6 Invaluable Tips for Satisfying Your Online Customers



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When I have conversations online, they tend to be tough to manage, especially when trying to resolve an issue, win an argument or present facts. People always seem way more difficult to deal with online than in person. It is just the way the internet 'feels.'

Despite this, business trends seem to be moving more towards online conversations and 100% online transactions. This is both intriguing and scary because customers also want the ease that online transactions give.

How do you build a customer service system online that limits the chances for the occurrences of these classic miscommunications that internet conversations are fraught with?

I have a few ideas to share with you.

Learn Your Customer Base

Let me start with an illustration; if you sell a new technology or software or offer a completely novel service, then the information this gives is that most of your customer base will be novices, initially at least.

This prepares you to receive questions of every kind, even the kind that seems obvious or even stupid. This little piece of information can help you prepare mentally for the usually herculean task of pleasing curious customers.

The best way to learn your customer base is to walk a mile in their shoes and keep records of everything you learn. It’s a great idea to use a ticketing system to keep records of individual customer’s pain points.

This way, any of your customer service associates who speak to them anytime down the line would have a paper trail to follow to foster a genuine, personal conversation.

Review sites, niche forums, and social media all also give tremendous insight into who your primary base is.

Now that you have the full picture, all you need are the tactics.

Hire Balanced Customer Service Reps

I think the worst thing you can do when interviewing for a customer service rep is staring at paper qualifications and

course certifications. The most important thing to do during this interview is to talk with the person a much as possible since that is what they would be doing for a living anyway.

I prefer having an online conversation with the person before meeting up in person. This way, you have a comprehensive idea of the person’s people skills and communication skills, offline and online.

If done right, you can train a child to use a help desk software, but the ability to put an anxious mind at ease and talk a violent customer through a confusing process is rare. That is what you should be looking for when hiring.

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Use Scenarios To Train Customers

There are many areas where it is a great idea to let your staff learn on the job. Customer Service, and Online customer service at that, is not the place. A single tweet by an unsatisfied customer can tank your brand. This isn’t a place for any B.S.

This is the place where you need to be extremely proactive; jump in front of the problem and make sure your reps are prepared before they face them. I often train Customer Service Reps by simulating the most intense customer service conversations they would face in the field. This is a great idea for any business looking to serve customers with minimal damage.

Your reps are going to be unable to see, feel, and in some cases, even hear the customer; this is a perfect recipe for miscommunication. Your simulated scenarios should be set up to teach your customers how to respond, when to respond and when to shut up, apologize, and listen. You can stop them at every error and re-direct them till they are flawless. At least

that’s what I do anyway, and it seems to work well.

Innundate Your Customers With Great Content

One of the hidden benefits of content marketing is that it helps you have less and less contact with your customers… I know how that sounded, so I’ll try to explain.

Having a blog, a FAQs page, and loads of content from whitepapers to research pieces can be extremely useful for customer service if they are excellently done in such a self-explanatory way that your customers see no need to contact your reps.

Every conversation with a customer is a potential article, a potential addition to your FAQs page, and a potential research topic. Your commitment to updating your content and releasing new great content could greatly reduce your contact with customer’s complaints/inquiries and hence, reduce the chances for miscommunications and the crises that come with them.

Related: Why Content Marketing Delivers Effective Results for Startups

Increase Ease Of Contact

It could be as simple as setting up a live chat ability on your website, maintaining a hotline, or even running a Whatsapp group or social media official account. Still, you need to make it very easy to get contacted.

Many businesses have a “Contact us” tab on the top of their website, which leads customers to a form they fill and send back to them and hopes for a response. As a mail bait, this is an excellent idea, but not so effective anymore for customer service. The reason is that customers typically perceive mails

to be a slow process…and it usually is.

You do not need to offer 24/7 customer support if you are financially unable to, but at least make your open hours known to your customers and make sure your knowledge of your customer base leads you to select the right platform with which to let customers contact you.

When contacted, speed is of the essence. A recent study by The Social Habit showed that 32% of customers expect a response within 30 minutes when using social media to contact a brand. And 42% expect a 60-minute response time. That gives you an hour tops, for the most part, to react to all complaints.

I have found that for things that can not be resolved quickly, it is safer to make initial contact, explain the process and buy more time. This way, your customers feel heard and know that something is being done.

Ditch The Jargon and Crammed Speeches

You or your reps shouldn't use technical terms while performing customer service functions… I prescribe using "*idiot speak*," by this I do not mean that your customers are idiots. I mean that you should speak in such clear and simple terms that even an idiot will understand.

Your reps should also learn to relate authentically and avoid rehearsed, generic speeches. Once customers have heard it a few times, it becomes boring, even annoying, and it increases the potential for a bust-up if complaints end up unattended.

That's all I have, I am sure there are loads of other things you could do, but if you implement these, you'll already have a massive head start!

Related: Why Jargon is Bad for your Business and How to Eliminate It

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