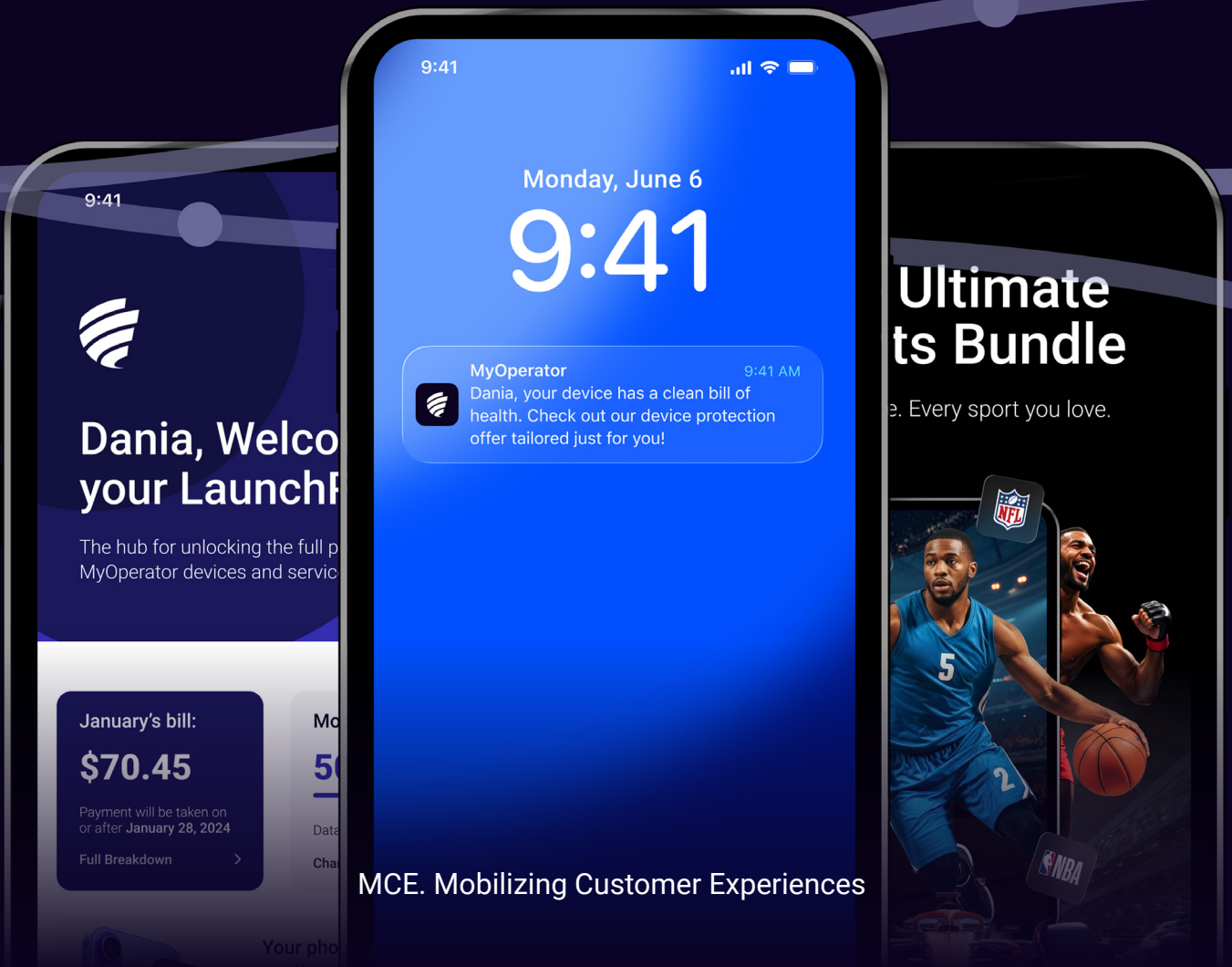




The App Power Play

a Playbook for Higher Customer Lifetime Value



MCE. Mobilizing Customer Experiences

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It's Time for Mobile Operators to Find the New Competitive Edge.

The fight for customer loyalty is no longer only about who has the best network – it's about who owns the relationship. Competitors now include not just other operators, but also device makers (OEMs) and retailers, all aiming to capture the customer's trust. In this crowded market, staying competitive requires innovation, not just infrastructure, and in the right places.

While mobile operators have invested plenty in other areas like network connectivity and billing simplicity to gain a competitive edge, one piece of the puzzle remains: the device experience. Owning this means owning that edge.

