tidio

2026 Holiday Customer Service Blueprint

Proven strategies for peak season success



Black Friday & Cyber Monday

Did you know that customer service requests can increase by 65% during Black Friday and Cyber Monday compared to a typical day? [15]

This staggering surge can overwhelm even the most prepared customer support teams, as they struggle to manage a flood of repetitive questions, keep response times low, and maintain high levels of customer satisfaction–all at the same time.

However, this surge also presents a critical opportunity to boost revenue and acquire new customers, with over 87% of consumers shopping during Black Friday and 61 million people globally purchasing from Shopify-powered brands [16].

Drawing from our experience supporting over 300,000 businesses worldwide, we understand the importance of a seamless customer experience, especially for ecommerce companies and SMBs. We've developed strategies that help businesses overcome customer service challenges during peak shopping times.

In this ebook, we'll share practical tips and insights from industry experts to help you manage customer demands during these critical periods. Learn how to navigate and thrive during the busiest seasons with our proven advice.

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Part I

Understanding the challenges

Chapter 1

The Black Friday surge and its impact on customer service

If you think that Black Friday and Cyber Monday are just major sales events–think again. The Cyberweek, kicking in right after Thanksgiving, offers businesses **a prime chance to boost year-end profits.**

134M people shopped online during Black Friday 2023 [1], spending $38 billion [2] **$38B**

21% of people do a night shopping session and make their purchases from 12 am until 6 am on Black Friday morning

18% shop late in the evening on Black Friday

20% make their purchases throughout the weekend after the event [3]

15% complete most of their Black Friday shopping on Thanksgiving evening

Biggest challenge of the Holiday season

There is one thing you can't forget–as sales skyrocket, so do the demands on your customer service teams, who must be ready to handle a marathon of frequently asked questions.

To fully capitalize on Black Friday's potential, brands need to ensure their customer support systems–and agents–are equipped to maintain high-quality service, even under pressure.

Customers frequently want detailed information about:

32%	Product availability, specifications, and compatibility
20%	Order status and shipping updates
4%	Return and exchange policies

Add to that managing a flood of inquiries without delays, ensuring websites and apps stay functional under heavy traffic, and efficiently handling a surge in returns and refunds under tight timelines.

Consequences of poor customer service

If businesses fail to stand up to the challenge–it can backfire.

44%

of customers say good customer service is crucial during Black Friday

Poor customer service during critical events, including Black Friday and Cyber Monday, can lead to a surge of negative reviews–and these remain online long after the sales are over.

The outcome? Decrease in sales and damaged customer loyalty. People remember bad experiences and are less likely to return–in fact, according to research, 1 in 3 customers [4] will leave a brand after just one bad experience.

With so many shoppers actively searching for great deals, there is only one solution–online businesses should prepare to meet this surge in demand.

Here's how to do it.

Part II

Pre-Black Friday preparation

Chapter 2

Creating clear policies

Prevent unpleasant surprises with return and exchange policies

Imagine an international shopper browsing your website during BFCM sales, eager to buy a product. They check your FAQ for details on international shipping and return policies, but the information is outdated or missing. Uncertain if it's safe to order, they abandon their cart and you lose a sale. Not the best scenario, right?

To kick things off smoothly this shopping season, clearly defining your return and exchange policies is crucial. Lay out the specific time frames, conditions, and procedures in simple, straightforward language.

Example

If you're selling electronics, specify if items must be unopened and in original packaging for a return. This transparency helps prevent customer dissatisfaction and disputes during the hectic shopping period.

Pro-tip

Create a returns and exchanges FAQ dedicated specifically for BFCM deals and make it visible on your website. This will not only reduce the number of customer inquiries but also allow customers to quickly find the information they need.

"Guests today don't always want to call and speak to someone when they just have a simple question. They'd rather try to find the answer on the website by themselves."



Jackelyn Dacanay,
Marketing Director at Bella Santé

Handle the unexpected with ease by laying out shipping, fulfillment, and lost package protocols

Pre-Christmas shopping season calls for timely deliveries. Clearly outline the expected delivery times, the steps you will take in the event of delays, and the procedures for reporting and resolving instances of lost packages. Make these policies straightforward and easy to find on your website.

Example

On each product page, right beside the price, display a clear notice: “Estimated delivery if you order today: X business days.” By providing this information upfront, you set clear expectations and reduce customer queries. This feature is particularly appreciated during high-demand periods like BFCM week.

