



**UNDERSTANDING,
SUPPORTING & IMPROVING
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

The customer is at the heart of your business values. And your company is dedicated to creating fantastic products and services as you offer the most amazing customer experience. But, the quality of that experience relies on a wide array of factors that need continual consideration and examination as businesses change and grow. In the following article, our experts from [Blue Valley Marketing](#) will explore some of the key elements that businesses need to support, improve, and understand regarding the value of customer experience.



What Is Customer Experience?

Also referred to as CX, customer experience is your customers' perception of their interaction with your brand or business.

Customer experience is the result of every time a customer interacts with your brand, from visiting your website to speaking with customer service and buying and receiving your products or services.

Everything that you do as a business impacts their perception of your brand and whether or not they keep coming back to you. An exceptional customer experience is crucial to your success.

The Importance of Customer Experience for Your Business

Giving your customers a great experience is vital for any business. For example, the better customer experience you provide, the more positive reviews and repeat customers you'll receive. You'll also likely notice a reduced rate of product returns and complaints.

Some of the top benefits of delivering a great customer experience include:

- ▶ **Better customer loyalty**
- ▶ **Lower customer attrition**
- ▶ **Higher profitability**
- ▶ **Greater repeat business**
- ▶ **Higher customer satisfaction**
- ▶ **Increased positive reviews**
- ▶ **Increases in referrals**
- ▶ **greater lifetime value**

Every business model can benefit by improving its customer experience. For example, [subscription-based businesses](#) can reduce churn and increase retention rates, while e-commerce marketplaces can reduce returns and increase brand loyalty.

Putting customer experience first is always good for any business.



Customer Experience vs. Customer Service

While customer service is part of the customer experience, CX is so much more.

As we mentioned, CX is how a customer perceives your company overall based on their interactions. Comparatively, customer service is more about the customer experience at specific touchpoints where they request and receive assistance.

In other words, **customer experience is more extensive than customer service**. CX includes every touchpoint customers have with your company, whether when they first hear about you or contact your customer service team for help.

What Defines a Good Customer Experience?

There's no universal checklist that you can follow to guarantee the best customer experience; your customers and your business are unique. However, some common principles apply in every industry. So let's look at some of the key points.

You can help achieve a better customer experience by:

- ▶ **Listening to your customers and making it your top priority to recognize their wants and needs**
- ▶ **Using customer feedback to gain a better understanding of your customers**
- ▶ **Implementing systems to collect, analyze, and act on that feedback regularly**
- ▶ **Reducing friction and solving your customers' specific challenges and problems**
- ▶ **Empowering your employees to solve any problem or complaint correctly the first time**
- ▶ **Not offering excuses and providing solutions**

The summary is simple: good customer experience **typically comes from asking for feedback, listening to customer responses, and acting on what they say.**



What Causes a Bad Customer Experience?

Unfortunately, it's easier to create a bad customer experience than a good one. Bad CX comes in various shapes and sizes, but let's look at what frustrates customers the most. Typically, **bad customer experience comes from:**

- ▶ **Dealing with employees that don't understand their needs**
- ▶ **Automating too much of the process without [human touch](#)**
- ▶ **Speaking with rude or angry employees**
- ▶ **Waiting for long periods of time**
- ▶ **Leaving with unresolved questions or issues**
- ▶ **Being treated like another customer and not a unique person**
- ▶ **Shifting blame instead of promoting solutions**

For other ideas, try to think about the last time you were frustrated as a customer. Most likely, it was one or more of the above causing that frustration.

However, what ends in a bad customer experience for your business will likely be unique, and the best way to learn about it is by opening the door for your customers to leave feedback and working to minimize the factors that cause them to have a poor experience.



Customer Experience Statistics to Understand

Bigger than factors like satisfaction or loyalty, **the customer experience is a broader way to define how a customer encounters your brand.** It's everything from the convenience with which they can make a return or the offers they receive that seem custom-made for them.

Here are seven statistics you need to know about the customer experience:

The Phone Is Still Number One: More than half of all consumers across every age group reach for the phone first, holding it at number one for communication channels, according to [Zendesk](#).

Hold Is Your Enemy: Your “please hold” is not part of a great customer experience. [HubSpot Research](#) reports that 33% of customers are most frustrated by being placed on hold. A bad call routing solution is also causing aggravation, with 33% of consumers saying that having to repeat their question or concern over and over again is the most frustrating part of their experience.

Service Is Supreme: When a customer's complaint is rooted in service, your company should take note. Customers with a service-related complaint are four times more likely to switch to one of your competitors, [according to Bain and Company](#).

They're Talking About It: [CFI Group reports](#) that whether your service is bad or good, there's a 36% chance your customers are talking about it. And one-third of them are posting about it on Facebook.

