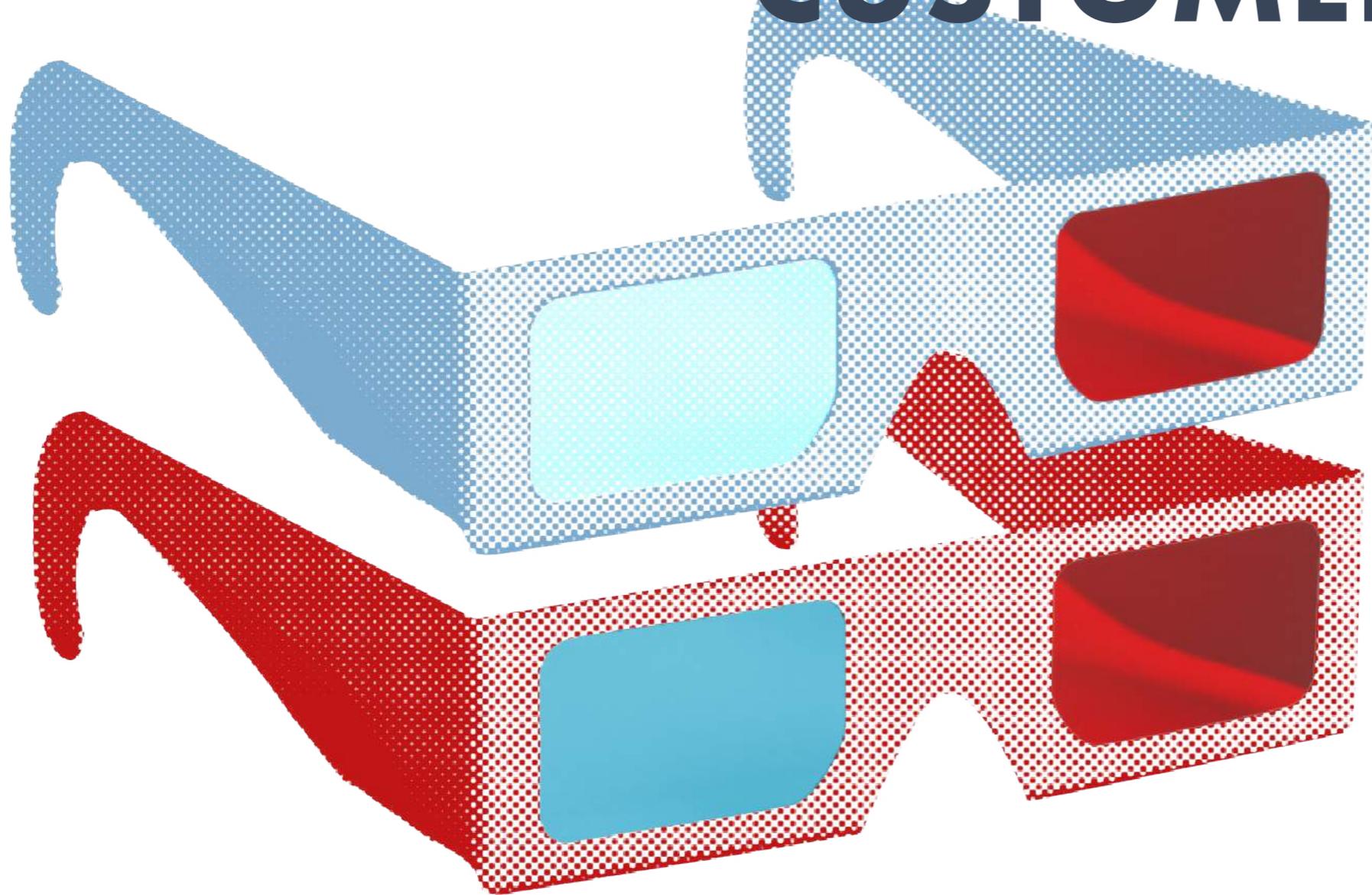
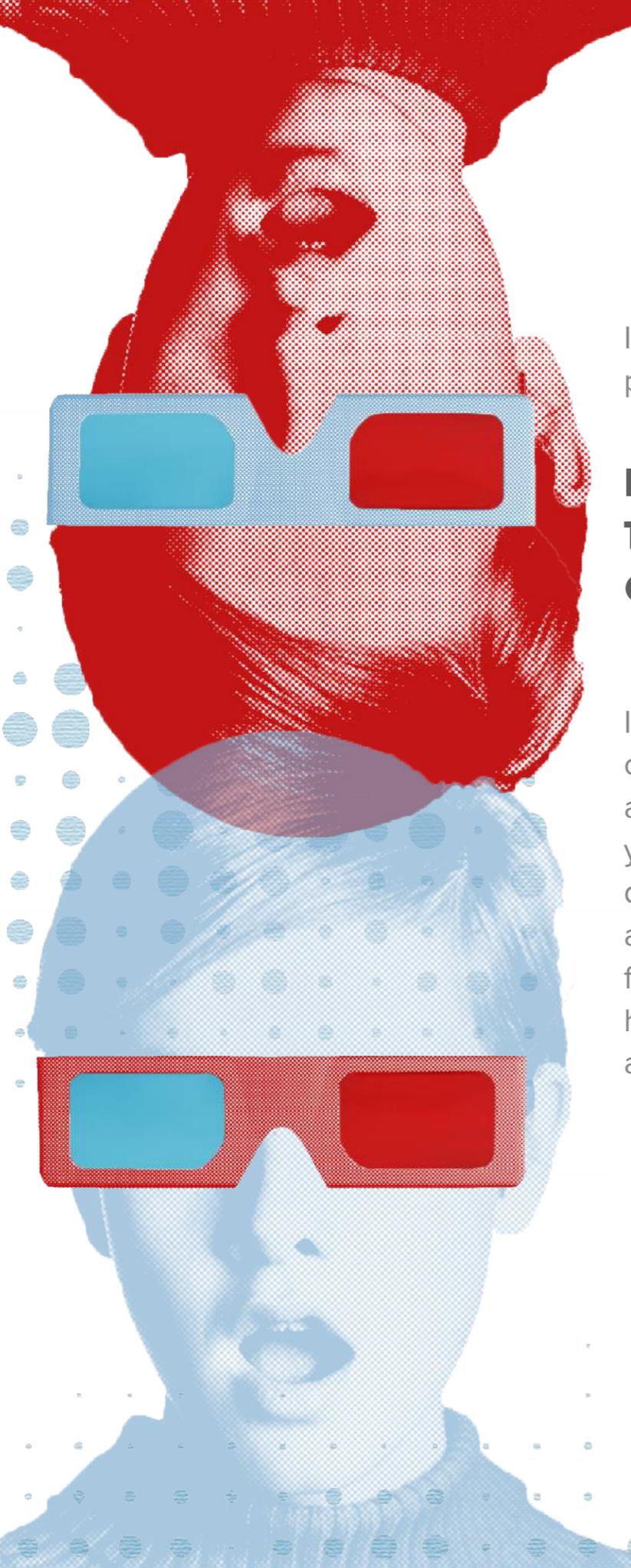




YOUR GUIDE TO

BOOSTING ROI THROUGH CUSTOMER SERVICE



A large, stylized image of a woman's face, split horizontally. The top half is red and the bottom half is blue. She is wearing 3D glasses. The top pair of glasses is blue with red lenses, and the bottom pair is red with blue lenses. The background is white with a pattern of small blue dots.

It's an age-old story: Businesses push products with a series of sales and discounts, expand product lines to capitalize on a singular success, and get behind big-budget promotions.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR GREAT ROI, THERE'S A SIMPLE SOLUTION THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO OVERLOOK: PROVIDE GREAT CUSTOMER SUPPORT.

If you want a no-frills way to boost your customer retention, loyalty, word of mouth, and ultimately your ROI, look no further than your customer service team. Gone are the days of viewing customer support as merely an operational cost. View the team as your front-line ambassadors to create and sustain healthy relationships with your buyers or audience.

Consider that studies have found that it can cost from five to 25 times more to acquire a new customer as to retain one. The numbers don't lie – it's in your best interest to focus on pleasing current customers. While a healthy expansion of your customer base is clearly desirable, when it comes to pure ROI, your budgets can be more effective when used on customer retention efforts. Cultivating the loyalty of your audience through superior customer support efforts is a powerful way to drive ROI.

CH.



**MAXIMIZE YOUR CUSTOMER
SUPPORT KNOWLEDGE BASE**

**REDUCE CALL
ABANDONMENT**

**PROVIDE OPTIMAL CHAT
SUPPORT**

**FOCUS ON SOCIAL
CUSTOMER SUPPORT**

**CARE FOR THE MOBILE-
FIRST CUSTOMER**

INTRODUCTION

To that end, this e-book will focus on support tactics you can deploy *today*. These proven best practices can give your support offerings a shot in the arm that your customers will appreciate. With more than a decade of providing customer support for top brands worldwide, we've seen what's most effective and what is not. Our insight will go a long way toward keeping customers satisfied and coming back through omnichannel support.

