MARKET STUDY
CX TRENDS, CHALLENGES, & OPPORTUNITIES

JUNE 2023

CX Trends, Challenges & Opportunities

For all the talk about customer centricity, some businesses ironically downplay the actual voice of the customer. They chase trends and make investments without fully considering how these initiatives will transform the customer experience.

Unsurprisingly, this great irony has produced a history of disappointment. Frustrating pain points like long wait times have long endured, while customer satisfaction and loyalty measures have long underwhelmed.

This aura of disappointment remains palpable in 2023. CCW Digital's Annual Consumer Preferences Survey reveals that customer experiences are actually regressing, with brands continuing to miss the mark in areas like personalization, speed, convenience, empathy, and channel accommodation.

Where have brands been going wrong? What opportunities – and incentives – do they have for reversing course and making customer centricity a reality? By providing a deep-dive into the aforementioned survey, this CCW Digital Market Study reveals the answers.

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Methodology & Demographics

To conduct its inquiry into the state of customer experiences, CCW Digital conducted its annual Consumer Preferences Survey in June 2023. The survey polled 517 US-based adults on their expectations, goals, and sentiments when interacting with brands.

About the Author

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CMP CUSTOMER MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

Brian Cantor is the principal analyst and director for CCW Digital, the global online community and research hub for customer contact professionals. In his role, Brian leads all customer experience, contact center, technology, and employee engagement research initiatives for CCW. CCW Digital's articles, special reports, commentaries, infographics, executive interviews, webinars, and online events reach a community of over 150,000.

A passionate advocate for customer centricity, Brian regularly speaks on major CX conference agendas. He also advises organizations on customer experience and business development strategies.

Key Findings

1 Only 4% of consumers feel experiences have improved over the past year, and a staggering 57% feel they have gotten worse.

2 Given what consumers routinely face when interacting with brands, these sobering statistics are unfortunately very understandable. Only 13% of consumers feel brands are delivering highly personalized experiences, and a nearly-as-disappointing 25% feel brands are failing to deliver quick, easy, and convenient interactions.

3 A whopping 66% of consumers, meanwhile, frequently endure long wait times. Pain points like answering repetitive questions or di culty reaching a live agent are also disappointingly common in today's customer engagement landscape.

4 Despite all the talk about the rising agent standard, consumers have yet to witness notable improvement on the frontline. They, by and large, do not feel agents are becoming more adept at communicating warmth, knowledge, or empathy.

5 Consumers also feel experiences are becoming more restrictive. The majority, for example, experience more di culty receiving a refund or make-good – and more trouble reaching a live phone agent.

6 The stakes of   nally addressing these issues are signi cant. Nine-in-ten consumers are more likely to support brands that o er easy experiences, and nearly as many gravitate toward those that display personalization.

7 Brand values matter; two-thirds of consumers care about a brand's public stances on hot-button issues, and 84% consider a brand's reputation for employee centricity.

8 Consumers of all age ranges continue to place more trust in phone calls than any other brand communication option. About 95%, moreover, still expect access to a live agent for some or most issues.

9 Many brands are failing to personalize their outbound texts and emails. To correct this gap, however, they will   rst have to cultivate more customer trust in their data and security initiatives.

10 Online reviews and social media discussions do not shape every consumer's perception, but they have enough of an impact to warrant a prominent place in any company's customer experience strategy.
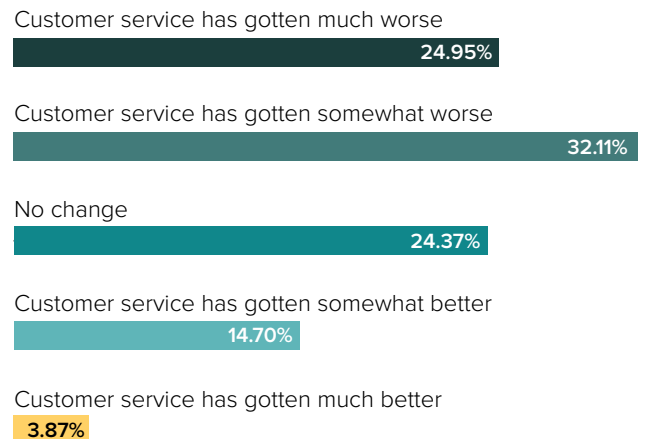
Scoring Today's CX | Is Customer Centricity A Reality?

Customer contact leaders can call it the era of customer centricity. Brands can declare their commitment to competing on the customer experience.

Unfortunately, this talk, enthusiasm, and investment is not positively impacting reality. Customer experiences are not improving.

Only 4% of consumers feel that their experiences with businesses have gotten much better over the past year. Even more troublingly, **a staggering 57% feel experiences have actually gotten worse.**

In general, do you feel businesses have gotten better or worse at delivering customer service over the past year?

Customer service has gotten much worse

24.95%

Customer service has gotten somewhat worse

32.11%

No change

24.37%

Customer service has gotten somewhat better

14.70%

Customer service has gotten much better

3.87%

What's Going Right (And Wrong)?

What makes the lack of improvement so concerning is that experiences are already weak. Consumers are, therefore, not faulting brands for failing to move from "good" to "great." They are criticizing brands for allowing inefficient impersonal experiences to persist at a time when customer centricity is supposed to be a driving force.

Just 13% of consumers feel that experiences are highly personalized to their needs and expectations, which actually marks a regression from last year's sum of 15%.

The absence of personalization, notably, does not correspond with an emphasis on speed. **Less than one quarter of customers feel their typical experience is quick or convenient**, underscoring the dramatic extent to which brands are failing. They are neither respecting customers' time nor tailoring interactions to their unique needs.

