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BRAND PROTECTION AND CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS

UNDERSTANDING CCM FOR AGILE BUSINESS
ENVIRONMENTS

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Foreword

We're pleased to present the findings of Keypoint Intelligence - InfoTrends research. As the innovator in customer and business communications, we are committed to working with the leading researchers and analysts to uncover aspects of customer communications management (CCM) that have not been widely addressed. We want to ensure that through our technology and solutions, we provide enterprises with the best approach to scaling conversations across their very important customer bases.

By partnering with Keypoint Intelligence - InfoTrends, one of the leading analysts covering trends in customer communication, we aimed to better understand how financial services institutions, insurance providers, and healthcare companies think about customer communications, specifically:

- What role does a customer communications system play in protecting the brand?
- How are enterprises addressing the need to communicate effectively with Millennials?
- How satisfied are enterprises with the current state of customer communications?

In this first report, you'll learn that financial services institutions, insurance providers, and healthcare payers identify CCM systems as key to driving brand consistency and overall brand health across an enterprise. The research found 60% of enterprises had dedicated systems in place, and over half had branding guidelines that employees/outsourcers were expected to obey.

At Smart Communications, we have always known the crucial role our solutions play in brand leadership and growth. Since our start, we have committed to helping the world's most powerful brands deliver relevant, personalized communications and, as the report discusses, to enable brand consistency across every communication and every delivery channel. As enterprises scale both the volume of customer conversations and the number of customer delivery channels, protecting the brand has never been more challenging or more critical. I invite you to review this report and other reports in this series and then engage in a conversation with Smart Communications about your views and thoughts on the research. To learn more about the Smart Communications suite of cloud-enabled solutions, visit us [here](#).

George Wright

CEO

Smart Communications



Brand Protection and CCM: More Connected Than You Think!

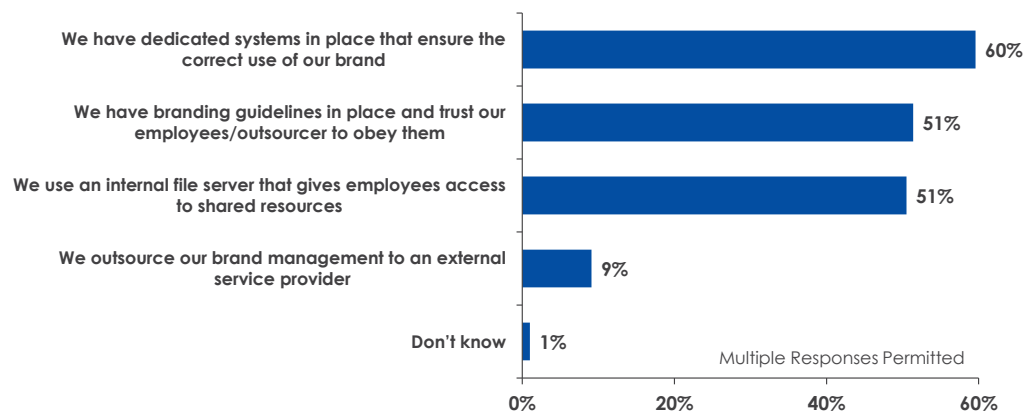
Keypoint Intelligence – InfoTrends (InfoTrends) has been exploring customer communications management (CCM) systems for quite some time and in a variety of capacities, but we have never deeply explored how CCM systems relate to brands in the course of day-to-day business. Smart Communications commissioned InfoTrends to conduct a survey that explored this very topic, and the findings from this research show just how important CCM is to brand protection. The research clearly shows that brand protection, brand management, and system contributions should be key considerations for businesses that are considering changing or upgrading their CCM systems.

Although the survey results indicated that they were quite satisfied with their current CCM systems, enterprises are paying a high price in terms of adaptability, maintenance, and risk of brand inconsistency. Communicating successfully with all consumers—and Millennials in particular—requires an awareness of the type of communications sent as well as any associated customer preferences.

