



5 Ways to Make Service Easy for Today's Customers

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Introduction

There's a whole new world out there when it comes to customer service. Social, mobile, connected, and cloud technologies have created new customer expectations. Today's customers want service on every channel and every device, anytime, anywhere. And they want their service experience with your company to be one thing: effortless.

Why should you care about delivering effortless service? Because it's the #1 way to make consumers of today happy and earn their loyalty in the process.

Customers now expect your company to solve their issues quickly and give them the capability to find solutions easily on their own, 24/7, anywhere, and

on every device. If your company doesn't fulfill these needs, your customers will find another company who will.

To emphasise the importance of effortless service, let's take a look at the latest research by CEB, a leading member-based advisory committee for tens of thousands of organisations around the world.

CEB recently conducted a survey of more than 125,000 customers to see what impact service has on loyalty and how businesses can drive that loyalty. Their three major findings will no doubt be a big surprise for most of you.

First, CEB found that exceeding customer expectations doesn't correlate with higher customer satisfaction or increased loyalty.



Next, the survey showed that four out of five of the main causes of disloyalty in customers were directly related to the amount of effort it took to solve their service issue.

And here's the kicker: If a business wants to decrease disloyalty, they need to minimise customer effort.

In fact, when asked, 96% of customers responded that high-effort experiences make them feel more disloyal to a company. The message is clear: businesses of today should want their customers to say:

"Wow, that company made it really easy for me to solve my problem!"

What is keeping your business from delivering a frictionless service experience to every one of your customers?

Here are a few of the common big obstacles:

Customers aren't empowered. They can't find the answers they need easily, self-service options are limited, and it's difficult to engage on a mobile device. Overall,

if a customer's only option is to contact a company's customer service department to solve their problem, it probably means more effort for them.

Agents aren't equipped. They are utilising multiple, outdated, disconnected, and difficult-to-use legacy systems to deliver service to your customers day in and day out. They don't have access to the collective knowledge that resides in the minds of every employee to deliver the right

answers the first time, every time. And it's not their fault—legacy solutions were built for the world as it was 15-20 years ago.

Disconnected systems cause friction. This one is a doozy. Siloed departments, disconnected systems and information lead to inconsistent customer service experiences across channels. There's no single view of the customer and no visibility into their interactions with other departments. This also makes it impossible to deliver service on mobile devices or social networks and even more difficult to embed service into products and mobile apps. The great news is we are here to help.

On the following pages, you will discover how to totally transform your customer service organisation so it provides the effortless experience that today's customers want.

Keep reading to learn and implement the five ways that will get you there:

- Create a single view of your customer
- Deliver consistent customer engagement on every channel
- Equip agents with a single source of knowledge
- Empower customers with self-service and mobile options
- Embed service everywhere

It's time for smooth service.

CHAPTER 1

Create a Single View of Your Customer



“

70% of buying experiences are based on how the customer feels they are being treated.”

- McKinsey

When most companies first made an effort to enhance the customer experience--often unbeknownst to them--they took the siloed route.

Each department invested in their own separate application to manage customer relationships. This meant that everyone across the company had a different view of its customers,

but there was no single source of truth that showed the entire history of interactions, including purchases, service inquiries, rewards program activity, etc., with the organisation.

Siloed data has also been an issue within customer service departments. Agents have had to access multiple systems to solve problems, resulting in the same obstacle: different systems show separate views of the customer, depriving them of the context needed to deliver a service experience that is seamless for customers.

A major key to providing low effort experiences for customers is ensuring that all of your service agents have the same, single view of the customer. This enables them to deliver consistent and contextual service.

How do you create a single view of the customer?

The companies who have overcome the challenges of siloed data have changed the way they view their customers by investing in a customer engagement platform.

This technology enables a service organisation to connect various sources of customer data into a single view.

Agents then have access to customer history and insights across every system, channel, and function.

