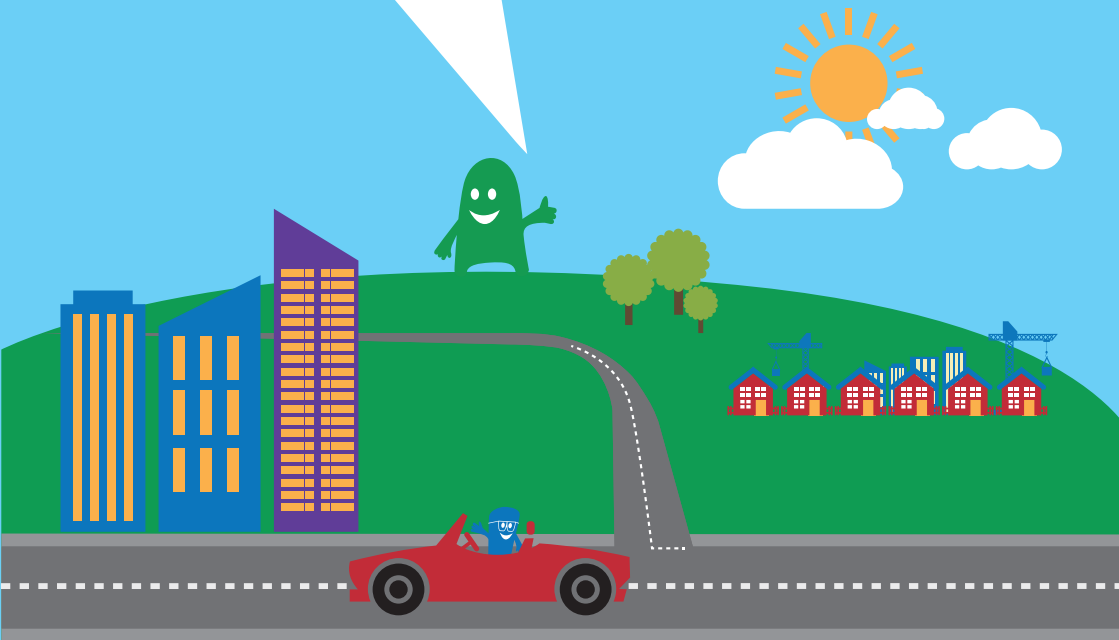




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LIVE CHAT – Seven killer questions to ask a potential service provider

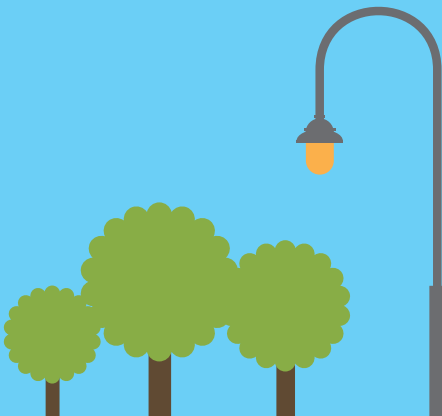


It can be tough to know what a great live managed chat service looks and feels like, let alone what brings you the highest quality, the greatest return and the best value for money. So, let us help. We've put together this handy guide to share the SEVEN KILLER QUESTIONS you should ask any web chat company before you hire them.

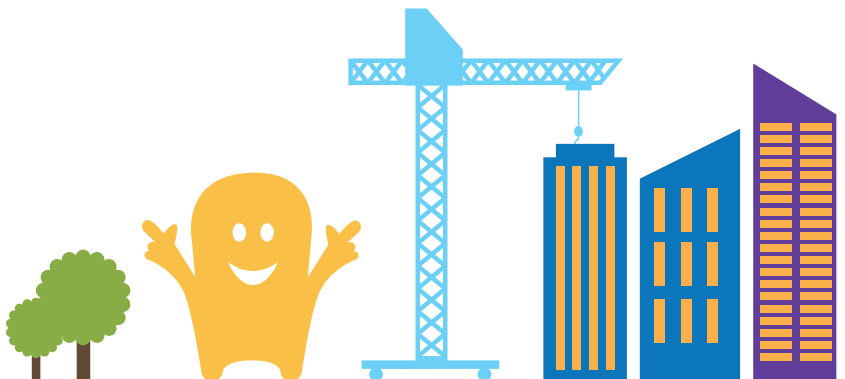
Not only will these help you sort the experts from the amateurs, but it'll make sure that you, your business and your customers get the live chat support and innovation you deserve in this fast-paced and rapidly evolving industry. We hope it provides useful information and some food for thought!



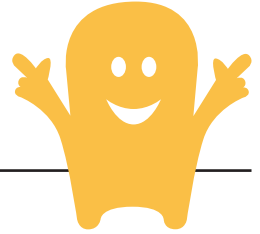
Tim Breden and Andy Soloman



- 1 What pricing models do you offer?
- 2 How do you ensure consistently high-quality engagement?
- 3 When are your operators available?
- 4 How will you deliver leads to me?
- 5 What supervision do you have in place?
- 6 How fully do you train your operators?
- 7 What about Data Protection?