Pro-tip

Work closely with your shipping partners ahead of time to prepare for the increased volume. If you’re selling home goods, coordinate with your logistics partners to make sure they are equipped to handle an influx of large deliveries.

Examine past data and trends to delight your customers

Leverage historical data and market trends to anticipate what customers will want during BFCM. Before the Black Friday frenzy begins, supercharge your FAQ section with answers tailored to the big sale. Discuss common queries like special promotions, price cuts, and your return policy for sale items. This strategic move lets shoppers self-serve the information they need, without bogging down your customer service.

Example

If you run a cosmetics store and saw a surge in demand for certain skincare bundles last year, stock up on those items, extract common queries about them and prepare for similar inquiries.

Pro-tip

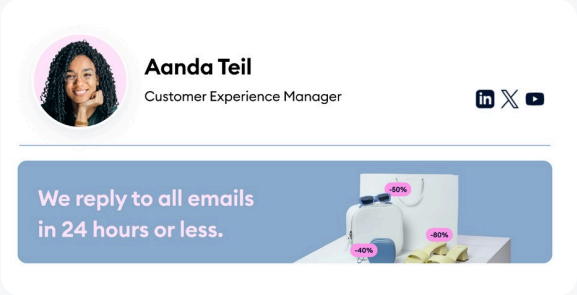
Review chat transcripts from previous Black Fridays to identify common themes and questions. Use this data to make your FAQ section as comprehensive and relevant as possible. Additionally, you can use this data to train AI chatbots, ensuring they are equipped to handle customer inquiries efficiently and provide accurate responses based on past interactions.

Prevent impatience with clear wait times communication

During the BFCM rush, clear communication about wait times is essential. Use automated responses and updates to inform customers about their query status and expected resolution time.

Example

If your online fashion store is experiencing high traffic, consider adding a statement to your email signature, such as “We reply to all emails in 24 hours or less.” This sets clear expectations for response times, keeping customers informed and reducing frustration. Additionally, you can send out real-time status updates via email or website announcements through platforms such as Parcel Panel to notify customers of any potential delays.



Pro-tip

Use on-hold messaging that provides helpful information, like where to find order tracking or return details on your website. This way, even while waiting, customers are still receiving value.

Craft step-by-step shopping guides

To smooth out your customer's shopping experience, create easy-to-follow guides showing how to get the best deals and finalize their purchases. Use clear, concise instructions complemented by visuals like screenshots or infographics, making the shopping process a breeze.

Example

Consider creating a guide that shows how a customer can use filters on your product pages to find the best tech deals swiftly, add them to the cart, and check out within a few minutes. This enhances user experience and likely increases the chance of a sale.

Pro-tip

Make these guides easily accessible on your website, such as a dedicated "Help" or "Support" section linked in a prominent place during Black Friday. Also, consider offering downloadable PDFs for customers who prefer an offline reference.

Read more about BFCM statistics in detailed report on holiday season trends

Open report

Chapter 3

Essential tools for high-service volume

Improve efficiency with the right customer service toolstack

Your customer service tools need to work in perfect sync to handle the flood of customer inquiries during Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

Make sure your customer service platform is ready for the surge, providing a unified view of every customer interaction. If a customer checks their order status through a chatbot and later follows up by email, your team should have all the details at their fingertips for a smooth, informed response.

Look for a tool that meets all your needs and goes beyond basic functionality. It should seamlessly integrate with your existing systems, especially your ecommerce platform.

Test integrations for smooth operation

Before the BFCM rush, it's crucial to test all your integrations to make sure everything runs smoothly. Start by creating a detailed testing plan that covers different scenarios and includes stress tests to simulate high traffic.

For instance -> if you're running an online beauty store, test how your payment gateway handles a sudden surge in orders, or how your inventory system updates when multiple items are purchased at once.

Involve key team members in these tests to get a full picture of your systems' performance and spot areas for improvement. This preparation helps prevent surprises, keeps your operations running smoothly, and keeps clients happy.

