

4 WAYS YOUR CONTACT CENTRE IS FAILING MILLENNIALS

*AND 3 STEPS TO
PUT THAT RIGHT*

www.sparkresponse.com

WHO SHOULD READ THIS?

This guide is for heads of contact centres, customer service, and customer experience who are looking to improve the customer experience they offer to a key customer demographic; millennials.

WHY READ THIS?

There are around 16 million millennials in the UK; that's a quarter of the UK population. 96% of those own a smart phone, 95% of them own a laptop, and almost 40% say new technology excites them.

Millennials are therefore a very valuable demographic, and as we'll show, are the most loyal of customer groups.

This guide will highlight, with an everyday example, how brands and retailers can build and maintain close relationships with millennials through meeting their customer service demands.

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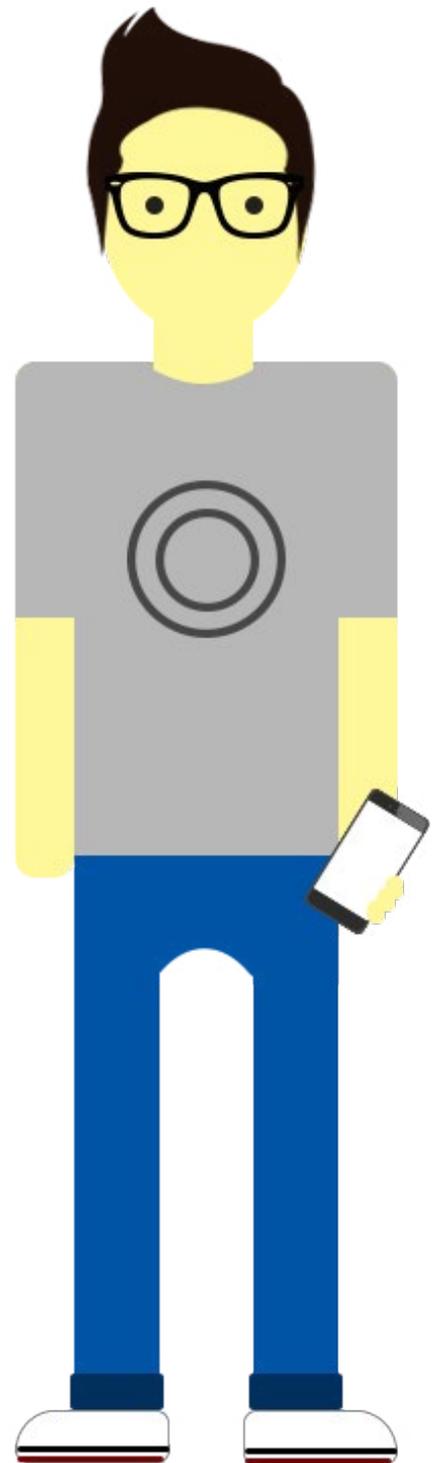


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THIS IS MATTHEW

MATTHEW IS 25. HE'S A TEACHER. HE WORKS LONG DAYS, OFTEN WORKING LATE INTO THE NIGHT AT HOME.

ONCE HE CAN SWITCH OFF FROM THE DAY JOB, HE COOKS DINNER, AND SITS WATCHING TV, WHILST READING ABOUT THE DAY'S EVENTS ON FACEBOOK ON HIS LAPTOP, AND ARRANGING HIS SATURDAY NIGHT WITH FRIENDS VIA WHATSAPP.



MATTHEW'S ISSUE

It's a cold Wednesday night in October. Matthew finishes work at 6pm, and on his way home has to call in at his local store to collect a parcel that's been delivered there, via click and collect.

Once home, Matthew opens the parcel to see a new shirt he's bought for this weekend's night out.... but he's been sent the wrong shirt.

WHAT DOES MATTHEW DO NEXT?

Matthew searches the parcel for a returns label. There isn't one. Next he searches for returns instructions. There are none. Matthew picks up his iPhone and tweets the retailer to ask what he should do. An hour goes by and he's not had a reply.

Next he searches the retailer's website for the returns guide via his smart phone. The page doesn't work on mobile devices. Matthew now has to open his laptop and searches the website for details, which he finds. Matthew reads the site and learns that he needs to call the retailer to get a returns code, before downloading a returns label. It's now 7pm. He calls the customer service line, which only operates until 5pm. Now Matthew is really unhappy. He'll have to call the retailer during work hours tomorrow, which is difficult.

He picks up his iPhone and tweets the retailer again to say how unhappy he is, and also emails their customer service address hoping he won't need to call them after all.

THURSDAY LUNCHTIME ARRIVES

Matthew gets a tweet back to apologise for the error and an instruction to call the retailer. He now has to use his lunch hour to call them.

Using his iPhone, he dials the 0800 number to speak to someone about getting a returns code. He reaches the IVR menu, presses option 2 for returns, then is told he's in a queue. 110 seconds go by before an advisor answers.....

Matthew then has to give his name, address and order number to the advisor, before being given the option to return the item. He hangs up. 15 minutes later he gets a response to his email with another returns code. Matthew is frustrated and again tweets the retailer to say how he's wasted his time calling.



WHAT WENT WRONG?

In Matthew's mind, everything went wrong. He feels he's received a very poor customer experience. Putting the order error to one side, here's where Matthew's customer service frustrations came from.

1. HE WANTED TO SELF SERVE

According to a report entitled 'The Self Serve Economy' 40% of 3,000 global consumers said they prefer to self serve than have human contact with brands. The report goes on to say that 70% of consumers expect a website to offer a self service option.

In Matthew's case, if there was a returns label or instructions in the parcel, he would have self served. The need to contact the retailer is also driving cost into the customer service department, which really isn't necessary.

