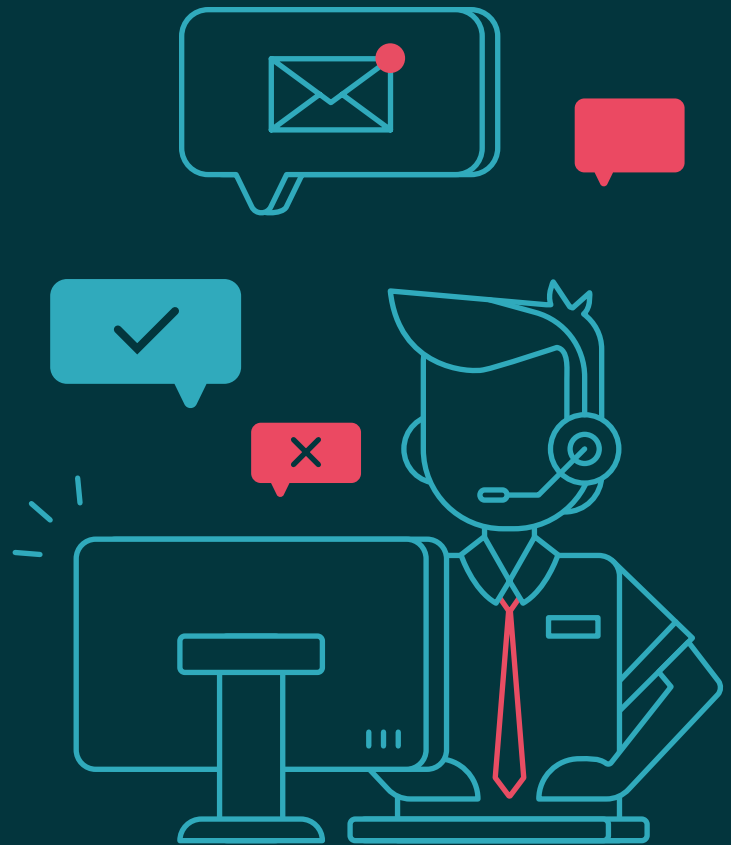# 6

Tips for building a thriving help center

zendesk

Your customers are busy people. They want to help themselves whenever and however is most convenient to them.

They are more technically savvy than ever and have come to prefer the DIY approach to solving their issues and answering their own questions. Years of research by ICMI has confirmed that customers prefer to resolve issues themselves and within their channels of choice. Furthermore, customers only seek direct interactions when they unsuccessfully exhaust their self-service options. This is backed up by data from American Express, which found that **48% of consumers prefer to speak with a customer service rep when dealing with complex issues, but only 16% prefer the same contact for simple issues.**

The goal of this paper is simple: We want to help you build an all-in-one knowledge base, community, and customer portal. All of which can be accomplished with a help center like Zendesk Guide.
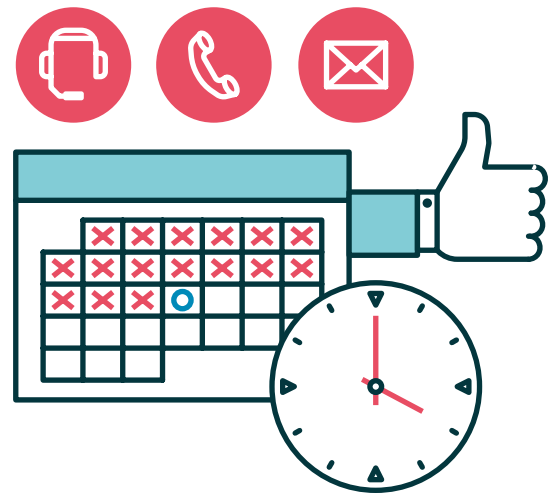
Why you need a help center right now:

- Increase customer satisfaction by providing better service and meeting the needs of customers who prefer self-service.

- Reduce costs and increase efficiency by eliminating repetitive costs so that agents can focus on more strategic tasks.

- Grow your business community, and build deeper connections between your company and customers.

1

Planning: Start with goals

Whether you are just starting to think about launching a help center or simply looking to improve what you have, the first and most vital step is to define what it is you hope to achieve. Is your purpose to reduce the number of support tickets being submitted to your staff? Or is it simply to foster relationships and engagements amongst your customers and employees? Consider how a help center can impact customer loyalty.
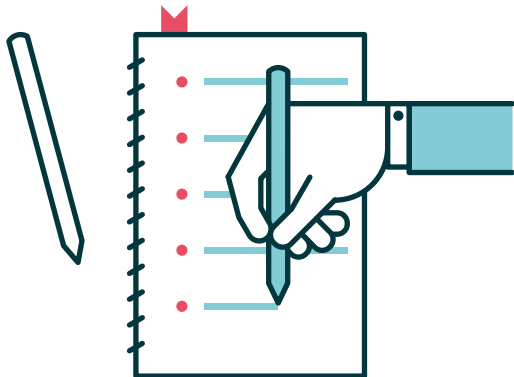
These are some ideas to think about, but the important thing is to identify the right goals for your business and work to get upfront consensus among key stakeholders.