Must-have features of customer service platforms

Features	What they do
Automatic workflows	Automate complex tasks through predefined rules, ensuring inquiries are routed and resolved efficiently
AI & chatbots	Use artificial intelligence and automation to handle customer inquiries and automate responses in a conversational manner
Multichannel support	Manage customer interactions across various channels (email, chat, social media)
Views	Organize inquiries and tickets based on criteria like priority, status, or department
Integrations	Connect with CRM systems, ecommerce platforms, and social media
Reporting & analytics	Gain insights into customer interactions and agent performance to identify areas for improvement

> “Lyro AI Chatbot offers our customers 24h support and gives them enough information to go through the website.”



Daniel Reid,
Co-founder & CEO of Suitor

Part III

The strategies

BFCM strategies and tools

Strategy	Tool to use
Scaling customer service without extra hiring	AI chatbots Rule-based chatbots
Turning traffic into customers	AI chatbots Rule-based chatbots
Managing chaos with views and automation	Custom views Ticketing automation Rule-based chatbots

Can't keep up with customer queries? Automate your support with Lyro AI agent

Get started free

Get a demo

Chapter 4

Scaling customer service without extra hiring

Role of AI and chatbots in customer service

During major sales events like Black Friday, small stores typically receive around 1.1 customer inquiries per $100 in sales, while large stores handle about 0.4 inquiries for the same amount.[17]

Based on these rates, if the highest volume sales minute on Shopify during the 2023 BFCM reached $4.2 million, this could result in over 16,800 customer inquiries from orders made in that minute alone. This highlights the need for businesses to be ready for a surge in customer inquiries during peak times.

AI can be a game-changer in this scenario.

Firstly, AI chatbots can bridge the gap by covering conversations outside business hours. The AI works around the clock, responding to inquiries during offline hours, which eases the load on your support team and reduces the number of tickets waiting for a response.

But the real advantage is that you don't need a full implementation to see significant results. With just a few days of setup and using your existing FAQ, AI can solve 50% of your questions right away and handle up to 85% of routine inquiries, passing complex issues to human agents when needed.

It's crucial to start early, setting up the AI before the BFCM surge hits, so you can test and refine it in advance, ensuring smooth performance during peak times.

The impact of AI on customer service during BFCM 2023

AI saved online businesses

5,135 hours of work

Equivalent to ~214 days or ~57% of a year

And customers appreciate the help of AI as well–

60%	of users believe that AI can improve customer experience, effectively answer questions, and make customer support easier [3]

One thing is certain–AI in customer support has rapidly evolved from a novelty during the 2023 holidays to a competitive necessity in 2026, especially as peak sales events drive a surge in inquiries requiring high-quality service.

This growth is evident in our internal research, which shows a 47% increase in companies planning to use AI for customer support during this Cyberweek compared to last year. As demand for AI-driven customer service continues to rise, businesses are recognizing that leveraging AI is no longer optional–it's essential for maintaining a competitive edge and delivering the efficient, responsive service that customers now expect.

Use cases for AI chatbots

Most common customer queries during BFCM

32%	Product availability, specifications, and compatibility
20%	Order status and shipping updates
4%	Return and exchange policies

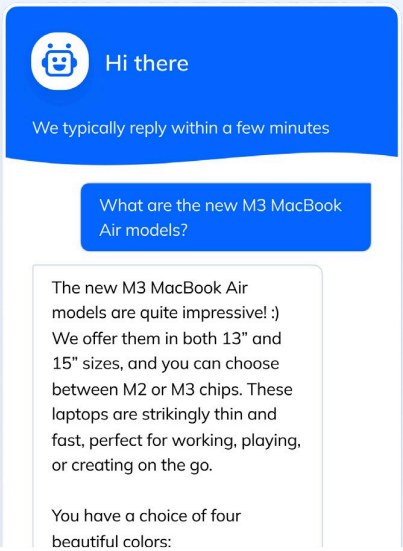
Product availability, specifications, and compatibility

During the frenzy of Black Friday and Cyber Monday (BFCM), **nearly 32% of inquiries revolve around product questions.** This is when your ecommerce platform needs to shine.

Your customer service team should be ready to handle any questions about your products. By training an AI chatbot with this knowledge, you can ensure that common questions get answered instantly, 24/7. This way, no customer is left waiting, and everyone gets the help they need right away.

Example

If a customer is curious about the difference between two similar laptop models, your AI chatbot can quickly pull up a comparison, highlighting key features and availability and even linking them to customer reviews.



Training AI chatbots with answers to common BFCM questions, such as product specifications, comparisons, and discount info not only speeds up the response time but also personalizes the shopping experience.

