

Customer Service

Essential to success



Car Care Plan

An AmTrust Financial Company

Your customers should be at the heart of everything you do. Whether you're selling vehicles or services to individual consumers or businesses, your customer service will make or break your success.

Good customer service is essential to business success. Happy customers are more likely to buy from you and return to your business next time they need a new car, MOT or service. They are also much more likely to recommend your business to family and friends. Whereas unhappy customers will not only never use your business again, they're likely to tell others about their poor experience and broadcast their disappointment online.

In this eBook from Car Care Plan, we will explore:

- digital technology's impact on customer service
- monitoring and handling online reviews of your business
- top tips on improving your customer service
- identifying good quality add-on products to ensure customer satisfaction
- Car Care Plan's approach to customer service
- FREE dealer health checks to give your customer service a boost.



How digital technology has changed customer service

Customer service no longer begins when a consumer walks through your door. It starts long before. The first impression a customer has of your business will likely be through your website or a search engine. And these first impressions are very important for generating business.

When a potential customer finds your company through Google, for example, one of the most prominent features that pops onto their screen is the 'Knowledge Panel'. This box on the right-hand side of search results includes all your company's vital details, such as name, address, opening hours and contact information. One of the most prominent pieces of information is your Google Review, followed by 'Reviews from the web', which can include your ratings from Car Dealer Reviews, Facebook and AutoTrader, to name just a few.

If a business has provided ongoing poor customer service, it will show up online, with 76% of consumers using the internet while vehicle shopping, according to [The Car Buyers Report from AutoTrader](#). According to the latest statistics from [NetMarketShare](#), Google has more than an 80% share of the global search engine market, so it's likely the majority of customers who find your business online will know fellow consumers' opinions before they walk through your door.

Digital technology has had a huge impact on every aspect of commerce. Your sales team must be trained and ready to deal with customers aided by advice found online, a list of deals available elsewhere and a multitude of options on their vehicle of choice, all easily accessible on your dealership forecourt thanks to their smartphones.

According to Google, the average car buyer takes 2.7 months to research and decide on a new car purchase, [reports Econsultancy](#). You must maintain a positive public image online through good customer service to ensure they are coming to your dealership at the end of their search.

Download our eBook

[Digital Technology for Dealerships](#)

to keep your business ahead of the e-competition.

Look out for online reviews of your business

There are several places reviews of your business can appear online and it is worth monitoring them all. Knowing what your customers are saying about you online, whether positive or negative, will help you manage your reputation.

Positive reviews can be shared across your own social media channels and used in marketing materials, which can help generate new customers. Negative reviews can be used to make improvements, as well as an opportunity to win back an unsatisfied customer by responding and, if appropriate, offering an incentive to return.

Where are your customers talking about you?

- **Google** – the world's leading search engine is one of the first places a customer will go to find out more about your business.
- **Facebook** – with over two billion active monthly users, the social media giant's business ratings and reviews are highly influential.
- **Twitter** – another social network where customers often post about a business they have recently engaged with.
- **Trustpilot** – a fast-growing consumer review platform, which helps business proactively collect customer reviews.
- **AutoTrader** – the UK's largest digital automotive marketplace with free-to-use dealer reviews that display across your AutoTrader adverts.
- **Car Dealer Reviews** – 14,500 dealerships listed and used by over a million car buyers, this online review website is fast growing.
- **Which?** – an independent consumer review organisation that tests and reviews products.
- **Yelp** – a free review site where consumers rate businesses on a five-star scale.

How to respond to negative reviews

Whether you're responding to a positive review simply to say thank you or a negative review as part of your procedure for handling customer complaints, ensure you always use the same tone of voice.

Negative reviews are never easy to read but, given enough time and enough customers, every business gets them. It is vital, first and foremost, that you respond as quickly as possible and in a polite, understanding, empathetic and helpful manner. Always offer an apology, explain the issue will be investigated and, if possible, state how you intend to repair the customer's trust.

Ensure your initial response is public, on the same platform the negative review is posted, to demonstrate to the wider audience that action is being taken. Further conversation with that customer can then be conducted privately, to protect their personal information.

Top tips for providing great customer service

Customer service – good or bad – sticks in the mind of all consumers. Whether that's a rude waiter at a restaurant or a friendly sales rep when you visit a dealership. Your sales team is the face of your company and ensuring they provide a great customer experience is essential. You should also always be looking for ways to improve your customer service to ensure your company is ahead of the competition.