Success is also scarce for areas like **predicting and proactively addressing customer needs (a common experience for less than 14% of consumers), going "off script" to support special customer requests (14%), using technology that enhances interactions (14%), and engaging customers in meaningful conversation (16%).**

In a startling testament to the present-day absence of customer centricity, **more than 28% of consumers feel brands are doing *nothing right*.**

Consider your typical customer service interaction over the past year.
Which of the following would you say are true?

None of the above
28.05%

The experience was very quick, convenient, and easy
24.76%

The experience was highly personalized to my specific needs and expectations
12.57%

The interaction was very conversational with a lot of small/personal talk
16.05%

The business predicted exactly why I was getting in touch and immediately knew how to help
13.54%

I was able to choose exactly where to interact with the business (phone, email, chat, etc)
25.92%

The employees seemed really happy, helpful, knowledgeable, and could empathize with my issues
21.86%

The company/employee went "off script" to give me a special resol tion
14.31%

The technology used (such as chatbots, mobile apps, screen sharing, etc) made the experience much better
14.31%

Persistent pain points

As they fail to deliver key value tenets like efficien , personalization, proactivity, and friendliness, brands are subjecting consumers to numerous points of frustration.
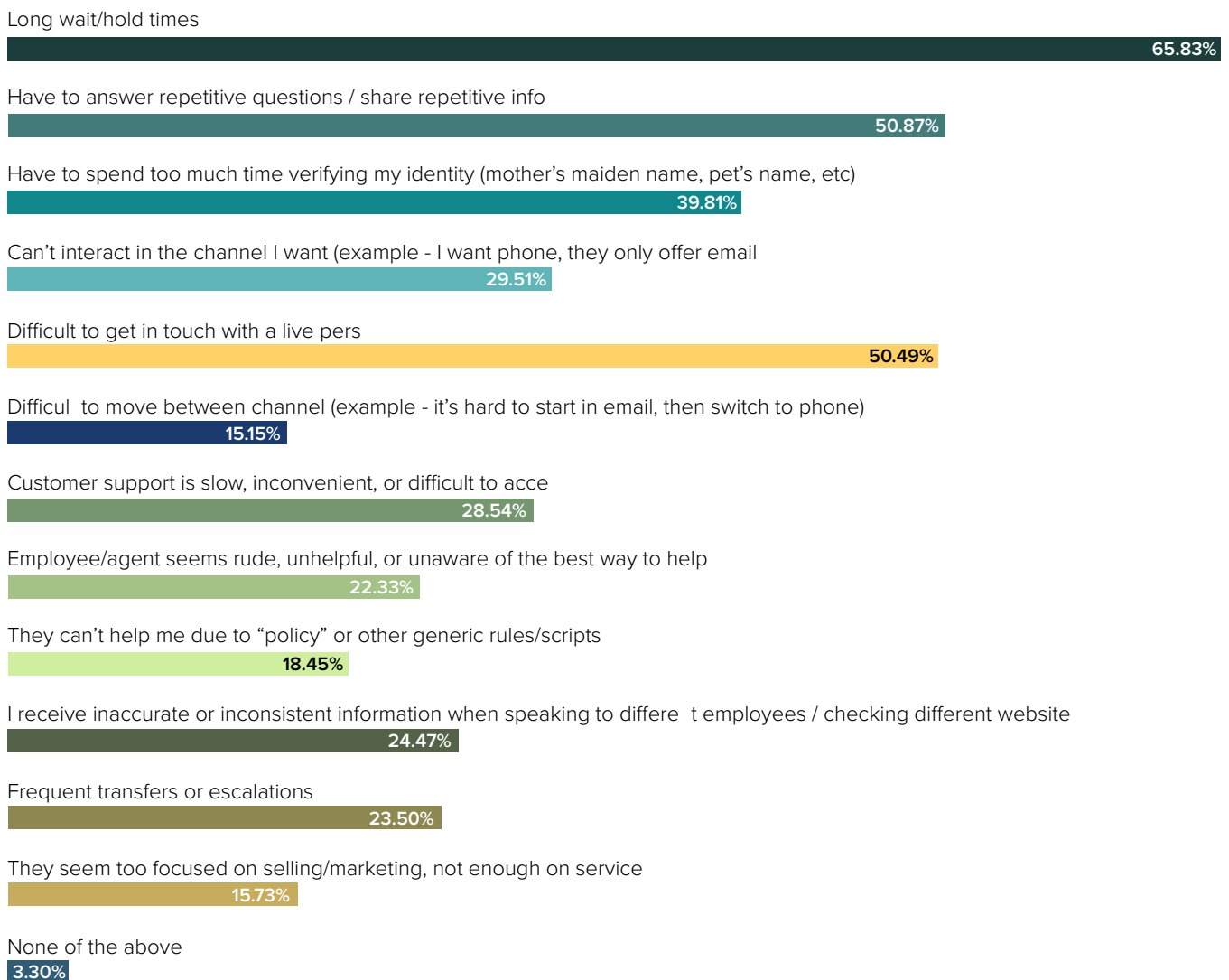
Nearly **66% of consumers, for example, say that they** *frequently* **experience long wait or hold times** when interacting with brands. Other common pain points include **having to answer too many repetitive questions (51%), struggling to reach a live person (50%), and spending too much time authenticating their identity (40%).**

The prevalence of these pain points should not catch any brand by surprise. Long wait times have consistently ranked as the biggest pain point since CCW Digital began conducting the Consumer Preferences Survey several years ago, and the other issues have often ranked near the top of the list.

