

Digital First Aid Kit ENTrepreneur's for recovering from COVID-19 pandemic

CONSULTANT TRAINING TOOLKIT CHAPTER 5

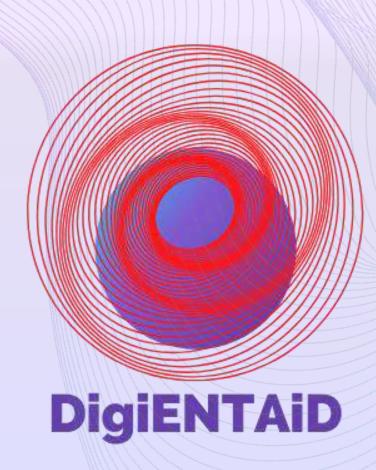


DigiENTAID

CONSULTANT TRAINING TOOLKIT

CHAPTER 5

Technical skills for online customer retention and using platforms, customer relations, and communication



Digital First Aid Kit ENTrepreneur's for recovering from COVID-19 pandemic













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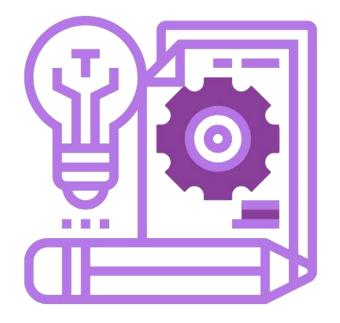
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1. How Small Businesses Should Adapt Their Customer Communication in a future crisis





1. How Small Businesses Should Adapt Their Customer Communication in a future crisis The COVID-19 pandemic was unexpected and affected companies in general, from large organizations to SMEs, which were the most affected. Several business sectors suffered, especially retail, travel, hospitality, and services. During this unprecedented global health crisis, companies were forced to question what would be the best and most effective communication strategies to adapt.

Meaning of "Crisis" – an unexpected event that threatens your business's reputation and/or finances and public safety

Clint Fontanella stated in the HubSpot blog, that there are different types of crises:









Personnel

Organizational

Technological



1. How Small Businesses Should Adapt Their Customer Communication in a future crisis



How to communicate effectively

Regardless of the type of crisis your business is experiencing, it's mandatory to have effective communication with both your internal and external stakeholders, this being said, it's recommended the following:



Preparation of a crisis communication plan





Quick and accurate communication with the public



Communication channels, take advantage from them



Social Media – A Crisis Communication Tool



Post-crisis evaluation and follow-up communication.



1. How Small Businesses Should Adapt Their Customer Communication in a future crisis



How to communicate effectively



Preparation of a crisis communication plan

Even though crises regularly appear unexpectedly, organisations may prepare themselves with a crisis communication plan and a crisis management team.

Plan Outlines:

- Goals
- Members of the crisis management team
- Key audiences
- Steps to take when a crisis begins
- How to communicate with the public (e.g., on your social media channels and in Your published content or official statements),
- How to prevent the problems from happening



Customer always comes first

In a general way, a crisis scenario brings up strong negative emotions. Sometimes unhappy customers may write negative comments on review sites or social media. In this case, playing the blame game is not the answer. Promote a supportive and collaborative communication climate on your social media, including your company blog, rather than a defensive one. Always use positive ways to respond to unhappy clients:

- Offer a discount on a future purchase
- Contact the customer directly and apologize.
- Take measures to prevent the problem from happening again.
- Offer a refund



1. How Small Businesses Should Adapt Their Customer Communication in a future crisis



How to communicate effectively



Quickly and accurately communication with the public

Do not sacrifice accuracy in favour of speed. Fake news is a part of everyone's reality. Unreliable information can disrupt and destabilize and cause panic in a crisis scenario. Companies must make sure that all information released on their website or posted on their social media or even provided to the press is precise and accurate. They also must keep in mind to keep them updated to avoid uncertainty, anxiety and false rumours. The keywords are honest, open, transparent and consistent.



Communication channels, take advantage from them

Communication with the audience using multiple channels such as text, email, customer service phone number, website or social media pages. In a crisis, companies have to adapt and reinvent themselves, and updated information in multiple channels must be provided. Not only online but also in the traditional channels, such as a message on the company voicemail.



