

ICXI - POST newsbriefing

Vol 4 – Issue 1– JUNE 2024

Introduction From The President

The previous newsletter looked at the implications of the current global trading environment on Policy and People (two of the five elements in the ICXI 5 P's Customer Experience Management Model), this issue asks to what degree the Places where customers interact with organisations has evolved and whether the Processes that customers are now required to use have improved the customer experience.

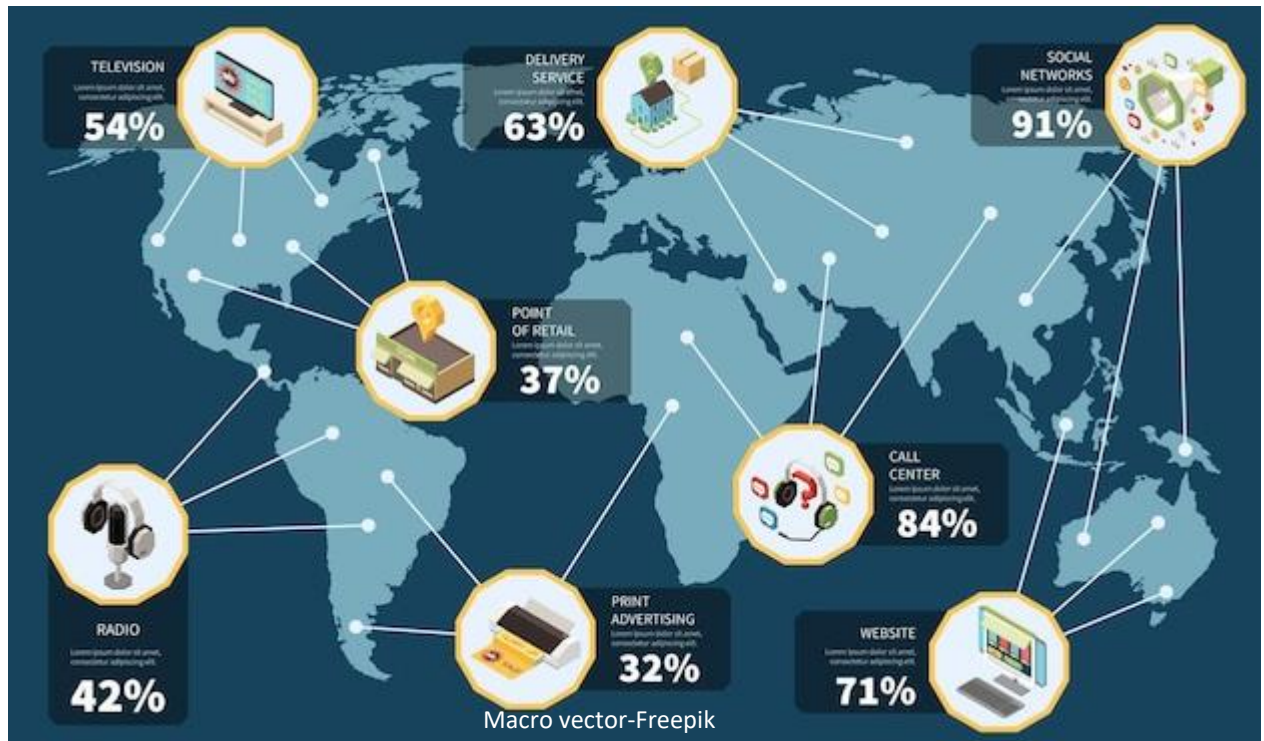
Until fairly recent times customer engagement was limited to a few places or channels ranging from face to face, mail order/post and to a lesser degree telephone. Payment processes developed to suit the needs of the channels, originally predominantly cash or cheque and evolving into credit card and debit card systems. Each channel was quite separate from the others even in organisations which operated all three options. Pre-purchase there were always real people to answer queries and discuss options and issues would be resolved via the same three channel options.

Has today's multiple channel options of face to face, mail order/post, internet, telephone with the accompanying multiple payment methods and the increase in self service options improved the experience or not?

There is an old saying about self service *"If you don't like the quality of the service, you only have yourself to blame!"*. Is that true? Is self service a seamless journey? Gartner research would not appear to agree



What are the Places options at present?



There are multiple channels many of which refer customers on to other channels e.g. Radio or television marketing may refer customers onto websites, websites may refer customers to physical stores. All of which has the potential to be very helpful and convenient to customers but also has the requirement for careful development of the necessary engagement processes.

There are a number of challenges as Richpanel point out in their May 2024 article *What is Multi Channel Customer Service? Benefits & Challenges* by Himani Trivedi

Challenges of Multi channel Customer Service:

Multi channel support isn't all roses. Setting up a multi channel customer service comes with its own set of challenges. Multi channel support can be difficult to configure and even more difficult to keep pace with. Even channel prioritization can be a little tricky. A 2001 research study by Forrester showed that 62% of leaders think self-service is the most important channel of customer service. There are two plain reasons for this-

Customers love to have control and find quick answers to their queries. One of the most cost-effective ways to offer customer service. However, most businesses fail to utilize this channel to their advantage. Consider an eCommerce business that sells pet products- food, hygiene products, and accessories. A website visitor is piqued by the slashed prices and contacts the store to see which food would be best for their dog, who is allergic to lamb.

There's no filter on the site, so they shoot a message on the chat, and the AI Bot replies "This pack is the best choice for dogs aged 6-10 months". It's not the response you want to hear. The struggle with AI/chatbots that do not offer the answers customers want. In other instances, there is an overwhelming number of FAQs leading you down a "link spiral". What's worse? 20 tabs later you realize it doesn't offer you the information you are looking for.

In fact, research by BT in 2006 pointed out that more channels will increase the number of interactions a customer has with your customer service reps.