But Talk Can Be Good: [Qualtrics XM Institute](#) research found that 94% of American consumers will talk about a company whose service they deemed “very good.”

Perception Is Reality: [McKinsey reports](#) that 70% of the customer journey is rooted in how the customer feels they are being treated.

You Better Be Quick: [Research from HubSpot](#) says that customers see an immediate response from your company as being either “important” or “very important” when they have a service request.

What Customer Experience Means for Your Growth

Customer experience is a critical factor in securing loyalty and fostering growth because it's not just about what happens at the final purchase. Instead, it's about every touchpoint between a brand and a customer, from initial online searches for the product to informative content and product comparisons.

Customer experience is all-encompassing, and there are some key reasons you should be perfecting yours:

The Stakes Keep Creeping Up: Consumers are increasingly willing to divulge their information to brands, but they expect access to those details to provide them with an immersive, personalized experience. And they know that if you aren't delivering what they expect, another brand will. [According to a PWC report](#), **80% of customers identified knowledgeable support, speed, and convenience as their most critical expectations for brands**. Notably missing from that list: price.

It Sets Your Brand Apart: Customers want to do business with brands that **allow them to interact when they want and how they want**. That means they want an omnichannel experience, with the freedom to text, chat, email or call, according to their whims. A company that not only offers the product or service the consumer wants but allows them to tailor their experience is one offering a distinctive customer experience.

It Delivers Results: Investing in customer experience has to deliver better sales, or it's not worth it. But [research from the Temkin Group](#) says that **73% of companies boasting an above-average customer experience outperform their competition**. And companies focused on the customer produce revenue that's 5.7 times that of their competitors.

Related: [3 Ways Small Businesses Benefit From Inbound Contact Center Services](#)

Key Elements of a Successful Customer Experience Strategy

Next, let's talk about how you can create a strategy to give your customers a better experience. Follow these eight crucial steps to get started:

1. Understand Who Your Customers Are, and What They Want

To create an environment for great customer experiences, you need to understand who your customers are and what they need from their interactions with your business. A great way to do this is by **creating comprehensive [customer profiles](#)**. Employees can learn to recognize these profiles and better understand how to approach specific customers to provide an improved customer experience.

2. Map the Customer Journey

Customer journey mapping is required to understand the experiences your customers go through. This process helps you understand what experiences your customers have at different touchpoints. Businesses often perform exceptionally well on some components of the journey, but without a full view, they might fail at some distinct points. Viewing the entire journey and not just some of the touchpoints help frame a better customer experience.

3. Collaborate the Right Way

Having a **consistent delivery across the customer journey can be challenging**, and it's often increased by your siloed operations. Until your entire business understands the impact on customer experience, your progress will be limited. For example, having a difficult billing experience can override a customer's otherwise positive interactions with a business. However, your team that handles the billing might not see themselves as part of the frontline delivery.

Creating a cross-functional experience can help you **improve your customer journey and experience in meaningful ways**. By committing to a [customer-centric view](#), you can realign existing processes to allow your business to deliver a better overall experience.

4. Develop Emotional Connections With Customers

Some of the best quality customer experiences are achieved when employees can successfully create an emotional connection with customers. In fact, [the Journal of Consumer Research](#) indicates that **more than 50% of consumer experience is based on emotion, and said emotion is a primary driver that shapes consumer decisions**. The better a customer feels about interactions, and the more emotionally attached to a company they are, the more likely they are to become loyal to said company.

Data indicates that businesses that optimize for an emotional connection with customers can **outperform competitors by as much as [85% in terms of sales growth](#)**.



5. Listen to and Leverage Customer Feedback

If you want to design a customer experience strategy that is 100% customer-centric, **you need to understand where you currently stand when delivering on your customer journey.**

Implementing a customer experience program can help you deliver real-time insights into how your customers feel about their interactions with your brand and how they impact their overall engagement with your business.

Soliciting and reporting customer feedback in real-time across every touchpoint and experience can help you identify and prioritize what you need to improve. Remember, customers will tell their stories, positive or negative, whether you're listening to them or not. Leveraging these stories to improve your services can be a fantastic way to enhance customer experience and develop long-lasting brand loyalty.

Consider implementing **live chat tools, follow-up emails, post-interaction surveys, and even outbound sale calls to collect customer feedback.** Also, don't shy away from complaints or negative feedback from dissatisfied customers since that provides you with an opportunity to improve your services and general business practices going forward.

6. Don't Ignore Employee Feedback

While leveraging customer feedback is critical for improving customer experiences, so is **listening to your employees' feedback.** Employee feedback is a precious tool that managers and business owners can use to enhance other practices and procedures for all parties. After all, the happier your employees are, the happier your customers are likely to be.

