



# 3 Essentials for not Losing your Travelers' Business this Peak Season —

OFF

**NANO  
REP**

Guiding  
the Digital  
Experience

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The holiday season is upon us once again, and if you're in the travel industry, you know that with higher volume in traffic unfortunately come lower service rankings. While many industries such as software, health, and retail experience a minor decrease in customer service ranking, the travel industry experiences the largest overall decrease according to [Zendesk's Benchmark](#) report.

As an online travel site, you're probably asking yourself: Are my customer representatives as prepared as they need to be for the approaching holiday season? How can I empower my agents to deliver the best customer experience, despite the added volume and pressure? And what's the best way to do so, without significantly driving up my costs?

In this white paper, we'll provide a three-prong strategy for your customer service during the height of the travel season, so you'll be able to effectively address all issues that arise.

## **Be Prepared with a Plan**

In the digital world, where over half of your customers will abandon their online purchase if they cannot quickly find an answer to their question, you have to be fast and you have to be flawless. Customers don't empathize with technical difficulties, understaffed customer service representatives, high surges in traffic, or even political instability or natural disasters that are obviously beyond your control. You need to be prepared for these types of situations in advance, to the best of your ability.

Failing to plan is planning to fail. – Alan Lakein

## **Analyze Past Data to Estimate Future Needs**

Common challenges of travel agencies during any holiday season include a shortage of customer representatives, and a surge in customer inquiries. Do your best to estimate your future needs by analyzing data from past holiday seasons. Carefully examine numbers such as incoming cases, average replies per resolve, and average time required to reach a resolution within a single customer support interaction. Review which destinations were the most popular, and

of those which required the most support so you can hire and train your reps accordingly.

For example, ski destinations require a bit more detail involved in the planning: buying ski tickets, equipment, lessons, etc. High adventure destination vacations require ordering not only international flights, but scheduling of local day tours and treks, as well as booking equipment and car rentals, personal injury insurance and more. More advanced training might be required to attend to this high level of detail for customers booking these types of destinations.

### **Anticipate Your Customers' Needs**

If customers have to navigate away from your site to find answers (ie. visit a social media network, support portal, or search engine) you risk them never returning to your site. You'll therefore want to make sure your content is easily accessible, especially on a page where conversions occur. Provide auto-correct, autocomplete and intelligent semantic search that understands context to draw from your knowledge base articles. You'll want to invest in a digital customer self-service solution that supports dynamic FAQs, providing clients with intuitive personalized responses to any questions that may arise.

For example, when Turkey experienced political unrest last July, the Thomas Cook online travel agency had a serious surge in traffic – over 85,000 inquiries about the situation in Turkey in just 5 days! Since user questions were asked in 130 different ways, their customer service department benefitted from Nanorep's integrated self-service solution, which provided personalized responses to customer inquiries, based on the website's specially updated FAQ section. Response times were quick, and Thomas Cooke's clients received the data they were seeking, via the medium of their choice, with the personalization users have come to expect.



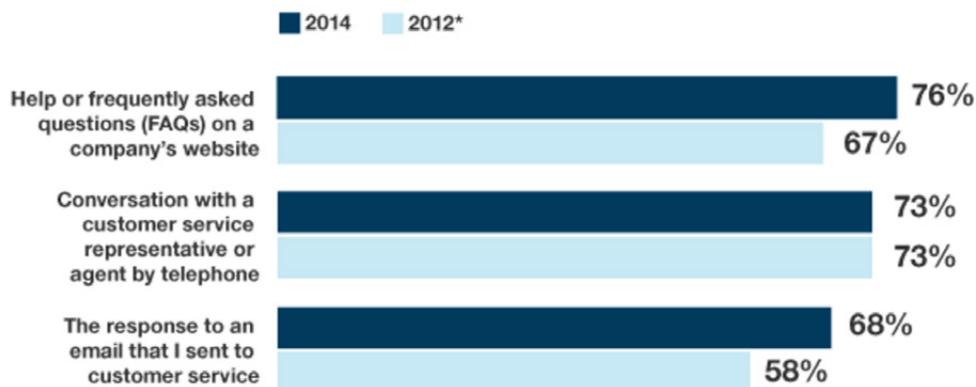


## Hand the Reins Over to Your Customers

In today's Age of the Customer, consumers expect easy and effective service that is at the same time deeply personal. In fact according to Forrester, 76% of customers prefer to use a company's website to find the answers to their inquiries themselves, rather than contacting customer support.

