

Certified Digital Marketing Associate

Social Customer Service – Transcript Version 1.0

CERTIFIED DIGITAL MARKETING ASSOCIATE

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Module Overview

In this module, we're going to look at the importance of using social media for customer service.

Most people have experienced customer service which didn't live up to expectations – whether you had to wait endlessly in a queue or were told to wait for a call back which never happened.

Well, in today's environment and with social media, customers have much greater influence when dealing with businesses and it's critical for businesses to understand how to adapt to this new way of interacting with customers.

Hi, I'm Margaux Denneulin and I'm a Customer Support Specialist with HubSpot. I've many years' experience in digital helping companies in Product, Marketing and Customer best practice.

Customer service has gone through a lot of change over recent years. I'm sure, like myself you may have experienced times when you had a negative experience when interacting with a customer service department dealing with an issue. How did you feel? Disappointed? Frustrated by the level of service – while also feeling powerless that you don't have an alternative?

In this module, you will learn about the changes brought about by social customer services and understand how companies are adapting to this new way of interacting with customers.

We'll start by taking a look at how the behavior and expectations of customers have changed, and the resulting implications for customer service. We'll build on this by looking at the advantages of social customer service for businesses, before gaining an understanding of the importance of other digital tools to support your customers.

Finally, we'll explore the challenges for social customer care and the strategic approaches that we can implement to improve customer service.

Section 1: Changing Customer Behavior

Now, we're going to look at why it's important to understand how the expectations of customers have changed and evolved over the past number of years.

We'll also see the impact the smartphone has had on customers and their behavior.

We'll also consider the impact social media and messaging services have had on customers and their expectations.

And finally, the strategic decisions businesses and organizations need to do make in order to retain the loyalty of their customers and keep them satisfied as a result of these changes.

DEPENDENCY ON SMARTPHONES

Take a moment to think - how many people check their smartphone first thing in the morning? And then continue to check multiple times throughout the day, even without having received an alert? It's estimated that there will be 2.5 billion smartphone users by 2019, and in a study by Bank of America, 71% of people said they sleep with their smartphones, while 38% of people never disconnect from their smartphones – even when on holiday.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND MOBILE

What about the link between social and mobile?

Well Twitter, for example, has over 100 million active daily users and 80% of them access Twitter using their smartphone, sending out 500 million tweets a day. Seriously impressive numbers! But what about Facebook? It has over 2 billion active monthly users. What's even more impressive is that over 1.5 billion of them use their mobiles to check Facebook daily.

EASE OF USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

With the increasing use of social media apps, more customers prefer to engage with businesses using social and mobile channels. Did you know that 94% of people between the ages of 18-24 prefer mobile or online banking services, rather than going to their local bank branch?

Trends also show that the millennial generation prefer interacting asynchronously using digital tools and social media. They find that the ease of use of social media is a major advantage – as they can multitask while interacting. Often, calling a customer care number is their last resort.

Finally, consumers nowadays also find platforms like Twitter less frustrating than sending an email and five times less frustrating than calling a customer service center.

PRIVATE MESSAGING

While initially public forums on social media became popular with consumers for complaining about issues – because they felt issues were more likely to be dealt with – now private messaging is quickly becoming the favored service channel for users seeking resolution to their issues.

Consumers don't always want to go public and associate themselves with what can become a very public issue.

GROWING POPULARITY OF PRIVATE MESSAGING APPS

Private messaging apps have become much more popular with customers – including Facebook Messenger, Twitter Direct Messaging, WhatsApp and SMS. They are designed to support 1-2-1 resolution while multitasking.

- Messaging apps are now over 20% bigger than social networks.
- 30% of those using chatbots will communicate with a business.
- 36% of consumers using messaging apps use at least 2 other apps.

CUSTOMER REVIEWS

Of course, one other change which has occurred over the past number of years is how much easier it's become to search for and find businesses, which makes the customer service function more important than ever as dissatisfied customers have the ability to find and choose new suppliers, mainly because of web and social media research/reviews.

NEWLY EMPOWERED CUSTOMERS

As we've seen, the balance of power has shifted to the consumer because businesses no longer control the communication channel – customers do. Furthermore, customers expect that when they have an issue or query, they will approach the company or organization on the social media platform that they are comfortable using. Not only do they expect the company to have a presence on the social media platform, but they expect resolution on that platform in which they raised the issue.