CCM Systems are Key for Brand Protection

In today's age of digitization and varying communication preferences by generation, brand owners must work to maintain the integrity of their brands. When the respondents to InfoTrends' survey were asked how they intended to secure brand quality/consistency in their communications, they reported relying on a number of methods—ranging from dedicated systems to simply managing brand resources on a shared location on the network. 60% of enterprises had dedicated systems in place, and over half had branding guidelines that employees/outsourcers were expected to obey. Over 50% of respondents used an internal file server to provide employees with access to shared resources.

Figure 1: How do you intend to secure the quality/consistency of your brand within your communications?



N = 208 Respondents



Of those enterprises that used systems or solutions for brand protection, the top system for all respondents was CCM solutions. When it came to ensuring the correct use of a brand, over 60% of respondents had a dedicated CCM system in place to enforce brand consistency. This underscores the strong association between CCM systems and brand quality, especially for Financial Services and Insurance businesses, which typically rely on CCM for creating, managing, and delivering branded customer communications. Web content management (WCM) solutions and customer relationship management (CRM) systems were also common, but CCM clearly plays a dominant role.

Table 1: Which systems/solutions are you using to protect the quality/consistency of your brand in your communications?

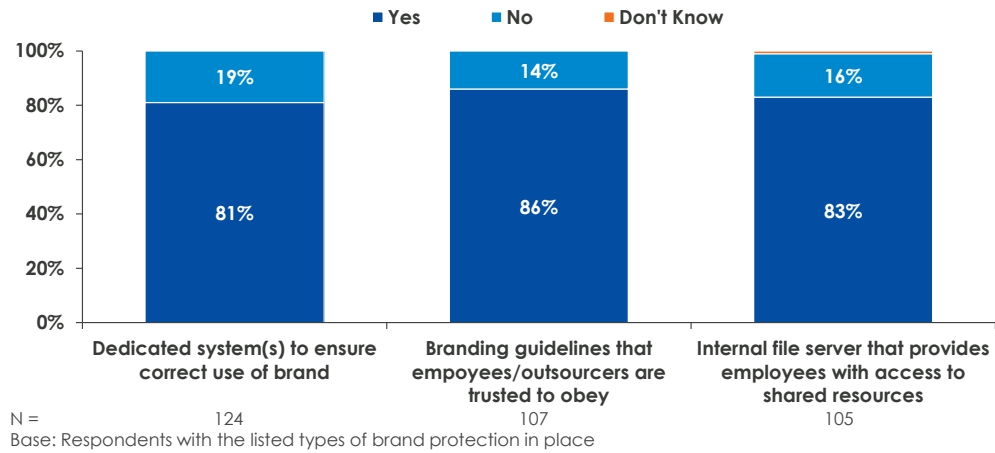
	Top Systems in Place for Brand Protection
Dedicated system(s) to ensure correct use of brand (N=124)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CCM (62%) 2. WCM (56%) 3. CRM (50%)
Branding guidelines that employees/outsourcers are trusted to obey (N=107)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CCM (40%) 2. WCM (39%) 3. CRM (35%)
Internal file server that provides employees with access to shared resources (N=105)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CCM (38%) 2. WCM (38%) 3. CRM OR Dedicated Customer Correspondence Solution (33% each)

Even with Dedicated Systems, Brand Inconsistencies Persist

Unfortunately, dedicated systems and guidelines are not guaranteed to prevent brand inconsistencies when using communications. Even enterprises with brand protection in place still experience significant issues in terms of brand inconsistency. As shown in the Table below, the clear majority of enterprises that had brand protection still experienced brand inconsistencies.



