



SUPPORTING YOUR BUSINESS

# OVERLOAD TO CUSTOMER SERVICE

— In this playbook Emakina will share a set of solutions to cope with increased demand to your customer service team through optimised or new processes, tools, features and channels





### **Intro**

COVID-19 has a major impact on all our lives, and on the way we do business. Things are moving fast and retailers need to be able to react quickly. With stores closing and many of us in partial or full lockdown, your online business has never been more important. This has lead to additional pressure on customer service as customers try and find answers resulting from the changes and uncertainty (where is my order / when will this product be available / how do you ensure a safe delivery / ...)

In this playbook Emakina will share a set of solutions to **cope with increased demand to your customer service** team through optimised or new processes, tools, features and channels.

- → Optimisations
- → New processes, channels, tools and features

Optimisations

# **ACT NOW**



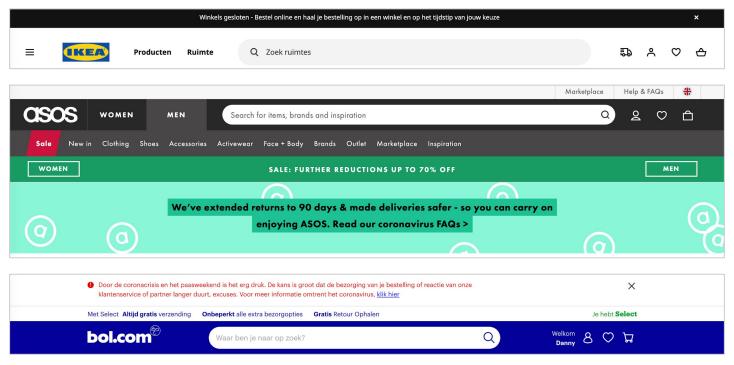
#### OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

- → Inform your clients in a proactive way about the most crucial topics, such as:
  - Longer waiting times at customer service
  - Longer delivery times
  - New / other contact channels you have opened
  - Changes in your services and / or offering
  - Your process for safe deliveries
  - Order status updates (potentially more than normal)
- → Display (near) real time waiting times on your contact / information page per channel.

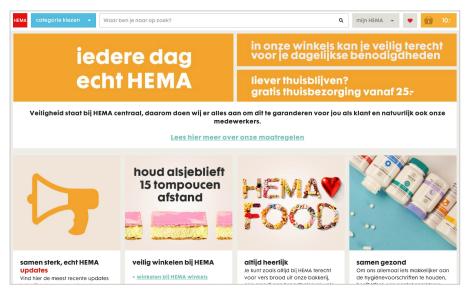
#### WHY IS THIS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

- → This will lower the amount of repeating questions asked to your customer service agents.
- → It shows you're on top of this new situation.

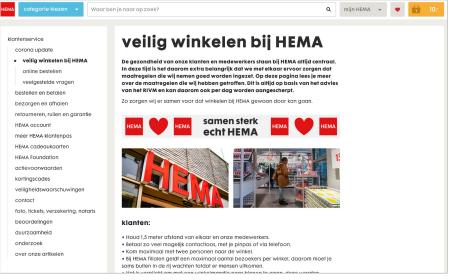
- 1. Make sure you have an element that is visible on all pages, such as a top-banner.
- Make sure to regularly (daily) update your customer service information pages and elements.
- Add the latest information in all email communication (newsletters, transactional emails, service emails, etc).



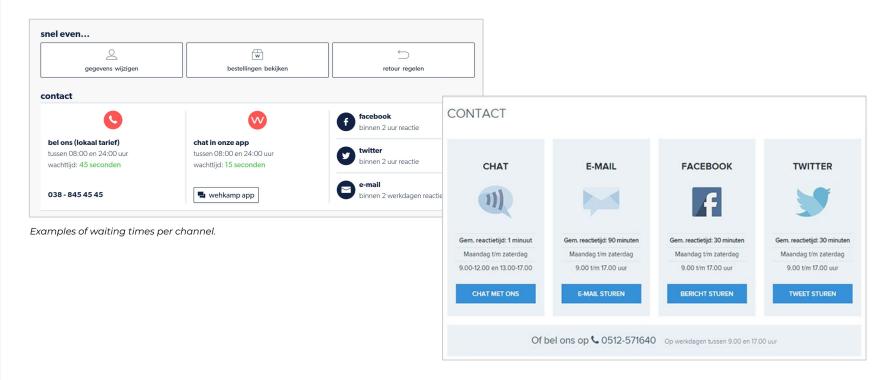
Various examples of top-banners with the latest information regarding changed services, closed shops and possible waiting times.