When every service agent is empowered with the same information in context, they can build deeper customer relationships and ultimately drive higher satisfaction, loyalty, and revenue. The ultimate payoff is the ability to engage with customers in a way that makes the experience effortless for them.

“

45% of US consumers will abandon an online transaction if their questions or concerns are not addressed quickly.”

- Forrester



CHAPTER 2

Deliver Consistent Customer Engagement on Every Channel

We've explained why it's so important to have a single view of your customers. Next, let's take a deeper look at the new breed of customer. They are social, mobile, and always connected. They want answers in context, wherever they are, on every device.

Not only do they expect to receive service on the channel of their choice, they expect to receive a consistent experience as they move back and forth between channels.

Today's consumer values time more than ever and they now demand that finding solutions to their issues be fast and effortless.

As previously mentioned, each time a customer contacts your company, they expect that every employee have visibility into all of their past interactions with you.

No matter what department the customer comes in contact with, your employee needs to understand:

- The products or services have they purchased in the past
- Their preferences
- The kind of service level agreement they have • Their previous issues (if any)
- How and when they contacted you

In the past, organisations asked their customers to provide this type of information every time they switched to a new channel. Not anymore. The customer now anticipates that the context around their situation goes with them when switching amongst channels or agents, so they don't have to repeat information.

One example of this is if the customer starts a live chat on your web site and then decides to call into the call center. The customer expects the call center agent to know about the discussion they just had with the chat agent.

A standout feature of a customer engagement platform is its ability to keep context about customers as they are moved across channels, while making each interaction feel personalised. It also gives your business the flexibility to redirect customer requests to the channel that will require minimal effort and where they will see the fastest response time.

Every customer interaction with your company is an opportunity to nurture a relationship with them. As you learn more about your customers and transform your organisation to provide the service they expect, you will increase their loyalty and overall satisfaction.



CHAPTER 3

Equip Agents with a Single Source of Knowledge

In addition to having context as customers move across channels, your agents need to deliver the best answer to your customers the first time, every time. Every second counts when trying to find the best answer.

Most support organisations have some form of knowledge solution with information agents use to answer customer questions. These range in complexity from FAQs and Word documents to multiple, complex knowledge base systems.

The challenges of multiple sources of knowledge include:

- It can make answers hard to find
- It can result in duplicate documents
- It can make it difficult to update duplicates with new info
- It can lead to multiple bad sources for agents
- It can result in a negative customer experience

If you are going to provide a frictionless service experience that customers expect, you must equip all of your agents and employees with access to the right answers at their fingertips. Fortunately, technology exists today that can empower your agents with the answers they need.

When evaluating knowledge base solutions, ensure that they can deliver on the following:

1. Multi-channel - One unified knowledge base for customers and agents and across all channels.
2. Multi-product - One unified knowledge base across all brands and product lines.
3. Mobile Enabled - Deliverable via any device.
4. Ability to integrate into your case management and customer service processes.
5. Ability for agents (and the consumers of the content) to easily create new knowledge articles.
6. Predictive - Surfaces the right information quickly, enabling agents to deliver the right answers more quickly.

CHAPTER 4

Empower Customers with Self-Service and Mobile Options

Now that we've spent some time discussing service from your company's perspective, let's take a moment to understand service from a customer's perspective. And the reality is, customers don't always want to contact you. They also want access to answers 24/7, which not every company is equipped to provide.

A major part of giving the new breed of customers the frictionless service they desire is empowering them to find the answers they want, when they want them, from anywhere.

Instead of picking up the phone to dial a customer support number, today's customer would sometimes rather do a quick Google search from their phone, ask their social network for advice, or get answers via your company's website. The common theme among all of these channels is that once again, they require little effort for the customer.

One of the best ways to empower your customers to get the help they need is by providing dynamic customer communities that are self-service optimised for mobile devices. Self-service portals have traditionally been an online destination for customers to log support cases. Communities take that idea and add a social, peer-to-peer element, because sometimes, the best answers lie in the minds of your customers.

