Counting the Customer

The Complete Guide to Dynamite Customer Care

Prepared by:

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Everyone has a reason for loving the brands that they love: the quality product, the short lines, the fun website or the friendly cashier. Whatever it is that someone appreciates about a company, it boils down to one thing: customer experience.

Many digitally-based companies make the mistake of overlooking customer experience, since they never interact with the customer face-to-face. However, customer experience does not exclusively apply to physical interaction with your company. Any interaction between a customer and your brand is a crucial opportunity to make a good impression.

If anything, studying and improving customer experience is more important in the digital world. You have a finite amount of time to impress a customer before they open a new tab and — *click!* — they move on to a competitor.

This guide is intended to enable you to cultivate positive relationships with the people who will most benefit your company in the long run. Here, you will discover why customer service is important and how to achieve profitable gains through your customers' experiences.

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Why is customer experience **important**?

It's easy to prioritize profits or expenses over a focus on customer care. What's often overlooked is the fact that generating positive customer experiences directly translates into high benefits for your company.

Sales are important.

As a manager, it's very likely that you've got a brain for numbers. Try these on for size:

- An American Express survey recently found that 78 percent of consumers have backed out on an intended purchase because of a negative experience.
- The same survey states that 91 percent of unhappy customers will not willingly do business with your company again.

So… We'll get new customers.

- It is 6-7 times more costly to acquire a new customer than to maintain an existing one.
- Loyal customers are worth up to 10 times as much as their first purchase. That small sale they backed out on could have turned into a significant amount of revenue in the long run.
- You have a 60-70 percent chance of selling to an existing customer, while you only have a 5-20 percent change of selling to a new prospect.

Making a customer experience investment should not be considered a business cost, but a sales opportunity. The pennies that go into developing a better customer experience will come back to you ten times over in sales.

Public perception is important.

Word-of-mouth is one of your strongest marketing tools. It's free and often goes directly to your target audience through a source they trust. It has been found that Americans tell an average of 9 people about a good consumer experience—that means 9 potential new customers that you were otherwise unable to reach!

Word-of-mouth can also be a dangerous weapon when you don't exercise positive customer service skills. Americans, on average, tell 16 people about a negative consumer experience. News of bad customer service reaches almost twice as many listeners as praise for good service.

The Internet acts as a megaphone for these complaints, too. With sites like Google, Yelp, etc., customer complaints are easy to make and even easier to find.

91%
of customers who had a bad customer experience won't willingly do business with your company again.

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70%

of unhappy customers whose issues were resolved in their favor said they would return to purchase from that company again.

People are important.
Always remember the old retail adage: customers remember the experience longer than they remember the price. Focusing on improving consumer experience is more important than competitive pricing, as 70 percent of Americans would be willing to spend more with companies they believe provide excellent customer service.

Once you have provided a customer with a bad experience, redemption is nearly impossible. Ruby Newell-Legner's "Understanding Customers" states that it takes 12 positive experiences to make up for one unresolved negative experience. Resolution is key: 70 percent of unhappy customers whose issues were resolved in their favor said they would be willing to come back.

People are complicated. The study of how to make them happy is no different. However, there are a few staples that every manager should be mindful of when developing a customer experience strategy.

How does a company provide a **great** customer experience?

Great Customer Service Starts with Great Training
Customer service agents are only as good as their trainers. It's important to develop a training outline that encompasses the keys points of your customer experience strategy.

This training isn't just for those in the customer service department, however. Every department of your company should be mindful of the goals and expectations you have regarding customer care. Consistency among attitudes across the company will encourage adherence to your strategies.

Important things to teach employees:
- **The customer is often right.** Most of the time, your job is to be on the customers' side. They are a little scary when they're frustrated, but they're just looking for help and you're the one that can give it to them. Business guru Alan Weiss suggests that you "don't view your customers as part of the problem, but ask them to be part of the solution."

- **You are often right**, too. When dealing with difficult customers, don't doubt yourself. You work for this company and likely have a better idea of the way

67%

things work than the customer. Remain confident and calm — you can help this customer; you know your stuff!

