

3 Ways to Empower Your Customer Support Team

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Customer support agents are the warriors of every organization. They tackle the toughest questions and they're highly accountable to both the company and the customers they serve. It's their job to represent the interests of both—make customers happy and uphold company policy—which is a hard role, to say the least. And despite the critical work they do, they're often strapped for resources. Because companies typically view support as a cost center, not a revenue-driver like marketing or sales, their budgets are limited, giving them little room to grow.

But no company will see success without a frontline team that keeps its customers on track. So how do you empower your customer support team? Well, you start by recognizing their challenges and giving them a louder voice. Here are a few ways you can empower your support team and set them up for success.

1. Ask them for feedback on a regular basis—and really listen

Support agents not only interact with customers daily, they're constantly brainstorming ways to overcome the top issues impacting your customer base. The easier customers' lives are, the easier the customer support team's job is. No one is as motivated or equipped to solve customers' problems. It seems obvious, but companies often leave their support team out of major decisions that impact their customers. When it comes time to plan the product roadmap, roll out new services, or make changes to pricing, support is often the last to know.

You can harness your team's knowledge and empower them by involving them in those decisions. It can be as simple as holding monthly, cross-departmental brainstorming sessions and asking support agents to represent the voice of the customer. Just the act of getting multiple teams in one room to discuss the issues impacting customers is a great start. And of course, it's important to give team members a channel to voice their opinions without judgment. Internal surveys are an easy way to ask for employee feedback without putting people in the hot seat.

2. Centralize your customer data and integrate all the things

Different teams use different tools. It's just how it goes. But when it comes to customer data, it's extremely important to decide early on how you'll store and leverage the data you collect. If your support team has to open seven browser tabs to find the answer to a question, that's a problem. Not only is it frustrating for the agent and the customer, but it leaves too much room for error and lost information.

Practically every business tool out there integrates with major CRMs. You can prevent the needless loss of data and boost efficiency by integrating tools early on and cutting down manual entry as much as possible. Of course, it's not always possible to create one "source of truth" for your customer data, but by prioritizing it each time you roll out a new program, you'll avoid a lot of future headaches.

3. Name top-performing support agents "customer advocates"

Customer support is a stressful, often thankless job, so employee turnover is particularly high. Many companies also struggle to create real career paths for their support team. It's unfortunate because experienced support agents cultivate a wealth of organizational knowledge that can make a real difference.

One simple way to recognize your all-star agents and give them goals to work toward is to create a specialized support role. It's more and more common to see titles like Customer Advocate and Customer Experience Specialist. While still customer-facing support roles, these titles acknowledge the essential role support agents play in the customer experience. Naming a support agent a Customer Advocate shows your entire organization that you value the people that care about customer needs.

Wrap-Up

These recommendations aren't just about building up your support team. By giving customer service a clear voice in the company, you'll foster a culture that respects customer needs and prioritizes customer satisfaction. That can impact your product roadmap for the better, steer your sales conversations, and just inspire more thoughtful decisions that lead to happier customers.

As the frontline, customer support is a direct channel into customers' needs and opinions. When you empower them to speak their minds and share their experiences, you also empower your customers.

For more on this topic, read NewVoiceMedia's eBook, [7 Tips to get the most out of your People with Workforce Management](#).

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