

More Sales With Online Communities

Guide on how online communities
help you increase sales



Foreword

The best way to drive more sales in today's economic landscape is to make customers more satisfied.

This process is twofold: **create better products and services, and improve the customer experience.** Everything essentially falls into these two broad categories and even the product itself is a part of the experience.

Customer satisfaction in a nutshell means satisfying the needs, wants, and desires of people.

Your brand image relies on customer satisfaction, which is largely made of the customer experience you provide. A big part of customer experience is your product or service. Sales and marketing only support them.



What do people want, need and desire? How do you figure it out, create it, and sell it to them? **Our solution is to build a brand community.**

It will help you in 3 categories:

1. Product Development

2. Customer Experience

3. Customer Satisfaction

Research finds that **customers who join a branded online community increase their spending on the brand by 19%.**⁽¹⁾ In this guide we will go over how online communities support your strategic objectives in the aforementioned three categories:

1. Use your community to survey and discover what your customers want, and co-create the best solution. Online communities give you the keys to customer feedback, ideas, and opinions at all times. **Customers are eager to contribute and want to feel heard.**
2. Give people the information, service, and resources needed to become a customer for a lifetime. **Customers want to engage with the company to create a bond that will drive loyalty.** Design your customer experience journey and align the journey with your customer experience strategy.
3. Discover customer pain points and frustrations to improve your offers. Personalise your online presence by adding a human touch. **Customers want to hear and read from other customers.**

The purpose of this guide is to give you a framework to understand what your customers want in order to create better products and improve customer experience. We will go over steps on how to increase customer satisfaction, which is the driving force behind more sales.

Enjoy!

- Jaakko, CEO of Puheet

How does Puheet increase sales?

- 3x better

You can use our platform to help you improve in 3 categories:



Products
& Services



Customer
Experience



Customer
Satisfaction

It has become increasingly important for businesses to gather their customers into a tribe-like community to bolster customer engagement.

Of those who rank the CX of a company as **“very good”**

- 94% would purchase more
- 95% would recommend the company

Of those who rank the CX of a company as **“very poor”**

- 18% would purchase more
- 15% would recommend the company

(2)

Consumers must be given the possibility to interact with the company and fellow customers. Social belonging is a primal human drive, and we can relate to people who like similar brands.

For companies, an **online community is a great opportunity to help our customers feel important and heard** — which is what we all strive for.

1. Develop products that sell more

Building an online community will help you build products and services that sell more because of 3 things:

1. More Ideas

2. More Diversity

3. More Certainty

Customers have ideas and they want to share them, because it is in their **best interest that you create the best product or service possible**. They will directly make their lives better by helping you.

58% of companies have tested customer co-creation with 51% reporting improvements in financial performance. (3)

More diversity is better. Diversity of perspectives, experiences, and expertise, all make a difference. More customer backgrounds can give you a **better idea of the target audience, potential problems, and use cases**.

It only makes sense to collaborate with the customers to understand who will eventually use your product.

This will also lead to more certainty, as you can better understand who wants your offering, what features to build, and how many people could actually buy it.

Nobody wants to launch a dud. With the help of an online community it is easier to figure out if your new solutions have potential, if they have problems that should be solved pre-launch, and how to make them even better.

2. Engineer the customer experience journey

The customer experience is an on-going journey that begins as your brand first crosses the consciousness of a consumer.

Although every prospect will not discover the company or become a customer, let alone a superfan, it is worth devoting time to construct the ideal journey and support your customers on their path towards becoming valuable parts of your business.

The path generally consists of 4 phases:



Online community is the ideal first touchpoint

The importance of social media cannot be downplayed. Most consumers find information about companies on social media. It does, however, come with its downsides. [Unless you are Facebook or Twitter, you do not own the platform.](#)

You can think of an online community as your own, local social media that you own and operate. You make the rules as well as the changes. It is empowering and opens up plenty of opportunities.

It also compliments your website well. [Peer reviews, testimonials, advice, and experiences make your company appear more trustworthy.](#) Consumers respect transparency and feel better about companies that encourage their customers to create content about them.

The beginning of the journey

The advantage of branded online communities is that interested prospects can find [all the necessary information they need to make a purchase, in one place.](#)

This makes learning about your offering fast and convenient for customers, leaving them more satisfied with the experience.

1. Interested Prospect

Uses an online community to make a decision

FAQ

Forums

Peer Advice

Testimonials

2. Engaged Customer

Recommends a product to others and spreads information about the brand

Shared Experiences

Social Media

Reviews

Why is a customer community needed in this process?