1. How Small Businesses Should Adapt Their Customer Communication in a future crisis



How to communicate effectively



Social Media – A Crisis Communication Tool

Social media is commonly used as a crisis communication tool. Twitter is a website where organizations can communicate with their customers during a crisis. Twitter is a way to share updates and notifications from your company with your followers. You can use it as often as you like. Twitter is a way to share what you're thinking with other people. You can also follow other people and retweet their messages. This means that other people can see what you're saying and respond to you.

You can use social media to keep your customers updated on relevant information.



Post-crisis evaluation and follow-up communication.

Post-crisis evaluation and follow-up communication.

After a crisis, it is important to evaluate to make sure everything is okay. This evaluation should be followed up with communication to make sure everyone is aware of the situation. The intensity of a crisis usually decreases over time. After a crisis, you can look back and see how your company handled it.

You can use social media and other channels, such as emails and your website, to keep your followers updated on your progress during the recovery stage. Crisis communication can be hard because it can be difficult to communicate well when things are going wrong. Being prepared, honest, and responsive is important. Make sure you keep your audience updated with your work through multiple channels, like social media. After the crisis is over, you will evaluate your performance during the crisis, and then follow up with your audience.





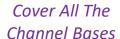
- 1. How Small Businesses Should Adapt
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 crisis
- How to communicate effectively

In 2020, businesses started using virtual communication methods more often than not. This new way of connecting with customers is likely to become the new normal in the future. The pandemic made it easier for people to communicate and work from home, but these practices can be difficult to manage because of the logistics involved.

CCM is all about working around different situations so everyone can get what they need. To keep in touch with your loyal customers, here are a few ways small businesses can adapt to their communication needs:









Rapid Response And Thorough Follow-Up





Curate Your Content



Heed Their Words



Flexibility with empathy



1. How Small Businesses Should Adapt Their Customer Communication in a future crisis



How to communicate effectively



Personalize Communications

When you communicate with someone, you need to find out what feels comfortable for them and what works best for the conversation. Knowing what your client's preferences are when it comes to connecting and working with them is important because it will help you make sure you are providing the best customer service, shopping experience, and meeting opportunities. The important thing is to pay attention to what customers prefer and use their preferred communication methods as long as it's necessary.



Cover All The Channel Bases

You need to have a plan in place to be able to serve your customers' communication needs. This may include increasing your current services or developing new ones to meet everyone's needs.

Here are some examples of prominent and popular CCM sources:

- Phone
- Email
- Video chat (Zoom, Google Hangouts, Facetime, etc.)
- Social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok, etc.)
- Texting
- Live chat
- Customer relationship management (CRM) software (LiveChat, LiveAgent, HubSpot, Olark, etc.)

















1. How Small Businesses Should Adapt Their Customer Communication in a future crisis



How to communicate effectively



Rapid Response and Thorough Follow-Up

Rapid response means that we get to work right away to find out what happened and to take care of things. Thorough follow-up means that we keep track of what happens. It is important to respond to all inquiries as quickly as possible for your small business. You need to take action to make sure your customers are happy, rather than waiting for feedback. Enlisting services to help you with chatbots or automated customer communication can provide 24/7 emergency assistance for any needs your customers may have.



Curate Your Content

Creative and interesting content can inform, entertain, reassure, and promote awareness of your company and its products and services. Using social media to connect with customers is a great way to learn what they think and what they would like to see from your business. You can also respond to their comments and suggestions in real-time. Creating content that is both interesting and helpful is important when communicating with people who are potential customers or leads. This means creating things like personalized email newsletters, informative videos about your industry, or updates that show people what your company is like from the perspective of its employees.

















1. How Small Businesses Should Adapt Their Customer Communication in a future crisis



How to communicate effectively



Heed Their Words

Recognizing and implementing any input received into your business approach: it might be as basic as devoting time each day to analyzing which suggestions for areas of improvement are most frequently made, or polling clients on the best methods for positive change based on their interactions with your staff.

