



BEING EASY TO DO BUSINESS WITH

WHY SIMPLICITY IS NOW A
COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE



Introduction

At Investor in Customers (IIC), we've spent nearly 20 years helping organisations understand, improve, and be recognised for their customer experience.

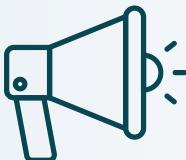
Across thousands of assessments, one theme repeatedly stands out: how easy - or difficult - companies make it for customers to deal with them.

In today's fast-moving, always-on marketplace, being easy to do business with is your core driver for retention, reputation, and revenue.

- 88% of customers say the experience a company provides is as important as its products or services (Salesforce, 2024).
- One in three customers will walk away from a brand they love after just one bad experience (PwC).
- Making processes easy is strongly linked to loyalty - the Harvard Business Review found reducing customer effort has a bigger impact on retention than “delighting” customers alone.

Our data clearly shows many organisations make their customers work harder than they should. Are you also losing business through slow response times, confusing processes, and inflexible communication channels?

The good news?



Simplicity can be built into your customer experience quickly, without huge investment.

What Easy to Do Business With Really Means

In the IIC framework, Easy to do business with sits under our Meeting Customer Needs principle.

We ask key questions, to assess how straightforward customers find working with you, either online or in person, and how easy they find it to make contact.

When we compare organisations, the difference is clear.

Recently, two clients in different industries achieved very different results:

Client A's customers scored a pitiful 3.93 for Easy to do Business With.

Yet their staff and Senior Management were totally oblivious to this core weakness.



Client B's customers scored 9.16 for the same theme.

Yet their staff recognise this and make constructive suggestions about how they could do even better.

The customer comments behind these scores are revealing:

Client A's customers spoke about delays, unreturned calls, and complexity;

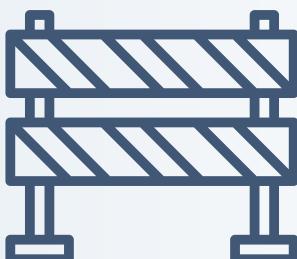
Client B's customers described clear updates, helpful staff, and proactive support.

Four Common Barriers to Ease

From our analysis of millions of customer comments, four themes regularly emerge:

- 1 Slow resolution of issues - Delayed (or even no) responses to queries or help requests quickly erode trust.
- 2 Limited communication options - Forcing customers into one channel (e.g., email only) frustrates those who prefer phone or live chat.
- 3 Reactive rather than proactive service - Waiting for the customer to chase instead of anticipating needs.
- 4 Overcomplication - Complex forms, jargon, or processes that make basic tasks harder than they need to be.

The root cause of these issues results from inconsistent processes, unclear ownership, or internal systems designed for operational convenience rather than customer ease.



Why It Matters More Than Ever

Customer expectations have shifted.

Speed, clarity, and convenience are now minimum requirements.

Fail to meet them, and your customers won't just leave - they'll share their negative experiences.

- 54% of consumers share bad experiences with five or more people (Zendesk).
- 79% of people trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations (BrightLocal).
- Negative experiences spread faster on social media, meaning the reputational cost can far outweigh the cost of fixing the problem.

Being easy to do business with is not only about retaining customers - it's about creating advocates who will recommend you to others.



How to Make It Easier – and Keep It That Way

Based on our findings, here are five practical ways to become easier to do business with:

- 1 Manage expectations - Set service-level commitments and timeframes and keep customers updated of any delays.
- 2 Respond quickly and clearly - empower staff to answer questions first time, or at least put the best person to help in touch straightaway.
- 3 Offer choice in communication - Let customers use their preferred channel, whether that's phone, email, chat, or self-service.
- 4 Be proactive - Anticipate needs, follow up before customers have to ask, and provide solutions in advance.
- 5 Simplify processes - Remove unnecessary steps, use plain language, and design around the customer's journey, not your internal structure.



The IIC Perspective

Our data shows a consistent pattern - the most customer-focused organisations often receive higher scores from their customers than from their own staff, as exemplified earlier.

This isn't because employees are disengaged, but because they set the bar higher for themselves and are more self-critical.

That's the mark of a truly customer-centric culture - one where people constantly look for ways to improve, even when customers are already happy.

These organisations design processes around customer needs, empower staff to take ownership, and use feedback to drive continuous improvement.

In our experience, making it easy to do business with you isn't a "quick win" or a one-off project - it's a mindset.

When ease is built into every process, system, and conversation, customers notice, loyalty grows, and advocacy follows.



Final Word

In a world where switching providers is easier than ever, your customers won't tolerate unnecessary hurdles.

The organisations that thrive will be those that remove friction, simplify interactions, and make every touchpoint feel effortless.

But it's not just about doing the right thing - it's about showing the world you do it.

Independent recognition, such as **IIC Gold, Silver or Bronze** or our **A Company That Cares** awards, gives you credible, third-party proof that you put customers first.

These awards don't just boost internal pride - they become powerful marketing tools.

Displaying them on your website, proposals, and marketing materials sends a clear message to prospects and competitors alike: you're easy to do business with, and you have the evidence to back it up.

When you combine a friction-free experience with public recognition, you stand out from the crowd, strengthen trust, and make it harder for customers to imagine going anywhere else.

If you'd like to know how your organisation would score on 'Easy to do business with' - and how to improve - talk to us

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