



spark
response

10 ways to improve the customer experience in eCommerce.

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Introduction

For eCommerce retailers, providing a simple, effective, and hassle free customer experience is essential to win new customers, and retain existing consumers.

There are many ways to improve the overall customer experience, either through technology, systems, or even design.

This guide will focus on the role that a customer service team can play in delivering a positive customer experience, from proactive email responses, through to the use of technology to help customers 'self serve' their own needs.

Whilst improving the customer experience and retaining customers is a huge benefit in itself, there are also cost savings to be made from doing so. For example, reducing the number of complaints also reduces the number of calls and emails a contact centre will receive, and have to process. Put simply, fewer contacts requires fewer contact centre advisors.

Read on for our 10 ways to improve the customer experience in eCommerce...

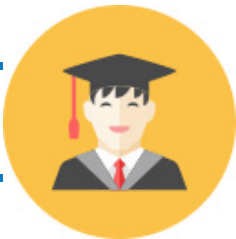


1. FAQ Pages

The frequently asked questions area of a website is the first place to start when trying to improve the customer experience.

This content area should offer a comprehensive guide to any regular questions asked by customers. FAQ's should be both product and service related, to reduce queries around delivery or returns.

It is also important to review the FAQ area regularly to take into account any additional questions asked by customers via customer services. Being able to gather qualitative feedback from the contact centre is imperative.

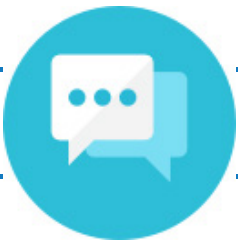


2. Educate Customers

It's all very well having an up to date and accurate FAQ section, but if customers don't know where this is, or that it even exists, how can they be expected to use it to resolve their queries?

Ensure your customer service team are pointing all contacts to the FAQ pages for future reference, allowing customers to effectively self serve.

It's also a good idea to add links to the FAQ area on order confirmation emails, on product shipped emails, and even on the rear of delivery notes and email signatures to maximise the visibility of the FAQ area.



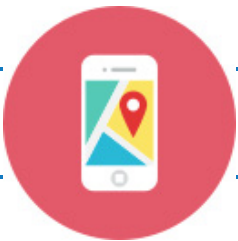
3. Proactive customer service

Use previous data and the experience of customer service advisors to be proactive in responding to emails and written communication. Don't wait for customers to ask follow up questions. Anticipate what a customer is likely to respond with.

An example of this is when arranging a product return. Proactively tell the customer what the returns policy is, when the

customer will receive their refund, or how long it may take the bank to process the refund.

If an exchange item is being sent, notify the customer of the carrier their item will be sent with, when they can expect delivery, and any other information relevant to the customer delivery.



4. Choose carriers that add value

Many of the larger carrier companies such as DPD, UK Mail and Hermes have been investing £millions in their parcel tracking and customer communication technology.

This technology allows customers to receive email and SMS notifications as to when they can expect their parcels. In DPD's case, customers are notified to within 15 minutes of delivery.

As these notifications are sent from the carrier, this takes away much of the responsibility from the retailer.

Best of all, if customers need to rearrange their delivery, they can organise this directly with the carrier, rather than via your customer service team.



5. Call rather than email

Perhaps the most obvious tip of all is to respond to more complex customer service queries with a phone call, rather than an email. This should do two things.

Firstly, this allows the query to be resolved first time around, which also improves first contact resolution figures, but secondly, it should also completely

satisfy the customer, as they should receive exactly the information they require, without having to get back in touch with your customer service team.

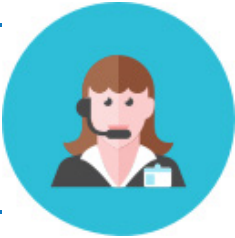


6. Keep customers up to date

Inevitably issues, errors, or delays will happen. When they do, customers will contact you. And by that time, they're probably unhappy.

A much better way to manage this scenario is to be proactive, contacting customers as and when issues occur, and informing them of any delays. This goes a long way to ensuring that customers are kept up to date and completely satisfied.

Key retail dates such as Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and in the final week leading up to Christmas are the obvious examples of where proactive customer communication can hugely improve the customer experience.



7. Consider a virtual assistant

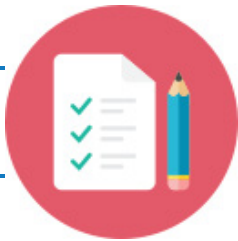
A virtual assistant is an interactive, automated online help platform which allows customers to navigate online help pages and receive the help they need immediately, any without human input.

Virtual assistant (VA) platforms allow 24/7 self service help for customers both pre and post purchase. As the platform is automated, using natural language to provide real time answers, a VA platform

reduces the reliance on contact centre teams.

VA will not replace the human touch or deal with specific order queries, however the platform will improve access to FAQ's or help pages.

If more specific information is required, many VA platforms allow conversations to flow into a live chat or email dialogue.



8. Offer product reviews

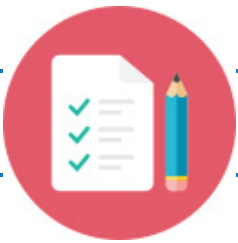
In many cases, customers can self serve just from reading reviews from other customers, reducing the reliance on the contact centre.

Examples of this in the fashion sector can include reviews of the accuracy of sizing, or the fit and comfort level.

In the electronics sector this could include

how easy a product is to set up, or how long a product takes to charge.

In many cases, reviewers will also mention the speed of delivery, how well the product was packaged or gift wrapped, further increasing consumer confidence and the customer experience.



9. Welcome negative feedback

No brand or retailer enjoys receiving poor feedback or complaints. However, those issues are valuable tools for improving customer service going forwards.

Having the ability to log issues relating to certain product features, service delivery, or returns procedures allows brands and retailers to refine their processes to improve the customer experience.

A common cause of complaint maybe the condition of customer parcels arriving. The issue may be the fault of the carrier, and not in any way related to the retailer. In this case, changing carriers may be necessary, or investing in new packaging could be a simpler solution.



10. Free and easy returns

Offering a simple and free returns policy to customers offers many long term benefits, one of which is an increase in the overall customer experience.

Many brands and retailers request that customers contact them to receive a code, number, or returns note prior to returning an item. Whilst this does allow the retailer to predict returns volumes,

the process naturally increases the steps a customer must take and this can be a frustration for customers.

A recent survey by Royal Mail found that 87% of online shoppers felt that a free and easy returns policy was important when choosing where to buy from.



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Spark Response is one of the UK's most respected providers of customer contact centre and order fulfilment services to brands and retailers. With 30 years of experience in delivering award winning inbound and outbound contact centre services, choose Spark Response to deliver excellence in customer management.

