

Self-Service

Best Practices and Realities

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In This Issue: Self-Service

Best Practices for Self-Service

By Eleonora Babayants

Companies can improve customer experience by limiting the amount of effort it takes for customers to find answers to their questions and accomplish their tasks. Here lies the appeal of Web self-service, which for many consumers has become the preferred communication channel.

Instantly available, 24/7 online customer self-service portals are gaining ground over conventional agent-assisted support, marking a significant shift in consumer attitudes toward the technology. Interest in Web self-service technologies is not just coming from younger consumers. The technology is changing the behavior of consumers of all generations.

There are several elements to consider for successful self-service strategy.

The success of Web self-service depends on the quality and quantity of the information available and the ease with which it can be accessed. Online customers are extremely impatient and information-hungry, so the material available to customers through self-service needs to be succinct and direct.

The self-service option has to be easy to find on the Web site. To call more attention to the portal, organizations can prominently place a link to the self-service portal on the homepage and other common support pages that feature company, product, and services information.

As for the content itself, it should be clear, to the point, and easy to understand. This

can be achieved by including graphic elements, such as diagrams, charts, and bullet points. When doing so, make sure the graphics are optimized for the Web.

Ensuring accessibility also means that the site should support a variety of Internet browsers, operating systems, assistive technologies for the blind, and, of course, mobile platforms.

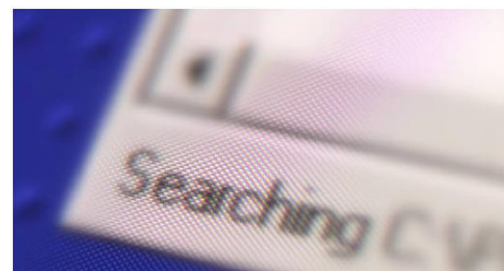
Companies can also use Web chat to help customers through the self-service maze. It's a tool that's already widely accepted by consumers and businesses alike.

It is important to measure response time. Perhaps the most effective measure is the number of customer questions that are submitted and get a response.

It's important to collect user feedback about the self-help experience. This can be done through customer surveys, Web analytics and search logs, customer interviews and focus groups, usability testing, and collaborative design processes.

For self-service to be done right, it should be in the interest of the customer. You do not want customers to use self-service because they are forced to. You want them to use it because it serves their needs.

Galaxy Consulting has 16 years' experience in optimizing self-service on companies' web sites. We can do the same for you. Contact us today for a free consultation!



Best Practices for Self-Service

Web Self-Service has become the preferred communication channel for many consumers.

Realities of Self-Service

Realities of modern online service expose the gap between customer expectations and website performance.



Industry News

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Realities of Self-Service

by Eleonora Babayants

There are key realities of modern online service that expose the gap between customer expectations and website performance, and how you can take steps to close that gap starting now.

1. Customers have grown tired of your old online help tools.

Customer satisfaction with today's most common web self-service features is abysmal and getting worse. As more companies rectify this by deploying next generation self-service solutions and virtual agents, fewer customers will tolerate antiquated self-service help tools online.

2. Customers now expect a superior experience online, not just a good one.

Exceptionally positive online experience is now setting the bar for what customers expect when they visit virtually any website in search of answers and information.

3. Consumers are impatient and protective of their time.

Consumers cite "valuing my time" as the most important thing a company can do to deliver a good online customer experience. Yet most websites are complex, hard to navigate and filled with content that provides multiple possible answers rather than a single, swift path to resolution.

4. Customer service has gone mobile.

Mobile phones are now ubiquitous.

Consumers use their phones for information, research and commerce.

5. Social media is increasingly embraced as a customer service tool.

Delivering a consistent service experience across multiple channels is critical, especially today, as consumers are not shy about using social media sites to publicly complain and vent frustration about any interactions with companies that fail to satisfy.

6. Dissatisfaction online = hijacked revenues.

One of the most appealing benefits of delivering a positive experience in the web channel is the opportunity for organizations to provide information that supports and encourages purchase decisions. Online, the shift from a customer service conversation to a purchase consideration conversation can be a very natural and systematic progression. This progression is thwarted, however, the moment a self-service experience fails to satisfy.

