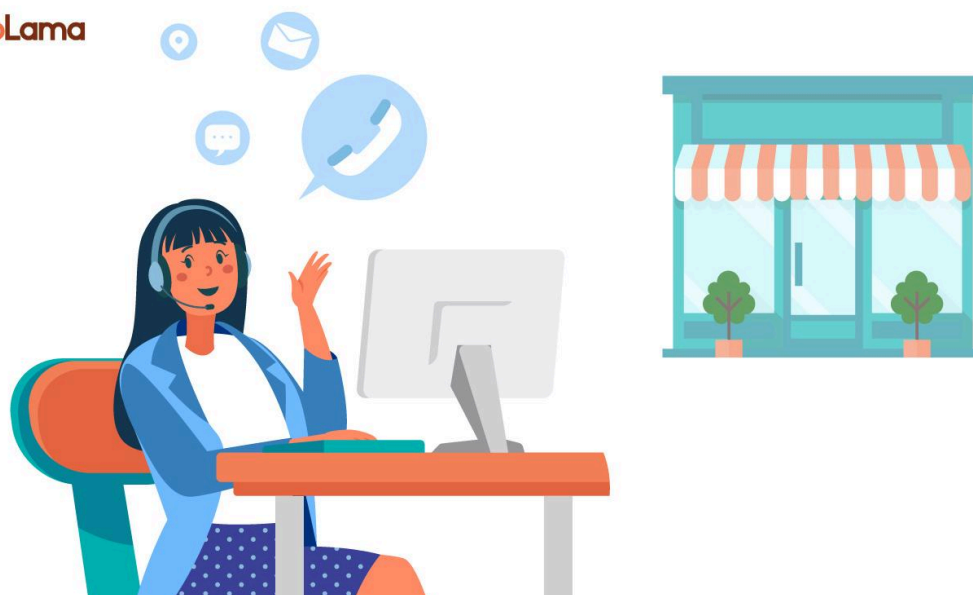


Understanding Customer Service Requirements for Small Businesses- Outline

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Achieving customer delight is rarely a linear process. It requires commitment and the ability to adapt processes and systems over a period of time. Why? Customers come in all shapes and sizes. The classic one size fits all approach is a recipe for failure. Over the years, great customer service has gone from meeting basic expectations to fulfilling unstated needs. Today, customer service has evolved even further; to win at it brands need to be able to anticipate customer needs before they know it themselves. Given modest budgets, limited bandwidth and a niche audience, customer success teams at small businesses are expected to wear multiple hats, including sales and business development. However, a company-wide customer service focus is becoming more important than ever for small businesses.

Functionally speaking, customer service brings together processes and people to drive business outcomes. From the strategy point of view, however, business goals must be defined by what matters most to customers. Most small businesses fail to identify what is most important to customers because of which they end up spending money on the wrong goals. From lead generation to customer acquisition and beyond, your business process must be mapped to customer requirements. To do this, first, gather customer data and then prioritize the processes with the highest pay-off. This will help you see how each stage of

your customer service strategy impacts the next and enable you to take actions that optimize the effectiveness of your team over a period of time.



According to the 2020 Digital Marketing Trends Report, customer experience was ranked as the single most exciting opportunity for B2B and B2C organizations. Throughout the customer journey, customer service represents the face of your brand. Every interaction contributes to creating the experience that customers will eventually associate with you. To enable your team to deliver outstanding service every time, identify the biggest spenders and the ones that are most likely to leave. This will help you focus your efforts on the customers that could be your biggest opportunities for growth.

Here are a few ways in which your small business can lay the groundwork for customer service excellence:

Know what customers really want

Analyzing website heat maps and visitor data from Google Analytics can help you identify buyer demographics such as age, gender and purchase history. It can let you identify the source of your traffic, whether they are searching for your product by name or clicking on paid ads on social media. More importantly, you can learn whether visitors are using mobile or desktop devices to access your site. This can help you optimize your landing page and checkout for a seamless user experience.

