Rippling's CX Sauce

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Introduction

A quick disclosure! Reading this report, you will find me praising Rippling a lot, but that's my personality. I tend to love the things I do; however, it also means something could be better. There are many shortcomings and issues, but has that stopped Rippling from being on top? No. So, while optimism fuels one's curiosity, here's a deep dive into Rippling's Support and how SaaS (and other businesses) can create robust customer experience systems that defy industry norms.

Unlike most SaaS companies and startups focusing on point-based solutions, one stands out by building a one-stop solution for all HCM needs, i.e., Rippling. One of the most fundamental beliefs of Parker Conrad (CEO, Rippling) is the ability of a compound startup to scale, as the employee data for a business is its underlying moat, and interconnected systems built on top of it can help enterprises achieve actual efficiency. And so, unlike them (SaaS Companies), Rippling aims to *free smart people to work on hard problems.*

Onto what Rippling does, it is a Human Capital Management platform for businesses, allowing a company to manage its employee tasks easily. From onboarding them, inputting their tax information, processing their payrolls, providing them devices, tracking their Time Off and T&A, access to 3rd party integrations, mapping career progression, and employee travel arrangements,

they've got a lot to offer. It is not that the other competitors don't do it, too; it's that Rippling just works.

Building a compound startup makes sense, as you provide distinguished, high-margin services while getting access to much more data, allowing them to scale their abilities. Rippling was rather clever with their approach and PR. Unlike Parker's previous company, Zenefits, which went through public humiliation, Rippling has been customer-centric and industry-focused. It is one of those companies that has grown sustainably and is valued at a premium, with almost all significant VCs trying to own a pie.

I, however, am not just here to praise Rippling but to jot down my observations and learnings after working in the company's most "boasted" domain, Customer Support. It is apparent that Parker's LinkedIn tagline (Customer Support at Rippling) has garnered a lot of views, been a topic of discussion, and made memes; however, it is also true that it has brought Rippling a lot of eyeballs on LinkedIn's real estate. There have been multiple posts about how attentive and responsive he is regarding Customer Support, and it is to a certain extent; with Rippling known to boast about their Support, it truly stands the test of Customer Judgement.

In an industry where customer satisfaction rates average at about 80%, Rippling's CSAT stands at a staggering 91.55% (as of 5th May 2024). While

PR can be involved in getting buzz on social media, after working as a Customer Support Specialist myself, I can defend these stats, as they are indeed true. So, what's their secret sauce? Read more to find out.

Industry vs. Rippling (A Company Overview)
Workplaces have become places of worship throughout history, as people can run their families based on their jobs. Workplaces have also evolved; thanks to COVID, it has changed how people communicate, work, and live.

Although the human race runs on trust, businesses can also provide hope and faith to their employees regarding a better future. This trust can be seen through timely salary payments, ample time off, educating and supporting their workforce, and providing assistance with insurance and benefits that employees look up to.

I imagine employers in the 1990s trying to promptly complete all these (and many other) tasks. Building that trust was a lot of mundane work, and while businesses exist to earn profits, create impact, solve problems, and bring change, managing their workforce was a behemoth task in itself, taking away a lot of time from the business activities. Companies in the past spent a lot of time solving internal matters, whereas they should've focused on solving their customer's issues and serving them well. All of this shifts a business's focus and makes them less efficient.

However, with technology evolving, it allowed space for companies to help businesses become a lot more efficient by automating these tasks or completing them at the touch of a button. Software emerged to solve these needs, but the market was flooded with the cheap ones, the customizable ones, the fast ones, and the trusted ones. However, all these were point-based solutions that solved only one of the problems for businesses, ranging from Payroll, Hiring, Time Off, etc. If you analyse this in retrospect, companies that are built on a single agenda (i.e. single problem, single system, single ideology)

tend to shut shop faster than companies that create an ecosystem of offerings allowing for a customer to exist in their ecosystem help do much more for a client and take full advantage of their pockets.

For instance, the Ford Motor Company changed the automobile industry through the line manufacturing system and bundling the same with branding, performance, distribution network, etc. Don't remember the 1900s? Here's a recent example: Apple, a walled-garden ecosystem offering software to hardware enables users to do much more than any other disconnected or fragmented system. One of the reasons for the greatness of these kinds of companies is the consistency in delivering great value every time.

