The most important time to engage with your customers

Build customer loyalty, decrease support overhead, and increase sales using shipping data
Take control of your post-purchase experience

Don’t say “bye-bye” to your customers after they click “buy”. They are waiting to hear from you after they make a purchase – is my order fulfilled? Where is it? Is it going to arrive on time? The post-purchase window is the best time to engage with your customers. Providing them with an unique and personalized experience is a fantastic way to build loyalty and increase repeat purchases.

Top performing companies create a “renewable resource” of loyal customers. By the end of 3 years, almost 60% of their revenue is generated by repeat purchases.

(RJ Metrics, 2015)

The tool that you need to create a memorable post-purchase experience for your customers is already in your toolbox: shipment tracking information.

Marketing

You have the customer’s full attention from the moment of purchase until the delivery. Take the opportunity guide them back to your website or create a personalized experience for them during this time.

Operations

Taking the pulse of your physical fulfillment and delivery workflow using shipping data is the key to understanding the health of your overall business. Tying together your online and offline operations using shipping data can help you anticipate issues and proactively set expectations with customers.

Customer support

By using shipping data, customer support outreach can become a proactive, and even automated. Whether it’s to control the customer experience during a negative interaction or get them excited about their order before it’s delivered, empower your support team to easily create a personal and memorable experience for your customers.
Marketing

There is often a disconnect between online retailers and customers after a purchase. Once the order is completed, the customer waits for the delivery, with no information between the purchase and delivery. By providing a branded post-purchase experience, you can continue to engage with your customers on your terms.

During the waiting period, you have the customer’s full attention. They want to hear from you because they just bought your product - they will be receptive to what you have to say. That is an opportunity that most retailers miss when it comes to building brand equity and trust during a critical time in the customer journey.

Branded updates

While most carriers, such as FedEx and UPS, offer the ability to send the customer an email with the tracking numbers, most businesses miss this opportunity as part of their own marketing mix.

By sending your own email, you’re able to inform the customer of the delivery status and include custom content such as educational materials and promotional offers. By owning tracking data, you can also offer customers updates via SMS messaging, Facebook messaging or other channels that they prefer.

Tracking number emails have some of the highest email open rates. Utilize it as a channel to showcase other relevant information to encourage customers to return to your store.

(Marley Spoon & parcelLab, 2017)
Custom tracking pages

Similar to tracking number communication, when a customer wants to see the status of the shipment in progress, it’s easy to rely on the tracking pages provided by the carriers. However, there are numerous benefits of creating your own tracking status page:

- It brings the customer back to your site
- You can provide additional messaging, offers, and actions based on the status of the package
- Let’s you control any communication seen by the customer

Even though the delivery is done by a carrier, customers will always tie the shipment experience with your brand. By owning the communication method, you can fill the information gap between the purchase and when the package arrives at their doorstep.

(Madewell, 2017)
Operations

Tracking data helps you tie together the physical offline logistics to the online operations. By monitoring the performance of your physical fulfillment and delivery workflow, you can better plan for operational impacts such as extra support tickets.

Understanding carrier performance can help you anticipate customer service load and optimize your shipping mix. These metrics can help you proactively set expectations with customers, and even provide you with data points for your next carrier negotiation.

Logistics dashboard

With a bit of investment, you can build a dashboard to help monitor the health of your outgoing shipments. Here are some key metrics to consider:

- Orders pending fulfillment
- Shipments pending pick-up
- Shipments currently in-transit
- Late shipments
- Shipments with an exception status (undeliverable, lost, etc)

From here, you can build a carrier health dashboard to help you see if the carriers are performing according to your expectations. For instance:

**Percentage of packages**

| Delivered on time | Delivered late | Delivery exceptions |

With the metrics described above, you should be able to see any issues with the shipping mix and take corrective actions before they negatively impact your business. You may consider proactively sending customers notices about delayed shipments, working with carriers to figure out why so many packages are delayed, looking for alternate carriers or leveraging this data in your next rate negotiations process.
Customer Support

According to Amazon, 40% of all customer inquiries are shipping-related. While it’s impossible to completely remove all shipping-related questions, tracking data can be utilized to minimize the number of questions and decrease the amount of time it takes for your support team to answer them.

Proactive outreach

There are two types of proactive outreach that can be automated to decrease inbound customer support inquiries:

Exceptions and delays during the delivery process

There are many ways for something to go wrong during the delivery process: the package can be misrouted, it can be damaged, it can be delayed due to weather or any other reasons why it may not be delivered on time.

You want to inform your customers as soon as an exception has occurred. By keeping your customers up-to-date on the order status, you can minimize inbound support inquiries and control the customer experience during a negative interaction.

