

A stylized illustration of a yellow and red striped tower, resembling a lighthouse or a communications tower, with a grey satellite dish on top. A string of colorful bunting flags (red, yellow, and red) is draped across the scene. The background is a bright blue sky with white and light blue clouds.

How to drive down customer service costs

(while boosting productivity and customer satisfaction)

Your customers are better informed. Should you be better prepared?



Customer expectations are changing, and changing fast.

The web and mobile channels keep people connected, 24/7. And social media means people are sharing their experiences – good and bad – instantly, around the world.

This isn't going to go away.

Not only are customers increasingly adept at managing their own experience and engagement, but they also consider good customer service to be immediate and available **everywhere**.

Get it right, and you'll bolster loyalty – while driving down customer service costs. Get it wrong, and your customers will let you know, en masse.

Epic customer service #fails

Some customer service failures may lose you a sale. Worse, some will lose you a customer. And then there are those epic fails that go viral on social media.

From complaint letters that get shared across Facebook to screenshots of unacceptable real-time chat sessions to businesses bombarded with comments on Twitter – when it goes wrong, it's not a pretty picture.

Clearly, there's a new kind of threat facing corporations in the internet age.

And a new kind of opportunity.

Because transforming how you deliver customer service can help you deliver world-beating customer service at lower cost across multiple channels.

What will it cost if you get it right?
And what will it cost if you don't?

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Investment vs. expenditure: Why it makes sense to spend now, save later.

55%
increased customer loyalty

54%
increased sales revenues



Businesses everywhere have spent the last few years slashing budgets, scaling back and generally doing more with less.

So why is it such a smart idea to evolve how you provide customer service? And why do it now?

The clue's right there, in 'customer service' – and a good analogy for making the investment is advertising.

Brands that invest through bad times do better when good times return. Brands that cut back lose awareness. They have to spend more, proportionately, to get back to level ground. And they run the risk of dropping off the consumer radar altogether.

It's the same with customer service: invest in bad times and you'll suffer less and emerge faster than your competitors.

Win customer service, being where your customers are, knowing what they're saying about your brand, and spotting purchase drivers early is crucial. You can't cut back on that.

But you need the infrastructure in place to deal with the outcomes of changing customer behaviour.

Multiple systems, multiple screens, information silos, long waiting times and dropped calls just don't cut it, when modern customer service tools can drive down costs while actually enhancing the customer experience.

Loyalty as an asset

Simply making life easier for your customers (for example, by expanding the use of self-service facilities, or by offering mobile service capability) can pay off immediately by building loyalty.

Keep getting it right, and that loyalty can translate into advocacy. In return, you have the opportunity and the means to thank the people who speak out on your behalf.

And should you be faced with a crisis, it's easier to respond and nip the problem in the bud. (If you saw Tesco's national newspaper ads following the recent horse-meat scandal, you'll know the value of a full and early apology.)

Yes, driving down costs is essential. But saving a penny now and costing a pound later makes no sense.

The next spread looks at the specific benefits of timely investment, and how the right customer service tools and applications can help.

In other words, what goes around, comes around.

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Costs down, satisfaction up: Joining the virtuous circle.

79%
improved customer
service/support

70%
increased
customer satisfaction

63%
increased
customer retention

The really good news is, driving down costs doesn't mean risking a reduction in customer satisfaction.

In this and the following section, we'll show you how automating customer service in your contact centre can help you deliver quick wins and long-term benefits.

Transform your customer experience and build great customer connections:

Make your contact centre social

And at the same time, make it more productive, staffed by fulfilled service agents. Bring all of your cases together in one unified agent experience. Create and track, route and escalate. Automated customer service fully integrates with your company's call-centre telephony and back-office apps. Your agents know more about your customers – so they can work faster and smarter, across all channels, all the time.

