zendesk

CUSTOMER STORIES

Bright Ideas

box   SwiftKey   FC   LE TOTE   Wharton
University of Pennsylvania

Contents

Building healthy relationships with your customers is a good thing. But healthy relationships don't happen overnight; they are not based on a single interaction. The relationships you value most are a journey unto themselves.

This is especially true in today's economy, where transaction-based sales models are giving way to subscription and loyalty-based models. Building real and lasting relationships is vital to long-term success.

That's why Zendesk is here. We've made it our mission to bring you closer to your customers. We do this by helping businesses and organizations offer a consistent and frictionless customer service experience, on a platform that's flexible and easy to build on.

But we haven't brought your eyes this far down the page just to tell you the Zendesk story. Our customers are the heroes of their own stories. Learn how they've used Zendesk to tailor their support, try out new ideas, and improve their relationships—all at scale. Because the truth is that tools don't innovate—people do. A tool becomes innovative when it allows you the freedom to use it in cool, new ways and to take the support you offered before and make it even better.

Connecting on all the right channels

CUSTOMER SINCE

July 2011

AGENTS

215

CHANNELS

email, web, phone, live chat, self-service

DECREASE IN FIRST
RESPONSE TIME

20%

TIME SAVED PER TICKET

20-30 seconds

Box was founded on a simple, powerful idea: people should be able to access and share their content from anywhere. Since 2005, Box has helped more than 37 million individuals and 47,000 companies do just that. In fact, more than 50 percent of top Fortune 500 companies trust Box with their content.

Since becoming a customer in July 2011, Zendesk has helped scale Box's customer service through periods of explosive growth and as they've expanded channels of support. In a few short years Box's User Services team has grown from 17 to 215 agents, now grouped into multiple tiers and supporting customers by email, web, phone, live chat, and self-service.

Challenge

Before implementing Zendesk, Box's support team served their varied client base using a feature-packed but cumbersome Windows-based system. At times the team felt like they were spending more time supporting the software than anything else. This was problematic because SaaS companies like Box need their tools to make it easier to understand the lifecycle and health of customers, so that they can in turn provide appropriate support treatment. At the time, Box was looking to:

- Better organize agents by tier and channel

- Adopt a tool that required less maintenance and that was flexible enough to integrate with other platforms

- Better understand customer health and find ways to surface tickets that need immediate attention

Solution

Zendesk became the central integration point for managing customer interactions, allowing Box to maintain use of other systems and to roll out new channels of support based on customer preferences, and to choose the Zendesk partner that provided the right options for each channel's requirements.

Box has also developed a sophisticated customer health score that they import into Zendesk and use to drive many of their business rules. "Leveraging the Zendesk API in this way was incredibly simple," said Jon Herstein, Senior Vice President of Customer Success, "and the result has been powerful."

• Integrations with Salesforce, MailChimp, and other Zendesk-built productivity apps

• Development of a custom app to import customer health scores into Zendesk and provide agents with visual cues

Results

Part of great customer service, Herstein has said, is providing a consistent experience at every customer touchpoint. "The customer shouldn't care who in the organization they're talking to. They should just get the help they need."

"You have to innovate around the edges and constantly refine the offerings that you have."

—Jon Herstein, Senior Vice President of Customer Success at Box

With Zendesk, Box has succeeded in providing a consistent and connected experience across channels. They've also made changes at the organizational level and realized the following gains:

- Regularly report customer-reported issues to the product team, helping to increase customer empathy throughout the organization

- Saved 20-30 seconds per ticket and saw an immediate 15-20 percent spike in satisfaction

- Between February 2014 and February 2015, Box realized another 7 percent increase in CSAT, and in the same span of time saw a 20 percent decrease in first response time

- Have upleveled their service for enterprise clients, while scaling down support for their base of small business customers

- Formed a Customer Advisory team—now a fixture in the organization—to look at groups of customers for a month at a time and then tweak, refine, and track the support, services, and resources offered

Embedding customer service everywhere

MONTHLY HELP

280,000+

SELF-SERVICE RATIO OF

70:1

AGENTS

6

SwiftKey's smart, predictive keyboard app has been installed on millions of devices, and its technology is found on more than 250 million smartphones around the world. In fact, SwiftKey's users have written the equivalent of 30,673 copies of Encyclopaedia Britannica and users have saved themselves a trillion and a half keystrokes with the technology.