Along with active listening and client involvement, you may use data and analytics to assess consumer habits and preferences, which can then be incorporated into any services or products your company provides.



Flexibility with empathy

Empathy and adaptability are two essential characteristics that will convert honesty, confidence, and fellowship for your company's clients and prospective leads. Being open-minded and adaptable to their communication demands can help your small business navigate whatever paths lie ahead.

















1. How Small Businesses Should Adapt Their Customer Communication in a future crisis



How to communicate effectively

Tips for customer communication

1

Act Immediately 2

Recognize the Issue

3

Encourage Company Spirit 4

Be Honest About Your Brand

5

It's OK To Say You Don't Know 6

Be Loyal with Your Brand

7

Communicate
with Customers
Throughout Every
Touchpoint

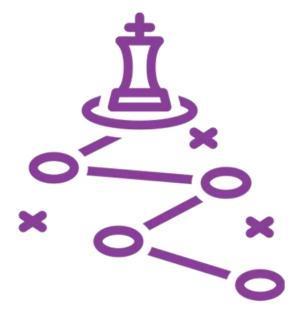
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Compile Best Practices for The Future





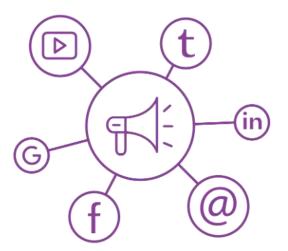
2. Strategies for online customer communication





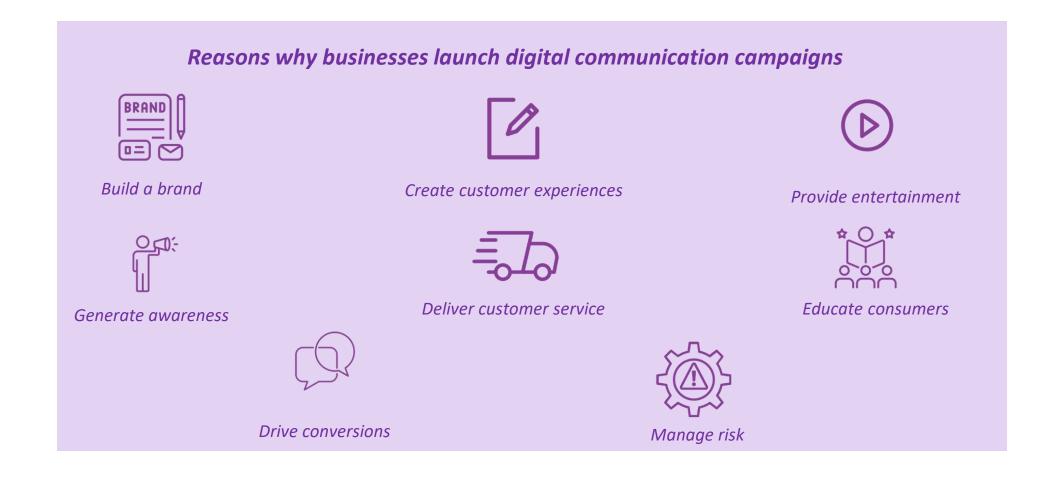
- 2. Strategies for online customer communication
 - Understand the Definition of Digital Communication

Digital communication is the process of connecting with people via online channels. This may include social media campaigns, email newsletter distribution, banner advertising, and native advertising articles. Through digital communication, businesses can reach a larger audience, share specialized messages, and build meaningful relationships.





- 2. Strategies for online customer communication
 - Understand the Definition of Digital Communication





2. Strategies for online customer communication

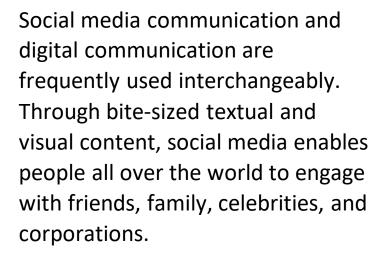
Reach Audiences Through Email

Marketers can send email messages to consumers directly, where they may have received messages from family, friends, and colleagues in the past. Adobe found that people spend about two and a half hours each day checking their personal email and three hours checking their work email. According to eMarketer, a large majority of internet users prefer to receive email communication from retailers instead of other platforms.