Parker, Prassana, and Rippling understood this exceptionally well. They realised that employee data could be leveraged to solve this mundane daily work problem, while the interconnected systems created altogether on top of this data will help maximise an organisation's efficiency. They built a suite of their products across HR, Finance, and IT, along with providing access to integrate 3rd party apps, solving other business needs via Rippling. What this did was help Rippling become a behemoth in the HCM space in no time. As an employee (previously) at Rippling, I could track all my information, requests and work through the Rippling dashboard. At the same time, admins could automate multiple things for the organisation. All of this is not incremental but radical change. It's never a hassle to think about my taxes, withholding information, leaves, time and attendance, access to apps and device management, referrals, and whatnot, because this software just works.

Not just this, Rippling is able to do all this, with its core beliefs in simplicity, maximum delivery of value, and fluidity across apps, intact. This enabled them to work on more new products, and I believe that inbound cross-selling from existing clients has organically become a significant revenue-generating channel for the

company. All this aside, there's another side of Rippling, which is its moat, and none of the other companies in the SaaS space have been able to achieve this, their Customer Experience spanning sales, account management, implementation, and support.

CX Philosophy (Rippling's approach to Support)

As mentioned earlier, Rippling was smart enough to recognize the power of interconnected systems and went on to build its own ecosystem or suite of products enabling workplaces. Still, in an industry filled with 100s of products and many alternatives, it filled two gaps for its clients (companies): Simplicity and Support. You see, in an industry thriving on huge dumps of information, it was quite a task for employers to comply with all rules and navigate around these systems to complete internal tasks, and Rippling solved just for that. Soon enough, other companies like Deel, Gusto, and others started working on the 'simplicity' principle, the one that Rippling pioneered. And the question arose, why Rippling now? This was the moment for them to simplify their foundation and move forward with R&D and Support. While R&D solved problems with new products and filled more gaps in the market (faster and better than others), Support was their defining factor. After all, their customers are companies, and if you have 10 or 2000 employees, you'd want to ensure you can solve your problems as quickly as possible; and if a software solves a problem by creating one by itself, isn't it just the snowball effect leading to destruction?

So, to the point highlighted, Support became its moat. Rippling's leaders understood this quite quickly, so they built multiple systems, allowing them to provide the best assistance to their customers. However, it's always the foundation that helps build on top and Rippling's foundation for CX is laid out as described.

The foundation envisioned building leaders who can work the Rippling way by imbibing and believing in these nine fundamental principles. These stood as the torchbearers and helped

anyone at Rippling decide the best possible way, even though they were stuck somewhere. The nine principles are:

1. Go and See
2. Push the limits of possible
3. Go to Western Union
4. Build winning teams
5. Challenge each other
6. Decide quickly
7. Are right, a lot
8. Change their minds
9. Are frugal

What it did was align everyone with a call to arms. This helped one understand what Rippling is and how it does things. With alignment and belief, it was easier for one to navigate complex situations. It is a first-principles company that believes in understanding the smallest unit of truth, i.e., insight, and acting upon it. While these nine principles stood as nine pillars, a few things that I observed and learned during my time here are these:

- **Communicate the truth** - Being remarkably frank, Rippling believes in cutting the fluff and being direct. Without sugar coating something, it believes in being honest with the customer. *"It's not like Rippling does not make mistakes, so if we do, why not own it?" - Anonymous.* People around me were upfront about the fact that communicating the truth to customers helps build trust. Sure, they'd be disappointed in the short term, but they'll know you're someone to be trusted. This creates trust. And why just own things? Action upon them, and provide hope to the customer that Rippling will do the best by them and work towards getting this done. I remember being told that a Support Specialist is like a news reporter. They are the bridge between the internal teams/functions and the customers; the one who speaks the truth is relied upon.

