Title:
Exceptional eCustomer Service - In 4 Simple Tips

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Summary:
How would your customers rate their experience on your "Contact Us" page? Here are 4 tips to help you create an e-commerce experience that keeps customers in love with you after a service mishap.

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Article Body:
Two weeks ago I scribed a note of praise for Office Depot on PlanetFeedback.Com. Two hours later I got a personal response from Office Depot's executive office. Last Friday I logged a complex complaint via email to my wireless phone company. Less than 3 hours later a researched response landed in my email box. It wasn't the response I hoped for, but it was a timely response. Both companies exceeded my expectations of timeliness and personalization of response. How would your customers rate their experience on your "Contact Us" page? Here are 4 tips to help you create an e-commerce experience that keeps customers in love with you after a service mishap.

1. Prominently display phone number. Many customers visit your "Contact Us" page for the sole purpose of locating a phone number. Don't force your customers to fill out a form or contact you via email if they want to personally talk with you. Your phone number, preferably toll-free, should be prominently displayed on your home page and on your "Contact Us" page.

2. Create a list of Frequently Asked Questions. Identify the top 5 – 10 questions or complaints logged on your website and post them with answers. This will be a time saving convenience for customers and reduces your email/call volume. Amazon.com has one of the best FAQ sections I've seen on the web. When visitors click Help on www.amazon.com, they are soon viewing a page of more than 50 frequently asked questions and answers. Visitors almost never have to contact Amazon.com directly for assistance.

3. Develop response standards. In 1998 I conducted an informal survey by shopping customer service departments on the Internet. In my survey, in which

I logged complaints or posed questions, 60% of the companies didn't even bother to respond. Of those that did respond, the average response time was 4.5 days. Today, e-commerce customers will not give you days to respond. They expect a response within hours. Determine your response targets and then line up systems and processes to deliver your goal. Keep in mind that your initial e-response should never be delivered more than 24 hours after the customer contacts you.

 4. Dedicate staff to email response. Well-intentioned companies are failing customers miserably because their representatives are juggling too many tasks. Customer Care staff cannot effectively respond to high volumes of phone calls, postal mail and email complaints and maintain quality service standards. If your Customer Care Department is receiving at least 400 email inquiries/complaints monthly, you need at least one person dedicated to reviewing, researching and responding to email complaints and this needs to be their primary job.