Leading Strategically
Delivering Timely Customer Support in the
Face of Rising Demand and Capacity Constraints

Amy Perkins
Thank you to everybody who's joining us today, for joining this roundtable series. I know many of you have joined several of them, Leading Strategically Through the Recovery. Joining me today is Roxanne Bartley. I'm so excited. Roxanne is currently the Executive Vice-President of Strategic Partnerships. In this role, she's responsible for cultivating the strategic relationships and driving business development for Remitter with their key partners.

Before joining Remitter, she served as VP of Business Development for Alpha Recovery Corporation and prior to that, she was the CEO of Bartley Ventures, LLC and through all of this experience, she's had exposure to operations, budget development, analysis and oversight, marketing, including volume growth, program development, FTE management, the list goes on and on. She clearly has a very well-rounded set of expertise in the collection and recovery industry. I'm really excited to have her here today talking more about self-service and how we can take care of our customers.

Before we jump in, though, I do want to give a big, huge thank-you to LiveVox and RevSpring, who have helped us make the webinar series possible. LiveVox is a leading provider of enterprise cloud contact center solutions, managing 12-plus billion interactions annually. With 15-plus years of pure cloud expertise, they empower effective channels of choice engagement strategies.

As for RevSpring, they lead the market in financial communications and payment solutions that inspire consumers to pay, leading accounts, which is important to all of us. Leading accounts receivables, management companies, [unintelligible 1:49] RevSpring to maximize their financial results through dynamic and personalized print, online, phone, email and text communications and payment options.

I'm really looking forward to today's discussion. One of the first things I wanted to talk about is what is your take on everything that's going on right now and how is Remitter responding or what are you hearing from customers and what do you think that's going to do to inform the rest of this year?

Roxanne Bartley
First all, thank you, Amy, for having us, the entire insideARM team, Remitter is obviously very keen to partner with you and others in the industry. I'm going to resist the urge to use the phrase unprecedented times. I think after we get through this, that will be the one phrase that none of us ever want to hear again, so I don't use it as a descriptor.

But I would like to say that the entire Remitter team joins with InsideARM and our industry in expressing our condolences to those who lost loved ones and are somehow negatively impacted by COVID-19. We're super eternally grateful to everyone who's putting themselves in harm's way to ensure our continuity of life.

When we pause and take stock of what we've seen in the last few weeks, take [pulse 4:00] now and look to the forecasts into the remainder of 2020 and beyond, there's a lot of uncertainty, right?

But there are some things that are really, really crystal clear and one of them being that leaders and organizations who embrace change, they are really using this and they use every opportunity to take adversity and turn it into advantage.

What we've been seeing and hearing is really two very distinctly polar expressions, one being, "Look. We're going to take every excuse not to change, whether it's we're too busy. We are wrapping up work from home or now we're too busy doing this or we're too busy doing that." I would say that the folks that give us that response are the same folks who would use any other circumstance to stay stuck where they are.

Then, there's another group who are really using this opportunity, like I said previously, to take adversity and turn it into advantage. These are the folks who really embrace innovation in their organizations and it permeates throughout. I personally believe that this pandemic, like other major disruptors we've gone through, whether it's the dot.com crash, Y2K, 9/11, the great recession, will lead to a busy period of M&A because there's going to be some opportunistic companies that will take advantage of those with more heavily, debt-laden books. There'll be some acquisition of tech.

We hope and we look forward to some reform from a regulatory standpoint. Hopefully CFPB and FTC and the other regulatory bodies will adjust for the more widespread digital transformation that's taking place. We certainly expect to see it in education and also in healthcare with the proliferation of telehealth.

Amy Perkins
It's interesting to hear that some people are saying, "Oh, we're going to hurry up and wait. We're not making any moves right now," and then, you have others who are moving very, very quickly to stand up those solutions that they can see are going to be really, really needed. I think that's a good transition to our next topic, which is scalability.

