



EddieDonovan.com

CUSTOMER CARE STRATEGY

OBJECTIVE:

To create an on-line customer services support network which delivers to our customers timely, informative, accurate, and personable information. Our solution must serve the customer in a fashion that recognizes the balance between on-line requirements, and occasional voice support where the issues are sensitive requiring customization. The above must be achieved in a cost efficient manner in order to ensure that EddieDonovan.com will always offer its products at a market competitive rate.

CHALLENGES:

1. On-line customers use the Internet for convenience and 24/7 accessibility. If the customer care services do not work properly, the customer will often become more frustrated than they were in a traditional brick and mortar relationship.
2. Customer Care must provide the answers that customers are looking for. Can this truly be accomplished with an Internet only approach?
3. EddieDonovan.com intends to use 'outsourcers' for the life cycle management of all products. Customer Care is a significant piece of this life cycle support, and EddieDonovan.com will as a result, rely on the performance of a 3rd party for critical customer retention issues.
4. Cross-selling initiatives are paramount to the success of the site. However, customers will desire the ability to review their entire relationship on-line. How do we integrate all product suites, and how do we manage the customer's ability to navigate to the customer care team that will have the proper answer?
5. Customer acquisition is a sensitive process which must closely monitor the customers' on-line experience, and maintain an extremely low abandon rate. Does EddieDonovan.com want to allow a 3rd party to manage this?
6. As EddieDonovan.com pursues a Pan European presence, do we focus on a centralized or de-centralized customer care support strategy? Language is not the only barrier to servicing on a Pan European basis. Cultural, product, pricing, processing and regulatory differences will require significant education and skills training.
7. EddieDonovan.com will support 4 separate products which will have multiple product offerings. In addition, the products may have to be supported under a multitude of brands. Should separate Customer Care Teams be set up for each Product? Or 1 team with 'subject matter experts' who assist a larger team of generalists?
8. Cost efficiency is paramount to the success of on-line / e-commerce solutions. EddieDonovan.com will have to find a balance between reducing cost per inquiry without losing the customer in the process.

CUSTOMER CARE STRATEGY FORMULATION

Critical Communication/Medium Support Tools

EddieDonovan.com will focus on delivering on-line Customer Care Services as the predominant method of customer support. This service will require "e-mail routing" support, "web chat" and "web call me" facilities. As well, this service must address the unique requirements of a Pan European solution. The following explanations support the above:

- a) E-Mail Routing- Customers make contact by e-mail and are supported with automated replies or are directed to specific skilled individuals within the call center
- b) Web Chat- The ability for an on-line customer to interact on a real time basis with a call center representative

- c) Web 'Call Me' Capability- Place a virtual icon on the website to allow a telephone call to be established between the applicant and a contact center representative. This will have to be established in a selective way.
- d) Pan European e-mail/Call Routing- an underlying strategy which involves centralized support for routine inquiry and localized support for inquiries that are unique or culturally sensitive.

Recommended Over-Arching Customer Care Strategy

A variety of input from other EddieDonovan.com team members will be necessary for the purpose of creating a robust Customer Care support strategy. However, the following explanations provide framework for a more detailed discussion:

- a) EddieDonovan.com should have a two tier support strategy where the customer acquisition process and 'non-routine' customer management inquiries should be supported by employees, and a second tier which is outsourced to 3rd party(s), who would support routine, low emotion inquiries. This approach would allow EddieDonovan.com to manage those issues that could impact customer stickiness (particularly in the acquisition process), and then rely on 3rd parties where limited customer damage and on-line economies can be realized.
- b) EddieDonovan.com should offer a limited amount of voice support in both the customer acquisition process and perhaps a 'weaning off' process after customer acquisition. For example, a customer should have the option to speak to an employee after they have exhausted all on-line chat options. The philosophy of this on-line organization is to use the Internet as the only medium for customer communication process. I support this philosophy 100% except that until we have proven that our technologies work 100%, I do not believe that we can place our deficiencies in the hands of our customers. We all know what the implications of this approach will result in. The concept is that once a customer has been activated, they could have the option of 3 voice inquiries in their first month (usually when most questions arise), 2 in the next month, and 1 for the next 4 months. Any inquiries that exceed these allowances would be charged a fee and included in the customers' next statement. This approach allows for 'early days' voice support, and then eventually financial penalties if abused.
- c) Based upon the consolidation of both customer exposure as well as customers who utilize our products, it is important that our Customer Care Strategy presents one coordinated approach for the customer. We should share one team of employees who can offer a single face to the customer.
- d) All routine customer inquiries must be managed by one of the 4 support tools identified above. The Customer Care Team will have to define all of the routine inquiries that include routine responses, and then determine which can be easily included in the outsourced relationship. Clearly defined responses and architecture must be in place to ensure real time e-mail routing as well as directing appropriate queries for chat.
- e) It will likely make sense to co-locate customer care team members in each of the selected outsource partners sites. First-e employees could then be considered "subject matter experts" and offer a resource (as well as a supervisory) capacity to the outsourced team. Our target partners have all welcomed employees co-location opportunities.
- f) EddieDonovan.com will have to determine whether or not continental European call centers could accommodate the philosophy espoused above as small Customer Care teams in each country, or one multi country, language, culturally sensitive center.

Key Immediate Actions:

1. Benchmark current approach to On-line Customer Care, as well as identify and define areas of commonality between the groups and whether a single front-end customer care unit should be established.
2. Attempt to benchmark other companies currently providing On-line Customer Care on a Pan European basis, and attempt to identify 'best of breed skill sets' necessary to differentiate in the market.
3. Source outside providers who offer technological Customer Care solutions that may solve all or a piece of our final Customer Care support strategy.
4. Establish the customer care activities that we believe should be supported directly by employees, and which components should be supported through 3rd party partners.
5. Recruit a Customer Care Manager to both define, own, implement and then manage the Customer Care strategy
6. Establish definition of the Customer Care inquiries that will typically link to the customer acquisition process and as well the inquiries that typically link to the customer retention process. This process must be detailed individually for all products and their associated features.
7. Immediate benchmarking of our target partners' capabilities to support our unique requirements should be executed immediately. We must know what they are able to support in before we can demand a committed project implementation schedule or look at alternative partners.