SEVEN KILLER QUESTIONS



1

What pricing models do you offer?

If they say subscription then run a mile. Yes, you'll have chat available on your website, and you'll be able to fix your budget, but it's unlikely to do very much for you. Why? Well the company gets paid the same whether they engage with one or 1,000 customers – and the latter will cost them lots more to deliver. It's in their commercial interest to deliver lower volumes, lower quality, shorter chats and lower depth of conversation. A good firm should be eager to agree a performance-related reward structure, where they share in your success and where they're absolutely motivated by client wins. Leading live chat providers will be driven to deliver services based on end value, not cost, and to deliver a great digital customer experience.



Your operators need to have nailed the basics like having great written English language skills, but they should also be credible, professional, and likeable. Ask your potential supplier how they

2

How do you ensure consistently high-quality engagement?



measure performance and how they report it. Plus, do they follow best practice in terms of speed of response and accuracy? We all know that slow responses in live chat can be like watching paint dry; it's a poor experience and your visitors will soon lose interest and head off elsewhere. So ask them what they believe is the optimum response time and how often they hit that target. And also find out just how many chats their operators are asked to handle concurrently, as the more the operators handle, the longer the delays in response (Yomdel recommends response times of less than 30 seconds, and experienced operators should never handle more than three concurrent chats). Finally look for a firm that has a proven track record, puts its money where its mouth is, and offers guarantees around service levels – Yomdel does, and your potential live chat supplier shouldn't be afraid to either.

3



When are your operators available?

You'll be amazed at how many companies don't provide a truly 24 hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week, 365 days-a-year live chat service. After all, visitors to your website deserve an excellent digital customer experience regardless of the time of the day or night they choose to chat. If you promise your customers you'll be there when they need you, what message does it give when they can only chat to you between certain hours? Any supplier you hire needs to maximise conversations and provide you – and your customers – the 24/7 cover you deserve. And beyond this, what happens when the supplier has staff absences? Can they properly cover sickness and holidays? Can they guarantee round-the-clock support? Check that you won't be bearing the brunt of their desire to cut costs or run their operation on a shoestring. You should also check whether the supplier uses teams of operators in a dedicated centre or whether they rely on home workers. Unfortunately, using remote workers can lead to huge inconsistencies in service quality and there is often no centralised training and supervision.



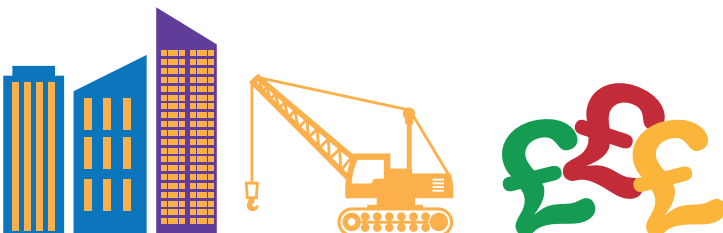
How will you deliver leads to me?

Leads are leads, you may think. But leads delivered directly into your customer relationship management (CRM) system or database via XML, in the format that you need, are quite clearly a cut above the rest. Ask your chat provider if they're able to supply XML feeds, and how quickly they can get the leads to you. Great live chat companies should deliver full lead transcripts within 15 minutes, ensuring you can strike while the iron is still red hot! It's also worth querying whether they can offer additional bolt-ons to suit your business needs, like text-to-voice sales support products, or in-depth data analytics or tracking services.



What supervision do you have in place?

From rogue operators to simple poor performance, there are a whole host of ways in which your customers' experiences can be negatively impacted by bad service. Any live chat suppliers you consider should be able to assure you that they've protected you in every way. Ask if they have a dedicated UK-based training, development and operations team to supervise chat quality and output in real-time. Ask them what processes they use to make sure they don't just understand your brand, but ensure their operators are representing you exactly as they should. Plus ask how they measure service quality and how they report on it.





6



How fully do you train your operators?

Remember that as far as visitors to your site know, the live chat operators are a part of your in-house team and represent you in every way. You need the assurance that they're trained well, and that they understand how to pick up cues, build rapport, offer empathy when appropriate and give a great impression of your firm. Watch for those live chat providers who try to dazzle you with training jargon, but have no substance to actually back it up. Ask them how active they are in your industry already. Do they use key performance indicators to continually assess operators representing your business? At Yomdel we seek university-educated operators, train them continually and ensure they adhere to a wide range of key performance indicators. Any deviation from expected standards brings swift and appropriate remedial action.

7



What about Data Protection?

Any firm worth its salt understands how essential it is to manage data appropriately. Ask your provider what processes and procedures they follow, how they stay compliant, and how they measure this. Also ask about forthcoming changes. Do they know about the move from the DPA to GDPR? If not, ask yourself whether they're really on the ball, or just trying to talk a good talk. They should be able to offer complete reassurance that you, your customers, and anyone visiting your site is completely safe and that they are safeguarding your reputation and brand.





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