- **Move fast, faster, fastest** - One must realise that you work with lots of responsibility in an industry where you're guarding a company's soul (their employees). You're managing their money, you're paying their taxes, you're providing them extra time in their hands to do more business. With these responsibilities in hand, you must be confident. This aided in a leadership quality for people to own things and move as fast as possible to help provide them with solutions. They move fast, looping in internal teams for more information or contacting the engineering team to fix bugs. That's why the industry defying CSAT stats. You will always find workarounds provided by Rippling specialists or reaching out through multiple channels, Zoom, Chat, Email, or whatever is required to complete the chain.
- **Loop everyone in / Stay in touch** - With transparency and speed, there's keeping yourself updated. Being an imperfect company, it faces the heat of solving 1000s of queries and issues every day with inputs from Account Managers, Implementation Specialists, Engineers, Support and Product teams, and others, and as I mentioned the news reporter analogy, Ripplers are expected to loop everyone necessary for situations that arise and keep in touch with all stakeholders so that everyone moves together. For example, whenever there is an unexpected product behaviour that is to be resolved by our engineering teams, a client receives timely 2-day updates until the issue is resolved. This layers into trust, transparency, and speed.
- **CTA (Call to ~~Action~~ Assurance)** - CTA offers a multidimensional support channel. Why? Not because competitors do so, too, but because people and their needs differ. Some prefer instant resolutions over chat; some prefer meeting 1:1 over Zoom; others prefer mailing in, hence the omnichannel. The omnichannel has yielded to the overall support philosophy: the ability to act upon a client's requests within our set deadlines (in line with their expectations as set via the Support Status page) and provide them more options to stay/keep in touch. This helped the company build the next and most crucial support layer, assurance.
- **Retention** - This last point is explained in two ways.
  - Even though one doesn't realise this, Support isn't just for damage control. Instead, Support is the most crucial money-making domain for companies in this capitalist universe. While the sales team helps bring business, the Support helps retain it. How well does your Support help one make the purchase decision? Amazon, for instance, is chosen for its excellent customer support over other companies. Support helps retain clients and sell more. We do multiple upsells and cross-sells for this, but they are not intentional and purely from a place of care.
  - The second facet emerges from the first four points. Trust, transparency, speed, and assurance lead to excellent relationship building, and once you have a great relationship, people are retained. If you're building great relationships and retaining people, aren't you the one people would rally behind?

This is my interpretation of Rippling's CX philosophy, their sauce for building simple things. Don't mistake me; simple things do not mean easy things. They can be (and are) difficult, but simplicity is fluid. Now that we've gone through their philosophies, let's dive deep into the details, afterall, it's time to decode the devil.

CX Model and Features (The Specialists)

Apple's Support is based on Ritz Carlton's service, which sounds ridiculous, right? Well, that's the thing about Support: Your support model can be based on absolutely anything, and companies across industries find their calling in one or the other.

Rippling is based on a Specialist model. Consider this: In a class of 100 students, you'd find about 20-30 students who essentially know everything taught to them and can help you with a problem you're stuck on. Unusually, there's always that 1 or 2 people who're great at maths or science or history, and these 1-2 people vary with every subject you're looking for an expert in. While you can resolve your queries about different subjects from a generalist, a specialist can help you learn, understand, and implement things like no other. The same follows with Rippling; it believes that these interconnected systems can be pretty challenging to understand, and so the specialist model helps assign a specialist to understand and address the client's concerns, allowing them to be educated about a specific functionality they become a pro at (and also create a brag worthy proposition for Rippling). The specialist model can also be limited to an extent wherein a client asks for a different query, and here comes Rippling's internal interconnection. All queries are routed until a client's query is resolved. Suppose I have a query regarding Permissions, Global Taxation, and Spend, all at once. In that case, I shall be assisted in my 1st query, transferred over internally to another specialist to help with taxation, and lastly, with a spend expert to help solve that. This experience was fluid, meaning the client can keep track of all this through a single thread while pro advice (by specialists) is rendered, allowing the client to understand this better.

This specialist model seems difficult to achieve but is quite well structured to ramp things up. Rippling follows a 3-month program for training their support hires, who are taught all the software tools used by support teams at Rippling, making them familiar with the tools.

Once you have the tools, you're set up with a specific product team where you understand and familiarise yourself with the product, start taking support tickets, and understand the intricate nuances on the go. Also, while you're still in your three-month period, every ticket response is vetted by an experienced/tenured specialist to ensure that what's communicated smells of Rippling's standards. To summarise, the specialist model helps achieve this result, and the support warriors are firstly equipped with the tools and trained on multiple scenarios. They get to the war prepared to solve the client's problems.

