



Whitepaper

CX Technology

Engaging Customers During COVID-19 and Beyond



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Customers want engaging experiences

The relationship between companies and their customers has changed radically over the past few decades. Where once it was enough to provide high quality products, customers now want far more from businesses when it comes to parting with their hard-earned money. Technological advancements have created an increasingly connected and on-demand world where customers expect unforgettable experiences delivered to them through a variety of channels – and seamlessly at that. It is through these experiences that companies build emotional connections with their customers – the foundation of customer engagement. And being engaging is just about the most important thing a company can do. Engaged customers buy more, share more and, ultimately, stick around.

COVID-19 is redefining customer engagement

In the years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic, companies had already started investing in digital transformation as a way to improve the overall customer experience (CX).

Human interactions were considered the best way to engage customers and deliver high-quality experiences. The two most highly rated channels for interaction were on the phone with an agent, and in a store/branch. Conversely, experiences with chatbots and those taking place across multiple channels (i.e. an omnichannel experience) had the lowest ratings for delivering a great CX (see Figure 1¹).

Although the number of companies investing in CX technologies is increasing, the majority of them still deliver mediocre experiences to their customers. Going into 2020, companies had focused their efforts on improving CX, but with the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, there is now an urgent need to rapidly accelerate implementation of digital CX strategies to meet changing consumer behavior.

In this whitepaper, you'll learn:

- ✓ How to use customer engagement technologies, such as chatbots and video, to fast-track the implementation of CX strategies
- ✓ Why CX and customer engagement is so important to increasing business growth, revenue, and customer loyalty
- ✓ The business challenges sales and customer support teams face in today's new normal
- ✓ The best customer engagement tools for sales and support teams to use in an online world
- ✓ Case study examples of companies that have successfully implemented new CX technologies to increase business growth
- ✓ Where CX is heading post-COVID-19

Quality of Customer Experience Across Different Channels

How would you rate the experience that your organization typically delivers through the following interaction channels?

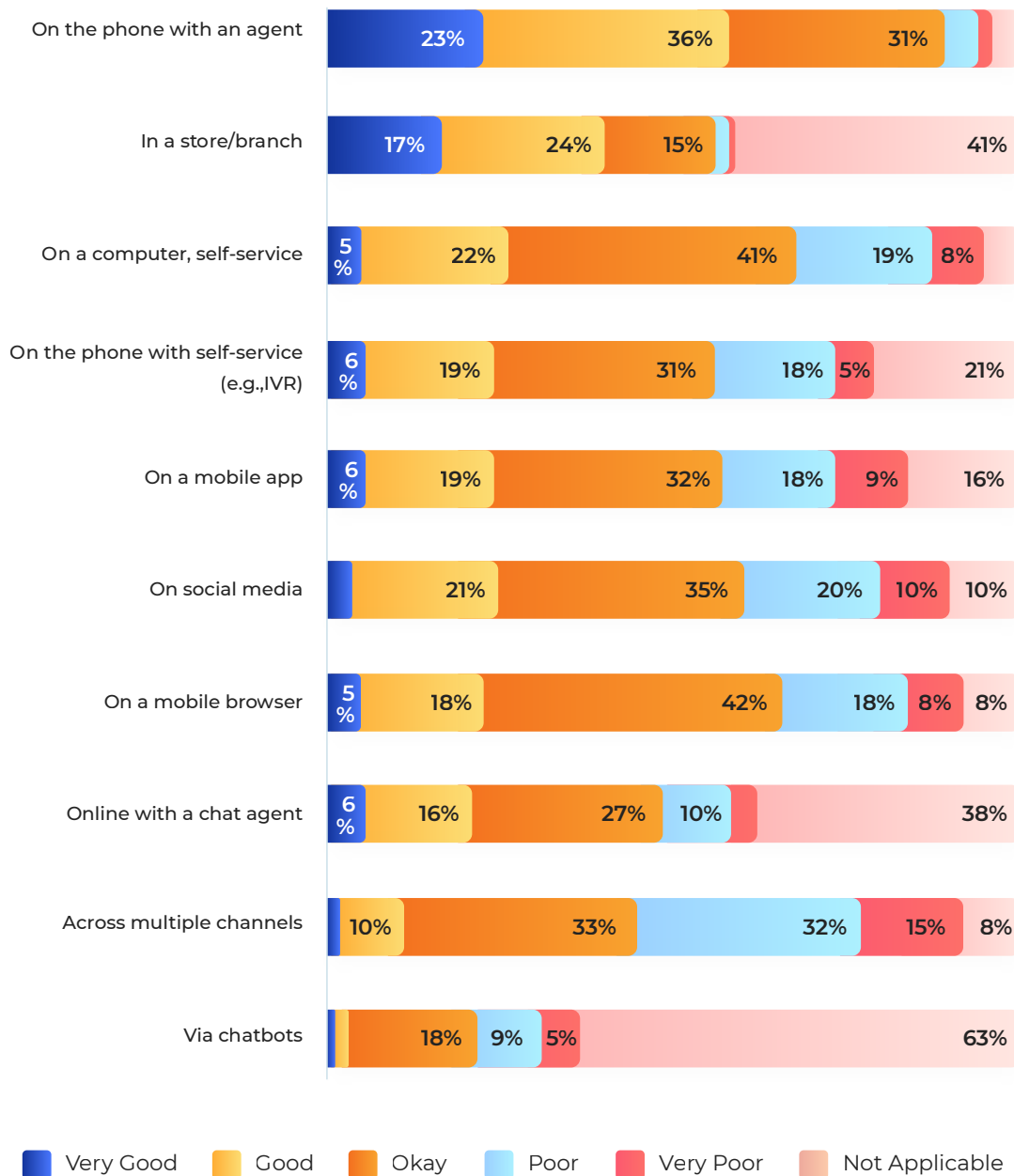


Figure 1

Customer engagement tech is helping shift in-store experiences online

COVID-19 marks an inflection point between the in-store and online economies. Its initial impact on ecommerce has created significant challenges – as well as opportunities – for online selling and service.

Data from the 2020 Remote Payment Study² shows that consumers are now 30.6 percent more likely to make their purchases online than they were last year. Compared to January 2020, data from COVID-19 Commerce Insight³ shows a 87 percent year-over-year growth in U.S. & Canadian ecommerce orders as of July 5 (see Figure 2³). With retail stores having been closed or forced to limit customer capacity until the pandemic recedes, there's increased dependency on digital commerce platforms.

