ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 7 - number 234 Wednesday 15 february 2023

Customer training: what it is and why it is important

Customer training is becoming increasingly important for companies. Let's try to understand what it is and why it is so popular.

More and more companies are focusing on **customer training** to improve the user experience. The objective of this type of training is to provide consumers with the information and knowledge they need to use the product or service offered correctly or to communicate the company's values and mission to create a closer relationship with consumers.

According to a **Salesforce report**, 76 per cent of consumers expect companies to understand their needs. With consumer expectations at an all-time high, improving the overall experience will ultimately help ensure that consumer needs are met. This consumer need has caused companies to increasingly focus on the concept of customer education, an area where education and marketing come together to improve the user experience.

In this article we explore the role consumer education can play on the user experience and what are the best practices for implementing it.

What is consumer education?

Before we delve into this topic, it is necessary to understand what customer education is and why it is important for organisations.

Customer education describes the **initiatives a company follows to educate its customers about its products and services so that they develop an understanding of how they can be used effectively**. Customer education aims at engaging and retaining new and existing customers, usually through guided onboarding or through stand-alone customer training, called on-demand.

The concept of customer training is not new, but customer training has seen substantial developments in recent years. A **survey by Thought Industries** found that by 2021, 90 per cent of customer training programmes had grown, with more than 60 per cent of respondents increasing their investment by more than 30 per cent.

The importance of customer training

When a customer enters your website for the first time, their experience has a beginning, a middle and an end: the **early stages** of the process are the most important to ensure they return. When customers begin to explore the site, educational content about the product and company will have a significant impact on their purchasing decisions and trust in the brand.

In general, we can say that successful customer education serves to:

- Benefit companies and customers
- Accelerate business growth by improving the customer experience
- Change behaviour
- Reduce barriers to business value

Satisfied customers are more likely to return and are willing to pay more. A SuperOffice report found that 86 per cent of buyers will pay more for a great customer experience. So introducing good customer education programmes will prove to be an incredibly effective way to improve the customer experience and opinion of your company.

The benefits of customer training

When implementing a customer training programme, companies gain a number of benefits:

- **Reduced time-to-value**: Customer training is a better way to help users find the value of your product as quickly as possible. With a true understanding of your product and the value it brings, organisations are likely to see much faster adoption rates.
- **Improved product adoption, engagement and retention**: Customer education provides users with the resources and support they need to find value in your product, which is essential for adoption, engagement and retention. In fact, according to a report by the Technology and Services Industry Association (TSIA), 68% of customers say they use their products more after training.
- **Greater flexibility and scalability**: On-demand training for customers is available anywhere, anytime, allowing companies to support more customers and achieve better results. With no restrictions, customers can receive the same high-quality training on their own time.
- **Reduced training costs for customers**: In-person training is expensive and inefficient. With on-demand training, material can be provided to anyone, for ever, to the extent desired by the customer, promoting efficient use of time and resources.
- **Reduction of customer service costs**: A company can reduce customer service team costs by developing training content targeted at specific problem areas. As a result, valuable team members will have time to focus on customers more strategically and contribute more effectively to achieving business results.
- **Faster onboarding**: All companies know that customer onboarding is a key factor in attracting and maintaining customer satisfaction. Introducing sufficient education and training at this early stage will be crucial to ensure that customers can fully understand your product.

Customers are the lifeblood of every company and therefore they are intent on keeping their satisfaction high. Improved customer education and training is an effective way to promote and sustain a high-quality customer experience, a key factor in business results. In fact, according to a **Forbes report**, organisations with a top-notch customer experience generate 5.7 times more revenue than competitors who do not keep up.

How to implement it

We have seen the benefits of customer education, but how can companies improve their programmes to ensure that customers are educated about products and services in the right way? Companies can properly review and update their systems through:

1. Checking customer education

The first step for companies that want to improve customer education is to audit the learning programmes currently in place and the results they are producing. This will be essential to gain a deeper insight into what is working, what is not working and what are the next steps to effectively improve these systems. The audit should include the following activities:

- Gathering the educational resources currently available to clients.
- Examining how clients can access these resources
- Identify when customers receive which resource
- Examine available data on user engagement

2. Addressing educational gaps

After verifying current customer education resources, it will be critical to address the gaps discovered during the process to promote an effective and successful programme. To address these gaps, companies must consider:

- The eLearning content and resources needed to fill the educational gaps.
- The resources available, e.g. if you use a learning management system (LMS) you may already have the resources you need.
- Plans for distributing training content in the future

3. Leveraging LMSs to build the customer training programme

Learning management systems (LMSs) are an increasingly viable option for companies that are putting in place corporate training processes, because of the cost and because many companies already use these systems for their corporate training.

These systems have become so popular in corporate training that the main consumers of learning management systems are company executives (65%) and managers (35%). In fact, customer training can be daunting for organisations. Consequently, advanced customer training software and tools are being implemented to help organisations upgrade their systems quickly and effectively. These tools can easily be added to LMSs.

Why rely on LMSs? These systems are the main technology companies use to manage training; therefore, they are already widespread and are an effective way to centralise all educational resources that customers can easily access anytime, anywhere.

How to choose the right LMS for customer training

What should companies interested in introducing an LMS solution to improve customer training look for?

- **Scalability**: Scalability is an essential feature for learning and training software, and refers to the ability to grow as your company grows. As your organisation grows and acquires new customers, it will be crucial to choose scalable options to ensure you have the resources and support you need to manage the company's growth.
- **Agility**: Choosing an agile LMS where the individual is at the centre of the development process, be it the user or the developer themselves, and must be able to intercept the user's needs, gather their requirements, process them and translate them correctly. This opens the door for companies to become more efficient and adept at handling changing customer needs and preferences, which is crucial considering that 92 per cent of executives believe that organisational agility is critical to business success, according to a report by the Project Management Institute (PMI).
- **Analysis**: In order to make the right changes to customer training programmes, companies must have sufficient information. Choosing an LMS capable of analysing the data collected and providing clear, in-depth and comprehensive reports is crucial to gaining an in-depth view of what is working and what is not. In this way, the company can make data-driven decisions to improve current strategies and optimise the customer learning experience.

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