As mentioned in the philosophies of Rippling, there were four main pillars, i.e., Trust, Transparency, Speed, and Assurance. To solve the problem of trust and transparency, Rippling took a colossal step about two years back by launching the Support Status page. Unlike other support information pages mentioning the downtime of a software platform across other companies, Rippling took a different way to display real-time stats regarding their service behaviours. This helps set the right expectations and places the pressure on them to deliver on it. This page displays the average time to respond to a client's queries, segmented by different channels, shows the expected number of responses to resolve one's queries, displays not just the median but the 90th percentile, meaning, what are the worst timelines for Rippling to deliver on its Support. You may think that the 90th percentile is rubbish, so why would a company do so? Yet you need to realise that Rippling's 90th percentile comes close to the industry average, intending that the best in the industry is our worst 10% behaviour, still top-notch.

This page provides insights into the split across our different service channels, helping any other company understand our stats and improve themselves. Regarding stats, Rippling internally set a target of 2 minutes for a chat and 4 hours for an email first response, and the support status achieves it handsomely. More so, we're known to solve a client's query in just a single

response over 49% of the time. And these deadlines are missed frequently. However, the organisation is always asked to do what's right for the customer based on the nine fundamental principles. This brings the team together and helps put the focus back on track for the teams to achieve.

Before I forget, no other company has a support status page; it's just another moat for the Rippling Support boat. Unlike other companies in this space, it feels okay to be vulnerable with the truth and work on it.

Metrics - Now that you know about Rippling's model, here's a quick look at the metrics tracked and calculated to achieve the listed targets and provide qualitative service. Understand that you can't be better at something you don't measure, so instinctively, when someone has to improve the quality of something, it becomes crucial to set the correct set of points to track and act upon that can help you achieve the quality of your desired process/goal/etc.

As you know the rationale behind tracking and working on the set metrics, I'll help you understand them and probably provide you with the reasoning behind why they matter. First, let's align that there are two kinds of metrics: input and output. Input metrics are tracked internally by a team, agent, or product to chart improvement plans and strategies and take corrective actions. Meanwhile, output metrics are shared with our customers to set clear expectations and align them with data points to create trust.

Output metrics include
- **CSAT** - Abbreviated as Customer Satisfaction score, it is the average of scores received across all support cases by Rippling at an organisation level, which stands at about 91.55%, an 11% + average compared to the industry. Note that it communicates that Rippling support will resolve your queries duly every 9.1/10 times. It's calculated as +1 -1 in percentages for the cases received. For example, if Rippling solved ten

instances with 9 CSATs and 1 DSAT, their satisfaction rating is 90%.
- **TFR (Time to First Response)** - This is the time taken to receive the first response from an agent at Rippling. This means that if a client reaches out to us via chat, they shall be provided assistance by a human in under 2 minutes, usually in 20 seconds, whereas they shall receive a response on their issue with a solution/next steps via email in under 4 hours, as promised.
- **First Contact Resolution Rate** - This is usually tracked for email cases only and denotes the number of contacts one must make to get all the required Support from Rippling. It stands at 49% for a one-touch resolution, meaning the specialist responded just once to the client's query and resolved it. If the client comes back, it adds another touch to the case, and so on.

Input metrics are used to track performance, and all the output metrics are calculated internally at an agent, team, and company level, and corrective actions are taken. This means all agents have their own CSAT, TFR, and FCR to work on. The expectations for our internal delivery are 95%+ for CSATs, 2 min and 4 hours for chat and case, respectively, for TFR, and none specifically for FCR apart from sending a great response.

Apart from these, we track 3 other input metrics per agent to get a fair idea of the workings and improvement plans to imbibe.
- **Adherence** - Every support specialist has a schedule that divides their shift hours into calendar blocks to be available for specific support channels. Explaining that, a support specialist across the 8:30 hours of shift is divided from start to finish so that the support channel can be active on their breaks, lunch, calls, etc. Adherence calculates how well an agent sticks to their set schedule. While the ideal target is 90%, it also helps divide responsibilities

across time frames, allowing everyone to contribute to the case queue and ensuring we're about to service all requests in time.

