

Acer Outlines Service and Reverse Logistics Trends

Contributed by Paul Rupnow
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Mr. Sudipto Ghosh, the Chief Customer Support Officer of Acer India provided the key note presentation in October at the Reverse Logistics Association 2011 conference in Singapore. As part of his presentation, Mr. Ghosh provided some of the key trends and challenges he is facing as the head of service in India. His insights are worthy of discussion and will be important or critical to the ongoing success of most reverse logistics and aftermarket consumer electronics service teams.

The twin revolutions of the digital age and the ICT revolution (information and communications technology) are rapidly growing, changing the world and as a result creating significant challenges on our aftermarket service organizations. Additionally, Consumers are shifting more and more to the evaluation of service as a major part of their technology device purchasing decision.

As a result, Mr. Ghosh outlines six key challenges and trends:

1. Contact Center – Voice is no longer the primary contact level and in fact, customers even now resist telephone based customer support. Instead they “prefer to find solutions themselves through online product support”.
2. Social CRM – “Social CRM is the use of social media services, techniques and technology to enable organizations to engage with their customers” according to Wikipedia. Organizations may utilize services like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or customer communities they manage themselves. The use of these new social channels to reach customers in a social network is still very much in its infancy and it is expected that by 2013 that 50% of Customer Service Centers will integrate some form of social capabilities and that by 2017 organizations that do not include Social CRM will become extinct, according to a Gartner report in May 2011.
3. Warehouse and Repair – there is a trend of “Touch Consolidation” occurring in this area. Touch Consolidation is the reduction of partners handling the aftermarket processes, particularly the logistics and returns handling areas of transportation, spare parts warehousing, repair and RMA management. This is particularly true in India and Asia Pacific where a large geography of many countries and regions can benefit significantly from a partner with existing capabilities in many of the regions for an “All-In-One Service solution”.
4. Service Delivery – various regions in the world require different service delivery, due to consumer expectations, infrastructure capabilities, transportation cost, transportation availability, service skills availability and labor cost. Some regions utilize mail-in, some drop points, some on site and some 2 hour service. The suitable combination of these varying demands present significant organizing, managing and cost challenges.
5. Customer Feedback – a number of popular techniques are used to collect and measure customer feedback, such as customer satisfaction, customer dis-satisfaction and net promoter score. However suitable data and results are still

difficult to gauge and measure, often resulting in conflicting analysis.

6. Service Efficiency – the challenge of finding a balance between the appropriate service level with a reasonable service cost to the organization is a never ending battle for all reverse logistics and service operations.

As our consumer electronics and PC industries evolve into any time, any where, any information, social and media consumption devices, these challenges and trends are ones that all service organizations need to understand and tackle in all regions around the world.

Good Luck!

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