



# Customer Service Excellence

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# Chapter 1: Customer Service: The Future of Business Success

The customer service team is one of your most valuable teams. It's the direct connection between you and your customers. Happy customers are return customers. They are your most successful marketers – they talk positively about your company, bring in more customers, and attract potential customers. So, shouldn't customer service excellence be given priority in your organization? Here are some points to consider:

- Every business wants to save costs and increase profits. Retaining customers is much cheaper than acquiring new customers. Retention of 5% of customers equates to an increase in 25% in profits.



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- Customer service represents your company's brand, mission, and values.
- Excellent customer services encourage your existing customers to stay loyal to your brand.
- Customers don't mind paying more for services and products if they are satisfied with the accompanying customer service.
- Excellent customer service increases customer lifetime value.
- Proactive customer services create several new marketing opportunities and new revenue streams.
- When you provide satisfactory customer service, you have a competitive advantage.

# SUPPORT



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On the contrary, poor customer service can drag your company down. Many organizations miss out on the opportunities that excellent customer service brings in because:

- They don't care enough to train their employees on customer care.
- Customer-facing employees don't have faith in their products and services. Or, they allow their problems and grudges to get in the way of work.
- Employees lack the commitment required to provide excellent customer service, and they don't understand the importance of their customer-facing role.
- Customers feel left out and not empowered by the organization.

There is no doubt that customer service excellence is vital to any organization. Here's a detailed look at how you can achieve that.





# Chapter 2: Critical Components of Good Customer Service

Excellent customer service includes several critical components. These components promote excellence and all the advantages we talked about in the previous chapter while thwarting the negativities associated with inadequate customer services. Every customer service must include all these components:



## 1. Expertise and goal-oriented focus

Appropriate trained staff are prepared to face your customers' questions. That decreases returns and dissatisfied customers, but it also makes your team understand and appreciate your products and services. When they have a reasonable opinion of your products and services and belief in them, they are proactive in their customer-facing roles.





## 2. Empathy and patience

Excellent employees have two fundamental traits - empathy and patience. When customers sense compassion, they realize that your organization truly cares. Angry and frustrated customers must be dealt with, with patience to be able to get through to them, understand the problems they face, and offer a solution.



## 3. Communication and attentiveness

Not everyone is a born communicator. Customer-facing employees are excellent communicators. Customer service professionals can understand questions and complaints and respond to these accordingly. Listening is an integral part of communication that helps understand the problem and provide a quick response.



## 4. Professionalism

Your customer service team is a customer-facing team. Customer service employees are very professional. Professionalism includes the way they dress, their demeanor, prompt service, being hospitable, as well as being transparent. That makes your staff understand how vital their role and they are willing to put in their best.





## 5. Appreciation

Customers who feel appreciated are more likely to return for your products and services because you treated them well.

At the same time, the customer-facing staff is appreciated. Happy staff perform well and are willing to put more effort than is expected. Provide them the power to give customers discounts, replace or return products, and the ability to provide additional products or services to customers. That power goes a long way in motivating them to be better customer service executives.



## 6. Body language and acting skills

Your customer service staff are the face of your company. Their body language tells your customers a lot about your company. Confident and sincere people have a very different body language compared to staff who are bored or have a don't-care-a-damn attitude. Your customers can tell about how much you value them through your staff's body language.

Your staff will come across customers who can never be pleased. At these times, they should be able to maintain a cheery persona no matter how frustrated they are.







## 7. Knowing how/when to apologize

As simple as this sounds, you will be surprised at how difficult customer service staff find it to apologize to customers. Reliable teams not only know when to apologize but also how to apologize. While in some cases a simple, “*We are sorry for the inconvenience caused to you,*” will suffice, there are some customers who demand much more. How to apologize, when to apologize, and how much to apologize are all critical.



## 8. A customer-friendly website

As well as your customer service team, your company website plays a vital role in keeping your current customers happy and attracting new customers. A customer-friendly website that is attractive provides all the essential information, and has a FAQ section so customers can get their doubts cleared immediately – is critical to excellent customer service.



## 9. Response time

Excellent customer service means quick response time to queries and addressing problems, and resolving complaints as quickly as possible.





## 10. Accessibility

Another vital component of excellent customer service is accessibility – ensuring that customers can get in touch with the company at any part of the day or night. They are not put on hold or have to wait in line to get their problems addressed. Companies that have excellent customer service have adequate, well-trained staff who are always ready to attend to customer queries.



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# Chapter 3: Steps to Developing a Culture of Customer Service Excellence

There are no two ways about it – if you want happy customers, you must ensure you provide excellent customer service; and to do that, you must have a unique customer experience strategy in place. Here are some tips to help you create an effective customer service strategy.

To begin with, make customer satisfaction your organization's end goal. Next, follow the following steps.



## 1. Identify your customers

Before you provide any type of customer service, it's vital to know who your customers are – what they do, their age, gender, likes, and dislikes.

