4 Strategies for Reassuring Customers

Global health concerns, economic downturns, cancelled events — a world of reasons could be creating heightened sensitivities in your customers. Even if their concerns have nothing to do with *your* business, when people are feeling uneasy, the times call for extra care in all your communications.

Communicating with care isn't just about reacting quickly when issues arise. It's also about proactively reaching out when a little reassurance can make a big difference. When circumstances impact the communities you serve, it's more important than ever for your company to communicate with empathy, awareness, and support.

Whether it's a customer email or simply a few social media posts — **what you say** and **how well you say it** are key. Getting the language and tone right could mean the difference between getting attention and getting ignored. Especially in times of uncertainty, you want to be sure people are not missing important information that might be helpful.

In nearly 20 years supporting companies in communicating through sensitive situations, we've seen these four strategies work well to help you improve communications and increase connection with customers.

1 Focus on empathy first

Every time you write a customer email, answer a support call, manage a process for someone, ask yourself: *"What if this was for me? How would I feel?"* As individuals and as customers, we all want to feel comfortable and confident. And when we have a problem or concern, we want reassurance.

Communicating with empathy starts with the same warm, conversational tone you would want to receive from someone. It includes acknowledging your customer's concerns, so they feel heard and understood. And offering what you can do to improve the situation, even if it's just providing more information or letting them know support is available if they need it.

You may have technical or tactical details to convey, and it's understandable that you want to sound authoritative. But you're still communicating with a real person, who (like you) wants to be spoken to in a thoughtful, caring way.

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Put extra care into humanizing your communications. As you craft messaging, always read it out loud to make sure it sounds natural and engaging. That's also a great way to find and fix awkward wording and overly long sentences that can disrupt the tone.

② Stay upbeat and reassuring

Too often, customer service communications are unintentionally negative. Even if you need to advise caution so people understand what they shouldn't do or what to avoid, you can phrase it with reassuring messages. People respond better to positive motivation — so instead of triggering concern, use language that inspires peace of mind.

For example, instead of saying: "*To avoid <negative impact> that puts you at risk*" you might say: "*To help ensure you're protected...*"

The premise is the same, but the feeling tone is entirely different. People are more likely to respond and take requested actions when your language and tone sound reassuring and hopeful.

Using optimistic language can be especially effective when people have heightened concerns. While you want to address the severity of a situation, you don't want to sound severe. Reinforcing positive actions and opportunities can help customers feel more comfortable about the road ahead.

③ Help employees think like a customer

Even with the best intentions, you could lose customers and your brand could take a hit if your employees are entrenched in a product- or policy-focused way of communicating. Are there signs your efforts are not resonating with customer needs and concerns?

Maybe it takes too many support calls to resolve issues, or you're having to send too many letters because customers aren't responding. It could signal a need to communicate in more customer-focused ways.

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It's critical to encourage employees to *think like a customer*. You can help your people apply an empathy mindset to all they do by providing learning opportunities to better identify with the customer's perspective. For example, a few years ago, in response to a slew of negative press, United Airlines sent some 30,000 employees to "compassion training."

For a Top 5 bank, we helped empower employees to show greater compassion for customers in the aftermath of natural disasters and big economic downturns. With training and best practice writing guides for negative-impact situations, employees learned to apply customer-focused thinking and communicate with reassurance and empathy.

4 Create a caring culture that's inclusive and ownable

To grow a company culture that communicates with reassuring care, all of your internal communications should reflect that as well. Employee empathy is as important as customer empathy. And buy-in for creating a customer-centric culture starts when your people see the value *they* can contribute to customer experience, even if they don't have a customer-facing role.

One powerful approach is sharing positive customer feedback and employee success stories in team huddles. Seeing and celebrating how they're having an impact with customers can help employees increase their confidence and a sense of ownership for their role in the big picture.

Inclusion is also a critical component to creating a caring culture that's ownable. Inclusivity centers on a collaborative spirit, giving every employee an equal opportunity to share ideas, and get involved to learn and perform at their best.

When employees feel reassured, they are more likely to reflect that outward to customers. That's a key consideration in an age when customer experience rules the day. Increasing your organization's ability to communicate with more caring language and tone — every day and in moments that matter — is no longer a nice-to-have, it's business-critical.

96% of employees think **empathy** is important in their workplace.

[Source: Rise]

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Communicating the right language and tone to reassure customers can be challenging. Even with focused efforts, sometimes companies are too close to their business to see things through a customer lens. An outside perspective can make a meaningful difference.

Need help putting these strategies into action? We're here for you.

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