Because **seven out of ten adults report they trust recommendations** from friends and family more than information from the brand itself. ⁽⁴⁾

— In-house content creation by itself is not enough any more.

In an economic landscape where brands are trusted less and less, companies need to collaborate with their customers more than ever.

Online community helps you build trust and develop an authentic relationship with the customer.

Customers can engage with your company on our platform. Content, other members, game mechanics, loyalty programs, and a customised, brand-like feel make for a more personalised experience.

Brand loyalty: Key to profits

A 2020 study reports that **67% of businesses with online communities report an increase in brand loyalty.** ⁽⁵⁾

This is significant, as the cost of customer acquisition is 5 to 25 times more expensive than the cost of keeping a customer. ⁽⁶⁾

Furthermore, loyal, and positive customers are more valuable than ever. In the digital age, **any customer has the potential to become a fan** who is capable of growing your business through recommendations.

Customer retention is a massive advantage companies should prioritise to increase long-term revenue.

Loyalty is the key factor in this and the basis of increasing customer lifetime value.

Loyalty is driven by meaningful connections that do not form in crowds. The intimacy and personalisation of a branded community makes this possible.

3. Loyal Fan

Engages with the community and helps potential customers and other members

Community Attachment

Advocacy

Reputation

4. Valuable Asset

Provides ideas and insights that help to make better products, features and decisions

Ideas

Insights

Feedback

Why a branded online community?

Customers feel appreciated when they are heard. When you listen to your customers they will reciprocate and listen to you in turn.

You build trust throughout the customer journey and eventually your customers will be eager to return the favour.

This means they are **willing to share ideas, help your company directly, and contribute to the community.**

Because they are more familiar with your business, their feedback and insights become more and more valuable as time passes.

What is your customer experience strategy?

Aligning your customer experience strategy with your customer journey can be helpful. It can lead you to answer important questions about your customer experience efforts:

Are we measuring the right things? Are we prioritising retention or acquisition?
Are we collecting insights from our customers?

Perhaps you should track and prioritise repeat purchases and monthly new customers. Maybe you should invest in a medium to allow loyal customers to express their ideas and do market research to find out the opinions of potential customers.

The way you service your customer will give you the edge

There is a trend. **Consumers want customer service on their terms.** This means they want support fast and at a convenient time. This might mean 5AM or 11PM. For multinationals this becomes even trickier.

The best solution to this is to provide self-service. Everyone goes online to find answers to their problems. If you can give the relevant information at all times, you are winning.

Most people do not even want to contact you anyways, they prefer to search online. **Online communities offer the best solution.** All the relevant information can be compiled into one location.

Today, consumers do not trust companies as much anymore and want to hear from other customers. **Giving a voice to your customers allows them to help each other more efficiently.** Peer reviews and support are the keys to customer service.

79% of consumers say they expect companies to provide effective self-service support to their questions whenever and wherever. (7)

The role of companies in this regard is going through a fundamental shift. We are not the most important source of customer service anymore. **Consumers want to be helped by other customers.** Our role is reduced to facilitating this and assisting consumers in finding the help they want faster.

3. Customer satisfaction strategy

With social media, consumers can reach hundreds, and even thousands of people. The voice of an unsatisfied customer can carry far and cause damage long after the incident. Satisfying the needs and wants of your customer should be your top priority.

Companies can access potential customers all over the world, but digitalisation has also brought its problems. Experiences are much less personalised as business happens increasingly more online. Supply is high and thus consumers have easy access to competition in the case your offering does not satisfy them.

73% of consumers say that respecting their time is the most important aspect of customer service. (8)

To help solve the first problem, a community can help bring some of the excitement of shopping in a brick and mortar store online. **Your website or ecommerce store needs a counterpart.**

The second problem can be solved with providing a great customer experience. We already know that just offering better products than the competition is not enough.

What if you went to a store and it was 100% self-service, and you were the only customer. That is how many feel about online shopping. Building an online community is like infusing your empty and cold online store with the warmth of other customers, human touch of service reps, and the helping hand of others who have had the same problem you are dealing with.