Not only does this frustrate your customers, but it also leads to increased interactions. If the aim was to find an efficient and cost-effective solution- multi-channel support ends up being neither.

It also affects the business in the long run. When a customer has a bad experience and ends up switching channels to get the point across- they either want to change businesses or look for your competitors. If you have a more substantial presence and more loyal customers- your problem doesn't end there either.

When customers have a terrible experience with one channel, they tend to revert to their old or preferred ways of communication like the phone support. This means all the time and money you've spent on utilizing other media are going to waste.

Are you keeping toe-to-toe with your competitors, who can provide support on the other communication channels?

Inefficient multichannel support harms your overall customer satisfaction and their perception of your brand.

In this way, the value of your customer service is measured by the weakest link in the chain

To strengthen your customer support, you need to streamline the channels and make sure that the quality of service (in terms of speed and effectiveness) is translated through all the communication channels.

Omni channel customer service helps achieve just that:

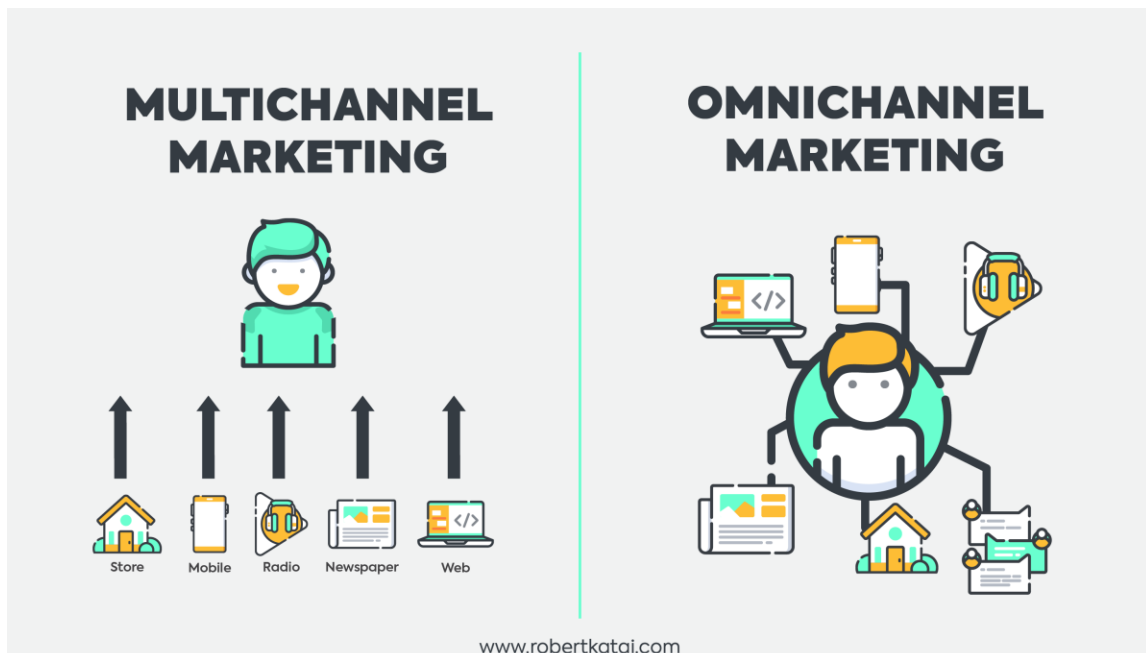
Multi-channel vs. Omnichannel Customer Service

Multichannel and omnichannel customer service are terms used very interchangeably. However, there is a big difference between the two- Multichannel customer service is very channel-centric. It focuses primarily on the customer journey through one interaction. The method is widely popular but it is siloed and tends to create an inconsistent customer experience. It is also overwhelming to keep up with this form of customer service.

Omnichannel customer service is a customer, experience-centric model. It creates an umbrella for all customer communication channels like live chat, phone support, and social media platforms. It is a cohesive model that helps unify all customer communication and streamline the customer experience.

Omnichannel customer service strategy has an edge over multichannel because of the increased first call resolution. With the right integration and complete customer context provided by omnichannel customer service, the agents can significantly reduce their handle time.

<https://www.richpanel.com/blog/multi-channel-customer-service>



5. What are the more specific issues that omnichannel presents for customers?

Omnichannel customers, who interact with a brand across multiple channels (such as physical stores, online platforms, social media, and mobile apps), can encounter various issues.

Inconsistent Experience: Disparate Branding and Messaging. Different channels may present inconsistent information or branding, leading to confusion.

Service Level Variation: The quality of service can differ across channels, which can be frustrating for customers expecting a uniform experience.

Fragmented Customer Data: Disjointed Profiles: Customers have separate profiles and histories on different channels, leading to incomplete or inaccurate data.

Lack of Personalisation: Without a unified view of the customer, personalisation efforts can be ineffective or off-target.

Complex Navigation: Channel Hopping: Customers may need to switch between channels to complete a single task, such as researching a product online and purchasing it in-store, which can be cumbersome.

Inadequate Integration: Poor integration between online and offline channels can result in a disjointed shopping experience.

Inventory Management Issues: Stock Inaccuracies: Real-time inventory levels might not be accurately reflected across all channels, leading to situations where products appear available online but are out of stock in-store.

Fulfilment Delays: Complications in coordinating orders across different channels can lead to delays in fulfilment and delivery.

Technical Challenges: System Failures: Technical glitches or outages in any channel can disrupt the customer experience.

Compatibility Issues: Not all channels may work seamlessly with all devices or platforms, causing accessibility problems.

Customer Service Gaps: Inconsistent Support: Customer support quality and policies might vary across channels, leading to dissatisfaction.

Difficulty in Escalation: Escalating an issue that spans multiple channels can be complex and time-consuming.

Privacy and Security Concerns: Data Vulnerabilities: Managing customer data across multiple platforms increases the risk of data breaches and privacy issues.

