

Customer Service Platform: *Bringing the Human Touch to Automated Parking*



A Personal Touch

Technology is amazing—until it isn't. Anyone who has wasted time responding to telephone prompts and pressing 1 for this and 2 for that, knows how frustrating it can be to try to reach a human being in this automated world.

Parking is no different. Over the past decade, parking facilities have become nearly universally automated. When we enter a garage, we pull a ticket to enter. When it's time to leave, we just insert that ticket, pay with a credit card, and the system lets us leave.

More sophisticated frictionless systems take automation even further: LPR and AVI systems recognize our vehicles and trigger entry gates; parking guidance technology guides us to open spaces; and when it's time to leave, vehicle and license plate recognition technologies recognize our vehicles, charge an associated credit card, and trigger exit gates to let us out. The one thing these systems have in common is that most parkers never interact with a human being during the parking process.

The introduction of parking technology was supposed to make parking more convenient and customer-friendly, and for the most part, it does. But sometimes things go wrong. The

usefulness of parking technology—as with any equipment—is limited, not just by its functionality, but also by the ability of people to use it.

There are many types of parking technologies in use, and drivers aren't always adept at using each different type. Imagine what would happen if people had to use a different mobile phone platform every day. Confusion would reign, right? Well, that's what often happens with parking technology. Screens, button placement, and user instructions vary from brand to brand, and that can cause confusion among parkers who are exposed to different types of equipment at different locales. Often, it's not the technology that's failing; it's the person who is failing to use it properly.

Sometimes, parking requires a personal touch.

What happens when a garage's or parking lot's PARCS equipment doesn't work as planned? You don't want drivers waiting behind a closed gate for 20 minutes or 30 minutes until a parking employee or enforcement officer can be summoned to handle the situation.

That's where the Parker Technology parking customer service platform comes in.

Our platform is electronically connected to the PARCS equipment

and can be engaged with the push of a button when something goes wrong.

Parking owners and operators can set up their own systems, that are connected to our platform, or they can turn to Parker

Technology to fully manage their customer service.

Systems typically provide a live audio connection to a trained customer service professional who can help solve the parker's problem.

Parker Technology has also pioneered the use of two-way video conferencing so the customer service representative can provide a smiling,

empathetic human face to reduce stress and calm frustrated parking patrons.

Parker's patented two-way video conferencing system is the only system of its type and it's the perfect solution for parking owners and organizations who want to provide their parking patrons a more personalized experience. Surveys of parkers who have used systems with

two-way video conferencing have found that parkers feel that they are receiving better service when they can see the person who is helping them. This is an important consideration for parking owners in an increasingly competitive parking marketplace

where customer service is of paramount importance.

This is no minor issue. In the United States alone, parkers call into customer service representatives 85 million times a year to help solve issues related to automated parking equipment. Whether it's a matter of user error or a problem with the equipment, the customer service rep can solve the problem and get the driver on his or her way.



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Following-Up & Following-Through

For the parker, this is the end of the story. But not for the parking owner or operator. Every call is recorded and that data is available to owners and operators to tell them:

1: What the most common issues are.

2: How they were resolved.

This is vital data that's often overlooked by parking managers. But when utilized properly, it can help owners and operators improve their systems to minimize problems in the future, thus providing a better parking experience in parking facilities and making parking operations more effective and efficient.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words, so imagine what a video is worth? Videos in Parker's customer service platform serve several functions. Initially, they can help resolve any disputes that may arise related to a given situation. If the driver feels slighted in any way, the video can provide a detailed look at how the situation was resolved and how the call center representative treated the driver. When it comes to resolving disputes, seeing is believing.

The videos are also a powerful training tool for customer service representatives. By demonstrating how individual situations were handled, they can offer guidance to others about how to handle similar situations in the future. Trainers can use the videos to demonstrate what the customer service representative did right or wrong, and help teach other representatives how to react when faced with similar circumstances.

Measuring the Metrics in Real-Time

The final benefit provided by Parker Technology's virtual support technology is data. And it's a powerful benefit.

The technology documents every aspect of every call. Parking owners and operators have instant access to data about how many calls were made on a given day, week, or month—really any period of time. The technology also analyzes the nature of each call. For instance, owners and operators can monitor how many entry/exit issues, ghost calls (accidental calls caused by drivers pushing the wrong button), invalid validations or permits, credit card payment issues, invalid tickets (obtained by the driver upon entering the facility), or any other issues there are. This information can be analyzed for any particular period or length of time.

This is important information that parking owners and operators can use to improve their operations and customer service. For instance, if there is an excessive number of invalid tickets, that could be an indication that the PARCS equipment located at the entrance is malfunctioning and needs to be repaired or replaced. The same conclusion might be drawn if there is an unusually high number of credit card payment issues. Or, if there are too many invalid validations or permits, it could indicate that the permit readers are malfunctioning or that the equipment that creates the permits themselves is. No matter what types of problems arise, the data created by the system can help diagnose the issues and help parking administrators address them more efficiently and cost-effectively.



Low Cost / High Impact

When issues arise in a parking garage or lot, the cost can be high. Drivers will avoid parking facilities in which they've experienced challenges, or which have a reputation for problems. These types of issues can have a significant impact on the bottom-line.

Sometimes equipment malfunctions or people struggle to use technology. That's why it's so important to be able to provide a personal touch to handle issues as they arise. But staffing a parking facility can be expensive. Does it make financial sense to pay someone \$15 an hour, plus benefits, to hang around a garage in case issues arise? Many owners and operators are instead turning to integrated virtual support provided by Parker Technology's customer service platform.

At an average cost of about 50 cents an hour, our customer service platform provides a much more cost-effective way to provide a personal touch in automated parking operations while, at the same time, giving parking administrators invaluable data that can be used to better manage parking operations.



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