A COVID-19 related landing page.



A COVID-19 related information page.



# **Keep Google My Business up to date**

#### OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

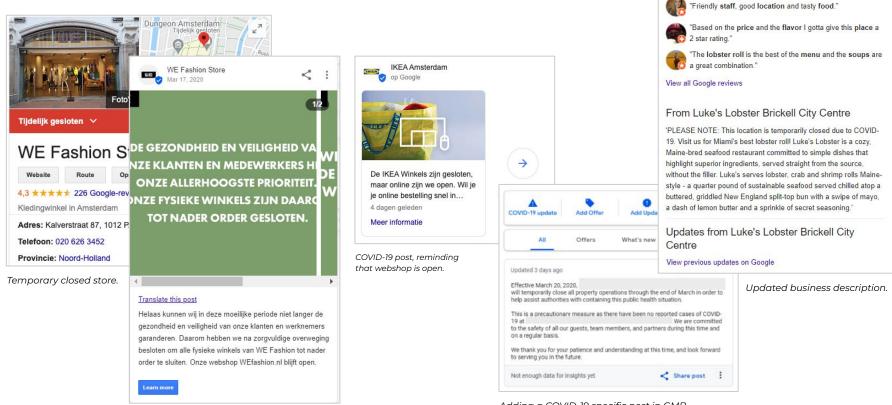
- → Consumer behaviour has changed radically since the coronavirus outbreak.
  - ◆ E.g. opening hours and services were fairly well-known and stable, now there is a lot of confusion.
- → With Google My Business you can do something about this and make it (more) clear to your customers what they can expect from your business.

#### WHY IS THIS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

- → Use Google My Business to clearly list your new delivery options in local search.
- → Communicate using the new **COVID-19 Update** posts (API is available for bulk updates, for example when you have multiple stores).
- → Clear and up to date communication in Google My Business will lower the amount of contact moments related to opening hours, delivery times, etc.

- 1. Change opening hours, or use the **temporary closed** option.
- 2. Keep your company description up to date.
- 3. Add new services / offerings.
- 4. Add **COVID-19** posts regularly.
- 5. Answer any questions via GMB quickly.
- . Keep an eye on (negative) business reviews related to the COVID-19 situation.

# **Keep Google My Business up to date**



COVID-19 post, reminding that webshop is open.

# Prepare customers when they're calling

#### OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

- → Normally, people who work from home have to make sure it's quiet, but right now that is not always possible.
- → So prepare your customers for this new situation.

"Rabobank is also experiencing the consequences of the Coronavirus.

Therefore our employees work a lot from home, so you can experience more disturbances and background noises than you are used to. We thank you for your understanding. Also check our website for questions related to Corona and for matters that you can easily arrange yourself."

- Rabobank tape

#### WHY IS THIS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

- → It'll lower the pressure on your CS agents who are working from home in a non-ideal setup.
- → You'll get a lot of sympathy from customers.

- 1. Implement a tape that informs customers that some 'home noise' can be heard, e.g. children's sounds, other people calling, etc.
- 2. Add the same kind of information to your online customer service information and contact pages.

# Setup the best possible customer service from home

#### OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

- Infrastructure and (security) protocols can limit the ability of customer service employees to work from home.
  - E.g. limited equipment, no VPN available, strict security, etc.
- → This also applies to external Contact Centers that might have more difficulty letting their employees work from home (for you).
- → Loosening policies or accelerating a *Bring* your own device policy can help setting up customer service from home.
- → Now can be the time to start using / integrating new (cloud based) tooling, like Softphones within your infrastructure.

#### WHY IS THIS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

- → Having more employees able to do (part of) their customer service work from home will decrease the pressure on your customer service.
- → It will also increase flexibility and scalability.

- 1. Review your current policy based on the Work From Home situation.
- 2. Identify any technical, security, GDPR and policy limitations.
- 3. Decide which ones can be (temporarily) changed
- 4. Identify if you need additional tooling (e.g. softphones, livechat, online knowledgebase, etc.).
- 5. Decide which ones can be added within your current infrastructure.
- 6. Implement your new policies and tooling.
- 7. Have technical support available.
- 8. Have a continuous feedback loop with the customer service team.

## Move the workload

#### OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

- → Other departments can assist with customer service: they might be limited in their own work at the moment and can spend some time on helping out.
  - E.g. administrative tasks, handling follow-up calls (satisfaction surveys).
- → If you already have a routing system, now might be the time to also route to other departments.
  - E.g. product related questions, B2B questions, recruitment questions, etc.
- → Other departments might have a different skill set you could leverage.
  - E.g. experiment and measure if certain internal time consuming activities could handled batch wise (by other colleagues) like refunds, resends, coulance or updating knowledge items and FAOs.

