



# The Ultimate Guide to Customer Service 101



## Learn More About Quality Customer Service

Free up your team to focus on what truly matters: delivering exceptional value and driving your business forward.

**C o r e . O n s h a r p . c o m**



## Overview

### *Customer service.*

For you, those words might refer to the name of your team or department. But to customers, the worst "customer service" might remind them of hours wasted waiting on hold, repeating information to representatives, and not getting their problems resolved.

And that's because many customer service teams aren't actually working to serve their customers. Instead, customer service organizations treat cases like numbers, and not like people. Customers are forced to use long forms and complicated phone trees to get the help they need, instead of using the communication channels they prefer. And worst of all, customers aren't empowered to succeed – instead, they receive one-off answers to questions, and not the tools to develop a growth strategy.


The dire state of modern customer service is a real shame – because as it turns out, helping your customers succeed helps your company, too. In fact, in a recent HubSpot Research survey, they found that companies that prioritized customer success were also growing in revenue. And successful companies are happy customers – and happy customers grow your business faster than sales and marketing by telling friends and family and, eventually, referring new, loyalty customers. And customer happiness starts with customer service.

## What Does Customer Service Mean?

Simply put, customer service is helping customers solve problems, teaching them how to use products, and answering questions. The definition is in the name of the concept – customer service is about serving the needs of customers. And customer service can take many forms – from troubleshooting a product installation to downloading software to processing a purchase return.

In most customer service interactions, a customer reaches out to a company to make a request, ask a question, or note a complaint, and a customer service representative (or their team) works quickly to offer support, expertise, and help. The quality of a company's customer service – good or bad – can play a huge role in the company's success. Happy customers spend more money and refer their friends and family members to companies that help them succeed – and dedicated customer service plays a critical role in customer happiness.

On the flip side of the coin, unhappy customers with bad experiences spread the word even further among their network and could actually cost you customers and impact your reputation, both online and in person. Just look at how many of this Yelp user's friends could see this negative review of a Comcast store:



**San Francisco, CA**  
 105 friends  
 26 reviews  
 13 photos

- Share review
- Embed review
- Compliment
- Send message
- Follow Kat C.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 7/30/2017

**Advice for Store Manager:**

Beautiful store, but it would help to either staff the front desk so people know to check in or make your check in display area BIGGER so people can actually see it!

Efficiency counts, and is often more important than the service aspect.

Another thought ; training your staff to say " hello" before asking a customer if they " signed in yet, and to put your name on the list before we call you". Customer service 101. Greetings come first.

Seriously so irritated with Comcast/ Xfinity ripping people off with their price increases and promotional pricing BS. And then as icing on the cake, make someone wait forever to return an item. This is the gratitude one gets with being a Comcast customer for 11 years.

If you think customer service (or customer support) are at odds with customer success, think again – building a relationship with customers by providing excellent service is a critical building block of helping customers succeed.

One of the biggest differences? While customer service is typically reactive, customer success is proactive – wherein customer success managers reach out to work with customers on strategy and goal setting, compared to customer service representatives responding to individual problems and troubleshooting. But more on that later.