- There are often discounts and special offers for things like seasonal items, new products, or personalized recommendations.
- Birthday or anniversary messages can be sent to customers to build affinity, the messages may include an offer or a discount deal.
- **Exclusive content** including product launch previews, Q&As, and behind-the-scenes information
- Newsletters can be sent out on a daily or weekly basis to inform readers of the brand news, updates, and possibilities for interaction
- Individualized product or content recommendations based on previous consumer behaviour



- 2. Strategies for online customer communication
 - Launch Engaging Social Media Campaigns



Communication professionals can use popular social media platforms to build brands in different ways:



The majority of users engage with marketers on the photo-sharing app.

Marketers reach consumers through Instagram Stories, advertisements, and IGTV (for long-form videos). Instagram serves as a platform for content related to fashion, beauty, and celebrities.



The platform allows brands and customers to live-tweet their favorite events, follow and participate in popular hashtag discussions, and communicate with one another through open dialogue or direct communications



Businesses may use YouTube to develop web series, collaborate with influencers, produce how-to videos, reveal their inner workings, and recycle website material.



Is helpful for networking with other businesses, finding new hires, and participating in thought leadership as a business-to-business (B2B) social network. For instance, executives can utilize LinkedIn to interact with other industry experts and write blog articles that reveal more about their business.





- 2. Strategies for online customer communication
- Career Development in Digital Communication

Recent graduates land their jobs as social media coordinators, PR agents, and digital media professionals. Additionally, they have experience working in a range of environments, such as publishing firms, nonprofits, governmental institutions, and advertisement agencies. New technologies that will change company communications will emerge as the digital environment continues to change. Professionals can be given the tools they need by a strong degree program to strategize, adapt, and engage online audiences in their chosen fields.





2. Strategies for online customer communication



• Six crucial consumer communication methods

1. Create an omnichannel communication

Using many channels to communicate with customers, while providing a smooth experience, is called omnichannel communication. Your customers will always have a positive experience, whether they contact you via email, the internet, or other media. Don't forget to offer your customers a variety of ways to contact you, such as:

- Face-to-face interactions (if you have a physical shop)
- Email
- Phone calls
- Live chat
- Social media messaging

2. Automate customer communication with chatbots

What aspect of contacting the support staff frustrates customers the most? Waiting.

Up to 75% of retailers claim that long wait times have cost them, consumers. Why allow it to happen when you can increase the reaction times and get an infinite number of hands?

Additionally, since chatbots never sleep, customers may contact support whenever they need it.

3. Enhance new client onboarding and first-time customer communication

When your onboarding information is kind and instructive about the product, is more likely that the majority of the customers will stick to your company.

Incorporate a little personalization into your initial exchange. Give the customer a customized welcome message before demonstrating how to set up your product. Have an interactive showcase of your features once everything is ready. By giving customers access to a knowledge base and sending follow-ups.



2. Strategies for online customer communication



• Six crucial consumer communication methods

4. Conduct regular customer satisfaction surveys

Begin by gathering consumer feedback.

Request brief feedback from your customers after each encounter. Make it easy and simple to fill out. You'll be aware of what has to be improved and how your customers see your brand if you do it this way.

Send surveys to your customers and request feedback after customer service conversations. By doing so, you may continue to monitor how satisfied your customers are with your services and how likely they are to refer you.

5. Educate your audience

Give your clients access to a knowledge library and a blog where you can offer industry insights. Customers are more inclined to buy from you if you have the considerable industry knowledge and offer free resources. They recognize you as the expert and can rely on your skills. And if they're not prepared to buy right away, you'll be the first company that comes to mind when they are.

Create a community forum online where customers can share knowledge and advice. It encourages them to support one another. Forums are helpful for when your customers are having technical problems and can assist you in building their trust.

6. Use proactive communication

Reaching out to customers and interacting with them directly in the core of proactive customer service. Anticipating future issues, providing immediate assistance, and gathering feedback at the right time, enhance the value of the customer experience.

