



PROFIT SOURCERY

Improving Your Customer Service &
Customer Metrics

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Improving your customer service and making sure your customer metrics are in line with Amazon's expectations is vital if you want to be a successful Amazon seller.

Offering excellent customer service isn't just essential to your customers it's also essential to Amazon. Amazon demands that sellers offer the same outstanding level of service to customers as they do, and that's no small feat. It takes time and effort to offer exemplary customer service but the benefits are well worthwhile if you decide to go that extra mile.

In this guide we'll explain to you:

- The benefits of good customer service and metrics.
- Offer six tips on how to improve your customer service and keep your customer metrics in check.
- How to handle negative seller feedback.
- How to get positive seller feedback.

If you haven't already read it yet, see our guide on "What Are the Amazon Customer Metrics?" It gives a great overview of the customer metrics and how they're closely tied to your customer service.

The Benefits of Excellent Customer Service and Customer Metrics

Before we offer our tips on improving your customer service let's go over some of the important benefits gained from offering excellent customer service. These benefits apply to sellers regardless of whether or not they use Amazon's FBA service. Offering excellent customer service is ultimately the way you can gain a competitive advantage over other sellers, as we'll now explain.

Win the 'Buy Box'

Excellent customer service is crucial to winning the Buy Box. The Buy Box makes you drastically more visible to the millions of daily Amazon customers and that's why it's essential to win. It's estimated that around 80% of all sales on Amazon are done through the Buy Box.

Offering excellent customer service provides two things, it keeps your seller rating high and can help you get positive seller feedback. Providing excellent customer service doesn't win the Buy Box on its own but it goes a long way to doing so. Here are some of the requirements for winning the Buy Box:

- Have a Pro seller account
- Be 'Buy Box Eligible'
- Maintain a high 'Seller Rating'
- Have excellent customer metrics
- Sell new products (and have available stock)

Only sellers with an excellent seller rating win the Buy Box. Amazon aren't going to include sellers who ship products late, cancel orders due to poor stock management or provide faulty products. This means you as a seller need to focus on your customer metrics. Good customer metrics and an excellent seller rating show Amazon that they can trust you with the Buy Box.

Your customer feedback also plays a part. Most Amazon sellers who win the Buy Box will have a feedback approval which is at least 97% positive. If you don't provide great customer service you run the risk of customers leaving you negative feedback.

Increase Your Sales

Offering excellent customer service can drastically increase your sales. Firstly, it increases the likelihood of receiving positive customer feedback. Your customer rating is your social proof to new customers that you can be trusted. If 97% or more of your feedback is positive customers will be far more likely to buy from you. It really is that simple.

If you can provide excellent customer service you will increase the chance of customers coming back to you in the future. Customer loyalty and building a good reputation is very important for a growing business.

Our Top Tips for Improving Customer Service & Metrics

Tip 1: Communicate Quickly With Your Customers

From day 1 you need to keep an eye on your Amazon inbox to make sure you respond to any customer enquiries quickly. Amazon require you to respond to all customer messages within 24 hours 7 days a week. Taking the small amount of time required to be responsive to your customers greatly improves your 'Buyer-Seller Contact Response Time' metric.

If customers make a product or shipping enquiry you need to respond quickly if you want to make a sale. If you take too long the customer might move on and buy from somebody else. If customers take the time to message a seller they expect the seller to be equally responsive. By replying quickly you let the customer know that you are trustworthy and helpful.

If a customer messages you after a sale you still need to reply quickly, after care of a customer is extremely important. If the customer has a problem you need to resolve this promptly to make sure the issue doesn't escalate and result in negative feedback or even an A-to-Z guarantee claim against you.

To be ready for customer messages always make sure that you can access your Amazon seller account. If you're someone who sells frequently you should already be checking your Amazon account hourly for new sales or messages. If you're someone who's just started selling or sells around other commitments then you need to be responsive 'on-the-go'. Amazon have a seller app available for iPhone that can help you out, otherwise you can access Seller Central through any mobile browser. The mobile app will alert you when you receive a customer message or need to take some sort of action via notifications. It is worth logging into your account once every 24 hours to be on the safe side, you need to be sure you haven't missed anything.

Tip 2: Respond to Customers in a Friendly and Professional Manner

This may appear to be an obvious point however there are plenty of sellers who are oblivious to their own communication with customers. Sometimes customers can be frustrating or come across as difficult. Your job as the seller is to approach customers in a friendly manner, regardless of how you truly feel. No question is stupid and you need to take all complaints seriously even if you feel they are unjustified.

You need to read each customer's message carefully. Identify what exactly customers are asking you, don't rush a reply. Once you've done this, write a succinct answer to the customer's question or complaint. This is where being professional comes in. Use the correct grammar, keep the tone friendly and helpful and before you send the message read it over for any errors. Good natured messages (with the correct grammar) from sellers are appreciated by customers and are more likely to result in positive seller feedback.