- **Solves** - Solves indicate the total number of client queries/tickets/cases one has solved. One is usually expected to solve an average number of cases, i.e., total cases/total agents, and everyone's ramped up to solve as many as new clients every day mean more support tickets to solve.
- **SWARM (%)** - SWARM is an internal tool created for a person to ask questions from their teammates, and an experienced team member shall review the case in detail and help with the same. For example, if I drafted an email but want someone to review it, or if I'm unsure about the following steps to proceed with a query, I can SWARM the case and wait until it's resolved to help close out. Now, tracking this allows a manager to understand where a specialist stands and what topics they might need help with, and they are equipped with the necessary training later on, as SWARMs are divided across product categories and agents, allowing them to be sure if an agent is good at something or not.

These metrics help Rippling manage its service channels, by creating a strong foundation and deploying scalable metrics that allow it to be an industry phenomenon. Also, there were more metrics like transfers per case, closure time per query, etc. However, no significant results have been yielded from those yet, but other companies can consider these (or others) that can be more useful in defining quality for their processes later.

Culture Points

It is safe to say that a company's culture is what builds it or doesn't. While I have my apprehensions about Rippling's culture regarding a few points, it is challenging to build robust business systems without a solid team and a culture, because they work together. Some of the things I see frequently happening are employee development sessions, fast tracked improvements, shipping timely updates, and being a bridge for great work.

Starting with employee development sessions, very recently, we celebrated the *Hackers' Prevention and Security Awareness Week* with sessions curated by in-house experts on money laundering, safe CX, etc. Although voluntary, we had a handful of employees join the same, creating space for developing employees with a sound understanding of concepts in spooky ways. Not just that. There are multiple forums created like All Hands, Support Monthly Handoff, Coffee with Parker, Town Halls, and a lot more, wherein the leadership teams discuss everything from Financials, Support, and Tech to new changes, betterment procedures, etc., and across all sessions, people participate. It could just be a formality, but in hindsight, it helps build a force of peer learning and development.

Onto fast tracked improvements, they say, move faster than light, or who are we competing with? Rippling has taken it rather seriously, wherein over the last eight years, a suite of industry-first or industry-best products were launched across four different platforms. But I'd instead use the AI innuendo to explain what I mean. Remember ChatGPT, where you could talk to a computer, and it does what you ask it to? This was a once-in-a-century innovation that brought AGIs to life. When this launched, everyone panicked, companies started building their models, and more and more people understood the cusp of AI and the future. In no time, the market was flooded with so many models. Every company was trying to use them.

One of the industries to shrink its workforce is the Support sector, where people thought that AI could replace humans, among other streams. Remember, we are still at a time when AI cannot respond to basic questions. At this time, Rippling embraced a dual approach, believing in enabling agents with AI and not replacing them. To a certain extent, they understood that B2B

businesses deal with critical information/situations; hence, humans are necessary. And so they started to train the AI on our help centre and internal support articles that help resolve the basic queries by routing clients to the best resources on our platform. This can be useful in routing basic know-how queries to great resources. However, if a client asks to chat with a live agent or if the bot cannot resolve something, it will transfer those chats/cases to specialists from the specific domain based on keywords listed by the clients. This resulted in clients responding more positively to Rippling support, as one could achieve what they needed most, a practical solution that saves them time; that's what Rippling's mission is, too - free smart people to work on hard problems.

Access to great people helped Rippling build a culture embracing peer development and a fast-moving company, however, collaboration is key in winning, ain't it? Rippling stands out with its industry-first innovations and robust integrations, offering a unique blend of in-house products and third-party compatibility to streamline client access and functionality.

The vision for Rippling is closely aligned with the decentralised and collaborative future of work as described by Naval Ravikant (Video). Unlike the centralised systems of the Industrial Revolution, the modern work environment is fragmented and reliant on lean teams and API-driven collaboration. Rippling's leadership fosters this dynamic, balancing comprehensive in-house products with extensive integrations to cater to diverse client needs.

In global markets like China, the preference leans towards Super Apps with concentrated offerings. Conversely, markets like India favour specialised apps for specific functions. Rippling achieves a balance by integrating with a wide array of third-party applications while also allowing clients to create custom apps for specific needs if required. This open ecosystem approach enhances client flexibility and accessibility. For instance, Rippling enables seamless integration with popular tools such as

Google Workspace, Slack, and Carta. If a desired app is not natively available on Rippling, clients can set up custom apps to meet their specific requirements.