7. Communicate More Clearly

Communicating the way you are improving the customer experience is crucial. Your customers **want to know that you are acting on their feedback and not just listening to it.** Direct problem resolution and customer engagement contribute significantly to how past, current, and potential customers see your business.

You can earn customer loyalty by consistently delivering on your business values and doing well with your customers, which is the key to customer experience success.

8. Compare Improved Customer Experience to Business ROI

Once you implement the above measures into your practice, you can determine how well your efforts are paying off by **comparing your business results and overall ROI to overall customer experience scores.**

Because customer experience is a problematic factor to measure, many businesses rely on the [NPS or Net Promoter Score](#). This method helps businesses collect valuable insights by ranking responses to the question, "how likely are you to recommend us?"

Does your growing business need access to an effective call center solution to help improve customer experience and satisfaction? Our team of experts at [Blue Valley Marketing](#) is here to help by ensuring they receive the same level of care they've grown accustomed to from your business.



The Problems With In-House Inbound Call Centers

Leveraging the key elements above to develop a compelling customer experience strategy is critical for continual business improvement and increased customer satisfaction. However, we also want to emphasize **a specific tactic your business can leverage to help drastically improve customer experience overall; inbound call center services.**

This tactic can provide businesses with a massive array of benefits, no matter how they typically operate within the market. For example, in-person stores need call center services ready to go for any customers who call in with questions or concerns about their products. And even e-commerce businesses that are specifically designed to be entirely self-serve experiences still need to assist customers at times.

When customers need help, they typically want to talk to a live agent. The convenience of a seamless online purchase or a pleasant in-person transaction is **only enhanced when customers find that an agent is ready to assist them when they encounter a challenge**, creating an improved customer experience.

However, the quality of that experience relies in part on the ability of your call center to offer a consistent, satisfying level of service. At times, even with the best of intentions and good business planning, **an in-house call center can face difficult challenges. Including:**

- Staffing challenges, limitations on scheduling and/or call center employees that are overworked
- Technical product lines that require extensive experience and knowledge, making the in-house call center a costly and challenging business segment
- Accelerated company growth:
 - Too many calls going to voicemail due to call volume
 - Challenges staffing positions quickly enough
- Short-term opportunities, such as a new product release, promotion or holiday creating a shortage of available agents
- The company has a need for customer service representatives trained in upselling and cross-selling efforts
- Call center employees that do not have access to the latest tools to address client needs efficiently
- Insufficient training or inadequate support for representatives to resolve complaints or questions on the first call

- You may not have agents empowered to solve complaints and inquiries on the first call, or you may need a support team with expanded authorization for these situations
A business partnership may create a situation where customers are dissatisfied with the level of service by agents outside the U.S. because of language barriers, culture differences, or quality of service
- You may have a need to reduce costs by moving call center operations to a part of the United States with lower wages.

Because of these issues, **an in-house inbound call center isn't always enough to help promote or maintain positive customer experiences**, especially if your business is rapidly growing or expanding its operations. Out of all of the factors noted above, the three most critical problems that businesses find themselves encountering include;

1. Teams Being Too Taxed

Whether you're experiencing high turnover rates, or employees are disengaged, dissatisfied, or simply overworked, having an overly taxed in-house call center is never good. In some cases, call centers are being asked to handle **not only voice calls, but also chat, email, social media and messaging**, which can cause a lot of messages to go unanswered.

2. Rising Complaint Amounts:

Only a decrease in sales could be a starker indication that something is amiss. When complaints are not only increasing, but they are moving higher up to the executive level, it's a sign that your customer service team is floundering.

3. Defecting Customers

You're losing customers, and your competitors seem to be gaining on you. This is a clear indication that customers aren't enjoying the experience with your company. **They're dissatisfied with your service, they want more interaction or more engagement**, and your in-house call center isn't up to the task.

If you start to notice these particular issues occurring in your business, it's generally a clear sign that an [inbound contact center service](#) can be a valuable addition to your in-house staff.



Inbound Call Centers: A Key Player in Customer Experience

Implementing an organization-wide focus on the customer experience is a daunting task, but one way that many companies implement customer-focused practices is by **utilizing outsourced contact center services**.

Agents trained to be knowledgeable in your industry, and who offer a consistent and high-quality customer experience, can help your company stay the course in areas like brand messaging. You can also ensure that you spend more time on individual customer interactions so that no call is ever sent to voicemail or missed altogether.

When you outsource to a contact center services provider, **they act as an extension of your company, using the same language and messages that make your brand unique**. It helps you create a consistently exceptional customer experience for every customer. Your in-house agents are freed up to handle more complex issues, while your outsourced contact center manages the more routine calls.



