

Here are a few tips to boost responsiveness.

A Response Doesn't Need to Be a Full Resolution

People often fail to respond in a timely fashion not because they're being lazy or blowing someone off but because they feel they need more time to fulfill the request. For example, a customer service representative fielding a complex question from a customer might need several days to put together a complete and accurate reply. But that doesn't mean the customer service rep can't provide updates to the customer.

Saying something as simple as "I'm working on getting an answer to your question. It might take me a few days to have an answer, but I will keep you updated and hopefully have something for you by the end of the week" can go a long way toward maintaining a positive customer experience.

Set Reminders

With seemingly endless commitments and priorities to juggle, it's easy for commitments to fall through the cracks, which is another responsiveness challenge; sometimes, employees fail to respond because they lost track of the request.

Setting calendar reminders to get back to people by certain times or even a general reminder to reply to outstanding e-mails at the end of each day can prevent you from losing track of issues requiring a follow-up.

Metrics

Performance metrics are a great way to improve the responsiveness of an organization, a department, or the team as a whole. A responsiveness metric might be something like "average time to respond to customer e-mail inquiries" or "average length of open customer support tickets."

Metrics provide a means of measuring the current state of affairs against which improvements can be gauged. They also give you greater visibility into the factors being measured and signal their importance to the organization.

Responsiveness is common in most effective professionals, and it applies whether you're dealing with internal or external stakeholders. Training staff to be more responsive can go a long way toward improving collaboration within your organization and customer satisfaction.