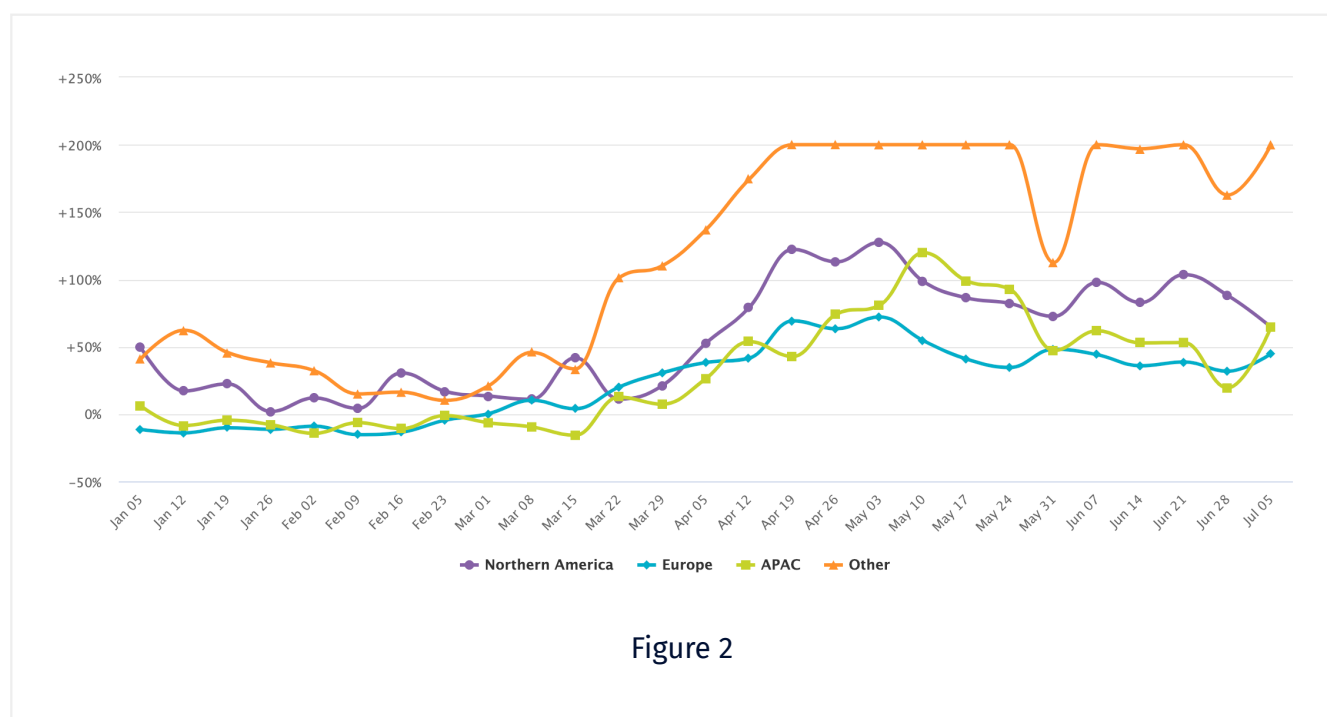


Figure 2

Companies can help customers cope

As the effects of COVID-19 persist, the general sense of uncertainty and anxiety has understandably remained heightened. During this crisis, companies must be present, accessible, understanding, and supportive of their customers who are experiencing unprecedented levels of stress. Now more than ever, customer engagement strategies need to recreate human connection. For brands, this means finding more ways to display empathy and offer help.

Call centers are heating up

As a result of this unforeseen shift, call centers are being inundated by calls relating to online ordering, shipping, and product availability. At the same time, companies are learning how to deal with work-from-home policies as well as implement new CX tools to keep up with the demand for efficient and effective online experiences and customer engagement.

With some form of social distancing likely to be around for the foreseeable future consumers are moving online to purchase their goods and services. A consistent, seamless CX is crucial for retailers looking to maintain customer loyalty and alleviate the burden on call center agents.

As of 2019, about two-thirds of large companies¹ (i.e. companies with at least \$500 million in annual revenues) had a senior CX leader and centralized CX team in place, focused on customer engagement strategies.



Customer engagement before COVID-19

Even before COVID-19, digital customer experience had become a key focus for many businesses – driven in part by a shift in demographics. With their growing spending power and demand for convenience and immediacy⁴, Gen Y and Z consumers expect businesses to provide them with more nimble and innovative modes of communication.

Companies have struggled with CX

In 2018 alone, U.S. companies lost more than \$75 billion annually⁵ to poor customer service. And it's not just revenue that suffers – the impact extends to customer loyalty, too. Faced with poor customer service, 39 percent of surveyed customers would drop the company altogether. Around the globe, 96 percent of consumers say customer service is an important factor in their choice of loyalty to a brand⁶.

However, despite understanding the correlation between CX and customer loyalty, only 6 percent of companies have reached the two highest levels of CX maturity¹. Almost 80 percent have only scraped the surface, languishing in the lowest two stages. The most common obstacle organizations faced as they tried to elevate their CX was competing priorities within their respective businesses. Other obstacles included limited funding, conflict across internal groups, and lack of a clear CX strategy.



Great CX affects more than just your bottom line

The ripple effect of a bad customer experience goes far beyond one lost sale. Based on results from a Salesforce State of the Connected Customer Report, 57 percent of customers stop buying from a company because they can find a better digital experience elsewhere⁷. What's more, 62 percent of customers say they share details about their bad experiences with peers. Given the popularity of peer review sites and social media, this could cause significant damage to a brand's reputation.



It's no surprise then that businesses investing heavily in CX technologies enjoy stronger financial results than their competitors. A survey by Qualtrics XM Institute found that:

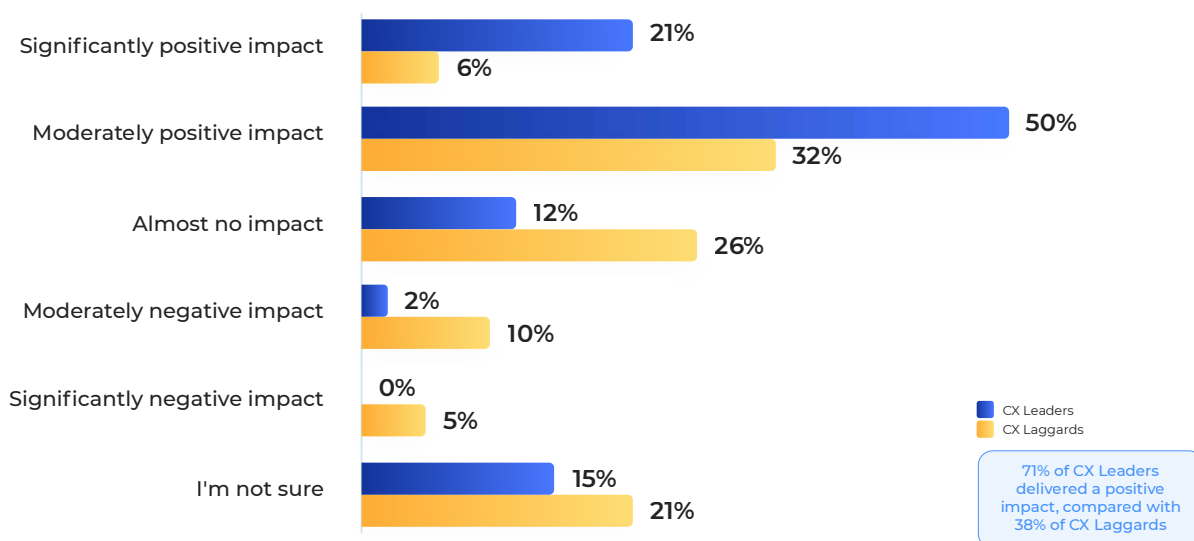
71 percent of leaders report CX efforts have a positive impact on their financial performance year over year¹.

Only 38 percent of CX laggards report the same. In addition, CX leaders tend to outperform their peers, with 61 percent saying they have better financial results than their competitors, compared to only 48 percent of CX laggards.

With customers flocking online to look for help, the onus is on businesses to make best use of customer engagement tools to retain their loyalty and stave off the competition.

Business Impact, CX Leaders Versus CX Laggards

As you think about your organization's customer experience efforts, to what degree have they impacted the organization's financial performance over the previous year?



Looking back over the previous year, how did your company's financial results compare with its competitors?

