

Sidestep the embolism, deliver true customer service

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Customer service must evolve if companies want to deliver true value and radically change engagement



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Most companies have invested in some form of digital customer experience toolkit or technology solution to gain deeper understanding of customer service processes and engagements. Most have looked at chatbots, analytics, and integration to translate customer complexity into seamless simplicity.

It's all about building the superior customer experience that delivers a complete picture of the customer's behaviour and preferences. While this is all true, customers are still getting frustrated and angry because they can't get a grip on communication with companies.

Connecting the dots

There's a disconnect between the technology that the company has invested in and experience. People read stories about self-driving cars that can identify a rock on the highway, yet their bank or mobile service provider cannot identify them immediately when they call in to fix a simple billing problem. They expect better, but they're not getting it.

Ultimately, the customer wants to stop that vein from pulsing in the centre of their head because they've spent the past hour on the phone, been passed to three different people and given five different answers to their question. They want fast and simple service and easy access to the right information so they can service themselves and resolve problems relatively easily. However, if something goes wrong, they look at all the different channels of communication – social media, email, call centre, chatbot – and take a deep, fortifying breath before they try and fix a problem.

Customers want there to be a connection, that's all. They want the call they had with the call centre to be communicated with the email team and shared with the resolution team. They don't want to have to explain the same problem, repeatedly, only to get stuck in the endless loop of frustration. Unfortunately, this is the most common result of a customer complaint or query – frustration.

Adding more channels to the customer service process only adds more problems if not done correctly – every channel needs to be connected, relevant and the context must be retained if a customer moves across multiple touchpoints. There also needs to be clear pathways to problem resolution that minimises friction. Simply put, organisations need to make it simpler for customers to do business with them.

No more empty promises

Usually, companies spend a lot of money on technology designed to attract the customer, but not enough time or effort is put into retaining them. Frustrating delays, unnecessary errors and empty promises are often what's left once the customer has been pulled in - and this divide is both commonplace and unnecessary. Building a bridge across this gap is where true customer service lies, and value is delivered.

It's about keeping the promise made to the customer and delivering support that's timely and relevant. Manage interactions more effectively, introduce better self-service tools, and remove the muddle in the middle and you've got happy, loyal and retained customers. Use the capabilities of technology to deliver what you promise and use the right metrics to monitor what needs to improve.

Infrastructure, technology and processes need to make customers' lives easier. It's as simple and effective as that. The easier it is for the customer to do business with your business, the higher your retention rates and the better for, well, business.

ABOUT WYNAND SMIT

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