Remove Web Sales Obstacles by Becoming Your Customer’s “Digital Best Friend”

Think about the last time you bought something based on the advice of a trusted friend. Chances are that your friend listened, asked clarifying questions, and chimed in when needed. You probably asked her about the differences between some choices and, having narrowed it down to just one or two, made your purchase when the time was right. That’s how it works in real life.

But it’s not how a lot of businesses operate. Despite phenomenal growth in B2C eCommerce, shopping cart abandonment is as high as 88%, web form abandonment is around 75%, and bounce rates of 90% are not uncommon. Several things tend to go wrong in the cycle of “Find, Decide, and Buy.” Most companies that struggle with improving web sales are plagued with siloed systems and an approach that treats online customer interactions as isolated individual events. Effective web sales efforts, however, are connected across touch points, and capitalize on the fact that at different stages during the process, customers engage with a business in different ways.

Consider the “Find” stage. Websites are rife with SKU clutter. No one likes to wade through thousands of options. Most people want guidance on where to look, assistance in narrowing down choices, and contextual help. Targeted offers anticipate what the customer needs. Informational widgets quietly provide contextual help. Smart searches show only relevant results, federating them from wherever they exist. Chatbots tease out subtleties and provide conversational assistance. Guided help lets customers narrow down choices. The result: Less chaos, moving customers rapidly to “Decide.”

In the “Decide” stage, customers are better educated, but still navigating a minefield of product choices. It’s here that many companies make the mistake of pushing the sale with “jack in the box” offers that load with the page. Would you want that? Contrast this with proactive assistance based on actual customer behavior, and you can almost see the face of your friend smiling from the other side of the chat or cobrowse session.

During the “Buy” stage, many companies ironically don’t offer in-purchase help or offers. At this stage, tools like cobrowse, click-to-call, chat, shipping FAQs, and free-shipping offers can make all the difference. Businesses must do their best to help customers navigate complicated forms and processes, getting them done quickly, while removing all doubts about the purchase.
Take the example of a leading telco that decided to “ditch” the industry’s reputation for difficult service, massive product proliferation, and confusing billing. They looked at their situation through the customer’s eyes and found that fewer choices and friendlier people made the biggest difference. They structured their sales and service organization around these core principles and buttressed it with pre-integrated solutions from the eGain Customer Engagement Hub™ for offer management, guided help, self-service, chat, cobrowse, and social engagement.

The emergence of new channels like social and mobile doesn’t change the fact that customers still want a trusted advisor who listens, informs, and guides. If anything, new channels reinforce that model, providing more ways in which customers engage your brand, and more opportunities for businesses to sell or be outsold. To make the most of each opportunity, it pays to start with a solution that integrates and tracks all engagement channels. Once you have a unified system for deep customer engagement across touchpoints, then you can begin to design customer journeys that will not only help you sell more on the web, but get customers to tweet, post, and otherwise brag about their purchases.

Just like you would to your best friend.

**About eGain**