Challenge

Josh Greenwald is the community support lead at SwiftKey. He joined the company in 2014 and took charge of reinventing the customer experience. The team of six was using Uservoice but experienced pain as the company began to ramp up. "It wasn't meeting our needs," explained Greenwald. "We struggled with being able to quantify things with analytics and data. We didn't have capabilities to do a lot of the things we needed to do on mobile as well. Things were really fractured."

That same year, in addition to the customers of the telco companies they're partnered with, Swiftkey adopted a freemium model for their consumer apps. The lean support team of six was suddenly faced with supporting millions of users. "We're just at a scale where we get a thousand inquiries from the Google Play store a month. We're not in a position where we can have a one-to-one conversation with every single customer," Greenwald said.

- Needed better analytics

- Needed a better mobile support experience

- Faced with needing to scale support to meet the demands of millions of new consumers
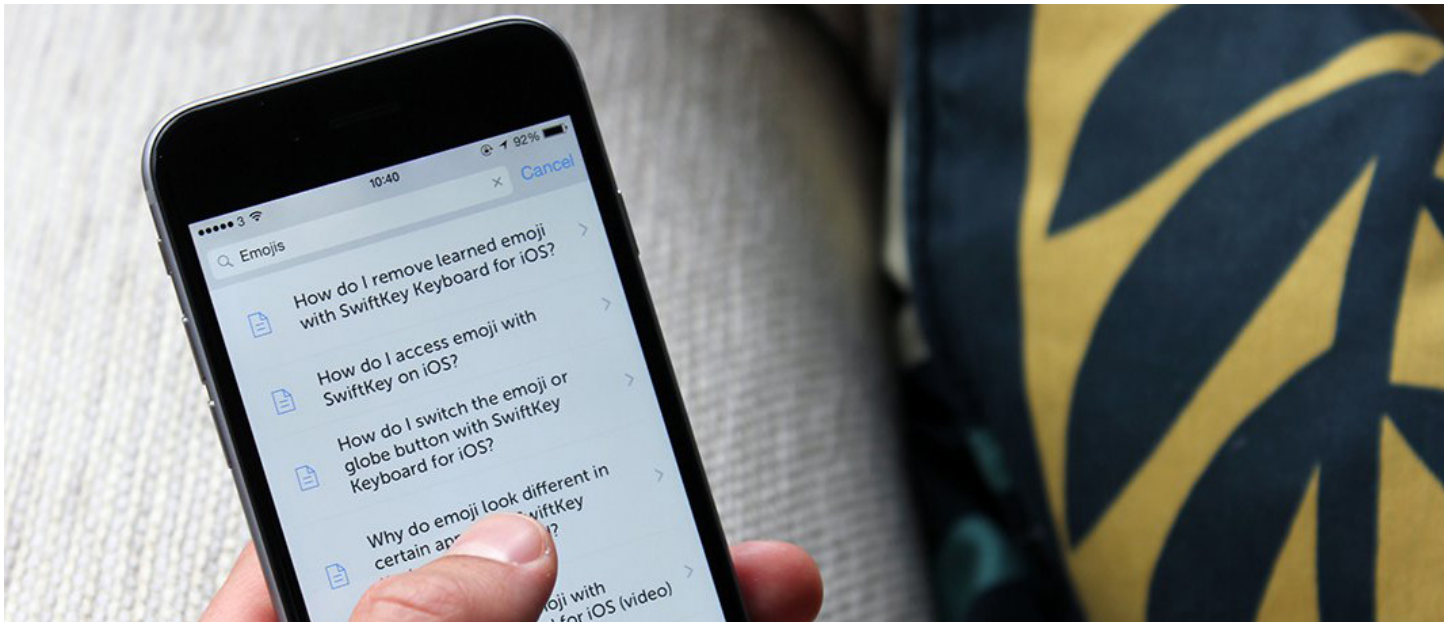
Solution

Much as SwiftKey's technology predicts words and phrasing as a user types, key to their support strategy was to anticipate users' needs and provide support right where the user is—on their mobile device. SwiftKey knew that one-to-one interactions were not always going to be workable at their scale, so they adopted a one-to-many approach. Foundational to this approach is the SwiftKey Help Center. "It's key that we made our Help Center a simple experience. One that is responsive. One that works on mobile, and that is easy to digest," said Greenwald.

