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# Recruiting Customer Service Employees at a High Volume



There is no doubt about it, customer service representatives have a huge impact on sales. In most cases, they are the first touchpoint for clients or consumers, so their interactions can make or break sales potential. One sour experience can mean a lost customer and bad reviews. However, a positive interaction can build a lifelong brand ambassador with high spending habits.

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That level of influence obviously leads to pressured hiring. Companies have to find the right fit in terms of personality and skill as well as enthusiasm. You could argue those are qualities all talent acquisition teams are looking for, but there is the added challenge of volume. Customer service representatives act as funnels, hearing out a variety of customer problems then deciding whether they can take care of the issue or will need to move them on to another specialized department or contact. In person, by phone or through chat, customer service reps are needed in high-volumes and require a unique skill set.

Even more, hiring for these positions is expected to continue on a steady increase with a **projected growth of 5%** over the next decade ([data from 2016 projected to 2026](#)). While that's not a massive increase, it does show that competition for these hires will also steadily rise. If there's already a struggle to connect and recruit customer service talent, it won't be getting any easier.

Assembling the customer service team of your dreams will take the right approach to recruiting. It will need to be quick, enticing and candidate-friendly. Nearly all brands require some level of customer-centric talent, so your recruiting strategy will have to stand above the rest. What tactics suit all those needs? ■

# Hiring for New Customer Service Channels

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Advancing technology has changed the way we do just about everything. The high connectivity of our world has changed the way people prefer to communicate with friends, families and brands. Traditionally, we think of the in-store and over-the-phone customer care representatives. These individuals are trained for live face to face interactions. They either need to know the layout of a store or understand the workings of a product or system. Everything from the rep's posture to their tone of voice can have an effect on the interaction. Assessments for these hires are very much focused on in-person interviews. Training covers techniques to satisfy the frustrated as much as it does education on the product, brand or service.

## How Much Influence Does Customer Service Rep Actually Have?

- The average happy customer tells 9 people about the good experience
- The average unhappy customer tells 16 people
- For every unhappy customer who complains, there is an average of 26 others who don't
- A customer retention rate growth of 5% typically translates to a 25% to 95% increase in profit
- 86% of customers with better customer experience will pay more
- 82% of customers left a company because of a bad customer service experience
- Customers who are contacted/have their service requests solved over social media spend an average of 20% to 40% more

Of course, there will always be a need for those who can work by phone and in person, however, technology is changing the customer service game. Whether it's time constraints or an aversion to talking on the phone, today's customer wants to go for avenues that allow them to quickly explain their issue in text and wait for a reply. Over the last few years, social media has become the go to for both complimentary and unsatisfied customers. Additionally, live chat is a growing expectation with [42% of consumers](#) preferring live chat functions to calling representatives.

These shifts alone show just how complicated the requirements for customer service representative positions are becoming. A recruiter is hiring for today's customer care needs while having to consider needs of the future. Representatives will need the ability to sympathize, understand the product or service and navigate dashboards and various communication tools.

## Embracing the New Age of Communication

They say your candidate is your customer and vice versa. For some industries or brands, the line between customer and employee is thin if not nonexistent. Companies use this knowledge to improve their product or service, but should apply it to their recruiting efforts as well. Your candidate is just as likely to turn to these types of communications as the consumer. Recruiting techniques should consider the value of mobility and instantaneous satisfaction. Job seekers are online, making techniques like SMS text recruiting, career sites, email alerts, retargeting, etc worthwhile.

### **Benefits include...**

- Recruiters can send information on openings and employment benefits quickly and efficiently.
- Companies can quickly connect with talent, potentially before competitors.
- Digitization will increase the chances of automating processes without losing a personalized touch.
- Communication is where the candidate is and in a welcome, less-pressured format.
- Organizations can reach those who have shown interest in the past without requiring re-entry or ATS complexities. ■

# The Typical Customer Service Requirements

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The requirements of a customer service representative can vary greatly. In general, these workers have high school or equivalent education. Some organizations welcome those who haven't yet graduated while others ask for specialized training with specific industry knowledge. The environment can have just as much of a variety, with some workers holding face-to-face customer interactions in the field while others work via other channels from a call center or office. Terms of work vary too with 1 in 5 customer service reps working part-time hours.

