

# Customer Support: A Thing of Utmost Import

Customer support is one of the most important aspects in any sphere of business. It is important not only to attract as many customers as possible, but also to keep the old ones satisfied.

Customer support is an essential ingredient in the successful marketing of products – from domestic appliances to high-tech computer networks. It is an important operation for most multinational manufacturing companies. It provides installation, inspection and maintenance support to their worldwide customers. Customer support on faulty machines or customer enquiries is usually supported by a service centre or helpdesk of the customer service department via telephone calls.

“Nowadays, customer support is one of the most important aspects in any sphere of business. It is important not only to attract as many customers as possible,

provide quality service in the most optimum turnaround time.”

We strive to delight our customers at all times and are able to do so despite the challenges and complexities of the geographical spread and vastness of India. We have a customer support contact centre located in Bangalore. The centre offers voice support in five regional Indian languages, in addition to English,” says Ashok Nair, South Asia Channel Business Manager, Intel.

“All warranty parts are handled by 11 walk-in centres across India. Customers need to call up the contact centre to log in their issue and get a unique RMA (Return Material Authorization) number. Upon receiving this number, the customer can go to the nearest walk-in centre where the faulty parts are verified and rectified,” says Ashok Nair.

Warranty supported is provided by Intel via three simple steps:

1. The customer has to get a RMA number by calling the contact centre and logging in his complaint.
2. The customer has to then



**Sudha Jagadish**  
Chief Operations  
Officer, Dax Networks

go to the nearest walk-in centre to return the part with reference to his unique RMA number.

3. The walk-in centre then checks and validates the part and subsequently issues a replacement if the faulty part complies with the product warranty terms and conditions.

Intel has 11 walk-in centres in India. The company has one toll-free and one DID number. The customer contact centre can take approximately 60 calls at a time. “We are working on several initiatives to improve the support services and have some unique features like the Advanced Warranty Support which helps in expediting the replacement of faulty parts for customers. Besides this, the contact centre offers support in five regional Indian languages and is supported by a set of robust online tools, including web chats. The 11 walk-in centres are fully equipped with testing and replacement capabilities. Over and above all these initiatives, Intel also conducts a support services training for all our channel partners at the Intel Channel Conferences which are bi-annual events held across all the major cities in India,” says Ashok Nair.

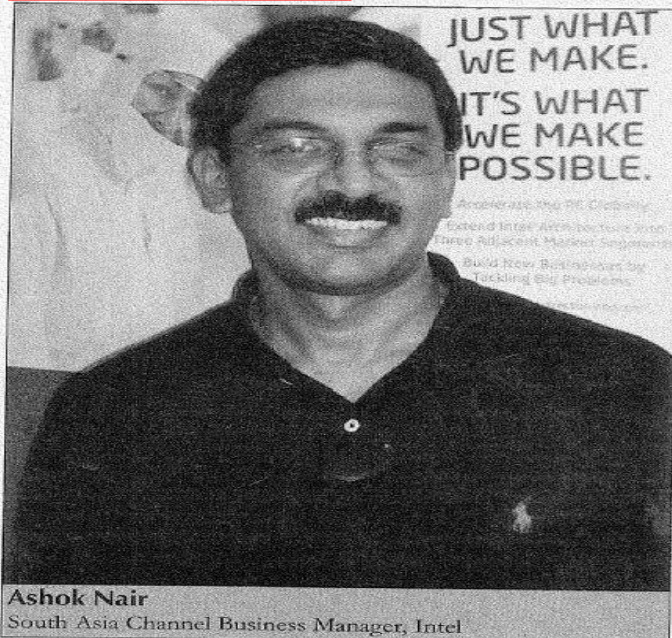
Dax Networks has framed various strategies, that is competent and professional, to support their customers. “At Dax, we provide technical assistance through phone to the SI engineers who are at the site during installation of its products and/or troubleshoot the reported issue that has arisen out of a particular unit / product and solve the issue. We

would recommend any network changes / upgrades that need to be undertaken by the SI engineer/customer to address the reported issue. We train the Partner engineer and Customer engineer at the customer premises on the installation and maintenance of the Dax products bought,” says Sudha Jagadish, Chief Operations Officer, Dax Networks. Dax further agrees to train the Partner engineer and Customer engineer on troubleshooting tips, general technical issues concerning the said products and ways of addressing the same.

