

Here's to a new kind of service level:

Everyone wants great service when they buy something. But as with many things, this is usually the exception rather than the rule.

It's always a pleasure when a salesperson really tries to make sure you get what you're looking for, or helps you understand why X is better than Y - even if it costs you less! The personal communication, the interest and the passion, is a skill used by good sales people to make 'the deal' appear to work for both sides. It also seems to make the transaction personal and 'real'.

These encounters always remain in the mind and why 'word of mouth' recommendations carry so much weight. It is therefore surprising that many companies are now using technology to distance themselves from such personal communication. Either by outsourcing any personal contact to offshore call centres using staff who communicate via menu driven conversations, or via overly complex websites with navigation that confuses rather than informs.

It remains a mystery why organisations continue to squander the incredible opportunities provided by technology to engage with customers intelligently. It is also an approach we do not intend to waste with OnOnShipping.

Technology should be an enabling party in any conversation. It should help to engage and connect participants, provide clarity and context and finally, remain as an unobtrusive observer - ready to advise or alert if required.

This is the philosophy we are trying to follow as we augment our operational systems. Customers should have the option to get automatic updates about the things that are important to them. They should be alerted automatically through the device that is most appropriate and convenient for them. They should NOT be overwhelmed by a blizzard of irrelevant messages, adverts and unnecessary junk that frequently obscures those that are important and should get through.

We will always try and look at the services we provide to our customers through their eyes. If we wouldn't be prepared to accept them, then neither should our clients.

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