RESOLUTION WITHIN THE CHANNEL

McKinsey recently found that customers who start and end their service journey on a social media platform have a satisfaction rate 15 percentage points higher than those who have their query deflected from a social media platform to traditional channels.

RESPONSE TIME

Customer expectations for response times mirror their expectations of response time within their own network. Therefore, most customers now expect a response from businesses on social media within the hour.

Furthermore, 71% of customers say that valuing their time is the most important thing a company can do to provide them with a good service.

SUMMARY

In this section, we've covered how customer behavior have evolved with the advent of the smartphone and social media. We also looked at how their expectations have changed in terms of how quickly companies respond and importantly the medium they use to respond.

We've seen that social customer service has grown in importance as the number of users across social platforms continues to grow. In the past it was not a traditional way to provide customer service, however it has become a preferred method for millennials. Businesses and organizations need to evolve and adapt to these changes, or risk losing their customers.

Section 2: Advantages of Social Customer Service

Next, we're going to look at the advantages of social customer service for a business. We'll introduce you to key terms and concepts; demonstrate the importance of being in the same place as your customers; learn the factors that constitute a successful response; and see how companies can empower and train employees to increase the chances of a successful resolution.

We'll also consider the importance of informing customers about your presence on social media and how to engage them in a brand-specific way. This all contributes to increasing customer retention and reaching the goal of brand advocacy, as we'll see.

At the end of the section, we will see how social customer service can enhance customer spending and lower overheads. And finally, we'll look at the consequences when social customer service isn't taken seriously.

KEY TERMS

Let's look at some of the key terms and concepts in social customer service:

Customer **engagement** is a business communication connection between an external stakeholder (consumer) and an organization (company or brand) through various channels of correspondence. This connection can be a reaction, interaction, effect or overall customer experience, which takes place both online and offline.

A brand **advocate** is a person or customer who talks favorably about a brand or product, and then passes on positive word-of-mouth messages about the brand to other people. This positive word-of-mouth is highly dependent on their satisfaction with the product and social customer service. 64% of consumers using Twitter expect a response within an hour.

Social **reach** is defined as the total number of people you are able to reach across all of your various social media networks. It is also referred to as the 'total social reach' because you are encompassing all social media networks under one number.

Messenger is an app that allows users to message each other instantaneously – usually used on a smartphone (e.g. Facebook Messenger).

Customer lifetime value is a prediction of the net profit attributed to the entire future relationship with a customer. It's crucial that this value is realized, with researching reporting that 66% of consumers stopped doing business with a provider and switched to another in the past year due to a poor customer service experience.

Influencer marketing (also influence marketing) is a form of marketing in which focus is placed on influential people rather than the target market as a whole. It identifies the individuals that have influence over potential buyers, and directs marketing activities around these influencers to maximize reach and increase effectiveness.

BE WHERE YOUR CUSTOMERS ARE

It's important to know where your customers are online and to be where your customers are. Most customers today expect that products and services they use in their day-to-day lives will have a presence on the social media platforms where they hang out. The danger if you don't is that you leave the dialog to others and you lose control.

Therefore, it is integral that businesses and organizations take account of their 'Reach' on social media and deal with their social customer service demands effectively. This increases their ability to retain customers and realize the expected customer lifetime value.

RESPONSE SUCCESS FACTORS

The success of a response to a customer is determined by the factors:

- **Response Time**: Response time and fast resolution is a crucial measure of success as customers increasingly expect quick responses, especially over social channels. Indeed, if the elapsed time is too long, then they may turn to traditional forms of customer service which is costly for the organization.
- Quality: Responses must always maintain a consistent tone of voice that is on brand, while
 ensuring that the response remains concise and, wherever possible, resolves the customer
 query.
- **Delivery**: Determining when to take an issue 'offline' is an important skill. While a public response can be very beneficial, there are times when it isn't appropriate, such as when a customer has multiple grievances to air, or when it requires a complex response or the exchange of sensitive personal details.

EMPOWERING CUSTOMER SUPPORT EMPLOYEES

To ensure customer satisfaction, your support employees must have the ability and autonomy to provide the best service possible.

