Delivering Personalized Service with MASTER DATA MANAGEMENT

There is an incredible impact from personalized service. When the barista at your coffee shop remembers your usual or the maître d at a restaurant greets you by name and takes you to your favorite table, you’re practically guaranteed to return. Research has shown strong relationships between satisfaction, loyalty behavior, likelihood to return, likelihood to recommend and revenue. However, this level of personalized service is difficult to achieve in large organizations where thousands of guests pass through multiple consumer touch points and there is high turnover among line level staff. If you cannot rely on the memory of the line-level staff, how can you possibly expect to deliver personalized service?

Personalized service is not limited to on-property interactions. Every contact the guest has with you is an opportunity to foster loyalty, leading to increased visits and on-property spend, whether they initiate the interaction through your website or call center, or through an email or direct mail offer. Your guests can easily become frustrated at having to identify themselves to you over and over again. Disparate systems across multiple touch points throughout the property, each with different data formats and required fields, make accessing and integrating guest profiles challenging, let alone matching this information to the information stored in CRM systems, call center logs and website interactions, all so that you can remember previous interactions.

A fully integrated view of the guest is essential to reach them at a personal level, and is the first step in a myriad of analytical initiatives aimed at improving the guest experience, increasing the value of the guest relationship, optimizing operations and maximizing revenue and profits. But, even something as simple as a name can become a guessing game when developing a complete picture of the guest. Depending on system restrictions, storage formats and data entry standards, the same guest could appear as J. Barnes, Jane Barnes or Jane L. Barnes with various combinations of work, home or even missing addresses. How do you determine whether this is even the same person, let alone develop a profile that allows you to segment, analyze, target and serve this guest?

There is a new opportunity available to help leverage operational data to deliver personalized service and increase operational efficiency. Based on the theories of good data management, and working within existing data initiatives, master data management (MDM) streamlines personalization by providing real time access to key information about guests at the point of contact. Line-level employees have the exact information needed to make the right decisions about how to treat each guest, in real time and at their fingertips. This information can also be used to streamline data entry, and to make operational decisions.

Master data is high-value information about an entity that is used frequently across an enterprise. It can be guest, product, service or facility information that is commonly accessed and frequently updated in multiple source systems. This information is not a list of recent transactions, but rather key attributes that are used to make real-time decisions. Master data could be a guest profile including information like name, address, phone number and birthday along with location preferences, eligible offers, theoretical gaming value, loyalty tier, last stay location and duration, special requests and preferences.

Ultimately MDM is the answer to providing personalized service at every guest checkpoint. It’s the practice of managing this master data across source systems and applications and serving it up in real-time across multiple touch points to provide an enterprise-wide single view. Imagine the host at the restaurant, the clerk at the front desk and the host on the casino floor having important profile information about each customer at their fingertips, no matter what system they are using, at the moment the guests identify themselves. Then a “Happy Birthday!” or a “Welcome Back!” is as simple as looking at the screen, and “Can I upgrade you to a suite?” is not far behind.

The Components of a Data Management Framework

The data management platform is the foundation, providing integration and quality capabilities. Layered on top of that are data accelerators which are comprised of pre-built jobs and reports that track data quality metrics like accuracy and completeness, helping to point the analysts in the right direction for quality improvement. The master data repository is at the center of the MDM technologies, storing the master data for consumption by the source systems and applications (located on the right of the diagram). The master repository manager is a Web-based stewardship user interface, used for data governance of the

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Another benefit of MDM is a decrease in marketing costs from eliminating duplicate entries and becoming more targeted in promotional efforts.

A large Las Vegas casino company has recently implemented master data management to support its goal of differentiating on customer service. Its call center and reservations agents use master data management to streamline the reservations process. When a guest calls the call center, the casino’s Avaya phone systems use the MDM processes to perform a lookup based on the phone number. If the phone number is associated with an existing record in MDM, then it sends all the master data to the call center agent’s application. The information is displayed as the agent answers the call, so he or she is ready to begin the reservation process, with knowledge of patron preferences and eligible offers without having to be retold. All identifying information is ready to be entered into LMS, avoiding any keystroke mistakes. Any relevant interactions during the call are sent to the MDM hub, and the record is updated.

MDM is also helping this casino streamline registration for its loyalty card program. When the guest wishes to apply for a loyalty program membership, he or she provides a driver’s license to a loyalty representative. The patron tracking system performs a patron lookup against the MDM hub to see if that customer already exists. If a match is found, then the patron’s attributes are returned, the loyalty card is created using that information, and the record including the new loyalty number is sent back to the MDM hub. If no match is found, then a loyalty card is created from scratch, and the new record is sent to the MDM hub.

Achieving this goal of using master data management to deliver personalized service requires alignment between business and IT. Master data management, unlike some other data initiatives, spans operational systems across the enterprise in real time. Despite the logistical and operational challenges, the rewards are worth the effort. Most organizations implementing master data management initiatives recognize significant benefits in the form of improved guest satisfaction, increased loyalty, increased revenue from cross and up-sell opportunities and decreased marketing costs from eliminating duplicate entries and becoming more targeted in promotional efforts.

The personalized service nirvana is only a data management initiative away.

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“Hey Bernie. That sand-packing seminar we took last quarter has really helped me see the importance of maintaining high quality in every single phase of our operation..........Bernie?”