“Your worst customer is your best friend”

-Jeff Jarvis, What Would Google Do?
Choosing the Right Solution

**Customer complaint management software**

For even the best customer service companies—those with droves of highly satisfied customers—customer complaints are just a reality of doing business. In fact, these companies often owe part of their high satisfaction ratings to the strength of their complaint management systems and processes. While it’s true you can’t satisfy every customer every time, there’s no reason not to use those customer touch points as an opportunity to improve.

Handled correctly, customer complaints offer a critical source of feedback from your most valued customers—the ones you already have. Of course, the question then becomes, how do I choose the right solution?

**Complaint management challenges**

In today’s business environment, the complaint management process faces several key challenges. Firstly, the systems supporting the complaints process are often outdated, inflexible, and lacking integration. As a result, agents handling customer complaints must navigate multiple systems while trying to reach the best solution in a timely manner.

In addition to this inefficiency, poorly integrated systems create information barriers; essentially blocking the flow of crucial customer and complaint information between those handling the complaints and the management team.

Without the consistent flow of information, companies find it difficult to respond proactively to customer complaint trends. In the end, glaring customer service issues, product flaws, and bad information can go undetected for unacceptably long periods of time. Aside from driving customer dissatisfaction, these open feedback loops will disconnect the company from its customers and eventually lead to a competitive gap.

Lastly, a reliance on ill-fitting technologies often leads to workflow issues where proper procedure is poorly defined or ineffectively communicated to the agents handling customer complaints. Ultimately, agents are left to interpret complaint procedures subjectively, and the customer experience becomes inconsistent and unsatisfying.

**SUMMARY**

**Solution elements**
- Integrated software system
- Workflow automation
- Task processing
- Knowledge management
- Complete customer view
- Data and reporting
- Multi-channel support

**Benefits**
- Improve customer experience
- Earn trust of displeased customers
- Gain efficiency in complaint handling process
- Anticipate and prevent future customer complaint trends
- Use customer insights to promote further innovation

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Solution Elements

To overcome these common customer complaint challenges and turn a potential source of conflict into a competitive advantage, customer service organizations should look to implement a complaint management system with a few core components in mind:

- **Integrated software system:** A single interface covering the entire complaint management lifecycle from submission and escalation to resolution and analysis.

- **Workflow automation:** Configurable workflows and customizable business rules allow you to create easy-to-follow, consistent processes while enforcing compliance to standard procedures.

- **Knowledge management:** A searchable repository of product and service information helps drive consistent complaint handling and policy-driven solutions.

- **Data and reporting:** Aggregated customer and complaint data provides a foundation to analyze and identify potential product or service improvements; reporting dashboards enable real-time monitoring of complaints activity.

- **Task processing:** Capture, classify, and assign complaints to the right department to streamline complaint management and ensure timely resolution.

- **Multi-channel support:** Track and manage customer complaints through multiple channels, including voice, e-mail, and chat.

- **Complete customer view:** Robust customer or case histories, including past activity by product, customer, classification, or other key data points better prepare agents to serve individual customer needs.

**Features for comparison**

The following feature list provides an outline of what your chosen solution should provide in order to deliver the solution elements described above:

- Alerts
- Automatic notifications
- Communication management
- Complaint classification
- Compliance management
- Corrective actions
- Customer analysis
- Customer complaint tracking
- Customizable fields
- Customizable reporting
- Custom user interface
- Dashboard
- Data import/export
- Drag-and-drop interface
- Issue tracking
- Microsoft Office integration
- Mobile access
- Quality control
- Reporting
- Routing options
- Software development kit
- Workflow management
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What it’s worth to you

From your customers’ perspective, the investment in a complaint management system will improve their experience by ensuring their voices are heard and their problems get solved. For your business, effective complaint management creates an opportunity to satisfy displeased customers and win back their trust.

Perhaps most importantly, customer complaints provide valuable data that can be used to improve your business. By understanding the issues frustrating your customers, you gain insight on how to prevent future problems as well as the fuel to ignite further innovation.

As a whole, an effective complain management system will align people, processes, and information to better serve customer needs, while helping businesses maintain a competitive edge.

About PhaseWare

PhaseWare, Inc. is headquartered in McKinney TX. The company provides customer service and support software solutions optimized for the small to medium business. PhaseWare Tracker and its Event Engine and Self Service Center enhancements provide incident management process automation, incident tracking, and resolution of trouble tickets from origin to close, plus self-service customer service and support options.