2018
HOW STRATEGIC BRANDS LOWER CUSTOMER CARE COSTS
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70 PERCENT OF CUSTOMERS WHO LEAVE A BRAND DO SO BECAUSE OF BAD CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES, NOT BAD PRODUCTS.

* Source: Corporate Research Forum
INTRODUCTION

Customer Care is the backbone of many successful organizations. And with an estimated 67% of consumers now turning to Twitter and Facebook for customer service, major brands aren’t just adopting social care; they’re making it a major priority.

With an effective social listening program, Customer Care organizations can measure the magnitude of customer facing problems and even identify previously unreported issues in real-time, allowing the care teams to get out in front of issues before impacting the call center and other customer care channels.

This e-book will discuss important topics and best practices for social listening that lower customer care costs and increase satisfaction, including:

- Creating a single unified view of the customer experience
- Mapping the entire customer journey
- Identifying high volume support issues
- Improving efficiency to reduce response time
- Informing all aspects of the organization
- Measuring the impact of service and satisfaction over time
According to the Corporate Research Forum, 70 percent of customers who leave a brand do so because of bad customer experiences, not bad products. Therefore, customer care is a top priority for every business. But how do strategic brands keep customer care high while making efficient use of their resources?

Social media and its accompanying technologies comprise one big way brands are answering the call.

It all starts with a single, unified view of the customer experience. And it’s not just about listening for customer complaints online. Social analytics can apply to any data set, so cataloging, indexing and analyzing everything from customer service logs to customer surveys to online conversations brings the entire experience into focus for strategic brands.

Think beyond the online mentions and ask your social technology platform of choice to do more than feed customer service. Ask it to feed the entire customer care process.

**BEST PRACTICES FOR UNIFYING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

- Select a social technology platform that enables the analysis of any unstructured data set
- Build a dashboard that incorporates conversation data points encompassing call logs, surveys, online conversations and even consumer reviews
- Incorporate all customer facing departments in an experience management mindshare
- Plot and measure conversion points along the customer path
- Use real-time feedback to inform decisions that affect the customer journey

70 percent of customers who leave a brand do so because of bad customer experiences, not bad products.
(Source: Corporate Research Forum)
MAP THE ENTIRE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Feeding your unified view of the customer experience should be a detailed map of the customer journey. This generally follows the traditional marketing funnel of Awareness » Consideration » Trial » Purchase » Loyalty. But in the digital space, it is less linear and more a mix of touchpoints that blur together.

However, having a detailed map of how your prospective customers think about, interact with and question your product or service at the various stops along the way helps you provide those touchpoints with more effective—and cost efficient—experiences to encourage and drive conversion.

The challenge is the map itself. You need to know every step of the way from the point the customer first encounters your brand—be it advertising or just a passive mention from a friend—all the way to repeat purchase and recommendation and beyond. So the map is important.
MAP THE ENTIRE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

BEST PRACTICES FOR MAPPING THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

- Brainstorm every possible touch point for a new consumer from awareness to repeat purchase
- Double-check that journey with the most visited pages on your website, the questions you’re asked via social media and inquiries that come through customer service and sales channels
- Interview a small sample of current customers to map their specific journey to purchase
- Vet your map through sales, fulfillment and customer service to find missing touch points perhaps overlooked
- Share your customer journey map with each touch point department to engender company-wide understanding of the multiple points of interaction in route to a sale
IDENTIFY HIGH VOLUME SUPPORT ISSUES

At each stage of the customer journey, they will ask questions or have issues they reach out with. The most frequent of which should be a primary focal point for improving the efficiency of your customer care practice.

By cataloging and building a common internal practice around routing and addressing the most common support issues, your brand is tackling the challenge of providing better customer service head on. The more experienced your team is at solving those hot-button topics, the faster, more effective they can turn the customer’s moment of pause into a moment of awe.

But identifying these support issues isn’t just about asking customer service what their most common issues is. Remember: If you don’t have data to backup your decisions or assertions, then you’re just assuming. And you know what that means.
IDENTIFY HIGH VOLUME SUPPORT ISSUES

BEST PRACTICES FOR IDENTIFYING HIGH VOLUME SUPPORT ISSUES

- Run customer service logs through a text analytics application (like your social listening platform) to surface topics based on volume
- Survey internal team members involved in any customer-facing role about the most common questions and problems they see from consumers
- Interview a small sample of current customers to map their specific journey to purchase
- Analyze online conversations for care- and service-related issues
- Compile results and prioritize the most frequent issues
- Build a knowledge share document or space for all customer-facing team members with best practices to resolve the high-volume issues
IMPROVE EFFICIENCIES TO REDUCE RESPONSE TIME

If the 24-hour news cycle is now reduced to 24 minutes (or less), how quick your customer care responds in the age of “always on” social media has never been more important. According to consumer research conducted for Jay Baer’s seminal customer care book Hug Your Haters, the most important element of a good customer experience is getting the customer’s issue resolved quickly. The second most important element, according to the national survey conducted by Edison Research, was getting the customer’s issue resolved in a single interaction.

So the urgency to reduce response time and impact customer care efficiency is real. How can we meet that need?