2

Measure for improvement

It is important to begin measuring your help center's performance from day one. Keep track of things like:

- Community analytics stats
- Resolution times
- Percentage of issues resolved by staff vs. those solved via the help center

These will help you understand whether your help center is effective and what areas need improvement.

It's also extremely important to track the kinds of content that your customers are utilizing. Knowing this will help you decide what content you need more of, such as specific topics or FAQs.

3

Mobile is not an "option"

It is important to provide a seamless experience so that your customers have the same level of service whether they're visiting your help center on a laptop, tablet, or phone.

As noted by the **Zendesk Benchmark** report, the rise of the mobile consumer is clear. Everyone has heard about the consumer shift to mobile with the popularity of smartphones and tablets; these trends are apparent in consumer preferences for engaging with brands through forums and help centers.

Not only is a seamless mobile experience important, but a mobile-first strategy is proving to be a priority amongst customers. **According to ICMI, 50% of customers think customer support apps for mobile devices are an important channel.**

4

Employee participation and moderation

Self-service doesn't mean setting up a site and not getting involved. Your employees should take an active role. It shows that you are listening to and care about customer behavior and feedback.

And by employees, we don't just mean your customer service team; we mean *everyone*:

- **Marketing:** See how customers interact with each other, and help foster those relationships. The help center is also a great way to find and become familiar with your customer evangelists.

- **Product and support:** Help answer questions and respond to comments. These departments working together can take what they learn from the community and use it to speed up the feedback cycle. They can also use this opportunity to listen to ideas from customers and collect feedback.

- **Sales:** Being active in the help center connects your sales department—the front line of your business—with your customers. Also, the help center gives excellent insight for an ongoing sales cycle.

5

Focus on the user experience

User experience is incredibly important. You might have done everything right in terms of getting people to your site, but if you don't provide a great experience, they won't stay for long and won't return. In fact, a **Consumer Reports** study found that **more than half of Americans will abandon a purchase or leave a problem unsolved if their customer experience (in-person or virtual) is negative.**

It is extremely important to provide easy navigation to the things that matter most. For example, search is an important feature that your customers will be looking for. Make sure it's easy to find and use. Ask yourself: *Can I provide and promote the things that matter most to my customers? Can I organize all my content in an effective way?*

It's also important to create something visually appealing, to give customers a place where they will want to spend their time. Consider adding rich media options. Many customers have come to expect things like videos, webinars, and images alongside text. Look for expertise on your web or design team for best practices; then test, test, test! Your help center is always a work in progress—so look at what works and doesn't work, and adjust accordingly.

One of the best ways to get customer feedback is to ask for it: *Did they find what they were looking for? Do they have suggestions for improvement?* A short survey can take you a long way toward creating an engaging user experience.

6

Put on your marketing hat!
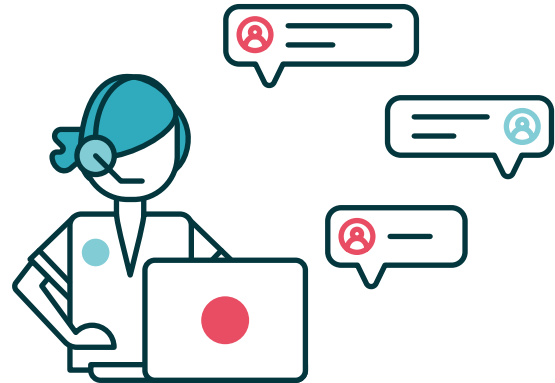
What's the use of a help center if no one is using it? Once you have selected your technology, set your goals, and built out your site, you need to drive users there. With this step, it is important to involve your marketing team (or to, at least, start thinking like a marketer): *How are you going to invite and attract visitors? How are you going to promote the site or even particular aspects of the site? Are there ways to leverage the community to help support other marketing programs?*

What's next?

With the right partner and the right advice, help center setup and maintenance is easier than it may seem. Define your goals early so that they can guide your implementation, and always keep your customer at the forefront as you make decisions. Once your help center is set up, you can begin measuring success right away—success that will only increase as you continue to stay involved.

See some great help centers in action.

Start using Zendesk Guide today!

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