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## Groupon merchant customer support

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But they often treat customer support, which can be the customer's first contact point with a company, as a necessary evil. Many companies make it harder for customers to help them – creating a negative impression. So what can you do to make your customers feel like they're getting the help they need when they need it? Here are 11 expert tips on what you can do to improve your customer and technology support – and create a positive impression of your brand. [ Related: 6 ways to anticipate, deliver and measure customer satisfaction ] 1. Offer customer support 24/7. If your company has bandwidth for this, provide 24/7 phone support, says Hossein Ghazizadeh, Vice President, Technical Support, Barracuda, which provides security and storage solutions. There's nothing worse than calling a customer support line when you need help just to get a clip that tells you to call back in normal business time. 2. Enable the text customer service. As millennial shoppers take over the market, traditional customer service lines of 1-800 don't cut, says Steve French, Vice President, Product Management and Marketing, OpenMarket, a provider of mobile engagement solutions. These consumers prefer the text. [So] text-enabling customer service and support can help companies best target a generation of millennials and improve overall customer satisfaction. 3. Activate the live chat option. Using a live chat facility on your website allows you to be exactly where customers need you at the moment, says Rob Rebholz, cofounder & general manager, SpaceWays, a self-catering company. In addition, live chat removes barriers to contacting support because it's quick and easy to type a message from the current screen instead of finding an email address or taking time to call, he explains. That's why customers get the help they need quickly when they need it. Most leading companies include live chat in their customer service efforts to reduce costs and with more options, notes Arielle Hurst, designer of customer experience, Pure Chat. But fewer companies are aware that even through live chat, they can speed up email-based support, he adds. When support teams include a link to a unique live chat website in their email signatures, customers can use that link to get to the team immediately and answer their questions via chat, he explains. In addition, offering this simple option reduces response times and can reduce time-consuming email exchanges by more than 40 percent. 4. Be sociable. The days of help lines and email support are slowly being washed away, says Jeanette Gibson, Vice President, Community and Customer Experience, Hootsuite. To implement a customer support system that meets the expectations of today's consumers, businesses need to invest and integrate socially into their customer support programs, he argues. With an effective and consistent response on all social channels, your company can take customer satisfaction to new heights. 5. Cover all bases (or channels). Today's consumer constantly jumps from text messages to phone calls, from social media to email, explains Spence Mallder, CTO at Aspect Software, the company's call center and customer service solution provider. Therefore, companies must take all channel approach to customer service. This means a) providing customers with the ability to move through channels for quick and easily accessible help, and b) supplying agents with the automated technology they need to pull customer information and history for quick and accurate help, he says. Omni-channel solutions take the multi-channel contact centre to the next level, seamlessly integrating all channels for one running experience. 6. Really listen to the customers. That means paying attention to what they say or writes, validating customer concerns, identifying with each customer's experience and entering the trust you'll own and resolve the issue, says Nate Rosenthal, director of customer support at Square. It also means using clear and direct language. Do not use technical terms or industry lingo, advises. Use plain English instead, but don't talk to your customers. And be simple, yet bland. 7. Specify the option of self-care. When customers easily and quickly find detailed answers to their problems, they feel empowered and appreciate the detailed information they can access without having to deal with customer support, says Jennifer Roberts, head of marketing and integration for Hubstaff, which provides time tracking solutions for remote businesses. Building a community of brand fans around the forum for help, on various platforms, also continues their interaction with the brand by giving them space to ask questions and engage with other users. Self-service can be the fastest way for customers to answers they need if it includes elements such as FAQs, questions, and customer forums, adds Robert C. Johnson, Director of TeamSupport, a solution to support users & help desks in the cloud. It also reduces the workload of the agent. But remember that self-service doesn't mean customers leave to sort their own problems. Ideally, the self-service option should be provided as one of many, with agent support that is always available when necessary. 8. Remember that no one likes telephone trees or waiting to wait. Provide a free number, that it will be easily accessible; and back it up with a live person to make ads on the phone, says Jerry Lee, founder, StoryLeather.com, an online retailer specializing in custom premium leather brand. This sounds basic, but consumers are so turned off from car attendants and long waiting times that having a live person to answer the phone will give you the most positive first impression you can as a business. Also consider offering consumers the option of returning a call, says Liz Osborn, vice president, Product and Solution Marketing, Five9, a cloud contact centre software provider. The callback option is an easy option for businesses that can set them up based on personalized customer settings – and saves time and decreases customer time. 9. Make sure you have a good multi-danish ticket management system in place. Having a ticketing system that can keep up with all the channels used by your customers is imperative, says Jonathan Darcy, a technology consultant at TechnologyAdvice, which connects buyers and sellers of business technology. For example, if a customer tweets at you, the ability to change that tweet in support of a ticket is key to staying on top of the incoming search, as well as maintaining the reputation of your brand. 10. Hire great customers, support them and give them some flexibility. Don't humiliate customer support features, says Brad Smith, executive vice president, Customer Experience, Sage North America. Customer support agents are your brand ambassadors. They provide collaboration with your brand and prove who you are as a company, he explains. You can't say you're all about brand and loyalty, and then offer your customers an unsaved, horrible experience of help, he says. So in addition to providing a great product or service, make sure it's easy to do business with your business, and provide great customer support/agents. If you're properly hired, you have a team of talented, trusted individuals waiting to serve their customers, says John Hebron, technical support coach at Bigcommerce. Having manager permission for every small thing wastes its time, manager time, and customer time. So give them the opportunity to do the right thing without always asking for permission, he advises. Although be sure to set limits in advance to avoid potentially expensive Make sure you have enough answers in customer service during your time. Certain times of the year require more high-level customer support than others, says Aaron Charlesworth, vice president Vonage Business Solutions. During the holiday season, for example, retail care centres are the busiest. It is therefore important to ensure an adequate amount of [properly trained and equipped] support on all fronts. Copyright © 2015 IDG Communications, Inc.

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