FAMILIARIZE INTERNET CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS

Information Sheet 6
Familiarize Internet Customer Service Skills

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
1. Identify the various types of online shoppers and their characteristics.
2. Explain the significance of internet-based customer service skills in the digital age.
3. Demonstrate effective communication techniques for handling different customer types online.
4. Analyze customer behavior to provide tailored service solutions.
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of various tools and strategies for improving online customer service.

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, customer service is no longer confined to phone calls or in-person interactions. The internet has revolutionized how businesses connect with customers, making online platforms a critical component of customer service. Whether it is responding to inquiries via social media, troubleshooting through email, or providing live chat support, having strong internet-based customer service skills is essential for delivering exceptional customer experiences.

Familiarizing oneself with customer service internet skills involves understanding and utilizing various online tools and platforms effectively. It requires knowledge of communication etiquette, technical troubleshooting, and efficient information management to ensure prompt and satisfactory resolutions. Mastery of these skills not only enhances customer satisfaction but also builds trust and loyalty, creating lasting relationships between businesses and their clients.

This journey into internet-based customer service equips professionals to navigate the challenges of digital communication and leverage opportunities for innovation. By familiarizing themselves with these essential skills, customer service representatives can stay ahead in an increasingly digital-first world, meeting and exceeding customer expectations with confidence and expertise.

Types of Online Shoppers

1. Price sensitive shoppers. These people make up the vast majority of those who purchase online. According to a recent Google research, shoppers in eCommerce marketplaces that have grown and evolved tend to be more price conscious. "Deal seekers" describe a large portion of the American population. Free shipping and "sale, discount, or promo" directly behind it are the most crucial considerations when making a purchase. In order to acquire a good bargain, they would search through dozens of websites.

Why you can't convert them:

Due to the fact that there are tens of thousands of other websites providing bargains, some of which are better than yours. These customers leave your business as soon as they feel like they've snagged a fantastic deal elsewhere.

Worse, these customers' browsers are infected with malicious extensions that act as price comparison tools. Unauthorized coupon extensions account for a significant portion of all coupon redemptions. These add-ons not only charge customers commission fees that aren't fair, but they also negatively impact the user experience on the website when discount codes are used. By installing browser extensions, customers unwittingly install ad injectors, which then show unwanted advertisements and content on your website. Cart abandonment is typically blamed on them as an indication of a shaky and untrustworthy website.

How to convert them:

Track your customers' on-site activity to identify price-conscious customers. Examine, for instance, the actions people do after the addition of items to their shopping cart. Was there at least one time when they left your site and returned to use a discount they found? Be the first to give them a coupon before they leave the store, and they'll thank you. Remove ad injections and coupon extensions using adware software that can guard browser-side infestations in real time. It's important to retain customers on your website by providing an experience that's free of adware. Make sure to keep an eye out for lower rates on your competitors' websites and consider offering discounts to customers.

2. Experienced shoppers
Isn't it funny how certain establishments aren't only for the items they carry, but for the experience they provide you? A large number of internet customers prefer to purchase for the experience rather than the product. The customers don't want to be treated as simply another customer and expect a customized, seamless experience. Customers are prepared to spend extra for a superior on-site experience, according to the CMO.

Why you can't convert them:
You may make or break your transaction based on the tiniest amount of friction between your customer and the thing they want to buy. Things like website load times, product discoverability, and even how fast customers can locate ongoing specials on the items they want are all included in this category of metrics that you should keep an eye on. In addition, a lengthy checkout procedure detracts from the whole shopping experience. Most online customers leave their shopping carts during the checkout process if it takes too long or is too difficult.

How to convert them:
- Website Speed: Make sure your site loads quickly, whether on mobile or desktop. If your website loads slowly, people have lots of options and will go elsewhere. Over two-thirds of mobile users in the US use mobiles as their primary access to the internet. Ensure your website is optimized for a mobile-friendly customer experience – from browsing to purchasing to engaging with your brand online.
- Search function: Site search is often a neglected function. It provides a quick and easy way to connect shopper intent with the right content. The data from search queries can be used to create a personalized experience.
- Easy checkout: There is no such thing as an optimum checkout process. It depends on the demographic, product complexity, price point, and other factors. But there are certain approaches that can help uncomplicate the process – Capture the user's email directly and give them an option to checkout as a guest or create an account later; Remove the header or footer navigation of the store

and remove any distractions so the users focus on the checkout page; Keep the cart page simple and summarize what the user has added.

3. Ready to purchase shoppers
   You may make or break your transaction based on the tiniest amount of friction between your customer and the thing they want to buy. Things like website load times, product discoverability, and even how fast customers can locate ongoing specials on the items they want are all included in this category of metrics that you should keep an eye on. In addition, a lengthy checkout procedure detracts from the whole shopping experience. Most online customers leave their shopping carts during the checkout process if it takes too long or is too difficult.
   Why you can't convert them:
   These consumers are all about how soon they can make the buy. If consumers believe that they can't discover a bargain readily on a product homepage or understand that they will need to complete an extra step to acquire a thing like signing up and building an elaborate profile on your shop, they'd prefer pass.
   How to convert them:
   Customers will only buy from you if you provide a hassle-free purchasing experience. Streamline the checkout process, make promotions accessible to your customers, and give a wide range of payment and delivery alternatives for them to choose from. Using on-site buying behavior to customize offers can help enhance conversions. Don't give them any reason to believe that you may be unable to fulfill their request at the last minute. Online merchants should make sure that their customers have an easy and quick time making their transaction. Personal offers that not only meet the demands of customers but also safeguard your profit margins are the best way to attract new customers.

