

Enhancing customer convenience: A guide for small businesses to improve customer experience

Today's business landscape is competitive. Small businesses have to go the extra mile to stay afloat and to outreach and outlast their competitors. That means understanding and growing your target audience, as well as enhancing the experience for your existing customers, is essential. When you're able to do this, you'll stand out from the crowd, build loyalty, and create brand ambassadors.

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It starts with prioritising customer satisfaction and implementing strategies designed to simplify your audience's lives.

With that in mind, let's examine some effective approaches your small business can adopt to improve the customer experience, drive repeat business, and attract new customers.

Streamline the experience

Today's average consumers don't want to wait around for things. We live in a digital world where people have grown to expect "instant" gratification. If your website is slow, if your customer service representatives take too long to reach, or if your products or services don't get to your customers quickly, they're likely to take their business elsewhere.

One of the best ways to improve the overall customer experience is to streamline it. For example, *IoT technology can greatly benefit small businesses* by making their processes more efficient. If you're in retail, for example, you can deploy automatic sensors for refrigeration monitoring, automate sales with kiosks, and connect mobile PoS devices to obtain valuable data you can use for future marketing ideas.

If you're in the manufacturing or distribution industry, technology — including IoT — can help with everything from scheduling to tracking. You'll be able to provide your customers with more information and send them products in a more timely manner.

Make things more convenient

Just as customers don't want to wait around for service, they also don't want to take part in a buying experience that's challenging or inconvenient. One of your biggest customer service goals should be to get your audience to experience value more quickly. Convenience is an important key.

As suggested above, things like self-service kiosks are a great way to start, especially if you have a brick-and-mortar retail business. You might also consider *cashless payment options*. Not only are they more convenient for your customers, but your business can enjoy benefits like:

- Increased revenue;
- Better data and insights;
- Payment security;
- Lower operating expenses;
- Accounting accuracy.

Not everyone carries cash and some people choose not to carry credit cards. But, almost everyone has their smartphone with them when

they're out shopping. Offering cashless payments can boost the number of sales you get each day simply because it's convenient for people to pay using what they already have on hand.

Foster relationships

Perhaps the best way to improve the overall customer experience is to treat your customers more like family. That isn't just a marketing ploy. It's something your business should rely on to build loyalty and create ambassadors for your brand.

Today's consumers want to feel *understood and supported* by the businesses they frequent. The more you focus on customer service, the more loyalty you'll gain from those individuals.

Start by listening to *customer feedback*. When people who have shopped with you before feel like they're being heard and understood, they are more likely to return. You can use customer feedback to improve the online experience, build social influence, or improve their overall experience when interacting with your customer service team.

It's also a good rule of thumb to *build a loyalty programme*. By giving your most loyal customers a few "perks" and benefits, they'll keep coming back. They'll also give you free word-of-mouth advertising, recommending your business and loyalty perks to others. Customer loyalty programs help to improve retention, encourage repeat business, and foster better long-term relationships with your customers. While your business should always be focused on growth and attracting new people, it's much easier and more lucrative to keep current customers coming back.

At the end of the day, your customers are the most important factors in your business' success. While having a solid marketing strategy is

important, it's just as crucial to focus on building better relationships. That starts by improving the overall customer experience from start to finish, so you can build longevity into your brand. Keep these tips in mind to streamline your processes, build healthy relationships, and encourage advertising from your most loyal patrons.

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