

Why Customer Service Matters

According to the Institute of Customer Service's most recent UK Customer Satisfaction Index, more companies have declined in service than improved. In 2021 and 2022, customer satisfaction with complaint handling showed a steady improvement but this has now stalled and other areas of customer satisfaction that are predictive of business performance, such as measures of a company's emotional connection with its customers, their customer ethos, and ethics, have also declined.

The demands of the last few years have certainly impacted customer care and resources have been stretched, but it's important now to look ahead, put remedial steps in place, and ensure that the customer really does feel like they are important!

So, what are they key areas to focus on?

Recognise that people buy from people

If you rely on telephone sales, then one key component of customer care is to offer a name to establish a real and personal connection. Revisit your call handling practices and ensure that attention to detail is applied to every stage, including the very first greeting.

See it through

Unreturned calls and poor follow-up practices cost business – not just in terms of lost revenue but also reputation. Nothing upsets customers

more than being ignored, so make sure all calls are followed up promptly.



Make your shop window transact

Websites are the shop window for many businesses and marketing teams spend considerable time and money driving prospective clients to them. So, when web traffic turns into enquiries, it's important it's met with a timely response.

Test the 'get in touch' forms on your website and your general enquiries email. Are they passing enquiries to the right place?

Embrace live chat

Many smaller businesses do not offer any form of webchat and of those that do, responsiveness is hit and miss. A recent survey showed 50% of chats were responded to within 30 seconds yet the other 50% weren't answered at all!

Customers expect communication with their suppliers to be easy, almost instant, and, increasingly, 24/7 - so it's important to offer a variety of channels. Live chat has the potential to deliver the quickest wins when it comes to customer experience. Managing it in-house it can be time-onerous and inconsistent, or conversations aren't recorded centrally, so you could consider an outsourced service.

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