

Six ways for small and mid-sized retailers to improve customer experience



Small retailers have made customer service a big priority and with good reason

The pandemic fundamentally changed the way people shop and live.

We reimagined the idea of work and millions have joined 'The Great Resignation'. Many have opened their own small businesses. And as the supply chain began to strain out-of-town superstores, people rallied support for their favourite locally-owned shops.

At the same time, small retailers also experienced some extreme volatility. According to our latest Customer Experience Trends Report, retailers saw a skyrocketing increase in customer engagement – up 38%, more than any other surveyed industry. And small businesses were under immense pressure with fewer staff to do the work. That's a lot to handle all at once.

Meanwhile, customer expectations are rising. They want quick, easy and effective service, and they're willing to look elsewhere if they don't get it. In fact, more than 60% report that they now have higher customer service standards after the past year's crisis.

While meeting these growing expectations is challenging, small retailers are poised to do it. The 'shop local' trend isn't likely to end

anytime soon, and customers will keep seeking out specialty shops in person and online. And what's more, 90% of customers will go out of their way to buy from businesses that offer a personalised service.

It's no surprise that small retailers are turning to technology to help them navigate the changing customer experience landscape. The key is finding a solution that makes things quicker and easier, for both customers and employees.

Ready, set, grow.

This report explores best practice for:

- Setting your small but mighty team up for success quickly
- Customising your tech stack with prebuilt integrations that work for you
- Scaling with confidence without adding unnecessary cost or complexity

01 Save time for your customer service team

Doing more with less is a mantra for small business owners, and it's become even more true over the past few years. The pandemic impacted sales and made it hard for businesses to hire and keep qualified employees. A recent Goldman Sachs survey found that of those currently hiring, 87% are having trouble finding candidates and 97% say it's hurting their bottom line. That makes productivity a critical issue for small retailers.

Technology is an invaluable tool for boosting your team's capacity. And as shopping habits have moved online, so have your customers. But whilst fewer people are shopping in person, the importance of providing personalised service has remained constant.

For small businesses, having a complete view of your customers is a critical piece of that puzzle. Whether customers pop in to your shop or contact you via social media or the web, you need to make sure your team can find the customer information they need to deliver a truly personalised experience.

The good news is that [apps and integrations can make it easy to get up and running quickly](#) without the need to code. Our app marketplace helps you get set up for success with easy integrations by bringing together your tools for a single view of your customers. Your team gets all the tools they need in one seamless omnichannel interface – ticket fields, macros, sidebar apps and more – to do their job efficiently.



CUSTOMER STORY



Chupi is a solid gold heirloom jewellery company based in Dublin, Ireland. The company empowered and encouraged its agents to sell and found success by bringing all customer information into one platform. Through Zendesk and a smart integration with Shopify, Chupi's six customer care agents can have personalised conversations with shoppers at every stage of the customer journey.

"The Shopify integration was one of the reasons we chose Zendesk. It's incredibly useful to see a customer's full details, social messages and purchase history in one place."

Brian Durney

Chief Technology Officer at Chupi

More to explore:

ChannelReply integrates your Amazon, eBay, Back Market, Shopify and Walmart messaging into Zendesk. No more scrolling through screens of pointless text. ChannelReply threads conversations into tickets, cleans up clutter and delivers your messages reliably.

BigCommerce brings rich, transactional commerce support natively into Zendesk to improve agent efficiency and stay with you as your business grows.



02 Focus on agility



The ability to adapt to change quickly has always been important, but the last few years have upped the stakes. Customers want to reach you on the channels of their choice and they expect you to have their complete history at your fingertips. If that information is stored in multiple systems, it can be a frustrating and time-consuming experience for your agents.

Small and mid-sized retailers have another challenge: the need for growth without adding excessive costs. That means leveraging technology that helps teams work together in a blended digital and physical environment. Zendesk's easy-to-use interface and integrations let your teams connect and collaborate easily.

CUSTOMER STORY

HARRY'S

This New York grooming company started in 2013 with a team of 12 and has since grown to more than 600 employees. Scaling a business while maintaining high-quality service standards is a big job for any company. **Harry's** uses the Zendesk integration with MaestroQA to audit for quality assurance across all channels. This allows agents who would have been part of the QA process to spend more time with customers. The recovered QA time also allows Harry's to develop more targeted training for experienced agents.

More to explore:

SnapCall enables voice, video call and screen sharing inside the chat with the customer. Now you can video or voice call directly inside the conversation widget without finding out phone numbers or going to a third party app.

ViiBE is a video assistance technology dedicated to help desk support in call centres. With ViiBE, you can integrate video calls, screen sharing and more into Zendesk.

03 Use chatbots for faster customer service

SMBs need to save time whilst still providing the excellent service customers expect, and one way to do that is chatbots. AI-powered technology isn't just for big business – chatbots can answer common questions, cut down on repetitive tasks and save your business time. Customers say chatbots are most helpful with simple requests, like checking on an order status, and especially when they need help outside of normal business hours. You'll find chatbot apps in the Marketplace that integrate with Zendesk to reduce ticket volume, lower support costs and improve customer satisfaction. You'll also find AI-powered apps to automatically route and tag tickets, analyse sentiment and suggest the right macros to agents at the right time, driving agent efficiency to rapidly handle customer queries.