Lack of Trust: Customers might be wary of sharing personal information across different channels due to concerns about how their data is handled.

Return and Exchange Hassles: Complicated Processes: Returns and exchanges can be difficult if policies differ between online and physical stores. Customers may find it inconvenient if they have to return online purchases to a physical store.

Marketing and Communication Overload: Excessive Messaging: Customers might receive redundant or excessive marketing communications from different channels. Lack of synchronized customer data can result in irrelevant offers.

Pricing Discrepancies: Different Prices: Prices for the same product can vary between online and physical stores, causing confusion and dissatisfaction.

In spite of these potential issues is self service still seen as a good way forward for organisations and for customers?

Ian Luck of Customer Guage states in his Article

Why customers prefer self-service support, if it's done right. It's popular but it's not there yet

Self-service is becoming an ever-increasing medium by which customers are looking to resolve problems and learn more. Today's tech-savvy customers are not just ready for self-service but actually prefer it over assisted service.

In research carried out by Nuance, 67% of respondents preferred self-service over speaking to a company representative. While in another study by Coleman Parkes, 40% of people who contact a call center have first looked for answers to their questions via self-service.

The reason for such numbers is that customers want to learn and discover things for themselves. They don't want to contact a company over and over for an issue or explain their predicament repeatedly.

Customers want their problems solved promptly and feel that searching for the answer themselves is quicker than contacting the company. Furthermore, self-service improves customer knowledge, as it allows them to resolve problems at their speed and learn as much or as little as they want.

However, despairingly many customers often feel that self-service is not able to meet their needs. For another Nuance study found that 58% of customers are unable to resolve their issues through self-service and 59% are frustrated when they have to reach out to a customer service representative.

Components of Successful Self-Service Support

Creating a self-service tool that allows customers to easily resolve problems and become successful with a product means fulfilling the following criteria.

Identification & Creation

Understand the diversity that exists within your customer base and know each of your intended audiences' needs. Demographics, product usage, skill level with the product, access preferences of self-service, etc. – discover what it is that differentiates your customer base. While the volume and speed of content creation for a self-service tool is important, this will inevitably take time. More important is building on the identification process and creating content that covers each user group's needs. This means understanding the issues your customers face and how they interact with your self-service tool.

Functionality

Consider how self-service content should be presented. Make your self-service easy to use, navigate and have a design simplicity; customers don't want to learn how to use a self-service tool, it should be intuitive. Customers should be provided with multiple ways to find and navigate throughout a self-service tool. Some options include:

Basic search, followed by an advanced search that allows them to narrow their search using filters.

Make product images or icons the starting point of the service experience, to help customers select their preferred support category.

80% of customers are only looking for about 20% of your content. Make this prominent through FAQs or a "top ten articles" list at the start of the self-service experience.

VERY IMPORTANT. Eliminate all dead ends. Once the customer has begun their self-service journey, if they don't find an answer they should not have to stop and start over. One method is to transition them to assisted help, where the self-service activities of the customer are captured and used to make the customer feel like their efforts have not been wasted.

Do not feel the need to follow the conventional means of presenting self-service content. One study found that 71% of customers would prefer a virtual assistant to static Web pages when it comes to self-service.

Optimize for all devices.

Optimize based on feedback. Your self-service database, though, is never finished. Customers issues evolve, and new ones gain prominence. Your self-service database should be continually updated, so:

Flag cases that repeatedly present themselves within assisted service.

Use surveys and metrics such as the Net Promoter® System, Customer Effort Score, and Customer Satisfaction Score to discover key issues that can then be addressed through self-service.

Ask for feedback at the end of a self-service experience.

Do usability testing, focus groups and collaborative design with your customers.

The key to optimizing your self-service is to be open to the voice of your customer, as there is no one right way to optimize your self-service experience. Customer input can come through unexpected means, but what's important is that you are open to all channels and that the customer is the primary driver behind the evolution of your self-service.

Personalize the experience

There is a lot of information about customers that companies already know and can employ to improve the experience and create greater brand loyalty. To personalize the experience:

Use a single sign-in capability. This means that customers log in once and gain access to all systems, so they are not required to log in again at the self-service function.

Populate data fields and other site information if already entered on a related page.

Store individual users self-service history to provide related content the next time the user logs in. Most users only use a specific area of a product, meaning their problems will always pertain to a particular field. Presenting information about this will help speed up their self-service experience.

Marketing

Having a well-functioning self-service tool though isn't enough to shift people away from assisted service. Customers won't naturally flock to it just because it exists.

As stated earlier, most customers do prefer going through a self-service route.

However, it needs to be easy to find and marketed in such a way that it is preferable to assisted service. For changing customer behavior is not easy, as customers often distrust the success of new, untested pathways even if on paper they say differently.

To remedy this try some of the following steps:

Use recorded messages promoting self-service when customers call for support.

Integrate self-service into your website so that a link or "support" button appears on all necessary pages of your site and product (if your product is an online tool).

Self-service should not feel separate from the rest of your online experience, but should be a continuation of it.

Support pages should be indexed and ranked within your overall website so that support content shows up in search results carried out on your site.

Not necessary for all, but search engine optimization (SEO) can be beneficial as many customers will look for an answer first through search engines rather than a company's website.

Allow co-browsing. When a support agent helps a customer solve an issue, the customer can see the agent using the self-service feature, teaching the customer to use the self-service tool in the process.

When sending a customer resolution via email or chat, make sure to send the link to the article within your database.

CARRY OUT WITH CAUTION. *Some companies practice making self-service the path of least resistance or the only path to problem resolution. This often involves obscuring phone numbers and contact information, lowering the importance of phone, email and chat to increase waiting time or in some cases not having phone support at all*

Effective self-service

Self-service not only saves on operating costs for companies but also creates successful customers who remain loyal longer.