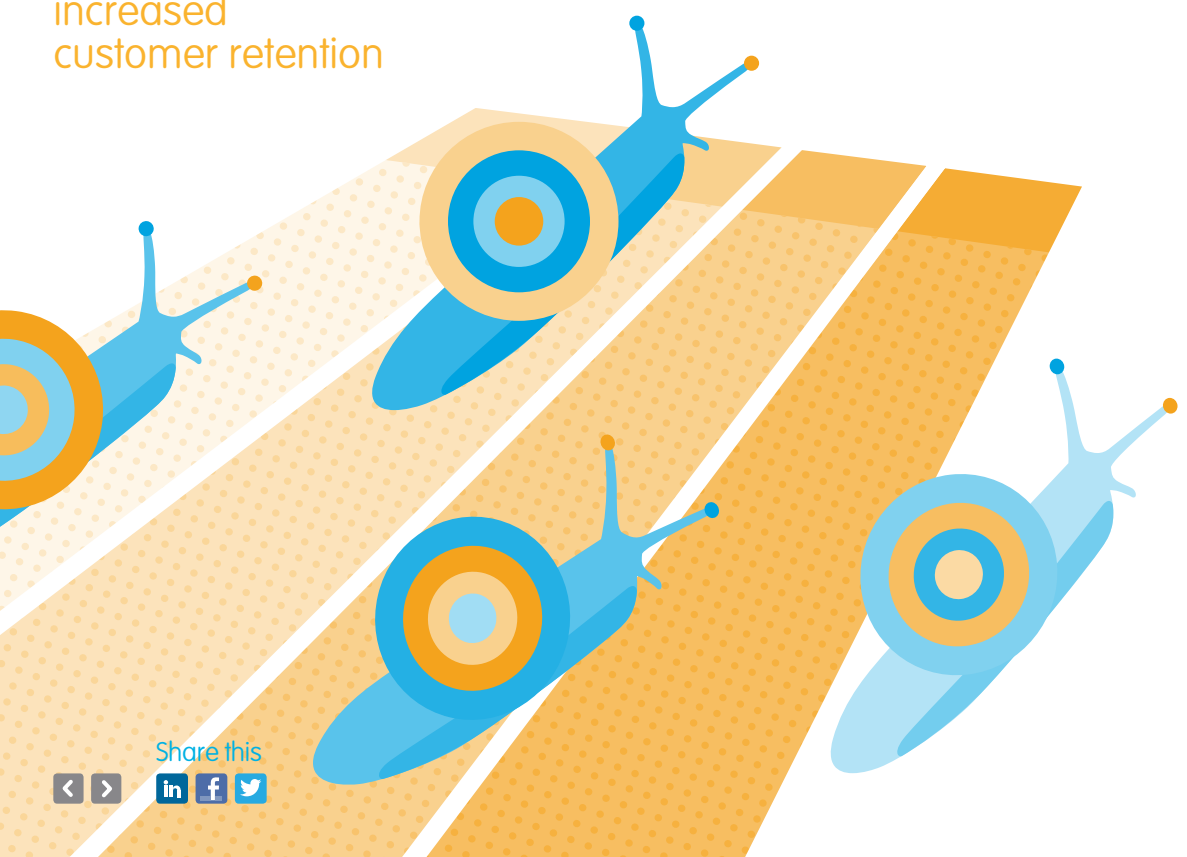
Empower your customers with communities

Ramp up loyalty and drive down costs. By creating communities where customers can help each other, access your knowledge base, and get help from an agent when needed, you can solve service requests faster. Set up multiple branded communities on a common platform, so customers get the high quality service they deserve.

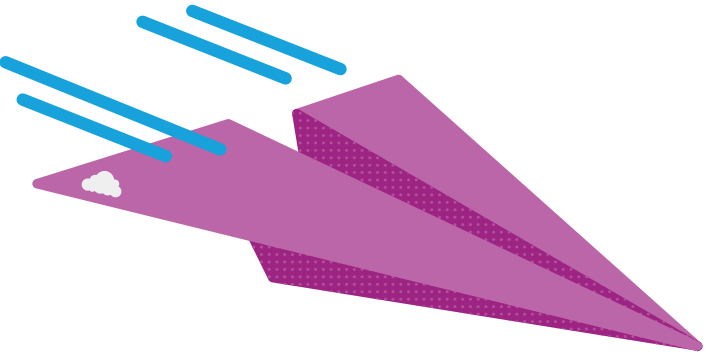
Service your customers on the social media channels where they live

Deliver answers anywhere, by letting questions and comments from social media channels become part of your case queue. Route through a single hub, and monitor and prioritise conversations by sentiment and influence. Then use insights from customers' online profiles to deliver better answers, faster.

Next:
[Extending the advantage >>](#)



Making a difference: What, where, how and why.



64%
reduced sales, service, marketing,
or other operational costs

59%
enhanced cross-sell
and up-sell opportunities

Smarter customer service can deliver real productivity and cost-reduction benefits.

Joined-up systems eliminate information silos – where the agent doesn't have access to a customer's full history.

Viewing the contact centre and the customer experience holistically also opens up opportunities for agents to cross- and up-sell.

Give your agents the tools they need

Resolve issues faster

First call resolution isn't just about giving customers faster answers – though that's a big customer service benefit. It's also about equipping your agents with the right tools and the knowledge they need at their fingertips. Because the faster you can close an issue, the lower the cost.

Streamline process management.

When you can manage any support process from call scripting and returns, to quotes and resolutions – even automated approvals for critical processes – entirely in the cloud, something amazing happens. Not only do you get consistency across every customer-service channel, from the call centre to the web, you also get speed. And time, as we all know, is money.

Better email, better service.

Can email contribute to cost reduction? Yes, when you can instantly create and assign cases from incoming email – whatever the volume. Yes, when you can give your agents the templates they need for measured, on-brand responses every time. And yes, when you can track them through to quick resolution from a single console.

Finding answers, anywhere

No single person is as smart as a fully clued up team. Enabling your people to collaborate more effectively will make your contact centre smarter. Give your agents the tools to share insights and get input from peers instantly. It'll improve service, speed response and save you money – especially as you can customise these tools to automatically deliver the right information to the right people.

Contracts and Entitlements

How do you lower costs while giving every customer the level of service they deserve? You keep tabs on key milestones and metrics. You continuously track progress against service milestones. And you ensure amazing service, while spending less every time.

Improve your contact centre metrics

Dashboards and Reports

What's the cost of complete customer insight? More to the point, what's the opportunity? When there's no complicated setup, just the customer service metrics that are important to you, you're already ahead of the game. And when you can add new reports and dashboards in real time, or customise existing ones, without calling IT, you'll stay ahead – stripping out costs without compromising quality.

Mobile

With mobile access, you can also get the latest performance metrics anywhere and anytime – but what's that worth to your organisation? Pure gold. Because when you take your contact centre with you, keeping tabs on your most critical cases is easy – and cost-effective.

Next:
More questions than answers? >>

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Singing in tune with your customers isn't a nice-to-have. It's essential.

We've already seen that customer expectations and behaviours are changing.

And who knows what new channels, new technologies – new game-changers – will be coming at you in the next few years?

But one thing's for sure. With the right mind-set, and the right integrated customer service solutions, you can rise to these challenges and delight customers while driving down costs.

Want to learn more about delivering better customer service?

Want to put some meat on the bones of potential savings?

Learn more about [Salesforce Service Cloud here](#).

Or get a [free demo](#).



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