

A Merchant's Guide to Consumer Authentication Deployment – Tips for Success

If your company is deploying Consumer Authentication to protect your card-not-present transactions, here are some real-world tips to help your experience run smoothly.

- 1 Create your business case.** Know what your current card-not-present (CNP) fraud stats are, as well as other KPIs and trends. Knowing where you are will help you define success. Some KPIs to consider are historic chargeback data, card acceptance rates, cart abandonment, issuer declines, merchant reversal declines, and interchange cost.
- 2 Look at what tools are available and decide which is the right one for your business.** You can use Consumer Authentication through a gateway, as part of a fraud tool suite, or as a stand-alone (like CardinalCommerce). Do your due diligence to see which approach and solution is the best fit for your business, both during the implementation phase and when the service is up and running. And don't discount the impact of good reporting and support. That can save you money and headaches in the long run. Talk to other merchants about their experiences.
- 3 Keep your whole company in the loop.** Make sure internal stakeholders understand what is going to happen, what the benefits are, and what the timeline is. Involve your marketing/communications partners so they can prepare messages to inform your Customers and colleagues about the changes taking place.
- 4 Have a plan to roll back if necessary.** If there are issues with implementation, make sure you have a decision point to either roll back to the environment prior to launch, or to a previous phase. Also make sure you build a "kill switch" to be able to bypass 3DS.
- 5 Take advantage of your provider's knowledge and experience.** Common Merchant Interface (CMI) providers do this every day. You do it once. Ask questions, have them explain the process, read the documentation they provide, and ask more questions.
- 6 Thoroughly review your current process before adding Consumer Authentication.** Make sure you address any existing issues and errors before adding another layer of complication.
- 7 Require your Consumer Authentication fields in checkout.** The more data you collect at checkout, the more effective and accurate Consumer Authentication will be.
- 8 Be aware of how your Consumer Authentication and your authorization process will work together.** Check with your CMI – again, they do this every day. They can counsel you on what fields need to be passed and what you'll need for authorization.

- 9** **Review all consumer-facing messages to make sure they are communicating what you want your Customers to know.** Look at the messages your Customers see when they are authenticated, when they are not authenticated, when their transaction goes to manual review, and any other scenarios.
- 10** **Don't update more than one tool at a time.** If you have an upgrade scheduled for your fraud tool, don't do it at the same time as your Consumer Authentication rollout. If you do, you'll have a harder time telling what made the difference – the fraud tool or Consumer Authentication. Make your updates and let the data settle into the “new normal” before introducing new changes. (This typically can take about three months).
- 11** **Remember to integrate your mobile site.** As you plan for your Consumer Authentication rollout, don't forget to include your mobile site in the plans. Consumers are using their mobile devices more and more to buy, and you want to make it as easy as possible for them to buy safely and securely on every device they use.
- 12** **Look at your entire checkout process and determine if you need everything you have been using.** You may be able to discontinue some of your legacy tools and provide a better consumer experience.
- 13** **Test, test, test.** Before rolling out any new procedures, make sure you thoroughly test each consumer scenario that you have, to make sure that you find any inconsistencies or errors before your Customers do.
- 14** **Manage expectations.** Make sure stakeholders know there will be a period of adjusting rules before your Consumer Authentication program is running at its peak. Be patient. Your decline rates will come down.
- 15** **Track before and after metrics so you can see how much Consumer Authentication is improving your checkout experience and bottom line.** You'll also want to do this to make sure your data points are stable before tweaking other aspects of your order entry system.
- 16** **Analyze your data and know your data.** It's very important to know what the typical behaviors are for your Customers, and often, you are the only one who can tie all the data elements together. Although it is not required, consider sharing your trending data and analytics with your CMI provider (and/or processor). The more data shared, the more helpful your partners can be in assisting in optimizing your fraud prevention solution.

To learn more, contact CardinalCommerce.