



How Stand-out Brands Weather the Storm during Critical Spikes in Traffic



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What do Pacquiao vs. Mayweather fight, Back-to-school, severe weather and the holidays have in common? Urgency. And when there is sense of panic or urgency, spikes in customer contact occur. Your audience wants something and they want it now. These are critical events, also to you and your brand. Customers have high expectations of not only your products, but your ability to respond quickly to questions, and to the customers' satisfaction.

During the Mayweather vs Pacquiao fight, cable and satellite companies experienced an enormous volume of Pay Per View (PPV) orders. Like most high profile events, there were long hold times, some brands experienced outages, and unfamiliar error codes popped up when opting to order online. It's true that in some cases, traffic jams are inescapable however, the way in which your brand interacts with your audience and provides answers here is key.

Here's an example: One brand in the telecommunications industry had already deployed a Virtual Assistant and saw the interactions double during this popular event. A Virtual Assistant (also known as a Virtual Agent) works similar to a live chat however, the end user interacts with an Artificial Intelligence (AI) rather than a human. The Virtual Assistant answered questions like: how to access, help with ordering and help with viewing. This same company leveraged the Virtual Assistant during a major outage in 2013, and the conversations doubled. Guiding viewers through a process often requires more hand-holding than typical search or FAQ experience. Often, a procedural document appears uninteresting and 'takes too long' to read and define. By breaking up these monotonous steps and guiding the customer through a procedure, a Virtual Assistant is the closest to human experience available.

\$50.17 Billion

The amount of money consumers spent online during the 2014 back to school shopping season.
(emarketer)

Lessons learned from the field:

- **Preempt support channels.** Use self-service as a first line of defense. Interactive and diagnostic solutions are key for increased customer satisfaction and reduction in escalations.
- **Share and promote your self service offerings via social media, through the IVR, mobile applications, and more.** When wait times are high, your customers may need a reminder that self-service options are available, and easy to use.
- **Focus on a single point of search.** Make it easy for your audience to find videos, articles, community posts, etc. all in one place.
- **Capture and monitor the voice of the customer.**
- **Employ solutions that can be updated quickly.** For most organizations, making updates is time consuming and requires multi-level approval. Self-service solutions such as Virtual Assistants can be updated in minutes.
- **Leverage solutions that can be replicated across channels such as social media, in the call center, and on mobile devices.** This creates brand familiarity with your audience, and simplifies your job by allowing you to make one update that is replicated across your customers' preferred channels. According to eMarketer (Lessons from Holiday Shopping 2014—What You Need to Know for 2015, in 2014), mobile generated more than 50% of website traffic for some big US retailers in December 2014. Not all Self-service options are created equal; in other words, leverage self-service solutions that are intuitive and enhance the mobile experience, not weigh it down.

According to Gartner, "Using Virtual Agents [Virtual Assistants] can do a number of things. First of all, it might answer the question outright. Second it passes the context to a human if it can't resolve it, and that shortens the time of answer. But the third thing it does, that may be just as valuable, is it begins to surface the questions that your clients have about you that you haven't solved with your search engine or knowledge base. And so it helps you then create that new set of knowledge for the customers. So it is very good for the hygiene of your knowledge management system or to understand your customers' wants or needs." Michael Maoz, Gartner. (Neil Davey. "How to make virtual agents a self-service gateway for customer relationships." MYcustomer. 28 July 2014.

According to eMarketer, **mobile** generated more than **50% of website traffic** for some big US retailers in December 2014. Not all Self-service options are created equal; in other words, **leverage self-service solutions** that are **intuitive** and **enhance the mobile experience**, not weigh it down.

Regardless of your industry's high volume season, critical weather challenge, or event related spike, it's important to make self-service your customers' preferred channel. If the masses are calling you, there will be traffic jams. Virtual Assistants are trained, first-responders that speak to your audience with approved content and in with your brand's integrity in mind. They are interactive and diagnostic, and capture valuable and actionable customer data.

Here's a story about how a multinational leader in networking weathered a severe storm:

A huge storm affected the Call Center in the Philippines. Power was out for 5 days. This particular company published a Virtual Assistant on its website. The volume of interactions reached 573,000, as it was the only option available to customers for support. In this case, phone was not available, live chat operators could not respond, and the standard knowledgebase articles and FAQs would not have been able to manage the need for an interactive and diagnostic experience.

Brainstorm:

How would you respond to your audience during a major storm or outage?

More than **40%** of the year's ecommerce sales are **generated from back to school and holiday shopping** combined during just one third of the calendar months.

(emarketer)

About noHold

noHold is a privately held company established in 1999 and is headquartered in Milpitas, CA, USA (Silicon Valley). noHold is the acknowledged leader in Web based Self-service solutions with a mission to deliver real answers to real questions - real fast. Simple to use, easy to implement and as close to human as you can get, noHold turns automated customer support into cognitive customer interaction. noHold customers include Toshiba, Lenovo, Cisco and a host of industry leaders. More information can be found at

www.nohold.com



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