Time is of the essence – changing priorities for customers and contact centers - the latest blog from Teleopti

When it comes to increasing satisfaction levels and sales, nothing beats making life easy for customers and releasing their most valuable asset - time. Annica Ronquist, at Teleopti explores the options

Look around you, we all lead busy lives where time is of the essence. The evidence is clear to see with people rushing to work drinking coffee on the run and travellers on public transport glued to their mobile phones and tablets! When was the last time you lost track of time and had to go online for an emergency grocery shop because you'd run out of everything in the house? It comes down to too much to do and not enough time to do it in.

It's all about time and convenience, therefore the organizations that deliver quick fixes, instant results and customer satisfaction will go on to flourish. Customers are not prepared to wait.

Studies reveal that 45% of consumers are likely to abandon an online transaction if their questions or concerns are not addressed quickly.(i) Likewise a popular KPI in contact centers is first call resolution. Put simply, responsiveness and excellent customer service is a winning combination for busy, time-poor customers.

What this means for the contact center

Customers now expect contact center agents to have the knowledge and authority to make decisions and fix their problems instantly. If agents can't achieve this, customers will go elsewhere. The lesson is:

• Invest in training – by self-serving, a banking customer will know how much money is in their account, but when it comes to more complex issues, such as investment advice, they will want a more personalized service. This type of call has longer handling times and requires more highly trained agents to respond successfully, build customer confidence and deliver results.

• Have a plan B – if customers can't find what they want online and quickly, make sure you have a back-up plan. Prominently display freephone customer support telephone numbers, enable agents to conduct Web Chat at any point and keep FAQs up-to-date and easy to find.

Bring it all together with the right technology

Technology offers a wealth of features to drive agent productivity, empowering them to deliver an efficient service that frees customers' time. Consider:

1.Self-service – according to Professor Steven Van Bellegham, in a presentation on SlideShare,(ii) around 40% of the 3,000 global consumers surveyed said they preferred to self-serve rather than have human contact with brands. As a result, over 70% of these consumers expected a self-service option to be available on company websites.   For businesses, the advantage of self-service means their shop window and shop door are open all hours, every day of the year, without resorting to the expense of additional

headcount

2.Web Chat - the latest technology solutions automatically flag up how customers want to interact. Switch agents to Chat as soon as the system tells them someone wants a Web Chat. The beauty of Web Chat is that well trained agents can handle multiple conversations at once leading to faster response times and enhanced customer satisfaction levels.

Consider introducing a dedicated self-service portal for priority customers including a free Web Chat service – a real competitive differentiator because many mobile providers still charge for freephone telephone numbers

3.Chatbots – especially when combined with applications such as Facebook Messenger, can provide anything from automated content like weather and traffic updates, to customised communications like receipts, shipping notifications and live automated messages - fast. Customisable greetings mean Chatbots make it possible to offer a more personal, more proactive, and more streamlined customer experience

4.Omni-channel – you might think you operate a multi-channel contact center environment but make sure communications are seamless and agile to deliver a truly omni-channel experience that is both swift and satisfying

5.Integration - with your CRM systems allows agents to track interactions from beginning to end, every step of the customer journey, to deliver a quick and personalized service

6.Right place, right time - maximize WFM functionality to estimate accurate forecasts of self-service usage in the future and develop meaningful training sessions to schedule the right skilled agents at the right time to answer those more challenging calls.

It's time to answer the question: "how do I help make life easier for my customers and give them back their valuable time?" As we all know, time is of the essence – act now to empower agents, deliver a faster, more enjoyable customer experience and boost the bottom line.

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(i)
https://www.salesforce.com/blog/2013/10/customer-service-stats-55-of-consumers-would-pay-more-for-a-better-service-exper
(ii) http://www.slideshare.net/stevenvanbelleghem/the-self-serving-economy

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