



The Customer Support Professional ... Uniquely Different at Trade Service

"Hello, Discount Tires, can you hold? ...er, I mean, can you keep holding?" "I'm sorry, ma'am, your wedding dress was delivered to our store in Brazil. Can you come back next week?" "The silver Audi you ordered has finally come in, but they shipped us a red one instead...will you take red?" And we all love this classic, "Our computer just went down so we can't sell you that today."

Lines like these are all too familiar – we each have our own horror stories of how we have been treated in everyday interaction with the outside world. And it seems that no area of our lives is exempt from what might be called, "customer care-less" experiences.

A unique approach

At Trade Service, we strive to be the exception to this unfortunate trend. In developing our customer support program, we determined that our approach must be strategic, not driven by circumstances.

An effective customer support program is not re-invented each time the phone rings. Rather, it is developed, organized, and fine-tuned long before the customer even calls. We decided that a continuing measure of success would be how often our customer hangs up the phone with a satisfactory answer – not more questions.

Measure twice, cut once

Considerable thought and planning went into crafting our multi-tiered customer support program. To be effective, it had to contain two essential elements:

- Breadth to address all possible types of requests, questions, concerns, and emergencies; and
- Depth to take any matter as far as it needs to go to resolve it.

So how does this all work?

A team of customer support specialists comes to work every day prepared to speak with you and help resolve any issue you may have. There are four general categories



"I love the challenge of problem solving!" Cathy Legge, Customer Support Specialist.

of calls we receive: a question, request for assistance, a concern, or an emergency. Depending on the type of call, there is a process in place to effectively handle it. We have developed a tiered approach (see graphic on page 3), where each issue is elevated to the appropriate resource level for resolution.

Does a content service really need such a comprehensive support program?

There are those who believe that a data service provider should require only one or two people to take calls. In fact, this model is used by several competitive providers today. On the surface, it even seems to make sense: if data is created by the manufacturer and simply needs to be communicated to the distributor, what could possibly go wrong in the process that would require a 3-tier customer service program to address it?

To answer this question, let's hear from members of our support team who are on the front lines each day resolving such issues. If you've had occasion to call for support, perhaps you can relate!

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The Customer Support Professional ...

Questions and Requests for Assistance

Cathy Legge recalls: "In November 2005, I received a call from a distributor who was trying to reconcile a price discrepancy between a product in his inventory and the same product as it appeared on a vendor invoice. This was a Tier One issue that was easily addressed while the customer was on the phone: I found the item in our database and saw that it had appeared on a recent update, which the customer had not yet run. After he processed the update, the discrepancy was resolved."

"A similar incident occurred with a unit of measure. For this, I worked with a Tier Two resource. Our Database Issues Resolution Team was able to track the history of the item in question through past iterations of updates. It was found that the manufacturer had issued a unit of measure change, resulting in a price change, that we had reported the previous month. I recommended the customer adjust for this change in his business system, and the problem was resolved."

Other service providers simply do not have the depth of resources needed to resolve issues like this, because it involves extensive research, tracking past activity, and analyzing the manufacturer's raw data.

The unexpected can be a good thing

In another instance, Cathy received a call for help regarding a CD update. This call ended especially well as Cathy was able to help the customer save time and money by suggesting a change of update medium from CD to FTP (Internet download). Cathy states, "After arranging for this change internally, I emailed the customer

the necessary information and then followed up by phone to walk her through the set-up and download process."

Concerns and Emergencies

Sometimes, resolving a customer issue turns into something that benefits all customers. Miguel Galaviz recounts a call where he was able to do just that:

"A concern we receive frequently regards the ability to be informed in advance of a manufacturer price change. Our customers need to receive the information early so they can prepare their back-end systems to process the new prices when they become effective. Recently a customer explained to me that if he could receive his update early, his business software would be able to perform the preliminary "legwork" and then store the data for implementation on the actual effective date."

"Knowing we often receive information early from the manufacturer, I took this concern to a Tier Two resource within our sourcing group. I found that in this case, we had the upcoming manufacturer price increase already loaded and ready to go in our database. I called the customer back to let him know we would move up the release date and send it early."

As a result of this call and succeeding customer demand, we have added a new section to our weekly update bulletin called, "Future Price Changes" which alerts customers to lines we are releasing prior to the effective date. We strive to provide two weeks' advance notice on future price changes.

Going the extra mile makes a difference

Miguel recalls another call in late 2005 that was clearly an emergency requiring immediate action.

"It was on a Thursday afternoon and I was about ready to go home for the day when I received a call from a very disturbed customer. A popular manufacturer's price increase was being released with an effective date of the following Monday. The problem was that the manufacturer had not yet distributed the information to any price updating service."