Therefore, if you only communicate with clients when they contact you, you need to change that.

Reaching out to customers, requesting feedback, and informing your clients of any changes or updates are all examples of proactive communication. Make sure your consumers feel engaged and a part of the process of improving your company.



2. Strategies for online customer communication



Handy sheet with issues to steer clear of while speaking with customers



Sounding trite

Your company should prioritize making interactions with customers more personalized.

Everyone desires to be treated uniquely and with respect. As we mentioned above, ensure that your representatives correctly pronounce each client's name, offer some advice, and personalize their interactions with each one.

Sometimes even small changes can have a significant impact. One of these is making little adjustments to tailor your communications with customers.



Empty promises

Some research indicate that the most successful businesses fulfill their commitments around 25% more frequently than their less successful rivals.

Prevent disappointing your customers and damaging your own credibility. Make sure your sales and support teams are assured that your business can deliver on everything it promises to customers.



Prolonged waits

will make People fewer purchases, there will be more irate customers, and your brand's reputation will suffer if you keep them on hold. That's a hefty price to pay for one poor customer service experience. A customer will typically wait 90 seconds on before hanging Implement chatbots and a callback option to prevent that from happening to your brand. This will shorten the line and increase customer happiness.



Uncooperative customer service agents

That is where your staff's training becomes important.

Make sure they can respond to all inquiries from customers regarding your goods and services. Particularly given that a Microsoft survey reveals that one of the top customer annoyances is incompetent reps.

How often did you become tense when a representative couldn't provide the information you were seeking?



Too frequent or seldom interactions with potential customers

Never do it too frequently.

Do not ignore it. You must discover the best time to communicate with customers. And be sure to keep up within all of your interactions, including in promotional emails.

The most crucial rule is to never contact a customer without express consent. Instead of enhancing your brand, you'll just damage it.



3. How SMEs can improve their online customer communication support







• What is the significance of online customer service?

A brand's reputation takes years to develop and five minutes to destroy. Businesses that have realized this, design their strategies differently. The importance of online customer service cannot be overstated, as the consequences of a poor customer experience are far-reaching.

Great online customer service programs should concentrate on immediately addressing client complaints and exceeding their expectations by utilizing the appropriate tools and methods. Businesses that use this technique can engage customers and create solid connections, in addition to reaping the other important benefits stated below.

Enhance contentment





When the primary purpose of your business is to provide actual value to your consumers, customer satisfaction skyrockets. And delighted customers are more likely to become loyal customers.

The credibility of the brand

Customer satisfaction improves brand reputation. Following a favourable customer experience, 69% of respondents said they would recommend the organization to friends. Excellent online customer service results in satisfied consumers who recommend your product or service to others.

Increased CLTV



Customer lifetime value (CLTV) is closely related to revenue. Superior service engages clients and motivates them to make additional purchases from your firm.





Tips to improve online customer service

Online customer service is critical to the growth of any organization, whether it be a product or a service. If you make customer service mistakes, you will be unable to provide the level of service that your clients require, and they will eventually depart.

The followings are the essential recommendations and best practices for enhancing online customer service. They will enable you to improve customer support and gain client satisfaction and loyalty.





















1. Concentrate on the customer experience (CX)



Customers can now communicate with businesses through a variety of methods. The first impression that a customer receives sets the tone for the entire customer experience. Any client touchpoint can provide a first impression. Make sure you're ready to serve your customers.

Understanding your customer journey allows you to engage customers across all touchpoints and provide a smooth digital customer service experience by removing friction points. Here are some best practices for improving digital customer service that you can implement.

Make advantage of social media: You can utilize social media to encourage customers to explore your website. Listen to them and reply to their problems as soon as possible to improve social media customer service.

2. Provide real-time client service



Improving online customer service requires real-time help. Live chat is a popular channel that allows your agents to provide immediate sales and support to your consumers.

Live chat has surpassed email as the most popular digital contact mode for online customer service, with 46% of customers preferring it versus 29% for email and 16% for social media.

Implementing live support service also aids in providing practical assistance solutions and increasing customer experience over the holiday season.























