



Aptean Respond

Creating World-Class Customer Service

How boosting staff efficiency and engagement can make a real difference to your bottom line





Your customer service team represents the first and best opportunity to reverse a negative situation or build upon a good one.



Your customer-facing employees are the first people with whom customers will interact. Customer service teams have the important role of setting the precedent for the customer experience and putting things right when they've gone wrong. If a client has a poor experience with your frontline staff, it could make or break the entire relationship a customer has with you and your business.

Demands on customer service staff continue to increase as consumers expect a higher standard of response. If you can't provide the service or product that your customer is looking for, they will simply look elsewhere to satisfy their expectations.

Customer retention is key. It can be five times more costly to gain a new customer than it is to retain an existing one, and increasing customer retention by a mere 5% can increase profits anywhere from 25% to 95%.

Historically, many businesses could rely on low customer churn because it was both inconvenient and difficult to switch suppliers or providers. Now, however, that couldn't be less true. Ecommerce powerhouses like Walmart or Amazon have monopolised the market, making it easier than ever for them to provide the lowest prices. If your business isn't using customer service as a key business differentiator, you risk losing your customers to the lower prices that only the bigger companies can provide.

And it's easier than ever for customers to switch providers, with organisations now offering to manage the entire switching process for free. Customers don't necessarily want to switch providers, but if they feel that inadequate service is forcing their hand, and it's easy enough to make the switch, then they won't hesitate to leave, perhaps for good.

Your customer service team represents the first and best opportunity to reverse a negative situation or build upon a good one. Because of this, it's important to invest in the success of your customer-facing employees, enabling them to operate at a level that can handle the demands of your customers and satisfy their inquiries effectively, all to reduce churn and improve loyalty. The only way to achieve this is to ensure all employees are properly trained, guaranteeing the best customer service and care.


The Complaint Heard Around the World

The challenge of providing satisfactory customer service has been exacerbated by the evolving digital landscape. Now, essentially, public opinion can dictate brand reputation.

Customer service departments are no longer nine-to-five operations; many are already running 24/7. Similarly, customer service is no longer limited to a single department - it's a business-wide objective that affects every aspect of the enterprise. The nature in which customers get the attention of their service providers has never been broader or more varied, both online and through more traditional channels like phone calls and letters.

Evidence of poor customer service no longer dies out once it's done the rounds at the coffee shop, office or gym - it lives on in the virtual world as a permanent reminder to anyone researching their next service provider. Customers tend to enjoy digital platforms for complaints as they often provoke a quick and public response from the company against which they're complaining.

These new platforms have presented real challenges for businesses and have dramatically increased reliance on complaint management staff. If customer service representatives are not adequately trained or don't have the resources to effectively handle customer interactions across several different channels, it can lead to a serious breakdown in customer trust, and consequently, loyalty.



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As businesses have adapted to these developments, expectations have risen. Consumers want answers quickly. They want immediate access to real people and they want these people to be aware of their situations and provide solutions tailored to their specific needs. Apologies and empathy may pacify the customer in the short-term—whether it be face-to-face or digitally—but they don't solve the problem.

To ensure your customers are truly content, your customer service team needs the expertise to be empathetic and proactive. That's what the customer ultimately wants: to know that their concern is being addressed and corrected and that this problem will not happen again in the future. Your customer service staff need to be empowered with enough support to make their jobs as seamless and efficient as possible, while also providing exemplary service to customers.

But an increase in customer service agents doesn't necessarily fulfil customer expectations. Instead, a more informed, more efficient team is the answer.

Embracing Technology to Drive Efficiency

With this digital age comes the need for customer service staff to be trained and equipped to keep customers happy across an ever-expanding list of communication channels.

Staff may receive a query by telephone, web form, comment card, email, social media, letter, fax or face-to-face inquiry. Though your employees may not immediately know the best complaint resolution path, it doesn't mean that they can't communicate assurances and useful information with empathy to the customer. You want your clients to know that you're doing everything you can to help them in a timely, effective manner. For staff on the frontline, understanding why an issue has happened is not an easy task.

