

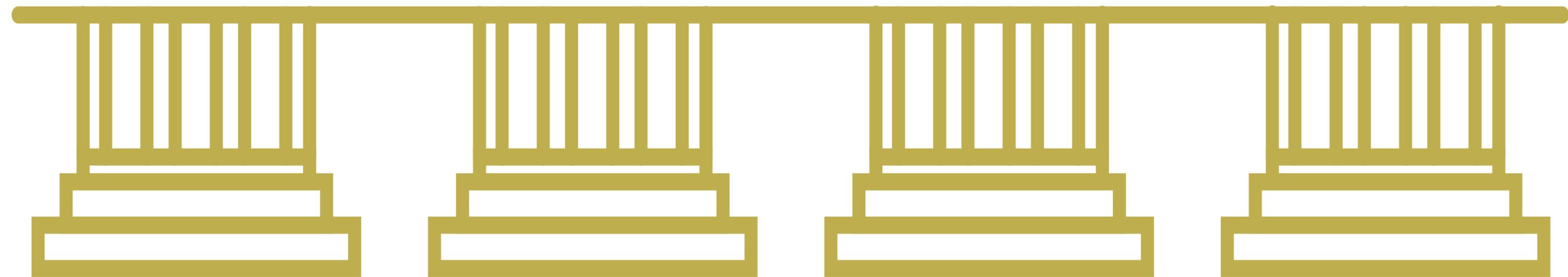
THE PILLAR OF YOUR BUSINESS

As organizations grow, the idea of a customer ecosystem is essential to ensure the longevity and scalability of the company.

BY JACOB PETERSEN

How often does a piece of technology break only to realize you now have to make the dreaded phone call to the 1-800 support number on the back of the device? For most, this is met with a monotone voice reading an infuriating script. Do they think we didn't try to restart the device? Of course we did. Yes, the router was unplugged and reset, too. In today's world, consumers expect a higher level of customer service. Whether they need to set up a new account, need help understanding the paperwork in front of them, or need help troubleshooting an issue, support must be seen as a trusted advisor.

As organizations grow, the idea of a customer ecosystem is essential to ensure the longevity and scalability of the company. This customer ecosystem requires that the entire organization work closely to provide only the highest levels of support. What steps are you taking to ensure your customer-facing teams emerge on top of today's demanding industry landscape?



Step 1: Scale Through Specialization

Growth within any organization can be a benefit and a curse. Rising to the demands of growth while also on-boarding additional resources can be challenging. In any complex business, it is difficult to replicate the knowledge of your existing subject matter experts. Introducing specialized roles can streamline the path for new employees, allowing them to flourish in any field quickly. Providing a protégé for your key players will ensure that you always have a well-versed employee available to assist customers.

Specialization within your customer-facing team provides many benefits internally and externally. Focusing on an area of expertise allows employees to increase organizational effectiveness, while enabling



the company to scale more efficiently as the time to train employees is reduced. Throughput also increases due to the comparative advantage that results from the specialization of each functional role and the organization's ability to divide work appropriately. Through this method, I've personally seen ticket throughput increase by more than 250%.

This functional specialization requires diligence by the organization to ensure employee knowledge and career growth. Most importantly, any broad organizational change requires constant analysis and adjustment, ensuring your customers, employees, and bottom line are satisfied.

Step 2: Single Point of Contact

Your company's brand identity and messaging no longer come just

from the marketing and sales teams. Instead, customers are speaking out about companies more than ever before, becoming brand content generators. What this means is that whether your customers are happy or not, they are going to express their experiences with – and opinions of – your company across social media outlets. Ensuring positive experiences is a difficult promise, but your odds of positive reviews increase greatly with a polite and informed dedicated representative. Within your specialized team of customer representatives, be sure to have a single point of contact for each customer. This will avoid the headaches of transferring departments for questions, comments, and concerns.

Scheduling regular meetings between customers and their representative is also critical to maintaining

While surveys are certainly not revolutionary, when used properly, the feedback obtained can help drive innovation within customer service processes, ultimately making a world of difference to your customer base. Quantitative survey data is great for showing trends and identifying overall customer satisfaction. Qualitative data, aggregated by a small sample of customers through open-ended questions, however, will prove incredibly helpful in refining specific methods of client relations. This is also a great opportunity to touch base with a good portion of your customers. Some questions, so as not to limit the answers you get back, could be:

>> What made you choose us?

>> What are the top 5 areas that you would like us to improve?

>> What are the top 5 things you like about us?

Customers are speaking out about companies more than ever before, becoming brand content generators.

positive relationships. Customers almost always have suggestions that can further grow your business by better outfitting theirs. Additionally, regular meetings keep everyone up to date on any progressions, creating a sense of solidarity and reassuring your dedication to their needs. In essence, these dedicated customer representatives not only serve as the face of the company, but they also serve as the customer voice internally. This role is directly responsible for pushing the organization where and when needed to make sure the company is doing what is best for the customer.

Step 3: Benchmarking and Refinement

Customer satisfaction surveys are among the most common forums to generate constructive feedback.

>> Was there anything that wasn't covered in the survey that you would like to discuss?

After compiling the data, organize it into charts. Rank responses by popularity, and include similar and outstanding customer concerns and praises. Data accumulated over a series of surveys will show definite trends that should be presented to key executives and managers. Results of the surveys will reinforce processes that are working well and identify what processes need refinement. Ideally, you would have a dedicated Project Manager to oversee the various improvement tasks that come from the survey results.

Step 4: Refine Over Time

One often overlooked component of any major organizational change is

constant analysis of the results. Aggregated data can enhance any organization's point of view, but without constant analysis of the results, it can become an Achilles heel. After deploying a major process change like those outlined above, it is imperative to compare the results to the baseline data. While the strategies mentioned above are tried and true tactics at Mortgage Cadence, each company should make the right decisions for their unique business and customer base.

Ensuring the most efficient and effective specializations are enacted is key. Analyzing both objective and subjective data is imperative to uphold precision, and the ability to make subsequent adjustments is vital to long-term success. Finally, integrated communication across all departments allows ideas from all levels of the corporate ladder. Challenging the status quo by freeing the minds of your employees to think within the realm of another department can often lead to great successes. Think about the possibilities when processes are challenged based on customer and employee feedback and data.

Through many of the tactics above,

we have designed our support solutions team in a way that best serves our customers. By driving service and partnership, we know our customers and their needs better than ever before. This shapes the future direction and vision of the company in a way that is simply not possible without personal interaction and transparency. Every day, Mortgage Cadence aims to live out our vision

of providing the last lending solution our customers will ever need through a commitment to partnership, service and technological innovation. Partnering with your customers creates a huge potential for growth with endless possibilities. Now is the time to tap into that potential. Your customers won't just thank you for it, they might just become ambassadors for your organization. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jacob E. Petersen leads the Client Service Management and Document Center teams to ensure quality service and document products tailored to individual client needs. He is responsible for prioritizing resources to ensure unparalleled client service and consistency with strategies and customer commitments, while mitigating operational risk through use of policies, guidelines, metrics, technology usage and templates. Prior to joining Mortgage Cadence, Jacob was the Quality Control Specialist - Country Home Loans at Farm Credit Services of America. There, he was responsible for developing, implementing, and continuously improving the Quality Control Program for mortgage loans and also led cross-functional workgroups to implement new regulations and determine optimal workflow for the origination process. Jacob has also served as the Compliance Operations Manager for Clayton, a due diligence firm, helping provide guidance on mortgage lending regulations to creditors and secondary market participants.