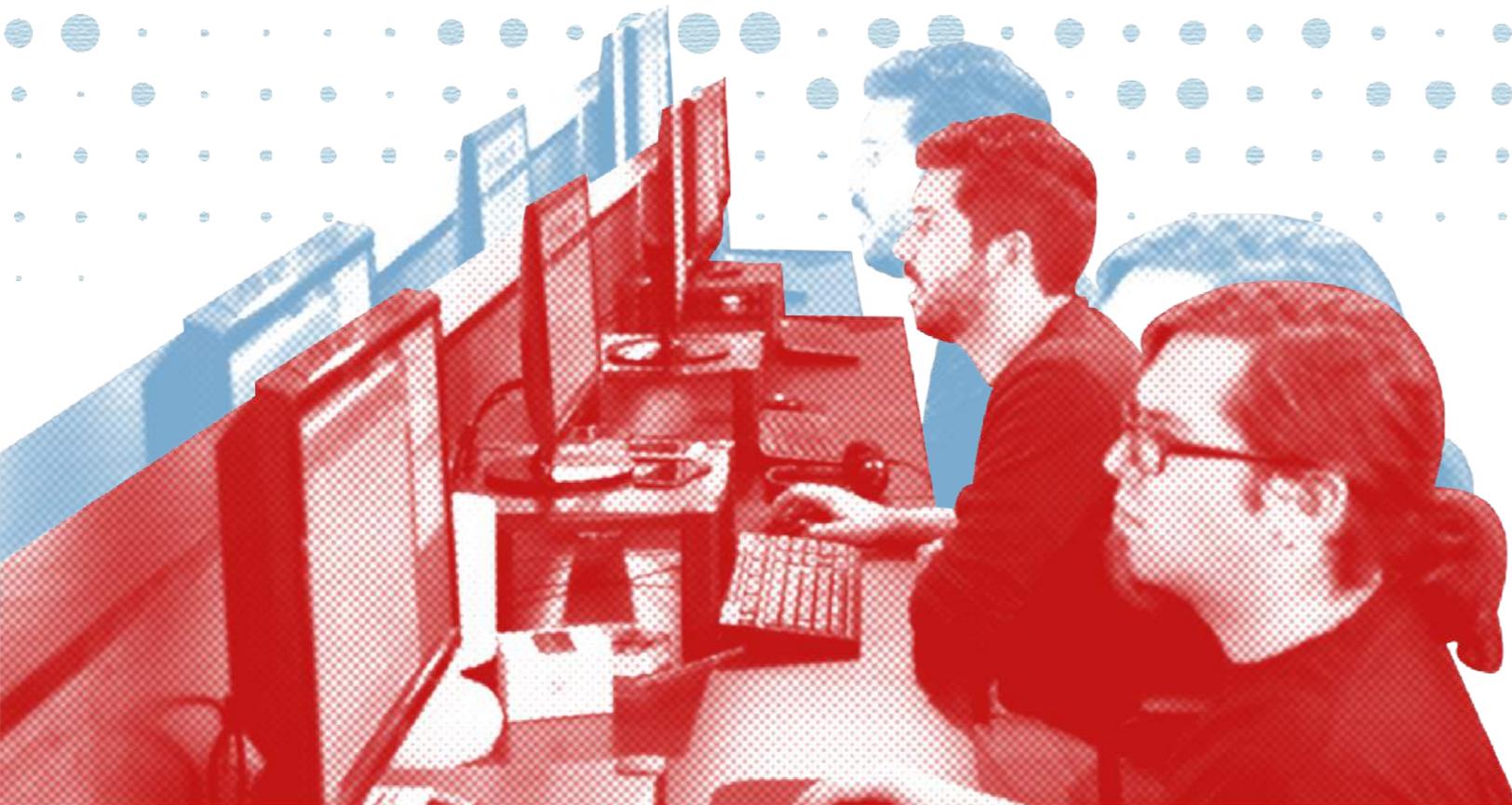
Modern customer support isn't just siloed in a call center; instead, it's the sum total of an experienced, engaged team, using the best tools and practices, making a genuine effort to provide an unexpectedly delightful experience to your customer. Your support team is the first point of contact that many consumers have with your brand. Putting these tips to work can only improve your customers' perception of your organization. Let's start by focusing on a solution that will be a great benefit to both your customers and your support agents.

1

MAXIMIZE YOUR CUSTOMER SUPPORT KNOWLEDGE BASE

As your agents strive to provide quality support and helpful information to your customers, they've no doubt run into the aggravating stumbling block of answering the same questions again and again. Hopefully you've already taken steps to overcome this logjam by developing your own knowledge base, a library of information about your product or service that can help customers discover the answers they need on their own.

It may seem counterintuitive to those committed to providing white-glove support to ask your customers to resolve their own queries. But the reality is, sometimes people prefer to find the answers themselves. Therein lies the important role an effective knowledge base plays in a holistic customer support strategy.



**Delighting customers
doesn't build loyalty;
reducing their effort—
the work they must do
to get their problem
solved—does.**

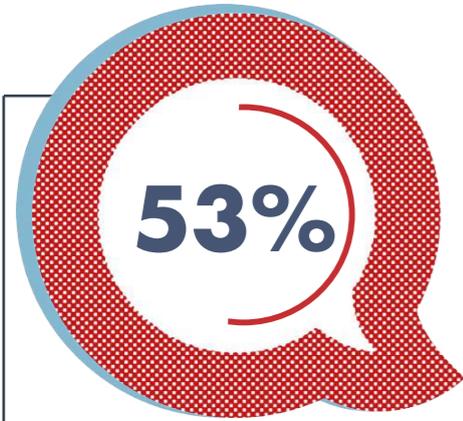
“Stop Trying to Delight Your Customers”
—Harvard Business Review

A knowledge base is not a replacement for a support team, but rather a supplement to one. Why have one? It provides faster answers for the team, and a quicker response will result in happier customers. It looks good for the brand, and happier customers spend more (and more often).

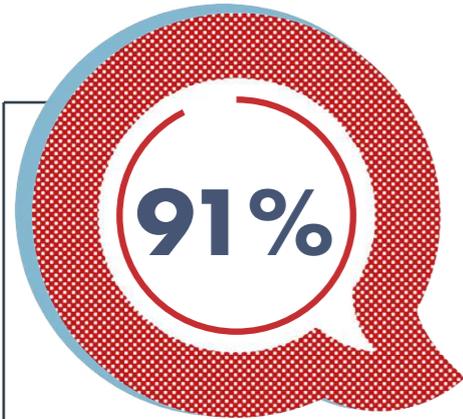
WHY YOU SHOULD HAVE A KNOWLEDGE BASE

Less effort = more loyalty.

Research published in the Harvard Business Review notes that even more important to customers than good service is their own valuable time. One of the main findings of their study is about how effort contributes to customer loyalty: “*Delighting customers doesn't build loyalty; reducing their effort—the work they must do to get their problem solved—does.*”



53% of customers are likely to abandon their online purchase if they can't find a quick answer



91% of customers would use a knowledge base if it met their needs



67% of customers prefer self-service vs. speaking to a representative

When something isn't working properly or you can't figure something out about a new product, what's the first thing you usually do? More than likely, your first step starts with a G and ends in oogle. We in the customer service industry call that self-service. Attempting to find the answer yourself is a low-effort option that (hopefully) leads to a solution. According to [research from Forrester](#), 53% of U.S. online adults are likely to abandon their online purchase if they can't find a quick answer to their question.

MOST CUSTOMERS WANT A KNOWLEDGE BASE

Over the past decade, numerous studies have pointed to increasing consumer desires for easily accessible information via a knowledge base. In a [recent study](#) by our partners at Zendesk, 91% of customers surveyed would use a knowledge base if it met their needs. In the same study, 67% of respondents said they prefer self-service to speaking to a company representative.

FREE UP AGENT TIME FOR MORE MEANINGFUL INTERACTIONS

While there are those who prefer self-service to get their answers from a knowledge base, those who prefer to interact with a support representative can still do so. An effective knowledge base should enable you to support more customers and reserve agents' time for more complex inquiries.

TIPS FOR BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE KNOWLEDGE BASE

A knowledge base is more than an FAQ page (though, an FAQ page is always good start). Of course, just like customers experience good and bad support interactions, there are also good and bad knowledge bases. Here are a few ways to make sure you're meeting your customers' needs:

A large, stylized graphic on the left side of the page. It features a blue, textured shape that resembles a speech bubble or a ticket, with a red outline. Inside the shape, the number "01" is written in a large, blue, sans-serif font. Below the shape, the word "TICKETS" is written in a large, red, outlined, sans-serif font. The background of the graphic is filled with a pattern of small, blue, dotted circles.