Create buyer personas that represent your real customers.





## 2. Understand your business objectives

Understand your business objectives and then identify how you can connect your long-term business goals with customer service.



## 3. Work backward.

Beginning with customer service, work your way backward – right up to the technology you use in your organization. That way, you can seamlessly connect your customers with your existing technology and fill in gaps where required.



## 4. Hire a team that is invested in the process.

Hire and train the right people to pay attention to your customers. Your employees can pick up vital clues from talking to customers when they are trained to do so. Hire people who show empathy, have a positive attitude, are adaptable, have excellent social and communication skills, and are highly motivated.



## 5. Eliminate bad design

Your website and mobile application play an important role in customer service. Get rid of lousy design and negative user experience as soon as





you detect them. A single bad experience can drive away potential customers and existing customers.



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### 6. Attend to your customer's needs and make use of feedback loops

The only way you can attend to your customers' needs is by knowing what they want in the first place. There are several ways you can get information about your customer's needs, and one of the most effective ways is by listening to what they say on social media – it's where they are most honest. Also, make use of post-interaction questionnaires, information received via follow-up phone calls, and real-time feedback surveys to understand what they want.



### 7. Find out what your competitors are doing

Find out what your competitors are doing and then do it better. Find gaps in their strategies and provide those to your customers. When you





know what improvements need to be made in your customer service strategy, you can use all this information to bridge the gap between where you currently are and where you want to go.



## 8. Set Create clear goals and objectives for customer service

Instead of vague aspirations, set specific customer service goals that you want to achieve. These could include:

- Ensuring customer retention
- Providing your customers with lifetime value
- Ensuring every customer is satisfied



## 9. Provide your customers with a seamless support system

Instead of forcing your support on your customers, let them know where they can find the support they need and show them how to access it. Some effective customer support options include:

- Live chat platforms
- FAQ sections on your website





- Support executives on social media channels
- Traditional feedback forms



## 10. Make use of new technology like artificial intelligence or machine learning

Both AI and machine learning can deliver a better customer experience. On your website and mobile app, AI can be used to send auto-responses to common customer queries, guiding them through carefully-curated content.

AI can also reduce the burden of your customer service executives and take care of most customer conversations, giving your executives a chance to attend to more complex issues.

Machine learning can draw information from past experiences and provide them with more relevant information.



## 11. Replace marketing with excellent customer service

We said it before, and we will repeat it – your customers are your best marketers. Provide them with outstanding customer service, and they will spread the word about your company, products, and services. They are more effective at drawing in new customers than a marketing campaign.





## 12. track your customer service team's metrics

Track valuable data, such as average response time and resolution time. You can even measure customer satisfaction with each employee. This useful information can be used to improve your customer service strategy.

Important KPIs to track include:

- Customer satisfaction score (CSAT)
- Net promoter score (NPS)
- Active issues
- Resolved issues
- Number of issues/nature of issues
- Customer retention rate
- First contact resolution
- First response time







Finally, focus on strategies for long-term customer service excellence.



**1. Provide customer services as a product.** That means providing them with support and services, just as you would for your other products. View customer service as another deliverable that you offer – one that gives customers real value.



**2. Remember that the customer is the boss.** Make your customer the center of every business function possible. This message must be grounded in the very core of your business.



**3. Aim for reliability.** That means that you consistently perform to the best of your ability and meet customer expectations every single time.





# Chapter 4: Smart Ways to Implement Your Customer Service Strategy

Now you know what excellent customer service entails – how it can be achieved, and the different methods you can use to create a successful strategy. The next step is to implement this strategy in your organization.

This chapter covers a lot of what you already know now about what makes an excellent customer service strategy.

## Smart ways to implement a successful customer service strategy

Here are some tips to follow:

- Strengthen your customer service team. Hire the best professionals, train them very well, and pack them with knowledge of your products.
- Track your team's performance and the performance of individual team members. Provide extra training when needed.





- Appreciate their good work and reward them.
- Use a Customer Relation Management (CRM) software to ensure the company reaches out to and stays in touch with every customer.
- Make use of multi-channel servicing. You can provide customer service via mobile devices, social media, the company website, and even through self-service solutions like an FAQ page on your website.

There is a lot that customer service employees can do to ensure that they provide excellent customer service. Here are some tips for support service employees for implementing into their work.



## 1. Product knowledge

An expansive knowledge of what you offer is a vital customer service skill. You spend all day troubleshooting for your clients and customers, and the only way that you can do justice to your job is by being a product expert.



## 2. Positive attitude

No matter how difficult a customer is, bear in mind that the right attitude goes a long way in providing excellent customer service.





### 3. Problem solving

If you can solve all y our customers' problems, they will stay loyal to the company. Build on your problem-solving skills. Find ways to creatively meet their needs while at the same time figuring a way to solve their problem. For example, if your product was shipped to the wrong location, you can ship out another product free of cost.