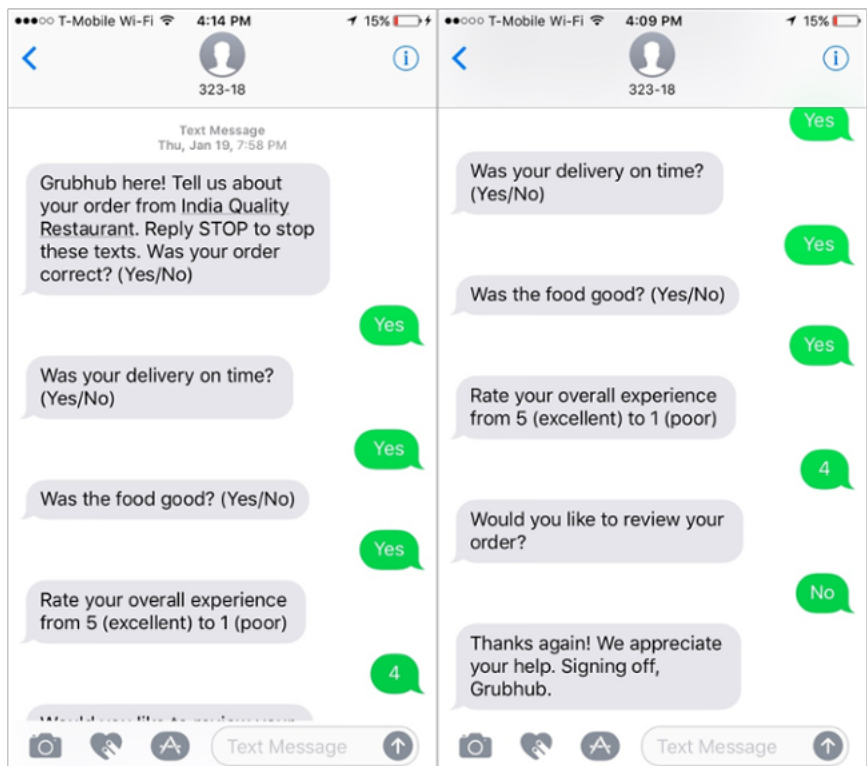
## Types of Customer Service

### Phone

Many organizations offer customer service primarily through phone interactions. Customers call a hotline, enter a queue, and a customer service representative picks up the phone. Forrester found that phone-based customer service is decreasing in popularity, though – and that phone service is viewed as an escalation of another channel, such as email or web-based service.

### Text

Twilio surveyed consumers to learn about their messaging habits, and while 90% of respondents said they wanted to use messaging with companies – via texting on their phones or messaging apps (more on those below) – only 48% of businesses were equipped to reach customers via messaging. Customers want to connect with businesses for things like order confirmations, reminders, status updates, surveys, and coupons – and that's partly because people keep messaging app push notifications turned on – because they're already using the platforms every day.



*GrubHub uses SMS messaging to glean customer feedback on recent orders and its mobile app.*

## Email

A lot of customer service is still requested and delivered via email – where it's still possible to offer a human touch, even over a computer. In fact, Twilio found that email was the second most preferred method of customer service communication for all ages – which is perhaps a reflection of the time-saving capabilities of submitting requests on your own time, without having to wait on hold.

----- Forwarded message -----  
 From: Zappos.com <cs@zappos.com>  
 Date: Sat, Dec 3, 2011 at 10:12 PM  
 Subject: Recently ordered shoes (Order: 113884488 )  
 To: [REDACTED]

Hello [REDACTED]

Thank you for contacting the Zappos.com Customer Loyalty Team. My name is Paul and it would be my pleasure to put a smile on your face today!

Those shoes are falling apart on you?! That is unacceptable and I am so sorry for that! Luckily for you, I was recently in an experimental lab explosion involving a lamp, a giraffe, and an expired pack of Bazooka bubble gum. As Captain Anomaly, I now have some totally awesome WOWing powers that I can use to take care of this for you!

KAPOW!

Whoa! What was that?! Look closely, do you see it? If I use my super vision, it appears to be a message from your bank statement. It says that in the next 2-10 business days, as soon as your bank authorizes it, you will see a credit of \$89.99 from Zappos. But why?! Because I have refunded you in full for those shoes since they have fallen apart on you so quickly.

WOOSH!

Oh gosh! Did you witness what just took place? Quickly, look to the inbox of your e-mail. You should see a few e-mails from us, but one of those will contain a link to your pre-paid UPS return label! Just put that first item back into the original packaging and tape that new label on the outside with clear tape. If you do not have a shipping box, any plain, unmarked cardboard box would work fine.

Please be sure to remove the old shipping label, or cover it up entirely with the new one. Then, just drop that package off at any UPS store within the next two weeks.

BLAMMO!

Holy smokes! What could have occurred just now?! I have used my laser vision to vaporize that poor customer service experience, and have created a coupon for you to help mend your online experience wounds in this troubling time.

That coupon is for \$15 and is a one time use, non-refundable coupon that can be used on your next order within 90 days. Please accept this as a further apology for what has happened. The code to use that coupon is below for your convenience.

As for the shoe, we do not have it in stock any longer, which is why I could not teleport a brand new one to you. I would assume it was probably a fluke defect on that one particular item, but either way I apologize that this happened.

I certainly hope this helps. If you need anything else, please do not hesitate to let us know and we would be glad to assist you. I will even fly down there to handle that for you myself! Permitted that I am not busy saving kittens in trees, of course. Captain Anomaly, awaaaay!

Thank you very much!  
 Paul  
 Customer Loyalty Team  
 Zappos, Inc.  
 Contact us 24/7, 365!

