What is a shared inbox, and do you need one?

2018-02-27 - Paul Davies - Kommentarer (0) - Blog

Email isn't dead, in fact - it's unlikely to go away any time soon, hence why you may be looking for a shared inbox solution. Whilst you could make a strong argument that email is our last opportunity to communicate meaningful longhand in a world of busy tweets, chats and snaps - for any growing business, it's still an incredibly tedious necessity. Amidst a quest for a more robust alternative to email, this short article is designed to help you determine what you and your customers might need.

Long live email!

According to Adestra's 2016 Consumer Adoption & Usage Study, nearly 68 percent of teens and 73 percent of Millennials said they prefer to receive communication from a business via email. In addition, a recent survey by Statistashows the number of email users worldwide is forecasted to rise to 2.9 billion users by 2019.

As widely adopted as email is, it's still a far from perfect means of communication - especially between businesses and their customers. For many, a handful of sales, support and other departmental email addresses might be a simple and effective way to manage customer support through a shared inbox - but never for long.

The pitfalls of email

As your business starts to grow, the complexity of managing support over several shared email or shared inbox accounts between a number of staff quickly becomes too much for even the most adept customer champions to handle. Visibility is completely limited, and internal communication becomes incredibly tricky. Following endless threads with multiple fwd, cc, and bcc emails also adds another layer of unneeded hassle.
In the best case scenario, you're wasting valuable time and creating frustration for everyone involved. And the worst case? You're letting customer issues slip right through the cracks - creating real problems for your brand and business.

So you need a solution, that's for sure. But what, exactly?

Do you need a shared inbox?

A shared inbox allows you to manage shared addresses your customers use to contact you - in one single place. All customer replies and requests are automatically converted into tickets that are easily tracked, assigned and indexed. This might sound like a dream to anyone who's been managing support through Outlook or Gmail, but what many small businesses don't realize is that shared inboxes typically lack the functionality critical to truly

efficient customer support.

At Deskpro, we spend an overwhelming amount of time talking to our customers who came to us because they say they want a shared inbox. They always have one thing in common: they actually need a helpdesk.

They want swift, innovative solutions that make customer support way more efficient. They need visibility into how support is being handled, and insights on how to develop their approach to customers should be readily available.

Five things you can only get from a helpdesk

1. Everything in one single place

View and customer conversations in full; complete with message history. This creates a highly-visible support environment for your business, which increases accountability, provides a baseline, and ensures issues don’t fall through the cracks. See at a glance what needs to be done, the status of various issues, and who’s working on them.

2. Easily prioritized workflows

Organize, filter, manage and label customer conversations. See exactly what you need to know at-a-glance, and rank customer issues in order of urgency or priority. Spend less time trawling through emails you’ve been CC’d in, and more time on what matters to your business.

3. Time spent wisely

Never type out the same reply to different customers ever again. Create, manage, and use predefined responses when replying to customers over email or chat. Save heaps of time and improve the quality of your support with dozens of other handy automation tools.

4. A collaborative environment

A helpdesk is perfect if you don’t like sharing your personal email inboxes with others, but want everyone to get stuck in with customer support. Multiple people can work on the same issue, and can keep progress visible through communicating via internal instant messaging and ticket notes.

5. Easily tracked and reported metrics

Understand important factors like support workload, response time and resolution rate. Metrics like these, that you can’t get from a shared inbox, quickly provide you with a perspective of how you might need to support your customers better.

What should you do next?

The bottom line is: we’ve all had enough of email, but a shared inbox is not the solution. If

you think you’re ready to move away from join thousands of businesses who are benefitting from using Deskpro to manage their customer support, go ahead - give it a try today for free.

Sign up for your free 14 day trial of Deskpro here.

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shared inbox