# A RETAILERS' GUIDE ON
# OMNICHANNEL CUSTOMER SUPPORT

24/7

**eServeCloud**
By CallComm Technologies Inc.

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# Introduction

Businesses are aware of the evolving customer sentiments and behavior in the digitized environment. The 24/7 connectivity and the availability of information at their fingertips has enabled them to do their own research about your products or service. At the same time, customers interact with brands and their agents through a multiplicity of channels.

Previously, it was just phone calls or occasional emails. Now you have a plethora of social media channels, chat, SMS, phone calls, and emails. To maintain a coherency of information across all these platforms, it's imperative to come up with an omnichannel customer support. In this article, we have discussed how retailers should craft their approach to deliver an omnichannel customer support.

# Importance of offering omnichannel customer support

Let's look at some statistics that would help you understand the value of acquiring omnichannel customers.

▸ Businesses with strong omnichannel customer engagement systems succeed in retaining **89%** of their customers. On the other hand, companies with weak omnichannel engagement of customers manage to retain just **33%** of their clients.

▸ Brands with strong engagement of customers on an omnichannel network witness a **9.5% Y-O-Y revenue** increment, while weak engagement leads to just **3.4%** increment.

▸ Companies with strong omnichannel engagement systems enjoy **7.5%** decrement in cost for each contact each year. This figure is only **0.2%** for brands with weaker engagement systems.

▸ **87%** of customers expect businesses to channel more effort to craft a better customer support experience.

▸ **89%** of your clients would be frustrated when they need to repeat the same information to different agents.

▸ **35%** of customers are keen to connect with the same agent across any channel when they interact with your business.

▸ While interacting with brands, **61%** of clients failed to seamlessly move from one channel to another.

▸ No matter which channels your customers choose, **64%** would be willing to get real-time assistance from agents.

# Understanding the expectations of your customers

Customer loyalty matters when you visualize scaling up your business. In the first place, you should guide your customers through an omnichannel customer support desk throughout the purchase journey. This may start right at the moment your customers start inquiring about your product and continue to post-purchase support.

An easy, consistent, and smooth omnichannel experience is what customers expect. For retailers, it often turns out to be a daunting challenge to fulfill these expectations. You might already have several business systems like ERP, OMS, and CRM in place. Accordingly, you have been aligning your processes and staff. However, your customers are not concerned about whatever you do behind the scenes. They look out for a hassle-free customer experience, regardless of how and when they reach out to you.

Suppose, one of your clients reaches out to you over Facebook Messenger with a query. To resolve the issue, one of your agents might have contacted him or her over the phone. Now, in order to share documents and complete formalities, you might have interacted with the client over email. Considering that the customer and your agents were involved in communication over different channels, you need to consolidate these interactions by having an omnichannel customer support system in place. No customer likes explaining the problems from scratch each time they contact your agents.

# Carry out a customer service audit

As you start working on developing an omnichannel engagement strategy, it pays to carry out an audit of your customer service. So, consider these aspects before you further integrate the necessary features or upgrade your system.

▸ The communication channels that are present now for customer support.

▸ The volume or demand for each of these channels.

▸ Other channels like social media or SMS that your customers are you are not using currently.

▸ Whether or not you have the permission of your customers to contact them on the furnished email address, phone numbers, or other channels.

▸ The average resolution time, customer retention rate, revenue, and other KPIs and the ones you can improve.

▸ Whether or not your customer support agents are equipped with all the tools to provide the necessary assistance.

▸ If you have adequate hands at your support desk to assist your customers, and whether they are professionally trained.



Once you carry out this audit, you need to tweak your existing policies and support infrastructure. Considering that an omnichannel customer support defines how consistently you interact with your clients, it's wise to strengthen this strategy.

# How to transform your omnichannel customer support?

Now that you have carried out your customer service audit, you would be well-poised to transform your customer service desk. For retailers, it's crucial to compete in three arenas. These are product quality, price, and service. Among these three parameters, it's crucial to prioritize customer service. So, you need to have your customers defining your policies to ease up their convenience. Before you make any decision, you should think of them.