### 4. Respond quickly

Don't keep your customers waiting. They are anxious and frustrated and need to get in touch with you at the earliest. Once they get in touch with you, don't leave them hanging on the phone while you solve their problem. Keep them engaged. Let them know that you are working on the problem and how close you are to fixing it for them.



### 5. Provide personalized assistance

Treat every customer like they were your only customer. Treat them as individuals. Address them by their name, know how to make them laugh, get them engaged in the conversation, don't be afraid to go off-script, and give your time with them a personal touch.





## 6. empower your customers

Some customers would rather solve issues themselves. Self-service is a great option for such customers. There are several technological solutions available today to help you help your customers help themselves.



## 7. Actively listen

Learn to listen actively. Active listening includes listening to your client without interrupting. Then, when they have finished, reiterate what they said so you could confirm you understood them. The next step is to ask questions to get more information about the problem they face. The more information you have, the better you will be able to help them.

When listening to your customers, be mindful of their emotional state. When you respond to them, keep this in mind and respond accordingly. The bottom line is this: your customers must feel supported, heard, and empathized with.



## 8. Keep your promise

If you promise your customer something, make sure that you deliver on it. If you don't deliver what you promise, you let your customer down, and



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when you break your word, they lose trust in you and faith in your company. Keep in mind that customers are not overly grateful if you deliver more than promised, but they will be very upset if you don't deliver what you promise.



## 9. Be proactive

Don't be afraid to go the extra mile with your customers. Anticipate their needs even before they tell you what they need; anticipate how they feel even before they express their feelings to you. Anticipate every need and provide it to them. That goes a long way in showing them that you value them.

## Technologies you must implement in your company to improve customer service

The following technologies will better your customer service strategy. You don't have to include all of them but those that you believe your customers and organization can benefit from.

**1. Chatbots** – Don't be afraid to go the extra mile with your customers. Anticipate their needs even before they tell you what they need; anticipate how they feel even before they express their feelings to you. Anticipate every need and provide it to them. That goes a long way in showing them that you value them.





**2. Big data analytics** – make use of all the information you have about your customers to serve them better. Big data provides a lot of useful information on your customers – what they want, their likes and dislikes, the kind of people they are, and more. When you analyze this data, you can deliver better service.

**3. Artificial intelligence** – AI-powered customer support conversations improve the decision-making abilities in your organization

**4. Virtual reality** – It has the potential to alter your customer experience completely. VR provides better engagement and a complete-sensory experience that successfully captures their attention, imagination, and senses.

**5. Internet of Things (IoT)** – Companies that adopt IoT will benefit greatly for its solutions. IoT is known to lower costs, increase productivity, and help organizations engage with their customers better.

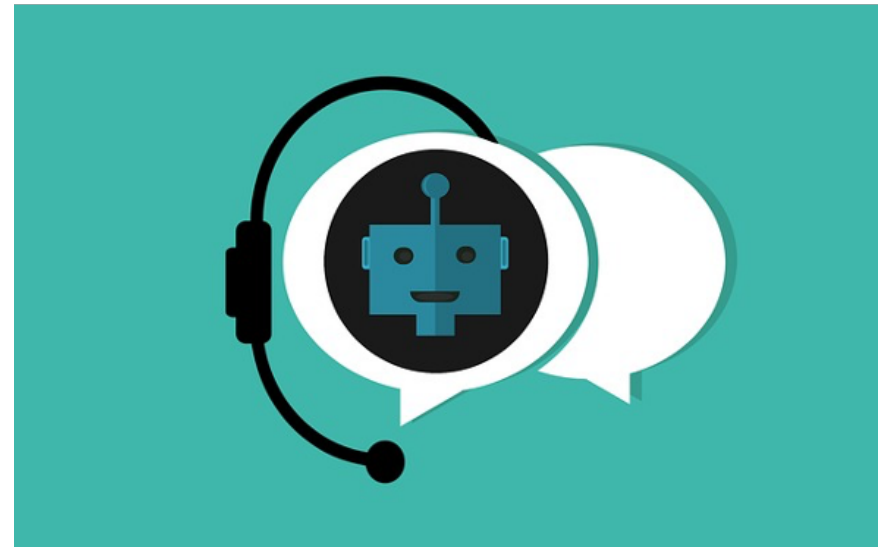
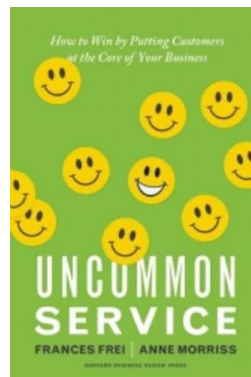
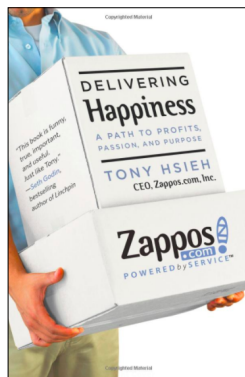


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