Zappos is well-known for its commitment to excellent customer service, but this email example might take the cake. It's not replicable for every single customer query imaginable, but the rep is clearly committed to delivering service – and making the customer happy in the process.

## Self-Service

Many customers are now turning to DIY customer service methods to get the information they need quickly and easily without having to hop on the phone or wait for an email reply. And in response, businesses are developing knowledge bases, where they publish articles and videos that explain how to use products and services so customers can seek out touchless customer service whenever they need it.

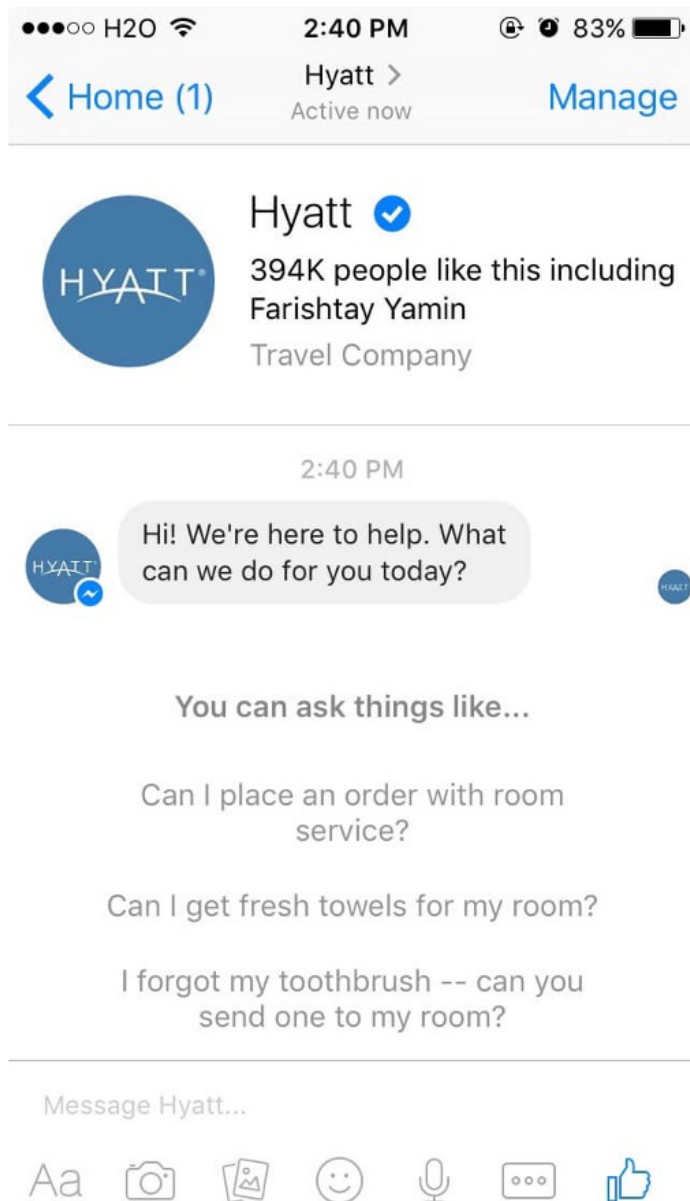
HubSpot Academy's Knowledge Base is full of articles and videos that explain step-by-step processes for using HubSpot software. And for bigger-picture learning and training, HubSpot Academy offers free certifications and trainings to learn about the inbound methodology and specific verticals within the software.

The screenshot displays the HubSpot Knowledge Base interface. At the top, a dark navigation bar contains various HubSpot modules: Contacts, Conversations, Marketing, Sales, Service, Automation, and Reports. To the right of these are icons for search, settings, and notifications, followed by a user profile for 'HubSpot Education Program'. Below the navigation bar, the 'Knowledge' section is active, with tabs for 'Manage' and 'Analyze'. On the right side of this section are links for 'View knowledge center', 'Organize articles', and 'Create article'. On the left, under 'All articles', there are filters for 'Draft', 'Published', and 'Archived'. The main content area shows a table of articles with columns for 'NAME', 'VIEWS', 'FEEDBACK', 'SENTIMENT', and 'LAST UPDATED'. The table lists five articles, with the first one in 'Draft' status and the others 'Published'. A 'Help' button is visible in the bottom right corner of the article list.