TAKE
TIME TO
LOOK AT
THE
TICKETS

KNOW YOUR BIGGEST CONTACT DRIVERS

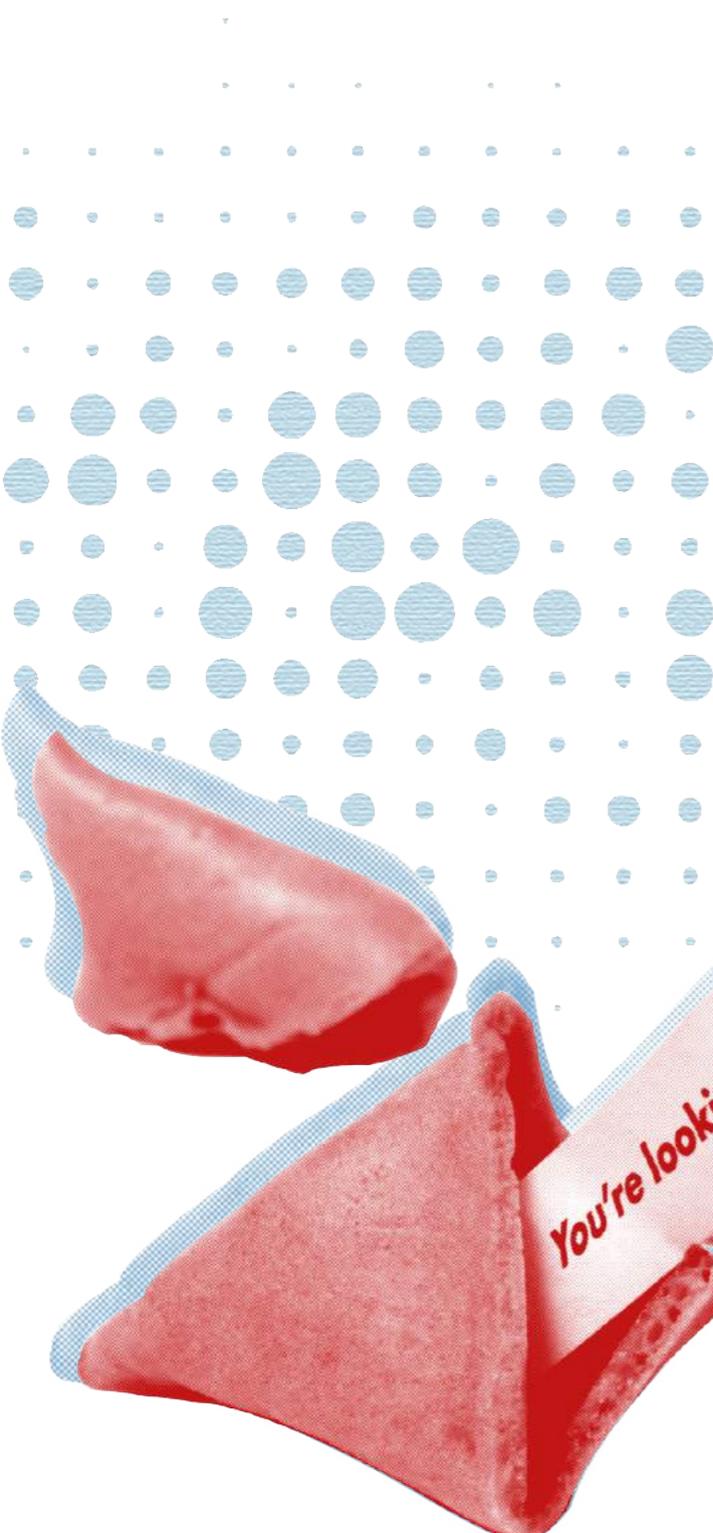
Take the time to look at the tickets and questions your support team receives, and check to make sure the ones driving the most inquiries are answered in your knowledge base. From there, you can work on adding lower contact drivers and other information your customers may seek. You can also design the landing page of your knowledge base to feature answers that are read the most or address a trending question.

UNDERSTAND YOUR CUSTOMER

This is important for any type of customer support, but there's an additional factor to consider when developing a knowledge base. Not only should you understand your customer in terms of who they are demographically and what they want from your company, but also the way they communicate. This is important because it will influence the words they use when they search your knowledge base. Review the ways in which they communicate a question or issue when they contact your support team.

ANTICIPATE CUSTOMER NEEDS

Are you launching a new product? Releasing an update for your game or app? Changing your return policy or the layout of your website? Don't wait until the questions start flowing in to update your knowledge base. Instead, brainstorm the questions and issues your customers are most likely to raise, and populate as much information into your knowledge base so that it can be published when your update goes live.



You're looking for answers...

BRAINSTORM

QUESTIONS AND ISSUES

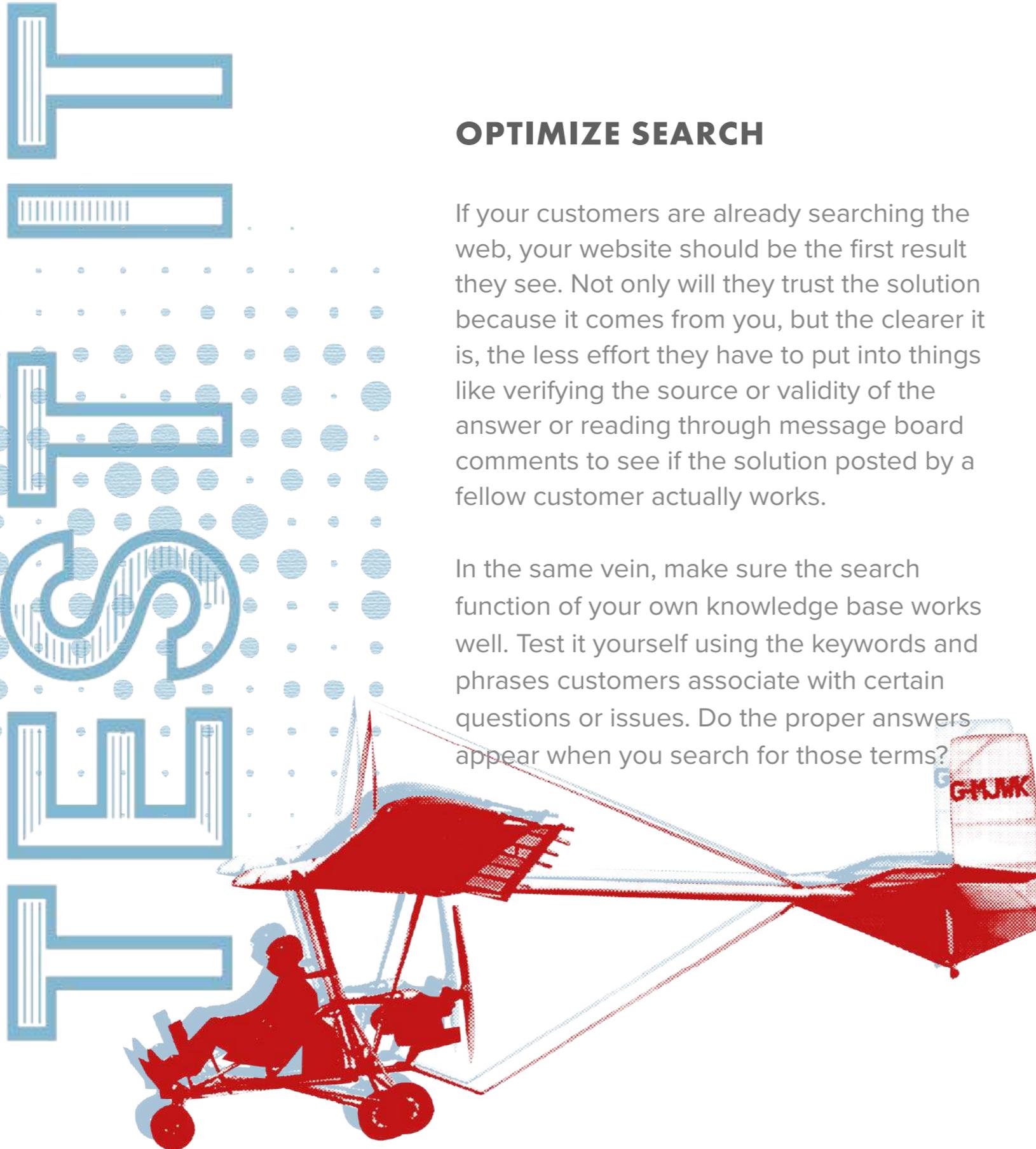
OPTIMIZE SEARCH

If your customers are already searching the web, your website should be the first result they see. Not only will they trust the solution because it comes from you, but the clearer it is, the less effort they have to put into things like verifying the source or validity of the answer or reading through message board comments to see if the solution posted by a fellow customer actually works.

In the same vein, make sure the search function of your own knowledge base works well. Test it yourself using the keywords and phrases customers associate with certain questions or issues. Do the proper answers appear when you search for those terms?

ITERATE, ITERATE, ITERATE

This is where a proper analytics tool is essential. Even free platforms like Google Analytics will give you critical information about how your knowledge base is performing. For instance, you can see what terms your customers are searching and test them, as mentioned, to ensure the right results appear. Another thing you'll want to look at is how many people are performing subsequent searches or submitting a ticket after their initial search. Activity like this can indicate that an answer was not found or clear, or that the answer provided did not solve the customer's issue. Use this information to improve existing answers or add new ones. Establish a regular time to perform these updates (at least twice annually), and make it part of your product managers' routine.