He chose to embed the Zendesk Mobile SDK in the SwiftKey app. This meant his users could access Help Center content without ever leaving the mobile app. "Zendesk and the Mobile SDK empower SwiftKey to provide a higher quality experience to our users," Greenwald said.

- Swiftkey's Help Center auto-detects a user's mobile device

- Based on the user's operating system, users are automatically shown the iOS or Android product category

- Users access Help Center articles and support without ever leaving the SwiftKey mobile app

Results

The team also pass device and app-level data to Zendesk when a user asks for help. "It provides the extra context we need to understand our users' issues." The benefits for the team are significant. Issues are resolved faster as they have all device information at hand and don't have to wait for the user to provide it. "We can more intelligently serve our users because of the Mobile SDK," Greenwald said.

"Our apps exist on smartphones. We need to work intelligently on the devices where our customers are coming from."

—Josh Greenwald, Community Support Lead at SwiftKey

These changes have freed up the team's time to measure, refine, and refresh their Help Center content, and to step outside the traditional boundaries of support by interacting with their customers in places like Reddit. Providing product knowledge and educating users on the sites they frequent helps SwiftKey develop better, more proactive relationships with their user base—instead of just waiting for a ticket to come in.

- The team now uses data to identify usage trends and to make improvements to the user experience
- For every 70 Help Center views, only 1 ticket is created
- In a continued effort to be data-driven, the team sends Net Promoter Score℠ surveys to measure loyalty and gather product feedback, and customer satisfaction surveys to measure agent performance and gauge how customers feel about their service

Designing better customer experiences

COMPLAINTS PER DAY

1.5 – 2k

COMPLAINTS PER YEAR

450k

AGENTS

75

FORMS REPLACED BY
HELP CENTER

18

Most of us don't think about the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) until we have to—because we want to stop the robocalls and get on the national Do Not Call registry, or we need help settling a dispute with an Internet carrier, or we have questions about this thing called net neutrality.

What's that? Fortunately, the answer is easy to find on the FCC's Consumer Help Center. The site, rolled out in 2015, represents a shift away from a 15-year-old on-premise legacy consumer complaints system, and replaces 18 outdated forms.

Challenge

Pressure to innovate was coming from the top down. The United States Congress tasked the FCC with making it easier for the public to interact with the government agency. From the bottom up, however, the scope of the project was both large and expensive. There were also the complexities of the organization to consider: the FCC is made up of 18 Bureaus and Offices, interfaces with 1500 carriers, and serves a target customer base of more than 320 million people—the entire United States.

This kind of undertaking would require driving real cultural change. And while reviewing consumer complaint systems, it was looking like they'd need to build their own on-premise system at a price tag near 3.2 million and that it might take 1-2 years to do so. Then Dustin Laun, a contractor who works for the FCC, suggested trying a SaaS solution.

- Outmoded paper forms
- Complex network and large number of people impacted
- High costs, long timeframes

Solution

After extensive market research, the FCC chose to implement Zendesk's customer service platform to build their Consumer Help Center and to provide ticketing support via email and web form. At an 85 percent savings to taxpayers, Zendesk is the first external-facing SaaS product the FCC has ever gone live with and marks the first step in a more radical modernization effort. It took just six months to implement.

The Consumer Help Center provides a wealth of information that citizens can easily navigate on their own. The goal is not to eliminate complaints; instead the FCC hopes the Consumer Help Center will encourage complaints by making them easier to lodge and track.

- The FCC currently receives more than 450,000 complaints annually and would love to increase that to 1 million

- Macros, triggers, and business rules have allowed for automated efficiencies throughout the system

Results

"Initially a small percentage of the FCC was on board, however now the majority of the agency is seeing the benefit," Laun said. "There is now agency-wide buzz and additional inquiries from other Bureaus and Offices to have their own instance of Zendesk, which has become our poster child for success."

"If Zendesk can successfully scale within Big Government, then you can be successful with enterprises of any size."