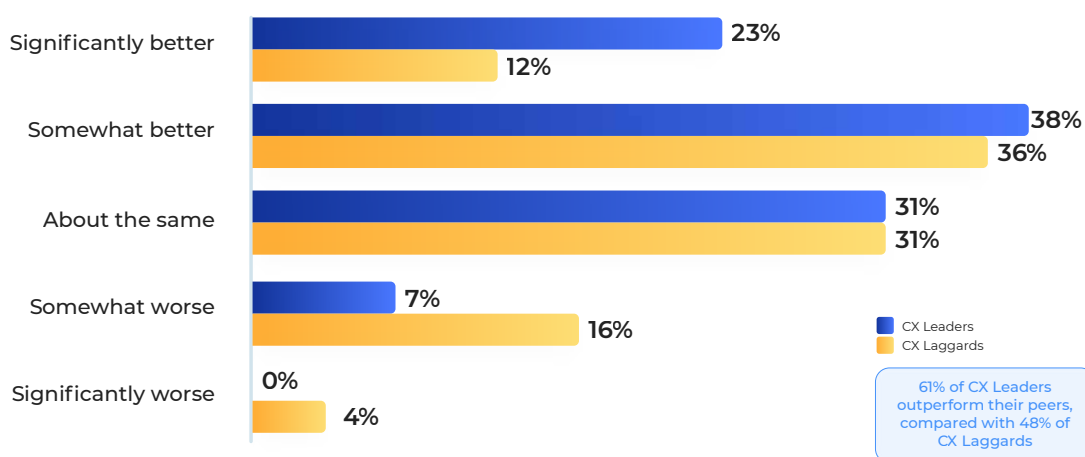


Figure 3

Business challenges for sales and customer support teams

As the uncertainty created by COVID-19 persists, it's critical that strategies for addressing revenue shortfalls are sustainable, rather than simply defaulting to cutting costs. With social distancing here to stay for the time being, businesses must innovate to rebound.

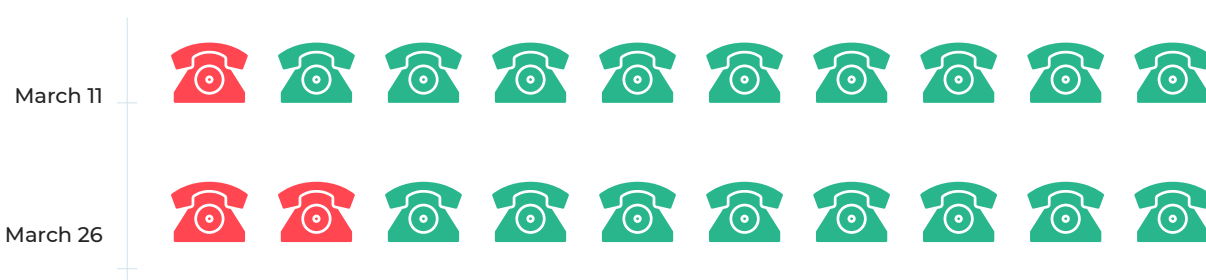
Two of the hardest-hit departments have been sales and customer service. For sales departments, especially in industries that relied heavily on in-person interaction, like retailers, the in-store shopping experience has migrated online for the majority of consumers. The integration of ecommerce shopping technology has become a vital lifeline to business health.

Larger retailers with an established ecommerce presence, or direct-to-consumer businesses founded online, are already familiar with digital customer engagement tools. For them, improving customer support means finding more effective ways to execute sales and outreach. However, smaller retailers who were without an online sales platform prior to COVID-19, will need to push forward quickly to survive in this new economy.

Customer service jobs have become harder

In terms of customer support, AI and machine learning venture, Tethr, studied roughly 1 million customer-service calls between March 11 – the day COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the WHO – and March 26⁸. In just two weeks, the average company saw the percentage of calls rated as “difficult” increase from the usual level of 10 percent to over 20 percent.

Calls rated 'difficult' before and after COVID-19 declared pandemic



Customer service representatives, whose jobs can be challenging even on a normal day, suddenly have to contend with anxieties and emotions heightened by the impact of COVID-19. Issues include anything from unexpected trip cancellations, to uncertainty with bill payments, to insurance coverage disputes.

Another, even larger, problem for agents is the loss of work infrastructure and peer support due to stay-at-home orders. Representatives are now working from home, potentially with less reliable phone and internet connections and more family-related obligations, and may be struggling more than usual to support customers. The Tethr study found a major increase of both customers and agents saying, “I can’t understand you,” hold times extended by as much as 34 percent, and over 68 percent more calls were escalated up the chain of command.



Under these testing conditions, teams have found it harder to close new sales, even with more high-effort interactions. One company surveyed found that resolving difficult interactions had only a 6 percent chance of leading to a cross-sell or upsell (compared to an 80 percent chance an easy interaction would). In stressful circumstances, customers threatening to leave the company altogether showed only a 4 percent likelihood of responding positively to a company’s “save offer” (an offer provided to customers to persuade them to stay), compared to a 20 percent likelihood of accepting an offer during easy interactions.

However, while COVID-19 has created new challenges for maintaining customer relationships, there are other ways to support CX, bring down handle times, and increase customer satisfaction.

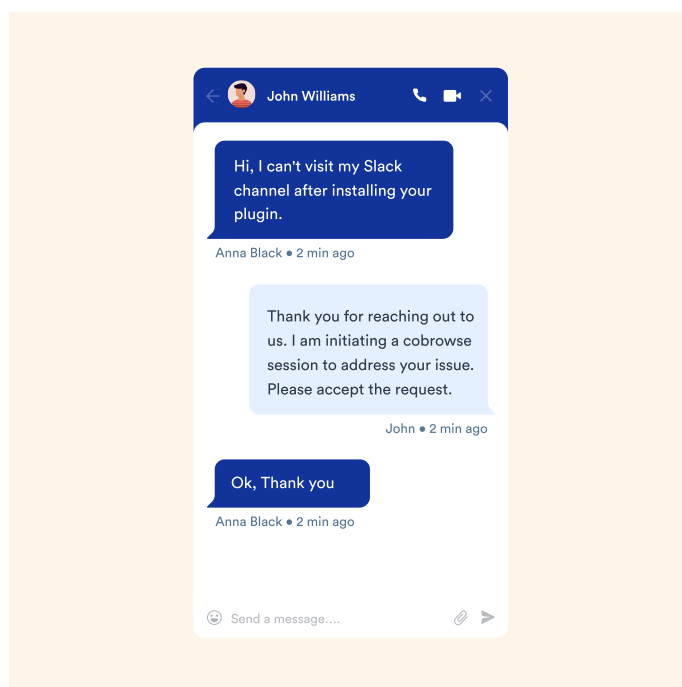
7 digital customer engagement tools to improve sales and customer support

Consumers have become accustomed to the kind of high-quality experiences offered by successful global tech companies such as Netflix, Amazon, and Google. That means there's limited tolerance for brands that don't provide an easy, seamless experience. However, it's important to note that customer engagement isn't synonymous with CX – it's a consequence of great CX⁹.

To improve CX, companies must look to bolster customer journeys with engagement tools. We've outlined seven examples of different tech that companies can use to enhance the customer experience and create sustainable business growth.

1. Live chat

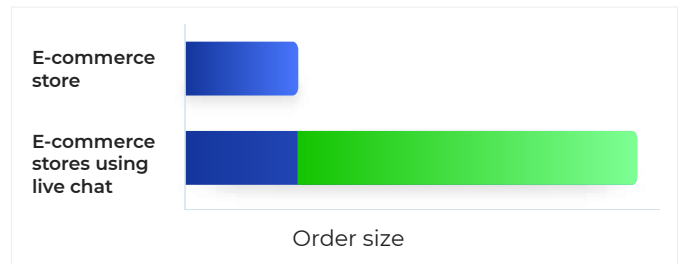
When a customer has a problem they're trying to resolve, or question they need answered, it's frustrating enough for them under normal conditions. But with people under enormous stress and stuck at home, problems can turn into full-blown crises. Connecting with another person during times such as these is of great comfort to consumers – especially for those craving human connection. That's when having live chat technology becomes a real advantage for a company.