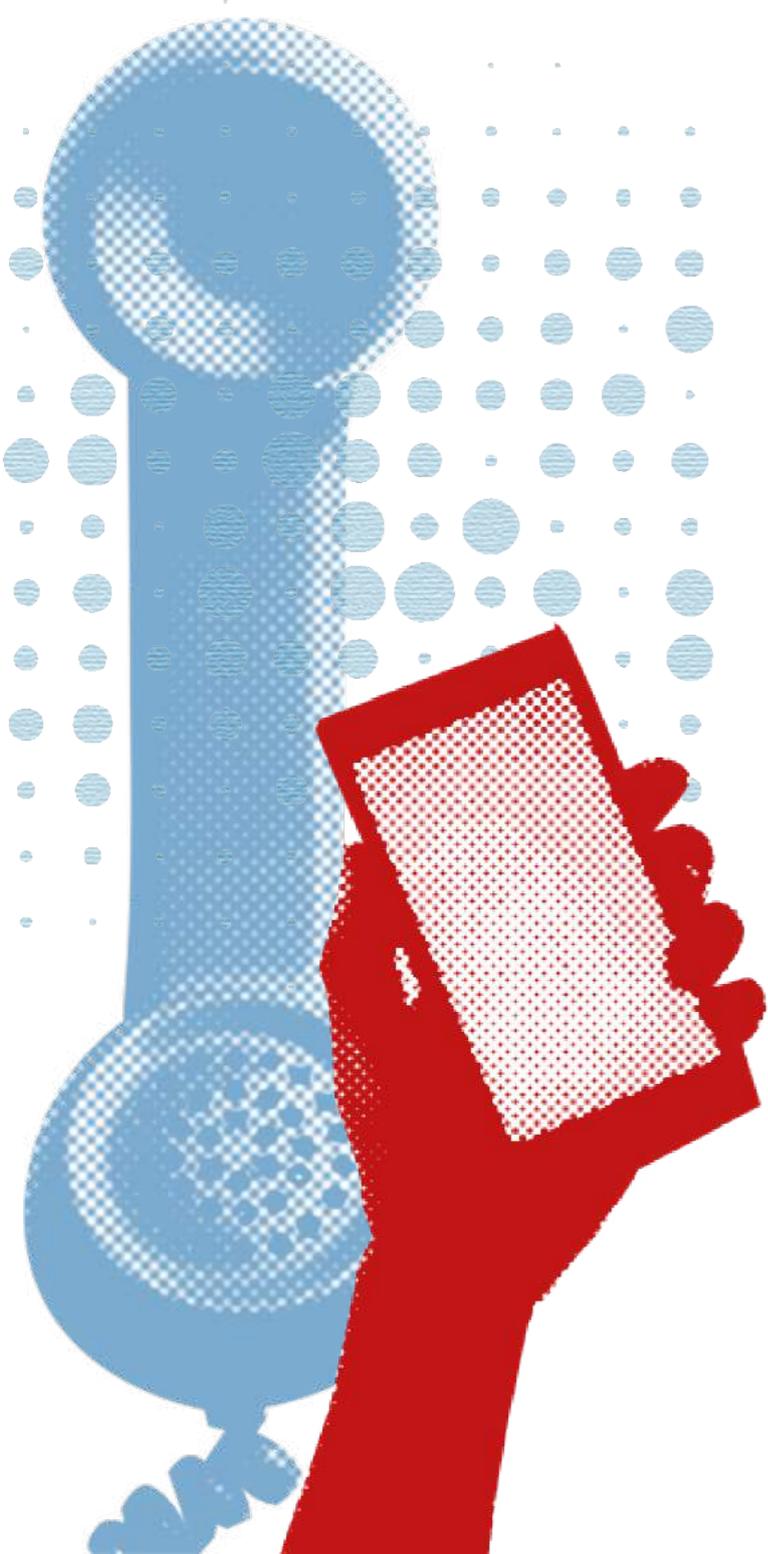
2

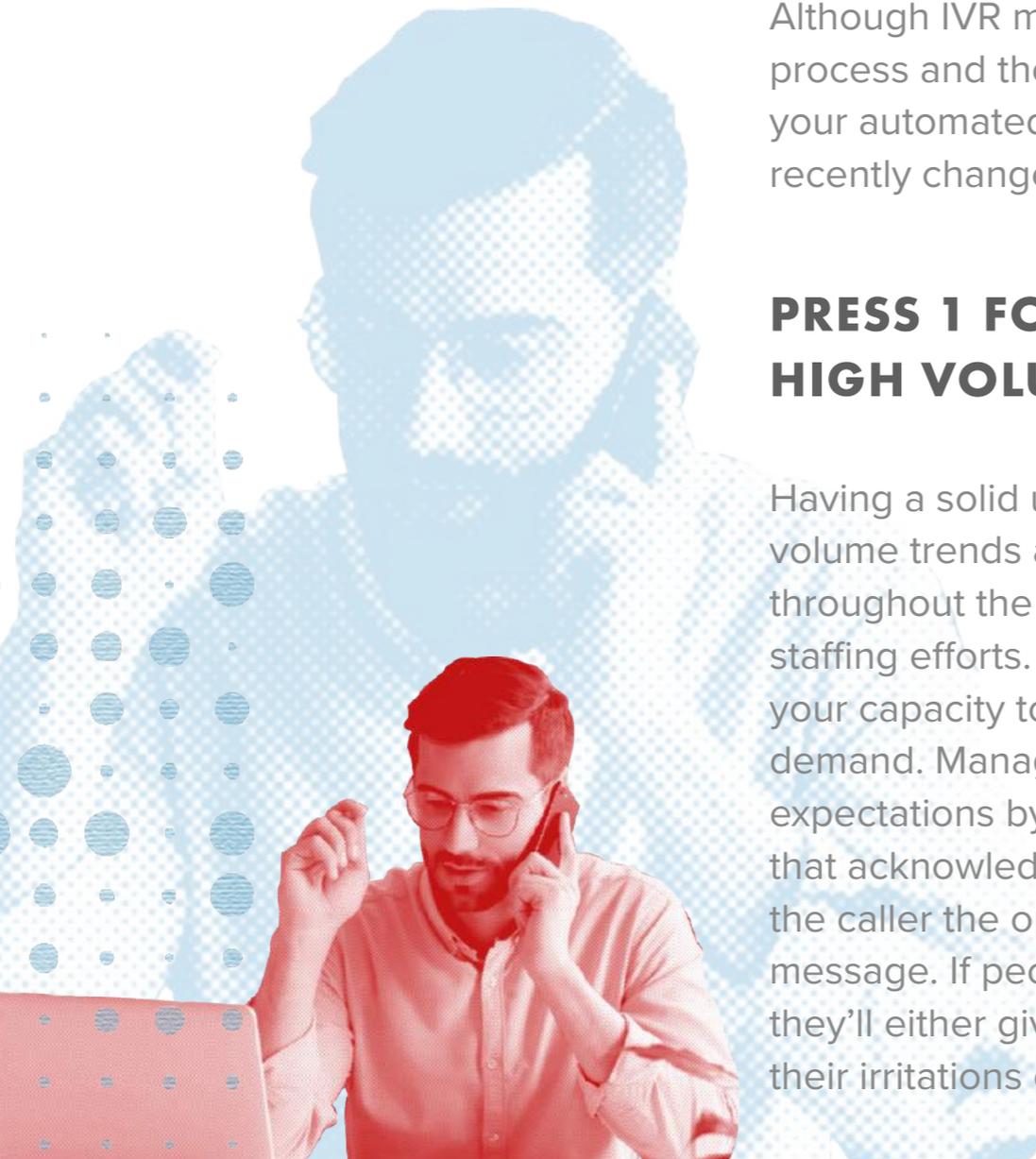
REDUCE CALL ABANDONMENT

Building a knowledge base for your customers can seem like a big undertaking, but with the right planning and strategy, the long-term benefits are wholly worth it.

But even if you've established a robust knowledge base, your patrons will sometimes need to speak to a live agent to get the help they need. Look at this as an opportunity to excel and prove how much you value your customer. Unfortunately, that lofty goal is sometimes too far out of reach for hapless organizations.

How many times have you called up a company, only to drop off somewhere down the line? It happens to most of us at some stage. Even if you've made it through an IVR (Interactive Voice Response) system with enough options to make your head spin, you might still face long hold times to speak with a real person, which naturally creates the urge to drop off the call. Not only will this increase call-abandon rates, but it can also reduce first-contact resolution and leave a sour taste with the customer — both of which are detrimental in the world of customer service.





Although IVR messages and hold times are inevitable, there are still ways to improve the process and thereby reduce your call-abandonment rates. Think of these tips as options on your automated response system — please read each entry fully, as our options have recently changed!

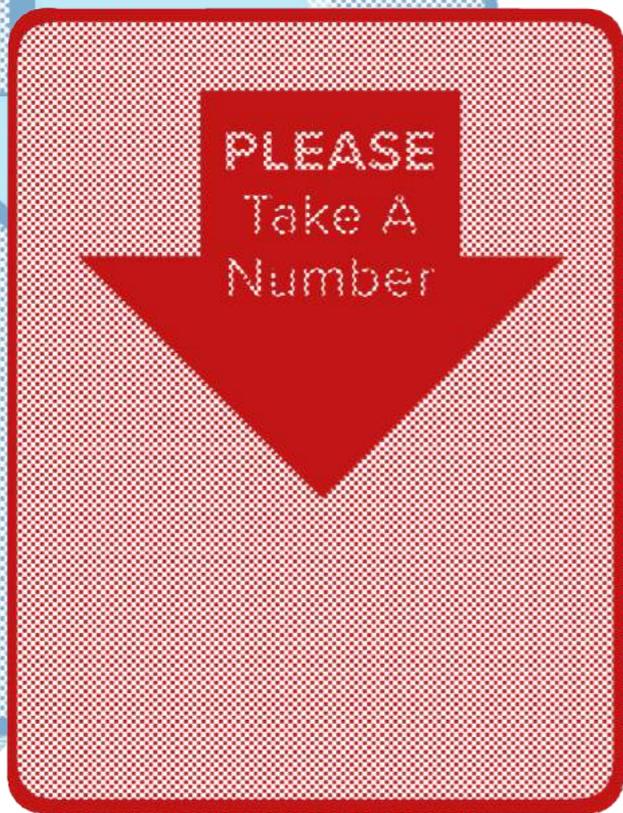
PRESS 1 FOR “ANTICIPATE HIGH VOLUMES.”

Having a solid understanding of your weekly volume trends and high-traffic periods throughout the year will help you prioritize staffing efforts. Know when to maximize your capacity to properly accommodate the demand. Manage the customer’s expectations by using pre-recorded alerts that acknowledge the high volume, or give the caller the opportunity to leave a message. If people are left waiting too long, they’ll either give up on the call or take out their irritations on your agent.