Skyscanner is an airline search engine that compares millions of flights to find you the cheapest deal. The website is very intuitive to use, and they've consistently proven to offer the best deals out there. Apart from offering great bargains, they also provide great social media support.

A post by a Skyscanner user detailed how the site suggested he take a 413,786 hour, 25-minute layover on a trip from New Zealand to London!

Instead of writing it off as a simple glitch, Skyscanner's social media manager offered some great time-killing ideas for the user during his extended layover in Bangkok!

EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Many of us have had the experience of speaking to a customer service agent at a call center. Often, you are left on hold for a long time and then placed into a system of scripted call center responses. There are often very limited actions that customer service staff can take themselves – meaning you can be transferred or told that someone will call you back shortly.

It's important not to repeat the same mistakes with social. Instead, social customer service agents should be empowered with ready-made solutions wherever possible to reduce the lead time to resolution. That requires training, as we're moving away from scripted conversations – it also means a more informal, friendly, natural tone over social channels, while still remaining professional.

BRAND CONSISTENCY

It's also important to maintain brand consistency in all customer interactions. When a customer is engaging with a brand, he or she expects the real-world look, feel and experience to be replicated in the digital world as well. That follows for the social customer service experience.

Netflix, for example, has a great track record of customer interaction and customer care, and it does it with charisma, wit and humor.

INFORM CUSTOMERS

If you create a social channel for customer support, include the handle in your brand's other social profile bios. Make it known to customers that you support social customer service through marketing and sales (online and other).

A WELL-CRAFTED CUSTOMER SERVICE APPROACH LEADS TO HIGH RETENTION

Consumers who experience positive social customer care are much more likely to recommend the brand to others. In fact, the resolution process itself can act like a marketing tool. If a customer with a large number of followers tweets a company with a query, for example, it automatically has the attention of their followers. In turn, if the social customer service team are find an effective and swift resolution, that enforces the positive message with the followers. For example, there is a 92% retention among companies with a well-crafted customer service approach.

On the flip side, if the brand doesn't respond quickly or a resolution isn't found, it impacts the brand's image with the customer's followers.

CUSTOMER EFFORT AND LOYALTY

Customer effort isn't just about what a customer has to do, but also how they feel about an interaction. Companies should focus on developing the skills of service reps so they can actively guide customers and preempt their needs during interactions.

For instance, 96% of customers who had high effort experiences reported being disloyal.

CUSTOMER LIFETIME VALUE

Once a business has acquired a customer, the goal is to keep that customer for as long as possible to maximize the customer lifetime value. Studies have shown that it costs six to seven times more to acquire a new customer, rather than to retain one.

Research also shows that customers who have a good experience over social customer service will spend 40% more money with a brand as a result.

Social agents are also able to handle four to eight times more issues per hour than phone agents (Gartner).

CUSTOMER SERVICE: A COMPETITIVE DIFFERENTIATOR

Customer care is now recognized as a key factor in building customer loyalty. It is an important differentiator for business, and those who spend the time and effort to integrate digital into their customer service are rewarded with brand loyalty and increased revenue.

A recent report shows that 62% of companies perceive customer experience delivered by contact centers as a competitive differentiator.

SUMMARY

In this section, we covered the advantages of social customer service; the importance for a brand to be on the same platform as its customers; and for customers to be made aware of it.

As we've seen also, the impact of response times should not be underestimated, which goes hand-in-hand with the need to train and empower customer service agents (especially with a brand-specific approach).

These ingredients are essential to retaining customers and converting them into brand advocates. And lastly, we discussed how social customer service helps a business become leaner and more profitable by maximizing a customer's lifetime value.

Section 3: Digital Tools to Support Customers

As we'll see in this next section, phone calls are no longer the preferred method of communication for customers contacting businesses, messaging platforms are increasingly the preferred medium (such as Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp). In order to filter out queries which can be easily and swiftly resolved, we will see that businesses are increasingly using technology like chatbots so that customer service agents can focus on resolving the more difficult queries.

We will also take a deeper look at the benefits of social listening and how a brand can use the data they acquire through social media to enhance the brand's reputation, as well as explore the use of management tools specific to each social media platform (to manage customers) and ensure that social customer service is more than just satisfactory.