	NAME	VIEWS	FEEDBACK	SENTIMENT	LAST UPDATED
<input type="checkbox"/>	How do I join HubSpot's Education Partner Program? ● Draft				Apr 24, 2018 8:43 AM Isaac Moche
<input type="checkbox"/>	Which certifications does HubSpot offer? ● Published				Apr 23, 2018 4:36 PM Isaac Moche
<input type="checkbox"/>	How do I change the email address associated with my Hub ● Published				Apr 23, 2018 3:58 PM Isaac Moche
<input type="checkbox"/>	Help and support for Education Partners ● Published				Apr 13, 2018 12:33 PM Isaac Moche
<input type="checkbox"/>	How do I submit a request/help ticket? ● Published				Apr 13, 2018 12:32 PM Isaac Moche

## Messaging

Messaging is quickly becoming the most popular way to seek out customer service help – and this can take many forms, including text-based messaging (discussed above), messaging apps, and direct messaging on social media (more on that below).



Messaging apps boast more than 5 billion users worldwide, and businesses are starting to rely on them to offer quick and easy content distribution and customer service to audiences.

HubSpot uses Facebook Messenger to distribute blog posts like this one, but other businesses are using these apps to make it easier for customers to make purchases and get the help they need – in apps they're already using to communicate with friends and family.



## Social Media

Customer service on social media is another up-and-coming way businesses are communicating with customers more often, and for good reason – nearly 80% of the consumers we surveyed have shared positive experiences with companies, and 24% recommended companies on social media.

Customers can get fast and easy responses to questions they have on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, and social media gives businesses permission to be a little more fun, too. Some brands even create specific accounts for customer support. Yelp Eat24 uses Twitter to offer great customer service – while still making customers laugh in the process.

