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White paper

The Content Intelligence Revolution – Part 2:
Optimization & Assisted Authoring

Kaspar Roos   July 2019

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The Content Intelligence Revolution – Part 2: Optimization & Assisted Authoring

By Kaspar Roos
CEO of Aspire

ABSTRACT

The CCM industry is at the dawn of a content intelligence revolution. Driven by advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), and Natural Language Processing (NLP), traditional barriers that prevent enterprises from cost-efficiently modernizing their communications are rapidly collapsing. In this two-part white paper series, Aspire founder and CCM industry expert Kaspar Roos outlines his vision of how content intelligence will shape the industry in years to come.

KEY FINDINGS

- The majority of enterprise executives see AI as very important or critically important to their business.

- Content Intelligence, the practice of applying AI to help enterprises manage or create content better and faster, is an exciting new development that has the potential to overcome traditional barriers such as duplicate and inconsistent content that hinder efficiently managing communications at scale.

- Content optimization is the process of applying AI to discover opportunities for content consolidation or improvement, while Assisted Authoring makes AI capabilities available to content authors in real-time that help them to create content that is easier to understand, better to

engage with, or more consistent in terms of brand, tone-of-voice, or look-and-feel.

- Content migration and rationalization, which is using AI to transform and rationalize existing communication templates into modern formats, is an essential step in content optimization, which is discussed in part 1 of this two part whitepaper series.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- CCM professionals interested in obtaining higher employee and productivity efficiencies, should look at applying assisted authoring or content optimization technologies to their CCM strategies

- Any business with a CEO mandate for omni-channel communications should look at the potential that Content Intelligence brings in terms of improving quality of content to create better customer experience and more consistent communications

- Companies with interactive deployments or agent-broker type communications will dramatically increase productivity and customer experience if content creators are assisted by real-time AI to help them write content better and faster, or re-use already available content fragments

INTRODUCTION

According to a survey by Deloitte, 38% of enterprise executives believe that AI will be critically important to the success of their business in just two years' time (see Figure 1). This remarkable finding shows how high the expectations are for AI in the business world, and how profound its impact is likely to be.

Figure 1: Importance of AI to business success
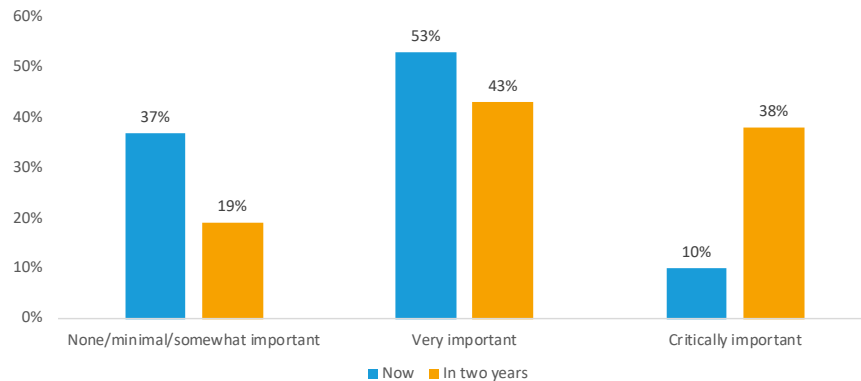
*Source: The State of AI in the Enterprise, Deloitte, 2018*

For customer communications professionals, the rise of AI will fundamentally reshape how enterprises create, manage, produce, and distribute communications. AI-driven solutions will help organizations reduce the number of communication templates, support business users with better orchestration, increase automation and operational efficiency, and provide greater granular insight to help organizations create better and more relevant content.

At Aspire, we have identified several impact areas of AI in customer communications management (CCM) and outlined their relative adoption in the market (see Figure 2). Since many of the areas touch on content, we believe we are at the beginning of a new wave of technological development primarily focused on Content Intelligence.

Intelligent solutions that help business users create better and more engaging content – and that is easier to manage at scale – are of massive importance to CCM. The impact, relevancy, and overall value of a communication are largely

determined by the quality of the underlying content. Using AI to improve content will lead to a better customer experience (CX), greater customer loyalty, higher up-sell and cross-sell, and ultimately drive business performance growth.