"My customer was obviously not content to receive the update late. She insisted she needed it to be available prior to or on the effective date, or she would have to manually insert the correct pricing into her current bids. Through proactive and persistent contact with the manufacturer, our sourcing team was able to receive the update



"Each day is different and I find new ways to help you."
Miguel Galaviz, Customer Support Specialist.

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Issue Resolution Process

7 Steps

The [Trade Service Customer Support Program](#) uses a tiered approach to resolve customer problems. In each instance, we follow a proven [7-Step Plan](#) to resolve your issue in a timely and effective manner.

- 1. Receive customer call or email**
- 2. Log call into support program**
- 3. Troubleshoot issue**
- 4. Determine resource tier required**
(see 3 Resource Levels)
- 5. Work with resources until resolved**
- 6. Keep customer informed on progress**
- 7. Contact customer with resolution**

3 Resource Levels

At the [4th Step](#) of the [Customer Support Program](#), your call is escalated to the appropriate resource tier.



Your Customer Support Specialist

Committed to providing complete account implementation & ongoing support

- As our customer, you have a dedicated [Customer Support Specialist](#), who works with your [Account Manager](#), our programmers, and production team to ensure your needs are met.
- Once you receive your data, we verify it is what you need, answer any technical questions, and help you understand your data and how to apply it.
- Your [Support Specialist](#) is readily available via phone or email to assist you on all support issues.
- To resolve an issue, we coordinate with internal production teams, business system providers, and manufacturers.
- We have the know-how and experience to resolve any customer concern.
- We offer free training on all products.
- Each day, the [Support Team](#) reviews current customer issues, determines the resources required, and creates a resolution action plan. We engage our production teams to put quality checks in place to ensure the issue does not recur.
- We provide detailed bulletins of upcoming changes and improvements via the internet and email.
- In the event of an urgent or unexpected manufacturer update, we will contact our customers and if requested, send an emergency update outside of the normal issue cycle.
- Phone Customer Support at **800-265-7367** or email CustomerSupport@tradeservice.com

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the next morning (Friday). Rather than wait to process this change in our next update cycle (the following Wednesday), we decided to release it as a special interim issue. Doing so, we delivered that vendor's change to our customer on Monday, making the effective date. We also proactively contacted all other customers with this vendor and offered them the same accelerated service."

Other pricing services did not become aware of this manufacturer's update in time to process the change for their customers by the effective date.

It's better when your service provider is also your partner

Trade Service is committed to helping you get the best possible value from our service. Accomplishing this objective is in our best interest as well, as we want to continue earning your business every day.

When you call us with a question or problem, the "burden" immediately shifts to our shoulders to find a workable solution for you in a timely manner. Using our tiered approach, we have a deep pool of resources available to handle any kind of issue that may arise. Some problems are more complex than others and involve in-depth research. Others can only be resolved by contacting the manufacturer directly, often requiring persistence as well as knowledge of the company's infrastructure in getting to the right person. Still other issues call for close collaboration with third party software vendors with whom we have longstanding relationships.



"Every morning, the team meets to determine the best way to tackle the day's support challenges." Sumana Munagala, Director, Customer Support

From our own experience, we know that other content providers, because of their limited resources, are all too quick to refer you to the manufacturer. This does not happen at Trade Service. If we exhaust our internal resources and are still unable to help you, we go directly to the source on your behalf and come back to you quickly with an answer. When your business is riding on the prompt resolution of a critical data issue, you don't want to wait or get bogged down getting things resolved. You want a real partner on your side, who has what it takes to get the job done.

You always have a choice...

The industry offers you a choice of content providers. We hope this message helps convey that not all providers are the same. Thank you for choosing Trade Service. If you would like more in-depth information on our customer support program, let us know.

Thank you for choosing us!

These distributors recently chose Trade Service as their content provider:

A & M Industrial Supply Inc.
Algor Plumbing and Heating Supply
All Breakers Inc.
Allied Electric Motor Service
American Ace Supply
Brooklyn Plumbing & Heating Supply
Dillon Supply Company
Ellison Electric Supply Inc.
Erin Electrical Enterprises Inc.
Farnsworth Wholesale
Harbor Wholesale Electric Supply
Mass Electric Construction Company
Penco Corporation
PVF Supply Co Inc.
Redlon and Johnson Wholesale Co.
Rocky Mountain Electrical Surplus
Rosendin Electric Inc.
Villa Lighting Supply Company
Watertown Supply
Westway Electric Supply Co. Inc.
dba Electricsonline.com
Yaun Company Inc.
Yorkshire Supply Inc.



Trade Service – The trusted provider of quality product and price information since 1931

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