

Call Center Secrets to Outsourcing Success

Call center advice from 3 industry experts



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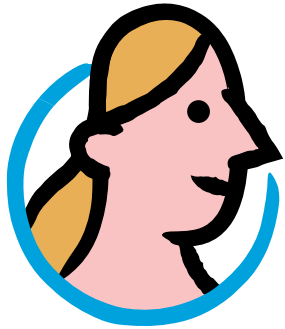
Yes, live customer support is still a thing. According to Microsoft's State of Global Customer Service report, 98% of consumers report that customer service is important in keeping them loyal to a brand. Numbers like that tell us that customer service doesn't just matter, it's a driving force in the growth of any small business. Yet, small business owners often aren't thinking about better customer service as a feasible option, thinking it's either not important or just not affordable.

There is an affordable shortcut on the path to customer service superiority! Instead of trying to wrangle a 24/7 customer service team under your own roof, you can outsource to a call center. And advice from employees of one of the best call center service companies in the US who have seen it all and done it all may offer you confidence that outsourcing is essential to your success. That's why we interviewed 3 leaders at SAS to learn the secrets to better outsourcing and what they recommend for businesses to get the most ROI from their outsourcing



Meet Some of Our Staff

Sheila F.



Role

Assistant Manager of the SAS Support Team department.

Responsibilities

I assist the department manager in keeping daily and weekly tasks on time. The support Reps come to me for guidance when they have an issue that needs clarification or they have general questions, and I take calls that need escalation. I also handle various billing tasks and will program when needed for special account needs. I am the new employee trainer, as well, and I keep the coffee machine stocked and clean!

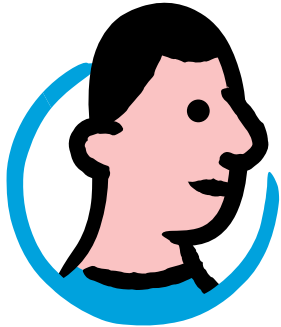
Favorite Aspect of Job

I like the challenges of finding and correcting issues, the open structure of our work place, and working with really great people.

Most Challenging Aspect of Job

Dealing with extreme clients, but mostly it's getting the job done in 8 hours.

George N.



Role

I am an Account Executive and the Continuing Education Coordinator for the Sales Department.

Responsibilities

My responsibilities include speaking to prospects about virtual receptionist services, consulting with current clients about their experiences, and working together with business owners to craft solutions valuable to the progression and growth of their brand.

Favorite Aspect of Job

My favorite part of the job is speaking to prospective clients about how our model can be an asset for their business. It's always cool to hear their excitement when they understand how much stress and pressure the service can alleviate, all while freeing them up to do other tasks that may have been put on the back-burner for who knows how long.

Most Challenging Aspect of Job

The most challenging aspect of the job is closed-mindedness. A lot of folks I speak to hand us ultimatums without giving us a chance to explain how things work, what works best, or even listen to suggestions of how to create an account to be successful. They'll say, "I need X done, and I need it done just like this". We're pros at this, but folks don't even let us get a word in edgewise.

Danielle V.



Role

I am a customer service representative.

Responsibilities

Primarily, my responsibilities consist of troubleshooting customer issues and working to come to creative solutions! I handle customer complaints, operator issues, programming issues, and billing issues. Basically, if you have a question about anything, I'm supposed to have an answer!

Favorite Aspect of Job

There are so many different things that I love about my job, but my favorite aspect would have to be that we truly do help businesses grow. People will start on our Economy plan, we will work to structure their script and make sure every lead is captured, and before you know it they are on the 220 minute plan.

Most Challenging Aspect of Job

By far the most challenging part is maintaining your patience. People call in and they may say things that they may not necessarily mean. However, something happened that affected them, their business, or caused them some kind of inconvenience. No one typically calls customer service to pat them on the back!

What is the most common misconception customers who have never used a call center have about outsourcing?



Location of call center

George Nave

One of the biggest misconceptions is definitely the location of the call center. Most folks are pleasantly surprised that everything is handled in the US 24/7/365. A lot of times, callers think all centers are overseas and outsourced, but at SAS we keep everything consolidated for quality and convenience.