PRESS 2 FOR “IMPLEMENT A SMART IVR.”

Talkdesk explained that inbound callers don’t just abandon in queue, but also typically abandon in the IVR. That usually means that the IVR is either too long, too complicated, or uses unclear prompts. Using a concise, helpful IVR can go a long way; the customer’s needs may not be fully understood, but they’ll feel that they’re making progress. Something as simple as a menu including live call, voicemail, callback, and a prompt on where to find information online would be a great start.

FIND OPPORTUNITIES



PRESS 3 FOR “SET PROPER EXPECTATIONS.”

During periods of high volume, it’s hard to avoid putting customers on hold at some point. A great way to combat this is a simple IVR message letting the customer know where they are in the queue or how long they will need to hold. Customers will know their expectations and agents will know what their goal is for each call — everyone wins!

PRESS 4 FOR “PROPERLY CONFIGURE YOUR SUPPORT SOFTWARE.”

It’s not uncommon for an abandon rate to seem higher than what it is; this could be due to the way your talk software is configured. If a caller can’t be answered by your agent because of a software issue, the customer will have to wait longer and will be more inclined to abandon the call. Ensure strong technical performance by staffing those with a solid understanding of how to identify and fix these issues before they affect your customers.

Now that you’ve gone through each step, you’re likely providing more efficient and communicative phone tree messaging and management. You’ve successfully improved the quality of your customer support, evidenced by your lower drop-off number. Congratulations — and thanks for calling.

LET THE CUSTOMER
KNOW WHERE THEY
ARE IN THE QUEUE OR
HOW LONG THEY WILL
NEED TO HOLD

3

PROVIDE OPTIMAL CHAT SUPPORT

ANOTHER FUNDAMENTAL COMPONENT OF OMNICHANNEL SUPPORT IS LIVE CHAT.

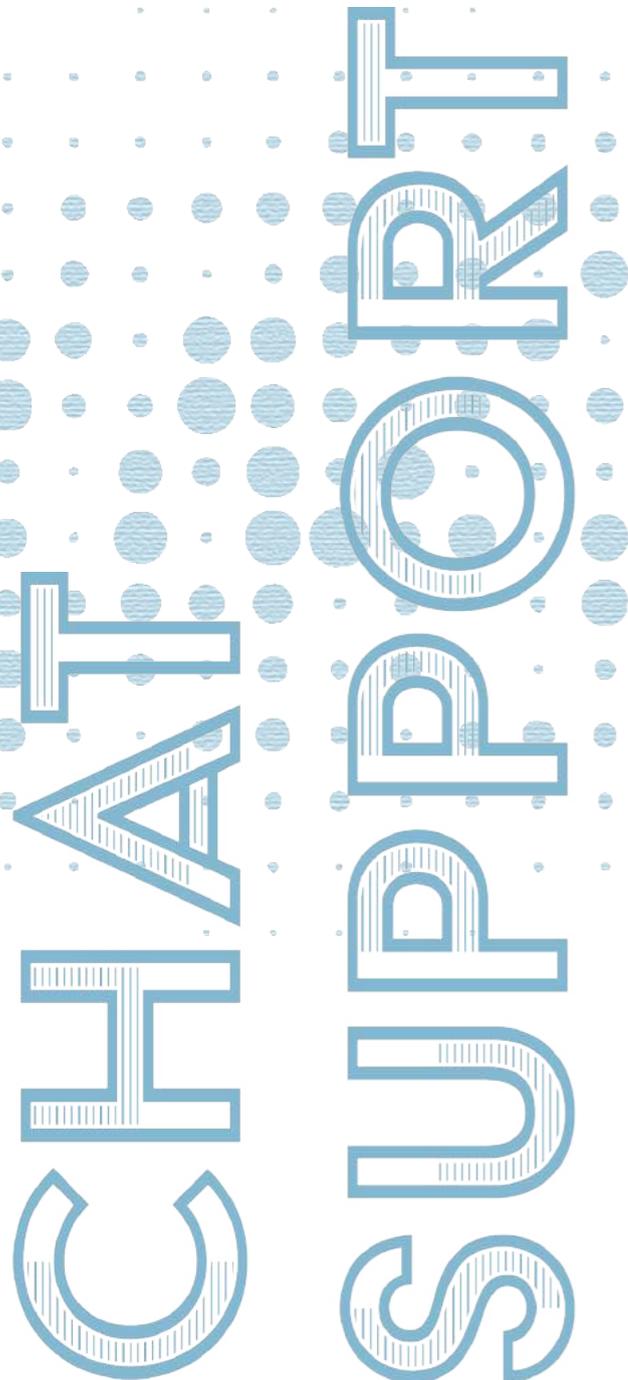
Taking traditional phone-support etiquette and marrying it with email customer service, live chat continues to develop as a must-have tool in your CS arsenal. This means your online chat support agents are just as important to your digital customer service efforts as those taking phone calls and pulling email tickets. They're all similarly tasked with ensuring that customers contacting your company go away feeling satisfied. To that end, here are tips your team can utilize to provide optimal live-chat support:

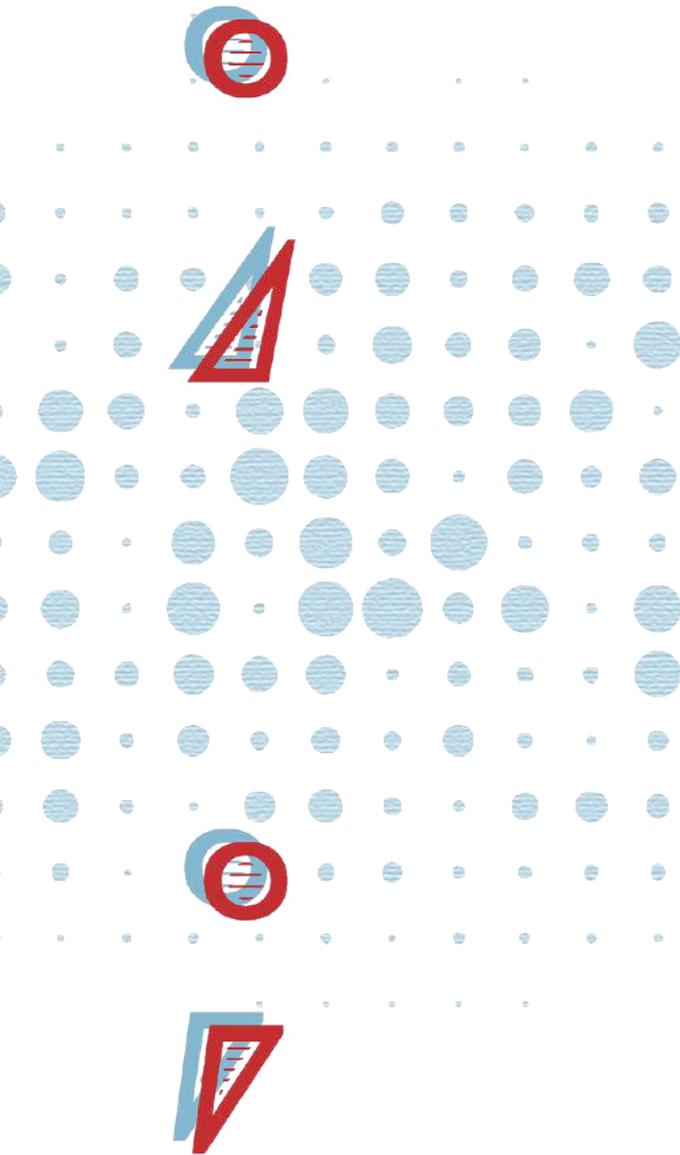
WRITE IN THE ACTIVE VOICE

Make your sentences clearer by avoiding writing in the passive voice. This helps you communicate with customers more effectively, and it's more likely they'll understand your explanations or instructions.

KEEP THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN

Once you receive a request, acknowledge receipt of it as quickly as possible. Then as you help the customer resolve their issue, remind them that you're working on it and thank them for their patience. There's no guarantee you'll solve the issue quickly. By staying in touch with the customer, you'll at least let them know that it's in progress and that you're not ignoring them.





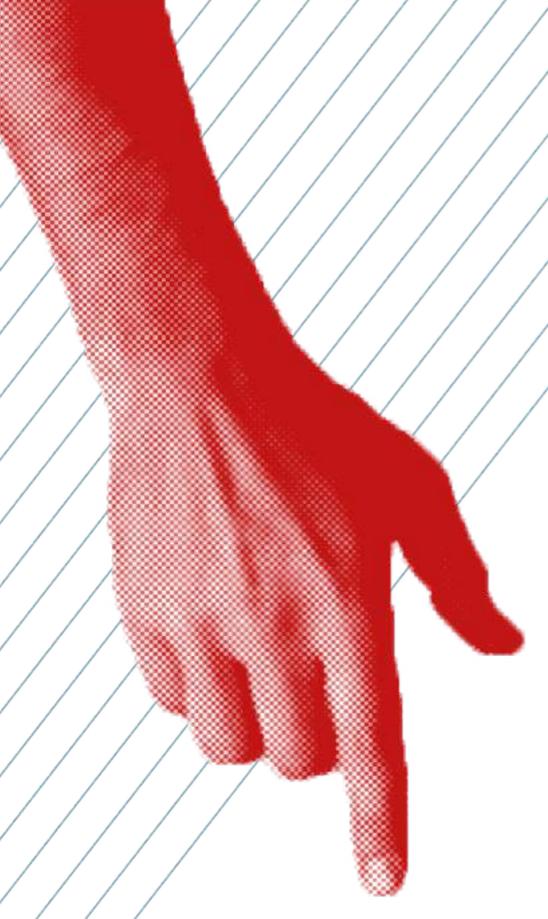
OFFER NATIVE LANGUAGE SERVICE

To accommodate your users throughout the world, offer chat customer support in the native languages of the regions in which your product or service is distributed. This goes beyond ensuring that you're providing the same superior service to English-speaking and non-English speaking customers alike. Regional and native support agents will also have a better cultural understanding of the audience and an authentic sense of their product affinities.

