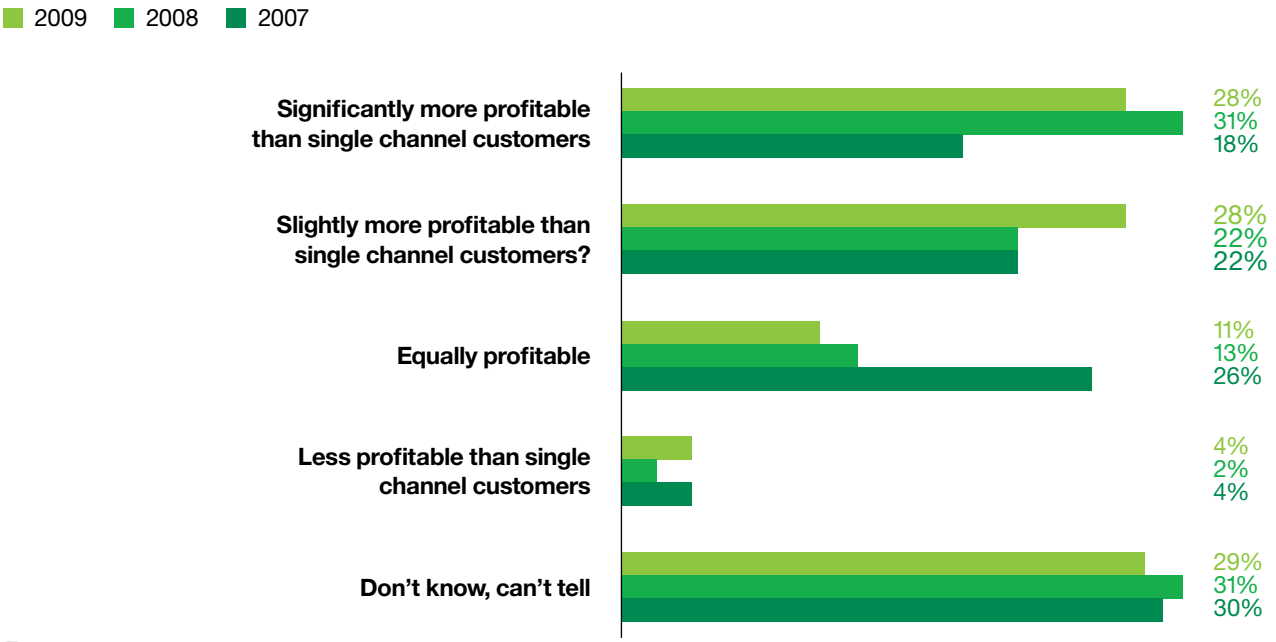

Figure 7: Relative profitability of multichannel customers

Source: RSR research, February 2009

3. The impact new channels can have on business strategies, operations, business culture and resources

Emerging channels, such as social media, have ushered in an age of customer control. Organisations need to embrace this if they want to incorporate these new channels successfully into their multichannel strategies. Relevance, open communication and consistent access to trusted data are critical components. Organisations must consider how the integration of these new channels could change their current practices. Elements are likely to include:

For business strategies:

- There are real opportunities to redefine brands and propositions, but these require an honest review of the brand proposition and its ability to deliver on the brand promise. Organisations need to understand their vulnerabilities and their mitigation strategies, as these are quickly exposed in the social media space.
- Compiling data about customers is one thing; turning that analysis into action is another. As companies integrate their newfound 360 degree view of the customer with insights gained from listening to customers and others' opinions on the brand, these findings need to be incorporated into organisations' customer experience strategies.
- In today's fast changing world, it is unrealistic to expect to design, deliver and operate effectively in every chosen channel. Organisations need to consider productive partnerships that complement their core competencies, while enabling them to successfully integrate new channels (for example, investing in mobile communication platforms or outsourcing social media management).

