



WHY EMPATHY UNLOCKS GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

Abstract

Studies show that 96% of consumers consider customer service a deciding factor in brand loyalty. But what separates a good experience from a great one? Empathy – the ability to understand a customer's emotions – and not just their words – even when you can't share them. Empathy is a powerful tool that can make or break a business. It helps not only to retain and attract customers but also to create a distinct brand image. With technological advancements, the role of empathy in customer experience is becoming even more unprecedented.



Empathy is the cornerstone of **modern customer service**. It possesses the power to transform simple transactions into meaningful interactions, establishing a foundation for lasting customer relationships. At its core, it is the ability to see things from the customer's perspective. But it isn't solely about understanding their emotions, frustrations and needs, but truly feeling their pain points and driving efforts to solve their problems.

Imagine a person walking into a store, frustrated and flustered with a malfunctioning appliance, needing urgent help. The salesperson they encounter sighs, rolls their eyes, and seems utterly disinterested in their predicament. Needless to say, such behaviour will lead to a negative customer experience and potential long-term business loss.

Conversely, if an empathetic customer service representative acknowledges these emotions by saying something like, "I completely understand your frustration. It must be very hard working without ", it may show the customer that their feelings are valid, setting the stage for positive interaction and solution-oriented dialogue. However, beyond building a positive immediate interaction, the benefits of empathy extend far beyond, such as:

- **Increased customer satisfaction:** When customers feel heard and understood, they are more likely to be satisfied with the company's products or services. Studies even suggest that two-thirds of consumers are more likely to be repeat customers if they feel a company is attentive to their emotional needs, and 3 out of 4 consumers are willing

to spend more with companies that excel in delivering a positive customer experience.

- **Reduced customer churn:** Frustrated customers are more likely to take their business to competitors. According to a study by Hyken, close to 90% of consumers are willing to switch companies for an enhanced customer experience. Empathy can help reduce this churn by building stronger relationships and fostering customer loyalty.
- **Improved problem-solving:** By understanding the customer's perspective, service representatives can identify the root cause of the issue and resolve it swiftly. This not only leads to faster resolution times but also attracts more potential customers.

- **Enhanced brand image:** When customers experience empathetic service, they perceive the brand as more caring and trustworthy. This positive brand image translates to increased customer advocacy and long-term financial success.
- **Boosted employee morale:** When employees act empathetically, they create a positive work environment and experience greater job satisfaction and motivation after interacting with customers. This can eventually lead to lower employee turnover.

As such, empathy in customer service is clearly indispensable. But now the question is, **how can one develop empathy, and can it be even developed?**

Empathy is not just a feeling – it's a skill that can be instilled and honed through training programs, workshops and real-life simulations. Here are some skills and strategies that can help enhance empathy and customer experience:

- **Active listening:** Encourage representatives to pay close attention to the customer's concerns, both verbal and non-verbal. They should avoid interrupting and instead ask clarifying questions to ensure they fully grasp the situation. Active listening demonstrates that they value the customer's time and concerns.
- **Emotional intelligence:** Train representatives to understand the

non-verbal cues of the customers, such as facial expressions and voice tone, so they not only recognise but also respond to the customer's emotions more appropriately

- **Personalisation:** Ask the service representatives to go beyond scripts and personalise the interaction. They should use the customer's name, acknowledge their specific situation, and tailor their response accordingly. For example, instead of a generic apology, encourage them to say, "I'm so sorry to hear that you are having trouble with your refrigerator Mr Kapur. Managing your groceries must be quite challenging right now."
- **Solution-based interaction:** While apologies may be necessary, service representatives should focus on offering concrete solutions to address the customer's concerns. This demonstrates that they are committed to resolving the issue and making things right.
- **Culturally sensitive language:** In an increasingly globalised world, businesses need to be mindful of cultural differences when delivering customer service. Providing training in cultural norms and communication styles can hence help ensure that empathy is delivered effectively.

In the future, the importance of empathy in customer service is likely to grow even further. As technology

advances, the human touch provided by empathetic interactions will become a key differentiator. Automated systems and AI can handle routine inquiries, but complex or emotionally charged issues will still require human intervention. Companies that master empathy will stand out in a crowded marketplace, offering a level of service that automated systems alone cannot replicate. But the best approach would undoubtedly be incorporating human elements seamlessly with technology. For instance, by using **data analytics** to discover customers' past experiences, purchase history, and preferences, service representatives can tailor the interactions and add a personal touch to make customers feel valued and understood. In fact, studies suggest that every 6 out of 10 consumers think companies should use the data they collect to customise their experiences.

In conclusion, empathy is not merely a soft skill but a strategic advantage in customer service. It enhances customer satisfaction, fosters loyalty, and builds trust. By training customer service teams in empathy and embedding it into the company culture, businesses can unlock the full potential of great customer service. As the business landscape evolves, the ability to empathise with customers will remain a crucial factor in achieving long-term success.



How can Infosys BPM help?

Infosys BPM takes [customer service outsourcing](#) to the next level by integrating digital technologies to transform customer

interactions. Our services focus on delivering comprehensive, omnichannel support solutions that not only meet

but exceed client expectations through strategic insights, advanced analytics, and streamlined technologies.

For more information, contact infosysbpm@infosys.com



© 2024 Infosys Limited, Bengaluru, India. All Rights Reserved. Infosys believes the information in this document is accurate as of its publication date; such information is subject to change without notice. Infosys acknowledges the proprietary rights of other companies to the trademarks, product names and such other intellectual property rights mentioned in this document. Except as expressly permitted, neither this documentation nor any part of it may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, printing, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of Infosys Limited and/ or any named intellectual property rights holders under this document.