BE PROFESSIONAL AND FOCUS ON HIGH-QUALITY WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

In today's age of shorthand text and messaging that consists of lingos and slang, it's easy to fall into that style of writing during chat support interactions — especially if the customer is using that level of communication. While it's good that your chat customer support team reflects an appropriate voice for your brand, it's important to remain professional with proper grammar and written etiquette.

REMAIN PROFESSIONAL WITH PROPER GRAMMAR AND WRITTEN ETIQUETTE.



USE THE CUSTOMER'S FIRST NAME (WHEN APPROPRIATE)

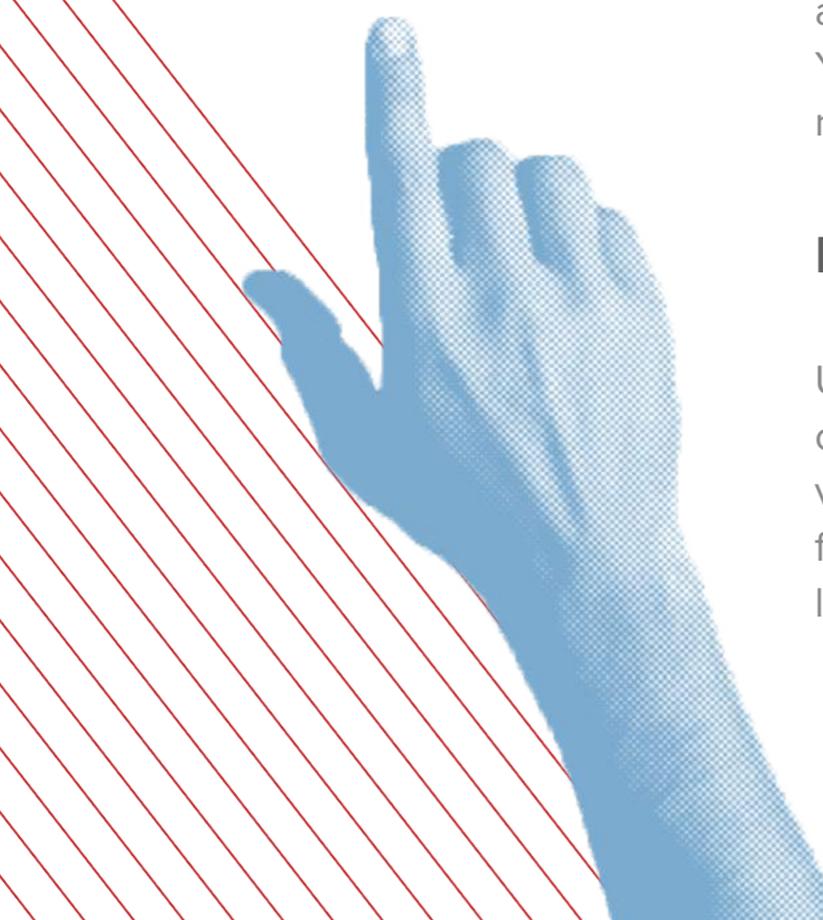
There's nothing a customer likes to hear more than their own name. For some audiences, using their given name is a courteous way to establish a genuine human connection; others may prefer to be addressed more formally. (Know your audience). Showing the customer you remember their name means they're more likely to assume you're thorough in all aspects of the customer service experience. You don't have to overdo it, but use it regularly throughout the interaction.

DO SOME PREP WORK

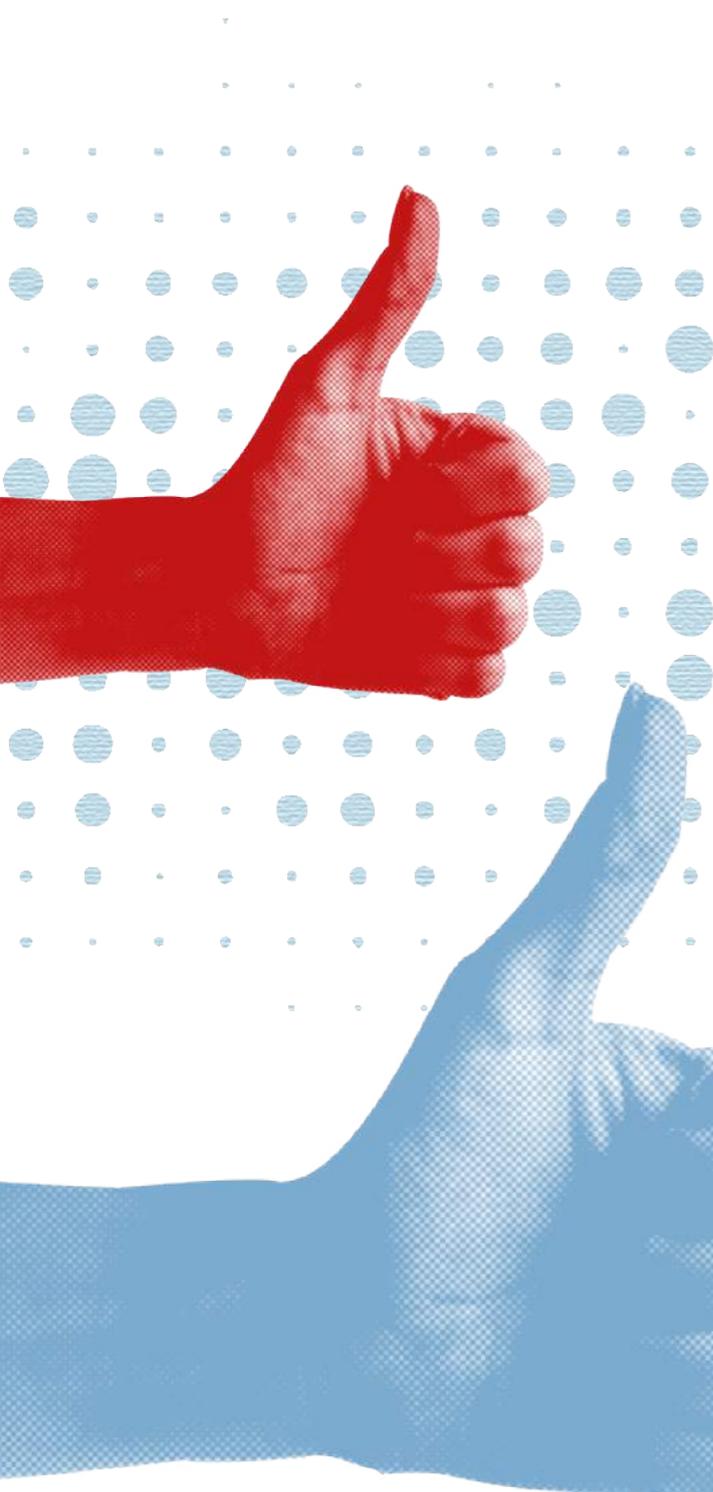
Use pre-approved replies and tweak to customize them. Have many types and variations available so agents aren't starting from scratch each time, especially for any long explanations.

OFFER SEAMLESS OMNICHANNEL CAPABILITIES

Your customers will often use chat customer support as a convenient method to get assistance for many reasons, such as personal preference or multitasking. However, their needs may require additional research or complicated technical steps better explained over a phone call or email/ticket. Your chat team should have the ability to contact your customer by the method that best resolves their need, whether that's scheduling a phone call to talk through the solution or submitting an email for further research and follow-up. Similarly, your agent might begin an interaction on chat, move to text, and end up on voice. The ability to do this within the same interaction and on behalf of the customer will set your chat experience positively apart from others.



CREATE A GENUINE HUMAN CONNECTION

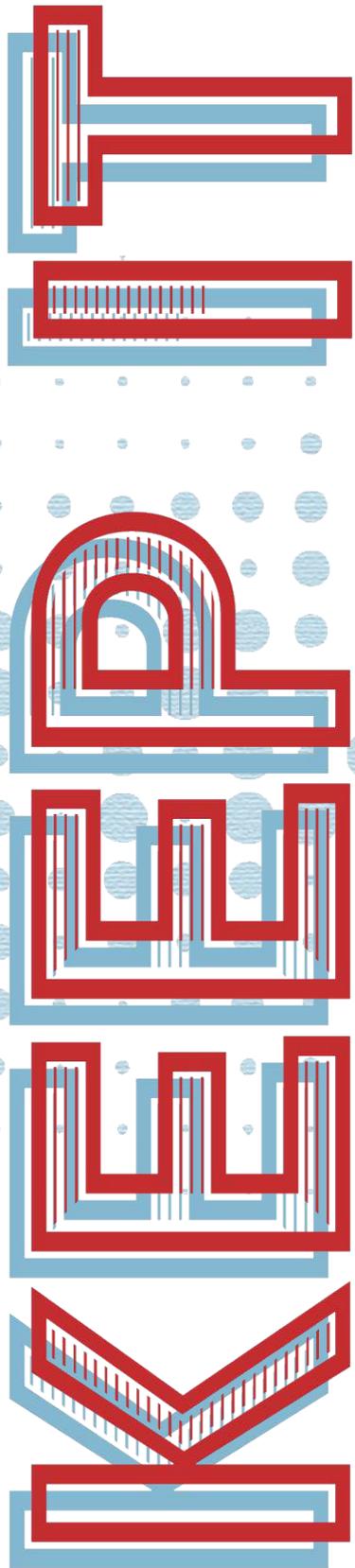


ALWAYS STAY POSITIVE

Maintaining an empathetic, positive attitude goes a long, long way. Look at each problem as a new opportunity to present the customer with a satisfying solution. For example, if your customer has a complaint about a certain service, you may be able to offer a free or discounted additional product in order to make them happy. Strive to leave them feeling better than when they contacted you. Remind the customer that you understand their frustration and will work as hard as possible to resolve the issue in a way that leaves them delighted.