3. Use co-browsing to collaborate with your customers



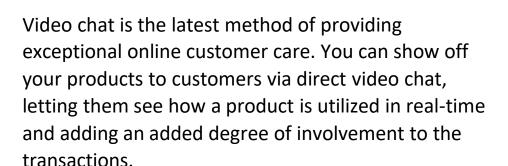
Using a sophisticated visual engagement solution, such as co-browsing, is one of the best methods to improve online customer support.

The co-browsing technology elevates client interaction by effectively resolving queries. It improves the consumer journey, resulting in increased conversion rates and a higher level of success for your company.

How co-browsing can help you provide better online customer service:

- Reduce buyer uncertainty
- Complicated form filling
- Technical issues

4. Use video chat to personalize your customer service



Using video call centre solutions, your agents may give in-store, in-person experiences to clients from the comfort of their homes, using a mobile device, tablet, or laptop. It enhances the customer experience, satisfaction, and sales revenue.





















5. Use social media to provide online customer service



6. Measure customer service metrics on a regular basis



According to Gartner, firms that reject support inquiries on social media have a 15% higher turnover rate than those that do not.

Businesses that use social media for online customer service can increase brand awareness, sell their products or services, and listen to customers. Improving client relationships through online social support can result in significant gains in terms of improving customer lifetime value.

According to American Express, "70% of consumers favor organizations that provide excellent customer service."

Measuring appropriate customer service KPIs and metrics are essential for understanding business performance, evaluating team efficiency, and increasing client retention. It also aids in understanding changing trends and planning an online customer service strategy with the same goal in mind.





















7. Teach your employees proper customer service techniques



When clients connect with your business, proper customer service etiquette is critical in making a good first impression. It can provide you with an advantage over your competitors. Provide proper training and education to your support team on how to engage with clients. Instilling service etiquette and manners in employees can assist firms in providing superior online customer care, strengthening client connections, and increasing customer loyalty.

Here are some crucial etiquettes to assist you in providing the finest online customer service:

- Use encouraging language.
- Pay attention to your customers.
- Empathise with your clients.
- Make your conversations more personal.

8. Pay attention to consumer input



Customer feedback is one of the most effective methods for gathering business-specific data that enables you to understand how your consumers truly feel about the product or service you provide. Listening to consumers can provide you with valuable information that you can utilize to improve your online customer care.

When you solicit and thoroughly consider client input, you are essentially giving a window through which to manage customer experience, reduce customer churn, and improve your products and services.

Customer feedback informs you whether or not your customers are satisfied with your brand. Happy customers are more than satisfied; they stay with your company.













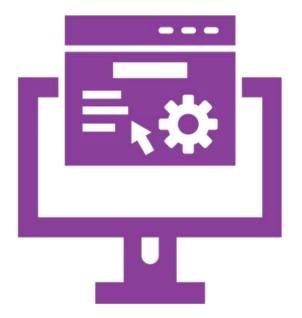








4. Overview of platforms and systems related to customer support and communication (examples, comparison)





4. Overview of platforms and systems related to customer support and communication



• Types of customer communication tools

Help desk software

Help desk software acts as a hub for managing, responding to, and tracking client contacts across several channels. It is most typically used by customer support teams, however, other teams such as sales or account management may also use it.

Examples:





Zendesk is a popular customer communication platform that is designed to fulfil the demands of small and large organizations alike. Create a separate support centre as well as a community forum to encourage self-service. Customers can resolve issues at their own pace, giving your team more time to focus on pressing concerns.

Freshdesk enables your employees to work more effectively and provide better customer service. For example, you can assign ownership of a ticket to different agents. Agents can also invite other coworkers to a discussion from inside the ticket to gather professional comments.



4. Overview of platforms and systems related to customer support and communication



• Types of customer communication tools

Chatbot software

Chatbots assist in automating support so that visitors can access assistance at any time. When done correctly, they take over the more tedious, repetitive aspects of service, allowing your agents to focus on situations that require more attention.







ProProfs Chatbot provides an AI-powered chatbot that can assist your company in automating its customer engagement process. You can tailor your chatbots to your specific requirements in order to create dependable leads and automate your customer care operations.

