Advancing Product Development with Customer Service

Customer service is a gold mine for product feedback. However, few product teams take full advantage of the information that customer service teams absorb on a daily basis. By leveraging data, your customer service team can work with the product team to **drastically improve the customer experience**.

Why are customers experiencing problems?

The first step in gathering product feedback is identifying which product areas give customers a hard time. Most customer service teams know intuitively which areas are problematic, but **where's the data to support these observations**? Analyzing your backlog and average number of activities per resolution by case reason can quantify these hunches.

1

Why are customers submitting cases?

The easiest way to gauge product issues is to **find out what's causing customers to submit cases.** Take a look at your backlog by case reason (Fig. 1) to discover which product areas are leading to the most case submissions. These product areas are hindering the customer experience. To see what's clogging your backlog and leaving customers with unresolved cases, identify product areas that have significantly more submissions than resolutions.

Fig. 1 **Backlog (Submissions and Resolutions)**
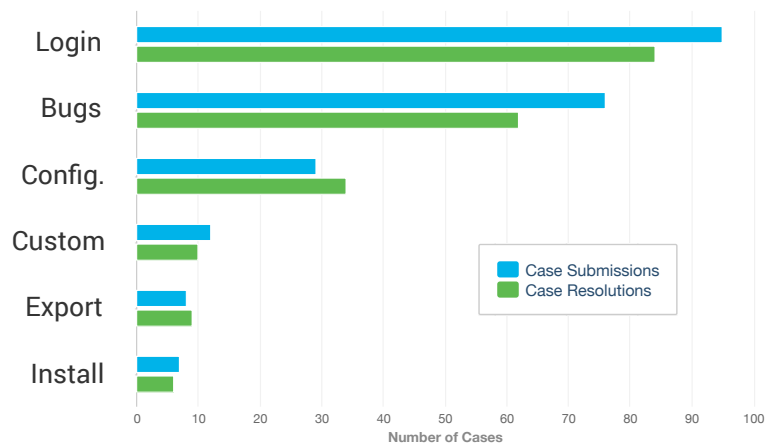
2

Why do customers have to expend effort?

The most dangerous product issues require work from customers in order to be resolved. By looking at the average number of activities per resolution by case reason (Fig. 2), you can see which product areas create the most back and forth between customers and your service team. These product areas **make life harder for customers** by wasting their valuable time on conversations with customer service reps.

Fig. 2 **Average Activities per Resolution**
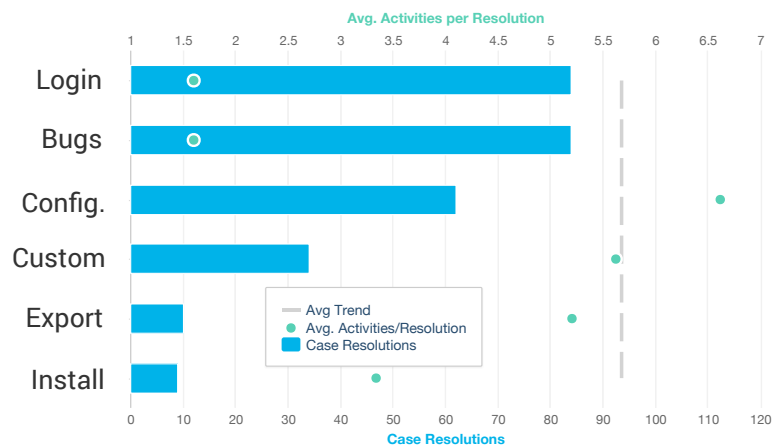
What's slowing down your team?

There are some product areas that are not only problematic for customers, but also for your customer service team. Chances are, your reps have a sense of which product areas result in complex problems, but how can these intuitions be measured? Looking at first contact resolution rate and time to resolution by case reason can provide the data you need.

3 | Which problems aren't easily resolved?