It's also important to know your rights as a seller. If customers are abusive you have every right to report them to Amazon.

Tip 3: Have a Routine in Place for Shipping Your Products

Shipping products is arguably the most important responsibility sellers have. When a customer pays you for a product it needs to be shipped within 2 days, that's [demanded](#) by Amazon. Your 'Late Dispatch Rate' should be less than 4%, so you don't have much room for error.

You'll need to be organised to make sure your customer gets the product when they expect it, and in the condition they expect. If your product is shipped late then you're far more likely to receive negative seller feedback and in the long turn that can negatively affect your sales.

Regularly checking Seller Central is a must. You need to stay on top of your sales. When sales come in you need to make sure you can quickly access the product that's been bought and get it packed. This requires two things if you're a 'merchant fulfilling' your orders: stock management and plenty of packaging material. Wherever you keep your stock make sure it's accessible (that goes without saying). And make sure that for every product you plan on selling you already have packaging ready.

Being organised needn't be an arduous or difficult task. Whether you use stock management software or the trusty pen and paper is up to you depending on your requirements, just make you you're taking note of stock!

Tip 4: Pack Your Products Properly

If you're fulfilling your orders you need to pack your product to ensure that it's properly protected. It's common sense but there are plenty of sellers out there who cut costs on packaging, and it comes back to bite them. Your Order Defect Rate will suffer if you send products that get damaged during shipping.

If you're sending books, DVDs, CD's or Video Games, make sure your envelope has bubble wrap to protect the contents. If you're shipping anything fragile that can be cracked, chipped or smashed into pieces then it goes without saying that you need to wrap the products in a protective cover (bubble wrap or polystyrene) and then use a good quality box to put the product in.

Please read our guide on 'Handling and Shipping an Order for Merchant Fulfilment' for additional help on how to ship your products securely to customers.

Tip 5: Choose Your Shipping Service Wisely

If you're selling a handful of items then heading to a post office is simple enough. If you're shipping a lot of items you might not have the time to keep visiting post offices throughout the day. This means you may want a courier to help streamline your shipping process. Whatever shipping method you choose it needs to be accessible and flexible to your business needs.

Choosing a courier is completely down to you but make sure you take the time to thoroughly research who you chose to deliver your products. You want your courier to offer the same level of customer service as you do. When looking for potential couriers to use for your business take some time to research:

- Delivery rates (do the couriers have excellent delivery times?)
- Payment terms (Do you have to pay couriers in advance or after delivery?)
- Fuel surcharges
- Evening delivery requests (particularly helpful if you're fitting this around your 9-5 job)
- Collection services (can they pick up any broken items from customers?)
- Maximum delivery measurements (it's worth knowing how much you can send at once)
- Redelivery charges
- Insurance exclusions for glass, china or jewellery
- Minimum quantities for pick up (will the courier take individual deliveries)
- 'Multi-consignments' (some couriers allow multiple parcels to be sent to the same address, for one fee)
- 'Access' Service– pallet pickup / tail lift and other special services (if your product requires it)

Doing some research on couriers will ensure your products get delivered on time and without damage, keeping your 'Order Defect Rate' metric in check. Don't forget that most courier services can offer tracking services so you can know your products have been delivered to your customer. By adding a free tracking service for your customers you could add real value to the customer service you offer.

It's also really important to stress that you need to let Amazon know you've shipped the product to a customer. If Amazon isn't notified within 2 days that a product's been shipped, the Late Dispatch Rate will begin to pass the 4% mark, and have a negative impact on your seller rating.

Tip 6: Consider using Amazon's FBA service

Using the Fulfilment By Amazon (FBA) service is a great way for Amazon sellers to expand their business while looking after their customer metrics. Through FBA, sellers can get Amazon to store, pack and ship their products and handle the customer service.

FBA can help you considerably in improving your customers' experience. Amazon has an incredibly efficient distribution network so when Amazon package and ship products for you they don't turn up late. It also greatly reduces the risk of products being damaged during shipping and the negative impact that damage will have on your seller metrics.

That being said, the condition of the product the customer receives is something of a grey area. If Amazon ships an FBA seller's product to a customer and it's damaged, Amazon collects the product and decides whose fault this is: the sellers or theirs.

If you choose to use the FBA service, you need to ensure that the products you send to Amazon are in the condition you say they are and that the packaging of your products is secure. Here's the ['Prep Matrix'](#) Amazon asks its FBA sellers to follow when sending items to their warehouse.

It is very rare that products get damaged as they reach a customer. As long you accurately describe the products and package them correctly before sending them to Amazon then you can be sure that any damages will not be viewed as your fault.