Like this, your chatbot becomes a virtual guide, walking customers through their purchase journey, from answering questions about a limited-time offer to suggesting complementary products. This immediate assistance boosts customer satisfaction and significantly reduces the chances of them leaving your site without making a purchase.

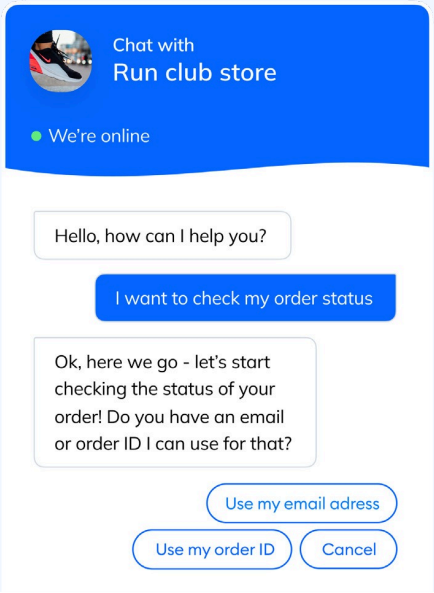
Automating the “where is my order” and shipping questions

During Black Friday and Cyber Monday (BFCM), handling the surge of **“Where is my order?” and shipping questions, which make up 20% of all inquiries,** is key to keeping customers happy. With 83% of users preferring immediate assistance [5], integrating AI chatbots with your order tracking system can be a game-changer.

These chatbots can instantly provide real-time updates on order status, reducing customer anxiety and freeing up your support team.

Example

If a customer wants to know when their new headphones will arrive, the AI chatbot can quickly retrieve and share shipping details directly from your ecommerce platform, such as Shopify.



To optimize efficiency, set up automated notifications at key shipping stages–like when an order is shipped or delivered–to keep customers informed and reduce the need for them to ask.

Pro-tip

Make sure your chatbot is always connected to real-time tracking data to offer the most current information, ensuring a smooth and satisfying shopping experience during BFCM.

"I'm so much happier because we can trust that the customer service is being taken care of by the AI chatbot."

Daniel Reid,
Co-founder and CEO of Suitor

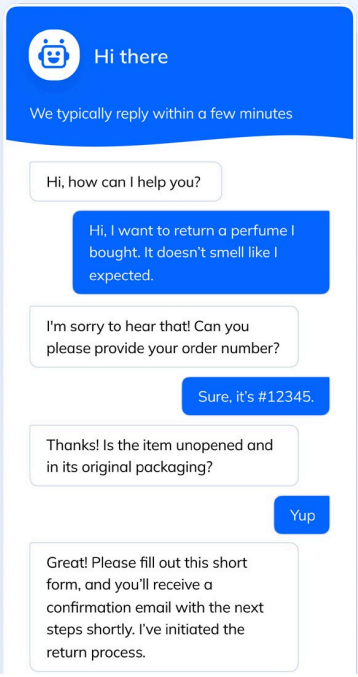


Return and exchange policies

Return queries make up 4% of all common shoppers' questions. By using AI chatbots for returns, you can efficiently inform shoppers about return policies and guide them through the entire return process. The chatbot can provide detailed instructions on how to pack the return, where to send it, and add any other necessary information so the customers have everything they need.

Example

Imagine a customer who wants to return an item they purchased online. Instead of navigating a complicated process, they simply ask your chatbot for help. The bot walks them through each step, from explaining the return process to providing directions to the nearest return facility, turning a potentially frustrating task into a seamless experience.



This kind of streamlined return process does more than just simplify the customer experience–it builds loyalty. A hassle-free return experience encourages customers to return to your store, knowing they won't face any difficulties if they need to send something back. In fact, a smooth return process can make the difference between a one-time buyer and a repeat customer.

Pro-tip

Set up an AI-human handoff that can easily pass more complex questions to human agents. This way, the AI handles the basics, while customers with trickier issues still get the personal touch they need.

Chapter 5

Turning traffic into customers

You will drive more traffic during the Cyberweek, sure–but driving traffic alone isn't enough. You also need to convert those visitors into paying customers to generate sales and build a larger customer base.

