Title:
Better Online Communication Makes Business Sense

Word Count:
561

Summary:
How you communicate with your online customers will make or break your company.
What are you doing to improve your customer relations?

Keywords:
customer, relations, communication, online, email, tech support, business

Article Body:
Many companies are now doing the majority or even all their business online and
foregoing the "Brick and Mortar" storefront. It is easy to see why that trend
has happened. For one thing, the cost of setting up such a business is
relatively inexpensive and easy. There is no need to pay for the overhead of a
physical building. Also, the cost of maintaining a Web site is minimal.
Moreover, the Internet provides a convenient and efficient way of marketing
products. As more and more people are spending time on the Internet, the market
of online customers continues to grow.

But when businesses shift from face-to-face customers to anonymous online
customers, there is a loss of personal connection and trust. All the online
spamming and scamming hasn't helped the matter at all. That has eroded the trust
in E-commerce and the credibility of many companies. How are you gaining and
maintaining customer trust? What are you doing as an online vendor to
communicate to your customers?

In an online world, business just doesn't stop after hours and on weekends. What
are you doing to answer your customer's questions? Here are a few things that
you can do to improve communication with your customers:

1.   Offer a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page and online product support
information. This is an excellent way of answering basic questions that may
otherwise flood your support email. For example, our voice-changing product,
MorphVOX, has a FAQ on the common issues that customers may come across. We also
have provided detailed online documentation on topics that users may want to
explore more. This takes care of roughly 95% of the questions people may have.

2.   Add a support email link on your Web site for issues that can't be

resolved by the Web support. At Screaming Bee, we try to answer our customer questions within one business day. More often, we'll answer questions within an hour of receiving the email. I believe that we have gained many loyal customers because of our aggressive efforts to meet needs in a timely manner.

3.   Provide a message board or forum for customers to voice their opinions, add comments, and interact with each other. Remember that people are social creatures and like to be heard. This also helps to build up a community of users that are empowered and have a say in the products and services that you provide.

4.   Write a personal email to each customer. Have you followed up on your customers after they have made a purchase of your products or services? This is essential, not only from the perspective of getting feedback on how to improve your offerings, but more importantly, maintaining the trusting, long-term relationship with your customer. Send them an email within 3-4 weeks of the first purchase. In this way their experience with your products and services is fresh in their mind. Remember, a customer who is ignored is a customer who is lost.

Spending time and effort on better communication with your customers will pay off. Your company will rise and fall not on the customers you gain, but on the customers that you don't lose. Loyal customers will be the ones that give you the best testimonials. They also provide you with the richest, organic, word-of-mouth marketing. Remember that every happy customer is a testament of your company's success.