I was a strategy exec before this role and have been more than half of my career. One of the things we always talked about was our need to have levers in place that we could pull if anything were to happen, if the loans didn't perform the way we anticipated, or if there was a disaster or something that we never could have foreseen, something like COVID-19, so that when you do have an increase, a quick increase, in delinquency volume, you have ways without immediately incurring a lot of incremental expense to alleviate some of that pressure, to be there to support customers, and then, be able to work your way through that bubble that's coming.

It really surprises me so much when I hear people who don't look—and we'll talk about self-service specifically, but I can tell you, if I was in my old job right now, a company like Remitter would have been first on my list to call if we didn't have a self-service web portal because in today's day and age when people are so keen to do things on their own, it just seems like that option should be afforded to those who are past-due or delinquent, too, which we know a lot of times companies don't make that available to past-due companies.

Can you share a little bit about what you're hearing from current or potential customers about the need to scale and how they believe that an online web portal or self-service will significantly help them, or how you're even seeing that with existing customers already able to leverage that?

Roxanne Bartley
Great question. I would say that there are some pretty interesting stats out there that point to the fact that many organizations recognize that they have this need. According to Forrester's with regard to digital transformation, customer experience and revenue growth have been the biggest drivers since probably 2017 to now. But it's a transformation journey. It's not a destination, so what a lot of companies get stuck with is thinking, "Well, we've done it already."

Okay. Remember. It wasn't that long ago where not every company had a website and not every company had an app or not every company had a payment portal.

Some companies today send emails. Some send an email reminder. Some send IVRs. Not that long ago, not everybody had that.

It's a constantly moving target and what the enterprises that are most successful are able to do is to recognize that the customers are going to drive that. The very, very successful ones tend to be very customer-centric. You have to keep in mind that on the recovery and collection side, many times we get a little complacent. I say we, as an industry. I was on the agency side for a long time and a lot of times, that's a space where technology is a little bit slower to be adopted.

But part of that is because they're not looking at what the customer experience is. The companies that do that really well, they tend to mimic what they're doing on the marketing side. If you recognize that your customer is the same customer that's using Uber, is the same customer that's using [audio gap 9:50 – 9:57] of itself, speaks to how [unintelligible] what they're doing is because across all their different platforms, they're allowing their customers to have the same experience.

That consistency is really, really important. We can't lose it where you go from origination, it's this experience, customer care is like this. Early-stage collection it's like that and then, when it goes into collection, late-stage or recovery, it falls off and we go back to 1985, like "Oh, we'll send a letter," or maybe somebody will knock on a door. You can't really do that.

We do need to catch up. About 26% of organizations recognize that the transformation is never-ending; 19% of them are still considering what to do and 14% of them missed the boat and they mistakenly think that they've already transformed.

If you stay abreast of that and continually make the adjustments for what your customers are telling you that they need—I was at a conference a couple of months ago, just before all this went crazy, and the comment was made by an [unintelligible 11:10], "Our customers are telling us. They wanted not just Omni channel. They want it on my channel," and I thought that that was just so perfectly apt because, "I want this, this morning, but I want this, this afternoon. I want this tomorrow." You have to have it all. It's going to be a smorgasbord of opportunity and let them choose.

Amy Perkins
Absolutely. I really like what you said about the focus on the consumer. A lot of times, because it is our technical job to create processes to support the bigger

[portions 11:44] of recovery process, I think for us, I think for lending institutions, it's so easy to very quickly forget that the reason we all exist is because of the person on the other end, the customer, either the institution we're servicing, their past-due loan or what-have-you.

I think about COVID-19 so differently than I do even like the housing crisis or any other blip that we've seen in the economy because we're going to see a lot of customers that are one, evaluating companies based on how they respond. The reason why that especially matters for these past-due customers that are coming through is because many of them would have never modeled to end up being a consumer who wasn't able to pay their bills because so many consumers out there that had impacts outside of their control from COVID-19 are coming in. They're probably first-time defaults or customers who aren't likely to stay in the delinquency cycle once they recover from this.

The reason why I believe that's important and why these tools that promote both efficiency and a positive consumer experience are even more important than they already are is because customers are going to come out of this and they're going to recover. They're going to be evaluating their interactions with companies, who made it easiest, who provided them the information they needed, those sorts of things.