But live chat is not just good for creating connections, there are many ways it can drive ecommerce sales, too – including reducing shopping cart abandonment, encouraging sales via mobile chat, and providing data to improve business operations¹⁰. Live chat instantly connects your sales and support teams with online visitors, can sync with knowledge bases to access information that helps answer customer questions, and can be integrated with chatbots so only the most complex issues get triaged to reps.

Here are a few statistics that show why implementing live chat technology is good for business:

Ecommerce stores using live chat see an increase in order size of between 100 percent and 300 percent, according to Michael Kansky, CEO of the help desk software company Live Help Now.¹¹



Live chat 73%

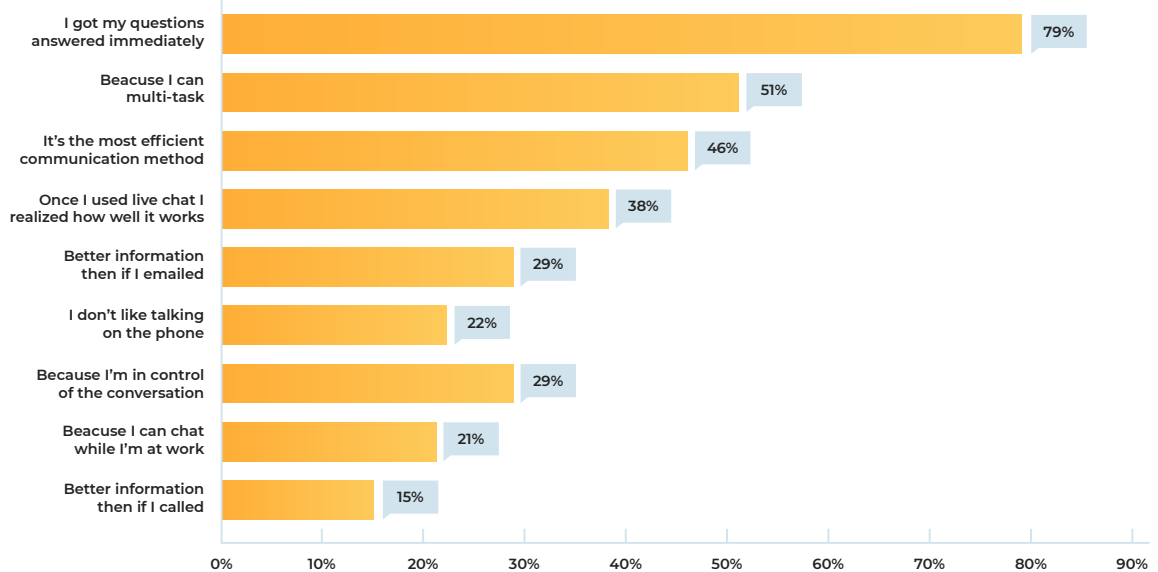


Email 61%



Phone 44%

According to a survey of 2,000 consumers on their experiences with various customer support channels, live chat has the highest customer satisfaction rating of all.¹²



The same survey found that almost 80 percent of consumers that prefer live chat over other channels, do so because it provides them with immediate support when they need it most, including when they are looking to make a purchase.



Another study found that over 77 percent of consumers surveyed wouldn't purchase from a website without a live chat function¹³

So, live chat is a valuable feature – and it comes with many benefits: It provides immediate support, reduces expenses for your company, and allows companies to engage with visitors as soon as they land on site. Brands get an edge over their competition, as live chat increases customer satisfaction and ultimately delivers greater value for companies.

Use case example: HLC

HLC¹⁴, a leading bicycle distributor in North America, used live chat to create an effortless customer experience. They recognized the shift in communication towards digital and wanted to be sure of meeting the growing demands for more convenient customer service.

At the time, HLC provided support primarily via email and phone. But with 1,000 visitors logging into their website each day, and their entire catalog available online, the company wanted to give customers an easy and convenient way to get their questions answered immediately.

Since implementing live chat, HLC has achieved a 97 percent live chat response rate, been able to onboard new hires within a day, and gained greater operational visibility into business and product issues.



HLC

Bicycle parts and accessories distributor
www.hlc.bike/ca

Industry

Sporting Goods

Company Size

51-200 employees

Features highlighted

Acquire Live Chat

Acquire Chat Tagging

Results

97% live chat response rate

1 day new hire onboarding

Greater insight into customer service issues



We don't want our customers to have to do much to get what they need.



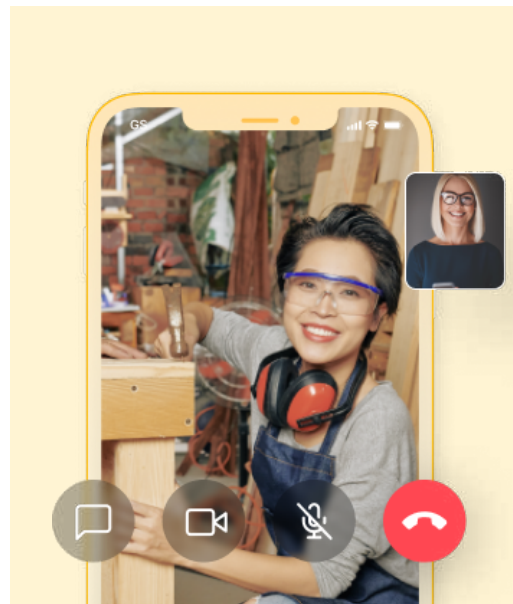
David Goodman

Customer Experience Lead

2. Video chat

Previously viewed as not much more than just another useful way to engage with customers, video chat has seen demand increase dramatically since the COVID-19 pandemic. It has now become a necessary tool for the survival of some online businesses.

Companies that previously relied on in-person interactions with customers are moving those interactions to video chat platforms. Other companies are also using video chat to create social camaraderie, maintain productivity, and encourage collaboration among remote working team members.



When face-to-face interactions aren't possible, video can be a powerful stand-in. For consumer-facing companies, incorporating video into sales and support strategies can help enhance CX and customer engagement in a number of different ways.

Here are a couple of ideas on how to use video to increase sales and improve customer support:

- 01 Live walkthroughs/Virtual tours.** For businesses that rely on selling to customers in-store, live walkthroughs can be a compelling way to show off products without customers being physically present. Companies can showcase products over a video call via smartphone or tablet, and allow for two-way communication if any questions come up.

This is already an established practice for many businesses. A 2018 Think with Google report found that 64 percent of shoppers who use video to inform purchases said 360-degree video and similar virtual sales methods would be enough to convince them to buy a car without a test drive¹⁵.

- 02 Video support.** Video-enabled support allows agents to connect with customers directly, providing a personalized, human touch. With video chat, customers are able to physically demonstrate product issues to support staff and receive immediate support.

Use case example: The Dufresne Group

The Dufresne Group¹⁶ is a Canadian furniture retailer that has used video to drive online sales during COVID-19. Furniture purchases are heavily influenced by the in-person experience, so not being able to go into the showroom to see and feel the product is a significant challenge for both buyers and sellers.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, The Dufresne Group was looking for a way to bring down costs on furniture repairs while improving online customer engagement. After implementing video chat, the company reduced on-site repair visits 50 percent by conducting assessments via video. They also increased their speed to service, going from an average of 10 days down to 5 days.



