

## Customer Service In A Globalized World

There's no doubt that good customer service is an important part of every successful business. It's the main way a company can stand out from the competition and build a solid long term business. However, for an international company with customers all over the world, building the ideal customer service solution is far from easy. There are many aspects to keep in mind when you want to be able to compete on a global scale, and customer expectations are constantly increasing.

One thing that every business that caters to an international audience should consider implementing is around-the-clock support, or risk leaving a poor impression on those customers who are unable to contact the customer service because it's only open during times when they're normally asleep. There is a cost associated with this, of course, but hopefully it will also lead to increased business further down the road. Many customers will be pleasantly surprised when they get a response to their e-mail even way after regular office hours, and are likely to come back and buy more later on based on that positive experience.

Another good idea to consider is going multilingual and hiring customer service reps for other languages than English. This is especially important when targeting parts of the world where few people understand English, since offering them customer service (and also a localized website) will make them much more likely to become customers. Again, this isn't something that can be done for cheap, so it's important to do some market research before exploring this alternative. If possible it may be a good idea to do a "soft launch" in the target country, which basically means launching without telling anyone and doing only a minimum of advertising to get a few test orders in.

To make the logistics of catering to a foreign country on the other side of the world easier, it may make sense to open a local office that's only focused on providing customer service to that particular area. It makes it much easier to recruit skilled native speakers. The downside, of course, is that it's a big step for any company to take. To even consider it there has to be a proven market and make financial sense. However, it may be the next logical step once a new

market has been proven and the expansion phase is ready to start. As always, taking it slow and proceeding with caution is recommended.