POPULAR MESSAGING APPS

Messaging apps initially became popular because mobile users found SMS messages to be expensive. Mobile carriers also set limits on the number of messages and charged extra for customers who breached their limit.

WhatsApp, WeChat and Facebook Messenger became popular as many people opted out of their expensive SMS plan.

Most consumers log onto the WIFI at work or home, or even at their favorite coffee shop to use their messaging apps. As a result, many brands today have a 'live chat' function on most messaging applications.

- **Kakao Talk**: A free mobile instant messaging application for smartphones with free text and call features. As of May 2017, Kakao Talk had 220 million registered and 49 million monthly active users.
- **WhatsApp**: More than 1 billion people in over 180 countries use WhatsApp, which gives them the ability to send messages and online calls (owned by Facebook).
- **Google Hangouts**: A communication platform developed by Google which includes messaging, video chat, SMS and VOIP features.
- **Facebook Messenger**: A messaging app and platform (supporting voice and video calls) that has been de-coupled from Facebook to act as a stand-alone app, although it remains highly integrated with Facebook.
- **WeChat**: A Chinese multi-purpose messaging and social media app developed by Tencent, with 1 billion monthly active users (902 million daily active users).
- **Skype**: A web- and app-based platform with a range of features that include free online calls, messaging, affordable international calling to mobiles or landlines and Skype for Business for effective collaboration.

BENEFITS OF LIVE CHAT

Let's look at some advantages of live chat.

Firstly it's cheaper than a phone call. Research has shown that live chat customer service is up to 30% cheaper than a phone call. It also enables a customer service executive to handle three or more clients simultaneously.

Secondly, customers prefer live chat as it enables them to multitask. According to a recent report, 51% of customers prefer live chat for multitasking purposes, with another 21% preferring live chat so they can shop while they work.

Thirdly, live chat makes it easier to analyze and look for patterns. You also have the ability to view and compile custom reports, as well as the chat histories of all your agents.

Live chat analytics gives you valuable insights into your agents as well. This gives you the ability to monitor agent performance and adjust staffing and training as needed.

Not only do live chats have higher customer satisfaction rates, they also lead to faster problem resolution as agents are able to 'push' links to help, or send training documents quickly via the chat window.

CHATBOTS

Chatbots are automated programs that use artificial intelligence to interact (usually via text conversation) with users. They help build stronger relationships with customers by delivering targeted content and anticipating user reactions.

For example, for a company that sells flight tickets, a chatbot can send customers a range of information, such as their purchase confirmation; reminders for checking in; and alternative options when their flight has been cancelled.

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENTS AND CHATBOTS

The vast majority of social customer engagements can be handled by chatbots. As there is always a need for instant or quick resolution, businesses are increasingly using chatbots in contact centers to deal with high volumes and increase their servicing capacity.

Bot-programmed resolution can significantly speed up interactions for both the business and customer.

According to Accenture, 80% of customer engagements can be handled by bots.

ADVANTAGES OF CHATBOTS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

- No wait time for customers.
- Provides guick answer to customers.
- Chatbots are available 24/7.
- Chatbots do not get tired.
- Chatbots provide a consistent experience across platforms.

DISADVANTAGES OF CHATBOTS

- **Not all bots are created equal**: Poorly developed bots can annoy users and waste their time instead of assisting them.
- **Bots can be too mechanical**: Bots don't understand context like humans do (so they may for example like or retweet messages that do not reflect your brand positioning).
- **Bots can alter analytics**: Bots can also potentially alter analytics by artificially inflating traffic (or followers).

CHATBOTS WITH HUMAN CUSTOMER SERVICE

To deliver the optimal customer experience, a combination of chatbot and customer service agent can be used. Chat bots provide unparalleled automation and speed, while human customer service operatives provide an authentic and empathetic tone of voice along with non-programmed responses.

In many cases, the combination of both delivers the fastest, seamless resolution.

One example is HealthJoy, a chat-based app that lets employees manage their own healthcare benefits by combining a team of doctors, insurance experts and the chatbot Joy.

The main function of the bot is to explain individual benefits and providers to users, to provide different healthcare options and to lower health insurance costs for companies by directing users to higher quality care that's also less expensive.