And if you are worried about chatbots not being able to cater to your clients, fret not–

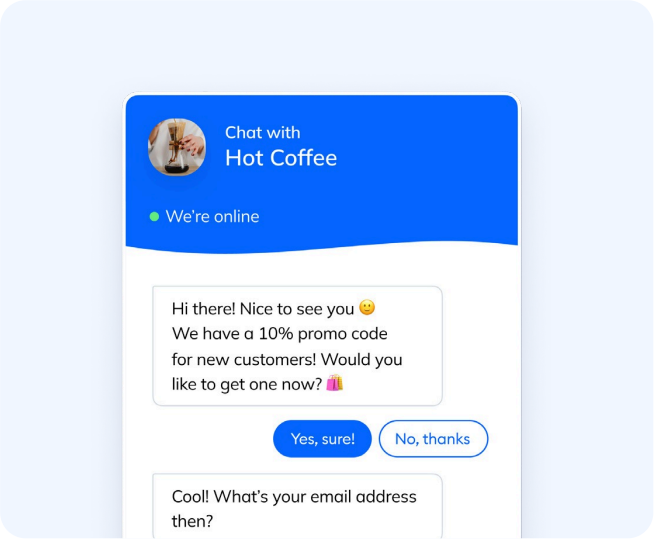
$51B

During the 2023 Cyber Week, AI helped drive $51 billion in global online sales through personalized offers, product recommendations, and AI-powered chat services[18]

Implement reactive chatbots to boost sales

Don't forget–during the Black Friday frenzy, your store will be up against countless others. With so many options and limited time, it's crucial to be proactive in standing out from the crowd.

Imagine having a virtual sales assistant that can proactively engage your visitors where they are at and offer personalized recommendations. That's the power of event-based automation! They are designed to trigger responses based on specific actions, so users receive relevant information and the best deals without even asking for it.

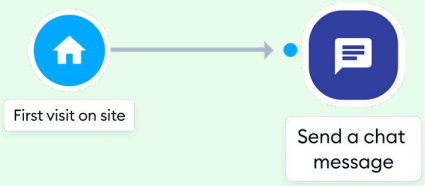


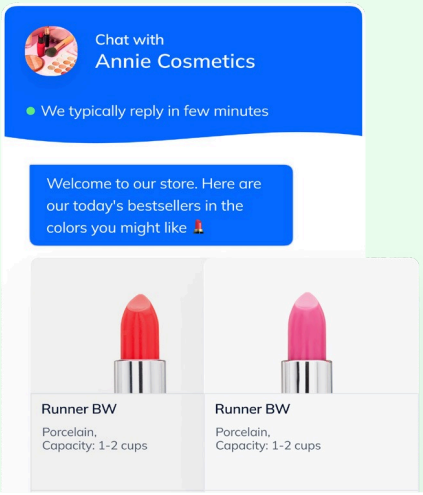
Example

A customer adds items to their cart, but then they compare your offer to others and get distracted, leaving without completing the purchase. With an event-based automation, you can set up a trigger that automatically sends a message with a link to their abandoned cart. To sweeten the deal, you could even offer a special discount code to encourage them to complete their purchase.

Pro-tip

You can also use event-based flows to provide your customers with relevant product recommendations based on browsing and purchasing history.





> “We made $66,000 in sales from Tidio’s chatbot-based product pop-ups alone. That’s someone’s salary right there. The fact that an AI tool was able to generate that on its own is mind-blowing.”

