CONTENT TYPES AND FORMATS

for customer service and support

17 DIFFERENT TYPES OF
CONTENT YOU CAN USE
&
WHEN AND HOW TO USE THEM

CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHOOSING THE RIGHT CONTENT TYPE OR FORMAT:

1 Customer Preferences

Some customers prefer text-based communication, while others may prefer phone support or video tutorials. Survey your customers or analyze past interactions to gauge preferences.

2 Nature of the Issue

The content type should align with the issue complexity. You can address simple inquiries with FAQs or chatbots, while complex technical issues may require detailed documentation or live support.

3 Accessibility

Your chosen format must be accessible to all customers, including those with disabilities. Use accessible design principles and provide alternative formats, such as text transcripts for videos or screen reader-friendly documentation.

4 Urgency of Response

Live chat or phone support offers quicker responses for urgent issues, while email or self-service content suits less time-sensitive matters.

5 Multichannel Support

To accommodate different customer preferences, diversify your support channels. Include various formats such as email, phone, live chat, social media, and in-app support options.

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6   Product or Service Complexity

More complex products or services require more extensive documentation or in-depth tutorials. Consider what sorts of information customers need to use your offering effectively.

7   Cost

Some support channels (e.g. phone support with live agents) are costlier to maintain than others. Consider the level of support required with the cost of providing it to decide what type of support to offer.

8   Scalability

Some types or formats (e.g. live phone support) are harder to scale as your customer base grows. Automated solutions like chatbots and knowledge bases can handle larger volumes without a linear increase in costs.

9   Technology and Infrastructure

Choose formats and types that you have the technical prerequisites to maintain. For example, if you require a lot of video tutorials, make sure you can produce them at high quality and have the means to host them.

10   Culture and Language

If your customer base is diverse, provide content in multiple languages. Consider cultural nuances that impact the choice of content format (e.g. access to certain social media).

11   Training and Skill Sets

Different formats require a different skill set from your support team. Consider which formats your support team can confidently create and maintain (e.g. moderating a community or creating video tutorials).

12   Regulatory Compliance and Data Protection

Stay compliant with relevant laws and regulations. Choose non-public channels for account-sensitive support (e.g. don't ask users to publicly share sensitive data like billing or credentials to provide support on social media).

13   Brand Consistency

Maintain the same tone, voice, messaging, and style across all channels. Ensure that the user has a seamless experience no matter which channel, type, or format they receive support on.

OVERVIEW OF TYPES AND FORMATS FOR SERVICE AND SUPPORT

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	CONSIDERATIONS
FAQs	Common questions with answers	Use for recurring queries; keep updated
Knowledge Base	Comprehensive articles and guides	Ideal for in-depth information; organize logically and update regularly
Glossary	Definitions for industry-specific terms	Clarify technical language; maintain for product terminology
Troubleshooting Pages	Pages for solving common issues or errors	Address technical problems; keep solutions current and easy to follow
Communities and Forums	Online spaces for customer interactions	Build a customer community; monitor and moderate for accurate information
eBooks	In-depth downloadable guides	Offer as lead magnets or for advanced training

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	CONSIDERATIONS
Checklists	Lists of actionable steps or tasks	Useful for guiding users through processes; offer a clear, sequential approach
Case Studies	Analyses of successful customer experiences	Showcase real-world applications; build credibility and trust
Video Tutorials	Visual demonstrations of product usage	Effective for visual learners and complex workflows; ensure high-quality production and accessibility
Webinars	Live or recorded online seminars	Engage users in real-time, answer questions, and provide expert insights
Courses	Structured online lessons with assessments	Suitable for in-depth training; offer certificates or badges for completion
Social Media Replies	Responses to customer inquiries on social media	Use for real-time engagement and issue resolution; maintain professionalism and responsiveness

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	CONSIDERATIONS
Email	Traditional email support for inquiries	Offer for detailed or private matters; set clear response time expectations
Live Chat Support	Real-time text-based communication with users	Provide instant assistance for quick questions and technical issues; staff appropriately for timely responses
Podcasts	Audio content covering industry trends	Use for auditory learners and reach a broader audience; maintain consistency in release schedules
Written Articles	Informative articles addressing specific topics	Publish to share insights and thought leadership; optimize for SEO to attract organic traffic
Interactive Content	Engaging content with user participation	Can include quizzes, polls, interactive infographics, simulations, and more.

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