Video Engagement for Customer Service: Dos and Don’ts

Amazon® Mayday™ has popularized video help, but what are the best practices for success?

If you watch primetime TV in the UK, you’re more than likely to know Amy. She’s friendly, knowledgeable, has a soft Irish accent, and is always available to help. In a series of Amazon Kindle™ ads, we see Amy help out a busy family man and stop him from looking like a technology ignoramus when his trendy friends are over to watch the footie.

Amy is, of course, a call center agent available to video chat at the click of a button. Amazon calls this service Mayday, and has embedded it into the latest Kindle offering. The Mayday ad campaign has started to move video customer service from niche to mainstream. As businesses look to create the “wow” effect in customer experiences through video, what are the emerging best practices for success?

To video or not to video

The first step is to decide if video engagement is right for your specific business. Several factors such as your target customers’ digital maturity, what your competitors are doing, the types of products you sell, the services you provide, use cases specific to your business, industry regulations, and your company’s emphasis on customer engagement as a competitive differentiator should all be taken into account as you make this decision.

When to video

It’s important to identify video use cases that are compelling from the standpoint of experience for the customer and value for your business. Here are a few examples (there are many more):

- **Insurance**: Video chatting two-way with the customer to quickly and efficiently assess damage to an auto or other property in the claims fulfillment process
- **Retail**: Show merchandise to an online shopper and answer questions to accelerate a purchase
- **Hi-Tech**: Show a customer how to fix a problem with a device
- **Healthcare**: Video chat with the patient for remote diagnosis and prescription, showing what to do and how

Video knowledge

In addition to enriching interactions, video can also enhance your knowledgebase content. Video knowledge can be embedded in knowledgebase articles or published as end-to-end videos. The key for ROI is to make it findable in search as well as navigable to the relevant part of the video, and leverage it across customer touchpoints. An example of video knowledge is “how to” videos that are especially popular
in industries such as high-tech, home appliance, consumer electronics, miscellaneous manufacturing, utilities, healthcare and telecom. Note that there might be industry-specific aspects of video engagement that you should be aware of around privacy, security and regulatory compliance.

**From video to “superchat”**

Thanks to Gen D (digital generation), the explosion of communication devices and the Siri effect, consumers now demand multimodal chatting, where they can “auto chat” (with a virtual assistant), text chat, video chat, click to call and cobrowse—all in the same interaction with seamless transition across these modes. The simultaneous use of multiple chat modes (e.g., talking on the phone while cobrowsing at the same time) takes these experiences to the next level. One could call this “multimodal chat” or “superchat.”

Digital customers want to do more on the web with cobrowse, including form-filling, which was traditionally done in retail locations, for example, a bank or the neighborhood insurance agent’s office. At the same time, they want control over what the contact center agents can see and do, as they interact. For instance, they don’t want the agent to see private information like their credit card or social security numbers while filling out a form, and they want to complete transactions themselves rather than having the agent click the “submit” button. In order to enable these kinds of real-time collaborative experiences while also integrating with traditional interaction channels, businesses need “superchat” built on a unified customer engagement platform—Gartner calls it the “customer engagement hub”. An insurance client in the US was able to improve online acquisition and customer onboarding by 200% with superchat!

**No video silo**

When customers went social, many businesses rushed to follow with siloed social products that were not integrated with other interaction channels across rules, interactions, workflow, knowledge, analytics or administration. This resulted in more customer frustration, damaging the brand’s social equity, while driving up Total Cost of Ownership (TCO).

**Who “videos”?**

With video, your brand is on “candid camera”! Make sure that video service representatives project your brand personality and values. Agent hiring and training becomes even more important in this case. Moreover, the surroundings of the agent should reflect your brand as well; this means making sure that not only the physical environment of the contact center is aligned with your brand but also the surroundings of work-at-home or outsourced agents! Distractions around the agent’s work area (e.g., people walking around) should be minimized or eliminated for a good customer experience.

**Final word**

The Mayday buzz affords a great opportunity for organizations to tap into the growing adoption of video chat but in order to truly elevate the customer experience, businesses should integrate video chat into a holistic “superchat” or collaboration experience, all as an integral part of a unified omnichannel engagement strategy across touchpoints.