Figure 2: Relative adoption of AI application areas within CCM
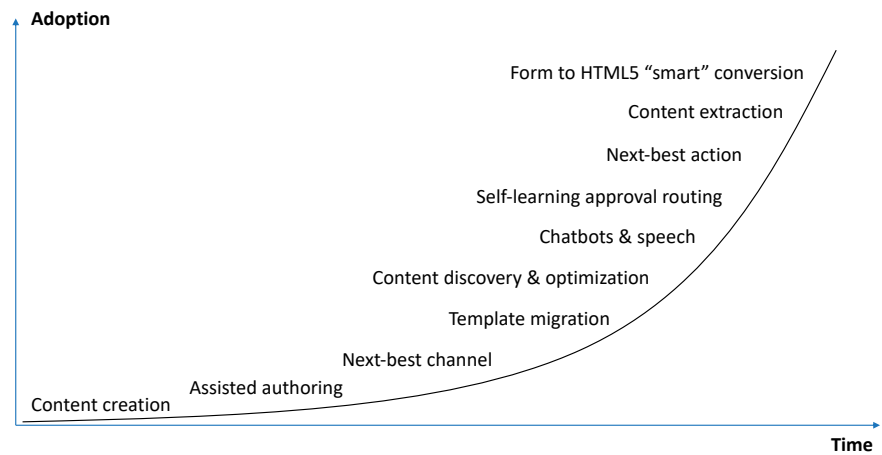
Source: Aspire, 2019

As enterprises are digitally transforming and placing more emphasis on customer centricity and being digital-first, there is a tremendous push to transform print-driven legacy and back-office communications into more modern communications that are part of an omni-channel approach. In part 1 of this white paper series, we looked at how AI-driven tools such as Messagepoint Rationalizer helps organizations reduce the number of legacy templates by analyzing them, looking for similarities, figuring out business rules and smart variances, and then migrating legacy documents into a modern content management system that can drive physical as well as digital communications. In this second white paper, we are looking, from a content-centric point of view, at how content optimization and assisted authoring help

organizations unlock even more value by using AI-driven technology to create much more relevant, engaging, and easier-to-understand content.

CURRENT CONTENT CHALLENGES IN CCM

It is important to understand what key challenges organizations face when it comes to creating and managing content for CCM, and where content optimization and assisted authoring can make a real difference. In this section, we have outlined five major challenges that we often see in the market.

CHALLENGE 1: FRAGMENTATION

CCM traditionally focuses on billing, service, and back-office type communications, which are driven by operations and IT. While CCM systems are becoming more integrated with marketing systems and are increasingly driving acquisition, onboarding, enrollment, and activation-type communications, the reality is that the majority of enterprises still have dispersed systems for customer communications in place. Add to this that many enterprises have outsourced some or all of their transactional communications to a service provider who often manages content as well. As a result, the content for communications tends to live in many different places in the organization and is highly fragmented in nature.

Additionally, the recent shift to digital has resulted in even more fragmentation when it comes to managing content for communications. There are currently over 7,000 software vendors in the digital marketing space alone[1]; many business systems now come with a CX or communications layer, and modern software is provisioned through SaaS which can be procured directly by a line-of-business (LOB). As a result, content for digital communications is becoming siloed and fragmented.

As Figure 3 illustrates, many enterprises do not actively control template inventory levels and often have no idea about the number of templates used in

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[1] Chief Martec, Marketing Technology Landscape Supergraphic, 2019

their organization. This results in enterprises not only grappling with inconsistencies in content, using multiple systems across organizational and technical siloes, but also adds much higher overhead and maintenance costs in comparison to a centralized content management solution.