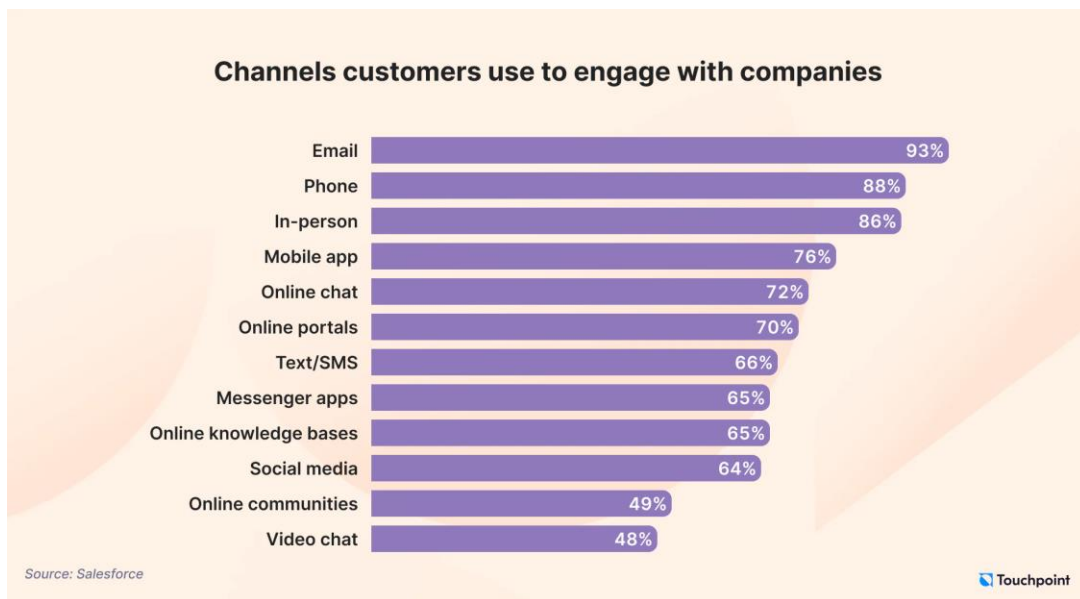
So What are the Places that Customers Prefer?

In their article ***The 12 most effective customer contact channels in 2024*** by Iustina Gherca .TouchPoint asks the question

What are the best customer contact channels?

Customer support channels are an important part of your customer experience (CX) strategy. The most effective options for your business will depend on the type of product or service you offer, the size of your organization, and your target audience.

Salesforce's 2023 State of the Connected Customer shows how organizations use different channels to support their customers. Email and phone continue to be widely used while channels such as online communities and social media are decreasing in popularity.



That's why it's so important to offer multiple customer contact channels and encourage your support team to master customer communication. Here are some common options to consider in this regard.

1. Phone

Phone interactions have an impressive customer satisfaction score (CSAT) of 86%. So, it looks like voice calls still remain the customer's channel of choice across all age groups. They also remain the preferred choice for 59% of consumers when contacting call center representatives.

What makes this channel so popular among customers? It's real-time, immediate, and direct, so it makes them feel like they've been heard and valued.

Phone calls allow you to handle urgent issues on the spot rather than wait for an email response or social media reply that may not come until later in the day (or not at all).

2. Email

The global count of email users exceeds 4 billion. It remains among the most important communication channels for Millennials, Generation X, and Boomers.

This support channel is great for customers who want to reach out quickly but don't need immediate assistance. Email communication allows service agents to respond on their terms while also keeping track of individual conversations. Customer service email templates help streamline the response process.

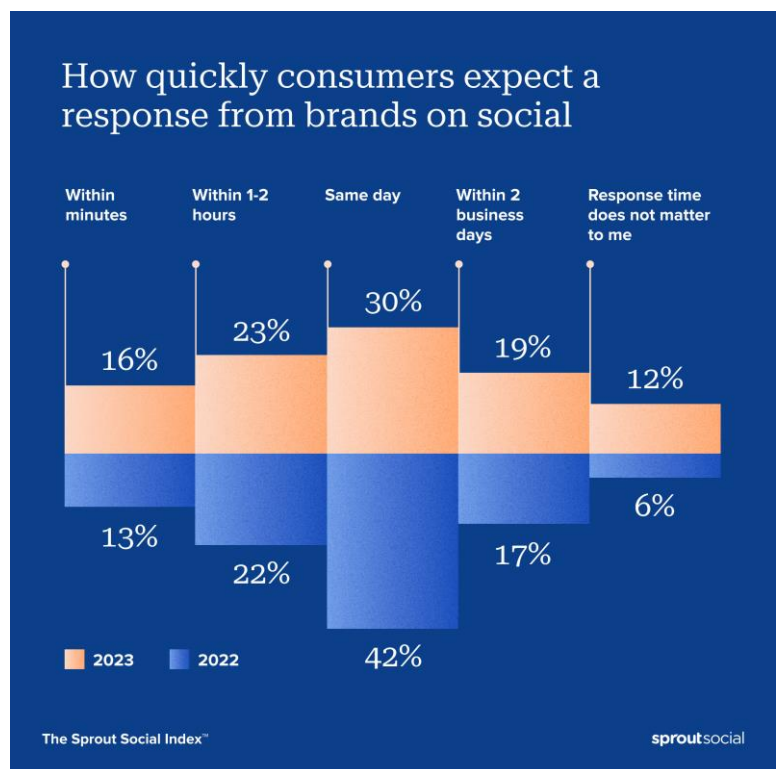
Email is a viable customer contact channel when using services or products provided by international companies, where there may be language barriers and considerable time differences. Given email's widespread usage, easy accessibility, and affordability, it's recommended that you integrate it into your customer support strategy.