The bot is supported by a team of professionals who can also help users with contacting doctors, booking appointments and more.

KEY TERMS

Here are some of the key terms associated with Social Customer Service

A **chatbot** is short form for chat robot – a computer program that simulates human conversation, or chat, through artificial intelligence (AI).

Average response time refers to the amount of time taken by a company to reply to a customer's query or complaint.

Social listening involves tracking conversations online for mentions of your product, brand or competitors.

A **forum** is a site (also called a message board) where users can hold discussions.

A **troll** is a social media user who makes offensive or annoying postings which provoke other users.

First response time is the amount of time between when a customer submits a query/issue and when a response is sent to the customer.

CUSTOMERS TRUST PEER RECOMMENDATIONS

Positive publicity comes in many forms. However, the medium in which it's presented is important for the level of trust customers associate with it. Studies show, for example, that 99% of consumers trust peer recommendations, but only 33% trust ads.

Similarly, when an unhappy customer chooses to publicly vent their frustration, the impact can seem irreparably brand-damaging.

However, whether the sentiment is positive or negative, you can use public customer interactions to your advantage. Let's look at this example with JetBlue.

During a four-hour flight, Esaí Vélez's seatback TV gave him nothing but static, while the rest of the passengers had normally functioning screens. How did he respond? He tweeted a complaint to JetBlue. Nothing inflammatory, but he was clearly disappointed.

How did JetBlue respond? While they could have made an excuse or even ignored his tweet, they didn't. They took his side and empathized with him.

"Oh no! That's not what we like to hear! Are all the TVs out on the plane or is it just yours?"

After he confirms that it was just his TV that was out, they respond:

"We always hate it when that happens. Send us a DM with your confirmation code to get you a credit for the non-working TV."

Not only do they imagine his frustration, but they also offer him a credit for his trouble.

What was the result? Just 23 minutes after his complaint, he tweets: "One of the fastest and better Customer Service: @JetBlue! Thanks and Happy Thanksgiving".

REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Reputation management involves tracking, monitoring and taking action to protect your online reputation.

SOCIAL LISTENING

Monitoring social media and the web for topics, keywords, brands or industries of relevance is social listening. This includes situations when your company may need to engage to protect reputation.

While attending the #PSEWEB conference in Vancouver, Mike McCready tweeted that, while he liked his room at the Delta, the view wasn't so nice. He didn't tag the hotel, and he wasn't asking for anything.

Within an hour, Delta responded by offering him a room with a better view. When Mike returned to his room after the conference, he found a dish of sweets and a handwritten card from the staff at his hotel. It made such an impact that he wrote a post about it – the very same day.

GOOGLE ALERTS

Google Alerts is a notification service that sends emails to notify you whenever a keyword (or phrase) you specified is used online.

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS TO MONITOR MENTIONS

Specific tools can be used to track mentions (and more) across multiple social networks, blogs, forums, news and review sites.

- **Social Mention** is an excellent way to learn about brand mentions and interactions in an easy-to-digest visual format.
- **Mention** is one of the newer tools that replaced Google Alerts. Mention is a way to visualize your online presence, separating the signals you want from the rest of the noise online. The platform allows you to monitor millions of sources in real time and in 42 languages, so you can react and interact.
- **Talkwalker** gives your brand mentions over time, as well as the sources where these mentions occur.
- **Hootsuite** is the easiest and most common brand-conversation monitor. It helps you keep on top of chatter in real time on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.
- **PinAlerts** is more of a Pinterest alert system than a traditional brand monitoring platform. It monitors links to pins from your website and notifies you via email when someone pins from your site.

TRIGGERING A SOCIAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

It is essential for businesses to keep an ear out for what's being said about their products and services on social media platforms. This process of social listening, which allows organizations to step in at a drop of hat when needed, is a key entry point to the social customer service process. The need for social customer service is triggered whenever your brand is mentioned in a context which may reflect negatively on you.

SUMMARY

So hopefully you now understand the importance and advantages to organizations of using live chats; the key role played by chatbots; and how the human element is important when integrated appropriately.

Furthermore, we covered how poor social customer interaction can lead to the loss of customers, while a positive experience can lead to the acquisition of further customers.

We've also seen that organizations must use the tools available to them on various platforms to acquire data and understand their customer needs.

