



## **Is Your Answering Service Strategy Delivering Brand-building Customer Experiences?**

**An On Call Centre White Paper**

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**Your calls are our priority  
Vos appels sont notre priorité**

## Introduction

Every touchpoint contributes to each customer's experience with your brand. An often overlooked touchpoint is the phone. Whether you're a 2-person business with a single phone line or a 200-person business with a customer support team, today's demanding customers expect rapid responses no matter if it's 12 o'clock noon or 12 o'clock midnight. Negative customer experiences erode the installed customer base, lose potential new customers, and create an anemic business model. Positive customer experiences retain customers, build customer advocacy, and lead to business growth.

By reading this white paper, business owners and heads of customer support will learn how partnering with an experienced telephone call answering service and call centre service provider delivers brand-building customer experiences that grow your business.

## "Customer Experience" takes centre stage

Over the past few years the term "customer experience" has taken centre stage. Forrester Research, a recognized research company, surveyed businesses to determine trends for customer experience goals in 2012. Their research revealed that "improving the online customer experience was the most common objective at 77%" and that "despite the number of customers who still call companies to get help (often after bad digital experiences), only 43% of respondents said that they plan to improve the agent experience in 2012." (Source: Forrester, ["The State Of Customer Experience,"](#) April 24, 2012.) The phone touchpoint is being pushed backstage.

## Phone interactions are integral to the customer experience

Step out of your "vendor" role for a moment and assume the role of "customer"—no doubt a role you play often. As a customer, you know the difference it can make to you when you need to speak with a vendor. There's really no debate that the phone is integral to delivering brand-building customer experiences. But let's take phone interactions to a higher level of performance and consider the brand-building value of the following customer-centric approaches.

### **The value of a positive first impression**

A phone may be the first contact a prospective new customer has with your business. When the phone isn't answered, when an automated voice asks the caller to leave a message after the tone, and when the phone is answered but the person is unknowledgeable or unhelpful, the prospective customer feels undervalued, hangs up, and dials your competition. In terms of business growth, it is critical to be "always on" and ready to deliver exceptional customer experiences.

### **The value of being greeted by a "live" person**

When a live customer service representative (CSR) answers your phone—one who is highly skilled in delivering customer service—your customers' questions and issues are resolved in a timely manner, which ensures customer satisfaction and loyalty.

### **The value of answering calls rapidly**

When CSRs answer the phones rapidly, the number of abandoned calls decreases, which means more satisfied customers. (And for you, this means increased business and repeat business.)

### **The value of conversing in the customer's preferred language**

If you live in a region with a high bilingual population, responding to customers in their preferred language decreases the risk of miscommunication and increases time to resolution, while delivering exceptional customer experiences.

### **The value of being accessible 24x7/365**

Answering phones 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year sends the message that you are customer focused and sensitive to the value of their time. By offering customer service that is "time zone neutral" or "time of day neutral," you're ensuring customer satisfaction.

Something else to consider. If 77% of Forrester's respondents are focusing on improving digital customer experiences—your up-close-and-personal, brand-building phone customer experiences are a source of competitive differentiation.

## **Is your answering service strategy flourishing or floundering?**

As you can see, your answering service strategy plays an important role in your growth strategy. Negative customer experiences erode the installed customer base, lose potential new customers, and create an anemic business model whereas positive customer experiences retain customers, build customer advocacy, and lead to business growth.

Look at your own business' answering service strategy—are you flourishing or floundering? If you're delivering value, then congratulations—you're flourishing. If floundering, consider that customers who aren't consistently receiving exceptional customer experiences are going to walk way. What can you do to prevent that from happening?

## **Sizing internal capacity**

Many small businesses and customer support departments just don't have the internal resources to scale and affect the customer experience for the better; for example, managing overflow hours, answering calls 24x7, hiring fluently bilingual customer service talent, etc. This is when a partnership with an experienced telephone answering service provider and call centre service provider delivers a valuable return on investment.

### **Small business**

Small businesses are based on a core competency; for example, a plumbing business, real estate business, high-tech start-up. If you're juggling the phones, your productivity—and earnings—are suffering. For the owner of a small business, an answering service provider becomes your ally to deliver an exceptional customer experience on your behalf and in support of your business growth goals. A partner can offer the following types of answering services:

- Remote reception
- Push "0" for operator
- Catalogue order processing
- Appointment setting

## Customer support departments

The person responsible for the customer support, customer service, or customer care department has a lot of responsibilities in an ever-increasingly stressful environment. While you haven't painstakingly brought in every new customer, it rests on your shoulders to retain that highly valuable installed base of customers.

For you a call centre service provider is your ally to deliver an exceptional customer experience in support of your customer experience goals and key performance indicators (KPI). A partner can provide the following types of call centre services:

- Help desk
- Dealer locates
- Remote reception
- Push "0" for operator
- Catalogue order processing

## Delivering brand-building customer experiences worthy of a standing ovation

Forrester found that 75% of respondents hoped to use the customer experience as a point of competitive differentiation (see illustration).



By partnering with an answering service provider or call centre service provider, skilled and experienced inbound customer service representatives can help you deliver customer experiences worthy of a standing ovation, differentiate your brand from the competition and—ultimately—improve your business performance. Here's how.

### **Achieve business goals**

By understanding and defining your challenges and goals, you can better collaborate with the partner, who will provide you with a customized message management service that ensures your unique requirements and business goals are achieved.

### **Improve customer focus**

Make your customers' lives easier. When your customers converse in the language of their choice, you minimize the risks of miscommunications, expedite call completion, and achieve lift in the overall customer experiences. And, when every customer's call is answered quickly by a human voice with a beating heart 24/7, you reduce the number of abandoned calls and achieve faster time to resolution, which means more satisfied customers.

### **Boost customer loyalty**

Inbound customer service is a specialized skill. When helpful, service-oriented CSRs are taking the best care of your valuable customers, customer loyalty and satisfaction get a boost.

All of these benefits can be achieved when you outsource your answering service and call centre service requirements to an experienced partner. Furthermore, you achieve these benefits without having to hire additional bodies, train and manage those bodies, find space for those bodies, or buy technology for those bodies.

## **Conclusion**

Whether you're a 2-person business with a single phone line or a 200-person business with a customer support team, today's demanding customers expect rapid responses no matter the time of day. Positive customer experiences retain customers, build customer advocacy, and lead to business growth—and a partner experienced in providing answering services and call centre services may be a real asset in your overall brand-building customer experience performances.

With zero capital costs, zero headcount increases, and zero extra workload on your supervisors' shoulders, consider the advantages of partnering with an experienced answering service and call centre service provider:

- Achieve business growth goals
- Increase productivity without incurring additional headcount
- Deliver exceptional customer experiences—consistently

## About The Author

Canadian-based On Call Centre Inc., established in 1971, holds 40 years of experience providing brand-building answering services and call centres services to thousands of customers in a plethora of industries. Do you need your bilingual customers' phone calls answered 24 hours a day without fail? For the Head of Customer Service whose shoulders it rests to answer the calls 24/7/365, and for the small business owner who can't realistically juggle answering the calls and getting the job done, the experienced people at On Call Centre provide uniquely tailored answering and messaging management services. Unlike voice mail technology and other service providers' solutions, with On Call there is always a human voice with a beating heart answering your customers' calls, which means you achieve a high level of customer satisfaction and loyalty without increasing head count or capital costs—ultimately ensuring repeat business.



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