3. Social media

According to a SproutSocial study, 70% of U.S. consumers expect brands to respond to their requests on social media in less than 24 hours. Taking more than one day to respond is unacceptable.

Social media is an effective channel for customer service because it allows you to connect with customers in real time and provide instant gratification.

When customers are frustrated or confused, they tend to reach out on social. Responses to X, Facebook, or LinkedIn posts are public and can also provide information to other customers with similar issues.



Taking time to respond to customer issues on social media helps you build trust. It encourages them to reach out when they have questions or concerns in the future.

4. Mobile messaging

As 97% of the US population owns a cell phone, mobile messaging is a great way to reach your customers when they're on the go. It's also convenient for them to get answers to their questions almost instantly. This is also one of the most direct and immediate ways to offer customer service.

This channel can be established by using messaging applications like WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Viber, Telegrams, and other similar solutions. They are easy to install and free for customers. What's more, by 2025, there will be over 3,5 billion mobile messaging app users globally, which makes this contact channel a good addition to your service stack.

Text messaging goes a step further. This mobile messaging solution comes as a built-in feature for all mobile phones and does not require any additional set-up or even an Internet connection to operate. More than two-thirds of buyers will use SMS to contact the customer support team.

5. Live chat

While 72% of customers opt for using online chat to connect with a brand, only half of customer service teams implement this channel. Live chat is an online feature that allows customers to reach out with questions or concerns they may have.

To enable this customer contact channel, simply place a link to the chat support platform directly on your website or blog pages.

Live chat as a customer contact channel

This is a customer contact channel with great potential as it combines the advantages of real-time communication, 24/7 availability, and a written form of interaction. Live chat also allows keeping track of essential information and referring back when necessary (for both the service team and the customer).

6. Chatbots

With instant responses and the ability to handle routine inquiries, chatbots minimize wait times and streamline support operations. This allows human agents to focus on more complex issues. The positive feedback rate for chatbot interactions stands at 80%. This high satisfaction rate shows how chatbots can deliver relevant and helpful customer assistance.

You can integrate chatbots across various platforms. These can include websites, mobile apps, messaging applications, and social media. This compatibility allows customers to engage with your business through their preferred channel.

6. Video chat

Video chat in customer service adds a personal touch. It's perfect for tricky or sensitive issues. Support agents can share their screens, walk customers through troubleshooting steps, or visually demonstrate solutions in real time. This can lead to quicker issue resolution.

Here are some use cases of video chat in customer service:

Solving complex technical issues by visually diagnosing and troubleshooting problems

Showcasing product features and functionalities through live video demonstrations

Offering personalized consultations for customers to receive expert advice remotely

Assisting customers with account-related queries (account setup, password resets, billing inquiries, etc.)

Through video, customers and agents can pick up on subtle cues, expressions, and tones that text-based communication may miss.

8. Web forms

*A web form is a tool that lets you organize and manage customer support inquiries. These forms typically **contain different sections**, each of which is associated with a specific purpose.*

*Customers can fill out the fields and boxes with information about their issues. This information could be anything from **"I forgot my password"** to **"I want to cancel my subscription."** Such web forms integrated into different sections of your website can have different fields to fill in.*

Web forms are effective, as they allow customers to submit their questions in an organized manner. This helps route questions to the right department and reduce their resolution time.

9. FAQ pages

You can't always be there to answer questions personally. But a frequently asked question (FAQ) page can. FAQs are an excellent way to provide your customers with answers to common questions in an organized and accessible way.

FAQ pages should be concise and easy to read. They should clearly explain what a customer can expect from your product or service and how they can deal with something that isn't covered on the FAQ page itself. FAQ pages can help you in many ways.

Save time by answering common questions without having to spend time fielding individual inquiries.

Help customers help themselves with answers to very specific issues.

Build trust by showing that you're transparent about the services you provide and how they work.

If your company follows a PLG (product-led growth) strategy, FAQ pages represent one of the best ways to help customers find solutions independently.

10. Self-service customer support portal

69% of customers prefer to tackle as many problems as possible on their own. However, just a third of companies provide users with self-service options. To be effective at customer support, it's important to offer multiple avenues for customers to find answers independently.

By empowering users to address their own concerns, companies can streamline processes and improve customer satisfaction. This shift towards self-service reflects a proactive approach to modern customer-centric strategies.

Self-service portal as a customer contact channel

A self-service customer support portal available on a business website can go a long way to providing customers with the independence to solve common issues.

11. IVR

Due to their accessibility, interactive voice response (IVR) systems are increasingly becoming a popular customer contact channel. Projections indicate that the IVR market will exceed 9.6 billion U.S. dollars by 2036.

With IVR, customers can navigate through automated prompts to access information or resolve issues without human interaction. This level of automation can significantly reduce call wait times and streamline the customer experience.

These systems often include options for self-service, such as:

Making payments

Checking account balances

Updating personal information

It's crucial that you design your IVR system with customer convenience in mind. Clear and concise prompts, intuitive menu options, and seamless transitions to live agents when necessary are essential for a positive IVR experience.

12. In-store experience

Unlike remote communication methods, in-store experience provides customers with a tangible and immersive interaction with your product or service. Customers can see, touch, and sometimes even sample products before buying.

This hands-on experience can influence purchasing behaviour and potentially create a connection between the customer and the brand.

From store layout and design to interactive displays and demonstrations, each element is part of the shopping experience. Some examples of these elements include:

*Pop-up events or workshops where customers can engage with the brand
Interactive product demonstrations where customers can test item functionalities.
Augmented reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR) experiences that showcase products.
Continuously evaluate and optimize the in-store environment to create a welcoming atmosphere that encourages customer engagement.*

How to choose the right customer channels

Selecting the most effective contact channels without overwhelming your team or creating fragmented experiences can be difficult.

The most important factors to consider when selecting a customer contact channel for your business. Research the support solutions used in your target industry. Keep an eye on your competitors to see what is working for them:

What solutions are they applying?