The answer lies in internal efficiencies. The aforementioned knowledgeshare and cross-discipline communication are critical components to closing the response gap. Every employee—from frontline retail to channel sales to customer care operators to the CEO—is, in the customer’s mind, able to address their issue. So they need to be able to do so.
IMPROVE EFFICIENCIES TO REDUCE RESPONSE TIME

BEST PRACTICES IN IMPROVING EFFICIENCIES TO REDUCE RESPONSE TIME

- Cross-pollinate customer care training, communication and processes throughout any company vertical or department that could interact with customers
- Require each employee to understand how to access and successfully leverage your customer care knowledge share resources
- Make a special line of customer care associates available on an internal hotline, live chat or similar instant mechanism for quick routing
- Invest in cross-training customer care specialists on social media to provide direct access to customer care from consumers engaging with the brand online
- Condition the “not my job” mentality out of your company’s culture
INFORM ALL ASPECTS OF THE ORGANIZATION

We’ve touched on a customer care knowledge share and pointed out internal collaboration and communication are critical components of lowering customer care costs. But it’s not just as simple as adding a paragraph to the onboarding documents or making sure everyone knows where the customer care knowledge share documents are.

Customer care must be baked in the entire employee experience as part of the company’s culture. Yes, there are tactical and procedural aspects that one must produce to create the mechanisms, but how many companies do you know have call centers that provide terrible experiences? It’s not the presence of software or even more staff that makes customers feel cared for. It’s the attitude, availability and knowledge of the staff they encounter—wherever they encounter them.

Consider this: The most important aspect of the organization you need to inform is the customer him or herself. Since the customer can encounter the organization on Twitter or Facebook, via an in-store retail experience, through email or by seeing a banner ad on a website or by picking up the phone and calling, you must ensure that whatever their first line of contact with internal resources is, it is an informed one.
INFORM ALL ASPECTS OF THE ORGANIZATION

BEST PRACTICES IN IMPROVING EFFICIENCIES TO REDUCE RESPONSE TIME

- Make customer care an imperative aspect of the company’s culture (top down)
- Provide access to and training for use of the customer care knowledge share to every employee
- Encourage each department and team leader to devote a portion of their staff meetings to customer care topics
- Require all employees to spend a day as a customer care specialist for your company
- Invest in software solutions that put the customer inputs via email, phone, web and social, accessible to all employees
MEASURE THE IMPACT OF SERVICE AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OVER TIME

No goal or objective can be met without designing a mechanism to measure it. And no measure of success can be truly quantified in a vacuum.

What that means is that in order to fully understand the impact of your customer care efforts, including lowering their costs, you must first decide how you will measure their impact, including cost and other factors. Then you must track those metrics over time to fully realize the effectiveness of the changes you’ve made.

In today’s ever-changing digital landscape and fickle consumer environment, measuring over time is perhaps more important than it has ever been. After all, the question you want to answer is “how are we doing?” Not, “how are we doing this month?”
MEASURE THE IMPACT OF SERVICE AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OVER TIME

BEST PRACTICES IN IMPROVING EFFICIENCIES TO REDUCE RESPONSE TIME

- Plan to measure! Identify not only the key performance indicators you will hold your customer care work against, but how and when you will collect, analyze and report them.

- Get executive buy-in. Without it, an uninformed superior can blow up all your work based on their own expectation of success.

- Set expectations for the long-haul. Communicate throughout the organization that the success of your customer care efforts will only become apparent after the culture and behavior has shifted, which takes more than a month or even a quarter to evolve.

- Report relevant data only, but do it consistently. No one needs a 50-page reporting deck or a dashboard with 100 panels on it. Report the most relevant 3–4 piece of data each department or stakeholder needs to see that what they’re doing is working or not.

- Discuss and resolve questions about progress, success and reporting together. If the team is bought in, the team will win. Making decisions apart from stakeholders can tear down collaboration and cooperation.
SUMMARY

Customer feedback comes at brands in so many different ways, and how you plan and prioritize has a direct impact on support volumes, handle times, and ultimately the cost of customer care.

Social listening enables you to hear everything that your customers are sharing about your brand with their peers, including brand mentions that aren’t specifically addressed to your company’s social care channels. This level of insight allows Customer Care to be more proactive, delivering service that’s faster and more relevant to its customers.

With a comprehensive social listening strategy, customer care organizations can improve responsiveness, lower costs, and deliver service “above and beyond” your customers’ wildest expectations.

Contact NetBase to learn how social analytics can lower customer care costs.

Helpful Resources

LEARN

Blog: How to Make Social Media Analysis Work for You

WATCH

Video: TBWA\CHIAT\DAY Utilizes Real-time Social Media Monitoring for Success

ebook: 2018: How Strategic Brands Avoid a Crisis
NetBase is the social analytics platform that global companies use to run brands, build businesses, and connect with consumers every second. Its platform processes millions of social media posts daily for actionable business insights for marketing, research, customer service, sales, PR and product innovation.

NetBase is recognized by analysts and customers as the leader in Social Analytics. NetBase was rated a category leader by Forrester in the “Forrester Wave: Enterprise Social Listening Platforms, Q1 2016” report. NetBase was also named a top rated social media management platform by software users on TrustRadius and a market leader by G2 Crowd.