The clearest path to that is already in the customer's pocket: the operator's app. Far from a cliché, the app on the device is where operators can truly understand their customers, engage them directly and craft the relationship. And the groundwork is already there to own this. Now, it's about understanding its potential.

This is the App Power Play. This is where mobile operators differentiate themselves.



Yuval Blumental,
CEO & Co-Founder
MCE Systems

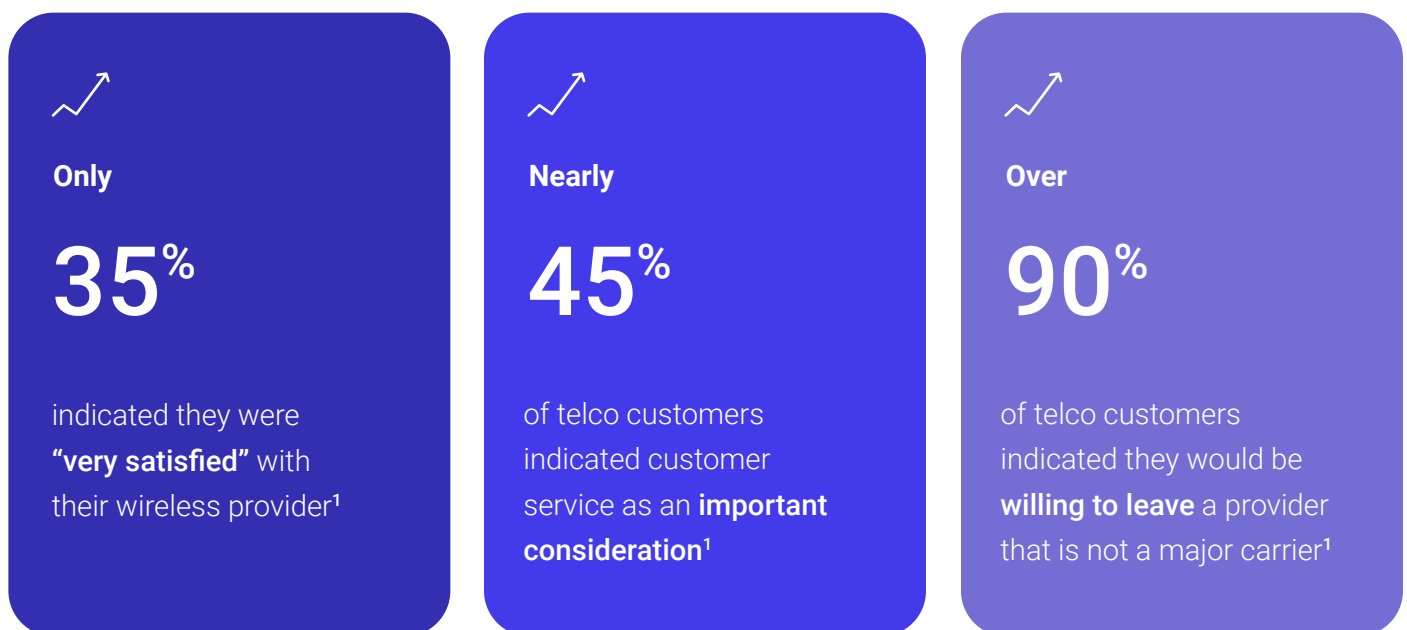
Evolving Customer Demand and Risks to the Customer Relationship.

Mobile operators have historically relied on strong network coverage and pricing to retain users, these factors are no longer sufficient to differentiate in a saturated market. Today's customers want more; they demand tailored experiences, prompt service and convenience. They expect to be heard, helped, and even predicted.

This shift is reflected in consumer sentiment: only a third of respondents in a recent [Oxio survey](#) reported being "very satisfied" with their current mobile provider. Critically, three quarters said they would consider switching providers for a more personalized experience that helps them save money. The vast majority of customers still list price and network speed as top factors in decision-making, nearly half now cite customer service as a key differentiator, highlighting the growing importance of the overall customer experience (CX).

Compounding the challenge is a crowded competitive landscape for customer loyalty. Mobile operators are no longer just competing with each other; they're also contending with original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and third-party retailers, all vying to own the customer relationship. Each party approaches this ownership from a different angle – be it repair, hardware, retail touchpoints or just connectivity. Regardless, all are converging on the same goal: control of the customer experience (CX). This is where the opportunity to generate revenue ultimately comes from.