—Dustin Laun, Contractor and Senior Advisor of Innovation and Technology for the FCC

Laun stated that Zendesk helps bring credibility and transparency to the agency. "With Zendesk in place," he said, "we started having a much more accessible and accurate view into who was engaging with the FCC."

- For the first time, consumers can view the real-time status of their complaint online

- Improved time-to-resolution with providers or carriers, reducing the time to serve complaints to carriers by at least 10 days

- Some complaints can be processed in just three clicks

Providing in-the-moment mobile support

TICKETS PER MONTH

2,502

GROWTH M/M

50%

DECREASE IN CHAT WITH EMBEDDABLES

60

CSAT

94%

Inspired by companies like Netflix, Le Tote lets women rent their wardrobe in the same way they borrow a DVD. Customers select clothing and accessories they love from an online collection and, for a monthly fee, receive a tote with three clothing items and two accessories. Each tote includes items customers choose themselves along with items selected by Le Tote's stylists that match an individual's overall style profile. The concept immediately struck a chord, and the company is growing at a rate of 50 percent a month.

Challenge

Le Tote knows it can't take customer happiness for granted. The company invests significantly in its customer service team headed by Aubrie Rice. And like any customer service leader, Rice makes sure she has the staff and tools she needs to solve customer issues quickly, even with their steep growth rate. The trickier challenge, Rice shared, is trying to understand what each woman likes and doesn't like, and to log that in the customer record. Not an easy task, and the difficulty was compounded by the fact that customer service requests increased in 2014 by more than 900 percent, thanks to Le Tote's explosive popularity.

Rice needed a customer service platform that would allow her agents to forge real connections with Le Tote's customer while also automating routine interactions. "We wanted to provide very personalized and proactive service," Rice explained.

- Needed a central customer record

- Needed to encourage self-service

- Desire to provide highly personalized and proactive service

Solution

Rice chose Zendesk for its flexibility and feature set. "Zendesk lets us be there in the customer's moment of truth," she explained. That is the all-important moment when a customer opens up and says something that can make or break a tote selection. For example, "I'm 5'10" so I try to stay away from short skirts."

Le Tote currently offers support over email, chat, and phone. Among the Zendesk features that Rice appreciates are Zendesk Embeddables. By using Zendesk's Mobile SDK, a web widget, or the Zendesk API, Le Tote offers customers the ability to engage with the Le Tote support team directly from the app they are using, whether from a mobile device or computer.

- Central repository for customer feedback and support history

- Embedded Help widget on mobile and online allows users to search for answers directly from their closet or shopping pages

- Set triggers based on actions a customer takes on the website

Results

Rice expected live chat requests to skyrocket after the embeddable functionality was rolled out, but Zendesk allowed Le Tote to guide customers to its knowledge base first, before offering the choice of Zopim live chat or email support. Instead of increasing, chat requests declined by more than 60 percent within two weeks of rolling out the widget.

"With help from Zendesk, we have really been able to scale customer service. We have been able to accomplish everything we were looking to do."

—Aubrie Rice, Customer Development Manager at Le Tote

"It's a perfect example of how Zendesk is helping us keep our costs down and be very efficient," Rice said.

Last year, the customer team used the information they gathered—in response to to a trigger that prompts agents to proactively reach out when a customer lingers longer than average on the checkout page—to provide feedback to developers and designers. That led to a new page that better-matched customer needs.

- Chat requests dropped by 60 percent

- Remaining live chat requests involved issues that were more complex, providing opportunities to build stronger relationships

- Increased conversions by providing trigger-based data to developer and design teams

- The number of tickets an agent has handled as more than tripled year over year

- 94% CSAT rating despite ticket surges

Increasing employee satisfaction

1,000

19

The Computing's Core Services provides a set of 25 core services to The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. These services include assigning IP addresses, software troubleshooting, provisioning for accounts or groups, handling infrastructure requests, outages, and all requests for labs or public spaces. With an annual influx of technology-savvy students, they've got to be nimble and on the cutting edge.

Challenge

Sharon Steptoe-Smith is the IT Administrative Coordinator for Wharton Computing's Core Services. Her department was using a traditional help desk system when she signed up for a free trial of Zendesk. Their help desk was fine as far as their end users were concerned—it worked— but it was inefficient for agents. It didn't connect to their other systems, so it was a hassle to manage. She wanted something more flexible, that was easy to use and access, and that she could get up and running with minimal time and effort.