A holistic complaint management solution will improve how your employees interact with your customers and help them gain valuable, actionable insight by integrating your customer experience processes into a manageable and easily accessible platform.



It gives your team the ability to provide customers with instant updates, rather than making them wait for an answer. If a problem can't be solved immediately, the software can streamline the redirection of a customer complaint to the right department or person. Company-wide system updates within the solution can provide clarity into how similar issues have been resolved, so your customer doesn't need to wait for an answer if it already exists in the system.

For large companies whose customer service teams are spread far and wide, this kind of streamlined, internal communication is vital in driving case resolution. All the data is centrally located in one convenient, easy-to-access location.

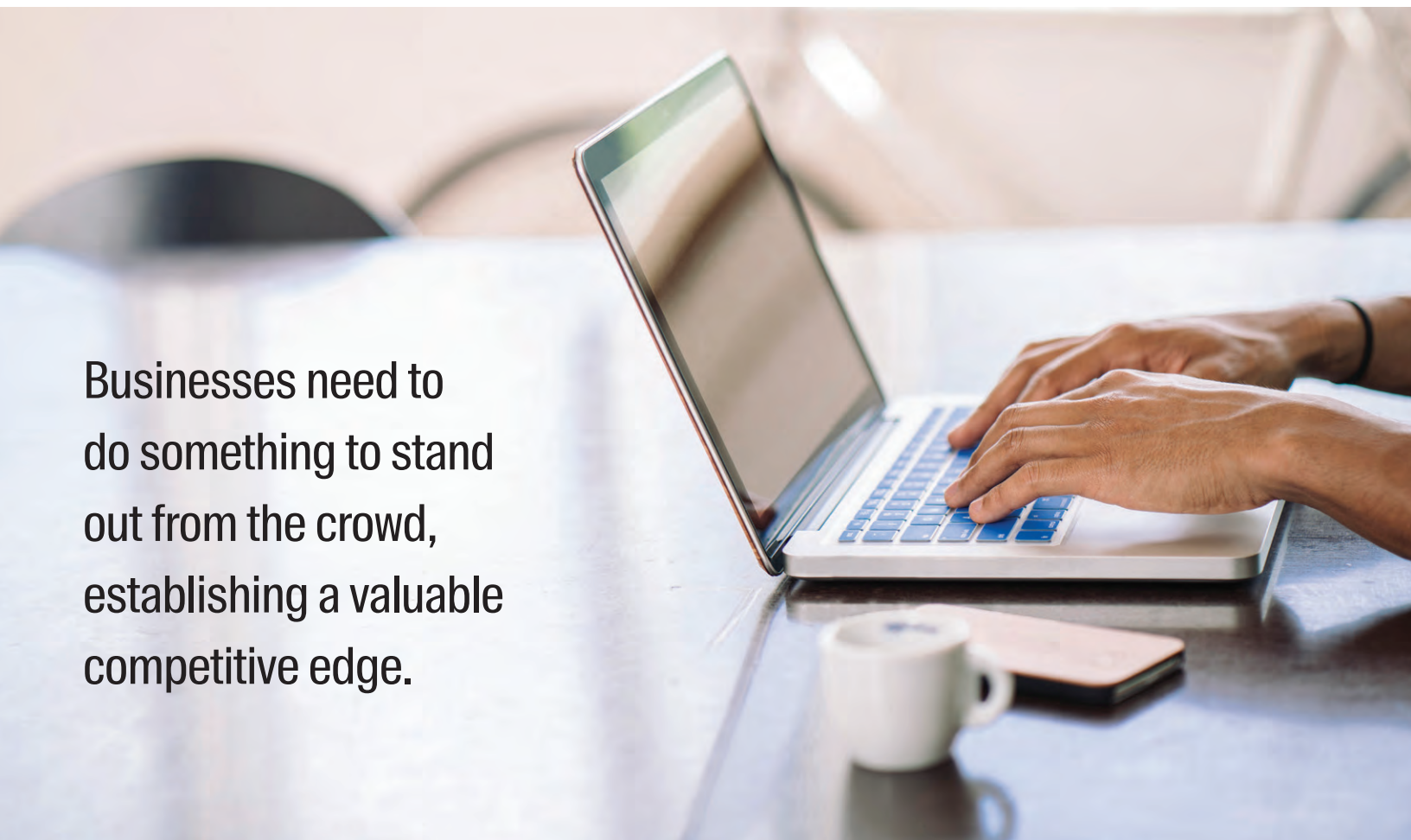
Short-term Action for Long-term Prosperity

