4 ways contact centres give consumers a better retail experience

According to Merchants SA, contact centres are the key to reviving the retail experience for consumers.

Ureshni Danilala-Morrison, Merchants SA

"Most retail businesses have invested in their brick-and-mortar offerings and online e-commerce stores in an attempt to make their products available to a wider audience and increase customer conversion," explains Ureshni Danilala-Morrison, general manager at Merchants SA.

"However, they are not necessarily incorporating the services of contact centres to bridge the gap between both channels to offer better customer experience and, as a result, bolster sales."

According to a 2019 report published by Dimension Data, two-thirds of respondents agree that good customer experience will increase revenue or profits, and 88% recognise this as a customer differentiator. Despite this, only 10.9% of organisations surveyed have positive customer experience ratings.

Here are four ways contact centres keep customer experience relevant for retailers:

Shop-floor sales backup

For in-store purchases, a customer contacts the retailer they want to buy from via phone, email or webchat. The contact centre agent, furnished with the retailer's complete database, would be able to instantly direct the customer to the closest store.

Not only could the agent tell the customer which store, but even the aisle, and provide the shop-floor salesperson's name and direct number. The agent can also contact the salesperson to advise them of the customer's required purchase so that the goods can simply be collected and paid for as the consumer enters the store.

In-store assistance

By prominently displaying the contact centre phone number in-store, customers can call for assistance when shop floor

sales support is not entirely familiar with every range of product or dealing with many customers at once.

Free Wi-Fi will allow customers to scan QR codes in-store, which direct them to view more information on the product offering in question. This also allows the contact centre agent to up-sell and cross-sell products to the customer, call the shop floor salesman to assist or recommend a completely different approach.

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Easing the online experience

For online purchases, a customer could simply upload a picture of their required product via webchat or email, which would be received by the contact centre agent. They could then direct them to the required product online so there would be no need for searching through webpages.

If the customer is not comfortable with online purchasing, the agent could also take control of the customer's browser page and help them navigate the site to not only find the product but also help with adding products to the cart.

Collecting customer data

Data collected through contact centres provides real and actionable insight to retailers, as they can measure the demand for products at a certain store, adjust stock levels, determine whether particular locations have more popular purchases than others and create niche shopping experiences for consumers.

With customer opt-in, contact centres can enquire with the customer later to determine if they require any additional help or products.

"Contact centres are no longer just a platform for customer complaints or queries. They should be seen as an integrated part of the retail business model. The right strategy will ensure that the contact centre is a means for the retailer to improve their customer experience, drive the consumer path to purchase and assist with a successful after-sales consumer strategy too," concludes Danilala-Morrison.