### For the first time, the website overtakes the phone as consumers' primary channel for customer service

Percentage of US online adults who have used the following customer service channels in the past 12 months



Base: 4,509 US online adults (18+) (multiple responses accepted)

\*Base: 7,411 US online adults (18+) (multiple responses accepted)

Source: Forrester's North American Consumer Technographics® Customer Life Cycle Survey 2, 2014

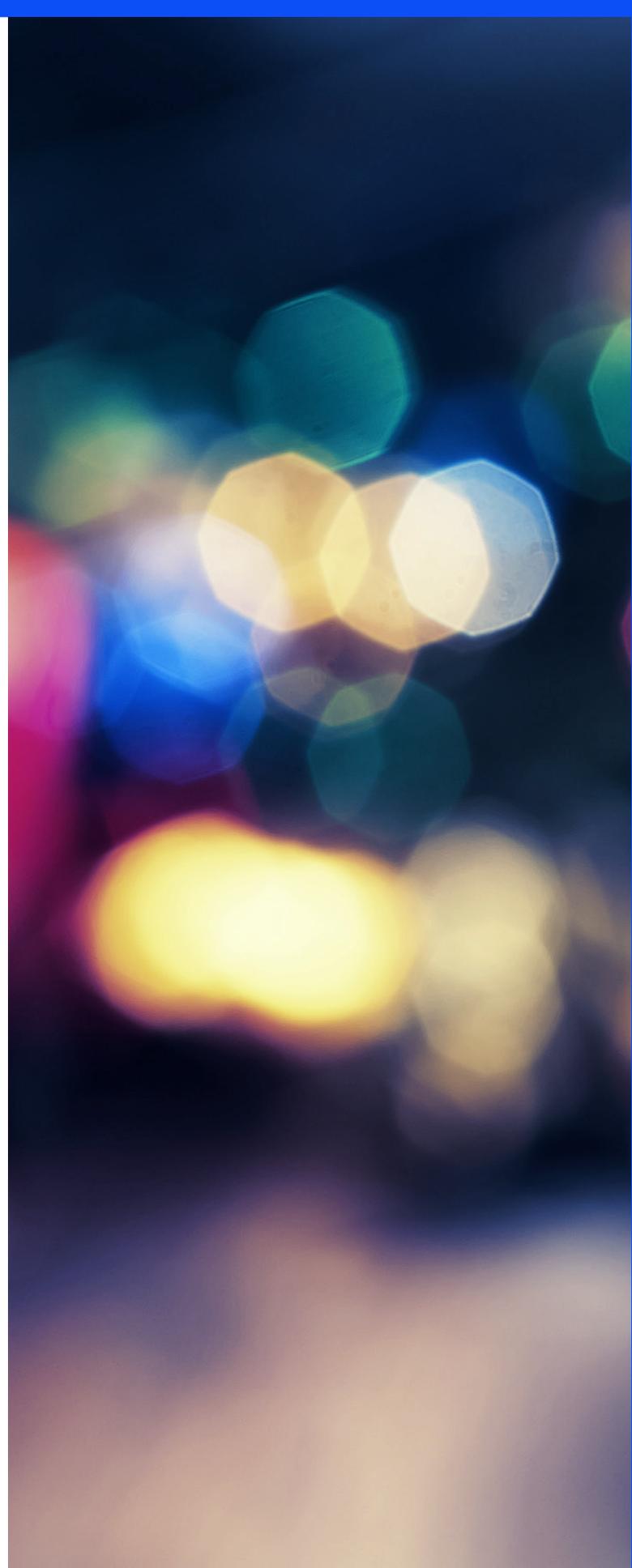
\*Source: Forrester's North American Technographics Customer Experience Online Survey, Q4 2012 (US)

When at the last resort they must turn to a customer service representative, however, users expect customer service reps to be fully aware of their past calls or issues with the site, as well as anticipate their future needs and concerns. That's where an integrated self-service customer support system comes in handy – it follows your customer's journey and data on their past interactions via multiple channels and platforms.

### **Provide Omni-Channel Support**

Even though customers may prefer to find answers to their questions via your website, it doesn't mean you can ignore the other channels of communication. It's important to be able to meet your customers on their preferred digital channel, whether it be social, email, mobile or more. This holiday season, be sure to properly staff your travel company across all the major channels as well as some of the minor ones, to deal with the multitude of incoming issues and questions.

Since many general travel inquiries such as: airline luggage policies, local weather and currency, popular daytime activities and dining and tour guide recommendations are communicated through social channels, having an automated service handle the general inquiries will free up your agents to deal with more complicated issues. Experienced agents will then have the time to focus on individualized issues, such as: flight upgrades and layover times, frequent flyer bookings, specialized health requests, private tour guide bookings and more.



## A Quick and Accurate Customer Support Solution

Investing in a high-quality customer support solution with a solid knowledge management solution is key. It enables your customers to instantly locate the answers they seek, without the need for a customer service rep. In the event of a security threat, which airlines will be flying? Will any of the local airports shut down? In the event of a natural disaster, when will flights be rescheduled for? Will local hotels provide a refund?

