



# Give Your Customer a Voice

How You Can Transform Your SMB With A Customer Centric Focus

# Executive Summary:

## The Customer Connection— It's All About The Relationships

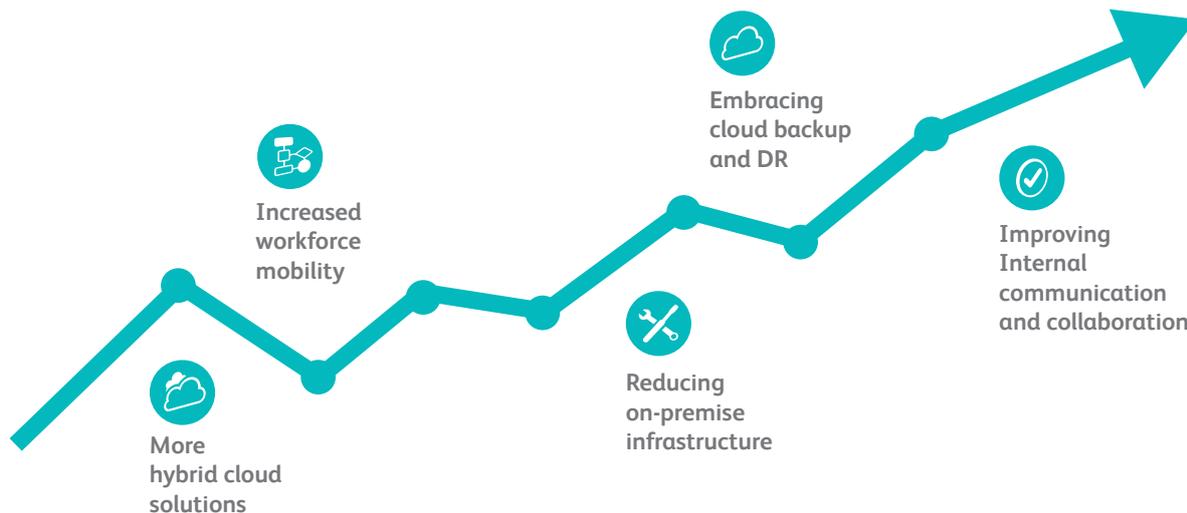
Innovative small to medium-sized businesses (SMBs) are setting their sights on a clear objective: To increase profitability by focusing their entire business on customers. While SMBs have long been known for friendly customer service and support, SMB leaders are taking their customer focus to a new level – integrating digital transformation and print management capabilities to deliver a seamless customer experience that locks in customer loyalty and keeps competitors at bay.

Not long ago, managing the entire customer experience was better left to large enterprises with lofty budgets. Today, however, many of these barriers to entry are crumbling and technology is acting as the great enabler, extending the competitive landscape and enabling SMBs to compete with larger established businesses.

By optimising their internal print resources, innovative SMBs are empowering employees to harvest customer insights, foster customer-first interactions and deliver actionable customer information just when they need it. This customer-centric approach serves as a new platform with significant benefits; cost reduction, sustainability, automation, improved mobility, ease of use (zero admin), among others. The result: a superior customer experience that drives up profits.



# Technology Trends for SMB's



## Building Mutually Profitable Relationships: The Customer-Centric Opportunity

A customer-centric focus helps SMBs lower costs by concentrating on high-value and high-growth customers to generate more revenue. Diverting resources to where it makes the greatest impact on the bottom line is a win-win for everyone.

SMBs must be able to identify the value and needs of a customer and deliver the best response, whether it's the fast resolution of a service issue, a follow-up to a marketing campaign, cross-sell, up-sell, etc. In a marketplace where there are too many products to compete against, such a customer-centric focus can be a lifesaver in determining your product strategy. But there are several challenges.

**Customers have become more selective.** Customers are more discerning now over which brands they choose to spend their money with. The brands that are winning are the ones that have built and cultivated a relationship with customers and treated them with respect and great service. According to one study (Harris Interactive 2010), 86% of customers quit doing business with a brand because of a bad customer experience. On the flip side, a 5% increase in customer retention produces more than a 25% increase in profit (Bain & Company – 'Prescription for Cutting Costs')

**Social Media & Mobility.** The customer journey today comprises social media and mobile phones as integral to the sales transaction. Customers can easily compare products and prices in real time across devices and complete purchases instantly. Few SMBs can justify the resources or scale of operations needed to compete on the same level, or sustain the effort.

**Sharing Customer Information.** Not being able to share information with employees and customer representatives

in SMBs is a huge struggle. Customer insights trapped in one department that are required by another to respond to a customer query, for example, is a perennial problem and impedes efforts to become customer-centric.

