

How much does it cost?

A personalized Online Dispute Resolution Program requires close attention to detail and design to ensure the process meets ethical standards and the particular needs of the parties.

1. **Set Up:** there is a one time set up fee is based on the degree of specificity from simple adjustments to a completely new proprietary program.
2. **Monthly Management Fees** are negotiated based on the volume of cases per year and the services provided which include:
 - unlimited access to the negotiation forum
 - services of recruited, trained, qualified professional neutrals
 - personalized support services
 - management services
 - monthly reporting on cases received and disposition
 - updating and servicing the ODR platform
3. **Per Case Fees:** Many e-commerce disputes are comparatively simple. Once the process is designed and operational, NetNeutrals charges a flat fee in the shared program. Many other disputes can be quite complex, requiring substantial review work by the neutral as well as professional qualifications, such as medical training. These types of disputes are priced based on time and expertise.

For more information

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Online Dispute Resolution Programs and Services

What is ODR?

Online dispute resolution (ODR) uses traditional, proven systems for settling disputes such as negotiation, mediation and arbitration and merges them with internet applications. Secure, password protected programs offer quick, professional and cost effective solutions for resolving differences.



Is this something new?

More than fifty years ago mediation and arbitration programs started to become popular choices as alternatives to traditional litigation. Designed to be easy to use, accessible and efficient, both consumers and businesses have found it to be a process that answers their needs. The programs have grown in acceptance and matured into a recognized professional field with rules and standards. Online dispute resolution was developed in the early days of internet use and email correspondence. NetNeutrals.com, a subsidiary of DeMars & Associates, Ltd., has been resolving e-commerce disputes for companies such as eBay since 2004.

How does it work?

- NetNeutrals offers personalized, proprietary programs for companies such as eBay, and it offers a basic process that can be used by multiple companies and customers/clients.
- Once the process is set up, a case is opened when one of the parties in a dispute contacts NetNeutrals. The program offers a free negotiation site where the parties can attempt to work out a solution on their own. The site includes FAQs to assist the parties. FAQs include ideas such as how to engage the other party, and how to find middle ground.
- If the parties are not successful in finding a solution in direct negotiation, they can invite in a neutral to manage a mediation. The neutral is an independent third party who does not have an interest in the outcome of the dispute and who assists the parties in finding a solution they can both accept.
- NetNeutrals also offers online arbitration. In this process the parties are each provided an opportunity to state their case and then the neutral makes a decision for them that is considered a final resolution of the dispute.



Who are the neutrals?

NetNeutrals uses professional mediators and arbitrators with expertise in the subject matter in dispute. The qualifications of the neutrals are determined in conjunction with the client. All of the neutrals are trained and are required to pass an exam before they are appointed to the NetNeutrals roster.

Who designs the online dispute resolution program?

All NetNeutrals programs are designed by staff, in collaboration with the client if it is a sponsored program. When the program is designed, NetNeutrals incorporates published Best Practices and industry standards, such as fairness and independence, along with the specific decision criteria that are tied to the issues in dispute. NetNeutrals places a strong emphasis on developing programs with rules that are clear, simple, easy to understand and can be standardly applied. NetNeutrals has more than ten years' experience in designing and managing ODR, and is widely recognized as a leader in the industry.

Who uses online dispute resolution and why?

Online dispute resolution is widely used by many industries such as insurance, health care and e-commerce. In fact, a recent European Union (EU) Directive requires most EU businesses to provide online dispute resolution by January 2016. The use of ODR is growing exponentially. It's estimated there will be nearly 1 Billion online disputes by 2017.

Companies who develop these types of programs recognize the value of providing a system for resolving differences. They understand that programs that employ an independent third-party, either as a mediator or an arbitrator, are considered to be fairer by their users. Often companies prefer to send the disputes to a neutral third-party in order to distance themselves from what may be an unpopular decision, or one that might prompt a user to take retaliatory action. Many companies use online dispute resolution as a part of their customer retention strategy.

Online dispute resolution systems are effective as part of an outsourcing plan. Handling unhappy customers traditionally has been a task that can be difficult to manage; and is often an unpopular part of the employee's job description. Handing off dispute resolution activities can free up employees to do other tasks, can eliminate the uncertainties connected with managing appropriate staff coverage and will increase both the fact and appearance of independence.

Online dispute resolution is fast and convenient for users. Many companies use ODR as an integral part of their customer retention and recovery initiatives.



What kinds of services does NetNeutrals offer?

1. Most companies request NetNeutrals design a proprietary process, provide the administration staff, recruit and train the neutrals and manage the process. This approach offers both the fact and appearance of third-party neutrality. Monthly reports are provided, along with consulting services for policy changes, program expansions, etc.
2. For various reasons, other companies prefer to manage their dispute resolution process internally. In those situations, NetNeutrals provides consulting services to assist the client in designing the process, developing rules and procedures, and formulating FAQs.
3. In response to the EU Directive, NetNeutrals also developed a process which provides offer a standard, shared online dispute resolution program. As required by the EU, the shared program will operate in compliance with the UNCITRAL Working Group III Draft Rules for business-consumer disputes. This program could be considered a generic version of the proprietary programs described in 1 (above). The shared online program is now fully operational, in advance of the EU's mid-February 2016 start date.

How long does it take to set up a program?

- ⚙ For a proprietary program, NetNeutrals plans a 90 day start up process. During this time the client and NetNeutrals staff discuss the program concepts and goals. Rules are written, FAQs are adjusted and all necessary software issues are managed, tested and launched.
- ⚙ In the situation of consulting services, staff time is billed at the hourly rate. Please contact us for current pricing.
- ⚙ The shared ODR process is currently available. A standard contractual agreement must be completed before NetNeutrals is able to accept the company's cases.