



answerNet
WHITE PAPER

Improving Customer Service

About AnswerNet

AnswerNet is a full-service provider of inbound, outbound, automated, electronic and business process outsourcing (BPO) call center services.

AnswerNet operates 28 contact centers within the continental United States and Canada.

We provide a wide range of services, from our core capabilities of telephone answering, hotlines, customer service sales, lead qualification and market research to a variety of business process outsourcing options including CRM hosting, email management and order processing.

Mobile technology (SMS/text) makes it relatively easy and cost-efficient to improve a company's customer service, as texting is the preferred communication channel for 50 percent of the consumer population. The average American spends 158 minutes a day on their smartphone or tablet.^[1] That's more than two-and-a-half hours! Worldwide, 2.27 trillion texts are sent every year.

By text-enabling a landline phone number, businesses can interact directly with customers anyhow or anywhere they choose. It makes effective self-service a reality. Moreover, it's safe and secure. Let's look at some of the top customer service complaints and how this innovative mobile solution helps to address each:

- **Telephone wait times are too long.**

Texting through a service such as AnswerNet's [TextGen](#) offers convenient, *immediate* resolution to questions or complaints via direct access to your business – without customer service hold times.

- **How it works:** A cloud-based communication platform uses text or voice to collect data in real-time via a single telephone number or web portal. A world-class API (a sophisticated yet simple piece of computer code) connects the texting system to your website, Interactive Voice Response (IVR), or call center application. You receive a 10-digit phone number that can be routed to your business phone or call center portal/application, which collects and delivers all the activity associated with the number. It is cost-effective, and can be added to traditional channels (such as telephone and web forms) without altering internal systems or needing a mobile application.

[1] If Your Business Isn't Mobile, Then It's Not Competitive. (2016, March 10). Retrieved May 24, 2016

- **Getting get anything done is overly complicated.**

TextGen can be used to simplify once complex or time-consuming customer service processes (See case history for further information).

- **I need to make an update or change to my account, but I don't really want to speak to anyone.**

The texting platform can be customized to your needs and offers three options:

- Completely Automated - Customers text their question and the text response is completely automated – this is beneficial for basic questions that can be answered through pre-approved, canned responses. This eliminates the need for human interaction and dramatically reduces labor costs.
- Live Operator - Customers text their question, which is then answered by a live operator through a chat-like interface. When the agent responds, the message is sent back to the customer's phone via text.
- Combination of Live Operator and Automation - Automated responses plus the option to “zero out” to an agent to respond via chat.

Benefits of SMS/Texting to the Business

- Communication with customers is immediate, as is data collection from them.
- There's a reduced likelihood of spam or compliance issues, as contact is generally initiated by the customer.
- The open rate of a text promotion is much higher than typical email open rates. An email message can sit in an inbox for days until it is read. Time-sensitive communications that are company-initiated, such as flash sales and same-day promotions, are better received via text.
- Companies have the opportunity to reach highly engaged audiences. Consumers typically limit themselves to brands they care about; therefore, if customers opt into an SMS promotion, you know they're interested in what your company has to offer.
- SMS is more likely to engage consumers to the point where they will visit a store or location instead of only going online. Once inside a store, the customer is more likely to buy other items. SMS gets clients in a store and opens their eyes to other purchases they might not normally be interested in.

In conclusion, keeping up with technology is directly correlated to the success of any business. Technology provides companies with resources that reduce labor, improve efficiency and generate income. Consider using texting for your business to manage call volume, reduce costs, and ultimately, enhance your company's overall customer service.

TextGen: A Case History

When customers of a consumer electronics giant were able to activate their new television tuners via text instead of calling customer service, the company experienced double-digit improvement in customer service productivity as well as a dramatic reduction in labor costs.

The company was struggling with managing costs and improving service – so they went searching for a technology that they didn't even know existed. That is how its partnership with TextGen was formed – transforming a difficult and expensive product registration process into a dynamic and profitable new way to speak to customers.

The electronics powerhouse offered the U.S. consumer market an award-winning line of innovative, eco-friendly and energy-saving LCD/LED television displays offered at retailers such as Best Buy, Costco, Sam's Club and Target.

For every television shipped, the company was required to pre-pay an activation fee for the television tuner, regardless of whether the unit was ever purchased. As a result, the company was exposed for millions of dollars that may or may not have been returned to the business. In addition to the extensive overhead, the tuner activation process lacked efficient customer service. The activation process required customers to log onto a web-based app for activation, or speak to an in-house customer service representative, resulting in a system overload of phone calls, backlog, long hold times and extremely frustrated customers. Recognizing a serious problem, the company sought an outsourced solution to better manage each aspect of the tuner activation process, a system that could optimize productivity and improve customer relations.

TextGen: A Case History, cont'd.

The company soon joined forces with TextGen, an original and innovative communications service that offers businesses the ability to reach their customers and collect data via text, web pages, and interactive voice systems – all with a single 10-digit number.

The new process was simple. Once a consumer plugged in the unit, the screen would power on with instructions to activate the tuner by text, web app or IVR. In most cases, no intervention by a customer service agent was necessary at all. By using TextGen's "text to landline" feature, customers were able to text the tuner activation code via a single, 10-digit number. Customers used the TextGen service to activate the tuners, eliminating costly activation fees and call center labor costs, improving setup times, increasing profitability for the sold televisions and improving customer relations.