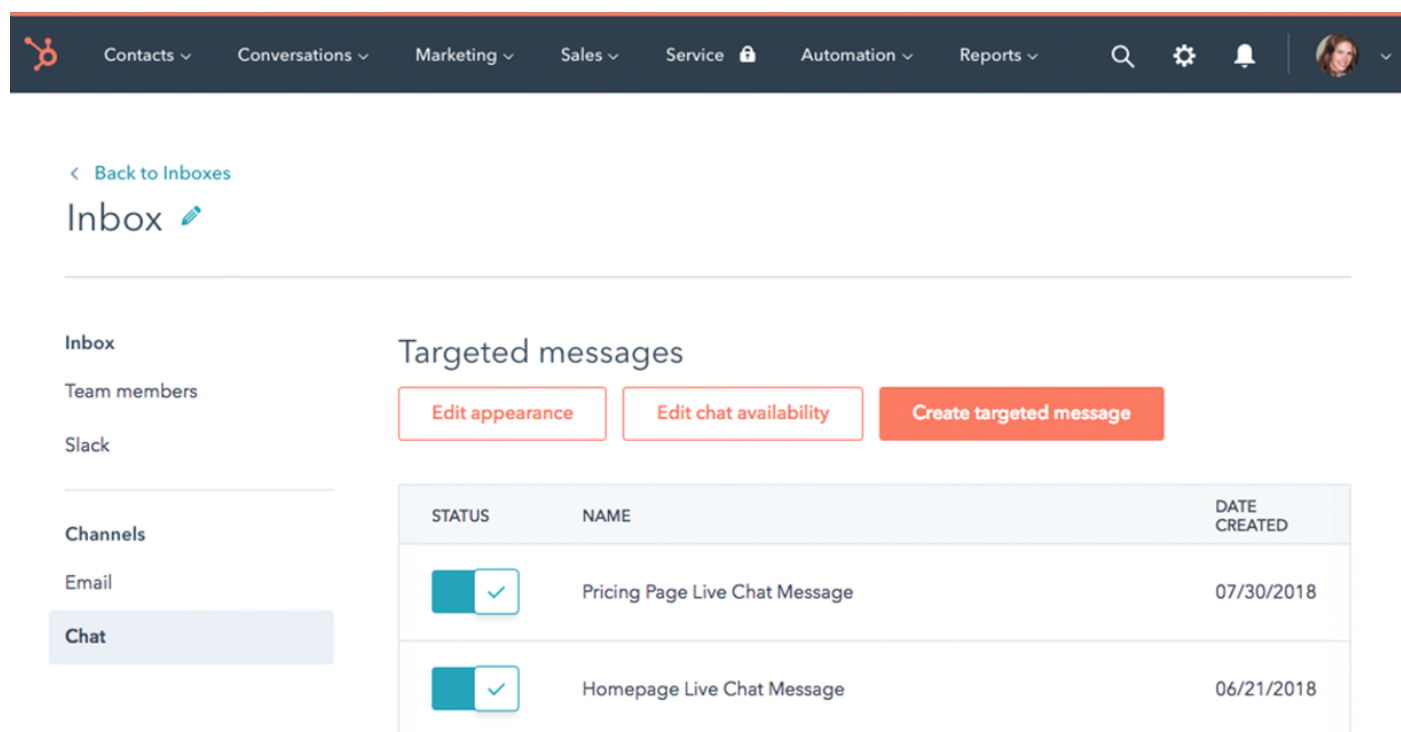




## Live Chat

Live chat is another option for offering speedy customer service without forcing your customers to wait on the phone – and it can be operated by humans or robots – specifically, chatbots.

Live chat widgets can launch on company web pages to offer instant customer support and service – in another easy way that might be more convenient for your customers. They require full-time dedication to operate successfully, so some businesses turn to chatbots to operate them more affordably – like CenturyLink did when it employed Conversica's Angie to start communicating with new leads to save time for sales and customer service staff.



The screenshot shows the CORE CRM interface. At the top is a navigation bar with icons for Contacts, Conversations, Marketing, Sales, Service, Automation, and Reports, along with search, settings, and notification icons. Below the navigation bar, the 'Inbox' section is active, showing a list of 'Targeted messages'. On the left, there is a sidebar with 'Inbox', 'Team members', 'Slack', 'Channels', 'Email', and 'Chat' (which is highlighted). The 'Targeted messages' section has three buttons: 'Edit appearance', 'Edit chat availability', and 'Create targeted message'. Below these buttons is a table with two rows of messages.

STATUS	NAME	DATE CREATED
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pricing Page Live Chat Message	07/30/2018
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Homepage Live Chat Message	06/21/2018

## Examples of Good Customer Service

For every bad customer service experience you can think of, you might also be able to recall a representative or a business that knocked your socks off by going out of the way to solve problems for you.

And you might think that spending additional time on customer issues won't have a meaningful payoff for you – but as we've now learned, happy customers bring better results to your business, so it's worth creating a team culture of dedication and extreme helpfulness.

Check out these good customer service examples from a few more big brands – along with actionable takeaways you can bring back to your team. These businesses are within different industries, but all offer employees a tremendous deal of autonomy and resources to go the extra mile to solve customer problems.

One such example, The Ritz-Carlton Company, gives each of its employees the autonomy to spend up to \$2,000 solving customer problems – without needing to seek approval. And while that whopping amount might be over budget for your organization, the greater reason why this company has created such a policy bears remembering for every customer service team.

The Ritz-Carlton prizes employee engagement – because it believes engagement is the key to cultivating employees who are dedicated to improving customer engagement, too. Learn more about its philosophy – and that of three other leaders in customer service – in this blog post.



## Customer Service Quotes from Leaders

Some of the most well-known business success stories can be credited to great customer service – at least partly.

After all, attracting new customers with a fantastic product or service is only half of the journey – a big part of revenue growth is keeping existing customers so they come back and purchase from you again and again.

As it turns out, leaders of big brands like Intuit, Pepsico, and Zappos have a lot of wisdom to offer when it comes to customer service – and that's because they doubled down on it and made it their mission.

Take Amazon, for example, one of the world's biggest companies whose CEO, Jeff Bezos, has been trying to optimize the customer service experience for a long time by making shopping easier. Bezos advocates for "trying to do hard things well" as the cornerstone for improving brand reputation and establishing a positive brand identity. Now, Amazon is known as the quickest and easiest way to buy things you need -- it's as simple as that.

Read the rest of these [customer service quotes](#) to inspire yourself – and your team – to give the best service possible, and to see the bigger picture for your business.

## Conclusion

Today, customers are in control. Their expectations for service are high, and it's minimally painless and virtually cost-free to switch to your competitors if you aren't meeting them. And the old customer service playbook isn't working.

Successful customers can grow your business faster than sales and marketing, but in order to get there, customer service professionals must take on a new, more human approach to service.

# Learn More About Quality Customer Service:

**Visit [Core.Onsharp.com](http://Core.Onsharp.com)**



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