What do their clients report?

What are they satisfied with?

What are they complaining about?

All these questions will help you acquire a better understanding of what works and what doesn't work in your industry.

<https://www.touchpoint.com/blog/customer-contact-channels/>

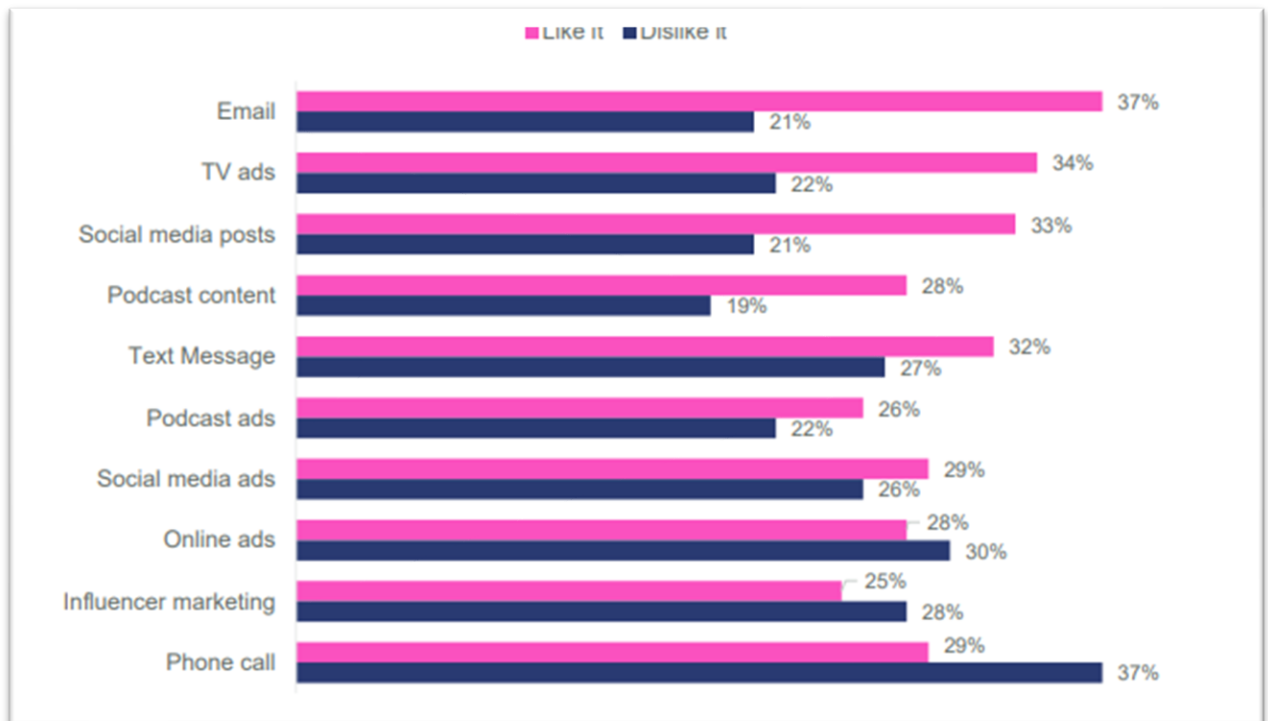
That is when customers contact organisations but what do customers prefer when organisations contact them?

Model B and Opinion make the following case in their paper **What Consumers Want: Preferred Channel Trends**

Email leads the pack: nearly two fifths of Americans like receiving emails from brands. Across all but three channels studied, more Americans say they enjoy hearing from brands than those who say they dislike hearing from them. Still, brands are much more welcome on certain platforms than others.

Email, TV ads, and social media posts (not ads) make up the top 3 channels Americans either 'like' or 'love' hearing from brands or companies on. Close to two fifths of Americans (37%) enjoying hearing from brands via email, while around one third enjoy hearing from brands on TV and through social media posts (34% and 33%, respectively).

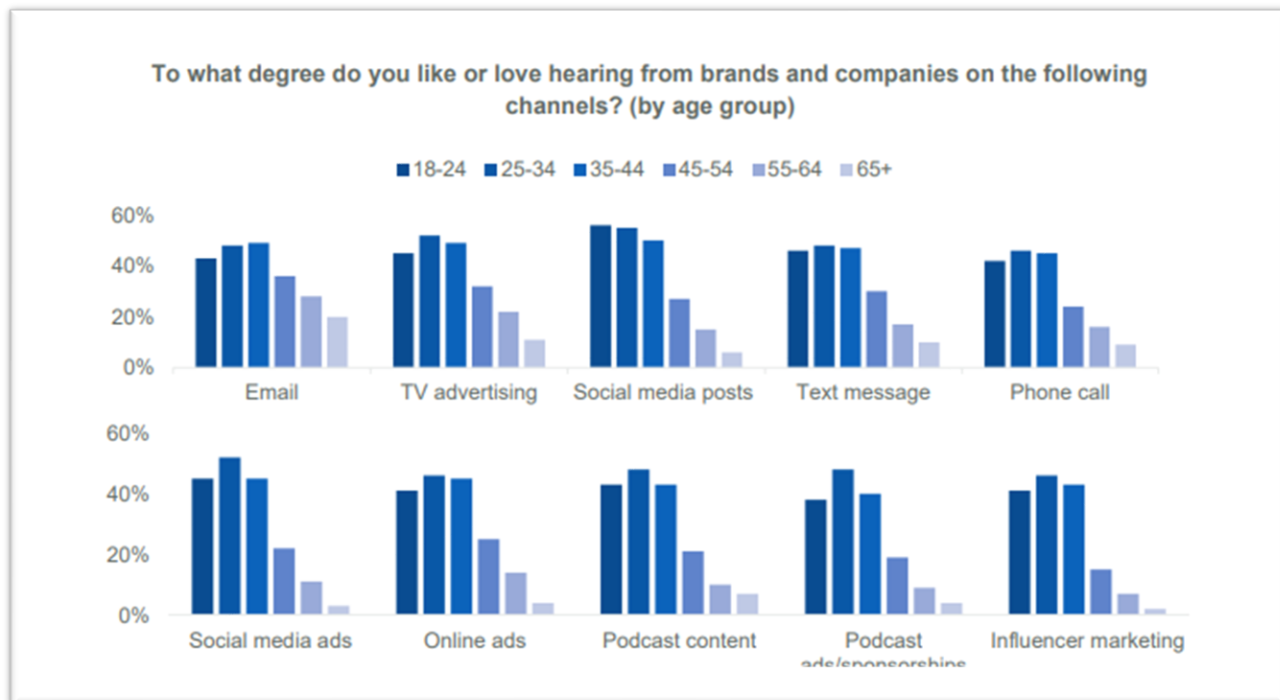
Degree to which Americans like/dislike hearing from brands and companies on given channels, in order of net preference (% like - % dislike)