(Marley Spoon & parcelLab, 2017)
**Delivery notification and set up instructions**

Don’t wait for something to go wrong before reaching out to your customers. You can notify them about the upcoming on-time delivery to get them excited and ready for your product. For example, the day before the scheduled delivery you can send an email or SMS to let the customer know to expect that the delivery tomorrow.

You can also support your customers with the product they’ve just bought. This is especially important if the product requires setup, configuration and/or assembly. As an example, you can get the customer to install the product app, setup an account, or provide an electronic copy of the assembly manual, and a link to your community forum.

By using tracking statuses, you also know the exact delivery date of the orders. Instead of triggering surveys and follow up based on a hard coded estimate of “shipment date + x days”, you can trigger the post-delivery follow up knowing exactly when the customer has received their order. For many ecommerce businesses, getting customers to share their post-delivery or “unboxing” experiences are essential to their online reputation.

(Fashionette & parcelLab, 2017)
Support tools

Getting inquiries about shipments is inevitable. Depending on your business, you may even opt to have a return merchandise authorization process that requires a support rep to approve every request to return a product.

Tracking data is underutilized in returns. Providing anxious customers tracking status updates to keep them informed every step of the way. It’s a great way to both decrease support tickets and improve customer experience during a stressful interaction.

Having a comprehensive and up-to-date admin tool for your support team can decrease their response time as well as provide more details for the customer.

The support team can look up the order status on each order by tracking number to see where it is in the delivery process. If there is a problem with the delivery, the support team can reach out proactively to the customer or carrier and help resolve the problem.
Case Studies

vnyl

VNYL is a curated and personalized vinyl record subscription service. They pride themselves on being the go-to source for passionate music fans looking for an immersive listening experience.

VNYL ships hundreds of shipments every day as they serve over 100,000 customers. VNYL’s customers don’t know what records they’re getting each month until their package arrives. VNYL wanted a way to keep the contents of a package a mystery until the delivery.

Letting customers self-serve

By making shipping transparent and accessible 24/7, VNYL decreases their support tickets.

- Customers receive a tracking number through either email, SMS, or within their VNYL account as soon as their monthly package is shipped
- Customers are able to log into their VNYL profile to check on the status of their orders and manage subscription details at any time

Viral post-purchase experiences

Customers are sent a personalized monthly Spotify playlist along with their subscription.

- Using Shippo’s tracking API, after each shipment status updates to “delivered”, VNYL uploads this month’s playlist to the customer’s Spotify account at the same time the physical records are delivered to the customer
- By sending timely post-delivery emails their customers, VNYL has built a community who shares hundreds of unboxing videos every month, garnering thousands of views.
Marley Spoon is a cook-at-home food delivery service that ships Martha Stewart recipes to your doorstep. The team focuses on creating unique weekly menus by combining ingredients sourced from local grocers.

Marley Spoon is available in 7 different countries across North America, Europe and Australia. Customers are able to select the recipes that they want each week and pick their preferred delivery days. Each box comes with fresh ingredients packed in a chilled container with step-by-step cooking instructions.

**Total control from the support center**

Since the shipments are perishable and delivery time is sensitive, Marley Spoon’s support team has total control over logistical operations

- Support tickets are automatically created if there is an issue with the delivery. Some triggers that could create a ticket:
  - Unexpected distribution location
  - Delayed arrival at specific checkpoints
- The support team is able to manually create delivery notifications for individual shipments or for a certain delivery region if there is an unforeseen event impacting shipping (ie: weather conditions)

**Automated shipment notifications**

Customers are always aware about the status of their Marley Spoon orders

- The night before, customers get an email/SMS about their pending delivery tomorrow with the exact delivery time window
- If there are any issues during the delivery, both the customer and a support rep are notified immediately
About Shippo

Shippo is a technology platform that connects businesses to shipping carriers. Using our API and dashboard, businesses are able to retrieve rates, print labels, track shipments, and access carriers the way they need.

**Instant access to shipping**

One API integration for access to deep carrier integrations including real-time rates, generating labels, tracking, returns, customs and more.

**Comprehensive platform**

Leverage Shippo’s scalable shipping API to access a global network of carriers. Shippo offers flexibility in dealing with carrier accounts, payments, and customer support.

**Building blocks for shipping**

Shippo is the shipping layer in your technology stack, providing you the right tools to scale shipping for your business needs and growth.

**Some of our select carriers from around the world:**

- Australia Post
- Canada Post
- Deutsche Post
- DHL
- FedEx
- UPS
- USPS

For more information about Shippo, visit: goshippo.com