



# Customer Care In the Era of COVID-19

The TPG Guide to Optimizing Call Center Ops



# Customer Care Optimization

*A Senior Consultant at TPG answers commonly asked questions on how to create positive virtual experiences during periods of high demand*

## How have customer expectations changed as a result of the pandemic? How do you meet those new expectations and prevent churn?

I believe that customers want optimal service at all times, pandemic or not. So if a client is experiencing challenging times due to unprecedented events, it is almost expected that, from a customer's perspective, the client has it "figured out" to continue providing service seamlessly. That is what differentiates optimal service from average service. Now, more than ever, we find our clients looking for solutions that provide a seamless transition from in-person to online to self-serve, and those are the solutions that we prioritize for our clients.

**The piece that allows call center agents to provide that excellent customer service is the ability to adapt and provide different avenues to reach out to them. Whether it's through actually calling in, or whether it's providing a chatbot function, you have to become more versatile and allow customers to access service wherever they are.**

## What opportunities or innovations do you see emerging in this space?

AI or anything automated is the next natural step. The AI conversation can be uncomfortable at times as people equate it to lost jobs or people-power. But what **AI actually helps with is allowing managers and others to use their time and energy more effectively to make higher-yield and higher value decisions, versus being focused on task-level duties.**

This industry is moving towards figuring out how to make things more automated to save costs and alleviate labour while serving the customers in the best way possible. **While technology can be leveraged to improve the lives of many workers, effective customer service still depends on having a human touch— so these innovative technologies need to strike that balance to best serve the customer journey.**

## DATA OUTLOOK 2021

Data is the core of call center solutions. As consultants, that's what we see as the goldmine to creating solutions and improvements for our clients. We use advanced analytics to get ahead of customer trends. We rely on detailed data points to tell powerful stories of the customer journey and the customer experience. We then leverage those powerful data stories to create improvement plans within the call center.

We also do predictive analyses within the call center. That means that looking at past performance and apply it to upcoming problems so that we can be proactive with our solutions versus reactive, which prevents firefighting or catering to crises in real-time.



### #EXPERTTIP

**"Map past performance onto upcoming problems so that your solutions are proactive, not reactive"**

# 3 TIPS TO ENSURE TOP-OF-THE-LINE CUSTOMER SERVICE DESPITE HIGH VOLUME

## ➔ Empower Internally



Ensure that quality of service is achieved through empowering agents internally.

We emphasize aligning the customer care team to be the most optimal by creating a sustainable workflow and processes for them to feel empowered to provide optimal service.



## ➔ Create effortless support experiences



Provide customers with a platform to self serve, whether that's chat functionalities, online videos, or educational materials.

Creating avenues that make it easy for customers to self-serve is important and empowering.

## Call centers have often been viewed as cost centers. How have cost-containment measures during the pandemic impacted call center operations and how do you maintain service levels with potentially reduced resources?

When our clients are facing increased call volumes, in combination with budget freezes to hire more agents, then we look at taking manual tasks and turning them into sustainable, automated processes in order to free up agent hours. These sustainable solutions not only meet the service levels but also ease up agent hours so that they can put their time towards more high-yield, value-added actions versus task-level actions.

## ➔ Build Enterprise-wide solutions



A call coming into the call center is not only a call center problem. It is important to emphasize the ways that a customer inquiry touches the entire organization, and that a customer cannot be serviced in a siloed manner.

## How do you ensure these solutions are sustainable in the long term and organizations don't revert once they are faced with another disruption?

Ownership and believing in the solution is the secret ingredient to sustainability. We work alongside the management team and the working team to ensure that they understand the changes and why they are being put in place. Once alignment is gained, we look to build solutions that require the least amount of baby-sitting (such as automated functionalities), yet producing the most value-added outcomes. These key factors ensure that an organization doesn't revert back to old processes.

these solutions cannot be created within a smaller call-center team; it requires direction and support from the entire organization. So, departments and teams must talk to each other to send a unified message to customers calling in.



## ABOUT US

The Poirier Group (TPG) is a Toronto-based boutique management consulting firm focused on strategy execution, with specialty in process improvement, cost optimization and operational efficiency. We differentiate on being operational experts, meaning we don't just figure out what to do, but guide you through how to do it for the long term.

Learn more about how we can help your organization unlock value [here](#).

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