



# Get The Channel Right And Avoid Deflection

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In the last 2 articles we explored how perspective is key to delivering a more positive customer experience as well as which channels of engagement make sense for a business, its customers and employees.

Many businesses are still in catch-up mode when it comes to customer experience and this makes for reactive approach. Making ends meet by opening channels of engagement across social, chat, phone etc... But without looking at the actual journey from either the customer or employee perspective.

Just because this is what other businesses do does not mean it will work. Many factors have to be taken into consideration like:

- Industry
- Buying Process
- Competition
- Logistics
- Type of product or service

These will have an impact on what channels make sense. The path to purchase varies greatly from industry to industry. Purchasing a car for example will take much longer than booking a holiday. Two very different journeys with different levels of expectation.

Expectation is key in delivering positive customer experiences. The ability to meet or exceed the desired outcome builds loyalty and positive feedback which 40% of consumers are likely to share online.

Progression is another important element of the customer journey. The ability to go online search, find and proceed to take action with ease also contributes to higher customer satisfaction. Yet many businesses out there fail to make it easy resulting in high effort and frustration.

Today there are 100's of channels which a business can engage on and it is simply not feasible to attempt to interact everywhere, what matters is that your customers know where to make contact.

Contact is just what it means, the ability to speak with or chat with the business. Unfortunately this is the biggest stumbling block for a customer. Reasons for contact vary, the below displays typical types of queries:

- Buying Questions
- After Sales Issues
- Technical questions
- Complaints

Customers will in most cases make the effort to find a solution to their problem before making contact with the business. This means a certain level of effort has already been exerted. Unfortunately some businesses put little thought into how they engage across channels and adopt a deflection strategy. Deflection is a bad word when it comes to customer experience especially on channels like chat, social and phone.

These channels are for immediate help, but some businesses do not take a customer centric approach resulting in frustration. Deflection can take a number of forms for example moving a Facebook chat to email or pushing a customer to self-help. Anything that causes delay causes frustration.

Phone as a channel is probably where frustration is at its maximum it takes time to arrive to this point. One company using this channel tries to deflect customers by encouraging them to visit self-help options online. It also does not communicate wait time, but instead includes unhelpful messages about high call volumes.

In deciding which channel is best to engage on a business must look at 3 key elements, its customers, its employees and the nature of the product or service they are selling. These help shape a perspective which is both customer and employee centric. These will provide a means to build loyalty and increase satisfaction across the entire journey. If a business cannot consciously be helpful on a chosen channel then it is best not to exist or engage on that channel. It should consider a means of engagement where the right level of expectation can be met.

On a final note self-help via an FAQ/help-Centre can prove to be a fantastic means of deflection, but in order for it to be successful it has to be relevant. Keep it up to date on the truly most Frequently Asked Questions and not just a set of random answers that are unhelpful.

