

# How phone-based services can help businesses during Covid-19



With the world in lockdown following COVID-19, businesses are revisiting existing strategies to adapt and strengthen their offering and find ways to overcome barriers created by extreme social distancing. Technology is helping bridge gaps, from e-commerce platforms, self-serve portals, automated customer service and AI driven bots, to collaboration tools, apps and video conferencing. Digital connections have replaced our human connections and we now all receive a continuous stream of messages and interact constantly through one form of media, device or another.

**With uncertainty now a permanent backdrop to our daily existence, however, it is vital that this surge in the use of technology does not eclipse the need for real, meaningful human contact. Now more than ever, we need to build supportive relationships in both our social and business lives.**

**With this in mind, we look at how phone-based services can help businesses maintain precious human contact whilst at the same time offering flexible support as customer needs evolve and change.**

## Tuning in to your audience

In unprecedented times when our sense of 'normality' has been turned on its head, it is critical that you tune into the emotions of your customers and tailor behaviours and communications accordingly. A solid understanding of the current issues and challenges faced by your audience is vital, if you are to ensure your business model keeps pace.

Only by reaching out to your customers in a personal way to gauge how they are feeling and understand the challenges they face can you offer effective support, relevant to their needs. What is more, not only can you adapt your proposition to offer more value, you create an

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emotional connection that will inspire loyalty and secure future business.

At the current time, real conversations with your customers over the phone will provide accurate, meaningful insight to feed your strategy and allow you to segment your audiences in ways than you'd previously not considered.

## Providing high-quality responsive support

Whilst automated support via help portals, chat bots or other AI/machine learning applications are efficient ways of managing your support function, they can't offer the emotional reassurance that is provided by a real person at the end of a phone line. At a time of uncertainty when customers need to feel supported and cared for, canned responses or a very prescriptive approach will negatively impact the customer experience.

A human agent having a real conversation with a customer can handle complex issues sensitively, alleviate anxiety, fully understand the customer's needs and quickly pinpoint the most appropriate resolution, which may be unique to that one customer. A dedicated inbound support team with this expertise can be strategically targeted to integrate human interaction where it has greatest impact. Inbound telemarketing services can flex to needs, including overflow communications, web enquiries and out-of-hours services. Where valuable customer relationships are at stake, phone agents can be deployed to pick up high priority overflow and deliver exceptional service.

## Targeting resources and securing ROI

Marketing automation, email and digital channels are effective ways to maintain regular communications with remote buyers at a time when face-to-face meetings and events are no longer possible. However, these channels have the ability to pump out high volume communications with minimal intervention, so it is vital to apply them intelligently. From the quality of data that you load, the scoring and targeting rules that you set, to the message you craft and send, your activity must be sensitive to the current requirements and emotions of your audience.

By adding a dynamic two-way phone conversation into your lead qualification process, not only do you initiate a meaningful connection and create a positive impression of your brand, you capture high quality insight into the needs, motivations and buying mode of that individual. Rather than adopting a one-size fits all approach, you then have the ability to profile and segment your audience, and target your automated and digital communications to deliver the right message at the right time to a responsive audience.

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Importantly, by cutting the wheat from the chaff, you can also apply your resources in the most cost effective way. Your email programmes, for example, can be used to nurture interest with those not ready to buy, whilst your expensive sales resource is focused on high value opportunities, armed with the insight needed to communicate a relevant and compelling proposition.

## A key differentiator during adversity and beyond

Human-to-human interaction is an important differentiator for brands that want to demonstrate they really care and are committed to helping their customers navigate today's challenging environment. A flexible, personal channel such as the phone allows you to make the emotional connections that are most valued at a time when physical human contact is limited and digital interactions are the norm.

Whether you are calling to find out how your customers are doing and reassure them that your services are still available, or responding to a product enquiry or service request, a phone conversation has the potential to elevate the customer experience more than ever before.

**The impressions you create and the relationships you build now will significantly impact future loyalty and create a foundation from which to jumpstart your effort when the commercial climate improves. If you would like to discuss how phone-based services can bring the value of human contact to your customer interactions, get in touch today.**



Hopefully this article will have inspired you to think a bit more about telemarketing and the value it can bring to your business. For more information on our services visit our website, or give us a call to discuss your requirements and how The Telemarketing Company can help support your sales and marketing strategy.

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