

Rethink customer care now

How to provide **responsive
customer care** for the post-
COVID-19 world.



Sustain business continuity and prepare for the future.

Everything is out of equilibrium. How can organizations **sustain** business continuity during this tumultuous time and **prepare** for the future?

After discussions with analysts and enterprise clients worldwide, we're seeing trends emerge around rethinking business in the post-COVID-19 world. We encourage organizations to look ahead by focusing on these five priorities: cost containment and optimization, talent agility, building a resilient core, enhancing products and services, and customer care and operations.

Responsive customer care connects across these priorities, as it takes people, processes, and technology to deliver a great care experience at lower cost. But the rules are changing: Social distancing is increasing demand for more empathetic and authentic connections, while consumers are unforgiving of brands that are not dependable, accessible, or are slow to respond to their needs.

Increased competition is pushing brands to generate engagement and sales using the right channels and message while reducing costs. Failure to retain and acquire customers today puts revenue at risk and leaves the business in a precarious position. To adapt and seize this opportunity of change, brands must **rethink customer care**.



Executive Summary

Read this guide and learn how to lower costs, gain revenue, increase market share and integrate the voice of the customer by offering responsive customer care across **three phases**.

The path ahead is not linear. There will be overlap within and across phases as organizations make rapid progress in some areas, while revisiting others:

#1. Respond to customer needs to protect revenue and build loyalty by redesigning your service using low-code digital agents, remote assistance, and rapid e-commerce.

#2. Reset for a new standard of customer care by modernizing your core customer insight capabilities, using intelligence and automation to get more value from customer data.

#3. Renew faster with digital to gain market share by rapidly enabling differentiated customer experiences through new channels and service models.



1. Respond: Redesign your service

You may be responding to customers by now, but there are new things to **consider** trying and **accelerating** to serve more customers faster.

Don't rebuild anything from the ground up; just tweak service by augmenting sales and service talent with digital tools, and ensure you have a viable (touchless) sales channel. These actions help you today – and prepare for rapid response during future disruptions - while you create more sophisticated long-term care solutions.

Augment service with virtual agents

Your call center agents may already be working from home, but there's more you can be doing. Act fast to augment your customer service with virtual agents. A basic low-code chatbot can be stood up in days to tackle frequently asked questions. Not only does this reduce calls and operational costs, but it reduces service wait times and frustration for customers who need quick answers. If virtual agents are in place, feed customer chat data back to your marketing and service teams to help improve messaging and prevent unnecessary service calls.

Connect front-line technicians with experts

Empowering technicians to solve service problems fast – and better yet, predicting and preventing them before they happen – minimizes customer disruption. Solve for complex field service issues from afar using mobile and mixed reality remote assistance to connect front-line workers with experts at any time of day. While being miles apart, experts can see what the front-line technicians see, and provide real-time guidance to help resolve issues every step of the way.

Accelerate digital commerce

Revisit your digital commerce strategy to enable transactions that fit into the behavior of customers as they increasingly turn to digital shopping channels. Trust, loyalty and increased conversions are earned fast if you can do this effectively and consistently. Ensure you provide realistic timelines for delivery and real-time inventory availability. And if you've shifted to a buy-online-pick-up-at-store model, make your front-end experience simple to navigate and understand while optimizing for mobile users.

Case Study

Turbocharging remote service

Challenge: It takes specialized expertise to service ABB Turbocharging's products, but centralized training was inefficient and expensive for the manufacturer's global network of engineers.

Solution: We helped ABB engineers use Microsoft HoloLens 2 mixed reality connected with Teams and Dynamics 365 Remote Assist to train, collaborate and resolve issues from a distance.

Results: This solution can reduce downtime, speed time to repair, improve service-level agreement compliance rates and increase productivity.

2. **Reset:** Modernize your core customer insight capabilities

With basic support in place, continually identify patterns in customer care **data** that inform how to adjust your overall care **experience**.

Provide proactive messaging to prevent problems and related service calls. Sustain momentum by using intelligence to understand what customers need now and predict what they need in the future. Making these data-driven decisions will help you deliver evolving customer care at speed while reducing costs.

Understand customer intent

Analyze search engine data and on-site activity to understand what customers are looking for, then proactively update care channels to provide relevant answers. Go further with AI and machine learning to mine vast volumes of unstructured data by [listening to calls and reading chats](#) to identify emerging customer problems, assess customer sentiment, flag compliance challenges and accelerate case management. If agents can't resolve issues quickly on calls or chats, [update your knowledge base](#) and scripts to bridge the gap.

Unify customer data

Shift further away from one-size-fits-all experiences to personalization through a shared cloud-based view of your customer. Insights gleaned from your customer data platform help you better segment customers, so you know which message or offer should go where and to whom. Look closely to identify segments that are the most profitable and/or underserved, so you focus your content and [personalization efforts](#) where they drive the most impact. And ensure data is fed back to your R&D teams to improve your products/services, to increase satisfaction and reduce service needs overall.