It has always been the intention of D-Link to offer world-class quality and service to its consumers, as customer satisfaction is the company’s topmost priority. “In order to serve our customers better, D-Link India has set up a dedicated call centre based out of Goa and level3 (L3) and level4 (L4) support centre based out of Mumbai (HQ). This is backed by D-Link R&D centre at Taiwan being directly connected,” says Raj Jadhav, Vice-President – Solution Consulting, Tech-Support & IT, D-Link (India) Ltd.

“Most of the times, our call centre proactively supports the end-users and partners concerns, whereas level3 support is engaged in managing support services like remote field configuration, troubleshooting and back office support to the field engineers,” says Raj Jadhav.

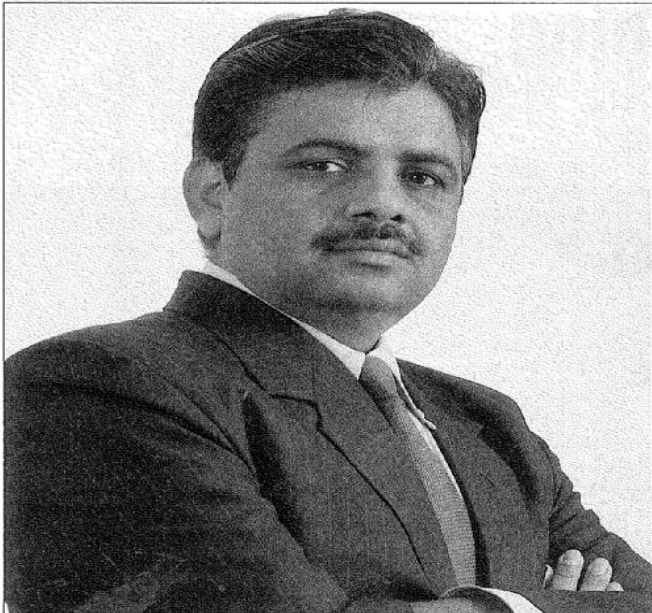
Onsite support is also provided through D-Link’s innovative “D-Link-Care service programs” with global initiative. As per the



**Ashok Nair**  
South Asia Channel Business Manager, Intel

but also to keep the old ones satisfied,” says Sudha Jagadish, Chief Operations Officer, Dax Networks.

“Our strategy is to deliver and



**Raj Jadhav**  
VP – Solution Consulting, Tech-Support & IT, D-Link (India) Ltd.

network and customer needs, different customized SLAs are available for customer service.

Generally, a customer sends/ carries the product to the nearest D-Link service centre. Unique service management system helps D-Link service centres to trace back the product and warranty validity. Many customers are served across the desk for fast run rate items. However, high-end products are repaired on the same day or next day according to the type of faults. Almost 90% of the products are repaired/replaced within 3 business/ working days.

The sales operation of D-Link is divided into four regions with 18 offices. Every region has a dedicated post-sales and presales team. "All our branch offices are well-equipped with technical manpower and proof of concept (POC) labs for all kinds of presales and post-sales support under the supervision of Regional Technical Manager (RTM). Apart from this, we also have 25 RMA centres in major cities," says Raj Jadhav.

D-Link India has set up a toll-free No. 1800-233-0000 & 0832-28865700. In addition to this, the company also has an e-mail service: helpdesk@dlink.co.in, for the benefit of its consumers.

D-Link India has lifetime warranty for majority of its products, which also goes on to prove our confidence in the

products we offer along with the quality. "We have recently introduced SMS service for our customers to know their product status so as to instantly update. Further, increasing the number of service centres across the country, so as to reach more and more consumers will be our prime focus and we are committed to our motto "Building networks for people," says Raj Jadhav.