Figure 3: Do you regularly assess template inventories?
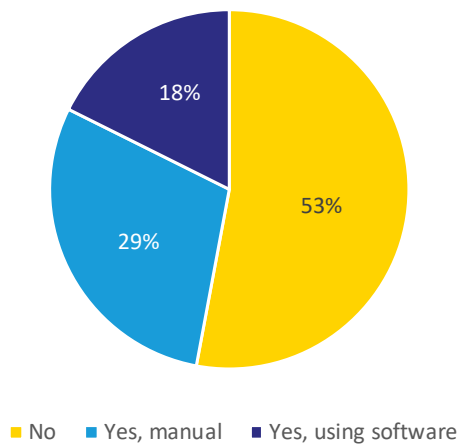
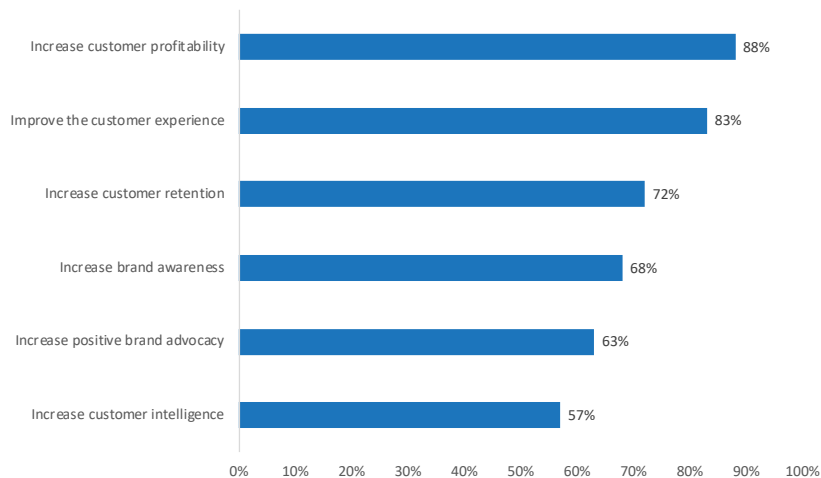## CHALLENGE 2: CONTENT REDUNDANCY

Redundancy of content is a costly problem – based on bad design or maintenance practices from the past – as organizations may have prioritized the expediency of developing multiple templates over a better application of variances and business rules. We see this most often in insurances companies who operate across multiple geographic markets or financial services companies that go to market with different brands. Instead of using business rules and a centralized content management system based on a limited set of templates, the organization produces a single template for each scenario, leading to increased amounts of content redundancy. Once content is locked within a template, without using smart technology, it is very hard to update and change it for the following reasons:

- It is difficult to find and extract content, especially when content is embedded in legacy communications

- It is hard to interpret and compare content based on its meaning – while certain templates may textually be different, they may have a similar meaning

- Changing content, including decommissioning content, across multiple templates is a manual and labor- intensive process

- Testing is time consuming and expensive

CHALLENGE 3: LACK OF CONSISTENCY

In recent years, much research has been done on the effects of customer experience on business performance, and it has been well documented that customers who can easily interact with a brand tend to be more loyal and spend more than customers who encounter a negative experience.

Figure 4: Benefits of omni-channel communications

| Benefit	Percentage
Increase customer profitability	88%
Improve the customer experience	83%
Increase customer retention	72%
Increase brand awareness	68%
Increase positive brand advocacy	63%
Increase customer intelligence	57%

Source: Starfleet Marketing, Benchmark Report, 2016

It has also been well documented that omni-channel communications lead to better customer profitability, customer experience, and customer loyalty, see Figure 4.

When it comes to omni-channel communications, a single customer view is absolutely critical, and communications need to be consistent for each step in the customers' lifecycle stage (see Figure 5). Especially in regulated industries we often see a big disconnect between acquisition and operational (billing, service, and compliance) communications. Marketing may have invested in the latest digital experience technology, can track prospects, and provide a state-of-art digital (mobile) experience, only to disappoint newly found customers because the operational part of the organization is still far behind. While solving this issue typically involves more than just technical change (for example, organizational change), centralization of content is an important aspect and leads to much better consistency in communications.