To stay competitive, mobile operators must look beyond legacy strengths. The next frontier for loyalty lies in the device experience – how it's supported, serviced and enhanced throughout its lifecycle with a customer.



Source: What U.S. Consumers Really Want From Their Mobile Provider. 2025. OXIO.

Device Experience: The Battleground for Customer Loyalty

As the legacy staples become table stakes, mobile operators must look to a new frontier to build differentiation and loyalty: the device experience. While billing and connectivity remain essential foundations, areas where most operators have already invested heavily. Recent [research](#) shows a strong correlation between customer satisfaction with device performance and their overall loyalty to the mobile carrier. This positions the device experience as the third critical pillar of customer retention.

Device experience is defined as every interaction and service involving the customer's device (outside network access), across every touchpoint in the lifecycle – from onboarding to in-life device performance to replacement. These milestones inherently mimic the customer lifetime value (CLV) lifecycle, as well – acquisition, conversion (mid-life upsell) and retention (trade-in/upgrade). Despite some investment in this area of the customer relationship, the device experience has yet to emerge as a true competitive driver for most mobile operators. At the same time, OEMs have elevated the experience to get closer to the customer, with unique AI and intelligence features that enhance experience.

But the opportunity for operators is clear: the device is the customer's constant companion, their always-on point of interaction. By taking control of the device-related experience, mobile providers can meet customers where they are – and with the right tools – they can differentiate themselves from the rest of the market and take what's most important – ownership of the customer. This implies better retention and commercialization opportunities. And it starts in the app.



The Gateway to the Customer and Device Experience: The App

Today, mobile operators have already invested in the app for billing and account management, laying a strong basis for interacting with the customer in a digital channel. As the device becomes the primary battleground for loyalty, the operator app must evolve from a peripheral channel to a primary interface in order to own device experience. Just as investing in infrastructure was essential to network competitiveness, so will the app experience to owning device experience and customer journeys related to it.

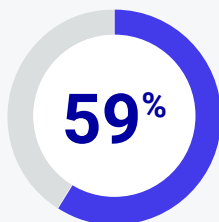
The potential of the app is twofold: First, device-related, in-life journeys – troubleshooting, trade-ins, upsell, claim management – are convenient for the customer and can be executed

more efficiently and intuitively in-app in many cases than via call centers or retail alone.

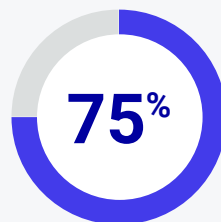
Second, the app is the most powerful data gateway to the customer profile. It continuously captures device telemetry (health, performance), lifecycle status (ownership, eligibility), behavioral signals (usage, preferences) and CX signals (issues, intents). This data is the engine for the entire business: it expedites support resolution, sharpens or tailors retail recommendations, and, critically so, enables proactive interventions before customers reach churn-risk moments.

With customer preferences shifting, this requires a fundamental shift in the app's role in an omnichannel customer service strategy.

The App On-Device Experience by the Numbers



of customers prefer their device-related journeys to be initiated on the app or entirely on the app²



of consumers would switch providers for a more tailored experience that could save them money.¹



of consumers would allow their mobile device data to be used for receiving more personalization or better service.¹

Elevating the App to the Level of Live-Agent Channels with Data.

As demographics become more digital-native, mobile operators must make the strategic shift of transforming their app into a channel that functions on par and in parallel to the retail store and call centers. We can think about how large retailers have built their entire platforms on digital platforms of service, where web or app channels are the primary touchpoints of service and stores or customer support serve as equal primary or secondary channels.

This is where extracting the app absorption of data becomes paramount. It elevates the app to become a far more strategically important channel in two ways:

1. Gathering insights for the mobile operator

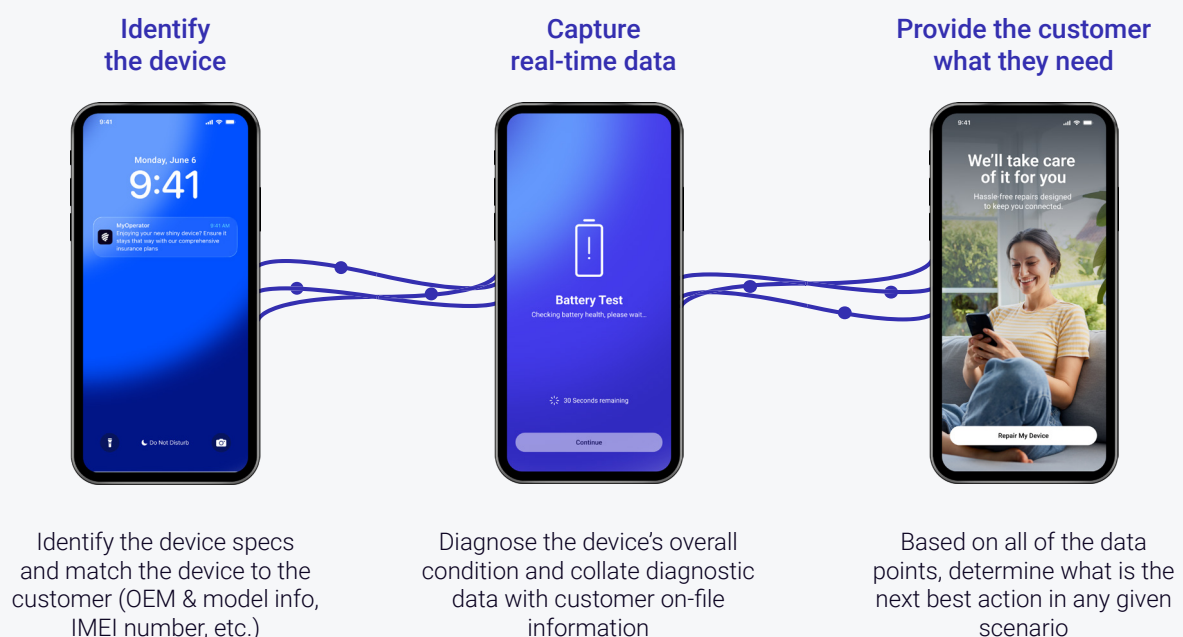
about the device to tailor solutions or commercialization for each customer's specific needs.

2. Connecting service channels so they can operate synchronously in any given customer journey.

As a remote channel, the challenge for mobile operators to equalize service with live-agent channels requires the ability to assess the device itself. That requires multi-faceted data capture to provide a clear picture of the device and enable journeys to be executed app-first with continuity to other channels when necessary. These include being able to identify device specs and cosmetic, software and hardware conditions.

We can see in the diagram below how the App Power Play comes to life, how it enables mobile operators to acquire data and drive journeys in a digital environment across the device's lifecycle.

The Formula for Device-Related Journeys via Your App



Agentic AI: Elevating the App to Live-Agent Channel Status

Agentic AI represents the next evolution in app-based customer service, enabling mobile operators to elevate it to the level of other live-agent channels. At its core, Agentic AI functions as a software intelligence layer embedded within the app that simulates human-like decision-making and interaction. Unlike traditional chatbots that are typically rule-based (algorithmic) and limited to scripted flows, Agentic AI can process context, learn from patterns and act autonomously without the need for human intervention, creating dynamic journeys as it receives newer information.

Agentic AI also introduces a conversational element into customer service on the app – a layer of human-like guidance that would otherwise be absent from this kind of environment. The natural language data input also provides qualitative data – like sentiment gauging or keywords – that can serve as feedback loops to the operator.

These dual capabilities also introduce a monumental shift from reactive to proactive service with device experience and in real-time. Instead of waiting for a customer to report an issue, Agentic AI can interpret customer behavior and device signals in real time and reach out opportunistically to service a customer before the customer reaches out. For example, Agentic AI can identify when a device is underperforming, anticipate service needs, or detect moments when a customer may be receptive to a trade-in or support.

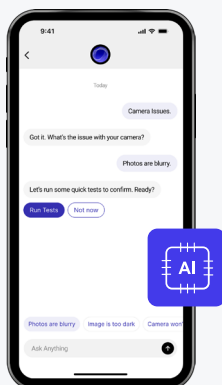
As a result, operators gain a more continuous and responsive connection with their users, which also transforms the app from a service tool to a full customer engagement platform.

Identify the device



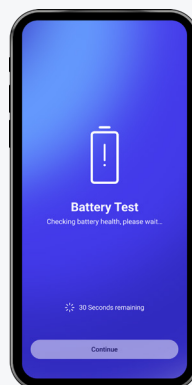
Identify the device specs and match the device to the customer (OEM & model info, IMEI number, etc.)