HP being the market leader in the imaging and printing segment is well positioned to provide the best customer experience with its robust service and support infrastructure. The company's post-sales strategy is to provide world-class support experience through web, call centre and authorized service centre network. HP provides both offsite and onsite warranty support on our products portfolio.

There is a three-pronged approach to provide warranty support on all HP products to its customers:

- Online warranty support through self-help tools
- Call Centre approach for technical assistance
- Onsite and off site warranty support

HP strives to provide the best experience to its customers and partners with its high-quality support services. The company's post-sales services are well in order

and occasionally when it does get complaints, they are addressed in time and properly. HP strongly feels that high-quality support services are important to its customers and to enhance their experience its company's endeavour to provide a hassle-free and timely support service. HP strongly believes that the post-sales services can play a very instrumental role in building up long-term relationship and grow business together. HP has 32 service centres and 40 ASPs. The company is planning to add more ASPs to give onsite support for our UPS products," says HP.

From the date of sale by Dax Networks Ltd., all active products are covered by a maximum 3-years carry-in warranty, and passive products are covered by a maximum of 20 years warranty against manufacturing defects and workmanship under normal use. Dax provides this extensive warranty to all Qualified Dax Products in order to establish outstanding quality of service to all Dax customers to give them a high return on their investment in Dax products. The customer is also entitled to avail special onsite technical support from Dax as

Products purchased hereunder against defects in material and workmanship under normal use and service for a specified period from date of sale. Dax at its option will not charge either repairs or replace, any Unit during the carry-in warranty period, provided it is returned in accordance with the terms of the warranty to any of the Dax Authorized Distributors or to any Dax Service Centre.

Dax has its own service centre functioning in Chennai. The customer will send the faulty Unit on freight prepaid basis either directly or through our logistics partner to the Dax Service Centre. Dax will repair within 2+1 working days and send back the repaired Unit directly or to the concerned AFL location to the customer. During the carry-in Warranty period, Dax will not charge for repairs or replace any unit returned within 3 years from the date of purchase.

DAX has a billing support centre in almost 12 locations, and a technical service centre in Chennai where the defective unit will be serviced and returned to customer on freight to-pay basis for different locations. The company



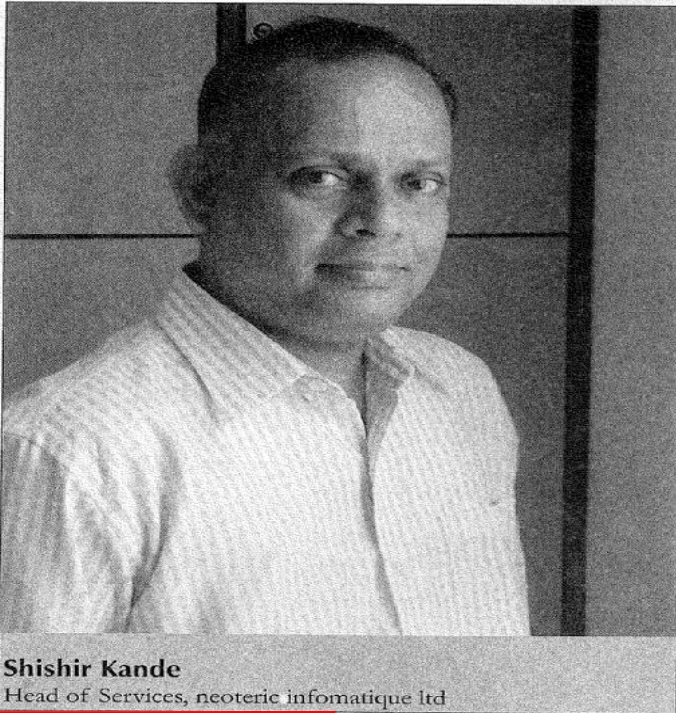
**Sushmita Das**  
Country Manager, Kobian

per the Special Onsite Technical Support Guidelines documented and laid down by Dax before the project is implemented.

Dax warrants carry-in warranty for each Qualified Dax

also has post-sales executives in major locations to offer after-sales service.