Phone calls, influencer marketing, and online ads are most unpopular channels

Meanwhile, there are more Americans who dislike hearing from brands through phone calls, influencer marketing, and online ads than those who say they like hearing from brands in these ways to two fifths (37%) of Americans dislike or hate hearing from brands through phone calls, making it the least favorite channel studied.

Digging deeper, brand communication preferences point to a stark generational divide. The degree to which Americans like hearing from certain platforms varies greatly by age group. Younger demographics are accustomed to and enjoy hearing from brands and companies via online platforms, while older demographics are more resistant.



Although email contains the most even spread across age groups of Americans who enjoy hearing from brands on the channel, there is still a significant difference between generations. Nearly half (48%) of 25–34-year-olds enjoy hearing from brands over email, compared to around three in ten (28%) 55–64-year-olds and only one fifth (20%) of those 65+.

Social media is the most popular channel for brand communications among younger generations. Over half of 18-24 and 25–34-year-olds (56% and 55%) enjoy hearing from brands through social media posts (not ads). Although posts are preferred over ads, social media ads still appeal to this younger demographic. Over half of 25–34-year-olds (53%) and over two fifths of 18-24-year-olds(45%) enjoy hearing from brands in this way.

Respondent reactions to influencer marketing demonstrate how stark this generational divide is in the marketing industry. Close to half (46%) of 25–34-year-olds enjoy hearing from brands this way, and around two fifths of 18-24 and 35–44-year-olds do as well (41% and 43%). Meanwhile, two fifths (41%) of 55–64-year-olds are unfamiliar with the concept.

So are the processes that customers have to use to navigate an experience environment becoming more difficult?

Yes, the processes customers need to use can become more difficult due to increasing channel complexity. This can occur for several reasons:

Fragmented Experience:

Multiple Entry Points: With numerous channels available (e.g., websites, mobile apps, social media, physical stores), customers may find it challenging to choose the right entry point for their needs.

Inconsistent Information: Discrepancies in information across different channels can lead to confusion and frustration.

Navigation Challenges:

Complex Interfaces: Each channel might have a unique interface and navigation style, requiring customers to learn and adapt to each one.

Overwhelming Options: The sheer number of choices and features can overwhelm customers, making it harder to find what they need.

Disjointed Processes:

Interrupted Journeys: Customers may start a process on one channel and need to continue on another, leading to potential data loss or the need to repeat steps.

Lack of Integration: Poor integration between channels can result in a fragmented experience, where customers have to manually bridge gaps between different touchpoints.

Technical Issues:

Inconsistent Performance: Varying performance levels across channels (e.g., slow mobile app, faster website) can affect the overall experience.

Compatibility Problems: Issues with compatibility, especially with older devices or software, can hinder smooth access and usage.

Personalisation Overload:

Excessive Targeting: Over-personalisation can make customers feel overwhelmed or intruded upon, especially if the targeting is not accurate.

Confusing Recommendations: Too many personalized recommendations can make it difficult for customers to make decisions.

Security and Privacy Concerns:

Multiple Logins: Managing different login credentials for various channels can be cumbersome and insecure.

Data Privacy: Concerns about how personal data is managed across multiple platforms can create distrust and hesitation.

Support and Assistance:

Inconsistent Support: Variations in the quality and availability of customer support across channels can lead to frustration.

Self-Service Challenges: Customers may struggle with self-service options if they are not intuitively designed or properly integrated across channels.



Such general background data implies that processes are becoming more difficult and the situation wherein the different preferences of the generation sectors may add a new dimension of complexity to the impact of the process communication weaknesses which in turn carries additional potential penalties for organisations who do not get their omnichannel processes operating effectively.

In their report *The State of Customer Conversations* Smart Communications state Comprehensive research exposes gaps between customer and business’s perception of customer interactions.

Today’s Customers Demand Streamlined Forms Processes



of customers would end an interaction with a company if the way they collect information (such as completing a form) is too difficult.



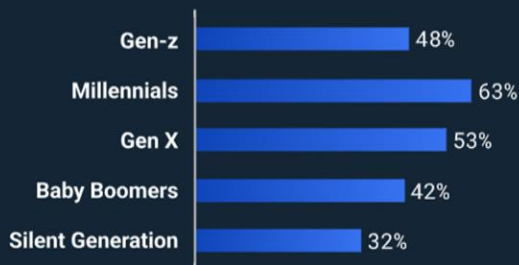
of customers prefer web forms over fillable PDFs and paper.



When it comes to providing personal data, 43% would prefer to submit data directly online.

