

What does great customer service look like?

Part 5 of a 5
part series

May 2018



It's one of the dilemmas of our time: We've got better products and services than ever before. We deliver them faster and more effectively. We have stunning design and bleeding-edge technology oozing out of every pore – chatbots, AI, VR, you name it. So why are customers generally unhappier than they've ever been?

Before you start telling me that it's because modern consumers are tech-savvy and hyper-connected, or able to compare prices online, or just more demanding, or they're spoiled – stop. Just stop. And ask yourself one question: Do you truly live your customer service vision?

You say you're a customer-centric company – don't we all? – but chances are there's a huge disconnect between your shiny customer service vision and your actions. Your website talks about “putting the customer at the heart of your business”, but back at the ranch, you're more focused on reducing costs and making your operations more efficient.

Research bears this out. According to PwC's latest **Digital IQ survey**, the number of companies that say “creating better customer experiences is a digital priority” dropped to just 10% in 2017, down from 25% in 2016. The bottom line? Customers don't feel their expectations are being met.

So, what can we do about it? What does great customer service look like?

Let me say this as clearly as I can: It's all about the experience. Give your customers a great experience, and they'll come back, and probably bring their friends with them. More than price, product, quality, speed of delivery, bells, whistles and the kitchen sink, the experience is key.

But here's the thing: A great customer experience doesn't happen by accident. It is the crown jewel of a carefully planned and executed customer strategy that knows who your customers are, and what you can do for them. It knows what customer experience you should aim to create, and what you need to do it. The Digital IQ report sums it up beautifully: "If experience isn't your strategy, you're doing it wrong".

What makes for a great experience? For a start, the basics help – speed, convenience, friendliness. Then work on making it as hassle-free as possible. People love great value, but it's got to be delivered with the minimum friction or stress. And, believe it or not, in this technology-crazed world, people want the human touch.

What, you say? But I've just spent all this money on technology! Sorry to break it to you, but consumers want it all. Make no mistake, they love the dazzle and bling of new technology, but they also crave real

connections with actual people. In fact, 35% of consumers polled in the *Digital IQ survey* said their biggest concern with AI customer service was a loss of human touch.

In other words, they're looking for the best of both worlds. They expect technology to just work. Think about it: You only really take notice of technology when it's not working the way it should. It's the same with every other customer. They want websites and apps to be elegant and user-friendly, and love the idea of quicker, more efficient transactions. But none of this matters if speed, convenience and the right information that is targeted directly to their needs is lacking.

To sum it up: Great customer service starts with an obsessive focus on a great customer experience. And it's delivered by using the latest technology to make the customer experience feel more human, and empowering your employees to deliver stellar service. Strategy, technology, experience. Three words to live by. Don't forget them.



Contact

Quinton Pienaar

**Lead: Customer engagement & Salesforce,
PwC South Africa**

quinton.pienaar@pwc.com,
+27 (0) 11 797 4420
+27 (0) 74 589 0033

Connect on LinkedIn [here](#)

