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VoIPstudio White Paper

Seven communications pain points and how to avoid them

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Executive Summary

Every business faces challenges to enable effective communications with customers. Symptoms of ineffective communications can include frustrated customers, missed goals, low productivity, and high employee turnover.

A communications challenge within the organisation can create a pain point for customers. If employees cannot transfer calls easily, customers get frustrated as they have to wait a long time to reach the right person. Unsurprisingly, communications pain points can lower productivity and impede decision making.

Businesses experiencing such communications pain points can mitigate them in different ways. A single solution will not work for all businesses even if they are dealing with the same pain points.

The underlying root of the problem will vary across organisations. So small business owners need a cost-effective and feature-rich communications system. A flexible solution allows business owners to use the features they need to resolve communications pain points.

The pain points for small businesses

Small businesses face a multitude of challenges on a daily basis, including problems in ensuring effective communications with customers and between employees. While both small and large firms share these challenges, the former often lack – or believe that they lack - the resources to implement effective solutions.

Pain points in communications force workers to waste valuable time on unproductive tasks like waiting for information. Such unproductive work time can run into several hours per week, per employee.

One study indicated that small businesses lost about $5,246 per employee per year in lost productivity. That's approximately £4000 or €5000.

Small businesses regularly face communications pain points. Encountering these results in wasted time and frustration for workers. It can also derail projects and affect customers. To solve a problem, it is important to understand how and why it happens.

This paper explores 7 common pain points for small businesses and shows how they can be solved with a cost-effective solution, accessible to a business of any size.

UNPRODUCTIVE TASKS COST THE AVERAGE SMALL BUSINESS
$5,246
PER EMPLOYEE/ PER YEAR

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#1

MISSED CALLS FROM COLLEAGUES OR CUSTOMERS

Missing a call from a friend or family member is frustrating. But for small businesses, missing an important call from a customer or a colleague has more serious consequences.

Consider what can happen when sales or customer agents miss incoming calls. Customers may take their business elsewhere. The missed calls may delay a new order or hold up a current shipment. In many cases, a few minutes delay allows a small problem to escalate into more serious issues.

Solutions

Voicemail

Voicemail is one possible solution for missed calls. Businesses can set up customisable voicemail for each extension and a professional system should enable voicemail access online, through email, as well as by phone. Users should get immediate notifications across all channels when they have voicemail, allowing them to take action, quickly. Professional voicemail helps workers to retrieve messages at their convenience and respond to customers without delays.

Ring groups

However, voicemail alone may not be sufficient. It should be combined with call groups to effectively manage this pain point for both customers and employees. Ring groups link together a number of people into a team – and allow any member to answer calls, meaning no customer has to wait to talk to someone.

#2

SLOW DECISION-MAKING AND LOW PRODUCTIVITY

It's easy to miss collaboration opportunities due to ineffective communications. How much time do workers lose simply waiting for replies or searching for a suitable meeting time? Consider what happens when a customer or colleague calls about a problem and they don't know the answer. They end the call, talk to someone who does and then contact the caller again. These are missed opportunities and often delay important decisions.

Solutions

Conference calling

Project teams often postpone crucial meetings waiting for everyone to have time available during the week. Conference calls eliminate this delay as team members can participate from any location. Managers can create virtual conference rooms with unlimited participants. They can enable voice-only calls or add video according to the situation.

Internal call transfer

Suppose a support agent is unable to help a customer during a conversation. They can find a colleague, get the solution and return to the caller without delay. Internal call transfers minimise the need to call customers back with answers. It allows support teams to resolve issues in a single interaction, delivering service faster.

#3

CHASING UNAVAILABLE COLLEAGUES

Often, employees call a co-worker for information or to share updates, but they may not always reach the person to whom they wish to speak. The intended recipient may be busy or in a meeting. The employee now has to wait until later to finish this task. On the other hand, a busy employee may take the call since it has already interrupted their work. In both cases, that leads to lost or unproductive time.

Solutions

Status and presence information

One way to solve this problem is to use presence information across multiple channels. Users can set their status to available, busy, away or other custom options. The ability to view presence information can save workers hours spent chasing colleagues and teammates.

