



Community-Based Support

Consistently Excellent Customer Service at Scale



"As the internet envelopes our world, one of the biggest challenges facing online brands will be to avoid becoming the customer service dogs of the next decade.

With the expectation of "free" which the internet engenders, there's an inherent danger of a cultural ethos in business in which non-paying "users" don't have the right to a personal customer service experience . . .

When was the last time you heard someone say

"Awesome! ACME.com gave me such incredible service, I clicked the link and they called me back instantly". It's rarer than you think. That's because at scale, it's really hard.

For excellent customer service to survive as a start-up grows into an incumbent, it has to be –and then remain– a deeply rooted driving goal of the organisation."

- Andrew Scott How do startups make customer service scale into awesomeness?



Invest in Community Based Support:

- * Peer-to-peer support is scalable.
- * Requires a cultural shift in which the company becomes open, accessible and human.
- * Allows the company to practice customer engagement rather than customer avoidance.
- * Engaged customers are brand evangelists who will champion your cause across the internet!

Fostering engagement in online communities:

- * The goal of communities is a sense of belonging.
- * Online communities are social economies that trade in social capital: kudos, respect, goodwill, trust, celebrity, influence, supremacy, greatness, leverage (J B O'Reilly, "The Art of COmmunity: Building the New Age of Participation" O'Reilly Media Inc, 2009, p. 6,7.)



Successful online communities:

- * Practice hospitality.
- * Seed the community with valuable content.
- * Give people a way to manage their reputations online.
- * Enforce a social contract.
- * Reinforce champions and withhold reinforcement for trolls.



Other strategies for scalable support and customer service:

1. Knowledge centric approach for self service support.
2. Close co-operation between support team and the rest of the company.