#### WHY IS THIS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

- → Make sure more people in the company get in touch with customers and know (or remember) who they work for.
- → Having a shared goal: making your customer happy.
- → Letting your customer know you will do anything to help out (and communicate about it).

- 1. Identify which departments can do customer service tasks.
- 2. Identify whether your current routing can be adjusted to route to different departments.
- 3. Identify any time consuming manual activities that can be handled batch wise (by other colleagues).
- 4. Create an onboarding plan for non customer service employees.

# Continuously improve your internal knowledge management

#### OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

- → This new situation comes with a whole new set of topics your customers will have questions on.
- → Therefore your current internal knowledge base, used by your customer service employees might not be applicable anymore.
  - You could capture feedback from your customers (e.g. survey, auto responder, ratings) to find articles that need to be improved.
  - You can use repurposed employees with specific knowledge (e.g. field service) to review and improve the (flagged) articles (or create new ones).

#### WHY IS THIS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

- → We currently have a *new normal* and we'll face a *next normal*, both require changes in your customer service knowledge.
- → Continuously improving your internal knowledge base will increase (first contact) resolutions.
- → Having a proper and up to date internal knowledge base will improve the foundations for Chatbots, Service Community and Self Service.
- → It allows for efficient transfer and use of knowledge to repurposed employees.

- 1. Identify and implement processes and tooling for customer feedback/input.
- 2. Consider making a *new normal* knowledgebase (based on the *old normal*).
- Identify which employees with specific knowledge can support in keeping your knowledge base up to date.

# Convert training material to e-learning material

#### OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

- → Often a lot of training material is only available offline. In the new situation this material becomes hard (or even impossible) to access.
- → Experienced agents will lose valuable sources of reference and new agents (or repurposed employees) will be harder to onboard and train.

#### WHY IS THIS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

- → Digitized training material will make it widely and easily accessible, both for reference or remote onboarding and coaching of agents.
- → Online resources can be reused, e.g. for (future) learning platform or internal or external knowledge bases.
- → Repurposed employees can be used to order and digitize the training material.

- Lay out a training foundation, don't try to create a full Learning Management System. E.g. start in a shared Google Docs document.
- 2. Prioritize and categorize material.

# **Optimize your routing**

#### OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

- → If you already have a routing system, now might be the time to consider optimising it:
  - The type of queries you are receiving will differ from normal times, so you should review whether your routing is still optimal for the current conditions
  - Consider routing to other departments to handle specific queries - eg. product related questions
  - If you are repurposing employees directly into customer service, consider completing a skills mapping to identify which channels best suit their skillset.

#### ROUTING TYPES TO CONSIDER

- Queue based
- Skill-based
- Priority based
- Omni-channel

#### WHY IS THIS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

- → More efficient handling of cases by ensuring they're routed to the most suitable person
- → Use repurposed employees efficiently

- 1. Review your routing in the light of the current workload and query types
- 2. Identify opportunities for routing to other departments
- Map the skill set of repurposed employees and assign them to channels that best suit their skill set

# Extend opening hours of your customer contact center

#### OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

- → Extending the contact center opening hours can help lowering the pressure on the CS team.
- → With the CS team working from home, potentially they could have (or want) more flexible working hours.
- → Preferred contact hours from customers are also changing now that they're working from home.
  - E.g. it's now easier to make a call during the day.

#### WHY IS THIS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

- → Non popular working hours, might become popular again (e.g. for people with kids).
- → Having extended opening hours can help spread the load.

- Identify who can and wants to work different hours.
- 2. If needed, incentivise working non-popular hours.
- 3. Put agents on standby (available for calls, while doing other things).
- 4. Communicate the adjusted opening hours (information pages, FAQs, newsletters, etc.).
- 5. Display (near) real time waiting time on your website, preferably in timeslots.

# **Frequent reporting**

#### OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

- → Consumer behaviour has changed radically and, with that:
  - the topics they have questions on
  - the frequency in which they contact the business to get their questions answered
- → This means customer service Managers need to have a more frequent reporting structure.
- → Next to this there are new *situational* KPIs that become more important. eg.
  - peak times change constantly
  - time to resolve: more important due to high load on customer service
  - cost per call: keeping costs down
  - average waiting time: longer times means unhappy customers

#### WHY IS THIS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

- → In general understanding how your business interacts with customers is essential to optimize your customer service, but in this *new covid situation*, it's even more important to keep customers satisfied and loyal.
- → Having more frequent reporting (and follow up) with a focus on situational KPIs can reduce costs, and lower pressure on your customer service employees.