4. Latest Product Shoppers
   There is no matter how unique or revolutionary a new product may be, new product buyers prefer to stay in the present. Consequently, they're constantly on the lookout for the newest and greatest goods in any given sector. Also, individuals who don't mind moving from one product to another as long as they can boast about possessing the most recent one

fall into this category as well. You'll see them in the fashion, cosmetics, and technology sectors on a regular basis.

Why you can't convert them:

Because they're constantly on the hunt for the latest and greatest, these consumers are a real nuisance. In their social circles, it's considered a badge of honor to be the first to acquire a well-known product. In order to get the best value, these customers will buy from any retailer that makes it simple for them to finish the buying process. There is no use in trying to sell them anything if they can't locate either of the two on your site.

How to convert them:

If you're going to get people to buy from you, you've got to be the first one to get in touch with them. Add a discount to make the offer even sweeter! Keep in mind, though, that you should use any and all methods at your disposal to connect with them.

5. Research Shoppers

Consumers are increasingly doing comprehensive research and comparison shopping before making a purchase. For purchases of $500 or more, the number rises. Before making a large purchase, 81% of customers do research online first. They then visit the retailer's online site and study for an average of 79 days. They don't want to have to deal with a return or exchange request due to even the tiniest of errors. Browser extensions are often used by these types of buyers to compare prices quickly. Nobody wants to be bothered, after all.

Why you can't convert them:

Comparison shopping sites are a major deterrent for these customers, who are so focused on the research process. Searching for a "versus" piece, reading reviews and ratings and sifting through the rest of the market possibilities is a natural part of their daily routine. It is possible that they may lose interest in the product or find a comparable product on a competitor's website throughout this procedure.

How to convert them:

Prior to making a purchase, these are those who want to learn more about the things they are considering. So, assist them better identify their wants and explain why and how what you're selling is the greatest option for them. For instance, if you see them hesitant in completing the

purchase, target them with on-site offers or help them using an engagement window or a live chat. Those who know what they're looking for are more likely to visit every product in a given category or spend a lot of time browsing for particular items. Using consistent product information across categories, creating buyer guides, and offering comparative product evaluations can aid your customers with their research and encourage them to spend more time on your website. In the past, high-ticket categories such as automotive, electronics, tools and hardware, and wearable tech saw shoppers' high online research. For low-ticket categories like cosmetics, clothes, toys & games, and more, internet research is becoming increasingly frequent.

Each sort of shopper is unique, but they all have two things in common: the ability to choose the greatest goods at the best price, and the seemingly limitless options available to them. There are those online shoppers who are always distracted by all the discounts offered on other websites, while others are constantly glancing at chat applications or emails or other distractions. You have no idea why a customer isn't making a purchase at your business. But the one thing that you do have in your hands is to ensure that you keep distractions like price comparisons, competitor ads, adult content, third-party pop-ups, and video ads at bay and offer them a frictionless eCommerce experience with timely engagement.

SUMMARY

The rise of the internet has transformed the way businesses engage with customers, making it essential for customer service professionals to master internet-based skills. These skills enable them to navigate digital communication channels, provide tailored solutions, and deliver exceptional customer experiences. This module emphasizes the importance of understanding different types of online shoppers and the unique challenges they present, as well as adopting strategies to meet and exceed customer expectations.

Online shoppers can be broadly categorized into five groups: price-sensitive shoppers, experience-focused shoppers, ready-to-purchase shoppers, latest-product seekers, and research shoppers. Each group has distinct preferences

and behaviors, requiring specific approaches to conversion and retention. For instance, price-sensitive shoppers are attracted to discounts and promotions, while experience-focused shoppers value seamless and personalized interactions. On the other hand, research shoppers need comprehensive product information to make informed decisions.

To address the needs of these customers, businesses must prioritize website optimization, ensuring fast load times and mobile-friendly designs. Streamlined checkout processes and secure payment options are critical in minimizing cart abandonment and building trust. Additionally, tools like live chat, on-site engagement, and personalized offers enhance the overall shopping experience and foster customer loyalty.

Customer service representatives must also combat challenges such as ad injectors and browser extensions that disrupt user experiences. Proactive strategies, such as targeted marketing and buyer intent analysis, help businesses provide relevant solutions while maintaining a frictionless eCommerce environment.

In conclusion, familiarizing oneself with internet customer service skills is vital for thriving in today's digital-first marketplace. By leveraging online tools, understanding customer behavior, and adopting innovative strategies, businesses can not only satisfy but exceed customer expectations, creating lasting relationships and driving success.

"The customer's perception is your reality."
— Kate Zabriskie, a renowned customer service and training expert.