

NEWS

The Support Column: No excuses this time

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The first wave of lockdowns saw the best of the channel. It also saw the best of its customers too.

More often than not, partners could rely on at least a little patience and understanding from customers, as they dealt with unprecedented restrictions and demands.

This time, lessons have been learned and expectations are higher. I'm not convinced customers are going to forgive anything less than the best possible service.

Don't get stuck in a rut

Look at it another way: whenever you reach a point of needing to count on customers to give you a break, it's already too late. You're on a slippery slope to higher churn and constantly chasing your tail.

The best policy is to avoid giving customers reasons to be dissatisfied in the first place.

I realise that's a tough ask for channel players with enough of their own problems to contend with. Unfortunately, that doesn't change things.

Stand out on service

Remember, your customers are under pressure from their own customers. In the first lockdown, people generally had lower expectations for being able to have their queries answered or communicate seamlessly. This time, they'll expect better, and comms providers will be on the hook to deliver.

I'm not just talking about in-life service, but the whole package from initial discovery and setup to porting, provisioning and go-live.

These added demands spell opportunity for comms partners with the right service approach. It's fast becoming one of the strongest ways to differentiate from competitors.

To deliver great service you've got to do the basics well and, in the midst of a viral pandemic, that means making everything you do safety-first, compliant, convenient and fast.

No delay with assisted plug and play

We at Support to Win had a head start on the trend for 'contactless' service and zero-touch provisioning, which are now widely accepted as critical in the fight against Covid.

That's because these were services we started providing in 2018, and this experience really helped our comms partner customers when onsite installs and training sessions had to stop.

It meant that major implementations and migrations could go ahead, irrespective of local or national lockdown restrictions. It enabled partners to sell with 100% confidence their projects would be delivered.

And with the new ability to conduct virtual PBX discovery audits, there is no aspect of the customer delivery lifecycle we can't deliver or support remotely.

I have every faith that the comms channel will continue its heroic efforts in keeping Britain communicating during the challenging times ahead.

Partners may end up receiving less thanks for the contribution they make, but at least they have the tools at their disposal to really make a difference to their customers' service experience – and to stand out from the competition in a way customers will remember long after this is over.