Businesses need to do something to stand out from the crowd, establishing a valuable competitive edge. For you, this means investing in customer service that outdoes the competition.

Simply hiring more customer service personnel is not the way to improve customer experience. Adding more components to an already inefficient system may only make things worse.

The key is to identify ways you can improve staff efficiency. By implementing an intuitive, inter-connected software system that allows staff to capture more detail, limit disruption of the customer-facing experience, provide root cause analysis, monitor social media and so much more, your staff can focus on case resolutions, rather than on dealing with inefficient systems.

Enhancing staff capabilities through a complaint handling restructure does not have to be costly, particularly in the context of the long-term gains of doing so. By working with complaint handling management experts to implement an infrastructure that improves frontline customer interaction, businesses will gain customers' trust, maintaining their loyalty for years to come.

A photograph showing a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. The laptop is open and positioned on a desk. In the foreground, there is a white coffee cup and a smartphone. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a modern office environment with a lamp and other furniture.

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Employee Engagement

Given that the quality of the customer experience is largely determined by who and how the experience is delivered, it's vital to ensure that your employees are content and proud of their place of work. If your employees aren't engaged and satisfied, the experience they deliver likely won't be a positive one. Having engaged and enthused employees helps ensure they provide a customer experience that stands out from the competition.

The customer experience department is one unlike any other in your business. Traditional measurement methods for your employees' success aren't easily applied here; success with a customer can't simply be counted by the number of cases handled or time taken to respond. These measurements don't work simply because they aren't measuring the customer experience. You should consider removing those restrictive measures and focus instead on customer experience outcomes, such as customer effort scores, while also having adequate controls in place to ensure employees stay within certain boundaries. Measuring what matters and presenting that back to employees in real-time so they can take ownership of their performance is what helps to create positive employee engagement.

As the following graph illustrates, by improving employee engagement, you can improve customer satisfaction and enhance your overall financial performance.

Employee engagement has become more central to customer experience and more challenging to achieve.



Conclusion

Aptean Respond is a world-class case and complaint management platform that supports every role in your customer experience team—from front-line agents and case managers to team leaders and executives. Respond's intuitive, process-driven tools and dashboards empower your team to easily speed up case resolution, complete tasks, manage workloads, generate actionable insights, and access critical data—all in a way that your CRM is not built to manage.

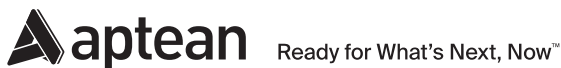
If you'd like to talk about how Aptean Respond can support you and your staff, reach out. We'd love to talk.

Aptean provides very specific industries with very specific ERP, supply chain management, and customer experience solutions. In today's fast-paced, highly competitive economy, organizations don't have time to waste forcing home grown software, spreadsheets, and one-size-fits-all solutions to do things they were never designed to do. Aptean is on a mission to end those workarounds – with industry-specific solutions instead of generic software, expert support instead of making you go it alone, and a steady influx of new ideas instead of the status quo. For more information, visit www.aptean.com



Are you interested in gaining visibility into all aspects of your complaints process?

Reach out to us today at info@aptean.com or www.aptean.com.



About Aptean

Aptean is one of the world's leading providers of industry-specific software. Our enterprise resource planning and supply chain solutions are uniquely designed to meet the needs of specialized manufacturers and distributors, while our compliance solutions serve specific markets such as finance and life sciences. With both cloud and on-premise deployment options, Aptean's products, services and unmatched expertise help businesses of all sizes, across many industries, to scale and succeed.

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