Our top five tips:

- 1. Look for the right skills in your customer service representatives**, including: empathy, patience, consistency, adaptability, clear communication, strong work ethic, good knowledge of the products they're selling and a thick skin.
- 2. Scrutinise every customer touchpoint with your business**, spanning everything from their initial search of your business online through to returning for their annual service. Ensure you have a consistent approach to customer service from your forecourt to your garage, telephone calls to social media interactions.
- 3. Put a robust customer service strategy in place** to ensure all new starters and experienced staff work to the same standards. Everyone at your business must know what is expected of them and how they should be interacting with and catering to customers.
- 4. Incentivise your staff to keep them engaged.** Staff incentives are a good way to motivate staff while ensuring they're providing first-rate customer service. There are strict FCA guidelines on how you should and shouldn't be incentivising sales staff, so ensure you're compliant. Download our eBook [FCA Regulations – How will they affect you?](#) for further details.
- 5. Give customers a way to provide feedback**, firstly, to motivate your staff by sharing positive reviews and, secondly, so you can investigate any negative responses and ensure any issues are addressed. You can always run a customer service feedback survey to find out how your team measures up.

Enhance your customer service with financial aftercare products

One way to enhance the customer's experience of your business is through the provision of additional products and services. Financial aftercare products are designed to meet the needs of your customers and offering to protect their vehicle demonstrates your commitment to supporting them after they drive off your forecourt.

A new car is one of life's biggest purchases and can either be a single large spend or several years of monthly payments, not to mention annual MOT, service and repair bills. Drivers not only invest a lot of money in their vehicles but they also become essential, everyday possessions that gain emotional attachment. They ferry their children to school, provide an escape on the weekend, commute their owners to work, take the family on holiday and rush their pets to the vet when sick. Car owners take pride in their vehicles and feel upset when they break. Aftercare products can help mitigate those concerns by providing financial support when needed.

Offering financial aftercare products also helps boost retention, with customers 10 times more likely to return to a franchised dealership for servicing work because of their warranty, according to the [Castrol Professional Car Servicing and Repair Trend Tracker report](#).

"It's not just about selling the car; it's about helping customers with a complete motoring solution. Diversification will help your margin per sale rise, it will boost customer retention and increase satisfaction ratings. Every customer likes to be taken care of and providing a wide range of add-on products to keep their investment safe is a great way to keep them happy."

Chief Executive Officer of Car Care Plan

What aftercare products are available?

There are a wide range of products available and helping customers to choose the right combination for them is essential to building trust and ensuring a positive customer experience. Those products include:

- **Warranty** – protects against unexpected mechanical or electrical faults
- **GAP Insurance** – protects motorists in the event their vehicle is written off
- **MOT Test Cover** – covers repairs, replacements or adjustments in the event of an MOT Test fail
- **Roadside Assistance** – covers motorists in the event of a breakdown
- **Tyre Insurance** – protects against damage to tyres
- **Alloy Wheel Insurance** – protects against minor damage to alloy wheels
- **Cosmetic Warranty** – protection against unsightly minor cosmetic damage.

For impartial information on vehicle aftercare products, download our eBook:

[**A guide to motoring financial aftercare.**](#)

What aftercare products should I offer my customers?

Here are three key rules to follow when discussing add-on products with your customers.

1. **Know what you're selling** – make sure your sales staff know the ins and outs of every financial aftercare product available to their customers.

Car Care Plan offers such training to our clients. [Contact us to learn more.](#)

2. **Always be clear and honest** – only sell products the customer needs, be upfront about the cost, balanced with potential savings and benefits, and explain any limitations. There are strict regulations surrounding the sale of GAP insurance, for example, which sets out the information that must be provided to customers alongside other sales rules.

Download our eBook on [FCA rules surrounding GAP insurance](#) to learn more.

3. **Listen to your customers** – your customers will know what they want and what is important to them. Listen to their feedback, discuss any concerns they may have and offer the options available to them. They will know if a product is right for them, so take their lead and, when they've made a choice, reinforce their decision with positive feedback.

What are the benefits of selling different aftercare products?

We have produced a series of blogs on the benefits, to both customers and retailers, of selling various financial aftercare products. Follow the links below for further information or call Car Care Plan on **0344 573 8000** to learn more.

- Benefits of selling [GAP insurance](#) correctly
- What are the benefits of selling [MOT test cover](#)?
- Advice on selling vehicle [Warranty](#) – could you improve?
- What are the benefits of selling [Roadside Assistance](#)?
- What are the benefits of selling [Cosmetic, Tyre and Alloy cover](#)?



About Car Care Plan

Car Care Plan provides over 1,250,000 peace of mind products every year – operating in over 50 countries worldwide, working with manufacturers, dealers and affinity partners.

For over 40 years we have provided financial add-on services for vehicle owners around the globe. This includes warranty, GAP insurance, MOT test cover, roadside assistance, tyre cover, alloy wheel insurance and cosmetic warranty.

Alongside our financial products, we provide services including claims and call handling, marketing support, e-commerce, account management and training and auditing.

Dealer Health Check

Car Care Plan offers free dealer health checks and a personalised report to ensure car retailers are providing the best customer service and products. The checks include:

- A FREE assessment of your current add-on programmes
- Analysis of your dealership's current strengths and weaknesses
- The key changes you can make to build a successful business culture and reputation through an improved customer experience
- A report on additional revenue opportunities for your business.

Apply for your
FREE
Dealer Health Check today



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