



## Chris Dunn Consulting

### How to Respond When Your Best Customers Stop Calling You



Why aren't we receiving as many calls as we used to?

It is a familiar question in companies who have enjoyed great success in up and cross selling their customers over the phone.

Businesses from banks to boiler manufacturers have all transformed their service centres into valuable sales operations bringing in much needed additional profit.

But recently, this rich source of revenue seems to be drying up for many companies. So, what is going on? And more importantly, what can you do about it?

The simple answer is that your customer's phone is increasingly likely to be used to interact with you online rather than calling you in person. The inexorable rise of the Smartphone has made this possible, as has the rapid development of digital content in all its forms.

Many businesses face a difficult dilemma. Ideally they'd like their customers to call rather than to click, but either they can't afford to keep their call centres open 24 hours per day, or online competitors are already taking business away.

So what can you do about this conundrum?



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## **1. Accept that we live in a multi-channel world where customers have options, including the choice to never ring you, however much you would like them to.**

Believe it or not, there are still companies out there that cling desperately to their proven telesales business model, working ever harder to corral a diminishing number of phone calls into teams that are pressured to continually improve their performance. Marginal gains are great to have, but the focus needs to be on increasing the total size of the opportunity and that means leveraging other channels.

## **2. Strategically build your digital footprint and capability.**

Customers are actively seeking a two-way online conversation and increasingly looking to share it with others. You may have an ultra-efficient call centre, but do you have an equally impressive digital presence that is generating awareness, interest, engagement, sales and stellar reviews? If not, it is still not too late to act.

## **3. Reinvent your business model so that your phone and online interactions are optimised to work together.**

Customer preference or business contact strategy may favour one channel over another and it is of course important to ensure that phone and digital can operate independently. However, the real power of multi-channel lies in integrating the customer journey – especially for businesses that struggle to match their telephone conversions online.

This is often the case with optional add-on products or multi-faceted service offerings that rely on skilled advisors to guide customers through features and benefits and close out sales. Virtual Assistants and Live Chat can be helpful in deepening the online conversation as can the use of call backs where the customer is engaged and chooses to take the conversation off-line.

In summary, it is time to obsess less about the number of calls received and focus more on the total opportunity to present products to customers at a time of their choosing and through a medium with which they are most comfortable.

Smart businesses have transformed their call centres into contact centres that support phone and digital traffic responding to their customers' needs in a holistic way that increases engagement, sales and satisfaction.