For operations:

- Organisations should reflect on the wide range of analytics options available for new channels and touchpoints. They must determine new metrics for reach, interaction and conversion. This is especially important for social media platforms outside an organisation's control, which require a sophisticated analytics approach to understand the impact across channels.
- By maintaining a holistic view of their channel portfolio they should aim for optimum profitability and the ability to provide a consistent, valuable customer experience.
- Operational impacts across functions, including IT infrastructure, data management and supply chain, need to be evaluated to understand the effect of transition on other parts of the customer value chain, not just for the approaching implementation of new channels, but also for flexibility to scale in the future.

United Airlines 'guitar song'

Customer complaint on YouTube that, within four days, had 3.6 million views and took its share price down by 10 percent costing shareholders $180 million.

– BBC, July 2009

For business culture and resources:

- Nurture a culture of collaboration and customer-centricity within the organisation, driven by the knowledge of how customers' communication preferences vary by channel and segment. Work across silos to support the customer.
- Empower customers to engage in peer-to-peer forums via social networking to demonstrate the openness and trust required to be relevant, and to harvest ideas and better understand the issues or questions customers have.
- Respond to privacy concerns. The notion of what is deemed to be private is changing and varies significantly across different customer groups and geographies; develop flexible models to accommodate privacy issues, and communicate transparently with customers about privacy policies.
- Ensure customer-facing employees have the skills and training needed to embody the brand promise in all customer interactions across all channels. In fact, the entire organisation needs this awareness, but start with employees who directly touch the customer.

Today most organisations already operate across multiple channels with varying degrees of success. Their current channel mix may have been the result of strategic investment but often channel solutions have grown organically in response to the market. Regardless of how the channel mix evolved, the challenge is to consider it in the round – both today and for the future – and to develop a workable strategy to deliver an optimal customer experience and profitable business model. As a result, the right levels of investment will be made in the right channels for the future whilst delivering today's business targets.

Procter & Gamble

Procter & Gamble UK, brand teams have launched a cross-brand website (www.supersavvyme.com) that combines content from many writers to appeal to the hugely important and specific segment of savvy mums.

– Forrester, September 2010

Multichannel transformation – delivering on the opportunity

Though tackling multichannel complexity can seem daunting, most organisations are not starting from scratch and are already on the path towards defining and implementing a more customer-centric, multichannel strategy. The comforting thought is that, whilst most organisations will have to be present in most channels, they will only need to excel in those that are most valuable to them – and their most valuable customers.

IBM itself is a good example of how to manage the multichannel challenge. Our transformation from field sales to a multichannel (field/partner/tele/web) model started more than 10 years ago and we now have a fully integrated, global multichannel sales and service operation.

Like many of our clients, we are evolving our customer-focused channel strategy to optimise the opportunities that the social media revolution presents and have already enhanced our channels accordingly.

We believe the organisations which navigate this next phase successfully will adopt three key principles:

- Focus on your long-term, high-value customers and the products and services they desire, and ensure there is a clear, compelling alignment to the brand promise in all customer interactions.
- Understand throughout the entire customer lifecycle which interactions are the 'moments of truth' for your target customers, and ensure you get those right.
- Invest in those channels preferred by these customers, which are suitable for the delivery of differentiated interactions, products and services. These are the channels that should be prioritised and in which you should excel.

To help organisations to establish their channel vision and the roadmap necessary to achieve it quickly and effectively, IBM has developed a multichannel diagnostic (Figure 8).

