

## 10 Tips for Optimizing the Customer Experience During Tough Economic Times

We believe that delivering an exceptional customer experience will give you the competitive differentiation needed to survive and thrive in today's business environment. How to do so while keeping operational and marketing costs under control is a challenge, one that requires ongoing focus on the customer and the ability to make difficult tradeoff decisions. And those decisions must be based on reliable and timely information. Take the following steps to turn information into higher business performance.

1. **Proactively seek customers' inputs** regarding their experiences, problems, wants & needs, using analytics to define and prioritize what actions will be taken. Capture customers' voices in surveys, as well as in focus groups/panels, email communications, customer comment cards, calls to contact centers, conversations with their account managers, web site link, etc. Listen actively!
2. **Understand your customers' processes and where they interact with you.** Listen to them across all those touchpoints on an ongoing basis. Markets change quickly, competitors are aggressively seeking to gain market share, and customers' expectations are changing, so it is vital to stay ahead of the curve.
3. **Leverage your loyal and profitable customers** by taking action on the insights learned. Be sure to focus on this customer segment. The goal is not only to ensure customer retention, but to retain and increase their current revenue streams through new offerings and delivery mechanisms that meet their specific needs.
4. **Emphasize the soft skills for all customer-touching employees**—listening, acknowledging, showing personal interest in the customer's processes and problems. This goes a long way toward creating the truly engaged customer.
5. **Determine the key drivers of engagement *and* dissatisfaction** through rigorous feedback analysis, so that attention and investments are focused on areas that will yield the greatest ROI
6. **Do not let yourself drown in a sea of data** from multiple data sources. Focus on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and metrics that track to your corporate and departmental goals, being sure to include customer data. Track how these relate to each other. For example, as Response Time decreases, customer satisfaction increases, but with the continuing reduction in Response Time, when are there no longer any gains in customer satisfaction?

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7. **Replace all your separate database reports with well-designed dashboards** that seamlessly integrate operational, financial, customer, and employee information, allowing you to quickly analyze and monitor how your group is doing. Complex information is communicated quickly, resulting in a rapid understanding of business performance and thereby driving smarter and faster decision.
8. **Use real-time, online alerts** that tell you when actual results fall short of targets, when a downward trend is just starting, when key customers are at-risk, or when customer satisfaction scores are heading south. With drill-downs, more granular information is available to help in root cause analysis and results can be analyzed by customer segment.
9. **Empower all staff**—executives and managers, as well as front-line employees—by delivering the right information at the right time through customized dashboards that are tailored to the individual's role and level. These are delivered through the Web via login to a corporate portal or to the individual's desktop.
10. **Demonstrate that orienting the business to customers benefits the business**, whether the goal is revenue growth, high renewal rates, or profitability. The well-designed dashboard will show how customer engagement correlates with loyalty and financial results. And, when this data is tracked over time, a business model can eventually be formulated and tested, which will allow you to predict the impact on business outcomes by making improvements to specific products, processes, systems, or training.

We can help you leverage company performance data and customer input to optimize performance management. Our dashboards place rich, visual operational and customer analytics directly in the hands of people who are making critical business decisions daily. We offer a SaaS solution that provides low cost of entry, lower total cost of ownership, and a world-class infrastructure without capital expenditure.

We invite you to learn more about CustomerImpact. Email us at

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