The real kicker is that these pain points are readily addressable in today's customer experience climate. Brands are *supposed* to be using proactive engagement and lower-touch digital options to better manage contact volume – and ensure customers who *require agent assistance* can get the help they need without delay. Brands are *supposed* to be using modern analytics and authentication solutions to improve customer recognition, eliminate repetitive questioning, and deliver quick and personalized support.

Since the tools and best practices already exist, brands have little excuse for not eliminating these long-enduring pain points. Consumers, in turn, have little reason to give brands a pass for underwhelming experiences. They meanwhile have every reason to condemn brands for failing to make noticeable improvements to their customer interactions and journeys.

Which of the following challenges/issues do you often encounter when interacting with businesses (such as for customer service)?

Long wait/hold times
65.83%

Have to answer repetitive questions / share repetitive info
50.87%

Have to spend too much time verifying my identity (mother's maiden name, pet's name, etc)
39.81%

Can't interact in the channel I want (example - I want phone, they only offer email
29.51%

Difficult to get in touch with a live pers
50.49%

Difficul to move between channel (example - it's hard to start in email, then switch to phone)
15.15%

Customer support is slow, inconvenient, or difficult to acce
28.54%

Employee/agent seems rude, unhelpful, or unaware of the best way to help
22.33%

They can't help me due to "policy" or other generic rules/scripts
18.45%

I receive inaccurate or inconsistent information when speaking to differe t employees / checking different website
24.47%

Frequent transfers or escalations
23.50%

They seem too focused on selling/marketing, not enough on service
15.73%

None of the above
3.30%

Is Agent Support Evolving?

In a survey for **CCW Digital's Customer Contact Industry Review**, contact center leaders revealed that today's agents require an unprecedented ability to deal with complex issues, work autonomously, go "off script" and interact with emotionally hostile customers.

The overwhelming majority of consumers, unfortunately, do not feel agents have risen to the occasion. They have simply not seen meaningful improvement when it comes to agent warmth, knowledge, or empathy.

A mere **11%, for example, feel agents are better at detecting and responding to customer sentiment.** The numbers are similarly discouraging for **knowing about customers and their needs (16%), conveying excitement about their jobs (16%), thinking "outside the box" to devise resolutions (17%), engaging in meaningful conversations (17%), possessing essential product knowledge (20%), demonstrating**

warmth and friendliness (21%), or caring about supporting customers (22%).

A troubling 33% do not feel agents have improved in any of these areas.

This lack of agent growth is particularly problematic amid the evolving engagement landscape. With self-service options at their disposal for simple issues, the expectation is that customers will primarily rely on agents for complex, personal, or otherwise high-stakes issues. In order to provide the requisite support, agents will absolutely require higher levels of product mastery and emotional intelligence. Their current abilities will not be enough.

And insofar as the majority of customers are jumping through hoops and enduring long wait times just to speak to these agents, the fact that they are unable to provide stellar service is a real slap in the face. It is a direct affront to the idea of customer centricity.

Consider the typical customer service agent with whom you interacted over the past year. Do you feel they have improved in any of the following ways?

None of the above
32.82%

They seem friendlier/nicer
20.97%

They seem more willing to engage in a conversation / less rushed
17.48%

They seem like they care more about solving my problems
22.33%

They seem more excited about their job and the company they support
15.92%

They seem like they know more about me / don't have to ask as many questions
15.73%

They seem like they know more about the business and products they support
20.39%

They seem more likely to "think outside the box" and give me a resolution that isn't in the script/policy
16.50%

They seem more aware of my anger/frustration and try their best to calm me down
10.87%

Is Service Becoming More Restrictive?

Despite talk about economic uncertainty and budgetary scrutiny, contact center leaders maintain their commitment to exceptional service. **More than 60% claim they remain as (if not more) willing to go "above and beyond" for their customers.**

The majority of consumers do not believe the walk supports the talk. From their perspective, brands are *indeed* cutting corners. They are *indeed* saying "no."

A staggering 58%, in fact, **say they have had a harder time getting refunds, replacements, or special resolutions in response to their inquiries.** It is worth noting that asking for a refund — though more financially costly than a simple

apology — may not even constitute going "above and beyond." It may simply be the appropriate response to a given situation.

The fact that brands are more inclined to resist providing refunds, therefore, negates any illusion of them providing exceptional service in today's economic climate.

The resistance to refunds and make-goods is not, moreover, the only area in which consumers have noticed some cutbacks.

More than 71% believe it has become harder to get in touch with an agent over the phone. Whether due to the outright removal of phone options, the introduction of more complex digital journeys, or a heavier use of IVRs, brands have been preventing customers from engaging in a tried-and-true manner. They have been scaling back one of the absolute cornerstones of the customer engagement process.

Over the past year, do you think it has become harder to get refunds / replacements / make goods / special resolutions from businesses when something has gone wrong?

- **58.03%** Yes
- **41.97%** No

Over the past year, do you feel that businesses have made it harder to get in touch with and speak to a live customer service agent/employee/ representative over the phone?
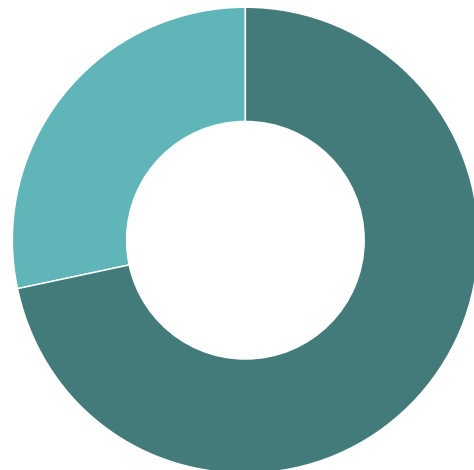
- **71.76%** Yes, it has been harder to get in touch over the phone
- **28.24%** No, it has not been harder to get in touch over the phone

CX Attraction | What Can Brands Do To Win And Retain Customers?