ASK THE CUSTOMER TO FILL OUT A SURVEY

Give your customers the opportunity to provide feedback on the interaction. Keeping it on the same channel as the live chat makes it more likely the user will fill out the survey and give your company valuable data on how you managed the interaction. It also increases the likelihood that you'll retain that customer.



SEND THE CHAT HISTORY

Once the encounter is complete, email the chat history to the customer or provide a way for them to download the conversation so they can refer back to the interaction. They may need this if additional follow-up is required, and consumers appreciate companies that practice transparency when it comes to customer service.

BE REALISTIC

Being upfront with your customers will build their trust. If you mislead or mischaracterize what will happen in order to make them happy, it could backfire if the solution doesn't come to fruition. They may not always love the answers you give them, but they'll always appreciate being told precisely what to expect and exactly what's happening.

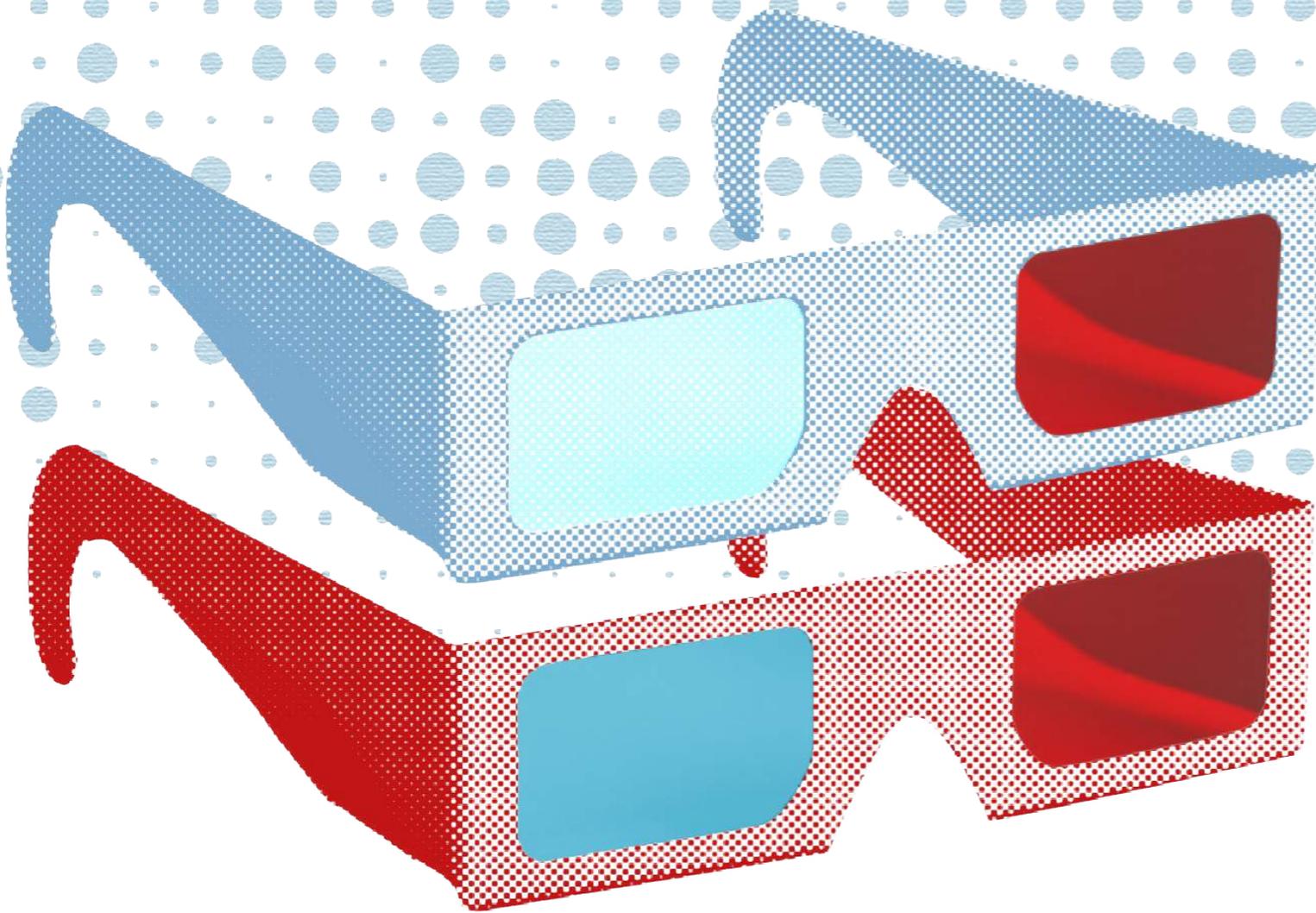
Following these simple tips can help your chat customer support team create a systemic practice that leaves customers satisfied and ready to give you more business. But this isn't the only real-time form of communication that today's consumers are using to get in touch with brands.

REAL

4

FOCUS ON SOCIAL MEDIA CUSTOMER SUPPORT

With 80% of customers expecting companies to respond to their social posts within 24 hours, it's imperative for brands to proactively serve those customers and resolve their very visible and public queries. Much has been made of how successful companies harness the power of social media and how it can boost engagement and trust. Of course, a strong content strategy is a large part of that success — your content, visuals, and a strong sense of your brand are all hallmarks of a powerful social media presence. But to really bring your brand to the next level, you need to have strong organic growth. Do that by creating a community and building your social support presence.



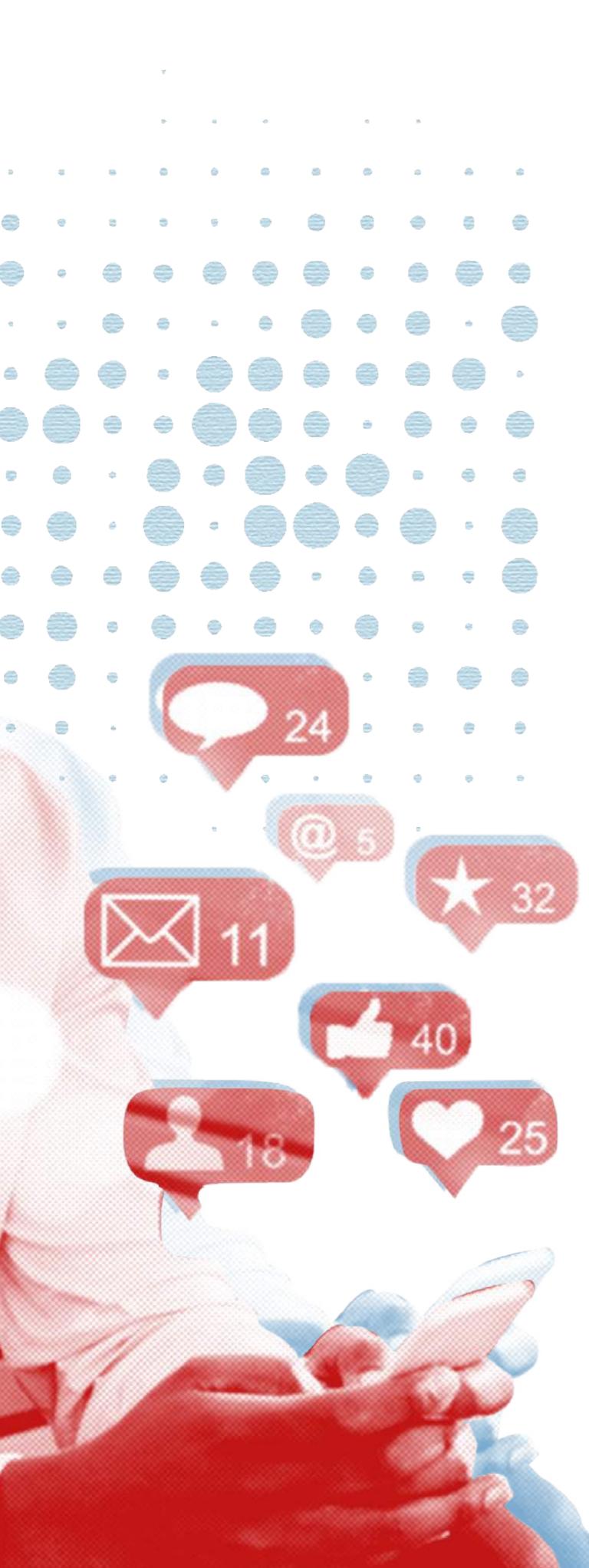
Social media customer support is incredibly important yet often overlooked. As companies continue to crowd the social media space, this is an area in which brands can differentiate themselves. Here are four reasons that underscore the importance of social customer support.