The impact of the self-service experience on revenues should not be underestimated. Fully 45% of US online consumers agree with the statement: "I am very likely to abandon my online purchase if I cannot find a quick answer to my questions."

These trends underline the urgent need to revitalize the online service experience offered by most companies. Online self-service is in need of resuscitation. Useful web self-service and virtual agent

technologies that can deliver an enhanced customer experience are currently underutilized.

Where to Go from Here

What should your organization do as the first step toward improving the online customer experience?

Begin with an honest and objective assessment of the self-service experience your website offers today. Looking at your customer facing website, ask yourself these three questions.

1. Is there a single, highly visible starting point for self-service activity?

Your customers want their self-service journey to begin immediately and move swiftly to completion. Looking at your home page or most highly trafficked customer service page, ask yourself if the average customer would be able to identify the clear starting point for any customer service-related task in a matter of seconds. Any required navigation or clicking through to new pages is viewed as time waste and is out of alignment with their expectation.

2. Is issue resolution generally a multi-step or a single-step, activity?

When looking for information online, customers want a single accurate answer that is accessible in one step. Any content page that offers more than one alternative answer or path to an answer requires your customer to take additional steps for sorting, scanning content and/or comparing answers.

3. How will you measure how your site is performing?

A quantitative assessment of your self-service performance is the first thing you will need to establish for any improvement to the self-service experience.

Exceptionally positive online experience is now setting the bar for what consumers expect



Industry News

Encrypted Content Search for SharePoint from Cryptzone

Cryptzone launched a new version of its SharePoint document security solution, Secured eCollaboration 5.0. Cryptzone explains new features have been added to Version 5 that secure content without impeding searchability and collaboration between internal and external teams.

Encrypted content on SharePoint can only be searched and discovered by authorized users. With Secured eCollaboration installed, authorized users are able to perform search operations from within Microsoft SharePoint and find encrypted content that matches the search criteria entered.

Personalized Sitecore Search

Coveo reports it has significantly upgraded its search and relevance solution Coveo for Sitecore, which enables organizations to build contextual search and discovery experiences on websites powered by the Sitecore Experience Platform.

Coveo for Sitecore now delivers complete integration with the Sitecore Experience Database (xDB), allowing users to personalize the search results, page content and product offerings displayed to site visitors.



Raising the Bar for Document Conversion

ABBYY has launched a new release of its server-based software for automated, unattended document conversion, ABBYY Recognition Server. The mid- to high-volume document processing software is designed to enable organizations and scanning service providers to establish cost-efficient processes for converting paper and image documents into electronic files suitable for search and archiving.

Recognition Server automatically obtains images of documents from scanners, file servers, fax and e-mail servers and Microsoft SharePoint libraries. Further, says ABBYY, it can recognize content in more than 190 languages and allows for metadata to be added to simplify search.

Bettering Web Self-Service

Moxie Software has introduced a new self-service knowledge solution designed to deliver relevant and consumable information to constantly connected customers on any device - desktop, tablet or smartphone. Moxie Web Self-Service permits companies to create branded, configurable and easily navigable self-service experiences to provide consumers with access to useful knowledge throughout their customer journey.

Key features of Moxie Web Self-Service include: easy-to-brand templates; tailored search delivers personalized content for each customer; Solution Finder, which provides guidance in complex situations by asking customers a series of questions to determine the correct answer and provide them with related information; search engine optimization tools allow the content from the self-service portal to be easily indexed by Google and Bing; language support allows business users to easily translate all content, labels and buttons in the self-service portal into other languages to serve customers around the globe.

About Galaxy Consulting



Galaxy Consulting was founded with the mission and vision of helping organizations to manage their valuable information assets. Many of our clients, both large and small, have dramatically improved efficiency and reduced unnecessary labor hours through efficient methods, processes, and solutions we created.

Galaxy Consulting believes in partnerships with our clients. We are committed to working with you and to helping you transform your business. We will increase efficiency and productivity, maintain regulatory and legal compliance, improve collaboration, enhance innovation, and reduce costs through effective information management!

Call us TODAY to schedule a free, no obligation consultation!

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Galaxy Consulting provides services in business analysis and usability, content and knowledge management, records management, information architecture, enterprise search, taxonomy development and management, document control, and information governance.