Dufresne
A Better Experience

The Dufresne Group

Retail

<https://dufresne.ca/>

Industry

Home Furnishings

Company Size

1,000-5,000 employees

Features highlighted

Acquire Video

Acquire Live Chat

Acquire Chatbot

Results

50% reduction in on-site repair visits

2x customer service speed

10x online sales chats in 2 weeks



I. Love. That. Bot. It's generating leads for us every single minute.

Norm Alegria

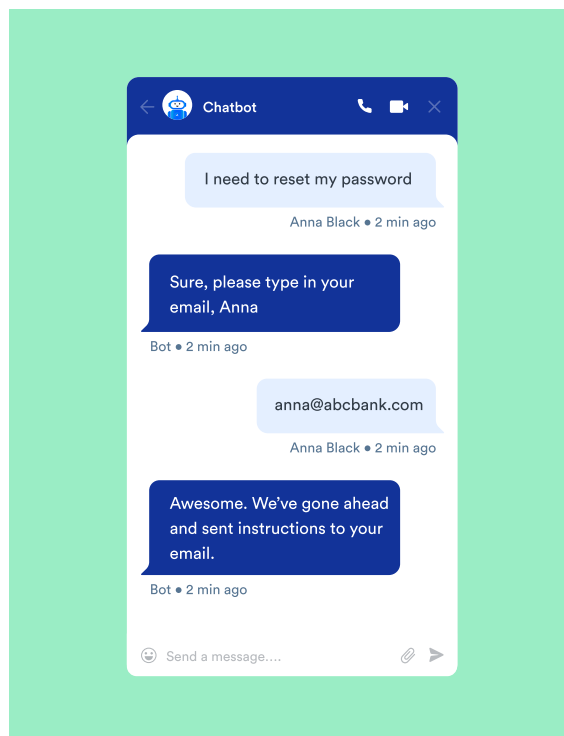
Director of Guest Care

3. Chatbots

According to a survey from BI Intelligence, 44 percent of U.S. consumers prefer chatbots to humans when it comes to customer relations¹⁷.

“**They act as the digital frontline to your human frontline, which is especially helpful to customer support teams experiencing high volumes of calls and emails.**”

During difficult times, anxious customers increasingly take their frustrations out on agents. The negative effects trickle down the system, bringing with it the potential to reduce team morale and increase burnout.



According to Chatbots Magazine, more than 30 percent of tasks carried out by today's contact center agents can be automated through the use of chatbots¹⁸. This has the potential to save a staggering \$23 billion in the U.S. alone.

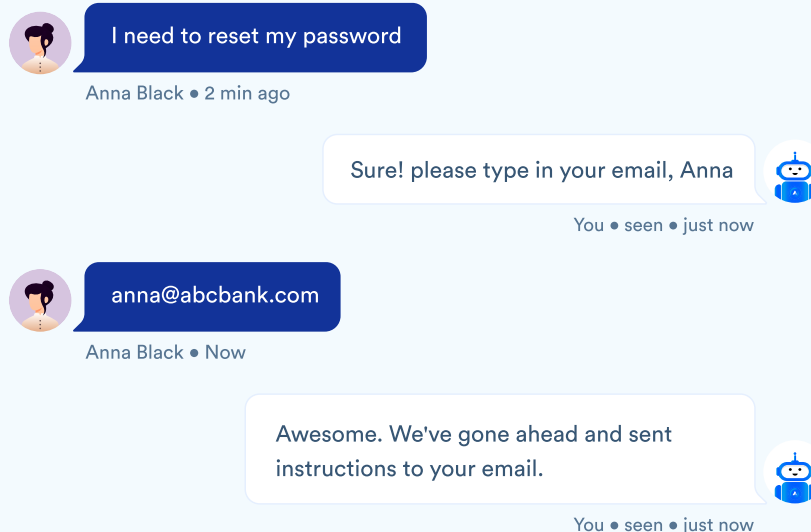


As AI becomes more sophisticated, chatbots are able to engage in more human-like conversations, enabling businesses to operate at higher volumes and increase their consumer base at a relatively lower cost.

With chatbots providing support and solving repetitive and simple customer queries, service agents are freed up to handle more complex queries and provide higher quality service to customers. Chatbots are also available around the clock, so response times are instant – especially important for time-sensitive issues. When integrated with the right knowledge base, chatbots can seamlessly access the information they need to answer customer inquiries. In addition to customer support, companies can even use chatbots to close more sales.

Chatbots help in the following ways:

- 01 Provide personalized user engagement.** Chatbots can analyze customer purchase history and preferences to provide relevant shopping advice and a personalized customer experience.
- 02 Guide customers through the marketing funnel.** Not only do chatbots respond immediately, they also take the time to guide customers through every touchpoint of a sale, providing additional support as needed.
- 03 Push out notifications.** Chatbots can make accurate predictions about customer behavior, and are able to send the right notifications to the right customers, at the right times.
- 04 Broaden reach.** Chatbots can go beyond the usual demand channels. By incorporating social media, companies are able to reach and engage a wider range of potential customers.



Use case example: Splashtop

Splashtop¹⁹ is a Silicon Valley-based tech company providing remote desktop access services to businesses and consumers. With close to 1,700 customer chat interactions every month, Splashtop wanted to use chatbots to increase conversations with potential leads. By using customizable chatbots with a modern UI, leads were quickly qualified with pre-sales questions – such as whether a visitor wanted to talk to sales, support, or was just browsing.

Splashtop was also able to engage with prospects outside of the chat widget using contact information collected during sessions – including names and email addresses. If customers had a complex question that needed agent assistance, the sales team could follow up the next day during office hours. Chatbots were also customized to appear on web pages that showed higher sales intent, such as competitor pages, the contact us page, and product comparison pages.

Upon implementing chatbots, Splashtop achieved a 35 percent increase in sales conversations.



Splashtop

Computer Software

www.splashtop.com/

Industry

Computer Software

Company Size

51-200 employees

Features highlighted

Acquire Live Chat

Acquire Triggers

Results

35% increase in sales conversations

Higher conversion rates

Better lead qualification



Our sales conversations have increased by over 35% since switching over to Acquire from Zendesk.