Engage and listen to the customer



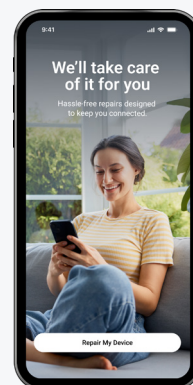
Converse with the customer in the app and assess customer needs in natural language

Capture real-time data



Diagnose specifically to what the customer's device issue is

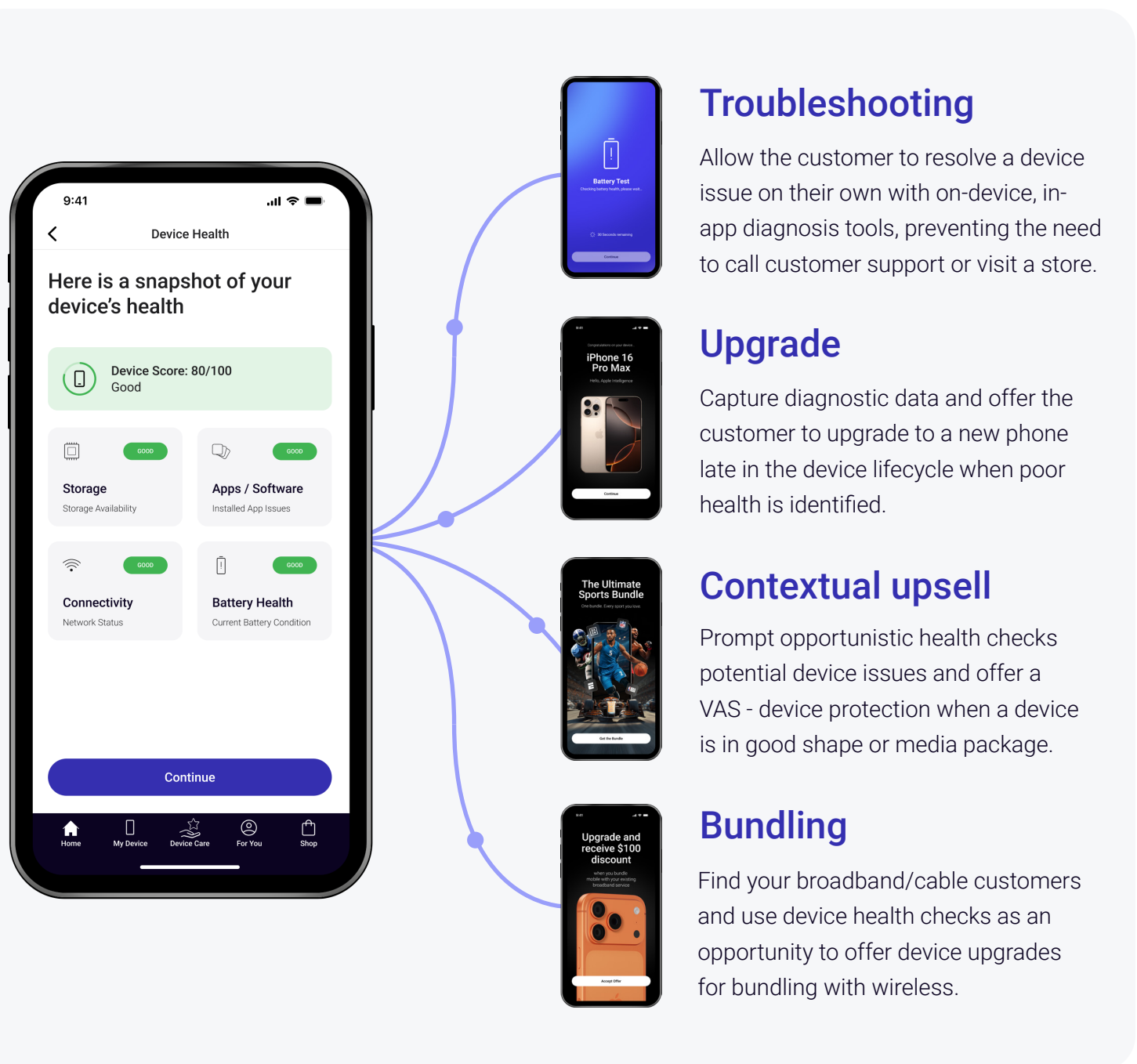
Provide the customer what they need



Determine the next best action – settings adjustment, repair, VAS upsell, trade-in/upgrade

Applying the App Power Play Concept to Common Device Journeys

When our formula for digital journeys is applied to typical device-related service, we can see how the app becomes a powerful channel. Below are the four device service opportunities that can be executed in the operator's app that bring business impact. They can be launched proactively (with AI) or be initiated reactively when a customer opens the app to address a mobile device issue.