The most crucial thing you can do as an employer is help your employees feel like you're on their side. If you can provide them with the necessary training to do their job well and the knowledge that they are trusted and appreciated, they will be confident in making decisions while interfacing with your customers

The Best Customer Experiences Happen in Less Than 10 Minutes

If there's one thing just about every human being has in common, it's that they're pressed for time. Whether you're consciously aware of it or not, your mind is running on an internal clock, which is measuring the amount of time you spend on something and alerts you with anxiety when something has taken too long.

Industry Specifics

Regardless of the type of company you run, consider the amount of time a customer spends with your brand and make the most of it.

- If your business generally experiences face-to-face interaction with a customer, make sure your physical space is clean and easy to navigate, your employees are friendly and helpful, and your close-of-sale procedures are well understood.

- If you're spending time interacting with your customers over the phone, make sure your hold times are short. One survey alone, conducted by American Express, reported that 67 percent of customers reported hanging up on an automated system out of frustration at not being able to reach a live person.

- If your customers generally interface with your brand online, it's crucial that your site is clean and easy to navigate, your check-out process is fast, your shipping or fulfillment procedures are efficient, you provide self-service options, but you also make it easy to reach your employees at any point in the customer lifecycle.

Make Your Customer Feel Like Part of the Family

Where are you more likely to buy cookie dough: from a catalog you got in the mail or your neighbor's daughter who always asks before picking the Begonias in your front yard? It's much easier to sell to someone who knows and trusts you than a stranger. For some reason, however, employees only ask for a customer's name 21 percent of the time according to a ContactPoint research study.

Having an online business is not an excuse to avoid personalized customer service. In fact, once a business is online, it's more important to continue to offer a human face to give them customer a comfortable association with your brand.
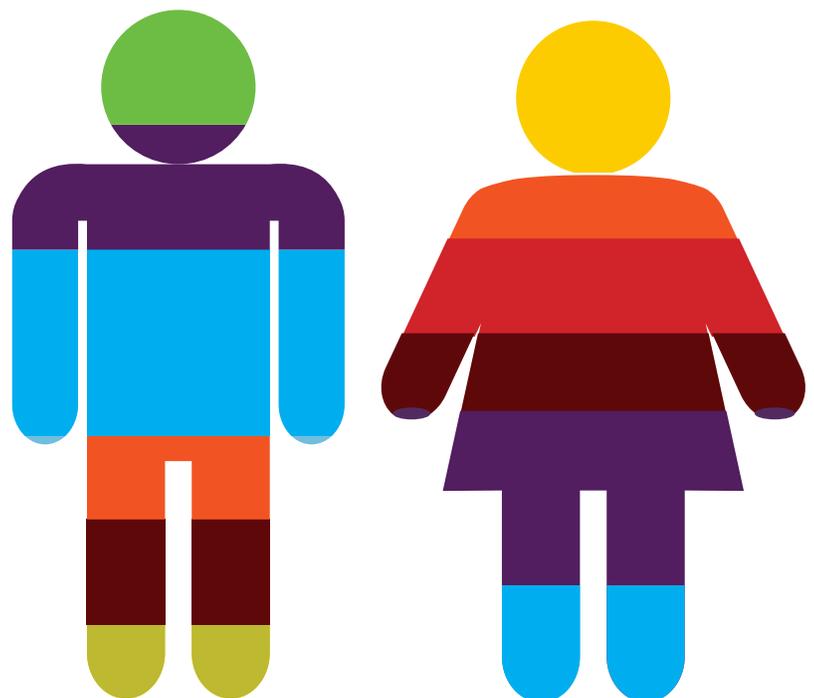
**Listen to What Your Customers Have to Say**

Not everyone is going to be satisfied all the time. Complaining customers can be a nuisance, but they can also be incredibly valuable in identifying the pain-points of your customer service system. Tracking Tweets, comments and complaints relevant to your brand provides you with free qualitative data regarding your consumers' experiences with and perception of your company.

For every one complaint you receive, there are 26 customers who kept quiet. View a complaining customer as a spokesperson for over 2.5-dozen people. View their complaints as suggestions for improvements.

Where do we go from **here**?

Depending on where your company's public perception lies, improving customer experience might mean a complete overhaul in your customer service system. However, it's more likely that there are small changes that can be made to your employee training procedures and overall business practices that will make a world of difference to your customers. For example, you can use visual engagement solutions to add live agent interaction to your online business in order to create a more humanized, personalized customer experience that will keep people.