Fortunately, SMBs are responding to these challenges in several aspects of their business:

## Cost Reductions

SMBs, almost by definition, rely on lean budgets to get by. The goal is to save on operating capital as they look to fund strategic investments that help the business move to the next level. This translates to increasing efficiency and extracting the value of every dollar spent. In a hyper-connected world where products and services are being commoditized and where there is little service differentiation to stand out, that value can give SMBs an edge. In effect, reducing costs to deliver more value starts with a focus on customer needs. Matching products and services accurately to the needs and wants of customers helps streamline product portfolios and guards against wasteful spending.

## Simplified Management

Some of the emerging SMB technology trends (see chart "Technology Trends for SMBs") are unrealistic or irrelevant to business operations. It can take time before a new technology trend becomes accessible and affordable. Still, information technology is the lifeblood of the modern SMB and without it, many will lose their competitive edge and control over cost and processes.

Most SMBs, however, don't have the trained personnel, flexibility or cash to effectively manage their IT solutions. IT solutions and office automation that are simple to manage and maintain enable SMBs to release resources to focus on customer service. The less time spent on managing the business, the more time SMBs can spend on improving the customer experience.

## Automation

According to a Gartner survey<sup>1</sup>, customers will manage 85% of the relationship with a company without even talking to a human by 2020. Increasingly, business is becoming more buyer-driven and more channel-agnostic. It doesn't matter which channel they use, buyers are deciding how and where they purchase your products and services. Automating workflows, streamlining processes and adopting cloud computing to improve the customer experience is a necessary evolution if SMBs are to stay relevant in the marketplace. The easier it is for customers to transact with an SMB, the more business they will have. A customer-centric focus will drive greater automation and integration to meet their demands.

## Mobility

Building a sustainable business requires long-term customer loyalty if an SMB is to grow. But creating a loyalty program that delivers higher value for the customer to embrace your brand requires becoming more customer-centric and less brand-centric. Mobility can play a pivotal role in driving this.

Customers are increasingly gravitating towards simplicity, and don't have the time to provide complex and lengthy personal details. Introducing a mobile element in the loyalty program can intelligently address the issue. For example, using their mobile numbers, it takes a customer less than 10 seconds to join a loyalty program at the point-of-sale. Using a mobile number eliminates the cost of loyalty cards and there's no chance of the customer misplacing the loyalty card or not having it at the time of purchase.

## Sustainability

In this digital age, when customers are more mobile, social and data-driven, the customer's power and ability to influence has shifted, and the customer's voice has scaled and amplified. They are as concerned about how products and services are manufactured as they are of their quality, and aren't afraid to speak up about it. Lower carbon emissions, green workplace practices, and reducing waste are some ways an SMB can align business practices to meet customer expectations and grow stronger customer relationships.

## Customer Centric Innovation: Digital Transformation & the SMB

The same agility that benefited SMBs against enterprises is also working for them in re-engineering their organisations as a new set of digital tools alters how they work, communicate and sell to their customers. If SMBs have no choice but to shift their focus from product-centric to customer-centric, then they must embrace digital transformation as a necessary evolution to that mindset change.

Digital transformation is a complete change in the way an organisation conducts business and how they engage their customers. One of the simplest yet more effective ways to do this is digitising paper workflows in the organisation.

Most SMBs struggle to integrate paper records with digital information. Valuable customer data, that can deepen an

SMB's understanding of their customers, often gets lost or are not captured in critical decision-making processes.

Much of this data resides in reams of paper receipts, repeat purchase orders, delivery orders, and contracts. If SMBs could glean and analyse the data captured in these vast repositories, they could predict what their customers' wants and preferences are and serve them.

## The Next-Generation Business Imaging Platform

Digital transformation integrates the best aspects of print with a digital workflow to capture all customer insights. This is the next-generation business-imaging platform for SMBs — a modular, plug-and-play solution that adds powerful functionality as and when you need it. Properly executed, it can ensure business stakeholders have all the information they need to keep their focus on the customer all the time. From cost reduction to mobility, managing your printing is a vital step in creating a customer-centric business.