Well, you might be thinking that the context of customer service arises only when they contact your business. However, customer service is a continuous pursuit that explains how they would perceive your brand. To help you understand these strategies better, we have demonstrated four tactics that should help you.

## 1. Offer customer support through multiple channels

Your customers might be comfortable with social media, chat, apps, phone calls, texts, or emails while communicating with your agents. As a responsible business owner, you need to offer support through all these channels. Once you provide them with the liberty to choose a channel of their convenience, they would be more comfortable in dealing with your brand.

## 2. Make sure to offer prompt response

The response time matters when a customer reaches out to you for help. Most customers connecting with you over social media channels expect a reply within an hour. Regardless of how they connect with your brand, make sure to respond instantly.

Today, many businesses have integrated AI bots to provide responses instantly. As these bots carry out repetitive tasks like collecting the name and other credentials, you can allocate the case to an agent. Also, the response needs to be contextualized to the channel the customer has selected. With the right software solution, you can sort the issue out.

## 3. Share information between all your channels

The ability to share information between all your communication channels with customers differentiates a multichannel customer support strategy from an omnichannel one. So, regardless of the communication method, you need to maintain a comprehensive database with records of all the interactions a client had with your agents. So, the next time when they contact you, your agents would be able to identify the case quickly and have the necessary resources at their disposal to respond.

As customers move between different channels, update the information across all the platforms. This will save time for your agents, while ensuring a better experience for your customers.

## 4. Assess performance and improve

Successful brands keep a track of the KPIs, tracking them tactically to understand how effective their customer service efforts have been. So, you need to find the most critical ones and evaluate them continuously. Once you detect some room for improvement, make the necessary changes to leverage your customer experience. For instance, a business might need more customer support agents during the sales seasons to bring the average resolution time down.

# What to evaluate while auditing your customer service infrastructure?

While carrying out a customer service audit, you need to evaluate three areas. These are policies, processes, and people along with the entire system.

## 1. Hire the right people

Good communicators make professional customer support agents. So, a careful recruitment process will help you have the right people on board. After all, customer service has people at the center. Hire agents capable of developing positive connections through powerful interactive skills. Communication matters while nurturing healthy business relationships.

Also, it would be wise to look out for agents with good listening abilities. This will help them identify the concerns, wants, and needs of your clients. A good listener can come up with the right questions. Accordingly, these professionals will be able to figure out the real problem leading to the concern of your customers.
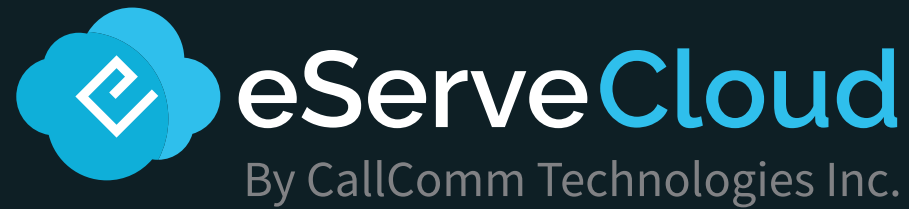
## 2. Formulate the right customer support policies

Having the right customer support policies on your omnichannel network keeps your efforts organized. Follow these strategies to foster a happier client base.

▸ Don't ask for the same information from your customer more than once, even though you connect through different channels.

▸ Let the customer choose the channel that suits the person well.

▸ Make sure not to direct your customers from one department to another.

## 3. Invest in a robust omnichannel customer support system

Now that you have the right people and policies in place, get a robust omnichannel customer support system. Once you understand your objectives and shortcomings, you will be able to leverage the existing system. With this approach, you can consolidate information across different channels. Also, based on the nature of your business and the needs of your customers, you need to integrate the right features into the system.

# Conclusion

In a competitive business world, you need to focus on the expectations of your clients. Having a strong omnichannel support mechanism for your customers can put you on track to success on the business front. Invest in the right tools and have competent customer support staff in place. This way, you can offer a better omnichannel customer support experience to your clients.

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