Customer service has emerged as one of the few sustainable differentiators in today’s hyper-competitive markets. The companies winning in this environment are those who provide “standout” customer service, while controlling costs. eGain has been enabling customer service and contact center excellence for clients around the world, through its customer engagement hub. Over the past 15 years, we have collected many innovations and best practices for doing more with less. Here are some of the popular ones.

1. **TAKE A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO CUSTOMER SERVICE**

With “time to competitive advantage” shrinking, businesses no longer have the luxury of taking a wait and see approach to customer service matters—whether it’s reacting to customer trends or competitor moves in their target markets, adding and unifying interaction channels, or addressing issues before inbound customer queries start to pile up. First-mover advantage in delivering exceptional customer service experience and building brand equity is often sustainable and irreversible.

**Best practices**
- Add next-generation web self-service options as well as new channels such as chat, SMS, and cobrowse and make sure they are integrated.
- Reduce inbound customer queries by implementing proactive customer service through outbound service campaigns and personalized notifications.

2. **PROVIDE VALUE-BASED CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Your business needs to excel in customer service without compromising profitability. Smart organizations provide the right service level by using robust frameworks to define customer value. They nudge low value customers to self-service, while making it easy for high-value customers to get access to any kind of service they need.

**Best practices**
- Define customer value, based on strategic variables such as customer lifetime value or tactical factors such as the value of goods in an online shopping cart or a combination of both.
- Make sure your customer interaction management system is able to integrate easily with erp, crm, and e-commerce systems.

3. **LEVERAGE ONLINE CHANNELS AS PART OF A UNIFIED CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT HUB**

Adoption of electronic channels continues to increase, fueled by increased usage of the Internet, and generational preferences. Moreover, many industry studies over the years have shown that interaction
costs through these channels are significantly lower than the phone channel. It makes sense to leverage e-channels for customers, while driving down costs.

**Best practices**

- Implement a customer interaction hub to avoid creating channel silos and provide a unified and consistent customer experience. Start with the most important channels first and simply plug in other channels when you are ready for them.
- Make sure traditional channels like phone and face-to-face interactions are integrated with your other e-channels. Look for solutions with proven, out-of-the-box integration.
- Establish and track service levels that are appropriate for each channel.

**4. EMPOWER YOUR AGENTS AND CUSTOMERS WITH KNOWLEDGE**

Contact center agents struggle to keep up with their companies’ offerings due to increased product proliferation and business consolidation. Ever-changing processes and government regulations add to this challenge. Businesses must arm agents with knowledge guided interactive processes that are compliant with best practices and government regulations, as well as knowledgebase content and flexible access methods that will help them improve first contact resolution.

**Best practices**

- Provide flexible access methods such as dynamic faq, search, browse, guided interactions, and chatbot interfaces to maximize user adoption and roi. A broad set of access methods makes it easy for agents and customers to find information based on their own preferences, experience level, problem type, and stage in the customer life cycle, while reducing escalations and improving agent and customer experience.
- Do not ignore ongoing content maintenance. automating content performance management tasks will help sustain content relevance, while curbing knowledge tco.

**5. ALIGN METRICS WITH GOALS AND BUSINESS STRATEGY**

If you intend to compete in your market based on high-touch service and you’re running your contact center based exclusively on throughput metrics, there’s a clear misalignment that will defeat corporate intent.

**Best practices**

- Consider metrics such as “the number of issues covered in an interaction,” instead of “average call handle time” or “calls handled per hour” if your goal is to develop deeper customer relationships.
- Sales-related metrics are more suitable if your goal includes revenue generation. Compliance conformance may be more important than handle time if you are in a highly regulated industry.

**ABOUT EGAIN**

eGain (NASDAQ: EGAN) customer engagement solutions power digital transformation for leading brands. Our top-rated cloud applications for social, mobile, web, and contact centers help clients deliver connected customer journeys in an omnichannel world. To find out more about eGain software, visit http://www.egain.com/products/