Now, this is also available in some of Rippling's competitors; the counter remains its ability to create industry-first features or apps, allowing more automation and efficiency for its clients. A recent one of the lot is Bill Pay, which integrates with a company's payroll and helps solve vendor payments seamlessly, or the Goals app, which helps track the OKRs and metrics of a team/individual. This coincides with their product philosophies and helps create more possibilities. All in all, it's a culture that helps bring business, positively.

Case Studies and Success Stories (Real-life Examples of Exemplary Support)
The downfall of Zenefits due to issues such as sexual harassment allegations, non-compliance, and the eventual resignation of its CEO, Parker, paved the way for the emergence of Rippling. However, Rippling didn't just rise from the ashes—it emerged as a company meticulously focused on maintaining a pristine image through adept PR, Marketing, and Communication strategies, keenly avoiding the pitfalls experienced by Zenefits.

Rippling's squeaky clean image is a great plus, it's essential to delve deeper into three key instances that underscore the concerted efforts of its product and marketing teams.

- **Crisis Handling (The SVB Saga)** - Remember the SVB crisis? Rippling was supposed to process payrolls for all its clients, but their money was stuck in SVB. Guess what? Parker raised $500 million in under 12 hours to keep that trust afloat when the world collapses, a tremendous positive. This assured them to run payrolls for all their clients, on time. (Article: A $500 million term sheet in 12 hours: How Rippling struck a deal as SVB was melting down)

- **Client Connect** - Rippling hosted multiple brand campaigns with the biggest influencers, i.e., their customers. Picture this: if you're a company with an above-the-market standard product, you're more likely to attract and retain high-value clients. And while that's the case, you would be okay with having them market for you, as it's improbable that they'd churn. This helped Rippling create a series of small interviews with their clients about how they use Rippling, how it has helped, etc., on LinkedIn, utilising a mass network of clients, their leaders, Rippling's page as a distribution channel to build familiarity, fostering identity creation (probably converting to new sales). One such recent campaign was their [Wavemarkers](#) initiative. (LinkedIn Posts: [Post 1](#), [Post 2](#))
- **Leveraging Appreciations from Industry Leaders** - LinkedIn greatly appreciates Rippling, and known figures like Garry Tan and VCs boast about it. Even though it can be an inorganic/personal agenda, it still qualifies as positive PR for Rippling. (Posts: [Rippling vs. Gusto](#), [Garry Tan's Statistical Insight](#))

This glimpse offers just a hint of what Rippling is capable of, yet its impact has been nothing short of monumental in shaping the brand identity and expanding the audience reach they've achieved.

Challenges for B2B CX
Upon becoming a Support Specialist at Rippling, I started interacting increasingly with the Support Channels of Amazon, Apple, Myntra, BlinkIt, etc., intending to twist them to support me in complex situations and see how robust these systems are. One needs to realise early on that B2C and B2B support channels, experience, expectations, and customers differ significantly. Unlike retail consumers, businesses do not have the time to wait and need to-the-point responses. And SaaS cannot be foolproof, meaning customer situations in SaaS are very complex to dissect and respond to. In contrast, many B2C support can be automated, as there could be 100 types of situations, which one can codify and build better services towards.

My insider and outsider perspective on Rippling has helped me realise that building systems on top of foundational models and providing a great support experience to the business's clients is challenging. With more and more systems created and interconnected with each other, it is difficult to maintain consistency across responses and assistance. So, while I've painted the rosy picture of how Rippling has done it all, there are so many things that Rippling has not, and others have not too. Establishing the context, here are a few potential challenges/issues SaaS CX can pose to companies scaling rapidly.

- **Confusion** - One of the starting parameters is confusion. Let me explain how; let's consider you're looking for assistance on Amazon; it could either be related to an order, a subscription, payments, bookings, etc, but all these are separate verticals and will not overlap. This means if you need assistance with flight booking, the query will be routed to the respective team. They will be experts in solving your issues from the "X" number of codified problem buckets, but this changes completely for SaaS companies, meaning a client can reach out to Rippling Support looking for assistance with a report and mismatch of data from the Payroll app, with four more integrations leading to a lot of confusion internally. This leads to the confusion that creates a grey area wherein support specialists from different streams have to work together to resolve this, and that's a collective time investment, i.e., five specialists out of the queue to solve a problem until resolved, maybe more. This is a big issue for Rippling and companies across SaaS, where confusion

leads to waste of time, delayed support timelines due to multiple parties involved, unclear communication, and a lack of consistent support experience.