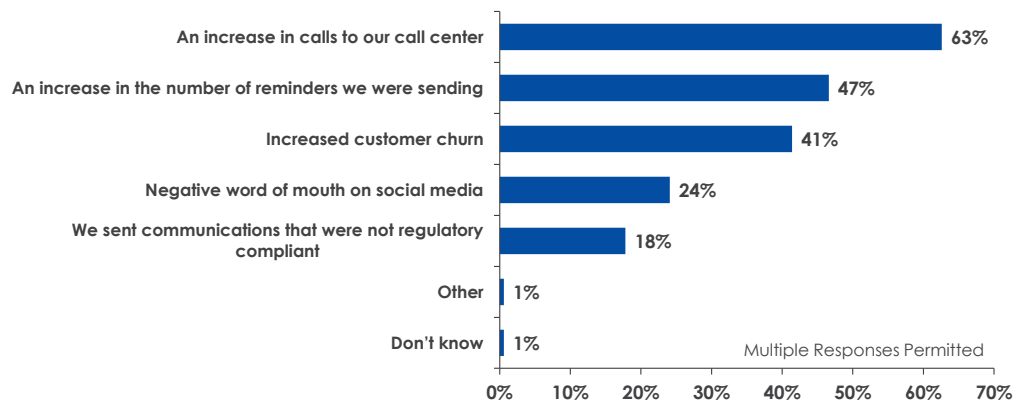
Figure 2: Have you experienced brand-related inconsistencies/problems in outbound customer communications?



Inconsistencies Are Identified When the Damage is Done

The majority of branding issues were identified only after they occurred, at which point it is of course too late. Among those enterprises that had experienced problems with their branding, most problems were identified as calls to the call center started to increase, the number of reminders sent started to increase, or customer churn started to increase.

Figure 3: Which of the following issues did you experience as a result of brand inconsistency?



N = 174 Respondents who experienced brand inconsistencies/problems in outbound customer communications



Brand Inconsistencies Often Stem from Channel Conflicts or Content Issues

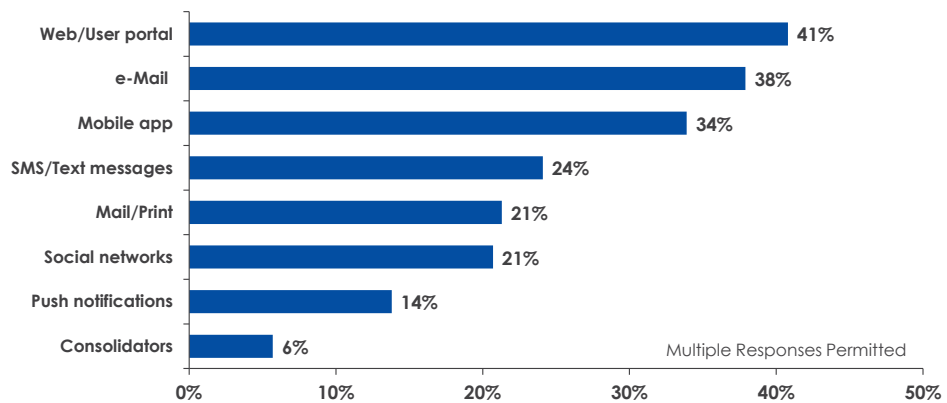
Survey respondents cited several causes of brand inconsistency issues of which the majority can be categorized into channel conflicts or content issues. We also conclude that the most commonly involved channels are electronic. There is certainly a need to ensure that communications remain consistent across all channels, but enterprises are especially struggling with the electronic channels.

Table 2: What caused the brand-related inconsistency/problem in the communication?

	Top Causes of Brand Inconsistency
Dedicated system(s) to ensure correct use of brand (N=124)	1. Conflicting communications across channels (36%) 2. Incorrect/outdated content (29%) 3. Inconsistent layout (26%)
Branding guidelines that employees/outsourcers are trusted to obey (N=107)	1. Conflicting communications across channels (36%) 2. Inconsistent layout (29%) 3. Incorrect contact information (26%)
Internal file server that provides employees with access to shared resources (N=105)	1. Conflicting communications across channels (37%) 2. Incorrect/outdated content (31%) 3. Inconsistent layout OR corporate style (26% each)

Zooming into the type of electronic channels involved in brand inconsistencies, we see a clear top three list of channels consisting of web/user portals, e-mails, and mobile apps. These channels are exactly those channels where we see enterprises investing in today in an attempt to reach out to a newer generation of customers.

Figure 4: Which of the following channels were involved in the inconsistency/problem related to your brand?