Roxanne Bartley
[Talk over 13:10].

Amy Perkins
That's [unintelligible] I said, "Oh, I would be all about this." That just further informs that decision, so can you talk a little bit about how it's more than just op-ex there that customers are evaluating?

Roxanne Bartley
I was just going to tell you, too. In addition to providing information and allowing customers to feel empowered beyond this pandemic period, even now while people are trying to find some sense of control, if you're able—just think about it. If you were that mom sitting at home trying to work, manage a child and home school them—god bless all the parents that are doing that—and then, you've got a simple thing like, "You know what? There's all these things outside of my control, but you know what? I can go pay this bill, but I have a question." If you have an opportunity to get your question easily answered by going to that website, going to a portal, having some sort of digital solution where you don't have to take up

anybody's time, you can do it at 2:00 in the morning or 2:00 in the afternoon or whatever the case might be, you would like to have that.

It would be great if you also had a [payment 14:23] come out of that, but what if it was just something as simple as an incremental gain by not having to deal with that inbound call because that customer was able to go and find the information that they needed. Something like 91% of people will choose to use a knowledge base that's available online if it's provided. Many companies don't have that for their customers, even also as an AI company, we have to be cognizant that we're constantly refreshing our information because there are certain things that people ask.

When you look at the proliferation of mobile devices, right now 58% of folks in the U.S. have a smart phone. You've got one. I've got one. I stand in front of conferences now and do our demos. The first thing I say is, "Whip out your smart phone," and everybody's got one. It doesn't feel like it's the other person.

They've got 1.2 billion people that are accessing the web from their mobile devices. If you're not reaching your consumers on those platforms, you're missing the boat. If you're thinking that they're only going to call in or they're going to respond to a mailed letter—and I'm not saying that those are not valid platforms, as well, because you're going to have some that that's what they respond to. But you have to have all.

I think it's just really important to make the point that for the most successful enterprises, whether you're an agency or you're a lender, mobile, agile, digital. You have to have it. It's going to give you the op-ex savings, but you also can't afford to be wrong because during this period, you've got the folks that you want to have the good will and yes, you want to build brand loyalty and all that, but in addition to that, you're fighting for wallet share. You're going to be fighting for it that much more when folks come out of this.

Amy Perkins
That's absolutely right. What I find interesting and I'd love to ask you this is one of the ways I would probably use it if I were in my old job would be to really educate consumers about what all of this means because again, so many of them are going through this for the very first time. Having that information available to them where they can find out what is a settlement. What is a payment plan? What does a deferment mean? What is that going to look like if I model that out for me and put in my information?

I think because this is a topic that people are just naturally less-inclined to want to talk to someone about…

Roxanne Bartley
A bit adversarial.

Amy Perkins
…what's happening, many people are going to want to take that and absorb that information, then make a decision and figure out what they want to do from there. It's good to hear that you do have some clients who are really valuing those qualitative benefits that are very, very hard—that's why they're qualitative—to measure, but make a meaningful difference in that overall experience with, in my opinion, the op-ex savings being a bonus.

Roxanne Bartley
For some organizations, obviously the op-ex is going to be the thing that they focus on, but for many others, it's really the additional, incremental savings of those reduced wait times. That's huge. I won't call a name, but I called one of my creditors recently and I hung up because the wait time was just so long. When you think of what that's doing, your organization is already spending so much on the front end to acquire a customer, it costs somewhere between 5-25X to gain a new customer.

After you've spent all that, to lose them in that way and people are much more inclined to talk about a bad experience that they had. I think it's something like 15-to-one, they'll tell about a bad experience. All we have to do is look to ourselves. If something bad happens, you're telling everyone. If something really great happens, you might remember to mention it if it was relevant to what you were talking about.

Being able to triage a lot of the volume of inbound calls, those are very real things where some folks are able, depending on what their capabilities are with their tech, to really drill down and capture that information and then, they can see all the value of digital.

