5 Tips for Entrepreneurs to Better Serve Their Potential Customers

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If McKinsey & Company insights from July are any indication, consumers have rediscovered their power in the pandemic. Due to a combination of product shortages, economic and job concerns, along with a general willingness to change their purchasing behaviors, 75 percent of shoppers say they've behaved differently since coronavirus began spreading. In many cases, their new purchasing habits have led to exposure to unfamiliar brands.

This is a huge boon, especially for entrepreneurs trying to disrupt a market or industry. Under ordinary circumstances, getting consumers to move away from their favorite companies' products and services can be challenging. However, with so much general uncertainty in the world, customers have become increasingly open-minded about giving untested organizations a chance to wow them.

If your startup or small business hasn't been ocusing on customer service, the time couldn't be better to put on a huge customer-centric push. However, you need to make sure you have the infrastructure, protocols and tools to be certain that your brand's first impression is nothing short of powerfully awesome.

Below are a few ways to up your game when it comes to serving

current and prospective patrons.

1. Leverage tech to ensure your sales time is nimble and responsive

Your sales team can’t afford to drop the ball anywhere or any time, particularly when customers are moving so freely from one product to the next. Mixmax, a sales engagement tool, boasts the time management benefits of utilizing key sales tools which can help your sales team focus less on tedious tasks and more on prospecting. Ensure they have the resources they need to carry customers from lead generation to conversion by investing in the best tech stack for your needs and goals.

What type of solutions might make sense? If you’re focused on improving the responsiveness of your salespeople no matter if they’re working from home or the office, you might opt for higher-end telephone and videoconferencing software that integrates most forms of visual and audio communication. On the other hand, maybe you want to streamline the information your prospective customers receive. In that case, you may be more interested in adding a secure contract management system into your toolkit.

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2. Centralize knowledge so anyone can be a customer-service star

Nothing frustrates customers quite as much as not being able to get quick answers to their questions. A fast way to ensure that anyone in your business can solve a client’s issues is to establish a centralized knowledge-management database that can be housed on your intranet or another piece of cloud-based

software. You may even want to include a corporate wiki so employees can find any information with only one login.

By giving everyone on your team access to customer information such as buying history, touchpoints and other data, you avoid having to bounce consumers between service representatives. Centralized knowledge-management systems can also be invaluable if you've moved some or all of your workforce remote.

3. Channel your inner Nostradamus and foretell customer questions

You want to make finding answers to potential questions as easy as possible for customers. In fact, according to Drift's 2020 State of Conversational Marketing Report, 34 percent of consumers cite not being able to find the information they need online as their highest customer-service snag. Rather than forcing would-be buyers to hunt around for the solutions they want, begin peppering your site with rich content that gives them the insight they crave. It's appealing to a lot of customers to be able to solve their own problems, and they'll appreciate finding answers fast.

What should your content look like? Ideally, you should have a variety of content FAQs on your website. The content can take the shape of videos, written copy, images, blueprints, schematics, how-to charts or even GIFs. Whatever you feel will be helpful needs to have a home on your site. Of course, you may want a more traditional page dedicated to the biggest FAQs your sales folks and customer experience (CX) personnel hear. Just make sure your FAQs stay up-to-date and don't become stale or irrelevant.

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4. Stay alert on social media

Spend a little time social listening, and you may just figure out exactly what your customers want. And you'll be in good company: More than half of companies are currently using social media listening to get real-time consumer information. To be sure, many customers will talk about what they didn't enjoy about a CX. However, their honesty is exactly what you need to hear and read. Add social listening to your sales and marketing plan today. That way, you can respond quickly if you notice that a customer is unhappy with you or, better yet, with a competitor.

For example, you might discover a critical review of your latest gadgetry on Twitter. Treat this knowledge as the opportunity to jump in and resolve the problem. Connect with the user publicly or in private and work together to solve the issue. Most people are willing to work with companies to get what they want. And you could end up turning a disgruntled buyer into a raving fan if you're fast on the draw, take crisis management seriously and empower your CX team to do what's right in every unique situation.

5. Make being your customer a rewarding, one-of-a-kind adventure.

Why do shoppers rave about Apple, Lululemon or Southwest Airlines? Though their products and services do tend to be well-considered, the key to the brands' almost cult followings is the culture. Wanting to be part of a community is a basic human desire, and certain companies have made being their loyal customer an amazing experience.

If you're trying to develop a fierce following of fanatics who wouldn't think of going anywhere else, consider the user experience from start to finish. Look for opportunities for

you to go above and beyond expectations to make shopping with you not just a pleasure, but a must-do. You might just end up building a society of kindred spirits like BMW did with its MINI series of vehicles. MINI drivers consider themselves part of a movement and collective, and the brand promotes this camaraderie on their site. Who wouldn’t want to be part of the “in” crowd?

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Customers are moving around like never before and into a phase of discovery. Meet them where they are, and amaze them with a CX unlike any they’ve had before. They’ll be more likely to rave, not to mention stick with your organization for the long haul.

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