- 1. Analyze notable changes in existing KPIs
- 2. Create an overview of *situational KPIs* that apply to your company, customers and business.
- 3. Create a new daily reporting plan.
- 4. Setup daily reporting.
- 5. Analyze your data and look for actionable insights that could improve for example resource scheduling, case routing, knowledge base updates and agent performance.



**THINGS** 



## **Self service**

#### OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

→ Self service, once setup, is the most scalable solution to lower the overload on your customer service.

#### SELF SERVICE TYPES TO CONSIDER

- On-site guided flows to find the best product or service or even an answer to your question.
- (Service) Community where customers help customers.
- Self service portal.
- Online return form.
- Chatbot
- Extended 'my account' features such as: order status, shipment status (track & trace), return status.

#### WHY IS THIS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

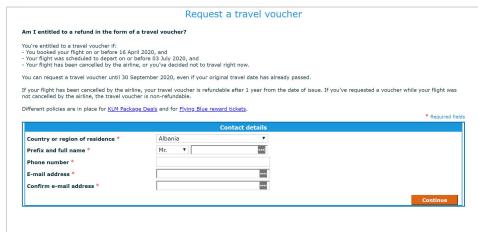
- → Having an option for customers to help themselves (easier) to find an answer to their questions or a solution to their problems will lower the load on your customer service.
- → Self service creates an opportunity for personalisation and can even boost site traffic (become a leading source of knowledge).

- Identify which self service types could easily be implemented in your current architecture and map those to the current load on your customer service.
- Setup those self service types and regularly review and refresh the content.
- 3. Make it clear to customers that they can easily find the answers and solutions themselves via these self service options you offer.

### **Self service**



Checking your order status online, even when you don't have an account.

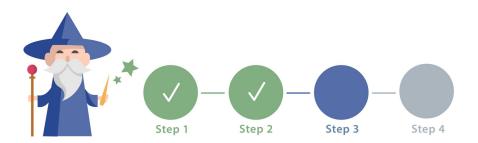


Requesting a travel voucher can be done without the help of a customer service agent.

# Implement wizards in your service system

#### OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

- → Most customer service solutions are quite complex to use and thereby hard to learn to work with.
- → If you want to repurpose staff, you need to find a way to make onboarding easier.



#### WHY IS THIS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

- → You can improve your solution for direct purpose and future benefit (easy onboarding, less effort and lower cost per call), as the urgency is there now.
- → It will reduce the amount of errors made by your customer service agents.

- Analyse what flows are supported within your customer service system and the amount of effort involved.
- Start improving the most used / most time consuming scenarios you currently have and create blueprint flows.
- 3. Develop the defined changes and reduce fields, buttons and add explanation / wizards where required.

# **Appointment slots**

#### OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

- → Give customers the option to make an appointment with a customer service agent at a time of their choosing.
- → The appointment could be through various channels (phone, text chat, video chat, etc)
- → If pre-chat or offline chat is also implemented, this could be used to make the appointment more efficient.
- → Some chatbots can also be used for making appointment slots
  - E.g. Collect.chat has a template for this.

#### WHY IS THIS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

- → No on-hold waiting times for customers
- → Customers can choose a time that suits them
- → Workload of customer service is more predictable

- 1. Investigate channels and process for appointments compatible with your current customer service tooling
- 2. Implement appointment form on site

# **New customer service channels**

#### OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

- → Channels such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Live Chat require less bandwidth than speech and are therefore ideally suited for home-working agents.
- → Customers can start conversations with your company by sending texts to your designated support phone number or sending Facebook Messenger messages to your Facebook page

#### WHY IS THIS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

- → Allow customers to easily contact you through the channel that is easiest for them.
- → You can divert customers to other channels instead of phone calls, which will lower the load of customer service calls.

- Identify which extra channels are compatible with your current customer service tooling and infrastructure.
- 2. Configure the extra channels (don't forget to update your routing)
- 3. Consider adding a channel menu on website showing available support channels

# Live chat

#### OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

- → Implement a live chat on the site: this provides a way for customers to get personalised, real-time help from the right person.
- → Right now it is not always possible to work from home in a quiet environment.

#### WHY IS THIS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

- → Engaging with customers in real-time to answer their questions improves customer satisfaction levels. This can go some way towards replacing the face-to-face service in stores.
- → Text-based chat is easier for customer service agents to manage from home (with possible noise in the background) than phone calls.