And in Steptoe-Smith's case, her colleagues also happen to be her clients. Her team functions as Tier 3 support to a distributed team of IT personnel, who work with different departments and programs throughout The Wharton School.

- Needed a tool that was easier for agents to use and manage

- Needed a tool that integrated with other systems

Solution

"When we switched to Zendesk, it was easy to see how flexible it was," Steptoe-Smith said. "Email to ticket conversion is immediate and the workflow setup is fast and efficient." The team updates tickets from Outlook or from the Zendesk mobile app on their iPads or smartphones. "It's tremendous. We've learned how to make Zendesk our own here," she said.

To avoid forcing people change the way they do business with the team, and to log into a new website, they use the forwarding feature in Zendesk. End users send support requests to email aliases, which create tickets and user records in Zendesk. Although the entire exchange appears to happen via email, Steptoe-Smith's clients noticed a marked improvement in service after they implemented Zendesk. "Once people started seeing the replies from Zendesk, they were very interested in the new look, and happy with our speedy responses," she said.

- Seamless end-user experience via long-established email aliases

- Automations and triggers automatically route tickets to Core Services subgroups

- Integration with JIRA allows them to easily pass issues to development

"Zendesk looks great and operates with ease. It allows us to work smarter and stay focused. My agents are happy."

—- Sharon Steptoe-Smith, IT Administrative Coordinator at The Wharton School

Results

Since implementing Zendesk, Wharton Computing has been able to adopt a more transparent mindset. Now, anyone can see every ticket, and Core Services meets weekly to perform incident management reviews on all tickets submitted that week. Zendesk lends a sense of stability to an organization entrenched in the always forward-looking pace of the academic year.

- Increased satisfaction from internal "customers" and from the team

- Smoother communication and processes

- Increased transparency within the organization

- Flexible, mobile access allows agents to update Zendesk from wherever they are

- Core Services' success with Zendesk has led seven additional departments to adopt Zendesk

But wait, there's more

Innovation is going to look different at every company. And growth happens at different times, in different ways, at different stages. So whether change comes fast and furious or happens to be more of a slow burn, Zendesk enables you to adapt and to refine your support offerings.

Innovation is really about seeing things in a new light—using tools that enable you to see more than you could before—and making improvements. The more you innovate, the better and healthier your customer relationships will be. It takes time, but it's worth it.

"With Zendesk, I was really impressed with the ability to customize everything. Zendesk was like a box of Legos. We could configure it to do things we hadn't even thought about."

—Kirk Barrett, co-lead of the success team at Expensify

"When I first started at GREE a few years back, we had a small instance of Zendesk but were still primarily using another system. I had used Zendesk before and knew it was pretty easy to implement and scale, so it seemed like a natural choice. Something that came as a nice surprise was the analytics capabilities built right in: it proved to be incredibly useful while we were building and scaling the team and gave us an easy way to get actual data on how things were going."

—Carlos Flores, Player Experience Manager at GREE

"For clients who want advanced reporting, Zendesk blows the competition out of the water. That goes a long way."

—Matt Ramsey, JibJab Project Manager at Metaverse Mod Squad

"With Insights I was able to show management the amount of dissatisfaction resulting from a complex cancelation process and to convince everyone that we needed to put pressure on the merchants rather than on the customer and customer service. Now if the customer wants to cancel, we cancel."

—Cedric Blum, Vice President of Customer Service at Lazada Group

"Zendesk expanded from a tool that was originally scoped to provide tech support to our partner developers to something that's much more a collaboration tool at the heart of our business. Support is always going to be a cost, but I think what Zendesk allows us to do is to justify that cost by demonstrating the amount of value we're bringing to the business, and the volume of requests we're actually dealing with."

—Mike Cartwright, Chief of Partner Solutions at Expedia® Affiliate Network

Businesses are made of relationships

On the surface business can seem like nothing more than a series of transactions. But underneath it's relationships – relationships with vendors, employees, and most importantly, customers. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. But making it better starts with a simple understanding.

RELATIONSHIPS ARE COMPLICATED

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