

Lower Costs



Whitepaper Topics

- ✓ It Doesn't have to cost more.
- ✓ Do Less, but Get more.
- ✓ Go on Vacation from Customer Service
- ✓ If you can't measure it, you can't...
- ✓ Online More. Sell More.

It Doesn't have to Cost more

Small business hears the phrase customer service and an instant, involuntary 'groan' can be heard. Small business is about sales, not really about perfect service. We all have seen the posters that say the customer is always right and if you don't take care of the customer someone else will. These are true. We don't wish to rebuff a hundred years of management guru speak. However, the groan still exists, as reality is sometimes louder than guru speak.

The reality of business is that assets have to be leveraged. These assets are sometimes your staff. The sales staff sometimes has to do customer service and the owner sometimes has to sweep the floor. This is the privilege of being a small business owner. Most times, doing more, costs more.

Most business today has the often normal customer service that is sub-standard at best. They have contact us emails that become full of spam quickly, missing critical inquiries, or a contact us form that is so generic, potential customers don't even use it. Even then, the contact us form often only sends an email to the generic, spam filled inbox. If this sounds familiar, we empathize with you; we see it all the time. If this does not sound familiar, I'd suggest doing a quick audit of your customer service process.

There is a better way. By offering multiple mediums for your customers, you optimize *THEIR* experience. Some people don't want to call; some people don't want to contact you. By providing multiple mediums for support you increase your customers' satisfaction and lower your costs. It doesn't have to cost more.

Do Less, but Get More.

Ever have those busy days that you can't remember what got done? Everyday? Yeah, us too. We think this is the norm for most business and don't have a magic solution or a silver bullet. What does exist though is a way to chip away at those distractions called customers. It is not very often you read a white paper that has the word distraction and customer in the same sentence, so it may be best to explain a bit. In my effort to not patronize and also not risk having anyone miss the point, I'll share this. NO customer really wants to contact you. Nobody gets excited about calling customer service, even if that service was perfect. When your customer has a questions, you must recognize that this is a distraction in their world, they'd much rather be doing other things.

By opening a few channels of communication, whether it is chat, email or smoke signals (not recommended), and customers get to choose their least painful option, for them, at that moment. If your customer is in a hurry, they may email the inquiry, not chat. If your customer needs the answer now to solve a problem, they will likely chat (or call if you don't have chat). If you have a robust, dynamic (read – very useful) self help system, most customers prefer that answer, and it is sometimes faster and fits within their work flow. Of course, don't hear me wrong, if you only have self help, you have trouble. The goal is to provide the medium of your customers' choice. You can do less, and get more done.

Go on Vacation from Customer Service

Superman still has to rest. But crime never sleeps. Many business owners deal with this same pressure and eventually reach some level of burnout. It is dangerous for your health, for your business and is an unnecessary symptom of the real problem. Thank goodness business can be different.

As a wonderful byproduct of creating multiple customer service mediums, beyond the phone, beyond the contact us form, is the creation of a dynamic, evolving knowledge base of your business. It's the 80/20 rule of customer service. 80% of your customers ask about the same things. The problem is that these 'things' are not really the bogus FAQ's you think they are on your website. FAQ pages are wrong, stagnant and not as frequent as you think.

Your business evolves, your customers are growing and your customer service can become stagnant very quick. Stagnant means lost sales even from the most loyal of customers. Avoiding this pit of problems is quite simple, let your customer service become alive, let it evolve. As your staff answers questions, through your new mediums; chat, email, phone, and if you prefer, smoke signals, these answers are easily documented and 'added' to your knowledge base. This knowledge base is a source for many things; like a no way stagnant, sweet smelling FAQ, a training tool and standardized answers to email, chat, phone or even smoke signals. This works like magic, well almost. Your staff, even the leveraged one's can answer 80% of the questions in an accurate, efficient manner. This gives you a vacation from customer service.

If you can't measure it, you can't....

When a customer asks a question, it would be great to provide a perfect answer all the time; 100% accurate, 100% of the time. If you believe this is possible, we have now found the source of all the smoke signals. We want this, we set it as a stretch goal (is that still a buzz word?) or whatever you want to call it. But it is unrealistic. It is.

The point that gets missed though is that you have to KNOW where you are. At the same time we can agree that 100/100 is not realistic, it sure would be nice to be absolutely sure we are not 0% accurate, 100% of the time.

The only way to know is to measure it. Stop guessing and get down to business. Start simple, and then improve.

The easiest way to measure customer satisfaction is to measure key components that you know make customers happy. Fast, Factual and Friendly. If you give a fast, accurate answer with a smile, you win. Often employee's are so leveraged that they give fast answers, with the assumption they are accurate.

Start by measuring the time to response of your email inquiries. Good Email ticket systems can do this.

Enable your customers to 'rate' answers in your FAQ. Good support systems can do this.

Connect your entire support staff to a centralized knowledge base. Good chat systems can do this.

Online More Sell More

Business is about sales. Customer satisfaction is proportionate to sales, better service delivers better short term and long terms sales. It is often a reality that the way you want to do customer service is just not, well, realistic. With the application of the right technology, you can do both.

LiveHelpNow Helps You Reach Out.