## A successful recruiting strategy will first consider:

- **Statements of Work.** What hours will this individual need to work, how will those hours be scheduled and what will the work environment be?
- **Necessary Knowledge.** Is certification required, will there be training classes and what technology does the job require?
- **Wages and Movement.** Will this worker have potential to learn more skills, earn bonuses or see a high starting salary?
- **Benefits and Perks.** Is there a benefits package and are they being offered to this worker?

This information gives a clearer view into the type of worker you will be hiring, helping to narrow your search. It will also help develop the positions, attracting those candidates.

Variety means organizations might find and recruit two amazing customer service representatives from very different backgrounds and places. The recruiting tactics will need to either be diversified or highly focused on the specifics of the role. ■

# Tactics for Customer Service Recruiting

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No matter the company, attracting and hiring customer service talent is a challenge. Big organizations might have brand recognition, but battle the fallout of a distasteful PR mistake. Smaller brands might hire in lower volumes, but have to work harder to sell their company. In either case, these basic rules for hiring apply:

**Identify Your High Achievers.** There are bound to be those customer service representatives who always hit it out of the park. Even their tougher quarters, they excel above the rest. Find those top performers and identify what sets them above the rest. Pinpoint how they were recruited and hired, discuss their motivators and ask about their challenges. Use their insight to make your team better, but also develop strategies that have or would bring them to your company. Don't be afraid to ask for their critique of your hiring process. What stings now will help tomorrow.

**Lay Out the Job Details.** Everything from hours and shift to benefits and perks will be crucial elements to your candidate. Customer service is hard. Outlining details can help find the positives that balance out some of the less than desirable parts of the role. It might also open your eyes to some of the reasons the department is failing or hard to hire and retain. Don't forget to reevaluate as time passes to ensure you are meeting industry standards.

**Refresh Your Job Ad.** A captivating job ad can make standard job positions stand out. That doesn't mean lose transparency. Customer service positions have existed for a long time and job seekers aren't easily fooled. Focus your attention on the atmosphere of your department and how that can translate to your word choice. Highlight benefits and touch on some of the challenges you hope the hire will solve. Be sure to point out the little things your company does that the other organizations don't.

**Rethink Your Tactics.** Again, customers are candidates and candidates are customers. If your customers are looking for new and innovative communication avenues, you can bet your candidates are too. It wasn't long ago that paper ruled the hiring process, now we're taking it a step further with mobility and personalization.

**The next step in recruiting will be...**



**Retargeting:** Somewhere, right now, your perfect candidate might be online or in your store or on your website or on your competitors website. No matter how well they should know your company, they just might not have been introduced to you yet. In fact, they might not even be on the market for a new job. Retargeting is the way to be where your candidate is without having to force the introduction. Have you ever viewed an item on Amazon only to see it pop up in your sidebar on Facebook the next day? Similarly, candidate retargeting will put your job opening in front of an expansive network of candidates, passive or not.



**SMS Text Recruiting Campaigns:** Have you ever deleted a text without reading it? Didn't think so. It's highly unlikely your candidate will either. Actually, 73% of job seekers say they want to hear about targeted jobs through text messaging. The average open rate for these texts is 97% and people respond quick when they are interested in more information or the opportunity. The average response rate is 15% within the first hour. That all aside, SMS text recruiting allows the recruiter to connect with a large volume of qualified candidates at once. It also encourages conversations with candidates without overwhelming a hiring team.



**Personalized, Simplified Emails:** Contrary to popular belief, email isn't dead. Targeted email campaigns can boost your job ads and your brand. Email marketing allows your unique voice to shine while bringing awareness to your current employment opportunities. Candidates who have shown interest in working for your team in the past are able to take part in recruitment as the jobs open, meaning you actually pull from your talented pipeline instead. ■

# Nexxt

brings companies a perfect blend of traditional recruiting methods and new, innovative recruiting tactics. From job boards and retargeting to email and [SMS text recruiting tools](#), there isn't a talent acquisition challenge their solutions can't answer.

**This is your brand. Take charge.**

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