The Dax toll-free Helpdesk provides higher level support to Dax customers and prospects. The



**Shishir Kande**

Head of Services, neoteric infomatique ltd

Helpdesk is serviced by technical executives and customer support representatives. The Helpdesk assists in handling queries from distributors, dealers, all Dax approved partners and end-users for any kind of queries – both pre- and post-sales. The toll-free number is 1-800-4255-Dax.

Dax offers significantly high level of support to its customers. “We provide onsite technical support on a case-to-case basis to address the technical issues that arise out of Dax products. The Dax toll-free Helpdesk attends to all technology, logistics and service queries, ensuring real-time response for our customers. We have a Live chat - sales option on our corporate website to provide live help to Dax users and prospects online. This not only gives us further visibility into the customer but also helps us enhance our service levels as well,” says DAX.

The leading distribution house neoteric infomatique takes customer support in right earnest. “We strongly believe in providing value addition to the brands that we represent and our very own F1 services (a separate after-sales service arm of neoteric) is just one this value addition to our vendors,” says Shishir Kande – Head of Services, neoteric infomatique ltd. “We have 32 locations where we have our own service centres,

besides at 40 locations we have ASP model wherein local partners act as an extended arm for our services. F1 Services is authorized Service Providers for leading industry brands like Apple, ASUS, BenQ, Staples, Moser Baer and UMAX,” says Shishir Kande. “We also provide service to Hitachi, Logitech, Iomega, Matrox and many more. Our set-up includes capability of L1 to L4 types of service levels, CRM for better customer relationship, buffer inventory of spares, more than a decade experience, site installations expertise and support availability for office automation products. Our team of professionals capable of handling Annual Maintenance Contracts, Facility Management Services, Complete Network Installations, etc. We have a strong team of over 80 qualified engineers spread across India. Thus, through this strong set-up, we are rightly placed to take care of post-sales queries for the brands that we represent,” says Shishir Kande.

These days, outsourcing and the use of external third-party service partners is now a buzz topic for many CIOs and IT managers in India. “India is a very complicated country in itself. The outsourcing trend is in variations and purely depends on the kind of IT solutions you are with, if S/W, the deal size has halved in the year 2008 due to economic

recession, but for H/W the trend of service industry has unchanged at least for the population already in the market and customers have sentimental attachments to their products, thus is exactly a variation from that of S/W trend, will grow for better in the coming years,” says Sushmita Das, Country Manager, Kobian.

Another force to reckon with in the third-party service support landscape is RT Outsourcing.

RT Outsourcing provides service to various vendors through its 250 service centres spread across 150 cities. RT with its unique business model has been providing integrated Level1 to Level4 services, including Tech-support Helpdesk, Repair and Refurbishment services, project implementation, RMA Management and Logistics services for the past 13 years. With its tradition of excellence and commitment to customer satisfaction, RT is a unique one-point support organization for various activities to include return-to-bench repairs, onsite service support, product installation and commissioning, etc.

AccelFrontline is another name in the third-party service support landscape. The company provides system integration solutions in India and internationally. The company also provides information technology (IT) infrastructure management solutions and after-sales services support relating to asset maintenance services for its

Accel provides a comprehensive range of Voice/Web-based technology Helpdesk and customer care to help OEMs provide effective support for their technical products sold to customers. Accel has a state-of-the-art call centre exclusively to take care of these customers. Accel Frontline’s Warranty Support Helpdesk has experienced supervisors to deliver services that consistently meet customer expectations. Some of its OEM clients are Seagate, Xerox, Lexmark, Epson, Sony Ericsson, Brother International and Kingston Technology Company, Inc.

Redington India is a national IT hardware and software distributor, dealing in products ranging from components and peripherals, systems, servers, storage products, packaged and licensed software and enterprise servers. Redington provides third-party support to a number of companies, including Samsung, IBM, Xbox, Liteon, Motorola, Nortel, Huawei, etc.

**Finally...**

Customer support is a vital part of every organization. As businesses expand globally, they need to efficiently communicate with customers, or risk losing business opportunities. Since customer support involves customer interactions, this allows companies to reduce costs and gain insight into other business information derived from customer interactions. ■