- Savings

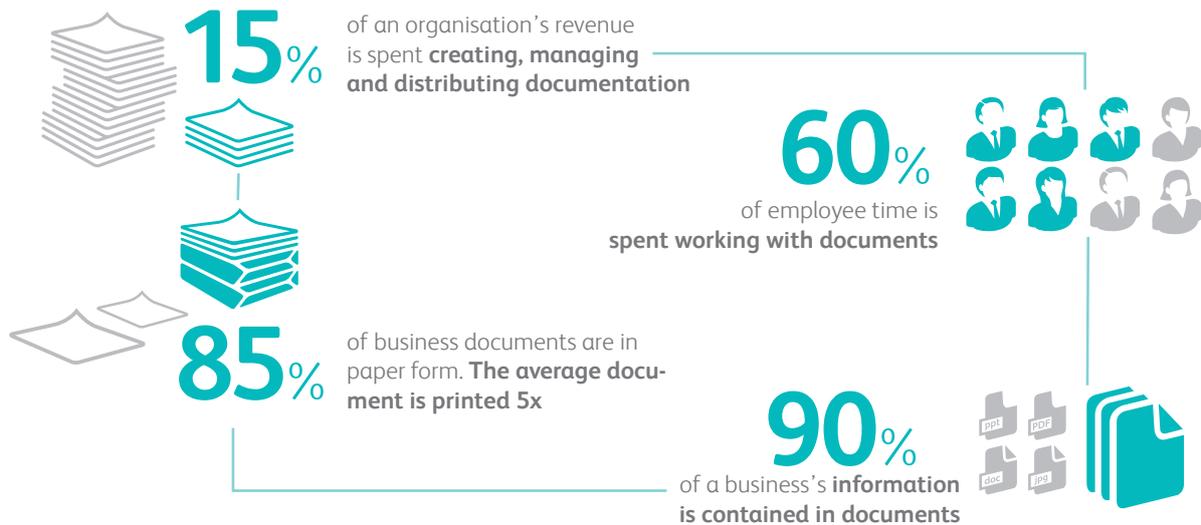
Print is often the first thing customers notice about an SMB brand. Whether is on catalogues, newsletter, direct-mail, even general mail, print gives the company a tangible way to build credibility with the target audience.

For an SMB, printing is an essential component of doing business today, and often translates to significant operational costs because of diverse printing needs (see diagram: Challenges for SMBs). If this is unmanaged, an uncontrolled printing environment will lower productivity, create bottlenecks, impede workflows and generally, escalate printing costs.

Digital transformation will evolve SMB printing into the next generation business-imaging platform. By exploiting the efficiencies of digital technology and processes, an SMB can



# Challenges for SMB's



<http://www.thepaperlessproject.com/>

effectively lower printing costs by optimising the device mix and consumable costs. This in turn, will deliver more value to the customer. By simply listening to customers and monitoring wasteful duplication and excess printing, these savings can be passed on. In specific cases, careful use of such a platform will realise full cost recovery for the SMB because of automated workflows that simplify print usage.

- Insights

For many SMBs, print usage is critical to their customer interactions but is a significant cost centre. Depending on the business and level of service, unbridled printing eats into sales margins if unchecked. But lacking visibility over its usage, most SMBs are resigned to rising print costs, content that if they keep up their sales volume, they can more than make up the difference.

An integrated business-imaging platform can provide the detailed analysis over print volumes by customer and worker, and deliver usage reports at regular intervals. It can manage, track and audit the print costs using customisable print-rules and quotas while achieving sustainability targets. This will optimise costs and workflows so greater value is transferred to the customer interaction and transaction. For e.g., consolidating weekly purchase orders into monthly or even quarterly statements means less paper invoicing and filing.

- Productivity

Bill payment and accounts receivables are always sore points for customers. They are time-consuming, transaction-based tasks that are tedious and cumbersome for both customers and SMBs. An integrated imaging platform can automate and integrate these tasks to make payments hassle-free for the customer. Using sophisticated document capture and routing in existing multi-functional printers, an SMB can simplify billing and collection for customers, and track payment records for easy retrieval. It will drive greater automation and integration while maintaining a customer-centric focus.

- Mobility

Mobile workers and mobile-enabled customers are the new paradigm in the marketplace. Being able to service customer requests from anywhere in your shop with the convenience of a tablet device to print out orders and receipts is a bonus in customer service and sales. Indeed, research from Quocirca indicates 80% of organisations surveyed would like to print documents from their mobile devices at the workplace. Digitised workflows will integrate all device management services to track and deliver secure mobile printing on demand.

- Security

In any transaction between a business and the customer, there is an implicit trust that confidential financial information is kept secure. But with many users sharing the same printing device at work, there is concern that sensitive information can fall into the wrong hands. With an integrated business-imaging platform, SMBs can assure their customers that all data shared is secure with proper user authentication and tracking to ensure no unauthorised access to the information.