Everyone answering the phone is foreign

Danielle Viglione

A common misconception that people have about call centers is that the operators answering the phones are all foreign. SAS is an Equal Opportunity Employer so every once in a while there will be someone with an accent that answers the phone. However, we are completely U.S. based! We make sure we have the best people possible answering the phones at all times.

What is the most common misconception customers who have never used a call center have about outsourcing?



Operator capability

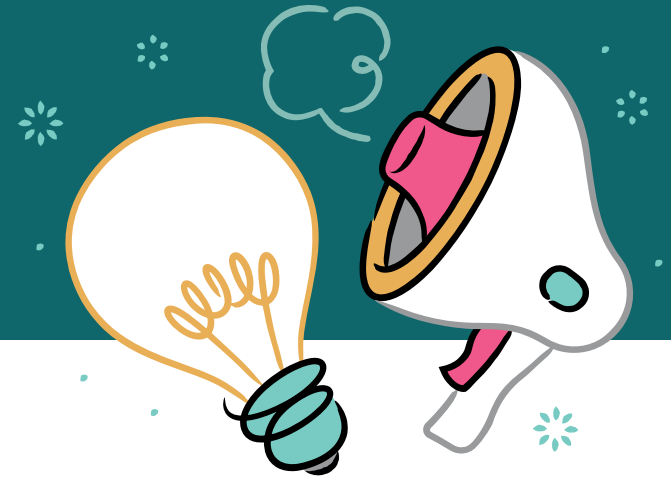
Sheila Forth

Many customers who have never used a call center before typically assume that the operators are not very bright, because they are following scripts that have previously been laid out for them. However, it can be difficult to hold a one-sided scripted conversation, since the caller is thinking and acting on their own accord.

Additionally, you'd be surprised how hard it is to answer calls all day every day for hundreds of different businesses. Operators are capable of way more than most people give them credit for, but our call center allows us to showcase all of their talents!

QUESTION TWO

What is the best tip you can give to a small business using a call center?



Less is more

George Nave

The less you have the operators juggle, the more control you will have over the success of your campaign. The more the operators have to do, the more they feel like a call center rather than your receptionist. When the operators have less to do, it makes it very difficult for the call to go awry, and it keeps the image of your brand personable and professional.



Listen to suggestions

Danielle Viglione

I would advise all customers to take suggestions from the programmers building your script. The key to having a successful interaction between an operator and a caller is a well structured script! Each business is different, but our programmers are the best of the best. They have experience answering phones for all different kinds of businesses and they know what is going to help you capture the most leads, and what is not.

What is the best tip you can give to a small business using a call center?



Start small

Sheila Forth

For a small business outsourcing to a call center, I would suggest that they try a very simple approach to message taking to start. As they get more familiar with the call center, and as the agents get more familiar with the client's needs, perhaps add more protocol, gradually, as needed.

When customers jump right into adding every protocol imaginable, a lot of issues can occur. We always try to remind the customer that the operators are not just answering for their business only, and what works in their office may not always work in a call center environment.

What's the most difficult aspect of outsourcing to convey to new clients?



Operators are not the same as your staff

George Nave

The most difficult thing about outsourcing is definitely attempting to convey that the operators won't have the same skill set, knowledge, and insight as the folks that have worked in their office for years do. The operators do their best, but no one knows your business like you do.



Human error

Danielle Viglione

You could have the most well crafted script in the entire world and an operator may make a mistake. We have systems in place to correct and train these operators like our quality review process. However, we like to focus on training and improving the operator before resorting to taking them off the floor.

What's the most difficult aspect of outsourcing to convey to new clients?



No one is perfect!

Sheila Forth

I would say the most difficult aspect of outsourcing to convey to new clients is that the agents are not perfect and they should never expect perfection. After all, no one is perfect! However, a good call center will work with their customers to make sure their outsourcing experience is as

close to perfection as possible. This entails providing amazing customer support by jumping on problems as soon as they arise, following up with check ins, coaching operators when necessary, making changes, and offering credits where credits are due.

QUESTION FOUR

What is the biggest mistake customers often make?



Being close-minded

George Nave

The biggest mistake has to be coming in with a closed mind. When clients aren't willing to hear us out, or listen to our insight of what would work best, they lose a professional opinion from our team who know what works and what doesn't. That additional insight can really make a difference in the success of a campaign.



