

Good News—Simple Steps For Improved Customer Service

(NAPSA)—If you've ever had a bad experience with a company and told someone about it, you have lots of company. Studies show each unhappy customer will tell 13 to 15 people about his or her bad experience with a company—far more people than he or she will tell of a good experience. When factoring in the power and reach of the Internet, one bad experience could have a significant impact on a business' bottom line.

Best Practices for Happy Consumers

Having a basic understanding of what customers expect when they contact a company makes it easy to develop strategies to meet and exceed those expectations. A recent consumer survey by Leo J. Shapiro & Associates, the Contact Center Satisfaction Index, says that businesses can start by connecting consumers to agents with the most appropriate skills, at the right time.

"It's fairly easy to meet consumer demands and it typically doesn't require an overhaul of contact center technology and infrastructure. Most changes can be effected through improving agent training processes or changing business rules. For example, companies should only send customers to automated solutions when they are sure their needs can be met. Similarly, getting a customer to the right agent with the right skills and resources to address their inquiry will do wonders for the customer's experience," said Mike Sheridan, senior vice president of strategy at Aspect Software, a contact center solution provider. "Overall, consumer demands are not that outrageous, and if companies listen and respond to those demands, they will have a significant business advantage."

Reaching Out

Companies can also improve the experience by proactively



It's fairly easy to keep customers happy without overhauling the system.

reaching out to customers to verify the status of recent orders, confirm payments or inquire about the quality of service calls.

In one case, a credit card company employed this strategy to contact its customers to verify suspicious transactions. In doing so, the company was able to prevent fraud, demonstrate that its security practices worked and show that it was successfully protecting its customers.

Keeping Customers Informed

Also, when unexpected contact volumes occur, companies need to let customers know how long the wait will be or, even better, deploy call-back capabilities to enable them to return customers' calls at the time and place most convenient for those customers.

Easy-to-navigate, well-architected self-service tools can simplify routine transactions, while giving customers the information they need most. Companies should be sure to transfer information the consumer already provided to an agent with the telephone call.

Most of these changes can simply be made without requiring new technology investments. To learn more, visit www.aspectindex.com.