

5 New Year's Resolutions for Improving Your Customer Experience

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Back in 2015, a Gartner survey found that organizations were significantly changing their customer experience priorities — from gathering and analyzing more customer feedback to “opening up” the organization for the customer’s benefit. As a result, Gartner analysts predicted that by 2018, *50% of organizations* would significantly retool their business models in their efforts to improve customer experience.

Well, 2018 has arrived, and in the face of continuously evolving consumer expectations, where do your efforts to improve the customer experience stand?

Whether your organization was among those in active pursuit of improving the customer experience over the past few years or you’ve resolved to make 2018 your year of evolution, we’re hoping to help you along.

Below we share several New Year’s resolutions to inspire your efforts to improve your customer experience, packed with our own insights, as well as those of customer care and service leaders.

1. Renew your focus on the *employee* experience.

Your employees — inside and outside your customer service call center — are the bedrock of your organization. After all, they’re the ones tasked with delivering on your promise of great customer service and experience, and they can also be your biggest brand advocates. But that all hinges on how engaged they are with the company and the work they do, as well as whether they feel valued.



From brand-building expert [Denise Lee Yohn's](#) perspective, that means putting just as much care into crafting a great employee experience as you do your customer experience. In a recent [Harvard Business Review](#) article, Denise — who's also the author of *What Great Brands Do: The Seven Brand-Building Principles that Separate the Best from the Rest* — wrote:

“If a company attends to its employee experience with the same level of discipline and intention that it does to its customer experience, the results can be seen across the board. Employees are more satisfied, companies enjoy higher employee retention and other benefits, and customers get better service.”

In addition, a key consideration for enhancing the employee experience and the customer experience is training. Not only does regular and valuable training help your employees deliver to your customers, but also gives them confidence. As one of our regular guest contributors [Shep Hyken](#), Chief Amazement Officer and owner of [Shepard Presentations, LLC](#), wrote in his recent post on [investing in customer service training](#):

“Investing in customer service is an investment in employees. Taking the time to hire the right people and train them to deliver a good customer experience takes money, but just like any other business investment, it will pay off.”



2. Stop looking at customer service as a cost center.

Regardless of the type of company you run, customer service is just part of doing business. But the investments you're making to level up the service and experience you provide don't just come down to dollars and cents. According to [Blake Morgan](#), customer experience futurist, keynote speaker and author of *More is More*, it's about building long-term relationships with your customers.

"Start seeing that your customer service operation is a relationship-building tool — it's a marketing investment not a cost center," Blake told us in our Customer Service Confessions piece. "If you make customers' lives easier and better, you invest in creating and retaining more customers."

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3. Strive to provide your customers with the right answers and support — wherever they are.

Consumers are the majority owners of today's customer journey, leveraging the internet and mobile technologies to make purchases, educate themselves and research solutions to whatever problems they may be facing. As a result, they expect retailers and service providers to make it easy to find the answers wherever and whenever they're searching for them — and

respond quickly if there's a problem.



When it comes to making information readily available to customers, Adrian Swinscoe, customer engagement and service consultant, author and speaker, told us:

“Research shows that, on average, around 60% of all calls or help requests into a contact center/help desk happen because customers can’t find the answers that they are looking for on the company’s website. Meanwhile, other research has found that between 25-40% of calls or support requests can be avoided. These numbers suggest that there are lots of opportunities to learn from the past about what we could do to improve service before the customer asks for help.”

As for responding quickly to requests or complaints, an investment in social customer care is a major opportunity, according to Dan Gingiss, author of Winning at Social Customer Care and co-host of the Experience This! Podcast.

“[I’ve worked with three brands that were] active in the channel but taking hours to respond to customers,” he explained. “Just as this is a customer pain point in traditional customer service channels, so too is it in social media.”

“By re-allocating resources and investing in a commitment to be best-in-class in social media response time, these companies were able to change customers’ minds and opinions about the brand,” he added. “A fast response time leads to increased revenues (per Twitter), higher loyalty, and more positive sharing about the brand.”



4. Give yourself the strength to accept that customer complaints happen.

Customers complain. This is a simple truth that every business has to accept. But in our experience, customer complaints are your biggest opportunity to show your customers you care and you're willing to help them — which helps you bolster the relationship and regain trust.

Andrew McFarland, Vice President of Customer Success for Packet Design, recently told us a story of a time when a customer had become extremely frustrated, feeling as if they had been misled and then abandoned. But with speed and a dedicated strategy, his team was able to turn it around.

“Whether or not we were at fault was unimportant since the relationship was in tatters,” he said. “We knew that a positively memorable recovery would help us rebuild trust and convert them to a lifetime advocate.”

5. Double-down on data security.

Data breaches are making big headlines these days, putting consumers on edge as they worry about whether their personal and financial information will be part of the next wave of hack attacks.

As a result, it's more imperative than ever for companies to take data security steps to protect their customers and their business, according to [Flavio Martins](#), VP of Operations and Customer Service at DigiCert, Inc. and owner of the website [WIN THE CUSTOMER](#).



“Customer experience management can be a long term disaster for organizations that have been subjected to a data breach causing leaks of critical customer information and loss of customer trust,” he wrote in a post on the [importance of data security](#).

While no organization is immune to attack, you can take steps to mitigate risk.

“How your operation transmits, stores, and gathers this data can have an influence on how hackers will perform malicious attacks against you,” Flavio said. “Determine the areas of your business that are susceptible to data breaches and then adopt security measures to safeguard the data at all available locations.”

Kick-Start Your Customer Experience Resolutions for 2018 and Beyond

The New Year's resolution tradition is rooted in the desire to make meaningful, lasting change — but that starts with being honest with yourself about what customer service and experience improvement opportunities are within reach.

Join CGS, as well as some of the customer care and experience leaders included in this piece, as we dig deeper into some of the challenges and opportunities for leveling up the customer service experience in our piece: *Customer Service Confessions: Market Leaders Dish on Challenges, Opportunities & Real-World Solutions*.

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