Figure 5: Omni-Channel Communications by Customer Lifecycle Stage
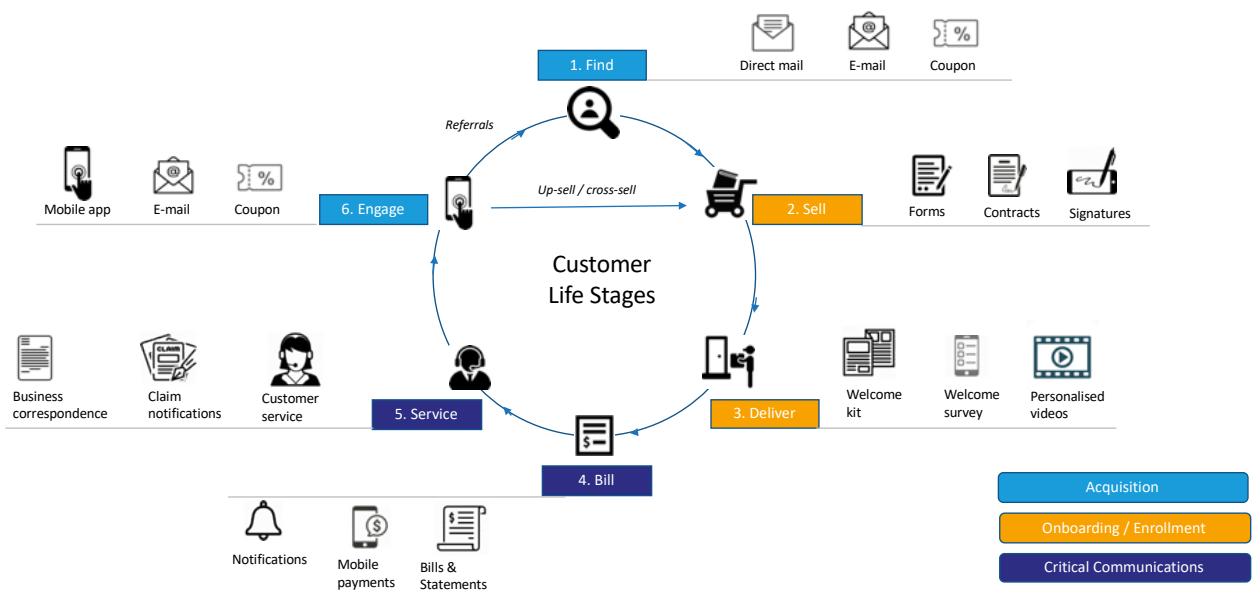
Source: Aspire 2019

CHALLENGE 4: INCOMPATIBLE OR UNSUITABLE CONTENT

Even if content is accessible, it may not always be useable. For example, content may be crafted in different languages. It may also be in formats that are not suitable for particular channels, for example, interactive HTML elements cannot be used in printed communications. As a result, smart technology may be necessary to either convert content, facilitate content sharing or help business users understand its restrictions.

CHALLENGE 5: UNUSED CONTENT

Content may no longer be in use. Finding and understanding which content has become obsolete and can be removed is a major challenge, especially with large template inventories and when responsibility for customer communications is dispersed throughout the organization or with service providers. Unused content and templates create clutter which make management of used content harder, and create risk where content is changed but not actually used in communications.

THE BENEFITS OF USING AI FOR CONTENT OPTIMIZATION

### CONTENT OPTIMIZATION EXPLAINED

Content optimization is the process of applying artificial intelligence to discover opportunities for content consolidation or improvement. The process typically consists of the following steps (see Figure 6):

1. Finding or locating content

2. Identifying similarities (based on meaning/attributes) and duplicates

3. Identifying inconsistencies/outliers in content

After discovery, the system can rationalize unused or redundant content, based on built-in intelligence that allows it to understand meaning of text, irrespective

of form, language, or style. The system can also provide recommendations on how to improve content; for example, by making suggestions on style and imagery (for better brand consistency) or by highlighting areas that are difficult to understand or have negative sentiment or tone-of-voice.