***"Repeat business or behavior can be bribed. Loyalty has to be earned."***

***Janet Robinson, Former President and CEO of The New York Times Company***

A travel agency successfully implementing knowledge management best practice solutions would provide the answers to these questions with accuracy and speed. These two factors are not optional. They are critical to businesses that wish to succeed in today's highly competitive ecommerce arena.





## Empower Your Agents

According to [Forrester's report "Vendor Landscape: Knowledge Management for Customer Engagement,"](#) customers today want effortless engagement, and they increasingly leverage web or mobile self-service as a first point of contact with a company. In other words, they want your customer service to be able to assist them all day, every day.

## Reduce Operational Costs While Increasing Job Satisfaction

A personalized self-service solution analyzes your customers' needs across all channels, enabling more quick and efficient responses in real-time, whether it's Facebook Messenger, Slack, Skype or any other platform. In addition, a knowledge management solution in your contact center can have a profound effect on the quality and efficiency of your service operations. By decreasing the number of "dumb contacts," or conversations that are not beneficial to your customer and certainly don't increase your profits, your agent training costs can be substantially reduced.

Many of the travel questions you receive will have

easy to find answers on your company website. You don't want the bulk of your agents' time to be spent on helping customers change a password or finding the address of the local Best Western. Freeing up your agents' time to help clients plan the finer minutiae of their travels is far more cost effective, and will provide your agents with greater job satisfaction.

## Give Them the Right Tools They Need to Succeed

Although you're trying to keep operational costs down, you shouldn't skimp on agent training. Be sure to train all customer service reps so that they know how to deal with difficult customers. Representatives need to learn how to confidently deal with a customer who wants a refund for a missed flight, or who wasn't satisfied with the quality of the hotel they stayed in. Train your agents to identify with customer concerns or complaints (however outrageous they may be) and reassure callers that they are doing their utmost to help. It is crucial that your agents never let disgruntled customers affect the quality of the service they provide.

## Develop a Greater Understanding of Your Customers

With so many customers engaging through multiple touchpoints, you've probably accumulated an incredible repository of personalized information. With the right technology, you can harness that data to receive targeted insight into who your customers are, and what exactly it is that they seek. You'll be able to track individual travel trends, segment your customers into targeted user groups, and pinpoint their exact location in the customer journey. Analyzing and breaking down this data will then enable your agents to truly understand the desires of your customers and provide them with an unforgettable customer experience.

***"The more you engage with customers, the clearer things become and the easier it is to determine what you should be doing."***

***John Russell, VP Harley Davidson***



## A Very Merry Customer Experience

Something about the holiday causes us to greet others with more smiles and a bit more consideration. That's the type of service experience you want to provide your customers with— not just during the holiday season but all year around. Despite surges in traffic and increased business pressures and demands, you want your customers to remember the personalized service they received. Be sure to implement the tips provided above, and you'll create a memorable holiday experience that will have your customers returning to do business, year after year.

***"70% of buying experiences are based on how the customers feels they are being treated."***

***McKinsey***





**Nanorep - Effortless, intelligent, personalized self-service solution empowering customers and internal service agents.**

With Nanorep, customers feel understood and supported via a real-time, natural conversation integrated with guidance capabilities for optimal resolution. Agile and easy to implement, Nanorep lets companies take off running within weeks, optimizing the customer experience from the first moment. Nanorep transforms the search box into a guidance wizard, available at all customer digital touch-points.

## About Nanorep

### TECHNOLOGY

The solution is channel-agnostic and easily integrates with existing service programs. Enhanced with auto-complete and multi-language capabilities, Nanorep's advanced NLU and patented Contextual-Answers™ technology deliver the most relevant and context-based information to your customers and internal users.

### FOR CUSTOMERS

Nanorep allows for organic interactions and conversations with customers by reaching them in the platforms and environments toward which they naturally gravitate. Customers enjoy a continuous experience with personalized guidance that takes variables such as tone, channel, history, and context into account.

### FOR COMPANIES

A uniquely agile solution with easy implementation and knowledge management, Nanorep allows companies to immediately begin learning and improving interactions. Our VoC analytics provide real-time visibility of content gaps with actionable priority list filterable per user profile and segments. Service agents are empowered to easily resolve issues, and your content team can create, edit, and add the most relevant content based on true customer's needs in real-time. Smart Channeling capabilities seamlessly route your customers through the most effective path for a faster resolution.

### HOW AND WHY WE DO IT

We value human connection and community and prioritize customer needs, facilitating a beneficial customer experience in less time and with less effort. Even when the interaction is based on intelligent technology, today's customer expects understanding and caring to be part of the equation. With easy implementation for companies, intuitive management practices, and effortless use for the customer, Nanorep strengthens the understanding between brands and their consumers and enables smooth, obstacle-free digital customer experiences.

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