Business Use Cases with an App-Centric Strategy

Taking ownership of the customer device experience with an App Power Play strategy can support mobile operators in a handful of key business objectives – from cost of service reduction to revenue generation. Below in the table are four examples of how transitioning to an app-first service strategy can achieve this, including new customer acquisition.

Device journey and Description

App journey

Business Value

Impact

Troubleshooting

Allowing customers to self-troubleshoot a device issue in the app without needing to call support or visit the store

Cost to serve reduction through fewer customer support calls for device issues

x1.4

reduction in call center volumes for customers who visited the app to troubleshoot a device issue³

Contextual upsell

Offering VAS upsell right in the app, without requiring the customer to be in-store

Opportunistic revenue generation with real-time data capture on the device

x3

invokes on revenue generating offers to customers (repair, insurance, device upgrade) with AI capitalizing on data³

Trade-in/Upgrade

Offering a trade-in to a customer via the app at the right time in the device lifecycle and executing the process mostly in the app

Retention and churn prevention through contract renewal with trade-in

x5

digital-driven customer trade-ins with the app's data-capture³

Bundling

Identifying broadband or cable customers who are primed for conversion into a wireless bundling

Customer acquisition by bringing over customers from competing wireless providers

UP TO 20%

conversion of non-bundled customers *based on market research & work with customers

Source: [MCE internal data]

Your Guide to Elevating Your Org's App and Owning Customer Device Experience

Phase 1: Audit & Prioritize (Weeks 1–6)

- ☉ **Assess Current Capabilities:** Evaluate your app's existing customer journeys. Where are the gaps? What's working well?
- ☉ **Define the Strategic Objective:** Choose a primary device-related or broader business goal you want to achieve (i.e. more digital, app-driven device trade-ins or more upsell revenue from the app)
- ☉ **Map the Journey:** Identify which journeys can start in the app and delineate how you want the customer journey(s) to flow. Consider simplified UX and minimal lift from the customer to maximize journey completion.
- ☉ **Establish KPIs:** Identify the milestones and metrics for each journey (e.g., journey milestone completion rate, upsell promo conversions, revenue from app-based conversions).
- ☉ **Agentic AI Opportunity Mapping (if applicable):** Understand where Agentic AI or generative AI can enhance the journey flow you mapped. Ask where objective data can be captured and used to drive proactive, predictive service? Outline how success of the AI feature will be measured.

Phase 2: Plan, Build & Integrate (Weeks 7–12)

- ☉ **Evaluate Technology Partners:** Identify external platforms or vendors (e.g., MCE) that reduce internal development overhead.

- ☉ **Map Data Requirements:** What device/customer data is needed to deliver each journey? How will you access and structure it?
- ☉ **Design the UX:** Once you've created the journey as mapped, stress test it and ask: How long does each journey take? What steps are required from the user? How do you maintain engagement through the process?
- ☉ **Align Data, UX, and KPIs:** Ensure every journey is goal-oriented, user-centered, and measurable.
- ☉ **Check Compliance:** Ensure any new data usage or workflows are aligned with data protection policies and internal governance.
- ☉ **Integrate the Stack:** Work closely with developer teams and the technology partner to connect APIs, SDKs, and backend endpoints for the app.

Phase 3: Launch & Optimize (Weeks 13–18)

- ☉ **Pilot with Measured KPIs:** Launch a controlled release of the new journey with your predefined success metrics.
- ☉ **Use Live Feedback Loops:** Monitor real-time customer behavior, errors, drop-off points, and satisfaction data.
- ☉ **Refine & Expand:** Once your use case shows impact, extract learnings and apply them to other journeys (e.g., from troubleshooting to upgrades).

MCE Systems: Pioneering Real-World AI for Mobile Operators

With customers demanding more tailored experiences and remote convenience, the time is now to begin the transformation to a digital-first, app-based service approach, leveraging data to give customers exactly what they need at the time and place of their choosing. For that, mobile operators require the right partnership and vision. MCE is there to help.

Backed by over 20 years experience working with mobile device lifecycle management in the telecommunications industry, MCE is pioneering the digital, app-first transformation for mobile operators. Its core dDLM platform delivers digitization and intelligence to customer engagement across 10 different unique customer device-related journeys – from onboarding to device troubleshooting to warranty exchange to contextual upsell to trade-in or upgrade. With dozens of customers and partners worldwide, MCE is one of the foremost technology leaders in the telecommunications industry, delivering mobile operators the capacity to provide the experience their customers need – and your guide to mastering the App Power Play strategy.

Customers



Awards



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