

Turning 30% churn into 15% retention improvement: a proactive customer success system for 300 B2B accounts

At HomeStars — Canada's largest home services marketplace — churn was high and training wasn't sticking. A proactive communications system built from scratch changed both. Six years after leaving, former clients were still calling.

300+

B2B accounts managed

30%+

churn rate inherited

50%+

email open rates

15%

retention improvement

The problem

HomeStars' contractor and home service company subscribers were churning at over 30%. The root cause wasn't the product — it was adoption. Contractors are tradespeople, not marketers. They weren't at their computers during training sessions, didn't always retain what they'd learned, and weren't using the platform in ways that would generate the reviews and visibility that made their subscription valuable.

If they weren't getting reviews, they weren't seeing results. If they weren't seeing results, they weren't renewing. The training model wasn't working because it assumed customers would remember and act on information delivered once, in a single session, months before renewal.

What was built

Proactive communications system — the only CS rep to build one

Designed and built a regular email communications program that delivered actionable tips, reminders, and education on a consistent cadence — reinforcing training over time rather than relying on a single onboarding session. No other customer success rep on the team had built anything like it.

Practical, contractor-specific content

Each communication delivered one actionable idea in plain language a tradesperson could act on immediately. Topics included:

- How to ask customers for a review — and when
- How to respond to a bad review without making it worse
- How to thank customers for positive reviews in a way that builds credibility
- How to turn good reviews into social media content
- How to update their website link correctly to capture the SEO benefit from HomeStars
- Online reputation management ideas relevant to their trade

Always-available human support

Always answered the phone. When a contractor got a bad review, panicked, and called — they got a real person who walked them through exactly what to do. That kind of responsive, practical support built trust that no automated system could replicate and kept accounts from cancelling in moments of frustration.

The results

Retention improvement

15%

across 300+ accounts

Email open rates

50%+

industry average 20–25%

Six years later

Years after leaving HomeStars, former clients were still calling — not HomeStars support, but personally — because they trusted that they'd get a real answer. When they called, the call was answered. When they needed help, they got it — including a warm handoff back to the right person at the company. That's not a metric. That's what happens when you build genuine relationships with customers, not just accounts.

Final Thought

Churn is almost never a product problem. It's almost always an adoption and engagement problem — customers who don't use the product don't see value, and customers who don't see value don't renew. This case study is proof that a well-designed communications system, built on genuine understanding of the customer's day-to-day reality, can change retention outcomes materially.

The six-year detail matters too. Retention isn't just about keeping accounts through renewal. It's about building the kind of trust that outlasts the contract, the company, and the product. That's what customer-first marketing actually looks like in practice.