Here are a few main aspects of successful communities:

- Communities can be accessed from anywhere, including mobile devices.
- Communities give customers a network of experts and members that can help answer their questions.
- Communities are ideally tied directly to your company's central case management system, so unanswered questions can be automatically escalated to your agents who can intervene.

Investing in communities can have a number of big payoffs, including:

- 1. Decreased customer service costs.** These include fewer inbound inquiries for your business over more expensive channels, such as the phone.
- 2. Increased customer satisfaction.** Customers can easily find answers on their own from any device.
- 3. A "Tier 1 Support" team.** Communities enable customers, some of whom have substantial product experience, to help each other out.
- 4. Agents can focus on tougher issues.** Because answers to frequently asked questions are easily found in communities, your agents can put their energy towards resolving more complex issues.



CHAPTER 5

Embed Service Everywhere

You now understand the importance of empowering your customers with self-service and mobile options. Let's take that concept a step further and focus on the importance of providing customer service everywhere. And we mean everywhere.

Consider Amazon's Kindle. The reading tablet features a "mayday" button embedded within the device. If a customer runs across an issue while using their Kindle, all they have to do is push the button and they are immediately connected in context to an agent who is empowered to address their service issue.

Now think about the way you and your customers use your phones today. Mobile phones have become the dashboard to our lives. You can check your email on your phone before even getting out of bed in the morning. You can pay for your coffee, hail a cab, find a restaurant, and create a radio station with a few clicks right on your device. Mobile apps have become the new way companies engage with their customers.

Yet 90% of mobile apps have inadequate support.

Often customer service for mobile apps is:

- **Not immediate.** Doesn't exist or is hard to find on mobile.

- **Not personalised.** If the customer is connected to an agent, that agent doesn't know them or their issue.
- **Not connected.** Customers become annoyed when mobile service is disconnected from a company's contact center, products, and in-store options.

Lack of mobile support at this level leads to disloyalty among your customers. One survey by Accenture shows that 51% of United States consumers switched service providers because of poor customer service experiences. This put \$1.3 trillion in revenue at play in 2013.

What if you could embed a help button in every mobile app?

What if your business had a help button in every app so your customers could access a customer service agent immediately and received personalised, connected service, just like the Amazon Mayday button? This is the future of mobile service, and the future has arrived.



CONCLUSION

Social, mobile, connected, and cloud technologies have changed the way customers expect service. They want it 24/7, on every channel, wherever they are, in context, making the entire process effortless for them.

Businesses of today must be able to deliver frictionless customer experiences to meet these expectations.

Remember the five ways to make service easy for your customers:

- 1. Create a single view of your customers.** A major key to providing effortless experiences for customers is ensuring that all of your service agents have the same, single view of them. This enables the agents to deliver the consistent and contextual service that customers of today demand.
- 2. Deliver consistent customer engagement on every channel.** Each time a customer contacts your company, they expect every employee to have visibility into all of their past interactions with you, regardless of channel. A standout feature of a customer engagement platform is its ability to keep context about customers as they are moved across channels.
- 3. Equip agents with a single source of knowledge.** If you are going to provide the frictionless service experience

customers expect, you must equip all of your agents, employees, and even customers with access to the right answers. Knowledge based solutions that are connected, mobile, and predictive ensure they can deliver on this.

- 4. Empower customers with self-service and mobile options.** Instead of picking up the phone to dial a customer support number, today's customer would sometimes rather do a quick Google search from their phone, ask their social network for advice, or get answers via your company's website. Empower your customers by providing them with mobile selfservice and communities that are available 24/7.
- 5. Embed service everywhere.** You must be able to provide the next level of mobile service to customers of today by embedding service in every mobile app. They want immediate, personalized service in context, wherever they are, on any device. And where they are, more often than not, is on their mobile device, using an app.

Companies that fail to harness the power of today's technologies to engage their customers in new ways will lose their customers to companies who will. The companies that make service easy for their customers will drive customer satisfaction, loyalty, and revenue.



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