N = 174 Respondents who experienced brand inconsistencies/problems in outbound customer communications



As a result of these investments and efforts, IT infrastructures for customer communications typically end up in channel-specific point solutions with no overarching system concept or centralized oversight. This is making it difficult for enterprises to properly address brand inconsistencies.

InfoTrends' Opinion: Consider Brand Protection When Choosing CCM

Although the majority of enterprises have some form of brand protection in place, they still experience a number of brand-related issues and inconsistencies. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that most of these inconsistencies are identified after the fact, when it is too late. This creates a number of customer satisfaction issues, including increased call center volumes and higher customer churn. Enterprises are challenged with uncovering these brand inconsistencies before they can have a negative impact on customer satisfaction, but this clearly remains a struggle.

Enterprises cite conflicting communications across various channels as the top cause of brand inconsistency, so ensuring that any new choice for CCM solutions can consistently protect brands across all channels—web, mobile, SMS, e-mail, print, and social—is crucial in today's digitally-based multi-channel environment. Given that most of the channels involved in brand inconsistency issues are electronic, these channels should be a particular focus for enterprises as they work to maintain brand consistency and improve customer satisfaction.

Recommendations

Here's our advice when it comes to brand protect and CCM:

- **Place a magnifying glass to focus how solutions protect brands.** CCM systems clearly play a strong role, if not the strongest role, in maintaining brand integrity. For businesses that are choosing a new CCM solution, making changes to an existing one, or upgrading their brand security solutions, you should test solution vendors to say what features and capabilities enable the ability to manage and protect their brands.
- **Look for solutions that provide capabilities to find and fix brand errors.** Since most issues with brand inconsistency are only identified after they occur, CCM systems that can prevent—or at least identify—brand issues early in the process (e.g., during the design phase) will make it easier and less costly to identify these problems before it is too late.



- **Make digital brand management and protection the priority.** As they work to maintain brand consistency and improve customer satisfaction, enterprises should remember that most of the channels involved in brand inconsistency issues are electronic. Although enterprises should ensure that their CCM systems are equipped to support all channels, electronic channels should be the focal point.
- **Look closely as to how brand-related content is managed and shared.** Enterprises should ensure that they have the right capabilities in their CCM systems to support electronic channels. Specifically, CCM solutions should manage and automatically version brand resources in a centralized repository or enable approval workflows and collaboration between contributors of the communications between the legal department, corporate communications, and frontline workers.

Be sure to keep an eye out for our next article, which will focus on the role that CCM solutions play when communicating with Millennials!



Appendix

Research Background

Keypoint Intelligence – InfoTrends recently conducted a structured web-based survey among 208 enterprise respondents in the United States (N=128) and United Kingdom (N=80) focused on three highly-regulated industries: Financial Services, Insurance, and Healthcare payers.

This independent research was sponsored by Smart Communications, which is dedicated to evolving the CCM market by sharing knowledge, insights, and best practices. In conducting this research, InfoTrends' key objective was to understand the role of customer communications in helping enterprises and provide recommendations about CCM requirements for agile business environments. This involves scaling/improving customer communications while also developing the ability to deliver meaningful and purpose-driven messaging.

Our research focused on addressing three key questions:

1. How are enterprises using communications to protect/promote their brands?
2. How do CCM solutions factor into efforts to communicate with Millennials?
3. What is the state of play with peoples' current CCM systems?

This document is the first in a series of three analysis reports and focusses on brand protection via communications. The other two questions will be addressed in separate reports.

Demographics

As noted earlier, this survey targeted enterprise respondents. The greatest percentage of these respondents (39%) reported working in operations (e.g., claims/investment management). Marketing respondents were terminated from participation. Other key demographic details are as follows:

- About 58% of respondents worked for small (500 to 999 employees) or mid-sized (1,000 to 4,999 employees) organizations. The remaining 42% came from large enterprises with 5,000+ employees.
- Most enterprises (64%) considered themselves to be leaders in terms of technology adoption. In addition, over three-quarters were familiar with the term CCM.
- Respondents are largely complacent with their current CCM systems.



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