But even if you're not, you can ask any call center manager, get a sense. They're like, "Hm. Phone are kind of dead today," or "Volume is really up," ask anybody about a Monday morning versus a pay Friday. They know. There's an ebb and flow in a call center. All those things can be quantified in addition to the

qualitative analysis, things like payer rates being higher, average balance of payments being higher.

Then, like I said, being able to—probably one of the things we hear from our customers the most, end customers who are potentially looking to partner with us, is because you've got lots of companies out there that do tech, the email and the Omni channel in general, but I always answer people, "Remitter is an AI company first and we deliver on that platform."

The fact that our customers and prospective customers see the value in being able to take the ad-powered insights and then, use that to drive strategy after. I know, coming from your strategy world, that probably makes all the sense in the world to you, but for many people, as we mentioned earlier with regard to those who think they've already done it, that 14% of those, "Oh, no. We already have that." "Do you? Do you really?"

When you're able to take the insights from what you're doing and use that to drive new strategies and improve constantly, then you can give your customers the benefit of that.

Amy Perkins
I love that you made point about AI being first. We partner with a lot of different AI companies. Most of them do something entirely different with the information that comes out of the AI. But I think it's really cool that on top of just saying, "Here's a channel the customer preferred. Let's plug it in," you can also build upon that with really a customizable experience based on all the information that that data-gathering is doing for you to be able to help consumers along.

I'm going to skip to the last question that I think sort of plays into what we're talking about here. I was reading the other day that about 40% of Millennials check a company's FAQ page before making any type of inquiry with a company about what their original concern was.

I have to say—you mentioned this earlier—I'm a little bit of the same way. If I can solve my own problem with my laptop while my daughter is in bed after hours, I am all about that because who has time during business hours to be making those calls and waiting on hold and doing all that stuff.

But it did occur to me that during the housing crisis, the mortgage crisis, Millennials were much younger in the system and probably were impacted in their

own unique ways, for sure, there was no doubt. But financially now, a lot of Millennials have families. They have homes. They are in the lending system, so it seems like there's more demand than ever to cater to their preference.

Are you seeing a shift in preference in the data that you guys see within the collections' realm of customers who are in that Millennial range who want more, less-antiquated options or solutions for resolving their debt?

Roxanne Bartley
I'll tell you what. This is really interesting because you and I don't sit in that bucket, right? But it's…

Amy Perkins
[Talk over 2:13].

Roxanne Bartley
We love to say that we do, but really, my grays tell a different story. But more than ever, customers are willing to use self-service channels that help get the support that they need. If you can make it easy for them to help themselves, you're going to be able to cut down your live support calls, etc. But 70%—it's not just you. It's not just Millennials—70% of customers prefer to a company's website to get the answers to their questions. That's whether it's their phone or their email.

In addition to that, you have to remember that if you look at the stats for mobile devices and smart devices with that, it's not just limited to the Millennials. Your 50-something-year-old user—to my point earlier about [audio gap 23:05 – 23:12] that's only the Millennials that want to self-service. [Unintelligible] because if you look at a lot of the data that's coming out of the online marketplace lenders, their customer base is very, very wide and varied in terms of their aging and most of those loans and products are being originated online and digitally, typically on a mobile platform. Again, if you're originating in that way, to then assume that everybody is just all of a sudden go back in time for their further communications, you're missing the boat.

Amy Perkins
You make a great point. I think as time goes on, it's going to be less about generations driving tech solutions because we're all being conditioned to self-service. Companies are teaching us this. It's the kind of thing that we're talking about here. The more we offer it, the more consumers can teach themselves how to

use it and the more we all get better at it. I know most of the things I do now, I don't even know the last time I bought a stamp, except for things [talk over 24:17].

Roxanne Bartley
I was just going to ask you the very same thing. I was mailing a birthday card to my granddaughter day before yesterday. I was searching all over for a stamp. I was like when was the last time I mailed something. Think about it. We all used to mail our bills out. Then, you shifted to doing online bill pay. Then you went to automated. Think about the last time you even looked at your phone bill or something like that. It just doesn't really happen anymore.

As we become more and more conditioned to do that, one of the things that we want as consumers is that consistency across all the channels. You want it from all your vendors. You want it from all your service providers and you want it throughout the entire life cycle.

