

Customer response time:

# 5 ways to help reputation, revenue, and growth



# How quickly an organization responds to customer requests can directly affect its reputation, revenue growth, and overall health.

46% of customers expect a response from businesses in less than four hours.<sup>1</sup>

On average, organizations take more than 12 hours to respond to customer requests.<sup>2</sup>

Customers demand quick engagement and resolution, but the reality is that customer response time is a challenge for many businesses.

## Key areas affected by customer response time



### Brand reputation

**A single interaction can alter the perception of a company's brand.**

- 88% of customers claim their interaction with a business is just as important as its offerings or products.<sup>3</sup>
- 87% of customers will not purchase from brands they do not trust.<sup>4</sup>



### Customer retention and revenue growth

**Customers are willing to pay more for a better customer experience (CX) – and they'll take their business elsewhere to find it.**

- 97% of customers say CX directly affects their loyalty to a brand.<sup>5</sup>
- 60% of customers stopped engaging with a business because of a negative customer experience.<sup>6</sup>



### Employee satisfaction

**CX affects more than customers. Cost savings, employee satisfaction, and retention rates tie directly into workflow efficiency and resource allocation.**

- Disgruntled employees can create unsatisfied customers.
- 73% of customers report previous negative interactions with employees.<sup>7</sup>

# 5 steps to help improve customer response time

Addressing CX overall can be overwhelming, but focusing on customer response time by applying thoughtful strategy and intelligent technology can help organizations improve customers' experiences.

Following are five steps customer support leaders can take to enhance the overall customer experience by reducing response time and strengthening their processes.



## Step 1

### Get smarter internal communication systems

An internal communication system can provide employees with easier access to resources, expedite case resolutions, and fuel more positive customer interactions.

#### Benefits:

- + Increased organizational communication
- + Consistent messaging across departments
- + Fewer touchpoints for quicker routing to appropriate teams
- + Balanced tasks and activities across teams
- + Clear visibility for the management team
- + Direct access to coworkers best equipped to address customer needs
- + Quicker escalation resolution for increased customer satisfaction

#### Practical steps to get started:

- **Use a single technology solution.**  
A single technology solution can help the organization communicate and consolidate resources in a secure and centralized environment.
- **Communicate solutions across departments.**  
Effective communication can help teams align with brand standards and provide consistent information to customers.
- **Standardize an approach for handling customer interactions.**  
Training materials and process documentation should be accurate, cohesive, and up to date so all customer interactions are consistent.

# Step 2

## Offer multiple channels for customer engagement

Allowing customer engagement through multiple channels – from SMS messages to mobile apps and phone calls – can help brands meet their customers where they prefer to spend their time.

| On average, customers engage with a business through nine different channels.<sup>8</sup>

### Benefits:

Direct access to platforms where customers choose to seek support

Quicker access to solutions and resources

Faster time to resolution for CX agents

Increased brand visibility and awareness-building opportunities across channels

Consistent, standardized responses for customers no matter where they seek resolution

### Practical steps to get started:

- **Evaluate traffic volume.**  
All communication channels should be monitored to help provide extra support as needed.
- **Do a competitive analysis and market research.**  
Organizations should understand industry standards and how competitors are engaging with their customers.
- **Understand your target audience.**  
Knowing where customers are spending their time and through which channels they prefer to engage is useful information for developing an effective CX strategy.
- **Align customer service with your product channel offerings.**  
Creating an intuitive experience that allows customers to easily access the resources they need is critical.
- **Develop standardized responses.**  
Organizations need a strategic approach to interacting with customers and confirming that all departments have access to up-to-date information.







# Step 3

## Personalize customer support

Customized engagement can help agents resolve issues faster and support friendlier and more productive interactions with customers.

### Benefits:



Personalized support based on previous customer cases



Knowledge of which products or services a customer already owns



Historical data on prior customer interactions

### Practical steps to get started:

- **Apply dynamic customer information.**  
Customer data should be made available to agents at every touch point.
- **Determine how to aggregate and centralize the customer data for agents.**  
Teams should have a process in place to record best practices and create documentation.
- **Enable and communicate data privacy measures.**  
Organizations should have a specific strategy in place to protect data privacy.
- **Identify the most important customer data.**  
By analyzing historical purchases and previous cases, CX agents can better prioritize case resolution.

# Step 4

## Make self-service accessible and useable

Thoughtful, easy-to-navigate self-service resources can help customers quickly resolve their own issues on their preferred channel and in their own time.

- 69% of customers try to address their CX problems by themselves.<sup>9</sup>
- 95% of customers report that accessible self-service, among other factors, directly affects their commitment to a brand.<sup>10</sup>

### Benefits:



Empowered customers and higher customer satisfaction



Quicker case resolution with 24/7 access to customer-tailored resources



Reduced agent workload and increased cost savings



Enhanced data collection and customer engagement opportunities



### Practical steps to get started:

#### ○ Create self-service awareness.

Organizations should advertise as needed, provide critical updates, and remove any barriers to access so customers can use the available resources.

#### ○ Address the right issues.

Conducting an analysis of client behavior can help organizations focus on key areas.

#### ○ Establish a continual review process.

Setting benchmarks, reviewing progress, measuring key performance indicators, and adjusting where necessary are critical components of effective process review.

#### ○ Identify how users might interact.

Self-service models should be aligned with each channel's functionality.

#### ○ Interview key clients.

Client insights can help determine navigation habits and shape content models.

#### ○ Create post-response procedures.

After cases are resolved, teams should consider any follow-up procedures that might need to be established.

# Step 5

## Use automation and AI to continually improve your CX program

Automation tools such as artificial intelligence (AI) help agents and customers accomplish their goals faster.

- 60% of customer service leaders believe AI is an impactful and transformative tool.<sup>11</sup>

### Benefits:



Quicker responses for common requests



24/7 support and greater content availability



Improved organizational communication



Streamlined case allocation



Reduced human error

### Practical steps to get started:



#### Identify common customer requests.

Automation can direct requests to the correct agent.



#### Create standardized procedures for common requests.

Applying standard procedures can preemptively address common customer issues.



#### Identify escalation criteria and procedures.

Documentation and training are integral in identifying and handling escalation issues.



#### Determine the most frequent cases and requests.

Automating processes can help address frequently asked questions, reported issues, and submitted requests quickly.



#### Automate escalations.

Organizations should prioritize and improve internal visibility of potential challenges and issues.





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ServiceNow customer service management (CSM) solutions blend intelligent systems with deep industry knowledge to automate operations for technology leaders on their journeys to stronger CX.

As a ServiceNow Elite Partner, Crowe specializes in optimizing the ServiceNow platform to help you meet your goals. Our strategists ask the right questions to help you build workflows that enhance customer and employee experience.

## Let's get started

Our team is here to help you explore ServiceNow CSM solutions so that you can tackle customer service with confidence.

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### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> "Customer Response Time Will Either Make Your Business Sink or Swim," Simplifai, March 8, 2023, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/customer-response-time-either-make-your-business-swim-sink/>
- <sup>2</sup> Blake Morgan, "100 Customer Experience Stats for 2023," Forbes, June 26, 2023, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/blakemorgan/2023/06/26/100-customer-experience-stats-for-2023>
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> Michelle Hawley, "10 AI Customer Experience Statistics You Should Know About," CMSWIRE, Oct. 2, 2023, <https://www.cmswire.com/customer-experience/10-ai-customer-experience-statistics-you-should-know-about/>