And finally, you should now recognize the importance of social listening and the potential backlash if social listening isn't implemented and acted upon.

Section 4: Improving Social Customer Service

In this final section, we'll look at some of the potential challenges you can come across with social customer care and the strategies that can be implemented to overcome these challenges. We will cover the importance for an organization of tracking key metrics and making continual improvements to keeping customers satisfied.

SOCIAL MEDIA CUSTOMER SERVICE ISSUES

Let's take an example from Twitter to highlight the importance and consequences of response times. British Airways has been under fire in the past for its customer service, and social media only escalates their problem.

This is exactly what happened with one customer - Hassan Syed – who paid to promote a tweet complaining about British Airways' customer service when they lost his father's suitcase.

The tweet was seen by 76,000 users. Making matters worse, BA didn't respond to the promoted tweet for eight hours, which gave it plenty of time to go viral.

Now, this isn't to say that all companies need to have 24/7 Twitter accounts. However, the expectation is that global airlines that runs 24/7 should have some sort of response team ready whatever time of day or night to respond to customers.

INFORMATION OVERLOAD

One drawback with social customer service is that agents sometimes have to sift through a lot of content to identify the customer service issue on social media. At the same time, it can also be confusing, as multiple public and private messages from a single customer can be hard to track (and get lost between agents). It can be difficult to resource (budget and hire).

INTEGRATED TOOLS

Nowadays, when an organization creates a page on social media, the platform itself has in-built management tools and analytics to help you understand how the page is performing with customers.

You can track a range of metrics, such as the reach with viewers; their demographic; the posts which are attracting new customers and gaining traction; and those which ones are not. Facebook, for example, allows customers to rate their experience and even informs the business of its average response time to queries.

These are paid services and there are also other options (such as Hootsuite) that enable organizations to listen and analyze their brand's performance across a number of social media platforms. This quantitative data is updated in real time and can adjust promoted posts accordingly. Unfortunately, it is of little help when a customer is very disappointed and writes an emotional post, which needs an appropriate human reply to save the day.

However, when it comes to importing performance data into more traditional tools (such as spreadsheets) for reporting there can be a lack of integration.

TRACKING SOCIAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

Response time helps you see whether your customers are getting followed up with in a timely manner – nobody likes being promised a quick response and then being left hanging.

Brand Sentiment is the general attitude toward your brand. Social media comments are assigned a degree of sentiment: positive, negative or neutral.

Brand mentions are when a company or brand is mentioned online, usually on social media or in a blog post, website article or other piece of content. **Mentions** are usually in the context of complaints, reviews, happy customer conversations and expert opinion articles or educational content.

Resolution rate represents the percentage of issues your reps actually resolve from the number of total tickets received. A rising resolution rate is a good indication of the efficiency levels of your customer service team.

IMPORTANCE OF DATA

Using the right tools to acquire relevant data is one thing, but going forward, the business needs to learn from the data to improve their social customer service strategy accordingly in order to retain their customers. As Kate Zabriskie said, "Although your customers won't love you, if you give bad service, your competitors will."

Here are some interesting facts that emphasize the need for a constant review of data:

- 3 in 5 Americans (59%) would try a new brand or company for a better service experience.
- 91% of unhappy customers will not willingly do business with you again and when it comes to damage control, the path to winning back your customer is a long one.
- It takes 12 positive experiences to make up for one unresolved negative experience.

CONTINUOUS TRAINING

Social tools are rapidly evolving, and keeping up to date with the latest social media tools and technology is important to continually engage customers and provide ongoing support. It also allows you to spot opportunities to improve and keeps employees at the cutting edge.

REVIEWING CUSTOMER INTERACTIONS

A key part of improving your social customer service is regularly reviewing your interaction with customers. 78% of consumers have abandoned a transaction, or not made an intended purchase because of a poor service experience.

Resolve a complaint in the customer's favor and research suggests there is a 70% chance that they will do business with you again. Indeed, loyal customers are considered to be worth up to 10 times as much as their first purchase.

SUMMARY

In this section, we looked at some of the challenges to be aware of when using social media for customer service;

We explored the importance of tracking key metrics and the need for organizations to continually improve their social customer service in order to maintain high customer retention rates.

