

# CUSTOMER SERVICE AS A GROWTH STRATEGY



## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

We define the key ways that customer service can be utilized as a growth strategy including automation, collaboration, and integrating technology systems.

## CAPITALIZE ON SERVICE TO INCREASE SALES

Whether your company creates and distributes software or delivers a service, maintaining happy customers is paramount to the success of any business. For small and mid-sized businesses (SMBs), it's especially important. After all, unhappy customers won't grow your company.

Despite understanding the necessity for exceptional customer service, most SMBs are preoccupied by other issues - accounting, sales, marketing - and don't always give customer support the attention it deserves. Some say it's an issue of time: There aren't enough hours in the day or a large enough staff in a small, growing business to meet every need. Others say it's a matter of money: A stretched budget means fewer funds for increasing staff or purchasing expensive customer support tools.

Fortunately, you need not deplete your resources to provide exceptional customer service. Incorporating these 6 simple best practices into your daily operations will improve customer support and dramatically improve your bottom line.

### **Best Practice #1: Know Your Customers (Not Just Their Issues)**

Delivering excellent service isn't just about answering the phone, resolving an issue, and moving on. It's about constantly seeking to understand your customers, anticipating their needs, and addressing them through teamwork. When a customer contacts you, you should know what issues they've had recently, who else from their company has contacted you, and what products they currently have. Use a software that can help you capture and track all of this data so it's right at your fingertips any time a customer calls.

### **Best Practice #2: Automate**

As a growing business, you want your staff focused on activities that directly influence the bottom line. If you've been stuck in the dark ages tracking customer support via spreadsheet, and trying to manage multiple email accounts, it's time to automate your support function. The ideal customer service software will offer automation features like ticket deflection (which promotes customer self-service) and ticket escalation (which advances customer requests depending on severity) that free up your support staff for more complicated issues. Comprehensive built-in reporting should also be an integrated feature. Features like ticket automation and ticket deflection help free up support staff for higher level issues.

### **Best Practice #3: Work as a Team**

Customers are discriminating; if a support representative can't address their issue, they don't care that the rep is new, or what the reason is. They want their issue resolved. Every support agent should have access to the resources they need to answer customer questions. And everyone in the company should be able to access a full customer profile, including a history of help desk issues. This means working together in groups, keeping product developers and the sales team (and managers) apprised of customer issues, and enabling them to join the conversation as needed. Look for support software that includes collaboration tools like groups, internal networking, chat, wikis, and forums all in one system.

### **Best Practice #4: Integrate with Other Business Systems**

World-class customer service used to mean managing a host of costly products and services - from a CRM database to an e-mail marketing system to business analytics software. Fortunately, many of today's best customer support solutions offer native integrations with leading business tools like CRM, analytics, and marketing software, so every system works in synchronization for maximum visibility and efficiency.

### **Best Practice #5: Beware of Oversimplification**

As a small and medium sized business, it is extremely important to embrace efficiency and get the best bang for your buck. That shouldn't mean, however, that you have to give up advanced features and settle for "simple". The best support solution will offer an easy to use interface without oversimplifying the complicated process of customer service. Make sure you choose a system that is robust enough to grow with you and offers the features you need to provide an exceptional customer experience.

### **Best Practice #6: Keep Your Head in the Clouds**

Managing costs is just as important as winning new customers. Cloud-based customer support software is now easier and more affordable than ever, and offers continuous improvements without added cost. Web-based software also ensures that staff in multiple locations can still work together as a team. Look for a system that offers setup and training at no added cost.

By incorporating these simple, affordable best practices into your operations, delivering exceptional customer support will soon be your No. 1 growth strategy. Finding the right customer service software will help get you there even faster.





## **ABOUT TEAMSUPPORT**

TeamSupport is a powerful yet easy-to-use, web-based enterprise software that helps businesses provide seamless, effective customer support by focusing on the customer and enhancing internal collaboration. TeamSupport customer service software is designed for companies with external-facing customer support.

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