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For detailed insights, you can turn to many more tools that can offer data related to individual orders such as the number and average value of items bought per session, frequency of visits, and so on. For example, Shopify's "Know Your Customer" app. This popular app can help you gain insights into buyer needs based on the frequency and time of visit. You can position your product better for your target audience's needs as the app captures data relating to their spending capacity.

Next, import all of your data onto a spreadsheet and look for patterns. Some of the interesting insights to look for are the percentage of orders from international versus local customers, the percentage of repeat buys, and if there is a certain product that is leading to a disproportionate amount of sales.

This can help you identify how to solve problems that customers face, driving them deeper into your marketing funnel.

Making it easy for them to reach you

Once you've analyzed your customer demographics and their requirements, you need to choose absolutely the correct support channels for them. Live chat, social media and email are popular mediums of communication for millennials and Gen Yers while traditional voice-based support is preferred by customers of the previous generation. However, instead of offering a standard menu of customer service channels, you can offer a mix that meets the needs of your biggest customer demographic. For example, if you have a significant proportion of older visitors, definitely offer phone support or at least live chat. In case you have many customers that could be persuaded to buy more, you might reserve the phone customer support option exclusively for them.

Integrate your customer support channels - helpdesk and live chat software - with your order management and social media profiles, configuring them with manual tagging functionality so that your team can tag each interaction in real-time. This can help you identify customers who are most likely to give you a 5-star [C-SAT rating](#). In fact, you can even send such customers a post chat/call survey with links to review sites like TrustPilot and Yelp. The result: Better customer service ratings and potential new leads.

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Personalize your customer experience

Building a customer-centric culture can bring in up to 2.4X more business over the average customer lifetime. According to customer experience consultant SuperOffice, positive customer service experience can drive customers to spend up to 140% more and boost brand loyalty for up to 6 years. However, businesses need to create personalized experiences for customers to continue using their services.

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Source: SuperOffice



Using customer personas to good effect, identifying opportunities to add value. User experience must be given enough attention to make it as easy as possible for the customer to explore your products and complete checkout. It is necessary to overcome the temptation of flooding the customer with offers for accessories which can potentially cause him to abandon the sale altogether.

Training

Small businesses need to evolve a culture of ongoing training and development, taking a leaf from the playbook of billion-dollar brands. Why? The lack of a formal training program is one of the biggest reasons why the potential of your customer service reps is underutilized. To boost response time, agents must be empowered to make exceptions to standard procedure when required. They must be equipped with the knowledge and training to handle routine customer queries seamlessly. Ongoing training is indispensable for agents to provide customers a consistent experience each time they contact your team.

Outsourced customer support providers like Helplama give you access to the agents working with your customers. This lets you train them directly to ensure a consistent tone and voice, turning them into a virtual extension of your in-house team.

Regular performance reviews

To identify gaps in customer satisfaction, feedback from your frontline agents is critical. Small businesses do not always measure the impact of policy changes on customer experience. This can lead to missed opportunities, especially when it comes to high-value customers. Analytics can quickly help small businesses understand key call/chat drivers and identify the best workarounds. It can also help you measure the impact of open tickets in terms of abandoned sales and/or lost customers. Based on these insights, you can decide whether you need to scale your customer service team or upskill your existing agents.

With regular performance reviews, small businesses can identify their areas of opportunity and get improved returns on the resources they put into customer servicing.

Last words

Customer service is all about building engaged relationships. While maintaining service levels is a business priority, the customer's needs must always take precedence. If customer service is slipping down your list of business priorities, bring in an outsourcing partner to help you catch up. After all, you only have so many hours in a day. A professional customer support outsourcing service like Helplama can help you look at your customer support operation with a fresh perspective. We specialize in helping small businesses get more out of their marketing dollars. We are surprisingly easy on the wallet yet source the best US based talent to serve your customers. From start to finish, you'll find Helplama a reliable ally in your quest to deliver an amazing experience to your customers.