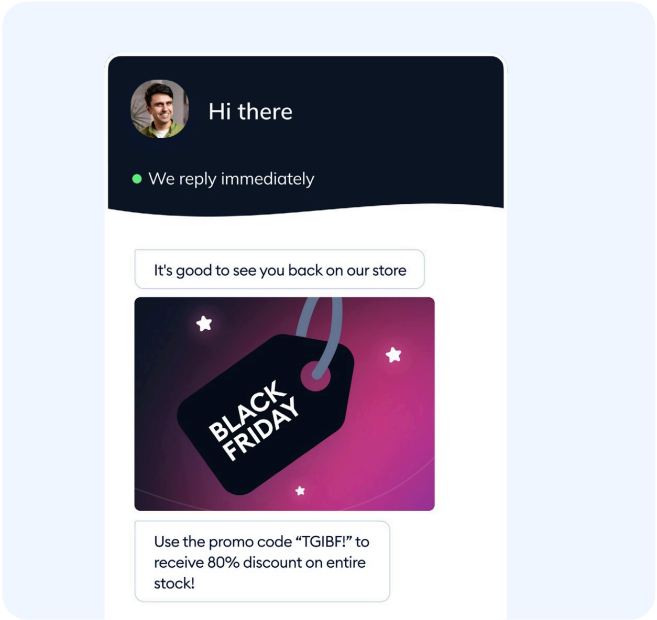


Jackelyn Dacanay,
Marketing Director at Bella Santé

Cherish loyal customers

Recognizing and rewarding loyal customers is essential for any ecommerce business. Research from Forbes reveals that existing customers have a 60 to 70% chance of making a purchase, compared to just 5 to 20% for new prospects. [9] This highlights the importance of engaging with returning customers, especially during peak shopping events like Black Friday.

To enhance customer loyalty, implement chatbot flows that specifically cater to your returning clients. Set up a chatbot to greet them warmly upon returning to your website and give special discount.



Example

If a customer is in a customers' group that frequently buys athletic gear, the chatbot could offer exclusive early access to a sale on new running shoes or fitness apparel, making them feel valued and appreciated.

Here are other effective strategies to engage loyal customers with chatbot flows:

Time-sensitive discounts

You can create urgency with limited-time discount codes that encourage quick action. For instance, a message could say, "Thank you for being a loyal customer! Enjoy 20% off your next purchase, valid for the next 48 hours!"

Exclusive offers

Provide loyal customers with access to special promotions or products before they are available to the general public. This could include a sneak peek at a new collection or an invitation to a members-only sale.

By incorporating these engaging elements, you not only enhance the shopping experience but also foster a deeper connection with your customers, encouraging repeat purchases and long-term loyalty.

Chapter 6

Managing chaos with views and automation

> “Integrating automation into our customer service has been transformative. With Tidio, our team can handle customer inquiries, manage chatbots, and navigate various features with greater ease. The improved user experience has had a positive impact on our team’s efficiency.”
>
> Isabelle Wålinder Isovic,
> Inbound Marketing Specialist at Wulff Beltton

Using custom ticket views to prioritize interactions

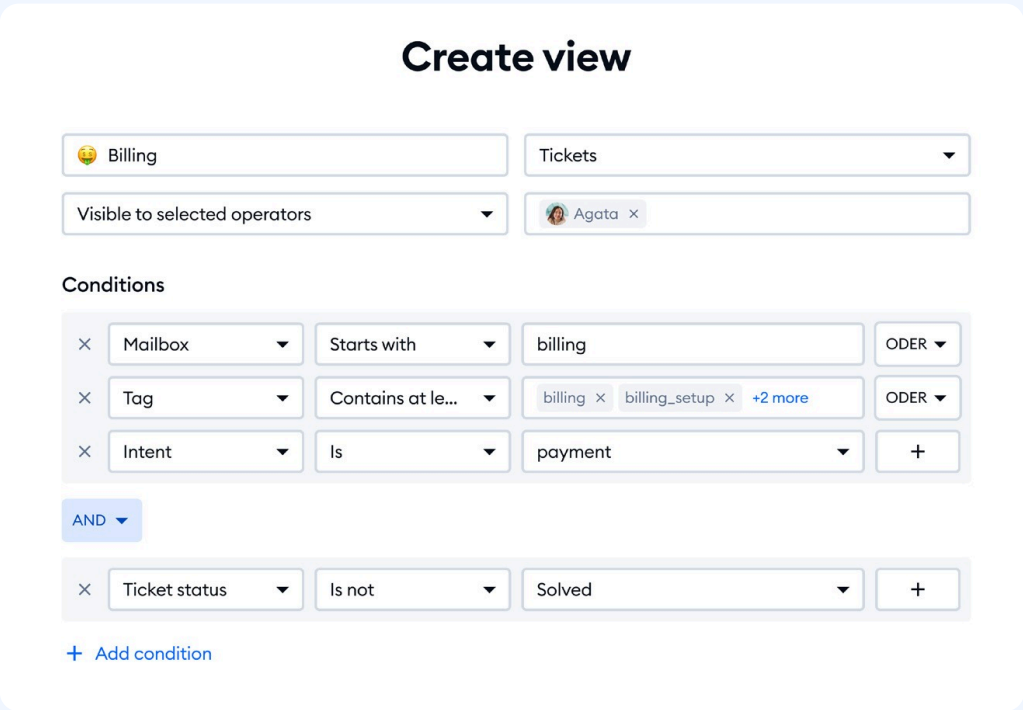
Custom views are a simple yet essential ticketing function that helps bring order to the chaos that many companies experience when they rely on tools like Gmail for customer communication. This feature is especially valuable for high-intensity periods like the Holiday season, when managing high volumes of emails can quickly become overwhelming.