SOCIAL SUPPORT BUILDS TRUST

The main reason social customer support is so important is that it creates a sense of trust in your audience, which is absolutely vital for brands. Social customer support gives people a clear method of contact, a paper trail they can follow, and, most importantly, it shows (sometimes in a public way) that you take their concerns seriously. A social media presence for support shows users that you evolve with them and gives them more reason to believe in your brand. That carries over into purchasing habits and brand loyalty. For example, a Twitter study found that customers who receive responses from brands on that channel are willing to spend anywhere between 3% and 20% more on their products in the future. It's a short-term investment that yields long-term results.

SOCIAL SUPPORT DEMONSTRATES EMPATHY

Who doesn't enjoy interacting with a human being offering a clear voice and personality (as opposed to bland corporate promo-speak)? Effective social customer support allows you to give a sense of humanity to your brand and, when necessary, demonstrate that you understand your customers' pain points and are actively trying to resolve them. Similar to how intelligent, focused content moderation can transform a brand, effective social customer support proves to the customer that you understand them, you hear them, and are ready to get it right.



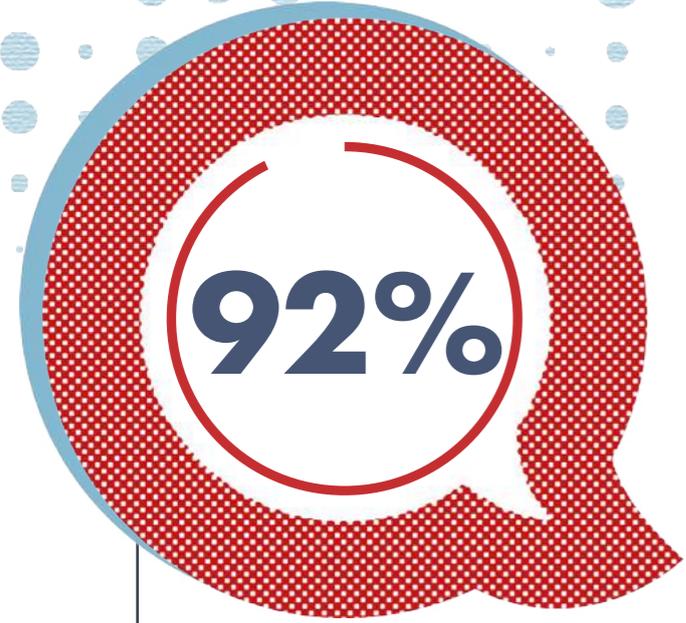
SOCIAL SUPPORT IMPROVES YOUR EFFICIENCY

Social customer service is often overlooked for more traditional support channels like email and phone. But consider the amount of data you can collect while still providing efficient service; that information can help you better understand your customer concerns. Use it to analyze the range of issues raised by customers, the average response times, and the solutions offered. Knowing that will help you refine your support offerings to ensure problems are solved even more quickly and efficiently.

SOCIAL SUPPORT YIELDS HIGHER ENGAGEMENT

Ultimately, the goal of having a social media support strategy in place is to get organic growth and engagement. By using this channel to provide support, you're resolving customer issues while boosting engagement. It's an effective way to demonstrate that your brand cares about its customers, actively finds solutions for issues, and builds a sense of community among your users.

It's no easy feat, but the results are worth it. [A study by Aberdeen](#) found that companies with a well-designed customer service approach had a retention rate of 92%, a rate that's difficult to achieve without the social customer service edge.



Companies with a well-designed customer service approach have a 92% retention rate

TRUST

EMPATHY

EFFICIENCY

ENGAGEMENT

**TRUST, EMPATHY, EFFICIENCY,
ENGAGEMENT**

These are all bedrocks of a strong social media strategy that gets you visible results. Using social customer service as a tool in your overall strategy is a powerful way to build out your digital presence and establish your brand. When executed correctly, it has the power to transform brands and bring in new audiences.

5

CARE FOR THE MOBILE-FIRST CONSUMER

More often than not, those calls and posts coming into your help desk queue originate on a mobile phone. Because, let's face it, we probably spend hours per day on our mobile devices. (Four, according to one study.) But what if that user would have preferred to use their mobile device to get support without making a call? When they want to access online help, should those users be forced to abandon their cell phones and seek out a desktop or laptop?



We're living in a mobile-first society. For the majority of brands, it's in your best interest to cater to the mobile customer. Below are a few essential steps you can take to ensure you're providing a mobile-friendly customer experience.

DESIGN A MOBILE-FRIENDLY WEBSITE

By now, this should be a no-brainer, but it's one of the most important things you can do. If your support portal is hosted or designed separately from your main site, ensure that it's easy to navigate via mobile as well.

Make sure to try it out for yourself or contract some QA testers to do a thorough test. Do your customers have to pinch and zoom to read important text? Do essential buttons like "Submit" or "Contact Us" get lost off the side of the page on certain size displays? Is it responsive to all phone displays or just the most recent models?

If you offer phone support, make your contact number an easy click-to-call button. Don't display your phone number as part of an image, forcing customers to bounce back and forth between their browser and call app to manually enter the number.

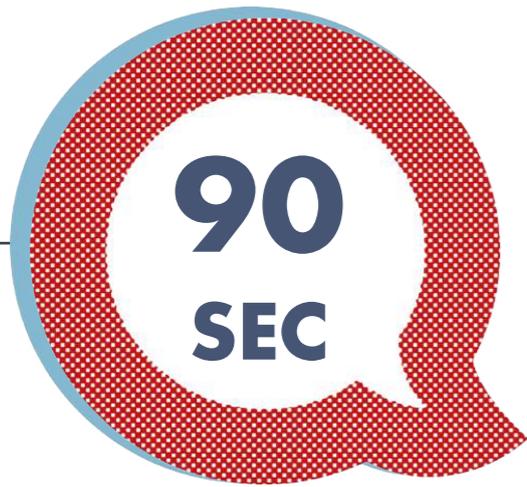
RESPOND ON SOCIAL MEDIA

We discussed above the importance of providing support via social. For good reason: The vast majority of social media usage is via mobile devices. And mobile users, who check their devices an average of 63 times daily, expect a quick response when they reach out to brands with questions and feedback.



63x
/DAY

Mobile phone users check their devices 63x/day



The average response time for a text message is just 90 seconds

OFFER TEXT/SMS SUPPORT

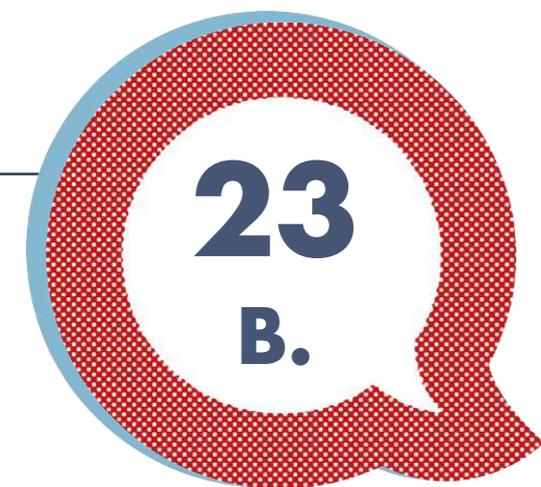
When you need a quick response from a friend, do you email them or text them? Exactly. So why should customer support be any different? Familiar and convenient, text support is like a live chat, but without the need to stay connected the entire time.

In 2019, the world sent approximately 23 billion text messages. Per. Day. It's safe to say that texting has become most people's primary form of communication. As with social media, leverage the platforms your customers are already comfortable with to provide them the most convenient support possible. Don't worry, your agents won't have to use mobile; there are several tools that allow them to manage text messages from a computer. Just keep in mind that customers will likely expect quick responses and around-the-clock availability.

RESPOND QUICKLY

The average response time for a text message is just 90 seconds, and even that can feel too long when you're waiting for an important reply. Compare that to the average response time for a customer support email (around 12 hours), and it's easy to see why consumer expectations may seem more demanding in a mobile-first world.

Whether you're just considering the mobile-first customer or honing your current support strategy to better serve them, consider both short- and long-term goals. Some website adjustments will take longer to roll out, while things like a click-to-call button can be quick to implement. If you don't have the bandwidth to add full-time staff to support your social channels or offer text support, consider outsourcing to a team of experienced agents who've done both for a range of businesses. It's a worthwhile investment; the payoff will be in the smiles on your customers' faces when they eventually look up from their devices.



In 2019, the world sent approximately 23 billion text messages

GREAT SUPPORT LEADS TO GREAT ROI

Consumers show their loyalty by becoming repeat customers and recommending your product or service to others. Earn that loyalty by taking steps now to improve your service offerings. The tips and procedures outlined above are effective methods to ensure customer retention for your brand or product. The investment you make in your support offerings will keep customers coming back and will reap a greater return for your company.

ABOUT MODSQUAD

ModSquad is a global provider of on-demand digital engagement services, known as ModSourcing: outsourcing *modernized*. Our experienced professionals engage your customers and communities on a personal level across online, mobile, e-commerce, in-game, application, and social media channels.

ModSquad offers expert-level service in customer support, moderation, social, and community. We've strategized, designed, and delivered digital initiatives for clients in more than 70 countries, with the capacity to respond in 50+ languages and dialects. We are the Mods!

855-818-MODS

CONTACT US

BOOK A TIME