Clearly, brands are not delivering great experiences. They are subjecting customers to journeys that are heavy on difficulties and delays and light on relevance an convenience.

Not simply disappointing in theory, this failure to demonstrate customer centricity is costly in practice. Today's consumers may not *ignore* price or product, but they absolutely consider the overall experience when determining which brands to support.

Speed, Personalization, or Both?

In the status quo, brands are neither meeting customer expectations for *speed* nor *personalization*. If they want to win customer satisfaction and loyalty, they need to deliver both.

More than **90% of consumers say they are more likely to support a brand that delivers quick, easy, and convenient experiences.** A nearly-as-significant **85% say highly personalized experiences have a direct impact on winning their business.**

Collectively, the statistics confirm that consumers are aware of their power. They know they do not have to settle for experiences that fire on *some* cylinders; instead, they can demand journeys that are frictionless, personalized, predictive, and proactive. They can leverage the competitive nature of today's market to find brands that are willing to elevate all facets of the customer experience.

Granted, if they *had* to choose, nearly **67% would choose speed over a deeply conversational experience.**

This does not mean consumers will ultimately waver on their demand for highly tailored experiences. Rather, it means that they value a more productive form of personalization. They are not necessarily looking for brands to "show oĀ" what they know about customers in the form of frequent name-drops, excessive small talk, and over-the-top conversations and gestures. Instead, they want brands to *use* their knowledge of customers to anticipate needs, eliminate friction, and deliver the most efficient and relevan support possible.

Are you more likely to support a business that delivers customer experiences that are highly personalized to you and your needs?
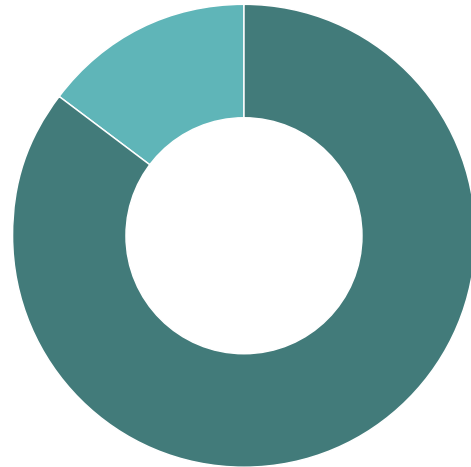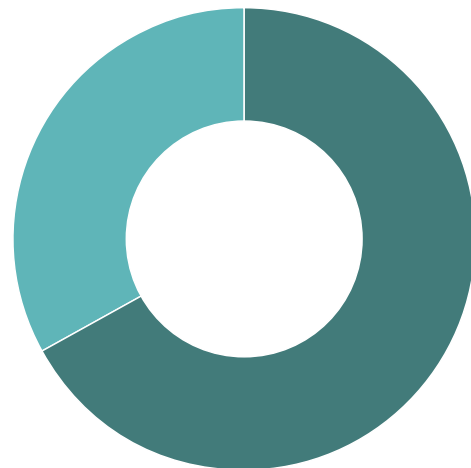

■ **85.44%** Yes

■ **14.56%** No

Are you more likely to support a business that delivers quick, easy, and/or convenient customer experiences?
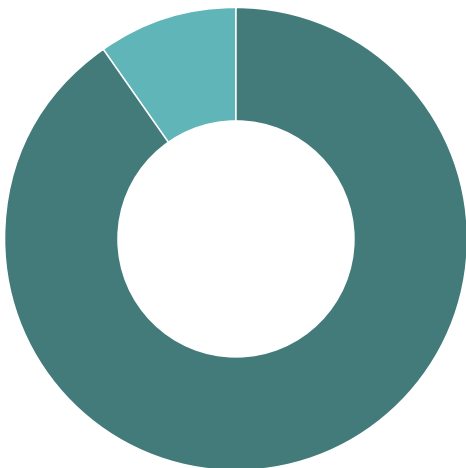
■ **90.29%** Yes

■ **9.71%** No

If you had to choose between a customer service interaction that was extremely easy and quick or one that involved a really friendly and personalized conversation, which would you choose?

■ **66.99%** I'd rather have the easy, quick interaction

■ **33.01%** I'd rather have the warm, friendly conversation

The Power of Values

If the goal is to build human connections with customers, it stands to reason that a brand's values – not just the service experience it provides – would impact satisfaction and loyalty.

Validating this notion, a substantial **67% of consumers say that a brand's public stances on polarizing issues will impact their support for a brand.**

For some, knowing that two-thirds of customers care about a brand's politics will cause risk aversion. They will refrain from publicizing any stances, fearing that their position may do more than simply generate a few mean Tweets. It may have a legitimate impact on their relationships with customers.

Others will see *silence* as the riskier option. They will interpret the statistic not as a reminder to stay neutral but as a reminder that customers want to know and feel good about the people behind the brand. Without putting forth a real, human identity, they will inhibit their ability to meaningfully connect with customers.

Consumers, of course, are not simply evaluating brands on the basis of their political views. They also care deeply about a company's actions, particularly when it comes to the employee experience. **Nearly 84% of consumers say that knowledge of employee mistreatment would impact their willingness to support a brand.**

The connection surely speaks to the fundamental empathy consumers have for frontline employees. Just as they criticize "Karens'' for rudely confronting service employees, consumers are holding business leaders accountable for their treatment of the workforce. They know what it is like to work in a difficult frontline job – and they know what it is l e to be unappreciated by management. If a brand will not do right by its employees, why should they reward that brand with their wallet share and loyalty?

