

## Developing out-of-the-box solutions



**Liberal arts students are ideal for the customer support industry because of their unbound creativity and interpersonal prowess**

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The Indian customer support industry is essential to the domestic economy because it generates employment and makes a significant contribution to the country's GDP. The growing number of adults entering the workforce and falling employment opportunities mean there is considerable demand for jobs in the customer support industry. Today the industry is being transformed by smart young professionals having a liberal arts education background. Industry insiders recognise that a liberal arts background is ideal for working in customer support. Hence students who have studied the liberal arts are in demand by the industry. Some of the reasons these students have the perfect background to work in customer support are provided below:

■ **Creativity:** Albert Einstein once said, "Creativity is seeing what everyone else has seen, and thinking what

no one else has thought". These words highlight the importance of thinking differently. Liberal arts students can view challenges from many perspectives and arrive at an optimum solution. Because of competition among organisations in the customer support industry, there is a need for customer support managers and agents who can think creatively. Such professionals can understand customers' requirements and fulfil them with ease. Managers with a customer support background excel at reviewing recordings to instruct others how to manage individual customers.

■ **Empathy:** Liberal arts students can empathise better than pupils from any other background. They've read classics by western and eastern thinkers and are mindful of cultural differences and thoughts. They understand people better than most engineers and science graduates can. A customer support organisation needs employees

who can contemplate questions like, is this product useful to me? How was my experience using a product? How can I help a customer who is facing challenges with a newly launched product? What is the best way to manage an angry customer who is continuously facing issues? The nuances of such situations are harder for those with Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (Stem) degrees to understand because they require empathy rather than rationality and logic.

■ **Gathering information:** Students of liberal arts learn to gather information to support their views. Working in customer support requires employees to conduct research. They do so by listening to the information given to them by coworkers, managers and especially consumers and general public. Collecting data from strangers is an art, not a science. There are guidelines for collecting data, but no foolproof formula. It is a nuanced skill

in which listening, responding appropriately, and asking questions must happen effortlessly. Liberal arts students excel at such interpersonal tasks.

■ **Communication:** Managers with excellent communication skills are vital to the success of every organisation and to talk effectively to customers. Every liberal arts programme is committed to improving student's communication skills. Through papers, presentations, and critiques, liberal arts students practice excellent communication and become terrific communicators and presenters.

■ **Critical thinking:** A liberal arts education background expands the mind's capacity to think critically and analyse information. It helps the brain connect seemingly disparate ideas from multiple disciplines. Critical thinking helps a customer support person connect the dots, draw con-

nections, piece together puzzles, and confidently assume various stances. Many times biases, hinders people from making the best decision. Having a background in liberal arts help students to think critically about situations, circumstances, people's behaviours, motivations and tendencies. Equipped with knowledge about different types of people, liberal arts students can face up to the most challenging customer-facing roles.

There's ample real-life evidence that the customer support industry is ideal for liberal arts students. Those at the helm of large customer support organisations value the creativity and interpersonal prowess of liberal arts students. Their ability to think on their feet and capacity for developing out-of-the-box solutions make liberal arts students a considerable asset to organisations that serve lakhs of customers every day.

The writer is founder, CallHippo

### PLUS POINTS

#### Pushing the limits



Delhi Collage of Art has created the Kollage Art Marathon in their college premises. The marathon of art offers the opportunity of self-expression through mixed media.

The marathon was designed to promote a healthy awareness of art and appreciation for young artists for their creativity. Artists from all over the country publish a drawing every day on their social media channels using #kollageartmarathon and #delhicollageofart from 1 to 31 January.

To spark their creativity, the institution has also provided a list of themes like Fresh, Crazy, Balloons, Sweets, Wool and Today among many more for artists, from which they select any theme every day or use their own ideas.

"It is designed to clarify aspects of one's own process, what works and what doesn't, and hopefully, it will make it easier for the budding artists to talk about their works and motivations," said Ashwani Kumar Prithviwasi, founder and director, Delhi Collage of Art.

#### Learn from proficient minds



Applications are open for Future News Worldwide 2020, a prestigious international conference for the next generation of journalists run by the British Council in partnership with some of the world's leading media organisations.

100 fully-funded places are available for the brightest young student bloggers, vloggers, photojournalists and reporters from across the globe to take part in the two-day event at Sky Central, Isleworth, London, in July.

The conference will offer an equally rich and packed programme for the next generation of newsmakers and content creators. The opportunity is available to undergraduate and postgraduate students (between 18 to 25 years) from any country. Applicants should be able to speak English at an advanced level and need to demonstrate passion about following a career in journalism. The deadline for applications is 14 February. For details, visit: [www.britishcouncil.org/future-news-worldwide](http://www.britishcouncil.org/future-news-worldwide)

#### Providing proper guidance



University admissions and career guidance platform Leverage Ed-tech Private Limited, recently announced that it raised over \$1.5mn from its existing investors. DSG Consumer Partners and Blume Ventures have co-led the latest funding round. Saama Capital founder Ash Lilani and PayU CEO Amrith Rau

## Set the ball rolling

