

THE NEW RULES OF CUSTOMER SERVICE: WHY YOU NEED MOBILE SOCIAL & CLOUD

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It's no secret that ERP implementations have the highest success rates when the software is used to enhance an organization's competitive advantage. Many companies tout customer service as their competitive differentiator, striving to give customers the incentive to choose its business over the competition. However, mid-market companies are challenged with overcoming several obstacles in achieving superior customer service.

One common flaw is that mid-market companies often hold on too tightly to older processes because they worked successfully in the past. This is largely due to fear to adopt newer, innovative technologies because of the perceived difficulties with implementation. While implementing a new ERP system can be costly in terms of time and money, the cost of not implementing a new system may be higher when you factor in the customer experience and what

your competition is doing.

While ERP systems make customer-facing business processes more efficient by providing all the functions a company needs to run the business in an integrated package, mid-market companies often struggle to provide top-notch customer service at every turn—largely because they're not properly utilizing core business functions that make them successful: mobile, social, and cloud.

Here's how to best utilize these technologies to deliver world-class customer service.

Mobile

Investing in mobile can lead to improved operational efficiencies, expanded real-time collaboration with customers, and faster, more personalized customer experiences. Customers today want solutions that are available anytime, anywhere, from any

device or via a web browser—shouldn't your company do right by them and provide them with the tools and convenience they expect?

From the company side, mobile applications can be used for a variety of tasks such as improving sales processes, coordinating store deliveries, and placing remote orders. Mobile applications can improve customer service by automating business processes such as real-time access to stock availability, order status, and credit information. For example, one of our customers, a leader in the homeschool curriculum industry, is using mobile technology to improve customer service through an expedited ordering process. By adopting an application that allows it to capture orders anytime and from anywhere, the company is able to quickly search its customer database, view the complete product lineup, view product pricing, create quotes, and create and process live orders on



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the go, ultimately increasing order accuracy and overall customer experience.

Mobile solutions enhance the quality of service an organization provides. Employees are able to better build relationships across client bases and improve response times when they have all the information they need at their fingertips.

Social

Communicating with customers is a vital ingredient in a successful customer service strategy.

Companies should focus on using communication not only outside the organization, but inside the organization to connect and collaborate. Through sharing information and brainstorming new ideas, companies can transform business processes and drive tangible results, which have direct impacts on bettering the customer experience. Companies need to keep customers informed of developments involving them, whether it's in relation to promotional offers, stock quantities, order delivery times, or technical issues, in the shortest possible time.

Business communications are shifting toward social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. These platforms provide a medium for companies to keep customers informed of the latest company news and events. Social networking sites also provide an avenue for businesses to get instant access to positive or negative feedback, providing the organization with valuable insights in real-time.

Cloud

Business is moving to the cloud, allowing companies to increase efficiency, flexibility, and collaboration. Companies that have implemented cloud ERP have witnessed the potential for more accurate and timely forecasting, with real-time access to data. On-premise ERP is often linked with complexity and the need for additional in-house technical expertise to manage e-commerce, mobile, and business intelligence. When the cloud becomes the central repository for the company data-orders, inventory availability, etc. all that information becomes readily accessible to not only the staff, but to the customer as well.

When the decision to switch to cloud-based ERP is made, mid-market organizations are able to deliver ERP software to customers while eliminating excess hardware and still maintaining control over system integrations, thus reducing the complexity of providing the highest level of customer service. CRM is an example of an application that excels in the cloud while improving customer service. Cloud-based CRM allows employees to access information in real-time and complete projects faster, which improves customer satisfaction. With decreased project completion times, employees are able to focus on other areas of the business and reduce operational costs.

Excellent customer service should be the center of every mid-market company's business model. Satisfied customers are more likely to make repeat purchases and recommend your business to their peers. Utilizing mobile, social, and cloud capabilities help mid-market companies provide excellent customer service in order to thrive in today's competitive landscape.