News of employee mistreatment may, moreover, signal potential customer mistreatment down the road. If a business will not even protect its employees who come into the office or store and contribute every d , will it really go above and beyond for *random customers* with whom it may only ever interact a few times?

Numerous brands have made headlines for taking stances on political, controversial, or otherwise polarizing issues. Does this affect you willingness to support the brand?
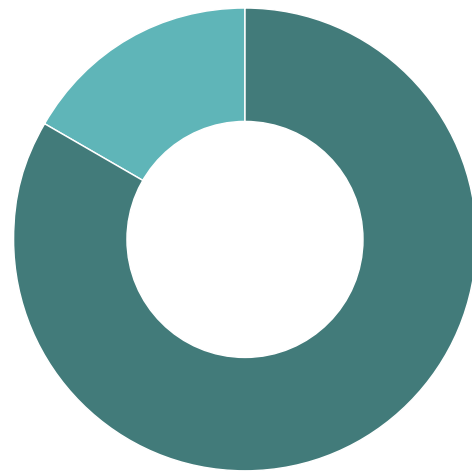
If you found out that a business did not treat its employees well, would that impact your willingness to buy from / support them?

■ **67.12%** Yes, a brand's public stances/views/values impact my willingness to support

■ **32.88%** No, a brand's public stances/views/values have no impact on my willingness to support

■ **83.50%** Yes

■ **16.50%** No

Omnichannel In 2023 | Where and How Do Customers Want To Connect?

Customer contact industry trends do not always align with customer demands. Nowhere is this notion more obvious than within the context of the omnichannel revolution. As brands obsess over digital transformations and AI-driven self-service, consumers are showing an enduring presence for agent-led phone conversations.

This does not mean brands should cease investment into their digital experiences. It does, however, mean they should consider slowing (if not ceasing) any initiative that leads to the elimination of live agent phone calls.

The Persistence of the "Call Center"

As a general rule, any brand that is eliminating or restricting access to live phone support is directly ignoring the voice of the customer.

Phone remains the most trusted customer service channel, with **70% of consumers confident they would receive a resolution by calling**. By comparison, **49% and 43% of consumers have the same faith, respectively, in live chat and email.** Trust levels are even lower for **messaging (29%), chatbots (20%), digital helpdesks (18%),** and **social media (14%).**
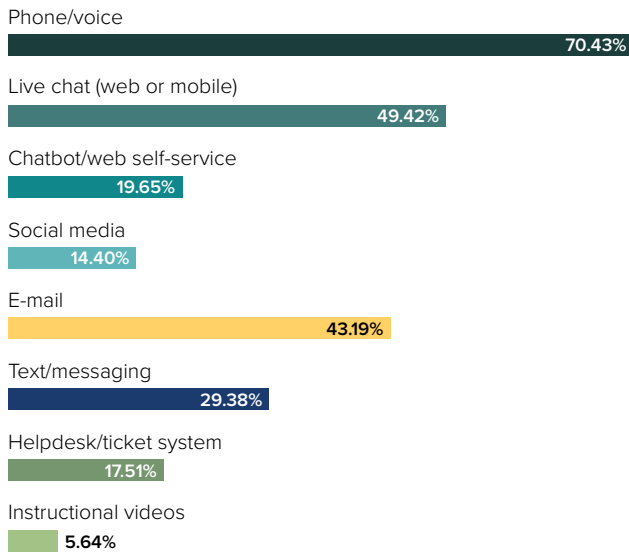
This general hierarchy, notably, holds across demographics. Even consumers under the age of 30 – those who have had access to the Internet and mobile text communication for most (if not the entirety) of their lives – resoundingly trust telephone calls more than any other option.

Obviously, this Ānding does not mean most consumers – the same ones who prefer texting and Tweeting in their everyday lives – *truly* prefer calling for customer service. It does not mean that they secretly long for the days in which voice calls dominated the conversation landscape.

More likely, it reflects an ongoing dissatisfaction with digital channels. Consumers simply do not feel they have access to the same caliber of support – and the same caliber of resolutions and make goods – when emailing, chatting, texting, or engaging with a bot.

If brands were to make good on their promise of a digital transformation and actually elevate experiences within these environments, they would likely earn customer trust and change the aforementioned hierarchy. Once customers become less reliant on phone support, brands can begin reaping the efficiency and scalability rewards of digita engagement.

Granted, cultivating digital trust will not be an overnight endeavor. Brands have had years (if not decades) to perfect options like email and chat, but consumers still feel these channels are inferior to the phone.

And though generative AI like ChatGPT is garnering hype for its potential impact on self-service, consumers are not yet certain it will drive the requisite transformation. **Only 41% of consumers have become more willing to use self-service this year.**

Suppose you have a customer support issue. In which of the following channels would you trust companies to successfully solve your problem?

Phone/voice
70.43%

Live chat (web or mobile)
49.42%

Chatbot/web self-service
19.65%

Social media
14.40%

E-mail
43.19%

Text/messaging
29.38%

Helpdesk/ticket system
17.51%

Instructional videos
5.64%

Has the buzz over AI technology like ChatGPT made you more willing to use self-service (such as chatbots) for customer service or support issues?
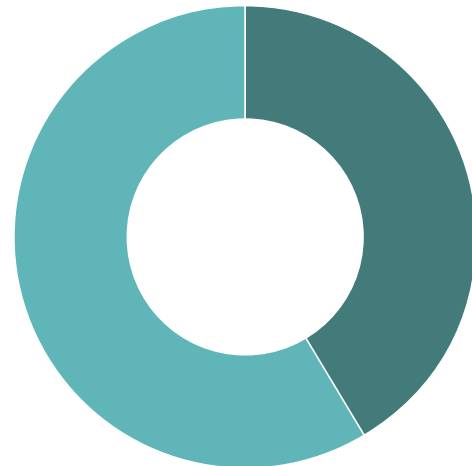
41.39% Yes

58.61% No

## Keeping The "Human" In "Human Connection"

Consumers are simply unwilling to abandon their belief that customer service should, at least in some cases, involve a live agent.

