



How to Build Trust with Customers During Times of Crisis

 Liferay



Introduction

In the wake of the recent pandemic, companies have to learn not only how to navigate their business but also how to serve and reassure customers through challenging and uncertain times. Client relationships that once seemed so strong have stepped onto shaking ground for reasons none one could have foreseen.

However, all businesses have a decision to make now; in this time of uncertainty, how can they continue to be a source of security for those who have placed

their trust in them? And, more importantly, how can organizations continuously earn that trust?

Find actionable strategies to build trust in times of uncertainty in this e-book.

**For any organization, a crisis
is a matter of when, not if.**

Communicating with Customers in a Crisis

In just a few short months, it's been made abundantly clear how quickly a crisis can change everything—and with those changes, businesses now face new challenges in customer service, namely, how to best serve customers and maintain the trust that they have worked so hard to build.

Conquer these challenges by establishing a plan to effectively communicate and build trust with customers in the short-term, while crafting a digital-first customer service strategy that will deliver long-lasting benefits.

Here are three steps that customer experience leaders must take to put together an effective communication plan that will not only reassure customers during times of uncertainty, but will also generate long-term trust and loyalty.

- 1 **Establish a Crisis Team**
- 2 **Cut Through Departmental Silos**
- 3 **Integrate Digital Channels**

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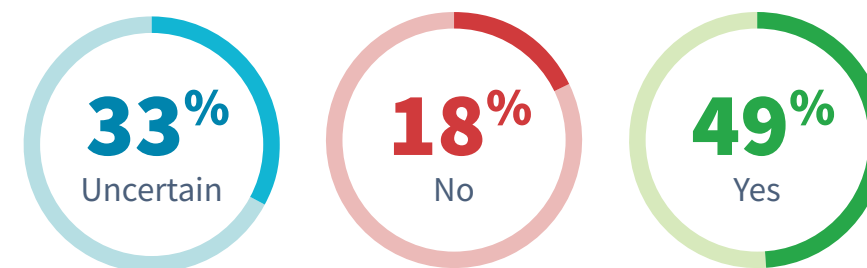
Establish a Crisis Management Team

To ensure effective customer communication, especially during times of uncertainty, utilize people from both internal and customer-facing teams to work together, such as **IT**, **Support**, **Sales**, and **Marketing**, and prioritize what's needed in an emergency.

Don't skip this step just to jump to other actionable items—this is essential in decreasing long-term negative impact from inaction. This group can draw from their expertise and business goals to strategically put together a playbook to handle crisis scenarios.

This plan should define:

- The chain of governance
- Rules of escalation
- Communication and coordination plans
- Alert and mobilization channels



This is how 317 companies answered when asked, “Do you have a crisis playbook?”

“

Fewer than half have crisis playbooks ready to use—and one-third don't even know if they do.

Deloitte¹

¹ A Crisis of Confidence



2 Cut Through Departmental Silos

Companies with siloed departments will find themselves hurting more than any other—that is because when communication is truncated during a time of constant change, information is bound to get lost. If nothing else, a crisis should be cause enough to convince any company of the dire need to eliminate silos in their organization.

Consistent internal communication will **equip employees with the knowledge** required to serve customers. Unify communication through an internal digital channel to surface relevant updates and allow cross-functional collaboration.¹

Consistent and clear internal communication, through a tool such as a modern intranet, empowers customer-facing teams to have access to the most updated and accurate information on-demand.

Providing an internal communication channel can also **reassure employees** while they navigate how to manage the business during turbulent times. Employees can be just as anxious as customers; educating teams with real-time updates will not only better equip them to handle customer requests, but will also put them at ease.

¹ How Global Leaders are Building Modern Intranet Solutions

3 Add Self-Service Digital Channels

The most effective method to manage and facilitate customer communications quickly is through the use of self-service digital channels. While many organizations understand the necessity of having digital solutions, not all have explored self-service options that enable customers to solve their challenges on their own.

Adding a self-service element to existing digital channels such as portals, websites, or mobile apps builds trust by:

1. **Cutting customer wait times** that can increase friction in high-pressure situations.
2. Allowing customer service representatives more time to **identify and resolve larger problems more quickly**, rather than answering the same FAQ's



Self-Service and Digital-First Customer Service

However, self-service is not just a “nice to have” option put in place to alleviate the volume of customer demands during times of crises. Relying solely on live channels for customer communication, especially when tensions are high, is both costly and resource-intensive. Instead, **businesses need to start strategizing how to increase the maturity of their digital customer service.**

A mature customer service unit understands the role digital channels play in improving their overall customer experience strategy. They will have integrated different digital channels and technologies, such as AI-optimized workflows and chatbots, alongside more traditional means of customer support to better serve and meet customer demands.

Doing so allows the company to experience long-term benefits such as:



Business continuity in the event of future crises



Increased agility and scalability



Improved cost and margin realization



Enhanced customer experience

Be prepared not only for crises to come, but also for shifting customer demands, changing industry standards, and emerging technologies.

Start by assessing how mature your long-term digital customer service strategy is. [Download this guide to get started >](#)

Best Practices for Consistent Communication

No matter what tools are in place, none will be effective if the culture of communication is not established and consistent.

To deliver communication that customers can depend on during a crisis, ensure that interactions internally and externally are:



PROACTIVE

Communicate as soon as possible and have a **regular cadence** for updates. While there might not be any new information to provide, a lack of regular communication can increase anxiety, hurting the trust that has been painstakingly built.



TRANSPARENT

This one is tricky. Share information that will be helpful for customers and ensure that this information is **accurate to set realistic expectations**. Be wise however with how much information needs to be shared, too much can also cause anxiety and fear.



EASY TO ACCESS

Customers should be able to **easily find relevant information**, especially in challenging times. This can include utilizing communication capabilities within self-service channels, setting up email or text notifications, creating status update web pages, or implementing dedicated call-outs in customer portals.



Ultimately, businesses need to create a foundation of responsiveness and reliability that will earn their customer's trust and loyalty.



Conclusion

Crises put pressure on all relationships. Regardless of the approach businesses take, they must be willing to dedicate the time and resources to make their plan successful. The experience customers receive during uncertain times will either make or break the customer relationships. Consider how you can begin to equip your teams to plan accordingly for the crises to come.

Moving Forward

Crises aren't the only time businesses need to be equipped to communicate effectively with their customers through digital channels. See three ways you can enhance your digital customer service strategy by implementing these best practices.

[Grab Your Guide >](#)



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