

Telcos must keep thinking how to add value to maintain digital lead

Industry can use know-how to retain edge, says Alope Kapur, partner at BearingPoint

At management and technology consultancy BearingPoint, we've launched our first UK Digital Leaders Study, identifying telcos as the clear leading players in the UK (and globally!) in terms of the maturity of the digital experience offered in the B2C market.

The study looked at the B2C operations of the telecom industry and selected companies in this sector, assessing digital maturity with



Alope Kapur of consultancy BearingPoint

regard to six areas (digital product experience, digital marketing, e-CRM, e-commerce, mobile, and social media). When looking at consumers' digital experience, we found that the industry is a consistently high performer across all these areas, giving it top spot in our ranking.

The telecom industry has invested heavily in recent years to develop its B2C offerings and digital channels, but most importantly has focused on refining and simplifying packages and communications to customers to streamline the sales process. This investment has clearly paid off.

As a whole, the industry scored highly on digital product experience, justifying the efforts made ensuring consumers have high-quality information on products and simple price plans, alongside seamless website functionality and design.

Looking at the companies evaluated as part of the study, there was consistency in the scoring across all telcos, with no single star. EE achieved the highest score, ranking seventh in the overall UK company results and 17th in the global results. However, O2, Vodafone and Virgin are all closely clustered. Each of these companies also scored consistently highly across all countries, confirming the industry's success as digital leaders

globally.

There is, however, one definite area for improvement in the industry's approach to digital marketing – the area where telcos scored lowest. We know that telecom companies are investing in such marketing, but our results show they are not reaching the potential of the latest capabilities in this area and what consumers expect today.

With all the telcos assessed being major global players, their digital and marketing operations will be more mature and larger than those of companies in other industries assessed in the study, so can leverage their expertise and know-how across all countries.

As previously mentioned, the industry's high scores reflect the heavy investment companies have made in their go-to-market communications, ensuring customers have access to easily understandable information.

However, while a focus on the simplification of offerings has been a good strategic move, telecom companies are at risk of losing their competitive edge by relying on this. Companies must continuously think about how to add value for their customers, and by doing so will create differentiation within the marketplace.