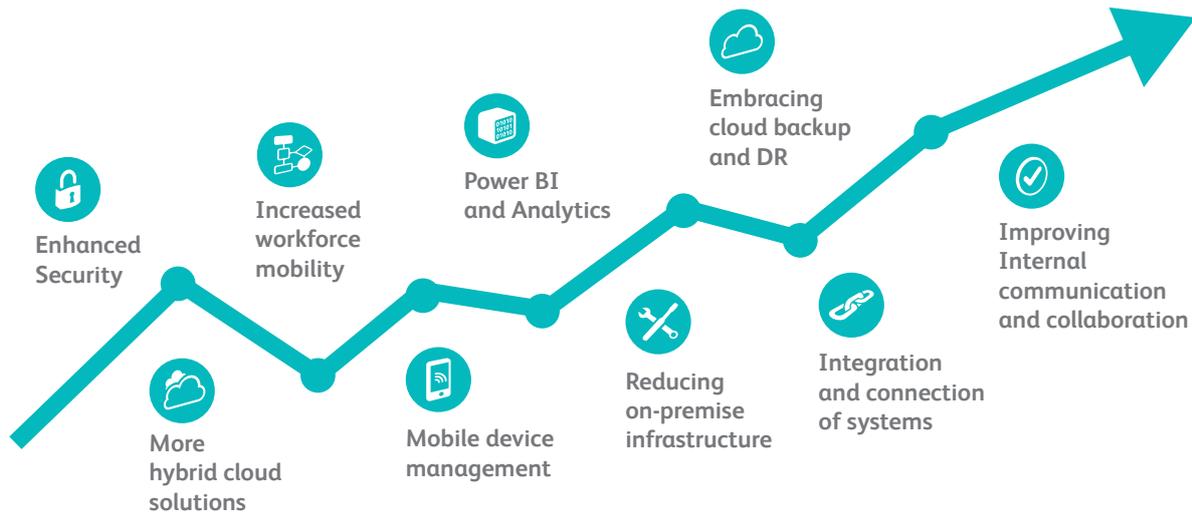
- Sustainability

Few SMBs have taken meaningful steps towards sustainability in their operations. Even fewer view green practices as vital to customer centricity, citing costs and implementation difficulties as reasons why it is not a good fit for them. But increasing regulatory compliance and rising social consciousness from customers has turned the spotlight on SMBs to do their part.

An integrated imaging platform can help the business address this through careful monitoring of energy consumption and waste reduction. Uncontrolled printing often produces significant waste through duplication, excess printing, and unnecessary paper and toner usage. Rules and routing can be set up to limit printing from certain applications, and generate green reports by department, device and user to encourage optimal energy usage and a lower carbon emissions footprint.



# Technology Trends



## Step 3: Add More Value With Increased Productivity

Providing more customer services and solutions for the same costs translates into greater customer loyalty and repeat business. Your customer relationships are strengthened with greater value. Improved productivity through the organisation will discover and deliver enhanced customer value.

Productivity gains are often viewed as improvements motivated by adverse market conditions. SMBs are driven to extract more value from the business when facing shrinking demand or increased costs. But companies that prioritise productivity not as a cost management exercise but as a means to grow the top line will gain a competitive advantage. Better values, greater customer interaction, and a streamlined the user experience are all productivity-sourced initiatives that put customer expectations front and centre, and drive your business.

## Step 4: Diversify Revenue Sources

Traditional solutions don't always work in a 24/7 business cycle. The ability to respond to new opportunities to service your customers with on-demand solutions only builds stronger customer relationships. How about faster after-sales or presales call to your customers to anticipate their needs? Could this create new product/solution revenues? Looking beyond the same product portfolio lets your customer know you care enough to understand their business and adapt your solutions to meet their needs.

## Step 5: Collaborate With New Partners

No SMB can survive alone. Working proactively to seize opportunities with partners across the supply chain will add value to your customers. For example, are there higher cost savings in delivering your products during off-peak hours and passing these savings to your customer? Can your distribution partners integrate their workflows with yours to make this happen? A customer-centric focus means looking at new

Your business must start with a customer-centric philosophy to understand your customers better than ever and use the information and knowledge as a source of competitive advantage.

technologies (SOA, web services, etc.) and opportunities to outsource non-strategic functions that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your business functions across the value chain. If you do this right, your company will develop capabilities to identify and manage strategic business partnerships that in turn, will improve customer outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

The aspiration of a company to become customer-centric requires work and commitment across the organisation. It needs to be sponsored by senior management and factored into the daily routines of all staff who have direct contact with – or an impact on – customers and the overall customer experience. The key element is creating mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and its customers. Ultimately, each SMB must determine what it means to them and how they plan to approach it. They need to make it their own – and own it as a business.

<sup>1</sup>The Gartner CRM Vendor Guide, 2009



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