- **Specialists** - As mentioned earlier, Rippling follows a *Specialist Model of Support*, which means creating product area specialists who can solve a specific issue, but this comes with its challenges. While a specialist can help solve queries in their domain, the clients are usually armed with many questions. When a specialist cannot answer a lot of them, they transfer/loop in someone else from the specific product to assist the client, and this continues. What happens in between is the latency during transfers, support not being fluid but in parts, increasing wait times for the client, not an optimal support experience, and fragmented information. And it's only standard to expect that every human and their way of assisting a client is unique. When the client receives multiple tones of Support, each different, it does not help set a great persona.

- **Communication** - Aren't SaaS companies changing daily? New features, changes in UI/UX, shifting buttons, making things /objects concise, etc. are everyday things to expect from those; however, it is (nearly) impossible to update all the clients about the changes taking place to the platform every day, isn't it? With the number of possibilities and minute/significant changes to the platform, it is understandable that 80% of the things only make sense for some of the clients and if a mass reach out is done it only helps a few. However, even in an ideal setup, if these changes are communicated, doesn't it lead to spam? There's also a significant cost attached to these communications. Now, this is where the problem arises. You see, changes cannot be communicated daily, and it can lead to an increase in

customers reaching out and blaming you for not communicating about it. And it's a situation where one walks on thin ice. How do you solve it?

- **Constant Training** - Carrying to the point raised previously about communication, note that the communication is both external and internal. However, a company must train its support staff internally and constantly with new updates, possibilities, etc., to provide the best experience possible. Although it sounds easy, it is a challenging task to pull off. Just as mentioned, there are multiple changes taking place every day, new possibilities are unlocked, and the support staff has to be active during their set timelines in queues, so how does one understand the reasoning behind a change, try it out, become an expert to assist clients, all while being active and on the queue as scheduled, is a challenge to be solved. If you do it, how do you manage the high frequency of queries, and if you don't, how do you build trust and maintain your brand with clients?

- **Feedback Loops** - From my experience, when clients have issues or are reaching out to see if something's possible, the support specialist understands the client's expectations and helps provide the best possible help. Finding 1000s of gaps in the client's product is routine. This, coupled with specific needs for specific clients, creates a necessity for people to build a ladder to pass this information, formulate funnels, and help develop a few required features/products that the market needs. What's exciting and challenging is creating a great feedback loop that allows a company to understand and work on specific features that align with its ideologies and customers' requirements, however, closure of these loops is a huge challenge.

- **Education** - Last but not least, one also deals with multiple regulatory compliances in SaaS. Whether it is an IT company or a payroll software, customers choose SaaS only because it eases their lives. Still, there are numerous actions that these SaaS software companies take on behalf of the client that they need to be made aware of/educated about. For example, changes to reporting tax filings; while companies may do it on behalf of the client, it is even more important to inform and educate about the changes, their implications, and the actions taken by the SaaS on their behalf. However, considering the vast array of forums and changes, how does one educate their client?

These are a few challenges SaaS CX leaders face, and the critical part is that these challenges affect the clients/customers a lot. These are challenging to solve, considering the same number of impact points on both the pros and cons. It is beautifully captured by altering William Shakespeare's quote, "To be or not to be, that is the question" to "to do or not to do, that is the question."

Recommendations

As discussed previously, the challenges posed to SaaS CX curators is quite difficult, not impossible though. There are multiple avenues to work towards and I believe these two specific recommendations can help tackle the problems of providing a better CX.

