

IT'S NO SECRET THAT 3M IS GOOD AT producing items that are part of our everyday lives. The St. Paul-based company turns out more than 50,000 products each year, including Post-it Notes, Scotch Tape, and ACE Bandages, to name a few.

But about a decade ago, executives realized that while the company got good grades for creating innovative new products, it wasn't as effective at connecting with the customer. "Senior leadership challenged us to find a path to be great at this, especially since we sell through many different channels to the ultimate end users," says Raj Rao, vice president of global eTransformation at 3M.

That's where ForeSee comes in. The Ann Arbor-based company helps businesses measure and improve the multichannel customer experience. At 3M, the process

began by developing a survey to assess performance across key aspects of the customer experience. The ForeSee data also delved further, providing insight into the reasons for consumers' visits, information about which industry the consumer was from, and their role in the company.

"So many different types of individuals engage with 3M—buyers, scientists, spec writers—we needed a systematic way to identify why they were coming to us and the nature of their visit," says Rao.

Once 3M had a good handle on who the customer was, ForeSee's data could help the company distinguish a good customer experience from a less satisfactory one. More important, it allowed 3M to measure and quantify the impact that any improvements would have on the customer's decision to buy from 3M.

For instance, ForeSee was able to discern that the majority of the visitors to 3M's health care website were not there to make a purchase but rather to understand the products' specs or find answers to questions about warranty issues. By moving a key action tab needed to accomplish those tasks closer to the website's home page, Rao says, customer satisfaction improved dramatically.

Still, customer satisfaction measures mean little unless you know how you stack up against your competitors. "There's no

point in being enamored with the high scores that Netflix or Amazon get, because the expectations of the customers coming to us are different than the expectations of the customers going to those companies," says Rao. "Knowing who to compare yourself to is almost as important as knowing your own score."

ForeSee provides benchmarks for comparable experiences, industries, and sub-categories. The data also break out customer expectations according to whether an individual is interacting with 3M on a tablet, smartphone, or desktop. Having this more robust customer intelligence, says Rao, enables 3M to make better investments. "We're always looking to drive engagement across all smart devices, and to do that we have to know whether we're better off investing in content or design," he says.

Every quarter, Rao meets with the senior leaders of 3M to explain the ways ForeSee data is helping improve the customer experience. "All executives, regardless of which businesses they run or which part of the world they focus on, agree on one thing: We want winning customer engagement," he says. "ForeSee is helping us do that." ●

BETTER CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS?

FORESEE IS HELPING 3M CREATE A MORE ROBUST CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ACROSS ITS VARIOUS PLATFORMS.

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