Without a structured system, support agents might struggle to find and prioritize urgent customer issues, leading to delays and frustration.

Example

If you sell electronics, you might have separate views for inquiries related to laptops, smartphones, and home appliances. This makes it easier for your team to quickly identify and respond to messages about a particular product line.

This approach helps your team manage their workload more effectively, ensuring that the most pressing issues are addressed first. In ecommerce, this could mean quickly responding to a high-value customer asking about the status of a large order or prioritizing inquiries about a popular product that's currently out of stock.



Use automated conversations assign to manage team workload

Imagine it's Black Friday, and your customer support team is drowning in a flood of inquiries. Without a system in place, some agents are overwhelmed with too many requests, while others have barely any work.

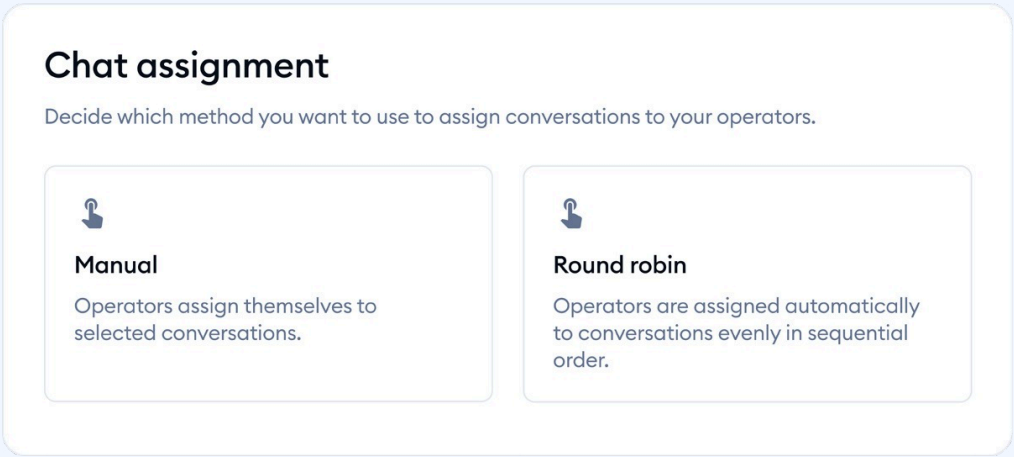
This is where auto-assign comes in as a game-changer. By automatically distributing customer inquiries among your team, auto-assign ensures that everyone shares the workload evenly.

Example

On Black Friday, a popular online electronics retailer faces a surge in customer inquiries. Without auto-assign, some agents are overwhelmed with multiple chats, while others have too few, leading to delays and frustration. By using auto-assign, the retailer evenly distributes inquiries among agents based on workload, ensuring quick responses and preventing burnout. Auto-assign keeps customers satisfied and support teams efficient, even during peak sales events.

Pro-tip

Automatic assignment offers flexibility by efficiently routing customer inquiries to the right agents during high-traffic periods like Black Friday or major promotions, ensuring quick response times. During quieter seasons, switching off automatic assignment allows agents to provide personalized support, fostering customer relationships and maximizing RO from each interaction. This adaptable approach balances efficiency and personalized service based on traffic patterns and business needs.