Improving Customer Experience Via Inbound Call Center Services

When you outsource your inbound contact center services, you take the pressure off your in-house agents and improve the customer experience. Here are **the top benefits you can expect**:

1. Improved Metrics

Across the board, from first-call resolution to overall customer satisfaction, you'll see better scores from your customers. **With custom call guides and fast, thorough interactions with customers**, an inbound contact center allows you to handle every issue and resolve it quickly.

2. Relieve Your In-House Agents

By taking mundane calls, like order-taking, invoice questions, and delivery status updates from your in-house agents, **you free them up to address more in-depth issues**. This step leads to better job satisfaction among your staff because their jobs become less routine and more engaging.

3. Get Through a Crunch

Maybe your customer service lines typically hum along at a steady clip, and you're only overwhelmed when your big promotion runs every spring. Or maybe you need a little extra support during the holidays or when your catalog is distributed each year. Outsourcing to an inbound contact center **helps you maintain the level of service your customers are accustomed to** and support your brand's excellent customer experiences.

4. Access Quality Talent

One of the key challenges for any company is finding the right level of talent to entrust with customer experiences. You want high-quality, trained agents to handle every interaction, and outsourcing can help. Inbound contact center services providers specialize in recruiting talent that is ideally matched to create superior customer experiences.

5. Cost Savings

Depending on where you are located, **talent may be more expensive than it is where you have the opportunity to outsource**. Not only do you save on the hourly rate, but you also avoid costs related to onboarding, training, and benefits when you outsource, freeing up your budget to invest in core areas of your business.

Additionally, the minimum wage laws in your state may be different from others, so you may see significant cost savings by utilizing an inbound call center in a state with a lower minimum wage. The minimum wage ranges from \$14-15 in some states, while in others, it is as low as \$7.25.



6. Multichannel Support

You want to offer your customers the flexibility to contact you in any way that is convenient for them, but your staff simply doesn't have the capacity to monitor an array of communications formats. An inbound contact center service offers **a way to communicate with customers via email, phone, text, and chat** so that your customers' needs are met in the way they prefer

7. A Consistent Experience for Customers

You need **representatives that consistently tell your brand story, using language that highlights your values and what makes your brand different.** An inbound contact center service offers customized scripts and training that ensures our agents are seamlessly representing your brand, maybe with even better accuracy than your in-house agents.

The Extra Value of Outsourcing the Customer Experience to Third-Party Call Centers

Outsourcing your business's inbound call center operations to a third-party service can provide far more benefits than the seven key ones noted above. It can also help ensure that:

- ▶ Your customers are never placed on hold, so you never miss the opportunity to meet their needs.
- ▶ With a multichannel service provider, your customers can contact you in the format they prefer—chat, email, text, and voice calls.
- ▶ It's completely scalable and flexible to your needs, whether it's a holiday surge or you're running a promotion, or you simply need coverage during certain hours.
- ▶ It's a human-to-human conversation, adding relationship-building opportunities, along with offering key customer service functions:
 - Appointment scheduling
 - Order taking
 - Upselling and cross-selling
 - Invoice and bill payment assistance





Selecting the Right Inbound Call Center For Your Business Needs

There are a number of factors that every company should consider when choosing a business partner to handle outsourced inbound call center services.

1. Does the service use incremental billing or do they bill second-by-second?

A call that is rounded up to the nearest sixth second will quickly increase costs compared to one that bills you for exactly the length of the call.

2. Where are the agents located?

If it's important to you that the agents offer a consistent experience, you may want to choose a call center that is in the same country as your company.

3. Does the service offer dedicated agents who can act as an extension of your own company?

You need agents who are trained to represent your brand consistently so that your customers experience the highest level of quality with every interaction.

4. What is the availability of the agents?

Are they able to match your hours of business, and are they able to adequately staff the call center during the hours where you experience the most volume?

5. How are the contact center agents trained?

Particularly if you have frequent product updates or sell a technical product, it's important to know how the agents will stay up-to-date on new information.

Concluding Factors to Consider

Providing exceptional customer service to clients is essential for long-term business success.

Our experts at [Blue Valley Marketing](#) sincerely hope that the above guide has helped you better understand how your business can start leveraging new techniques and third-party call center services to provide clients with better experiences. For access to other essential information that can help your business succeed, please consider exploring our collection of [educational articles](#) and our selection of outstanding [customer services](#).

Are you searching for an effective, one-stop solution for all of your business's customer service needs? Our team of professional communication experts at [Blue Valley Marketing](#) is eager to help handle your inbound and outbound call services, lead generation, and content marketing needs!



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