Analyze your first contact resolution (FCR) rate by case reason (Fig. 3) to reveal which problems your team isn't able to resolve easily. Find out which product areas have the lowest FCR, meaning they are resolved in one touch least frequently. These product areas should be improved so that your customer service team can be more efficient and your customers can have their problems resolved more quickly, **making them happier**.

Fig. 3 **First Contact Resolution Rate**

4 | Which problems take the longest to resolve?

The most painful product areas for your team are time sucks. Discover which product areas your team spends the most time on by examining your time to resolution by case reason (Fig. 4). Pay close attention to cases that spend the most time in the *Open Stage*, meaning your team takes a while to resolve them. **These cases are troublesome for your reps** because they slow them down and make them less efficient.

Fig. 4 **Time to Resolution (By Stage)**
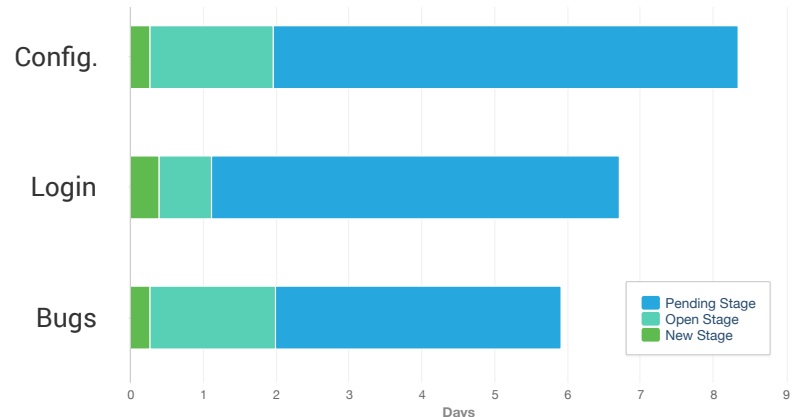
5 | What are customers telling your reps?

While analyzing the aforementioned metrics to quantify the impact of product issues will provide data to justify product improvements, collecting qualitative feedback from your reps can help complement your claims. **Ask reps what they've been hearing from customers** and which areas of the product they would like to see improved. What they say may surprise you.

How to Communicate with Your Product Team

So you've identified problematic product areas – now what? How can you convey your findings to the product team and persuade them to make improvements? You'll **make a more convincing argument** by providing data to support your observations, encouraging symbiosis, and engaging with them regularly.

6 / Let the Data Speak for Itself

The only way to get the product team to truly understand the scope of product issues is to show them the data that backs it up. Share reports with them to clearly quantify the impacts that product issues have on your customers and your service team. This will **help the product team put things into perspective** and understand why changes need to be made.

7 / Help Each Other Out

By combining forces, customer service and product teams can achieve the common goal of improving the customer experience. Speak with the product team about how this cross-departmental collaboration can **pay dividends for your business in the long run**. Each day, your customer service team hears valuable feedback from customers that can help improve your product. And the better the product, the less work your customer service team has to do. It's symbiosis at its finest.

8 / Build an Ongoing Relationship

As your product evolves and new product issues surface, you should maintain close communication with the product team. Relaying quantitative and qualitative findings to the product team should be an endless process. There will always be room for improvement in your product as the needs and wants of customers adapt over time. Setting up automatic weekly email reports of relevant metrics is an easy way to keep this relationship top of mind. But you should really be meeting in person with the product team monthly – or at least quarterly – to close the loop. Together, you have the power to **drastically improve the customer experience by refining your product**.

The Takeaway

A customer service team that isn't informing its product team of known issues is only doing half of its job. Your team receives feedback from customers on a daily basis, so you know best what areas of the product are causing problems for customers. **You have access to all the data you need** to validate product issues and justify allocating resources towards improving the weakest areas of your product. Working in sync with the product team will help you improve the customer experience and prevent certain types of cases from being opened in the future. It's a win-win situation.