



*Great Ideas For Customer Experiences*

# The Right Time for Customer Education

By Peter C. Honebein and Roy F. Cammarano,  
authors of *Creating Do-It-Yourself Customers*

Customer education often requires a significant investment. However, it is not always clear if that investment will pay off. By analyzing the expertise of your customers and the complexity of your product, you'll have better insight regarding the value customer education provides to both the company and the customer.

### Assist

When expertise and complexity are low, customers need only information or minimal education. Solutions such as simple product instructions or a short user manual are usually sufficient to orient customers to a product and its uses. Furthermore, since the risk of error is low, direct, purposeful experience with the product is the best teacher and customers will develop most of their expertise through usage.

### Embrace

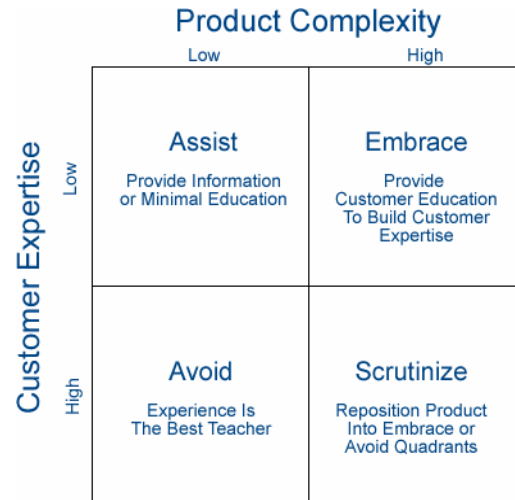
This is the sweet spot for customer education because when expertise is low and complexity is high, customers are highly involved and expect to spend significant effort developing complex behaviors. Companies should think about providing instructor-led classes, video or CD-ROM tutorials, or e-learning.

### Avoid

High expertise and low complexity means customer education should be avoided. Customer education may annoy the customer, distract the consumer from the task, and detrimentally increase the time it takes to reactivate a purchase. Here, customers are seeking efficiency, where a "just the facts" orientation is sufficient.

### Scrutinize

This is perhaps the most challenging interaction since studies show customers with high levels of expertise with complex products can become complacent. Expert customers are more likely to experience more product use errors due to overconfidence or misapplied rules than nonexperts. Because of this, experts may attribute defection or discontinuance decisions to the product rather than themselves. To avoid these problems, it is best to shift the customer back into the Avoid or Embrace quadrant.



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