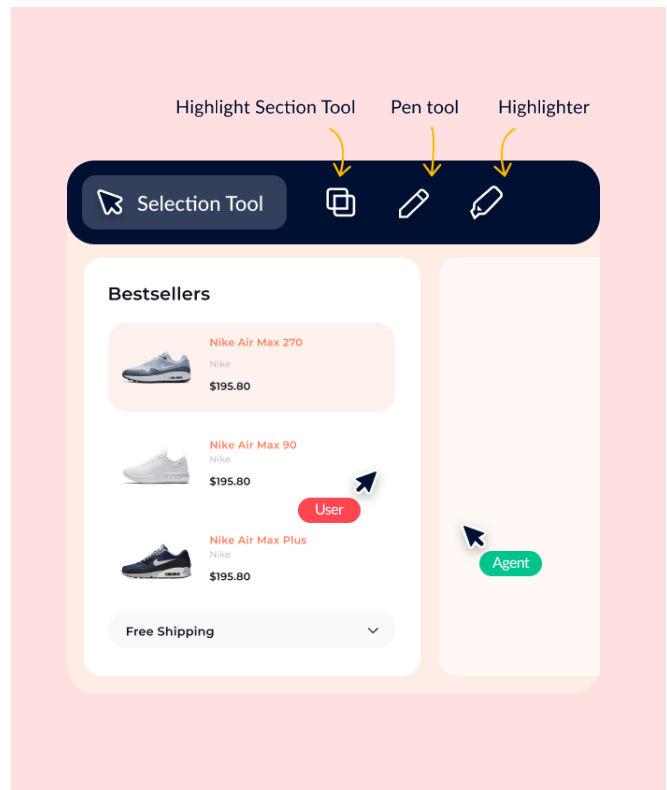
Italo Nava

Sales Manager at Splashtop

4. Cobrowsing

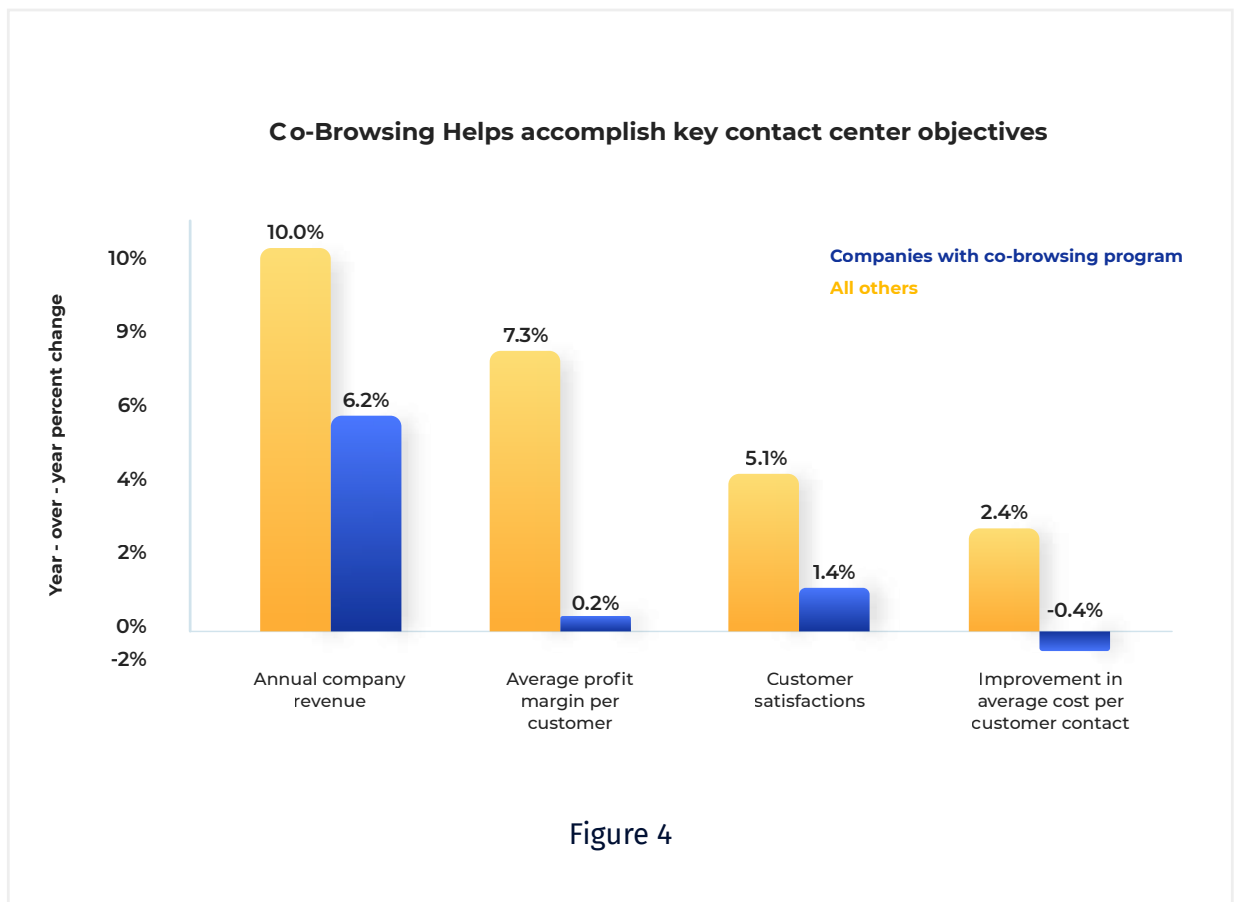
Companies at the forefront of innovation, like Apple and Amazon, are using visual engagement technology as a way to create stronger, deeper customer relationships and experiences. One of these technologies is cobrowsing.

Cobrowsing offers a safer solution than screen-sharing (which grants access to someone's entire computer screen). It gives support representatives secure access to a customer's browser tab – enabling them to control, click, scroll, and type. This kind of technology allows technical or software-related issues to be resolved more easily on-screen.



A recent report by Comm100 found that tools like cobrowsing yield customer satisfaction ratings of 89.3 percent – six points higher than average²⁰.

With this technology in place, no tech questions are too complex to solve, and customers can place their confidence – and web browser screens – in the hands of the professionals. Customers receive high quality service without compromising on security or privacy. Figure 4²¹ shows how implementing cobrowsing impacts organizational success.



Cobrowsing technology helps companies achieve greater customer satisfaction scores year-over-year, compared to companies that don't use these tools. The margin is significant at 5.1 percent vs. 1.4 percent. With cobrowsing, agents are able to diagnose and address issues much faster, resulting in lower handle times.

When customers get their issues fixed quicker, they are more likely to be satisfied with the service they receive. Additionally, support costs are reduced because agents are more productive.

Driving incremental revenue growth is another significant benefit of cobrowsing. Companies using this technology experience 61 percent greater year-over-year growth compared to all other types of support tools (10 percent vs 6.2 percent). This increase can be attributed to cross-sell and upsell opportunities that arise. Agents gain contextual insights during their interactions that enable them to propose products relevant to customers' needs.

The overall impact of reduced support costs combined with increased top-line revenue boosts the average profit margin per customer by 7.3 percent, compared to 0.2 percent for all other channels.

Use case example: Elevate

Elevate²² offers tech-enabled credit solutions that support the financial wellness of millions of Americans who live paycheck to paycheck. The company is dedicated to helping vulnerable customers through some of their toughest times, so customer support is very important for delivering a great CX.

Before implementing cobrowsing technology, Elevate was unable to track how customer support calls affected the signup process. They didn't have the tools to pinpoint which part of the application process caused customers the most issues. Without access to this information, the company wasn't able to measure their impact or identify areas of improvement.

Given the stressful circumstances of Elevate's customers, agents needed a customer support solution that could assess complications in seconds instead of minutes. Using live chat and cobrowsing in tandem, servicing became much more streamlined and seamless for both agents and customers.

Regardless of whether customers logged on via mobile or web, the user-friendly chat interface could be accessed anywhere on the Elevate site. If a customer needed assistance, agents could then offer to initiate a cobrowsing session instantly from a live chat, allowing them to see and interact on-screen in real time.

Their customer service platform existed on the website, so customers could get high-quality support without having to download an external application or launch a separate window for video chat. Instead, a pop-up window automatically appeared with an agent's request to cobrowse. Agents were only given access to the Elevate browser tab, and sensitive information such as credit card details was hidden to protect the customer's privacy and security.

Elevate

Elevate

Financial Services

<https://www.elevate.com/>

Industry

Financial Services

Company Size

501-1000 employees

Features highlighted

Live Chat and Co-browsing



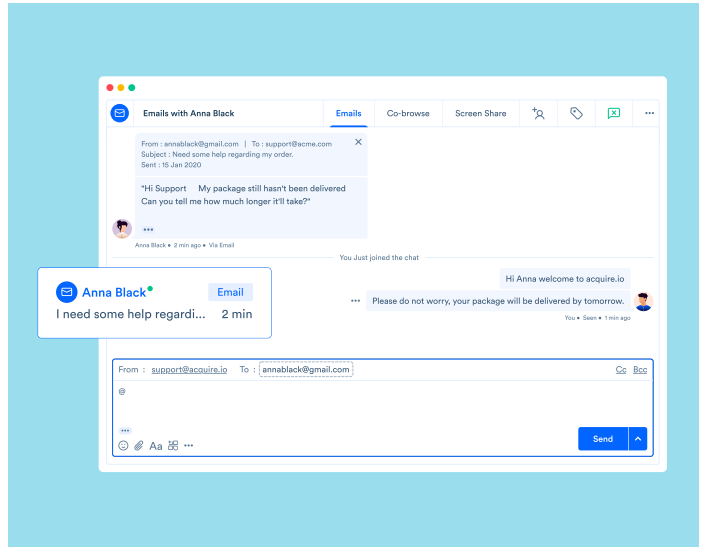
Acquire's customer support tools helped us qualify issues faster, provide more efficient help and reduce resolution time.