Nearly 95% expect access to a live agent in at least some cases, and 65% feel an agent should be available for *most* inquiries. This is not to say that customers are unwilling to use self-service, but it is a reminder that brands cannot simply eliminate the live support option in an effort to cut costs or chase trends. If they want to maintain customer trust, they will provide an option to receive live assistance.

If reducing consumer reliance on agents is possible, it will come via education on – and confirmation of – the value of self-service options. If consumers consistently experience irrefutable proof that they can receive the same quality of support (and same caliber of resolution) in a convenient AI platform, they would have no incentive to endure the waiting and repetitive questioning common to live agent support. They would *want* to use self-service.

Unfortunately, many brands are squandering this opportunity. Rather than working to get customers excited about self-service, they are simply forcing them into these channels. They are breeding resentment rather than enthusiasm and thus delaying customer adoption of a support option that should, in reality, be in everyone's best interest.

When you have a customer service issue, do you feel it is important for the business to at least give you the option to speak to a live customer service employee (via phone, messaging, live chat, etc)?
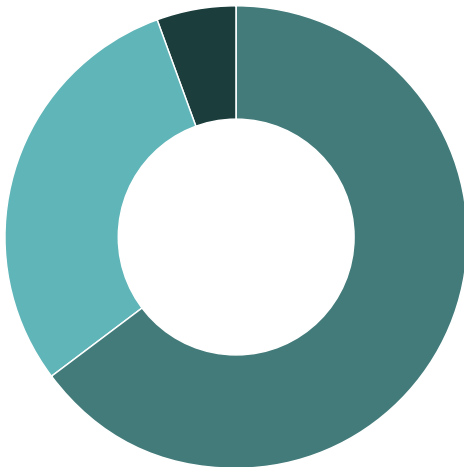
64.98% Yes, I want the option to speak to someone in most cases

29.57% I only want the option to speak to someone if the issue is difficult/personal/serio

5.45% I never feel it is important to have access to a live customer service employee

Next-Generation Engagement | How Does Digital CX Impact Trust & Reputation?

The endurance of the phone conversation does not change the fact that digital engagement is rising to prominence. It does not negate the reality that how a brand engages customers across web, mobile, and social channels can directly impact satisfaction, loyalty, and brand reputation.
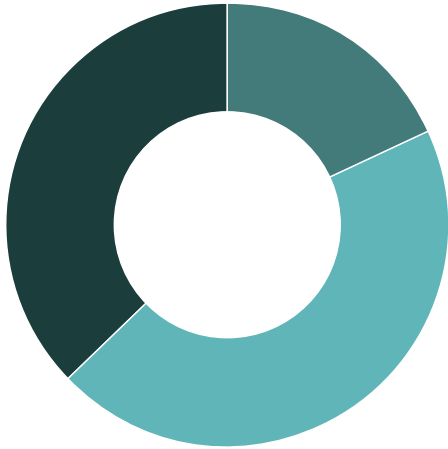
Must Low-Touch Mean Impersonal?

The digital journey encompasses more than inbound support inquiries. It, notably, includes *outbound* notifications and marketing campaigns.

Like customer service conversations, these forms of engagement also benefit from personalization

Unfortunately, many brands are missing out on this opportunity. Only **18% of consumers feel most of the brand messages they receive are highly personalized; 37% *rarely* encounter personalization.**

Not simply a means of showing appreciation for a customer, personalizing a marketing campaign is an important strategy for cutting through noise and driving conversions. With so many brands sending so many emails and texts every day, it will often take a highly relevant, highly personalized message to stand out from the crowd – and inspire action.

Think about the marketing and promotional emails and texts you receive. Do you feel like these messages/offers are highly customized to you including your name, account status, preferences, past orders, needs, etc?

Just over 26% of consumers trust brands to send an appropriate quantity of messages but do not trust brands to protect the privacy and security of their data. About 25% have the opposing viewpoint; they believe brands will do a great job of protecting their data but assume they will engage in excessive communication.

Only 18% of consumers, then, have full trust in how brands are using their information.

Given the competitive advantage that comes from personalization, and given the impending death of third-party cookies, brands are utterly reliant on this information to design great experiences and engage in fruitful interactions. They simply cannot allow these trust issues to linger.

- **18.29%** They are highly personalized in most cases
- **44.75%** They are highly personalized in some cases
- **36.96%** They are rarely personalized

Can Consumers Trust Brands To Personalize?

A brand's ability to personalize hinges on its ability to capture, unify, analyze, and leverage actionable intelligence about customers.

Brands will have no prayer of even accessing, let alone operationalizing, this data if consumers do not trust them to use it safely, securely, and tastefully. In the status quo, not all consumers have such faith in brands.

A non-trivial 30% of consumers neither fully trust brands to protect their data *nor* refrain from excessive sales and marketing communication. Fearing an abundance of spam at best and a risk of fraud or identity theft at worst, these consumers will surely hesitate to share data with brands – and thus inhibit the potential for personalization.

When a business asks you for your phone number, email, or other personal details, are you confident they will use your data safel and respectfully?