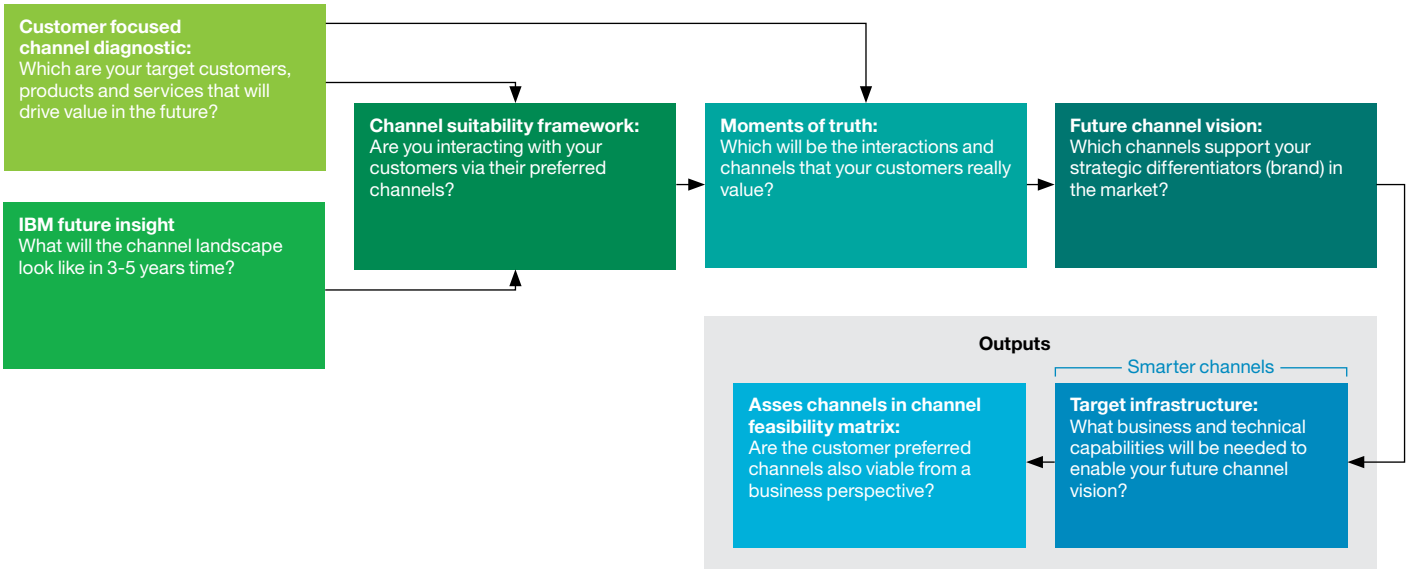

Figure 8: Multichannel diagnostic

Summary

The enormous growth in channels is providing not only more routes to communicate with customers, but also driving fundamental shifts in behaviour and expectations. Organisations need to understand, exploit and meet this in full.

There is massive pressure for most businesses to deliver short term profit, and often to add new channels quickly, whether it be a new Facebook page or an iPhone application. However, not having a holistic, thorough customer contact and channel strategy, risks investing in the wrong channels at the wrong time and in the wrong way, while losing ground to those who are getting it right.

Channels are now on the strategic agenda

Those organisations that decide to embrace the changes posed by channel complexity will have great opportunities for growth and innovation, but designing the right channel mix and executing it successfully is likely to require significant change across the entire organisation. This transformation will demand correspondingly strong executive ownership and commitment to succeed.

Every organisation's channel strategy will differ according to its customer profile, product or service offering and brand positioning. There is no one-size-fits all solution. Any organisation's 'ideal solution' will be formulated by accepting that the customer is in control, that channels should be brought into the core of the business with a unified customer experience, and that active selection takes place to attain excellence in only those channels that drive its target customers' perception of differentiating value.

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The right partner for a changing world

At IBM, we partner with our clients, bringing together business insight, advanced research and technology to give them a distinct advantage in today's rapidly changing environment.

Through our integrated approach to business design and execution, we help turn strategies into action. With expertise in 17 industries and global capabilities that span 170 countries, we can help clients anticipate change and profit from new opportunities.

IBM teams of customer experience, CRM, and digital transformation specialists from our consulting, operations and research organisations have generated a set of solutions to help our clients build their smarter channels capability.

Research methodology

This paper uses our experience gained in client work, combined with secondary market research conducted in September 2010. We reviewed published articles, reports and papers to build up a picture of the opinion of subject matter experts from academia, business and industry analysts. Examples of these information sources include the UK Office for National Statistics, UK Office of Communications; IDC; Gartner; Forrester Research; Datamonitor; British Broadcasting Corporation; Universal McCann; Business Week; Ezine; uSwitch; eMarketer; jmorgan marketing; iPhones Talk; Digital Trends; Morgan Stanley; Alexa; MedInndia; North American Technographics; European Technographics; Aberdeen Research; McInsey; JC Williams Group; DunnHumby; IBM Research; IBM Institute for Business Value.

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