Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Document Title: Customer Complaint Handling Procedure

Department: Customer Success & Support

Effective Date: January 1, 2024

Version: 2.0

1. Purpose and Objectives

This document establishes a clear, consistent, efficient, and empathetic process for receiving, tracking, resolving, and learning from customer complaints at TechVision Solutions. The primary objectives are multifaceted: Firstly, to ensure that every customer feels genuinely heard, valued, and respected when they raise a concern. Secondly, to guarantee that their issues are resolved in a timely and effective manner, restoring their confidence in our products and services. Thirdly, and crucially, to systematically capture and analyze complaint data to identify root causes, driving continuous improvement in our products, services, and internal processes. This procedure is fundamental to maintaining and enhancing our company's reputation for customer-centricity and operational excellence.

2. Scope and Responsible Personnel

This SOP applies to all members of the Customer Success and Support departments without exception. Specific roles and responsibilities are as follows:

Tier 1 & 2 Support Agents: Primarily responsible for the initial complaint reception, logging, triage, and first-line resolution. They are the customer's first point of contact and are empowered to resolve a majority of standard issues.

Support Team Leads: Responsible for the escalation of complex complaints, providing guidance to agents, monitoring adherence to timelines, and conducting quality assurance on resolved tickets.

Head of Customer Success: Holds overall responsibility for the efficacy of this SOP, its continuous improvement, and the generation of monthly reports on complaint trends, resolution metrics, and customer satisfaction for the executive team.

3. Detailed Procedure: A Step-by-Step Walkthrough

Step 1: Receipt & Immediate Acknowledgment

Complaints can be received via multiple channels: dedicated support email (support@techvisions.com), the ticketing system on our website, or directly by phone.

Critical Action: All complaints, regardless of channel, must be logged as a unique ticket in our central CRM (Zendesk) under the specific "Complaint" category. This ensures visibility and prevents issues from being lost.

Timeline Mandate: An automatic acknowledgment must be sent to the customer within 1 hour of receipt. This acknowledgment must include the assigned ticket number, the name of the support agent handling the issue (if already assigned), and a reaffirmation of our commitment to resolving their concern.

Step 2: Triage, Categorization, and Initial Analysis

The assigned Support Agent must first categorize the complaint (e.g., Technical Bug, Billing Dispute, Data Inaccuracy, Feature Request, Service Deficiency).

The agent must then conduct an initial analysis, which includes reviewing the customer's account history, prior tickets, and any relevant documentation to understand the context and severity of the issue.

Severity Level Assignment: Based on the analysis, the agent assigns a severity level:

Severity 1 (Critical): System outage or major feature failure affecting all/many users.

Severity 2 (High): Major feature impaired for a single client or group.

Severity 3 (Medium): Partial, non-critical loss of functionality.

Severity 4 (Low): Minor issue or general inquiry.

Step 3: Deep Investigation and Action Plan Formulation

The agent investigates the issue using internal knowledge bases, technical documentation, and by collaborating with other departments if necessary (e.g., querying the DevOps team for a system status check).

Communication Protocol: The agent is required to provide a substantive update to the customer at least every 24 hours. This update can be a resolution, a request for more information, or simply a status report (e.g., "Our technical team is still investigating the root cause; our next update will be by 10 AM tomorrow"). Silence is not acceptable.

Step 4: Proposed Solution, Implementation, and Customer Validation

Once a root cause is identified and a solution is formulated, the agent clearly communicates this to the customer.

The agent must seek explicit agreement from the customer that the proposed solution is acceptable before proceeding. After implementation, the agent must confirm with the customer that the issue has been fully resolved to their satisfaction.

Step 5: Resolution, Documentation, and Knowledge Sharing

Only upon customer confirmation is the ticket moved to "Resolved" status.

The agent must then meticulously document the root cause and the precise resolution steps in the ticket. If the issue is novel, the agent is responsible for creating or updating a knowledge base article to empower the entire team for future similar complaints.

4. Timeline and Escalation Protocols

Strict Timelines:

Acknowledgment: < 1 hour.

First Substantive Update: < 24 hours.

Target for Full Resolution: Severity 1: < 8 business hours. Severity 2: < 24 business hours. Severity 3 & 4: < 5 business days.

Escalation Triggers: A complaint must be immediately escalated to a Team Lead if:

It is a Severity 1 or 2 issue.

It remains unresolved after the target resolution time for its severity level.

The customer is a designated "Key Account" or the issue has potential legal or compliance implications.

The customer explicitly requests to speak with a manager or displays signs of significant frustration.

The resolution requires a resource or decision outside the authority of the support agent (e.g., issuing a refund above a certain threshold). The Team Lead may further escalate to the Head of Customer Success.

5. Success Metrics and Continuous Improvement

The success of this procedure is measured quantitatively and qualitatively. These metrics are reviewed monthly in the Customer Success Leadership meeting:

First Contact Resolution (FCR) Rate: Target > 40%.

Average Resolution Time: Target < 5 business days (aggregate).

Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) Score on resolved complaint tickets: Target > 90%.

Percentage of complaints acknowledged within 1 hour: Target 100%.

Complaint Recurrence Rate: Track repeat complaints for the same issue to identify root causes that have not been fully addressed.

The insights from these metrics and from qualitative customer feedback are used to refine agent training programs, inform product development priorities, and drive the continuous improvement of this very SOP.