Find me Follow me

An alternative method to solve the same issue is enabling users to set up a 'chain' of contact. Employees can designate the order in which various devices ring for incoming calls. For instance, the user could set the following sequence - work phone, smartphone, colleague, voicemail. In this case, incoming calls ring each device or person in order. The employee can answer the call from the most convenient device.

#4

MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH REMOTE/OFF-SITE COLLEAGUES

Few businesses have all employees working in the same office or at their desk. Some workers telecommute from home or a client site full-time, while others may switch between remote and on-site work depending on circumstances. Unfortunately, it can be difficult to maintain contact with remote co-workers or to ensure a consistent experience when they are in different locations.

Solutions

Multichannel communication

Multi-channel communication allows employees to use the best option in a given situation. It also enables quick communication as users don't have to think about which device to use or where the caller is. Instant message, texting, email, voice, or video call options means no one is out of touch with the office.

Simulate office experience

Businesses should aim to provide a consistent experience on desktop and mobile. Employees should not be forced to compromise on features because they don't have a desktop computer. Today's smart devices are highly efficient and are able to perform many tasks which used to require a laptop. Business managers should leverage the available interfaces and encourage teams to communicate effectively.

#5

DISCONNECTED COMMUNICATION

Unfortunately, multiple communication channels can lead to confusion as well. When users have access to texting, calling, email, and voicemail, they have to select a channel before initiating contact. Too few or too many channels can lead to disconnected communication.

Solutions

Integration with one number

There is such a thing as too many lines and numbers. Users can instead have a single main number with several connected extensions. Calls can be routed to any device or location with features like call forwarding, which means no user has to wonder which number to use before making a call.

Unified communication (UC)

UC tools are more than a marketing term. Businesses can bring all communication channels together to improve productivity, so that users are not forced to switch between dozens of apps to keep up with everyone. These can be supported by dashboards to bring all channels and notifications to a single screen.

#6

LONG WAITING TIMES FOR CUSTOMERS

Irrespective of the size of a business, there will be times when the call volume is higher than they can handle. It means putting customers on hold and creating long waiting times. There's nothing more frustrating for a customer experiencing a problem than having to wait for an available agent.

Solutions

ACD queues

ACD queues are a good option to manage inbound calls effectively, because they enable distribution of calls between a number of registered users. Department leaders can add agents as needed to handle excess or bursts of traffic, according to seasonal call volumes. Supervisors can minimise the waiting time for customers and make sure they can talk to a person as quickly as possible.

Advanced call routing

A sophisticated call routing option allows teams to send calls to the right place based on set criteria. If a business wants to serve customers beyond normal working hours, they can use multiple teams in different locations. Managers can route incoming calls to one office and switch to another location when needed.

#7

CUSTOMERS HAVE TO TELL THE SAME STORY SEVERAL TIMES

If there's one thing worse for customers than waiting on hold, it's having to repeat the same issue to multiple people. Sometimes, agents have to transfer calls to more knowledgeable co-workers, but they don't have the means to share information about the problem. This results in repetition and frustration for customers.

Solutions

IVR

Support teams can use interactive voice recognition systems to offer multiple options for callers. It allows callers to reach the right person at the first try. Customers should not have to talk to several people to solve a simple issue.

Whisper and call barge

The whisper option allows supervisors to listen to customer calls and provide real-time help to employees. Managers can also use call barge to take over the call seamlessly if an employee cannot provide the necessary answers or information.

Conclusion

A flexible communication system gives businesses the freedom to use the features they require. Managers can combine several features to solve a particular communication pain point. No two businesses function the same way and what works for one may not work for another, so it's important to select a communication solution that can adapt to different needs.

Just like large companies, smaller companies also face hurdles when it comes to internal and external communications. These impact customers in a variety of ways - even when it happens indirectly, creating pain points that can result in lost sales and lower productivity. This whitepaper takes a look at these pain points and provides solutions to each of them.

It is crucial to work with a provider who can adapt as the business grows.

VoIPstudio addresses the 7 key communication pain points for any business - no matter the size or industry. It is a great option for businesses interested in the best way to communicate with customers.

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