Figure 6: Content intelligence for content discovery and optimization
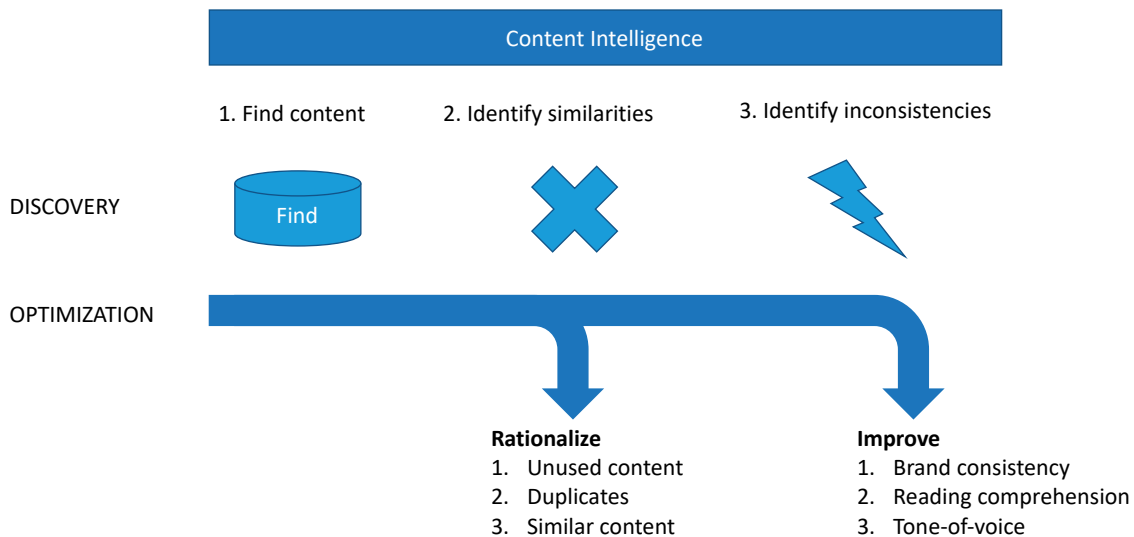
Source: Aspire, 2019

ASSISTED AUTHORING

While vendors such as Messagepoint are heavily investing in AI-driven Content Intelligence for CCM, the technology is still very much in its infancy. Current AI technology is not sufficiently developed when it comes to automatically re-writing content so that it adheres better to brand guidelines, is easier to comprehend, or has more positive tone-of-voice. While all of this may be possible in the future, right now, content optimization is typically deployed in a concept called assisted authoring. This means that content optimization capabilities are made available at time of writing, so that business users understand in real-time if they are creating content that already exists, that does not have the right tone-of-voice, or is too difficult to read.

THE BENEFITS OF CONTENT DISCOVERY AND OPTIMIZATION

While there are several reasons why enterprises should invest in Content Intelligence technology for CCM, they can be summarized in three main areas:

1. **Better customer experience**. Better content, meaning more consistent branding and messaging, leads to a better customer experience, which has positive effect on business growth, customer profitability, and loyalty.

2. **Enablement of omni-channel.** Omni-channel communications are difficult to realize and will require intelligent technology to manage and track content across organizational siloes. Having a content discovery solution in place will help rationalize content and make it easier to manage content across multiple channels and touchpoints.

3. **More efficient and effective content creation.** Having assisted authoring capabilities available that analyze content in real-time and provide suggestions on how to write better content helps organizations to create content easier, faster, and at better quality while being brand-compliant.

