

AXMINSTER

Tools & Machinery



*Axminster builds
world-class support
strategy with Freshdesk*

INDUSTRY: Retail / Ecommerce

USAGE: Customer Support

LOCATION: UK

A decorative footer area featuring several overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in various shades of green and grey, including circles, rectangles, and lines, arranged in a dynamic, abstract pattern.



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ABOUT AXMINSTER

Located in the South West of England, Axminster Tools & Machinery is an established name in the mail order tools and machinery industry. With more than 40 years of experience, the company offers a friendly and personal service to thousands of customers ranging from trade professionals and businesses to amateur DIY and hobby enthusiasts. Axminster holds an extensive range of tools, machinery, accessories, and consumables in the UK with over 17,000 product lines and a multitude of brands, sold in stores and via online channels.

Axminster's business success is driven by the quality service the company offers to its customers, based on in-depth technical advice and a fast and efficient delivery service. The company has a dedicated customer services team which is capable of providing end-to-end support to customers across multiple channels.

BENEFITS

- ✓ Improved ticket resolutions
- ✓ Increase in first response SLAs
- ✓ Better task management
- ✓ Decreased ticket assignment times

FAVOURITE FEATURES

- ✓ Multi channel features
- ✓ Integration capabilities
- ✓ Track and measure support performance

CHALLENGES AT AXMINSTER

Axminster's bespoke task management system, developed by its internal IT team, met the company's needs initially. However, the tool did have its shortcomings.

Helen Terry, Customer Service Manager at Axminster, understood the need for a software platform that would help the company provide exceptional support to its customers and stand out from the competition. "Our team provides both pre and post-sales support to the customers which encourages them to choose Axminster as their preferred supplier," said Helen. "Any new product would have to make it really easy to deliver that service to customers as well as tracking all the channels that customers can use to communicate with us. Without that level of insight, service could become disjointed."

To gain greater control and transparency over how all customer enquiries were handled, Helen worked with other managers to specify the company's future requirements. This was then used to build a business case for a new platform that would develop and evolve with the business. Axminster needed a system that would bring all enquiries together into one place regardless of the channel that a customer preferred to use. This omnichannel approach had to incorporate email, SMS, web chat, social media, and online e-commerce platform support.

"Including automated support for eBay was of paramount importance as this is a growing distribution channel for Axminster. Our previous system was unable to handle the enquiries from eBay," admits Helen. The Axminster team felt the omnichannel approach would lead to greater efficiency and customer satisfaction, which the current system wasn't able to support itself.

"It was important for us to have a system which we considered to be 'future-proof' - for example, we wanted to support our field staff accessing the system remotely via a mobile application, which they were unable to do previously. The team needed better performance reports, customer satisfaction surveys, third party integrations and a better way of handling sales enquiries," stated Helen.

"We considered developing our existing internal task management system but realised that this would lead to recurring costs and continuous development efforts. Rather than continuing with a bespoke internal application, we thought that it was time to evaluate other solutions," said Helen.

WHY FRESHDESK

This mix of requirements led the Axminster team to evaluate Freshdesk along with a number of alternatives like Zendesk, Desk.com, and Zoho. After a thorough trial, Helen and her team went with Freshdesk.

“Freshdesk provided support for all the channels that we do business over, including the third party websites like Amazon and eBay within the one application. We could integrate with social, online and traditional channels so that we could track all customer support requests in one place. We could also measure customer satisfaction, identify dissatisfied customers and take action more easily. Lastly, Freshdesk was very competitively priced compared to the other solutions we looked at, which made the choice a simple one,” commented Helen. During the evaluation, the team at Axminster liked that Freshdesk was able to offer seamless integrations with the various channels through which they provide support, and they praised the ease of use and intuitive UI. Helen’s role during implementation was to ensure that adequate training was provided during the early stages of implementation and post-implementation.

“Freshdesk offered the functionality that we required at a price that we considered would give us a return on investment.”

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Damion Norcombe

Technology & Business
Change Manager,
Axminster

FRESHDESK BENEFITS AND SUCCESS

Following the successful implementation of Freshdesk, the digital customer service team at Axminster has been able to take on the added responsibility of managing enquiries from eBay customers. This was previously managed by one dedicated individual as the process was too complex for their task management system.

The Axminster service team has also recorded improvements to their service level agreements. Since going live with Freshdesk in September 2016, the following results have been achieved:

- Average ticket resolution times have dropped by 43%
- First Response SLA - a key metric for Axminster's leadership team - increased to 92%
- Ticket assignment times have decreased by 87%

The customer support team is now optimistic of exceeding average industry CSAT levels with Freshdesk.

Today, more than 90 customer support staff use Freshdesk at Axminster including team members from retail stores, field sales agents, and engineers. Axminster currently resolves more than 9000 tickets a month - an increase from around 7000 tickets per month since they began using Freshdesk in 2016. Helen and her team are now looking at ways to cut ticket volumes by reducing the need for customers to contact Axminster's support team.

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FUTURE WITH FRESHWORKS

The team at Axminster has recently reviewed how Freshdesk is used and has found further areas where service can be improved. “To begin with, we are planning to make some improvements to the customer survey to encourage more ratings. We are also looking at ways of using the new functionality in Freshdesk around parent-child tickets and linked tickets. Using Freshdesk, we have given ourselves the opportunity to improve the quality of service that we provide and found more ways to increase quality. This simply would not have been possible using our previous approach,” commented Helen. Following their success with Freshdesk, Axminster has since expanded their use of the Freshworks product suite to include the CRM software, Freshsales, and the IT service management solution, Freshservice. They now feel they have an ecosystem in place which provides their customer service, sales and IT teams with the tools they need to deliver excellence to their customers.

“We are really happy with the roadmap, the support and the approach that the Freshworks team have had around the implementation of Freshdesk. After discovering that Freshworks also provided a CRM tool, it was a natural next step for us to implement this as well. Freshservice also brings the same benefits of competitive price, ease of use and strong release roadmap - so it made a lot of sense to use that too. We are looking forward to being successful together”, Damion explains

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