Automate marketing operations

Leave basic marketing tasks to technology so your people can take on creative, higher-value pursuits. Embrace [marketing automation](#) to speed up your marketing time to value, improve marketing and sales relationships, and increase campaign returns. If you automate marketing operations and lower your marketing spend, consider investing those savings in new channels and experiences that will help you generate revenue.

Case Study

Connected customer view in health

Challenge: A legacy system prevented [Independence Health Group](#) from effectively managing complex customer relationships and executing sales activities.

Solution: We helped the company integrate data with Microsoft Dynamics 365 CRM for a more complete view of the customer relationship, analytics capabilities to power sales planning and execution processes, and a mobile app to give sales teams access to data 24/7.

Results: Expected results include increased revenue and savings of \$2 million in annual administrative costs.

3. Renew: Go faster with digital

Push your thinking and digital technologies **to the limit** to enable new experiences that will help your brand **gain market share**.

Your digital platforms and care teams should be working symbiotically to enrich the entire customer journey, testing and iterating constantly along the way. Avoid slipping back into old habits by embracing a fail-fast growth mindset that will help you profit from rapid learning and continually provide an excellent care experience for your customers.

Optimize omnichannel

No matter how customers engage, they should consistently receive the right message and content for *them*. Ensure customer care data connects across touchpoints to keep personalized experiences flowing seamlessly from one channel to the next. AI and social listening tools can also help you use customer sentiment to adjust messaging and content in real time. Use [conversation design](#) to enhance virtual agents so they deliver a more empathetic and helpful experience that reflects your brand, and test that experience across your digital channels.

Build workforce elasticity

Reassess your internal teamwork operating model. Stay on top of emerging customer signals and market trends, leveraging blended teams to gain agility and broader expertise. Not only will you be able to adapt faster to continual change, but you can proactively invest in exploring new opportunities to innovate and better serve your customers. Enable care teams to quickly test new care channels, content and models to assess results, and adjust your products and care experience continually based on the latest findings.

Blaze new trails

As personalized, omnichannel experiences become repeatable at a lower level of effort, maintain a fail (and learn) fast cultural mindset to continue differentiating your brand. Look to other industries for inspiration and new service models that could be adopted to fit the needs of customers. Make visionary ideas become real in small, manageable increments so you can accelerate growth and retain a competitive edge. As you realize results, continue to sustain an optimistic outlook, share success with your team and iterate constantly to stay ahead of the market.

Case Study

Using omnichannel to drive loyalty

Challenge: [Subway](#), the world's largest restaurant chain, sought to become a digital leader and industry innovator by delivering exceptional guest experiences everywhere.

Solution: Together with Accenture, we worked as one team to ensure consistent experience across every interaction.

Results: Both MyWay Rewards and the new web ordering experience have contributed significantly to drive Subway's goals with over 45 million loyalty transactions processed by the new omnichannel solution, and digital order volume doubling from the prior year.

Why **Avanade**?

If you're looking to adapt your customer care for the post-COVID-19 world, Avanade can help.

Founded as a joint venture between Accenture and Microsoft, Avanade is dedicated to creating a genuine human impact by harnessing the power of the Microsoft ecosystem through the lens of human-centered design.

We deliver great experiences for the entire customer journey by combining the creative skills of a digital agency with the dependability and expertise of a proven technology solution provider.

Our approach and deep knowledge of Microsoft products like Dynamics 365, HoloLens, Power Platform, Teams and Azure have led Microsoft to name us their Alliance Partner of the Year 14 times.

The right team, every time

To help you seize the best results, we assemble the most powerful combination of people and skills: Strategists, designers, data scientists and technologists working seamlessly as one dedicated team.

Act now and think long-term

There's no time to waste. We offer talent and solutions to help you accelerate your customer care experience now, with recommendations and capabilities to sustain and evolve it for the future.

Close to you, wherever you are

We offer local support at scale, made possible by a global network of consultants and [Digital Innovation Studios](#) to support you in one location, multiple regions or across the world.

Experience you can trust

Analysts, alliances and partners have recognized Avanade as an industry leader for excellence in delivering outstanding business results and innovations in customer care through reliable, scalable and [secure](#) digital experiences.



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Starting to **rethink** your customer care program?
Please **contact us** for help.

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About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud services, business solutions and design-led experiences on the Microsoft ecosystem. With 38,000 professionals in 25 countries, we are the power behind the Accenture Microsoft Business Group, helping companies to engage customers, empower employees, optimize operations and transform products, leveraging the Microsoft platform. Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation. Learn more at www.avanade.com.

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