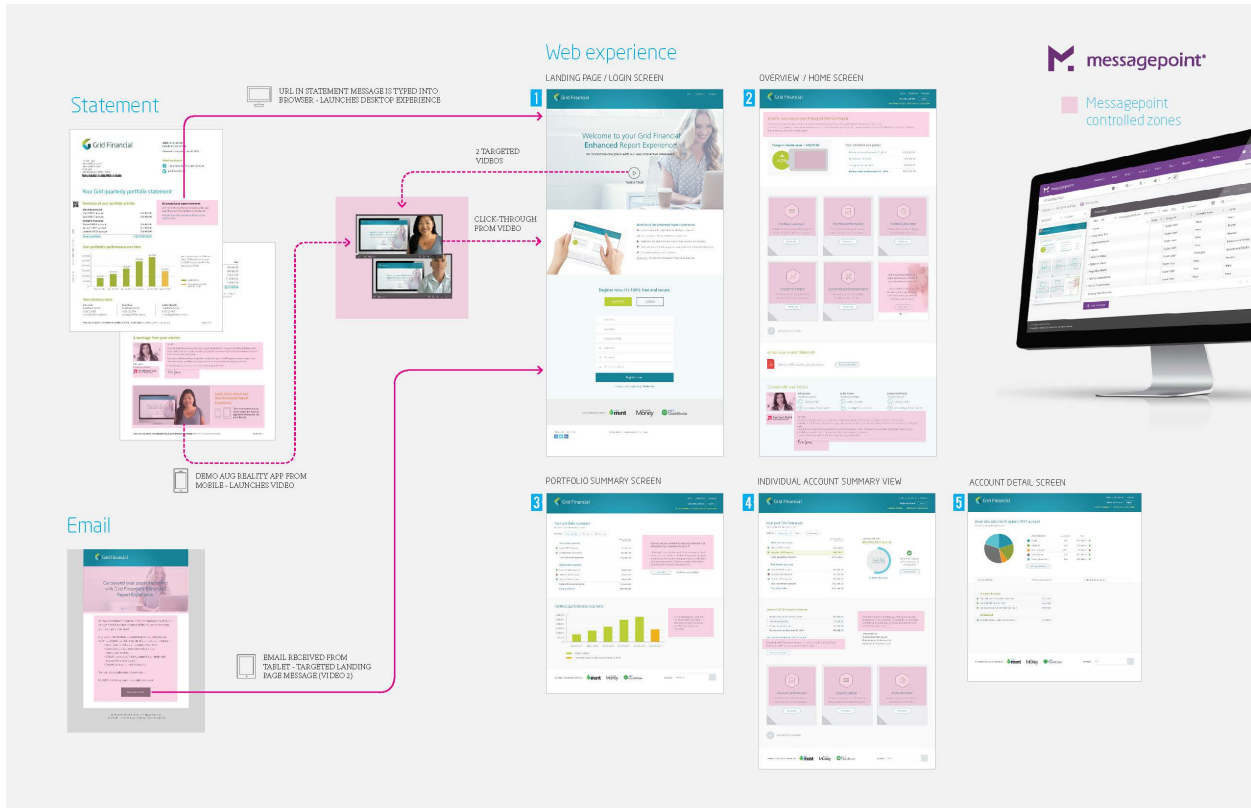## THE MESSAGEPOINT VISION

MESSAGEPOINT INTRODUCTION

Messagepoint is a hybrid SaaS solution for intelligent content management in the CCM space that helps enterprise business users create communication experiences for print and digital channels.

Messagepoint is composition or page assembly agnostic, meaning that it has its own composition capability and is also able to send curated content to composition engines such as Quadient Inspire or OpenText Exstream, as well as to webpage assembly solutions such as Adobe Experience Manager. The solution also integrates with digital output gateway services such as SparkPost (email) or campaign management solutions such as Salesforce Marketing Cloud

Journey Builder. This makes it a very suitable tool to manage content centrally for omni-channel output.

Figure 7: Omni-channel communications using Messagepoint

Source: Messagepoint, 2019

CONTENT INTELLIGENCE

Messagepoint sees Content Intelligence as a strategic area for future growth and is investing heavily in AI, ML, and Natural Language Processing (NLP) capabilities. It recently launched the Messagepoint Advanced Rationalization and Content Intelligence Engine (MARCIE), which is an AI/ML engine that specializes in providing content-specific AI capabilities for CCM. Messagepoint as a vendor focuses exclusively on the CCM market with Content Intelligence embedded in two of its solutions:

1. Messagepoint Rationalizer – its legacy content and template migration tool, which is described in the previous white paper in this series (Part 1).

2. Messagepoint– this is the organization's core CCM platform which offers Assisted Authoring, content optimization capabilities embedded in the content authoring interface (see Figure 8 for an example). The solution currently supports content similarity, reading comprehension and tone-of-voice analysis.

FUTURE CONTENT INTELLIGENCE DEVELOPMENTS

Messagepoint will continue to invest in the Messagepoint Advanced Rationalization and Content Intelligence Engine (MARCIE) by focusing on extending options for improving content quality and consistency such as enhanced brand compliance options, multi-lingual touchpoints, and plain language analysis. Additional capabilities will also focus on increasing efficiency by streamlining and easing ingestion and ongoing management processes, such as automatic variable identification upon ingestion.

ABOUT MESSAGEPOINT

Messagepoint is a leading provider of customer communications management software. Only Messagepoint **harnesses AI-powered Content Intelligence to automate and simplify** the process of migrating, optimizing, authoring and managing complex customer communications for non-technical (business) users. Our customers rely on our award-winning platform to control complex regulatory content and consistently deliver exceptional, highly personalized customer communications across all platforms and channels. For more information, visit www.messagepoint.com.

ABOUT ASPIRE CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

Aspire Customer Communications Services (Aspire), is a London-based CCM/CX strategy firm that works with enterprise C-suites across the globe to realize high-impact customer communications transformation.