- **18.29%** Yes, I am confident they will protect my data AND only contact me when necessary
- **24.90%** I trust them them to protect my data, but I worry about them sending too many emails/texts/calls
- **26.46%** I trust them to only contact me when necessary, but I'm worried about the security/privacy of my data
- **30.35%** I'm worried about the security/privacy of my data AND the company sending me too many messages

How Does External Communication Impact Brand Reputation?

The idea of a consumer telling a few friends about their experiences with brands has always been on the radar. The idea of a consumer's commentary reaching thousands or even millions of existing or prospective buyers, on the other hand, is a new product of the digital transformation.

Thanks to the rise of review websites, message boards, and social media platforms, a customer's positive and negative feedback has the potential to instantly go viral — and immediately impact a brand's reputation and ability to attract customers.

Granted, not everyone obsesses over these external indicators of brand reputation. Only **28% of consumers, for example, trust *most* online reviews.** Just over **57% percent trust reviews in select cases, while 15% do not trust them whatsoever.**

Not everyone, moreover, expects brands to aggressively respond to these external conversations. More than **44% of consumers do not even feel it is important for brands to actively converse on social networks.**

Still, today's brands cannot ignore the reality that conversations are no longer taking place on the company's home turf. Sentiments are being changed and reputations are being built on external platforms, and the most proactively customer-centric brands incorporate these conversations into their voice of the customer analysis.

Do you trust online reviews to provide fair, honest insight about a given product or brand?
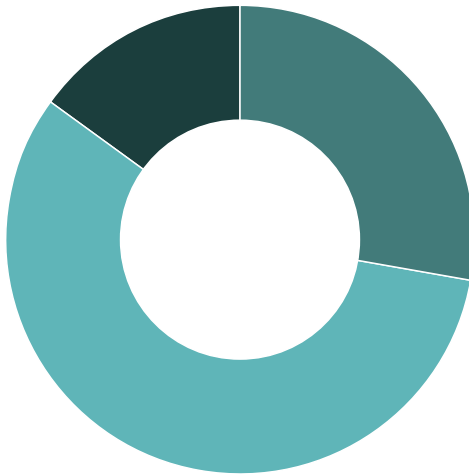
- **27.82%** I trust most online reviews
- **57.39%** I only trust online reviews on specific sites/network
- **14.79%** I generally do not trust online reviews

Do you feel it is important for a brand to actively engage with customers on social networks like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc?
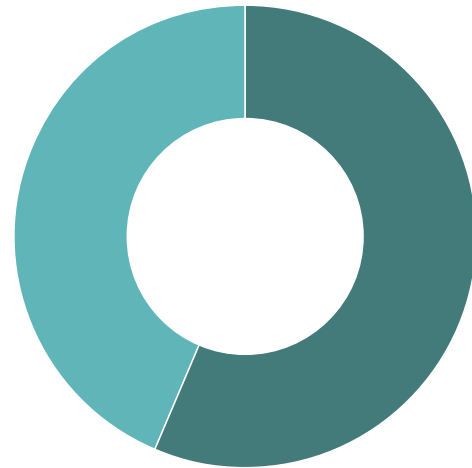
- **56.42%** Yes
- **43.58%** No

PRACTICALITY GUIDE

CallMiner

Your Customer Loyalty Blueprint

Superior customer experience can be achieved by understanding and improving the customer journey, which these days is anything but linear. And it all starts with a solid foundation of data to analyze. The challenge is that most companies primarily attempt to understand their customers via solicited feedback, such as surveys, reviews and more. Solicited feedback only covers a portion of overall feedback from your customer base.

Without capturing and analyzing unsolicited data — such as conversations that happen in your contact center or customer service center — companies are missing out on critical information. The **CallMiner CX Landscape Report** indicates that 79% of organizations today are collecting most of their feedback through solicited means.

So how do you collect the insights and feedback you need to understand the true Voice of the Customer (VoC), and act on that data to improve customer loyalty and lifetime value (LTV)? The good news is that your customers are already sounding contact center channels, social media, and more. It's a matter of knowing how to analyze that feedback at scale to make it actionable.

UNDERSTANDING THE OMNICHANNEL CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Customer journey mapping must gather data about every channel and touchpoint. It's critical to analyze every interaction to determine the quality of the experience at every stage of the journey. When it's done well, customer journey mapping can help you:

- Understand how your brand, products and services, and communications are perceived by customers. You will get a sense of what drives their opinions, what earns their loyalty, and what pushes them away

- Figure out what parts of the journey are creating friction and how you can improve the experience at specific touchpoint

- Identify opportunities for engaging customers at key pain points with content, brand interactions, and exposure

- Give your marketing, sales, and customer service teams the direction they need to create more compelling customer experiences

- Increase conversion rates by eliminating obstacles and negative experiences

- Delight customers with exceptional service

HOW AI-POWERED CONVERSATION INTELLIGENCE CAN HELP

AI-powered conversation intelligence analyzes customer interactions across all channels at scale to enhance the customer journey experience and drive business improvements. It works by gathering and analyzing data from calls, emails, surveys, social, chat, SMS and more to gain clear visibility into an omnichannel customer journey.

This technology analyzes interactions at the deepest level, interpreting nuance and finding patterns that shed light on customer experiences, and pinpoint new areas of opportunity.

CAPTURING ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE: NEXT STEPS

So, how do you take these concepts and act on them? Conversation intelligence can transform customer calls and multichannel interactions into structured data. This provides insight into how well you engage with your customers and manage the quality of interactions.

You can use this data to:

- Leverage omnichannel feedback from every interaction to better understand the customer journey. Combine analysis of solicited and unsolicited feedback to gain a more accurate view of customer experiences. Create a strategy for improving the customer journey based on 100% of customer interactions, rather than just a sample.

