

PUT THE COOKIES ON THE BOTTOM SHELF: *SIMPLIFYING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT*

BLOG BY: KARL D. FISCHER, CCXP



"Put the cookies on the bottom shelf." This phrase, often repeated by my former manager and lifetime mentor, underscores the importance of simplicity. His point was clear: don't overcomplicate things. Simplify tasks for your people and your customers, and everyone will benefit.

The Power of Simplicity

In the realm of Customer Experience (CX), this principle holds even greater significance. While achieving a seamless CX might seem straightforward, it is often complicated by the numerous channels and devices customers use. According to Forrester, 95% of customers use three or more channels to connect with a company in a single service interaction, with 62% using more than one device. Despite the digital shift, a 2023 ACA survey revealed that 81% of customers still prefer voice interactions.

THE CUSTOMER FIRST (CONT.)



Known Pain Points in Call Centers

Here are some well-known customer pain points in call centers:

- Long hold times
- Being transferred
- Being sent to voicemail for callbacks
- Dealing with unprepared agents

Let's explore how we can address these issues effectively.

Understanding Customer Intent and Channel Preference

To create a frictionless customer journey, the key is to understand your customers' intent and their preferred channel for each type of interaction. Customers are accustomed to handling straightforward tasks digitally, such as opening accounts, booking tickets, and checking order statuses. However, for more complex, consultative matters, they seek human interaction.

Are you ready to "set the cookies on the bottom shelf" and enhance their experience? What are the key ingredients to your recipe for success?

Reducing Hold Times

Long hold times can be extremely frustrating for customers and agents alike. The average speed of answer for call centers in 2023 was 79 seconds, which can feel much longer in reality. Balancing supply and demand is a perennial challenge in call centers. While forecasting helps, external factors can disrupt call patterns, leading to longer hold times and increased frustration.

A practical solution is Queue Callback, a feature in IVR systems that provides callers with a virtual reservation spot. This feature can reduce abandonment rates by up to 32%, respecting the customer's time and giving them control over the interaction.

THE CUSTOMER FIRST (CONT.)



Minimizing Transfers

Customers call with specific needs, yet many call centers fail to understand their intent upfront. Integrating CRM data with the IVR or an IVA can greatly enhance this understanding. Using transactional triggers (like payment due dates or order statuses) allows for a more relevant and flexible menu treatment, offering specific options upfront.

For example, over twenty years ago, my company used conditional-based triggers in an IVR based on call trends. We noticed a high incidence of transfers to our fraud department late at night, so we moved the "report lost or stolen card" option to the front of the menu during these times. This simple strategy helped callers when they were most vulnerable and got them to the right place quickly.

Avoiding Voicemail for Callbacks

Queue callbacks are beneficial, but relying on voicemail for callbacks is ineffective. Recent research by Forbes showed that 80% of callers do not leave voicemails, believing they won't get a timely response. This missed opportunity can drive customers to competitors who offer immediate responses. Implementing 24/7 live answering services ensures every call is answered in real-time, meeting evolving consumer expectations.

Equipping Agents for Success

Contact center agents are your brand ambassadors. While companies invest heavily in advertising and brand building, they often overlook setting their agents up for success. As Will Rogers famously said, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." Do your agents have all the ingredients for success?

In the 2022 State of Contact Center Knowledge survey, 49% of agent respondents said they have to look at multiple windows to find answers, and 38% mentioned that information keeps changing. This 'Swivel Chair' phenomenon creates inefficiencies and disrupts the call flow.

THE CUSTOMER FIRST (CONT.)



Equipping Agents for Success (Cont.)

A unified desktop experience and AI tools like Agent Assist can alleviate these issues. Companies using Agent Assist saw a 27% reduction in handle time and a 16% improvement in customer ratings. Additionally, Agent Assist improves onboarding times, crucial for maintaining consistency with remote agents.

Conclusion

Customer experience is the new battleground for businesses. The key ingredients to success are delivering efficient and effective interactions when customers connect with you. Given that most customers will use phone or email at some point, are you putting the cookies on the bottom shelf?

About BSDE

We provide best-in-class client call center services to organizations that result in empowering Delawareans who are blind, visually impaired, disabled and/or veterans through providing employment opportunities that enhance their quality of life and support independent living.

Our Mission

BSD Enterprises addresses the critical challenge of unemployment and underemployment among the visually impaired, disabled, and economically vulnerable populations. By offering world-class customer care contact center services, the organization not only provides sustainable employment opportunities but also fosters diversity, equity, and inclusion within the workforce

Contact Us:

Karl D Fischer

karl.fischer@bsdenterprises.org

302-298-1421