- **Feedback Loops** - Here's some quick context as feedback is a crucial problem to solve for. Firstly, note that a company needs to decide on its (own) path of adding features to its product instead of letting the market push it to do so; this allows it to have control over its experience and create intuitive products. (*Insights from Razorpay, it initially rejected Flipkart as a customer to focus on creating the right payment solutions*

for small firms, following advice from an early investor who cautioned against the risks of chasing large clients too early. This decision was based on the insight that catering to large clients can drain resources and hinder scalability for startups). Secondly, you must stay afloat as a company by providing products/services that are a notch above the existing market. Here's how a great feedback loop can be designed.
  - Vision to Work - The company understands its vision → Breaks it down into problems to solve for → Ideates viable options → Solves them.
  - Competitive Offerings - In constant touch with the market → Observing user requirements and competitors' offerings → Finding and filling substantial gaps → Point based solutions in the ecosystem, solving the requirements.
  - Support - Use support tickets to understand gaps and issues the users face → Build a simple CRM form → Break down to the tiniest specifics → Get responses → Categorise them in Churn, Pain, and Delight (3-1) → Use tools to analyse the three categories → Circle back to the previous points to decide accordingly.
  - Partnership - Provide a form nearly everywhere (subtly) for a client to request features → Treat them as partners → More belongingness (can think of a community forum too, just like the one executed by Apple) → Analysis of keywords to products and potential mapping → Route back to previous points.
- **Modules (Education & Training)** - The second insight here is to create

training modules and post them on a public channel for everyone to have easy access. If you remember, we discussed an issue regarding communication with clients and constant training for support representatives. While a support specialist can help the client with their specific questions, it is quite a task to simplify a complex change and present it to the client via text. This necessitates the need for a multi-communication model information sendoff. Information and education can be solved in 3 specific ways in this regard.

- ○ Learning Modules - SaaS companies are always on the hunt to onboard more and more clients every day, and it is vital to walk them through the different parts of your products and know-how/how-tos. A SaaS company must focus on creating and updating its course content based on changes to the platform to help address as many questions as possible at the very beginning. This can lead to controlled reach outs of new clients and the removal of basic queries, leading to manageable ticket queues. Rippling launched [RipplingU](#), a university offering courses and a certification program to educate clients on using their software effectively.
- ○ Blogs & Explainers - Even though companies have their blog pages, the sheer number of articles available can be daunting, and reaching the right resource takes a lot of work. With simplification being critical to this aspect, one of the ways to tackle new updates to your platform is a 1-minute explainer (TikToks) explaining the changes, reasoning, and technicalities, with the ability

for this content to be shared via omnichannel. This way, even while chatting, a support rep can save their time and energy, channelling their focus to other things. This can be useful in helping the client self-learn, and can possibly be embedded with the AI Chatbots, resulting in better CSATs, therefore CX.

- ○ Templates - In my experience, templates for CX are more evident in B2C businesses than B2B. This stems from the initial point of the complexities involved in B2Bs, too. However, it is possible to develop templates that can be fed into AI bots, allowing us to do what's needed again and tackle the extreme inflows of queries.

After considering the above recommendations, I'm still trying to figure out the best ones to help resolve the other challenges companies face in building a great experience. I'm happy to hear what you have in store.

Conclusion
Regarding the ending notes, I still need to include many points and information to cover here. However, I created this with insider and outsider perspectives of Rippling and a cult that Parker has built.

Being one of the most unsexiest industries considered by people, companies like Rippling helped make things cool. While there are many B2C industries based on wants, SaaS has helped create need-based solutions that solve real problems and build for true impact.

Creating and managing businesses takes work, and managing people running those businesses is even more challenging. Understanding the problem and the sheer scale at which early, growth, and large companies face this, there was a possibility to build something that solves this issue in the easiest way, a near impossible trail, which Rippling tried solving.

They've cracked the code to this problem and are on a path to grow faster than ever. One lever of this growth is their customer support experience.

Rippling focused on tracking every possible metric and established a clear framework that helped it establish a plan to provide excellent Support and make changes in multiple ways to collect timely client feedback. Starting from the Specialist model of Support, they've created a model to address and assist their clients.

It is a company focusing on not just pointed solutions but also multiple transparency projects, helping build trust and a better competitive space for everyone, starting from their [Support Status initiative](). Also, it is pretty expensive. After all, it takes an extra cost to run a system (Rippling) beefed up like a lion, doesn't it?

Multiple parallels were drawn, but this went right, wrong, terrible, and excellent for Rippling. To conclude, Parker is the guy who built the same billion-dollar company twice, and don't be mistaken—he brought Aladdin's lamp to business hands the second time.

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