- Rely on customer journey visualization to reveal rich insight about CX, from both customer and agent perspectives, across all voice and text-based interactions. Identify opportunities in real-time to improve customer experiences and outcomes.

- Use automation to simplify the process of gathering and analyzing data to drive better decisions.

THREE KEY CUSTOMER INSIGHTS YOU CAN UNCOVER WITH CONVERSATION INTELLIGENCE

Here are three commonly used insights that can help you see your customers in a whole new light.

1 **Sentiment and emotion.** Sentiment analysis continues to be an important standard within customer service. With the addition of emotional analysis, a more nuanced and complex picture of the customer can help refine your approaches. Sentiment is a powerful indicator but is often reflected in a one-dimensional answer to a question (Positive, Negative, or Neutral). Emotional insights can more quickly identify motivational indicators, such as loyalty, distress, or churn-likely behaviors.

2 **Contact drivers.** Contact drivers help you understand why customers choose to reach out, based on the customer's perception of a certain issue or situation. In addition to contact drivers, you can drill down into frequency of contact, the root causes behind the interaction, and more, to understand the context of a customer interaction. From there, you can share those insights with the proper team. Is a product issue causing an increase in calls? Share that internally for faster resolution.

3 **Call dynamics.** From silence time to average handle time to agent quality scores, conversation intelligence can reveal important dynamics of each customer interaction. For example, on collections calls about financial matters, longer silence times can indicate that an agent is empathetically listening to a customer's needs. On other calls, long silence times can be an indicator of a challenge or issue with customers that requires additional agent training.

LEVERAGING CONTACT CENTER SUPERPOWERS TO DRIVE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS AND LOYALTY

According to a recent survey, 83% of consumers said they were more likely to purchase from a brand with which they had an emotional connection. Building these connections starts with your contact center agents, who are on the front lines of omnichannel customer interactions. In doing so, you can identify and celebrate your top performers, while using key insights to improve coaching and training.

Successful teams share these strategies:

- Rely on customer feedback as a mechanism to offe agents the training and support they need to excel in their jobs
- Allow for bilateral feedback between agents and supervisors to reflect what parts of the training proces are working and not working
- Take their training beyond QA score and KPIs. Reviewing actual customer interactions can provide real-world coaching opportunities and create a continuous feedback loop throughout an agent's entire career

Analyzing 100% of omnichannel interactions can reveal important opportunities for CX improvement. Insights include the motivations for why customers reach out, the emotions behind their interactions, and how those emotions evolve throughout the customer journey.

By using these insights strategically, your managers and supervisors can coach and train agents based on the strategies that have proven most effective wit real customers.

That doesn't always mean correcting behaviors that are deemed ineffective or inaccurat . You can also leverage conversation intelligence to accentuate the positive with top performers and use it as a model for one-to-one coaching and training throughout the organization.

ACTING ON CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Most organizations are awash in data, but what good is data if you don't act on it? According to the **CallMiner CX Landscape Report**, while every organization is collecting some data/feedback from their customers, 70% say some improvements are needed to the ways their organizations use data to enhance CX. Customers want to know that their feedback is heard, understood, and being acted upon.

Here are two examples of customer-facing initiatives that can be improved using customer feedback.

- **Driving continuous product improvement.** Many teams share contact center insights cross-departmentally to drive product improvements. That often includes avoiding product safety and/or quality issues. In many cases, customer feedback can be used to design new products, services, or features. The goal is to leverage conversation intelligence like a focus group at scale.
- **Improving brand experience and driving more targeted, relevant customer campaigns**. How do your customers feel about your brand campaigns, messaging, choice of spokespersons, and more? Understanding customers' feedback on current campaigns is essential to refining them in the futur . This is particularly important in the social media world, where customers can sound off about every bran decision. In the event of a negative brand event, you can use conversation intelligence to detect "smoke" before it becomes "fir " in a crisis.

CONCLUSION

The events of recent years have caused customers to bond with brands they love, and quickly discontinue their relationship with brands they don't. Leveraging both solicited and unsolicited feedback could be the key to unlocking additional insights that enable you to connect with your customers on a deeper, more emotional level, and improve every interaction with your brand.

Forming emotional connections with your customers starts with your contact center. Customer feedback can inform coaching and training programs and improve employee experience. But employee retention and continuous improvement are just a part of the picture. Happy employees foster a culture of positivity, which shines through to your customers. Acting on customer insights and driving continuous business improvements could make a major difference in customer retention and expansion. The act of truly listening to your customers, as simple as it sounds, can work wonders toward building long-term loyalty and advocacy.

Appendix

CallMiner

📄 **Beyond Surveys: Building a Modern VoC Program**

📄 **Beyond Surveys Volume 2: The Power of Unsolicited Customer Feedback**

2023 Editorial Calendar

JANUARY

State Of Contact Center Technology

FEBRUARY

Strategic Planning For CX Operations

February 9-11, 2023

MARCH

Customer Contact Industry Review

APRIL

State Of Contact Center Technology

April 6-8, 2023

MAY

New Standards For Customer Contact Performance

May 25-27, 2023

JUNE

Customer Experience Trends, Challenges & Opportunities

JULY

Modernizing Service Experiences With AI & Digital

July 20-22, 2023

AUGUST

Modernizing Service Experiences With AI & Digital

SEPTEMBER

Customer Experience Trends, Challenges And Innovations

September 14-16, 2023

OCTOBER

Customer Contact Intelligence & Analytics

OCTOBER

CONTACT CENTER OF 2030

October 26-28, 2023

NOVEMBER

Future Of The Contact Center: A Forecast

DECEMBER

Future Of The Contact Center: A Forecast

December 14-16, 2023

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