2. HE WAS MOBILE FIRST

Like most millennials, Matthew first picked up his smart phone to find the answers he wanted. Four out of five millennials prefer to use social media to interact with brands rather than phone, email or web chat.

In fact, 42% of millennials would rather clean a toilet than call a call centre. Millennials don't like waiting, so when they do call, they expect their query to be answered in under 20 seconds, and have their issue resolved first time around.

3. HE FELT HIS TIME WAS WASTED

71% of online shoppers claim the most important thing a brand can do is to value a customer's time. In Matthew's case, his time was wasted in a number of ways, from tweeting an unresponsive account, through to being made to call when he could have just emailed.

Most worryingly perhaps, 25% of millennials will abandon a company after one bad experience. After three bad experiences, 82% will walk away.

4. HE COULDN'T COMMUNICATE WITH THE BRAND ON HIS TERMS

Matthew wanted to interact with the retailer on his terms, on the platform of his choice; Twitter. 53% of millennials expect a response from a brand on Twitter within an hour. Once that response didn't arrive, Matthew had to look for another channel, in this case; phone. When that failed, email was the final choice. Worst of all, the brand failed to recognise that Matthew had his issue resolved via phone, and had no visibility of his cross channel journey.





HOW TO WIN BACK MILLENNIALS



GIVE MILLENIALS EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO SELF SERVE

A recent study by Coleman Parkes for Amdocs found that 91% of customers would use an online knowledge base if it was available and tailored to them, whilst Gartner recently announced that by 2018 two thirds of customer service interactions will be self served.

As well as pleasing customers, an online knowledge base can also reduce the amount of contacts heading into a contact centre, therefore reducing customer service costs.

A great example of an online knowledge base comes from Spark Response client; Toys 'R' us, with their "Ask Emma" virtual assistant. Giving the appearance of a web chat tool, 'Emma' allows customers to ask short questions about products, support areas, or general enquiries. Using natural language, 'Emma' will answer a query with a short answer containing links to relevant parts of the Toys 'R' us website, and can even provide stock level availability when the relevant systems are integrated.

SELF SERVICE IN ECOMMERCE

In Matthew's particular case, his issue with customer service need not have occurred at all if the retailer had included a returns label in the order, or returns instructions. Many retailers still require customers to include a returns code before returning their items. This practice drives often unnecessary contacts into customer service teams, especially in the fashion sector, where returns rates can be as high as 40%.



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OPTIMISE EVERYTHING FOR MOBILE

Most millennials agree that the item they are least likely to leave home without is their mobile phone. For most, mobile is the go-to channel for web surfing, online shopping, and information gathering. We've seen how almost 50% of eCommerce sales in the UK come from mobile devices, a figure which is growing year on year. It goes without saying then, that if a millennial can shop online via their mobile, they expect to be able to return items or interact with customer service teams via mobile.

There are a number of areas to consider when optimising communication channels for mobile. Here's a checklist to optimise:

- Fully responsive website - often contact pages are hidden on mobiles
- Web chat - many chat tools are solely designed for desktop, ensure any web chat tool is mobile friendly
- Include mobile specific contact options such as SMS, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, or Twitter
- For brands with shopping apps, make customer service accessible within the app



BE OMNI-CHANNEL

As well as optimising customer service options for mobile, brands should also be able to seamlessly interact with millennials on their chosen platform, in a truly integrated fashion.

In Matthew's case, it's clear that no omni-channel contact platform was in place. This meant that when Matthew tweeted, emailed, and called, all those interactions were managed in isolation. In a true omni-channel contact centre, the advisors would have been able to see that it was indeed Matthew who was behind those three interactions. As a result, the same advisor would have been able to have a more personal conversation with Matthew, and address his issues on each channel, on his terms.

Millennials now have a number of contact channels open to them. It's not enough as a brand to simply 'be' on each channel. With skills based routing, and true omni-channel contact platforms, such as the technology employed at Spark Response, it's essential to have the right people behind each channel. Some advisors for example are more skilled in email handling, whilst others are web chat ninjas, or voice chat experts.

Being omni channel also enables customer service teams to better track key metrics such as first contact resolution, average handling times, and call outcomes, all per channel.

Most importantly though, Matthew will get the service he needs, on the channel he chooses, in the personal way he desires.



LOYALTY BONUS

You might think that millennials, with their constant channel hopping and use of technology would be the least likely generation to be loyal. In fact, millennials are the generation who are most loyal to brands, when they're given the service they expect. The logic behind that seems to stem from social proof, a psychological theory whereby an individual is influenced by the actions of others around them.

With social media being so widely used by millennials, being able to see friends' purchasing habits, and their interactions with brands seems to have helped drive loyalty. In the world of customer service, 62% of millennials are more loyal to brands who engage with them directly on social media.

IN SUMMARY

There is a huge opportunity for brands and retailers to engage with, and develop long term relationships with millennials. However in order to do this, brands must invest in customer service systems, software, and people in order to deliver the customer experience millennials expect.



ABOUT SPARK RESPONSE

Spark Response provides outsourced, omni-channel contact centre services. We support brands and retailers who demand the best customer experience for their consumers.

We're a mid size provider, offering bespoke, tailored services to each and every client, via a range of flexible, cost effective operating models.

In an industry synonymous with employee churn, Spark Response stands alone in boasting an average employee tenure of over 9 years within our inbound contact centre team.

Our people set us apart. That's one of the reasons our clients have also stayed with us for over 10 years.

To learn more about how Spark Response can drive the customer experience for your brand, get in touch.

www.sparkresponse.com

ideas@sparkresponse.com

0191 495 9931



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