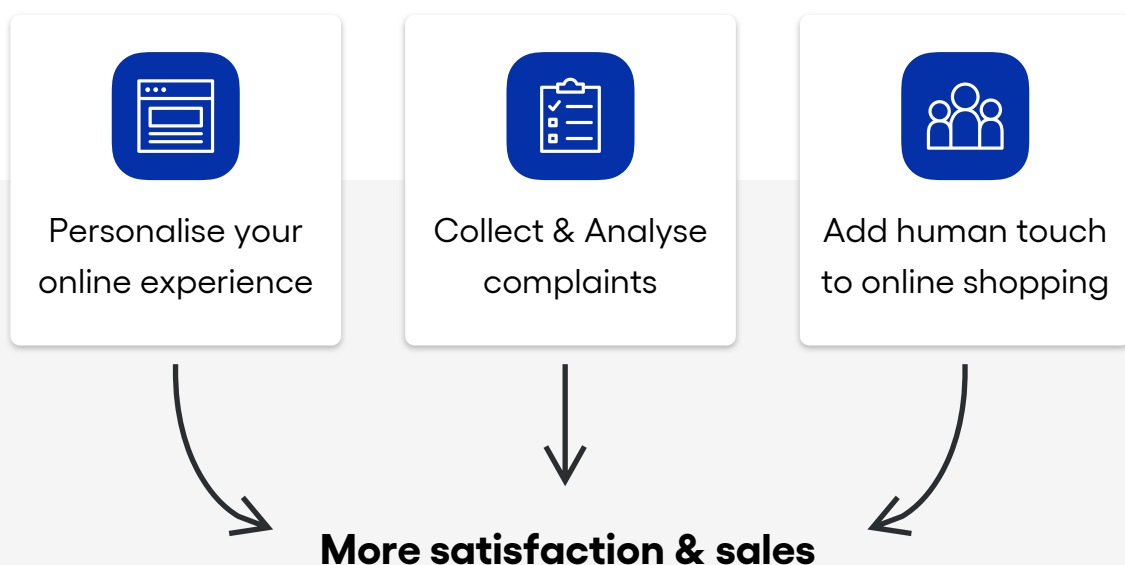
Help your customers complain

This might sound odd at first. The reason, however, is simple. **Unsatisfied customers will share their experience. The danger is that you might just not know about it**, if it happens in person, or on social media.

This is why you should encourage your customers to complain on your website. As a result, you have access to invaluable feedback about what can be improved in order to satisfy more customers.

Creating a convenient forum for customers to share their pain points and frustrations will help you figure out ways to increase satisfaction as well as give out the impression that your company listens.

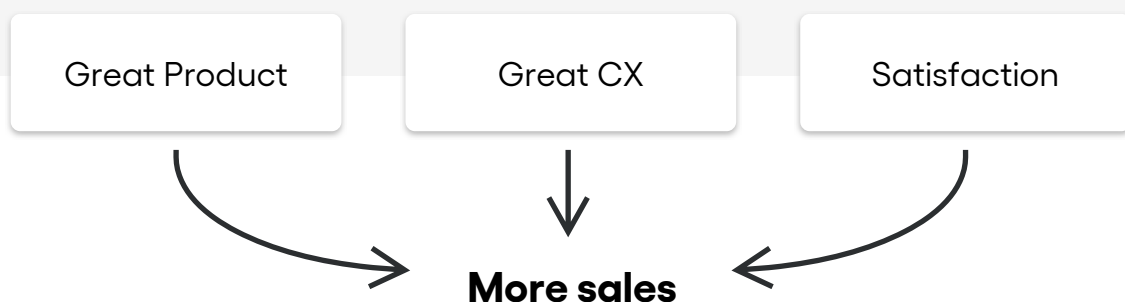
While you make it easy for the customer, you also **make it easy for your staff to answer those questions**. Complaints are easily lost in the masses of social media, which makes estimating the real satisfaction levels difficult. Online communities help you analyse customer feedback and find trends to improve your service.



Our goal for our partners:

- More sales

We thrive to help our partners develop better products, and improve customer experience and satisfaction.



Marketing and sales are going through a fundamental shift. A new paradigm is emerging, as customers do not trust advertising or traditional marketing.

Satisfied customers are your best marketing and sales team. You must unleash their voice and allow prospects to find relevant customer generated content.

How do you satisfy your customers? First you find out what they want, need, and desire. Then you create it.

The key to developing great products is **co-creation**. Developing products and services must happen **with the end user. Not just the end user in mind.**

Then you engineer the right customer experience to take your customer on a lifelong journey. You make service fast and convenient. You adapt to the trends and meet people where they want to be met.

How?

With a branded online community.

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