Botsify is a customer communication platform where you can create your own chatbots. You may create dedicated and intelligent chatbots for social media sites like Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, Telegram, and even your company's website.



4. Overview of platforms and systems related to customer support and communication



Types of customer communication tools

Call center software

Call center software has been developed to assist you in better managing your phone service for the benefit of both agents and customers.

With call service software, you may automatically direct calls into a queue, route calls to specific agents, allow call conferencing and create an automated callback if a call is lost.

Examples:



CallHippo also has a lot to offer in terms of outbound calls. Sales agents, for example, can use the Power Dialer tool to meet their daily calling responsibilities. You can even get voicemails by email in your inbox, and agents can listen to them immediately from their inbox.



You can track your outbound efforts for marketing, sales, payment collections, polling, and more all in one place with Aavaz. With IVR, queue monitoring, and other features, your consumers may contact you like never before, and you can keep track of all incoming calls.



4. Overview of platforms and systems related to customer support and communication



• Types of customer communication tools

Live chat software

Customers may require immediate assistance. Though many of us consider phone assistance to be the best choice, there is another option: live chat. Live chat provides the same level of immediacy as phone assistance, but it allows agents to handle numerous conversations at once, making it more customizable and less expensive.

Examples:



LiveChat has evolved as one of the most crucial methods for client communication. You may see what consumers are typing before they press the send button with the message sneak-peek feature.

You can utilize smart chatbots to generate leads, create support issues, and connect with clients across numerous channels to automate your communication process.



ProProfs includes strong chatbot features that can help you minimize support costs, ticket volume, and agent stress. You can automatically redirect talks to relevant members of your team in addition to the automated and proactive chat tools. This will assist you in converting leads into paying clients.



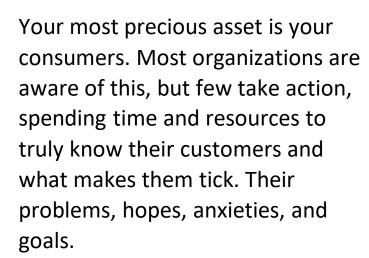
4. Overview of platforms and systems related to customer support and communication



Types of customer communication tools

Customer survey software

Customer feedback is very important for any business and customer survey software enables you to collect information in a consistent and focused manner.



Examples:



Outgrow's Survey Maker is a no-code interactive content tool that allows you to generate interactive surveys online in minutes. Outgrow's Survey Maker tool offers a wealth of survey options, including work satisfaction surveys, employee exit surveys, brand performance surveys, and customer feedback surveys, as well as market research surveys and more.



SurveyMonkey makes survey analysis a breeze. For example, you can use Word Cloud and Sentiment Analysis to learn what clients truly desire by analyzing text responses. After you have measured your responses, you can compare them to industry norms.



4. Overview of platforms and systems related to customer support and communication



Types of customer communication tools

Customer Review Platform

Communication is not always straightforward between the client and the company. Many customers communicate through online product review sites to assist other customers in making educated judgments. So, as a business, you must constantly monitor evaluations on these platforms, detect trends or common problem areas, and address them as soon as possible.

Examples:



Another venue for managing consumer interactions and feedback is Google Reviews. You can contribute important information and make your business stand out by using Google business reviews. However, where can consumers and prospects find these reviews? They appear in Maps and Search results next to your Business Profile.

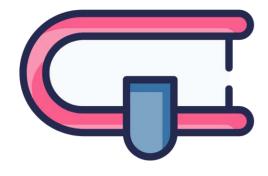


Capterra is a software evaluation and comparison website that assists you in locating the best business solutions for your organization. You may read client reviews, verify ratings, and compare them to your company competitors.





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- outgrow (https://outgrow.co/outgrow-forms-surveys/)
- surveymonkey (https://www.surveymonkey.com/)
- Proprofs chatbot (<u>https://www.proprofschat.com/chatbot/</u>)
- botsify (https://botsify.com)
- capterra (<u>https://www.capterra.com/</u>)
- Googçe Reviews (<u>https://www.google.com/business/</u>)