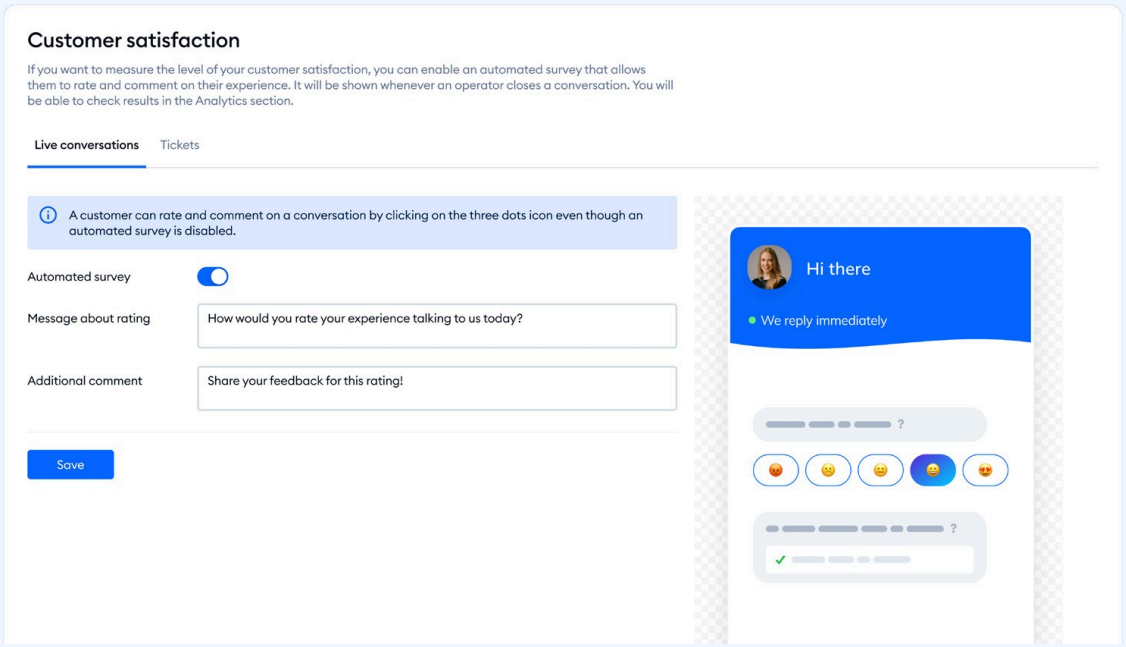


Collect feedback with automated post-interaction surveys

The Black Friday surge can make it challenging for your agents to keep up with feedback collection, but the investment is undeniably worth it. In fact, research suggests that customers who rated their experience as “Good” in CSAT surveys demonstrated a repurchase probability of over 40%.

This means that high customer satisfaction (CSAT) is a key driver of returning customers, a valuable asset in the competitive world of ecommerce, where customer loyalty is often hard to secure.

The good news is–thanks to automation, you can streamline effective customer feedback collection in a few clicks, making it both simple and highly efficient.



Example

Once the feedback collection feature is activated within the automated ticketing system, it becomes a seamless part of the customer support process. After every interaction–whether a customer engages with the chatbot, or on live chat, or a support specialist resolves a ticket–the system automatically prompts the customer to rate their experience or leave feedback. This automation enables your team to gather valuable insights continuously without needing to manually request feedback after each interaction.

Pro-tip

Collect feedback across multiple touchpoints, such as post-interaction surveys, website feedback forms, and emails. By regularly analyzing this data, you can make informed adjustments to your service processes and fine-tune AI configurations to make sure your customer service remains top-notch, even during peak seasons.

Optimize for peak season with AI-enhanced customer service

During peak period like Black Friday, when customer expectations are at an all-time high, leveraging AI, chat flows, and automation is crucial. These tools efficiently handle the spike in inquiries, ensuring quick, accurate responses and enabling you to manage the chaos in a structured way.

By implementing the strategies outlined in this guide, ecommerce businesses can manage large volumes of customer interactions without the need to hire additional staff. This approach not only streamlines operations but also reduces the workload on your customer support team while maintaining top-tier service.

As you prepare for Black Friday, keep in mind that a well-planned and strategic use of AI technologies can significantly enhance the customer experience. It can transform a potentially overwhelming situation into a seamless and positive experience for both your customers and your team.

Customers using Tidio to streamline their cs experienced:

85%	of conversations automated [10]
90%	CSAT & increase in conversion rates [11]
177k+	value of sales generated [12]
27%	increase in conversion rates [13]
10%	decrease in cart abandonment rates [14]

> “Having a great support team is crucial, yet it can become costly when you don’t balance the efforts correctly. Sometimes, the problem of overflowing inquiries can be solved not by hiring another agent, but by automating some tasks. Customer service automation is essential to optimize costs and make the work more efficient.”



Tytus Gołas,
Co-founder & CEO of Tidio

Join over 300k businesses that are already generating more sales with Tidio's AI-driven customer service and automation.

Try for free

Start a free 7-day trial to explore all Tidio features

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ISBN 978-83-68606-06-5