- 1. Investigate the preferred solution based on landscape architecture and current customer service tooling:
  - SESC live chat
  - b. Zendesk chat
  - c. HubSpot Live Chat
  - . etc...
- 2. Set up process and train resources.
- 3. Implementation of live chat in your site.

## **Pre-chat & offline-chat**

#### OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

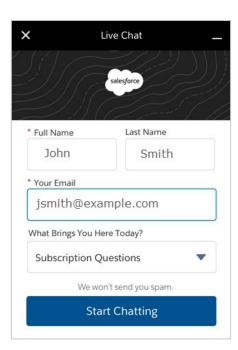
- → Pre-chat and offline-chat are great ways to gather information about the customer and question(s).
- → Both can also be used to inform customers about your current COVID-19 situation and even to promote any self service solutions you offer.

#### WHY IS THIS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

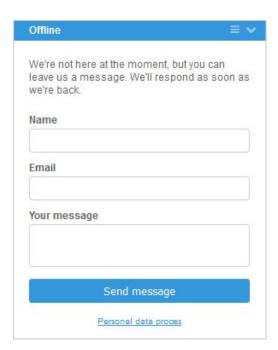
- → The pre/offline-chat fields can be used to optimize case routing and offer a personalized experience.
- → When customers are recognised, agents can prepare for quick resolution by checking existing customer information, orders, related articles/resolutions etc. before accepting the chat request.
- → Make the customers feel heard, even when no agent is available at the moment, as they can already have some interactions.

- 1. Define the necessary fields and make sure you don't overcomplicate things for the customer.
- 2. Configure and implement the forms
- Adjust your case routing

# **Pre-chat & offline-chat**



Pre-chat allows you to quickly find out the customer's needs.



Let customers submit a case form when the customer service agents are offline.

### **Chatbot**

#### OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

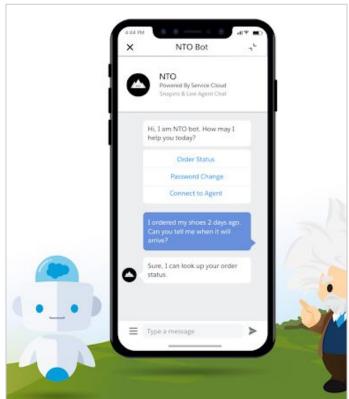
- → Chatbots can ease the load on your service agents as they can can handle routine requests.
- → Bots can also gather pre-chat information (more than with a standard pre-chat form) to save your agents time.
- → Consider that a chatbot becomes part of your company, so don't underestimate the conversation design aspect of configuring a chatbot.

#### WHY IS THIS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

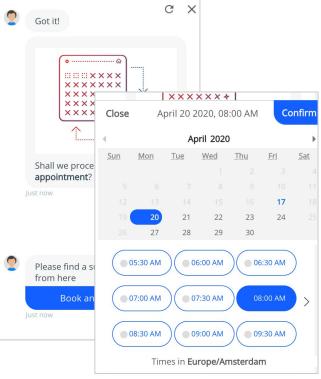
- → Chatbots can handle routine requests and free your agents to handle more complex issues.
- → They can also be used for more than customer service support, for example lead generation, appointment booking, conversion optimisation.

- 1. Analyze the issues that your agents are addressing to identify common issues that the bot can resolve.
- 2. Develop a set of Knowledge articles that the bot can use to answer questions.
- 3. Decide on which channels you want your bot to support (Chat or Messaging)
- 4. Start small, with a bot-menu (prefixed topics)
- 5. Don't forget to think about your bot's tone of voice!
- 6. Consider including an option to transfer to a human agent.

### **Chatbot**







The chatbot verifies an order.

The chatbot can answer service related questions

Book an online appointment via a chatbot.



#### **EMAKINA**

Even now - especially now - there are a lot of opportunities to be found. Some are simple improvements that should have been in place, others can be seen as low hanging fruit, but most opportunities need a change in the way you think about business as usual.

Whatever you'll start doing, **you will need to act fast,** and availability of people and plans is critical. We made our most experienced people available to help you achieve maximum results in this complex time.

This playbook is part of a growing series of publications especially created to help e-businesses get through Covid-19.

WE'RE HERE TO SUPPORT.

### LET'S GET STARTED! CONTACT US.

#### **EMAKINA**

Your direct contact is **Barry Bongers** +31 (06) 12 66 56 84 or send him an email at <u>b.bongers@emakina.nl</u>

EMAKINA Office Danzigerkade 4, 1013 AP Amsterdam, Netherlands

www.emakina.nl