Brad Tharp

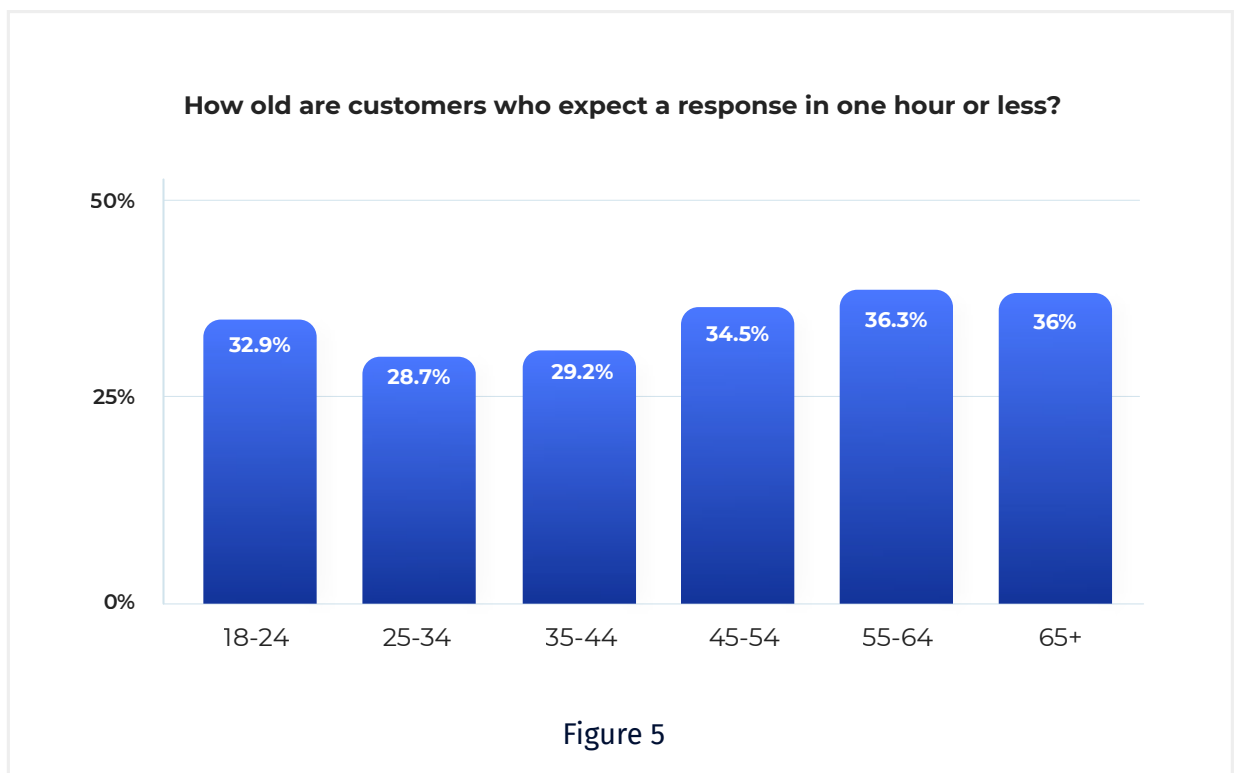
Senior Director of Operations

5. Email

In a digital landscape populated by emerging customer service channels, email still reigns supreme. In 2018, 54 percent of customers used email as a customer service channel²³. What has changed over the last few years is that customers expect a quicker response. The previously acceptable 24-hour response time from the days of dial-up internet no longer applies.



In fact, a recent survey found that nearly a third of customers expect companies to respond to an email in one hour or less²⁴. Figure 5²⁴ shows customers between the ages of 55 and 64 were the most demanding of a speedy response time.



Despite the prevailing popularity of email for customer service, studies from SuperOffice²⁵ have shown that many companies are not using this channel to the best of their abilities. In a survey of 1,000 companies, they found that:



don't respond to customer service emails at all.



don't respond back with an acknowledgment that an email has been received .

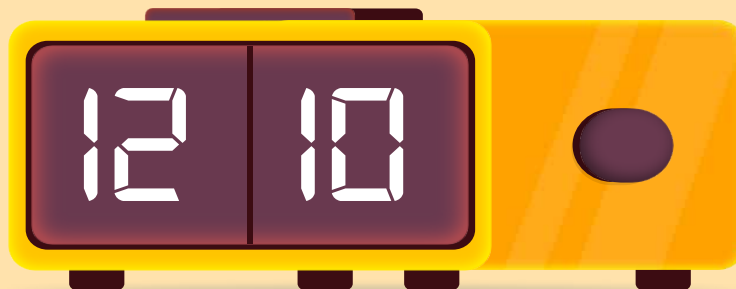


don't follow-up with the customer via email to confirm their satisfaction with the response.



are able to respond to the customer's satisfaction within the first reply.

The average response time to a customer service request is 12 hours and 10 minutes.



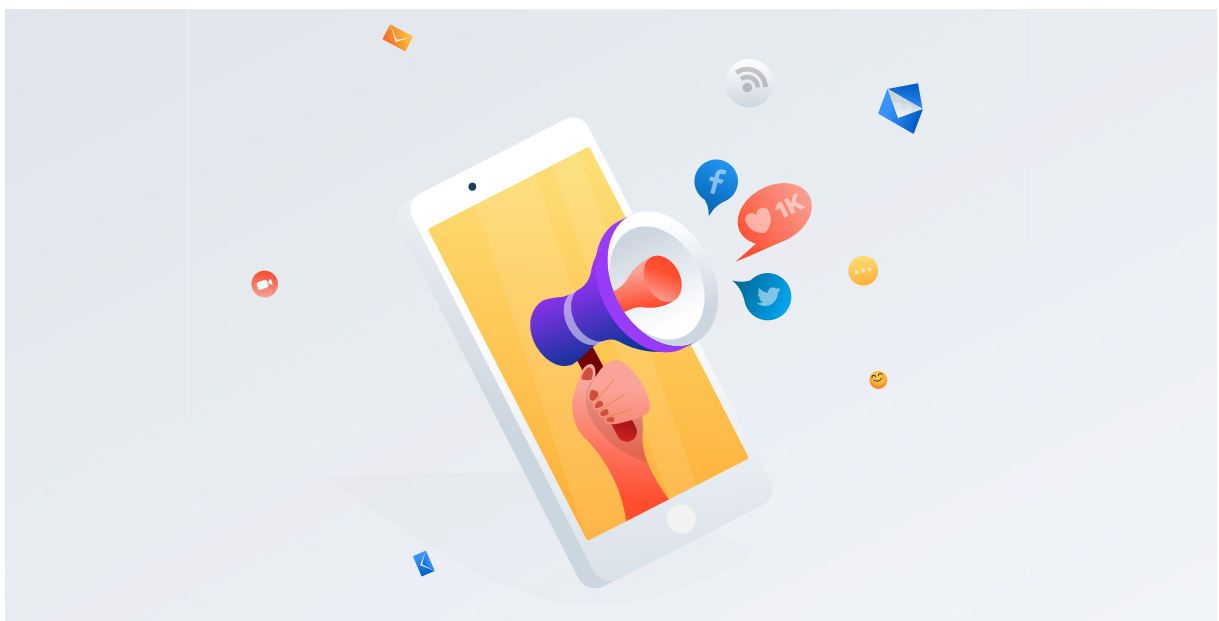
Businesses that don't take full advantage of email as a customer service channel are missing out on opportunities to generate new revenue and increase satisfaction. **Bain & Co found that increasing customer retention rates by just 5 percent could lead to increased business profits of between 25 percent and 95 percent²⁶.**