It's also worth mentioning that with Amazon handling the logistics, your product(s) will never be shipped late ensuring that the 'Late Dispatch Rate' will stay at 0%.

Amazon FBA do take responsibility for customer services, however customers can still contact the seller. This means that it's still essential to check your Seller Central account frequently.

With the huge benefits Amazon's FBA service provides sellers, it is well worth taking more time out to review the service for yourself and see how beneficial it can be for you, especially if your customer metrics aren't where you want them to be. For more information on FBA take a look at our 'What is Amazon's FBA Service?' guide in the Knowledge Base.

Negative Feedback

Negative seller feedback is something all sellers want to avoid. You take pride operating your ecommerce business and receiving negative customer feedback can be a really deflating experience. The good news is that if negative seller feedback is given, it is not always permanent, in some cases it can be removed by Amazon or if you can rectify the problem the customer can remove their own feedback.

How to Handle Negative Seller Feedback

The first thing you have to do when you get negative seller feedback is take it with a big gulp of humility. That's difficult to do, especially if the feedback is personal (we'll discuss this point later) but you have to keep calm and not immediately contact the customer with an angry response. Remember, you're running a business so you need to remain professional. **Don't agitate the situation by angrily contacting the customer.**

A proactive step to take when handling negative feedback is to **offer a direct apology to the customer**. If the product is damaged try and offer a replacement. If the product hasn't shown up, send a new product to the customer. However you approach and handle your apology, you need to be sincere. If a customer feels that you are truly sorry for any inconvenience caused they're far more likely to remove negative seller feedback.

Amazon seller policies are very clear about the way in which you can contact customers. **You cannot email customers directly**. You should keep your customer interactions within Amazon's site. Contacting (or hassling) customers via email with bribes to remove negative seller feedback can lead to your account being suspended. That's not worth one negative piece of feedback.

If you are unable to get rid of negative seller feedback, you've still got one last card to play to resolve the situation to the best of your ability. You will need to **leave a response** to the negative seller feedback. Leaving a response to feedback is all about damage limitation. Through the response you can show your appreciation for the feedback, explain what you have done to resolve the issue and show that you've taken on board the feedback for future improvement

A response is like a PR statement. Don't leave an insincere or sarcastic response, make it genuine. "We're deeply sorry for any inconvenience caused - please note as a result of your feedback we've changed the way we operate to ensure this won't happen again". There's one example but I'm sure you can think of an even better response.

Just note that sarcasm, denial, making accusations against the customer, and 'general ignorance' within your response is as damaging as the feedback itself. It doesn't reassure the people reading the feedback that you're a good seller!

Don't Forget Your Seller Rights...

Some negative feedback is completely unfair and this is where Amazon can come in to help. Any negative seller feedback that focuses on the product can be removed by Amazon. For example, if you receive negative seller feedback because the customer thought the product was 'rubbish' then that is not a reflection on you as a seller. Therefore you can request for Amazon to remove it.

In addition, any seller feedback that is abusive can (and will) be removed by Amazon. As a seller Amazon doesn't expect you to take abuse from customers. If you happen to be the unfortunate recipient of abuse, don't react, just contact Amazon and you should have no issues removing the feedback.

*It's important to highlight that **seller** feedback and **product** feedback are completely different. If a customer leaves negative seller feedback related to a product then Amazon can remove it for you.*

Getting Positive Seller Feedback

Every time a customer orders from you they will be invited to leave feedback on the transaction. Unlike other ecommerce platforms, the majority of customers on Amazon do not leave feedback, most sellers will tell you that only 5-10% of their customers will leave feedback. A good number of positive feedback scores are important as they tell potential customers that you are a reliable seller as well as helping you win the buy box and keeping your seller metrics in the green.

You cannot force your customers to leave you feedback and Amazon have strict policies regarding asking customers for feedback but there are a few things you can do to encourage it. If you are fulfilling orders yourself you might want to include a short note in the package for your customer, something simple thanking them for their purchase and expressing your hope that they are happy with the order.

You can then end this by pointing them in the right direction to leave feedback on your service. You cannot request that they leave you 5 star feedback or offer any sort of reward for them doing so but you can simply ask that they leave some feedback. If you are fulfilling your orders on time and packaging them well you should be getting 5 stars anyway!

Amazon will send your customer one email sometime after they have received their order requesting feedback on your behalf. Nobody likes to be bombarded by emails from the same person and sending multiple messages is more likely to result in negative feedback. This is why you are not able to email your customers outside of the Amazon messaging system. Amazon does allow you to send one message through Seller Central requesting feedback.

If you are just starting out and trying to build up some feedback to get the ball rolling it may be worth tracking your parcels to customers and sending them a request as soon as it has been received. You can express gratitude for the order and let them know you are happy to help if there are any questions or issues and finally explain that customer feedback is important for your business and direct them to a link to leave feedback.