CUSTOMER STORY

shapermint

When Shapermint, a direct-to-consumer shapewear marketplace, launched an **Ada** conversational bot, they saw quick results. The chatbot integrated with Zendesk's ticketing and messaging systems, allowing for a seamless handoff to a live agent when needed. This increased customer engagement by 15% and improved agent CSAT to 98%, all while increasing the percentage of sales facilitated by live agents by 50%. Ada's bot also integrates with Shopify to give customers real-time order status updates, resulting in 75% resolution of 'where is my order?' (WISMO) enquiries. With the same integration, the bot can pass order information to a live agent when the customer asks for a refund. This helps the agent facilitate an exchange versus a return.

More to explore:

Zendesk Answer Bot works alongside your support team to help customers using AI. It's easy to set up and can collect customer information and answer common questions upfront.

Thankful integrates seamlessly with Zendesk in minutes. The AI can resolve simple customer queries via email, SMS or chat without a human in the loop.

04 Bring together your customer data to do better business

Customers are increasingly demanding best-in-class service from the brands they shop with. And e-commerce has made it easier for them to shop whenever and wherever they want to. With infinite options at their fingertips, small businesses are competing on the quality of customer relationships – and that gives you an edge. But keeping up with customer expectations takes the ability to spot trends.

When you can dive into your data, you'll find insights you might otherwise have missed. It's no longer enough to keep a spreadsheet with customer orders and pricing. You'll see shopping behaviours that impact your inventory and support channels using Zendesk's reporting dashboard to bring together data from all of your systems. Uncover trends with advanced analytics so you can respond quickly to changes in your market. That helps you better manage your inventory and deliver more personalised experiences that fuel brand loyalty.

More to explore:

Mailchimp brings all your audience data and marketing channels together. With access to Mailchimp campaigns, agents can view all interactions in one place and create targeted lists to proactively communicate with customers.

Klaviyo customer lifecycle management tool integrates with your support data so you can easily identify the right customers to target, exclude users with open tickets from campaigns or proactively reach out to customers that are close to a purchase.



05 Listen to customers to create loyalty

Retailers that succeed at wowing customers enjoy enormous opportunities for growth. Not only do they create happy customers, they create loyalty. To do that, you need to listen to your customers. [Gathering feedback](#) from your customers can help you understand who they are and what they like, but also develop a personalised relationship. When you're a small retailer, it's even more important to have a solid view of what your customer thinks. Shoppers will go elsewhere if they're unhappy and taking the time to listen can help you resolve their problem and reward them for their loyalty. Our apps and integrations make gathering feedback a doddle, with no-code online form builders and automations that send surveys to customers across all your communication platforms.



CUSTOMER STORY

BOXYCHARM



In response to a period of rapid growth, **BoxyCharm** was looking to scale their customer support system to keep pace with demand whilst continuing to provide the highest-quality service for its subscribers. They integrated TrustPilot to enable proactive brand management. Now all of the feedback and comments that BoxyCharm receives from reviews in TrustPilot come into Zendesk as tickets. The team has a dedicated reputation management team that responds to them and addresses any issues that are being raised there. This connection to TrustPilot empowers BoxyCharm to stay close to their mission of putting community and customers first.



More to explore:

SurveyMonkey turns feedback into action, making it easy to measure and understand responses so you can drive growth. Send surveys to targeted lists and tailor messages to each segment, all inside Zendesk.

TrustPilot is an open-to-all customer reviews platform where consumers are heard by businesses and where businesses can earn consumer trust. With this integration, manage TrustPilot reviews from Zendesk without changing your existing customer service workflow.

Yotpo automatically emails your customers once a ticket is closed asking for a review of their customer service experience. Reviews can be displayed anywhere on your site or pushed to your business's Facebook page and Twitter account automatically or manually.

06 Make shipping and returns quick and easy

Once you have a customer, the journey doesn't end there. Retailers can keep customers in the loop about where their packages are with automated communications so common questions don't become tickets. And if a customer isn't happy with a purchase, Zendesk's integrations help make returns quick and painless. That frees up time for your small but mighty team to work on more complicated issues.

CUSTOMER STORY

Feed.

Feed. is a Parisian startup that makes it easy to enjoy high-quality, nutritional snacks on the go. The company delivers its products to customers across Europe. In the event that anything unexpected happens with an order, the Feed. team uses the Shipup integration to automatically contact customers. "Using Shipup has dramatically lowered the volume of tickets we receive" says Aurore Galland, Customer Support Happiness Manager at Feed. "If you're able to tell a customer about a problem in advance, they don't have to reach out to you and you're able to deal with resolving their problems faster."

More to explore:

Returnly is the only return solution that lets customers get the right item before returning the wrong one. With Returnly, your customers are issued instant credit to shop your site after completing a return.

Narvar gives customers and agents visibility to order tracking and lets customers return or exchange products with just a few clicks.

ShipStation helps retailers manage order fulfilment wherever you sell and however you ship. The integration also lets you pull, search and view recent order data within Zendesk.

Shipup creates a branded and intuitive post-purchase experience for your shoppers. Plus, the Zendesk integration shows recent order information right within the customer ticket, so agents have easy access to all the details they need to help.

It's time to boost your customer experience.

Making things easier for your customers means supporting your support team and keeping ahead of the trends.

Whether you're a growing business, a local corner shop or a pure etailer, Zendesk has everything you need to create the best-in-class experiences your customers demand.

[Start a free trial today.](#)