Here are a few ways to drive revenue and increase customer retention with email:

- 01 Send reminders.** Many products on the market have a limited shelf life or set expiration date. Businesses can send automatic emails to remind their customers to restock their product before it runs out or expires. Adding a simple “Buy” button will give customers an option to easily re-order.
- 02 Find opportunities to upsell or cross-sell.** This approach requires diving a bit deeper into customer data to understand the best types of value-add products or services to offer. Including a call-to-action to learn more or speak to a representative is a great way to keep customers engaged.

6. Social Media

Social media has become part of the fabric of society and is therefore crucial to a business’ ability to connect and engage with their audience. It’s useful for answering customer questions, generating reviews, sharing relevant content, and broadening reach to find more potential customers.

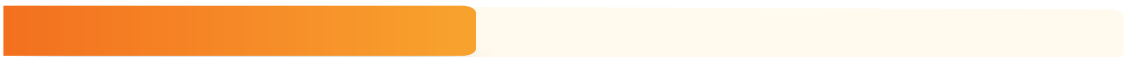


Consider the following statistics from research conducted by Jay Baer and Edison Research²⁸. When consumers contact a brand, product, or company for customer support through social media:

32% expect a response within 30 minutes.



42% expect a response within 60 minutes.



57% expect the same response time at night and on weekends as during normal business hours.



Users are rapidly turning to social media to request and receive customer service. However, a huge gap exists. The majority of these requests aren't being addressed by companies in a timely manner – or even addressed at all.

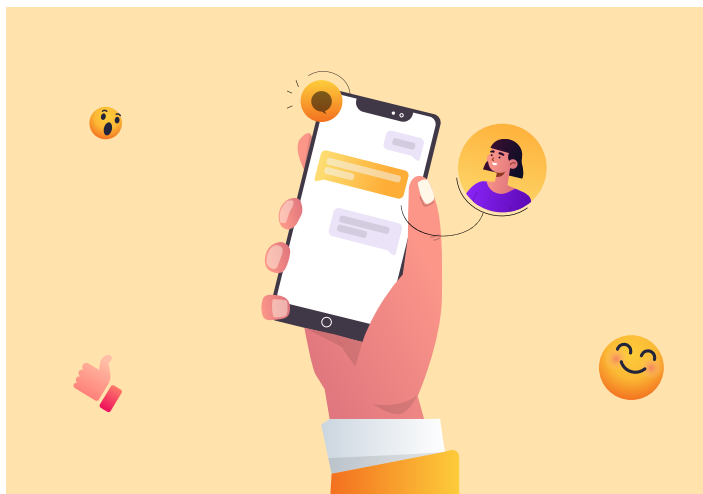
To bridge this gap, chatbots can be employed to provide instant, personalized attention to users. By continuing this flow of engagement, companies build stronger brand affinity and higher satisfaction rates.

Using chatbots within social media channels allows companies to:

- 01 Provide 24/7 customer support.** Given that customers expect a speedy response through social media, chatbots can be used to instantly resolve common customer enquiries.
- 02 Create a seamless cross-platform experience.** Because customers are likely to want to engage with your brand on social media, chatbots are able to keep the experience in-app versus needing to switch between apps and/or interfaces.
- 03 Streamline your marketing efforts.** Chatbots create efficiencies in the marketing funnel. Companies can use them across various stages, from marketing research all the way to acquisition. They can even issue questionnaires through social media, as well as call-to-actions to learn more about products and services.

7. SMS Text Messaging

Texting is the most widely and frequently used mobile app with 97 percent of American smartphone owners using it at least weekly, according to the Pew Research Center²⁸. Additionally, text messages have a 98 percent open rate, while emails only have a 22 percent open rate²⁹.



It's understandable that businesses of all sizes commonly use SMS text messaging for customer support. Being completely virtual, it requires no face-to-face interaction or verbal communication. Combined with a chatbot, SMS messaging diverts a high volume of calls agents would otherwise need to handle. This reduces stress on teams, frees up their focus for higher-value priorities, and allows more cases to be tackled with fewer reps.

It's also more economically sound to field customer enquiries via text rather than on the phone. A Forrester study found that a customer service phone call costs a company about \$16, while the average text thread costs between \$1-\$5 per interaction³⁰.

When it comes to customer engagement and support, text messaging provides the following benefits:

- 01 No additional software needed.** Most messaging systems on a smartphone don't require an app download or additional third party software. They simply use a text message interface – particularly helpful to users low on storage space.
- 02 Consumers are already familiar with this interface.** Text messaging tools allow companies to connect with customers via an interface they use daily and feel comfortable with.
- 03 Appointment reminders.** Companies can send automated reminders for any type of activity, including scheduled appointments or special promotions.
- 04 Customer feedback.** Companies can send out surveys to get feedback on products and services. These insights help improve future programs and campaigns.

The state of customer experience post-COVID-19

Figuring out not only how to function, but how to do so efficiently and productively, has been quite a challenge for businesses and consumers alike during this pandemic. People all over the world have been asked to stay inside and practice social distancing, and the lack of human interaction and connection has created heightened anxiety and financial stress.

The silver lining is that COVID-19 has amplified the pace of digital transformation, forcing change that would have otherwise taken much longer to implement. It's brought to light the need for businesses to adopt modern technologies to meet the evolving demands of consumers. Patterns were already trending towards online shopping, and as we enter the new normal, dependency on digital channels will only continue to grow.

Well after the COVID-19-related restrictions have eased, the uncertainty and emotional distress felt by people all around the world will continue to linger. Businesses will be held to a higher standard of care, empathy, and concern – particularly in relation to connecting with customers who may be in more vulnerable states post COVID-19.

There may well be a continued need – if not obligation – to maintain relationships with customers from their own homes, with many remaining reluctant to shop in-store. To stay competitive, a more robust suite of digital CX channels isn't just an investment in the interim – it's a way of securing survival in a post-pandemic future.

Embracing the new normal

Customers in this new economy expect immediate response times, a personalized approach, a seamless buying journey where assistance is always on hand, and plenty of compassion to boot. Opportunities to optimize CX have increased exponentially in this rapidly accelerating digital landscape, and any business would be remiss not to take advantage of them. There are a wide variety of customer engagement tools available on the market for sales and support professionals to put to good use. From chatbots to cobrowsing, advancements in technology will only continue to grow – as will their power to help drive business growth.

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About Acquire

Acquire is a unified customer engagement platform that brings all communication, interactions, channels, and tools under one roof. With Acquire, teams are able to respond to customers instantly using live chat, chatbots, cobrowse, video and voice, email, SMS, and more — all from one simplified dashboard.

Acquire is headquartered in San Francisco. The company's customers span the globe and include several Fortune 500 brands. Acquire is backed by groups like S28 Capital, Fathom Capital, and NHN Ventures, and was recently recognized as a high performer on G2 Crowd in Summer 2019.

For more information, visit www.acquire.io.