With the constant advances in technology, it can be hard to keep up with your customers needs. Luckily, there are companies that offer easy-to-implement services that will streamline communication between your company and a customer while making their experience easier.
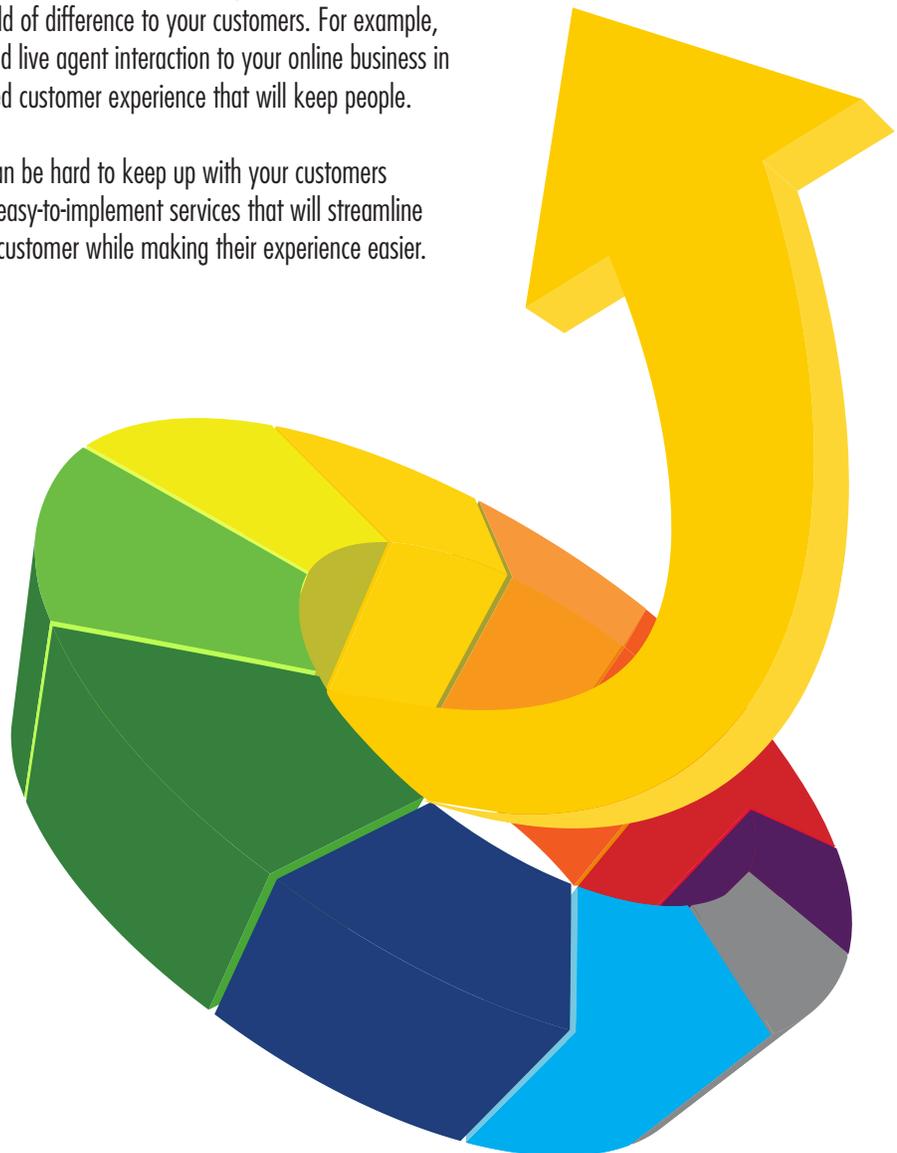
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Visit **www.glance.net** to see how Glance's services can empower your employees to provide an excellent customer experience, reduce business costs, and make your customers happy.

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The statistics for this eBook were provided through the following sources:

ContactPoint Client Research
Lee Resources
Understanding Customers, by Ruby Newell-Legner
White House Office of Consumer Affairs
2010 Customer Experience Impact Report, by Harris Interactive/Right Now
2011 Global Customer Service Barometer, prepared for American Express
2014 Temkin Experience Ratings