

# Goodbye pandemic: A post-COVID checklist for support leaders

For customer service leaders to make sure they're prepared for the post-pandemic rush

**As we transition from pandemic to post-pandemic, your customers and employees need greater consistency, reliability, and trust.**

**"Businesses need to be fast and well prepared to support customers, from product delivery to giving advice."—  
Shep Hyken**

**In this guide, we outlined 12 steps you can take to optimize the customer support department, prepare your team for change and put the customer first as we make the transition.**

**—SentiSum**

# Latest data



**87%**

of consumers say businesses should continue to offer options like curbside pickup that limit the need for in-person visits.



**79%** of consumers say that going forward they will seek out information on the type of health and safety standards and processes businesses have in place before visiting them.



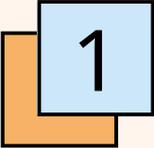
**77%** of consumers report that in the future the amount of in-person interaction required at a business will factor into their decision of whether or not they visit the business.



**43%** of consumers say it would greatly increase their likelihood of visiting a business if it were to proactively communicate its safety standards and processes, and another 39% said it would somewhat.

Source: Medallia, 2020

# Preparation checklist



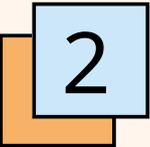
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## Look at the data/ get customer insight

More than ever, businesses need to be listening to their customers and finding out what they really think, want and plan to do.

Undoubtedly, their expectations and habits have changed. Things won't be a return to business-as-usual.

Customer insight must underpin your strategy moving forward. SentiSum helps businesses uncover customer insights from support data. Using AI, SentiSum eliminates manual ticket tagging, tag maintenance and reporting, replacing it with an automated process that surfaces the most granular customer insight.



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## Check-in with product changes

Customer service agents are usually product experts, too. They solve product-related issue all day, after all.

While business has been running slower than usual, it's likely that every department has taken the time to make changes and improvements that have been in the backlog for a while.

Everyone on your team needs to be 100% ready. That means they need to know about new features and new products that may impact the customer.

Take some time to thoroughly to update your team, your customer service content and your internal documentation.

# Preparation checklist



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## Retrain on tickets that haven't been coming for a while

During the pandemic, it's highly likely that your reasons for contact have changed.

For example, the travel industry has been out of action for a while. That industry will have had close to zero tickets that had booking issues and a large influx of tickets about cancellations and refunds.

However, as things transition again, every support department is likely to see a rebalance. It's been a stressful year for everyone and your team is likely to need refresher training on how to handle requests that they haven't seen for a while.



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## Redo & expand your help center

Help centers can be great. But, let's face it most aren't. When they're used as a strategy to deflect tickets, without customer experience in mind, they end up being a frustrating part of your customer's journey.

Before the pandemic comes to an end, take some time to improve the accessibility, digestibility and usefulness of your help center. Did you hide the 'contact us' button deep into your help center to encourage customers to use it? Probably best to not annoy your customers during these times.

Now's also a great time to update the help center with new, relevant content. Make your policies crystal clear, especially those around safety.

# Preparation checklist



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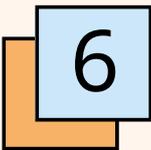
## Predict agent resource requirements

Whether it went up or down, the volume of support tickets for every company has fluctuated dramatically in the past 12 months.

For many, this may have meant downsizing the customer service team. If this was you, then you'll need to be estimating what resource deficit you're running currently.

You can use a simple but powerful tool like this [Erlang Calculator](#) to plan your call center staffing requirements in the future.

Input your predicted ticket volume, average handling time, and other data points to see the number of agents you need.



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## Streamline processes for efficiency

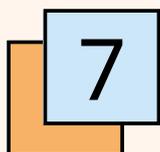
While ticket volume is reduced, take advantage of the time to streamline your internal processes.

Go through your department's weak points. Fix those manual workarounds and insider tricks that have been bugging your team for ages.

Revisit your communication channels, update your policies—does that issue really need escalating?—and reconsider how you route and prioritise tickets.

Don't forget to keep the customer experience in front of mind when introducing streamlined processes or you'll risk damaging customer satisfaction.

# Preparation checklist



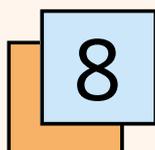
## **Update your tagging taxonomy: streamline and retrain**

Most tagging taxonomies look like enormous, complicated messes with numerous duplications. No wonder most agents tag tickets inconsistently.

However, to get high-quality customer insights that drive continuous, customer-centric improvements, your tagging taxonomy needs to be specific AND applied consistently.

Furthermore, it needs to be updated now. Health and risk prevention is top of mind for most consumers, and undoubtedly you'll be receiving health-related support tickets about masks and hand sanitizer.

Do a review and streamline of ticket tag taxonomy to be prepared for the post-pandemic. Your business will thank you for the clear insight in the long run.



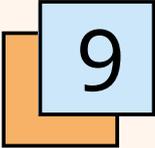
## **Automate where you can**

Automation tools like SentiSum are being used increasingly in help centers to aid process efficiency.

Whether it's optimizing your knowledgebase, automatically suggesting articles for particular queries, conducting skill-based routing, prioritizing particularly angry tickets, or surfacing hidden reasons for contact in the mass of tickets, AI-automation can help you.

Furthermore, if you're an omnichannel business, you'll need to be aware that customers are wanting less and less real-life interaction. That means your company's digital experience needs to be top-notch to fulfil customer's expectations of simple and easy access to products and service.

# Preparation checklist



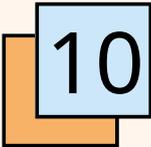
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## **Get ahead of common requests with public announcements**

Publicly showcase your health and safety guidelines and policies. And do the same for other ways consumers can expect your service to differ from usual.

If you're in travel, perhaps particular countries can't be accessed for longer than the rest. Or, perhaps, in hospitality, guest must abide by a particular set of rules if they want to stay with you.

Showcase key information like this where it's easily available to reduce ticket volume and customer anxiety.



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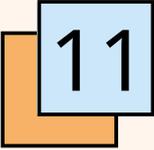
## **Refresh your work from home policy**

Most of the world shifted from in-office to working from home during the past 12 months. That meant new ways of working and new technology had to be introduced.

You need a clear plan in place for your team: are you remaining a WFH team, getting everyone back in the office, or doing a mix of both. Consult the wider business policies and your team's preferences to get this right.

If you're moving back into the office, make sure that it's ready for your current team size: are there enough chairs, computers, and building access cards for everyone? Do you need to restart the weekly fruit subscription?

# Preparation checklist

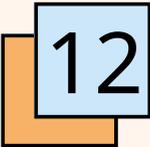


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## **New joiners, time to meet up**

Many people started new jobs during the pandemic which means they likely haven't met any of their co-workers.

As soon as you can, we suggest organizing a team meetup to get everyone acquainted and to quell 'first day back' nerves.



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## **Prepare to build a customer-centric culture**

As customer service and experience leaders, you inherently value the customer.

However, it's not always clear to other departments how important their actions are to the customer and their continued loyalty.

In this tipsheet, we outline [7 ways to sell the value of customer service and experience within your company.](#)

Use the checklist to get more investment for customer service and experience projects and to coach your company to put the customer and their insights first.



# SentiSum

Customer insights that drive growth