Millennials Have the Lowest Tolerance for Poor Experiences

LIKELY TO SWITCH AWAY FROM A COMPANY IF COMMUNICATIONS DON'T MEET EXPECTATIONS



LIKELY TO END AN INTERACTION WITH A COMPANY IF THE WAY THEY COLLECT INFORMATION IS TOO DIFFICULT



<https://www.smartcommunications.com/resources/benchmark-report/>

Will Artificial Intelligence Help? The Internet is loaded with sites offering a myriad of perspectives on how AI will improve and enhance the customer experience from the organisations point of view from Smart Chatbots to how the technology behind Chat GTP will “transform work and reinvent business”.

Zendesk in their blog **13 ways AI will improve the customer experience in 2024**

by Emily Miels, Contributing Writer suggest the following

An AI customer experience is the practice of using AI technology such as machine learning, chatbots and digital agents – to deliver fast, efficient, personalised and proactive experiences at scale. Essentially, an AI CX harnesses intelligent technology to improve customer experiences, enable CX teams to work more productively, and help the business save costs.

Here’s how an artificial intelligence customer experience can increase customer satisfaction and enable teams to operate more efficiently and, in turn, boost your bottom line.

Enable great customer service experience at scale

Provide fast, 24/7 customer support

Onboard CX teams faster

Improve efficiency and productivity

Deliver hyper-personalised interactions

Anticipate customers’ needs and potential issues

Provide AI-powered quality assurance

Analyse customer data to predict and prevent churn

Present customers with special offers

Improve workforce management

Reduce operational costs

Create more consistent brand experiences

Enhance knowledge management

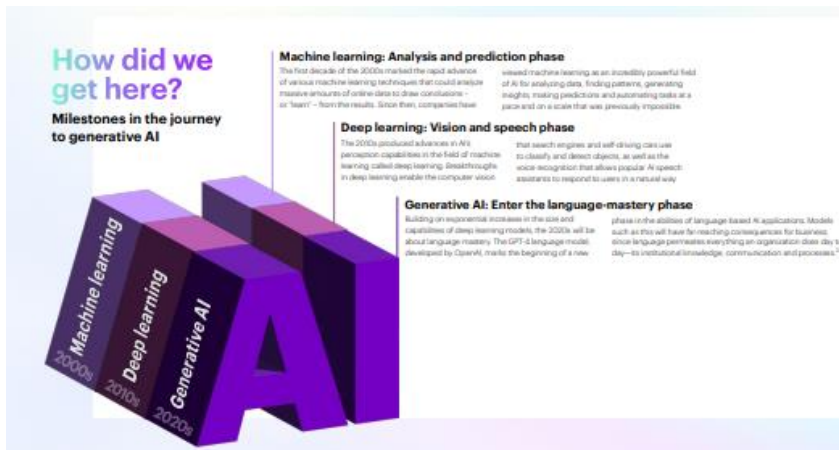
<https://www.zendesk.co.uk/blog/ai-customer-experience/>



Freepik

Accenture in their *PERSPECTIVE AI for Everyone* boldly pronounce

The technology underpinning ChatGPT will transform work and reinvent business. Advances in language-based AI – the technology that powers applications like ChatGPT – are ushering in a new era for Total Enterprise Reinvention. Everything from science to business to society itself will be transformed. The positive impact on human creativity and productivity will be massive. Companies will need to radically rethink how work gets done. The focus must be on evolving operations and training people as much as on technology. To capitalize, companies need a strong digital core and investments in people to reap the value of AI in a responsible way.



Generative AI for everyone

Imagine every employee in your company had an assistant that "knew" everything your organization had ever known—the entire history, context, nuance and intent of the business and its operations—and could process, analyze and use that information in a matter of seconds, in infinitely repeatable ways.

We're at a phase in the adoption cycle when most organizations are starting to experiment by consuming foundation models "off the shelf." However, the biggest value for many will come when they customize or fine tune models using their own data to address their unique needs.

Consume

Generative AI and LLM applications are ready to consume and easy to access. Companies can consume them through APIs and tailor them, to a small degree, for their own use cases through prompt engineering techniques such as prompt tuning and prefix learning.

Customize

To increase the value of generative AI and foundation models in specific business use cases, companies will increasingly customize pretrained models by fine-tuning them with their own data—unlocking new performance frontiers.

<https://www.accenture.com/gb-en/insights/technology/generative-ai>

The Last Word

Looking at rapid expansion in places (channels) now available for customers to engage with organisations it is not surprising that organisations have turned to technology to try to manage the processes of customer engagement. The fact that the across-the-board level of satisfaction varies widely from sector to sector is also not surprising or that some technologies, like chatbots, appear to be unpopular with customers regardless of the sector or the generation group.

As the world enters the AI era, with change implications as serious and far reaching as the introduction of the internet, it is interesting to observe what the implications and potential benefits will be from the myriad of internet gurus. While an “improved customer experience” is mentioned by a few it is in broad generic terms only and seems more concerned with elements of organisational push than with the development of the processes the customers will need to employ or endure.

The rapid changes in technology have already left some elements of some generation groups perhaps a little isolated by some process innovations thereby denying organisations the benefit of their custom.

It is hoped that the AI era will attempt to be as inclusive as possible to all customer generations and that “self service” means safe and easy for customers and not “self serving “ for organisations.

Recommended Reading

<https://www.richpanel.com/blog/multi-channel-customer-service>

<https://customergauge.com/blog/why-customers-prefer-self-service-support-but-only-if-its-done-right>

<https://www.touchpoint.com/blog/customer-contact-channels>

<https://www.opinium.com/us/what-consumers-want-preferred-channel-trends/>

<https://www.smartcommunications.com/resources/benchmark-report>

<https://www.moengage.com/learn/omnichannel-vs-multichannel/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/blakemorgan/2023/08/16/what-impact-will-ai-have-on-customer-service/>

<https://www.accenture.com/gb-en/insights/technology/generative-ai>

<https://www.zendesk.co.uk/blog/ai-customer-experience/>