

# Customer experience and ratings - a two-way street



By [Bruce von Maltitz](#)

8 Sep 2016

Customer experience management has traditionally been about customers being able to rate a business based on their interaction, or a business gathering information to better understand what a customer is thinking to provide a better service. But there is an element that has thus far been neglected in contact centres - rating the customer.



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## Good communication goes both ways

The idea of service rating has gained significant momentum over the years, but there is also a shift taking place in this sphere with an emphasis on a dual rating system.

The general level of customer service and product offerings have had to develop and improve over time. This has largely been driven by more easily accessible communication channels and the ability for consumers to hold businesses accountable, particularly through social media. However, what we are seeing in successful platforms and businesses now is that the playing field is being leveled by platforms such as Uber and Airbnb, as well as the most recent [App of the Year winner](#), Domestly.

All these platforms provide functionality that allows for both parties to rate the other, ensuring that each party receives the quality of service required. Based on these ratings, consumers can decide which service provider to use in the future, and service providers can determine which consumers or employers to work for. The question is, why should this approach be limited to platforms and services such as these when it could have equally positive effects in the context of business call centres?

## The cost of keeping customers happy

The reality, although something that is often overlooked, is that offering the same high level of service to every customer can quickly become costly. In some cases, particularly in businesses with large customer bases, it becomes all but impossible. As with reviews and ratings of businesses that allow consumers to make informed decisions about who to do business with, a customer rating system would allow businesses to make informed decisions about which customers to do business with and which customers to focus particular attention on retaining.

What consumers are often not aware of is the cost related to calls received or time spent on a customer query. As part of this reverse rating system, the value of the time spent on these interactions would have to be assessed to determine the benefit to the business.

Importantly, a business would need to take into consideration the reason behind the call. Numerous phone calls in a short space of time could identify a tricky customer who might be draining business resources. However, it could also indicate an internal issue with the business operations or product, which should be addressed to improve the service offering. This is why understanding, measuring and analysing a contact centre's data is so vital to the success and development of an organisation.

There are many aspects to consider before implementing a customer rating system in a contact centre, as it runs the risk of being viewed negatively. However, its aim should be to enhance service and improve business. Viewed from this perspective, it is something that, even if not implemented, should be considered as a business development tool.

## ABOUT BRUCE VON MALTITZ

Bruce von Maltitz is currently the MD of 1Stream, a cloud-based contact centre technology provider. He has over 20 years experience in the service industry focusing specifically on contact centres for the last twelve years. He has a detailed understanding of how to design, build and operate contact centres having worked in the industry in SA, Africa and abroad.

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