The nice thing is, we really have a great opportunity now as an industry to drive a lot of this change. We often lag, but companies that are really, really active to continue what their creditors have done on the front-end marketing side and to keep that life cycle journey for the customer all the way through, then they're able to add this component back in on the backend and if they do that, obviously we're happy to help. Our product is [white-labeled 25:35], so it really kind of extends that journey throughout.

Amy Perkins
It can look like and feel like any of your clients, brands, feeling, all [talk over].

Roxanne Bartley
[Unintelligible]. One quick thing. To the point not just for customer experience, but from a compliance perspective, as well, that is a tremendous value.

Amy Perkins
Absolutely. I think for trust and loyalty for consumers as they're navigating through, we're all sort of phished and scammed and all those things all the time, I think all of that just reinforces the continuity between the company's age, the company's brand and all of that allows them to use that, as well. I guess I'll say in closing that I know I'm probably on the leading edge of pushing for innovation and I stand behind that for [unintelligible 26:25] recovery.

One of the big things for me right now really is this self-service concept because years ago when we looked to consider putting it in, it legitimately for us at that time, was a few steps ahead of where we were. We had some building blocks we had to put in place to make it work, but as I think about the future and more and more the ways people want to service themselves, and also just letting go of this concept that if we don't talk to them, we can't possibly get to the right resolution, that used to be the old myth with self-service was that people would go on and if we didn't force them to call us, it wouldn't be handled the way we wanted it to. Well, now that websites are customizable and your application is customizable, you can lead the customers right down the path that a phone conversation could have handled, too.

Roxanne Bartley
The statistics really do prove out that when we present all the available options that you are willing to, whether that's blind or not, once you present it, the consumer usually does the right thing. They will do more than you ask of them, which is just always, I think it comes as a surprise to most operators, but it really happens that way. Again, to that higher payer rate and higher-paying accounts.

Amy Perkins
Absolutely. I'm going to pause there and ask Mike if there are any questions. If so, do you want to pitch them out to Roxanne?

Mike Bevel
We don't have any questions in the queue at all. If anybody wants to take a moment right now to write one out real quick, I would be glad to ask it. What questions are you dreading getting? What question would you hate for someone to send in?

Roxanne Bartley
The question that often comes up, it's regarding value. How do I know that this channel that I just provided is the cause or what drove my collections or recover numbers as opposed to it was the call we made last week. Most customers who use our products and products like ours, they're not just using one thing in isolation. They're doing some type of blend between a call, inbound, outbound, IVR, their own web portal, etc. How do you really know Remitter caused this payment?

That's usually the hardest one sometimes and again, I think I've sort of addressed this earlier in saying there are certain KPIs. Obviously, you've gotten growth

collection. You can look and see what was collected on the platform. That's probably the easiest.

But then, a little bit harder to calculate would be that increased efficiency in terms of what didn't have to go into your call center and require a live agent, the shorter call times, reduced wait times, etc. I think that would probably be the tougher one, but it is answerable. Again, it just depends on what your organization's main concern is at that time, what are you trying to solve for because the product can certainly apply at any point along the life cycle of the account.

Amy Perkins
Thank you, Roxanne. Let me just say once again to everyone, thank you all for attending with us. Your participation is invaluable. I also want to thank you again, Roxanne, for joining us. I'm hoping that we can run into each other on the Spartan circuit somewhere once all of this is cleared up, my [unintelligible 30:38] enthusiasts.

Roxanne Bartley
[Unintelligible] in between now and then.

Amy Perkins
Lots of [burpees]. I do want to close by thanking again LiveVox and RevSpring for sponsoring the series of innovative and thoughtful leadership webinars that are packed full of great guests like Roxanne. It's partnerships like this that really do help us produce some of the highest quality content that we possibly can. If anybody has any questions about today's presentation or suggestions for other types of content around strategy and tech that you'd be interested in, just email me at Amy@insideARM.com. I think that about does it. We hope to see all of you guys next time and you can safely disconnect from the webinar. Thanks again, Roxanne.