

Here's what consumers want from customer communication in 2020

By [Brent Haumann](#)

23 Dec 2019

It's now well-established that customer communication is vital to the success of any business. But it can only play that role if it meets the wants and needs of the consumers receiving it.



Image source: Gallo/Getty Images.

As time passes and consumers adopt new technologies, those expectations are changing. What was a cutting edge approach just a few years ago is now old-hat. If companies fail to keep up with the demands of their customers, especially when it comes to communication, they will take their money elsewhere.

With that in mind, here's what consumers will expect from customer communication in 2020 and how companies can ensure that they meet these specific wants and needs.

Make the most of micro-moments

Consumers increasingly expect companies to be there for the micro-moments, those seconds when they turn to their phones to satisfy a need, whether it is to know something, to buy something, to go somewhere or to do something.

People want these momentary needs to be satisfied immediately, which is why companies should do everything to ensure that their communications meet the “be there, be useful, be quick” mantra. It’s not just about being there in the moment, but also about delivering relevant content, making it easy for the customer to make a purchase and to ensure that the moment is a pleasant one.

In order to do this, companies need to ensure that they communicate with their customers at every point in the buying journey and be able to instantly connect with them. Importantly, they also need to measure every interaction with their customers and track and assign a value for every touch-point a customer has with the brand.

Integrating new technologies

Customers lead the way when it comes to the channels they want companies to communicate with them on. And today’s customer is more tech-savvy than ever.

As a result, things like chatbots, voice integration, and dynamic (hyper-personalised) content amongst others, are no longer points of differentiation, but essential for any organisation that’s serious about customer communication.

But organisations cannot simply implement these technologies and expect dramatic improvements in their customer communication efforts. They have to ensure that whatever integrations they implement give customers the kind of seamless, cross-channel experience that has become expected.

When it comes to providing this experience, artificial intelligence will play an increasingly important role. In the customer communication space especially, AI-based systems are useful for predicting user behaviour and providing content based on that prediction to prompt the user’s next action.

Organisations are already seeing the value AI provides in this regard, integrating it into email, billing, and mobile payments, all of which contain forms of customer communication. AI is additionally driving the use of chatbots, which appear on websites and instant messaging services, as automated virtual assistants.

Security

The size and impact of data breaches grew larger in 2019, with the average global cost of a breach [now US\\$3.92m](#), up 1.5% from 2018 and 12% from 2014. That’s unlikely to change in 2020.

At the same time, [consumers are more afraid](#) than ever of the potential consequences breaches have with regards to their personal security. Thanks to years of awareness campaigns, most people know that spoof customer communications often play a role in these breaches. This may make them wary of legitimate communications sent out by an organisation.

Companies therefore not only need to ensure that their communications are safe but also educate customers on what they will and won’t include in any piece of communication.

And, when a breach does happen, it’s imperative that organizations put customer communication at the heart of their response. Security breaches that compromise customer data always negatively affect customer confidence.

With customers already nervous about breaches and able to quickly switch loyalties, in 2020 it’ll be more important than ever for organizations to get information out as quickly as possible - either as reassurance or as notification that their personal information has been breached, and what they should do about it.

Granular personalisation

The degree to which companies can personalize their customer communications is increasingly granular, bringing together multiple data points to create a comprehensive image of an individual customer.

Where knowing a customer's history may once have been enough, customers now expect much more. In order to make the most of any given piece of communication, companies also have to factor in where customers are when they receive it and when they're most likely to interact with it.

The more information an organisation has on each customer, the more meaningful and valuable its communication will be.

Make it human-centred and authentic

As important as it is for organizations to embrace shifts in what consumers expect from customer communications, it's equally vital that they do so in a considered way.

Whether it's integrating new technologies, ramping up the focus on security, or making communications ever more personalised, organisations need to do so in a way that adds to a sense of authentic, human-centred communication.

Ultimately, companies that focus on what their customers want and need from communication in 2020 stand to see serious gains.

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