Having operators say your company name

Danielle Viglione

One of the biggest mistakes is definitely putting the company name in the operator's greeting. We offer a custom recorded greeting that is a far better alternative. This guarantees that your name is said correctly 100% of the time. An operator may hesitate or stumble (even with a phonetic spelling) because they have to stop and read the notes regarding pronunciation.

What is the biggest mistake customers often make?



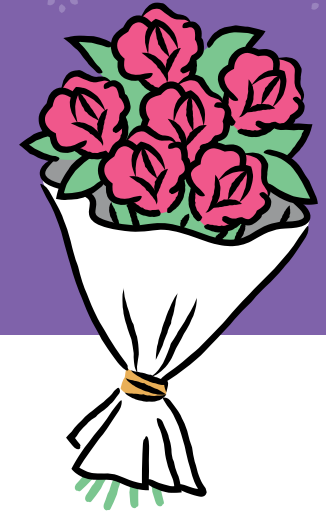
Implementing complicated procedures

Sheila Forth

I would say that the biggest mistake customers often make is over-complicating what they want a service to do. For example, a client may want their call center agents to access their website to book vacation tours. However, these types of calls may often come with a number of questions that the operators are unable to answer, like which

tour they recommend. Since it's unlikely the operators have been on said tours, it's hard to give the caller what they want. This in turn makes the operators seem un-knowledgeable about the business they are answering for, which is not a good look for anyone.

If successful outsourcing is relationship based, what's the best way to keep that relationship strong?



Communication is key

George Nave

Communication. We're here to help your company succeed, and that starts with communication. If you open up a good, consistent dialogue between your team and ours, we're always in a scenario where we're constantly informed, which allows your service to be optimized to the fullest; this results in the best experience for us, your business, and your service as well.



An accessible support team

Sheila Forth

The best way to keep an outsourcing relationship strong is a knowledgeable and accessible customer service team that really wants to help, accessible and communicative customers, and amazing operators!

If successful outsourcing is relationship based, what's the best way to keep that relationship strong?



Know how to contact customer service

Danielle Viglione

Answer when we call! We all do it. We all see the 800 number. We all reject it. Sometimes those calls are absolutely needed! We call our clients throughout their 2 week free trial and their active status to check in and see if there have been any issues. Most of the time when I call people,

they say they have had issues but they didn't know how to contact us. Yikes! That's not good for either of us. We of course want your business but we also want your business to thrive!

How can businesses prioritize what's most important when outsourcing?



What is your core problem?

George Nave

Objectively assess your core problem – missing calls, waking up in the middle of the night to answer non-urgent calls, lack of time or staff to answer, etc. When you identify your core problem, a solution is much easier to find. Among the glitz and glamour of all the features available, sometimes the core problem can be forgotten. Recognize your core issue and consult with industry professionals, like our staff at SAS. This will help to address your problems, which will then give you the flexibility to expand moving forward.



Track customer complaints

Danielle Viglione

One thing the business could do, regardless of what type of business it is, is track customer complaints. If your primary need for a service is handling after hours calls, get an after hours message taking service that informs them someone will be in touch when you reopen. If your website is hard for callers to navigate to schedule appointments, send a direct link to the booking page and have our operators do it for them. If your customer base is a little older and prefers to place orders on the phone, use us as an order taking line. The possibilities are endless!

How can businesses prioritize what's most important when outsourcing?



Determine your goals

Sheila Forth

Businesses can prioritize what's most important through a number of ways. First, they should decide what information is most important for a service to get from their callers, like Name, Number, Email, Regarding, etc. Next, they need to consider what will keep their callers happy. For example, will their callers be upset if they were under the impression

they were speaking with someone from the company and actually weren't, or would they like to be told up front who they are speaking with? And finally, the business will need to decide what method of message delivery will work best for them, like texts, emails, or both.

Try One Of The Best Call Center Service Providers for Free

If you want to keep more customers happy and turn your sales from an 8 hour sprint to a 24 hour marathon, you need a great call center backing you up. SAS offers affordable call center services designed to help small and medium sized businesses capture leads and help customers around the clock at a much lower price per interaction versus doing the same tasks in-house. Schedule a demo today or try us for free to see what your business has been missing.

