



We're in good shape

Zendesk builds software for better customer relationships. We used to make just one thing, but we've grown into a big company that makes lots of things. Our tools help companies communicate with their customers, solve problems, and build better relationships.

Because even though this is business, we are all people. Transactions are interactions, and interactions are the foundation of relationships.

And relationships are complicated.



Relationships

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Zendesk is growing up

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The crossroads of personal and professional relationships

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Relation

Every Zendesk product is designed to help you work with relationships, in both good and bad times. The marks in our brand are designed to represent relationships. Each is made of two simple shapes. They can do anything together: talk, walk, fight, agree, annoy, support, love.

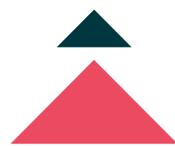
shapes



Support

A beautifully simple system for tracking, prioritizing, and solving customer support tickets. The mark shapes lean in to support each other.

As the heart of the original Zendesk, Support carries the original Zendesk green.



Help Center

A self-service destination featuring knowledge base articles, community forums, and a customer portal.

The mark uses the triangles as directional arrows to a suggested route on a road or path.



Chat

Live chat software that provides a fast and responsive way to connect with customers in the moment.

The Chat mark resembles two chat bubbles in conversation. The mark also retains the Zopim orange.



Message

Message software that helps companies engage customers on their favorite messaging apps.

The mark resembles activity within a messaging app. The circle speaks to the ongoing nature of the customer-agent conversation.



Talk

Call center software that allows for more personal and productive phone support conversations.

Voice support is often the most emotional of all support channels. With two mouths in conversation, agents can turn that frown upside down.



Connect

Customer intelligence software built for targeted campaigns and proactive engagements.

The design is inspired by old school video games. In motion, the shapes are always trying to fit together.



Explore

Analytics to help measure and understand the entire customer experience.

The visual is a mountain with an explorer's flag. This is evocative of the mountains of data that our customers generate everyday.



The Z

The Zendesk brand mark is made up of the same shapes and is responsible for the broader brand story. Made of two contrasting shapes, it is balanced, sharp, and bold. It represents our multi product company. Its tension connects our visual identity to our brand message Relationships Are Complicated.



Shaping our future

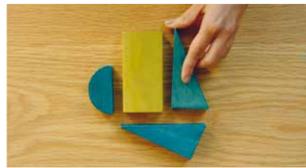
When Zendesk first started, our goal was pretty simple: Bring a sense of calm to the chaotic and stressful world of customer service. We like to think we've done a pretty good job of that. But we also think we can do more.

Zendesk has grown—a lot. We have more people, more products, and a bigger role in how companies interact with their customers. We've worked our way to the next level, so we need to change our style up a little bit. It's like when you finally realize that haircut you've had since 7th grade isn't doing you any favors.

But our new brand is not about trying to be cool. (And it's not just about realizing that bangs were a really bad idea.) It's about creating more choices, building better products, and improving the experience for our customers. We don't have it all figured out yet, and we know we have a long road ahead of us. But we know we're heading in the right direction, and that with each step we take, things will get better for our company and the people who depend on us.



Toke Nygaard
Chief Creative Officer



building blocks of more complex forms, we've utilized fundamental animation principles such as squash and stretch, overlap, follow-through, and anticipation to create complex animations. We're still applying the restraint and subtlety of the original Zendesk branding by making sure the movement isn't too exaggerated.



Sara Farnsworth
Motion Graphics Artist

Q: You created the Zendesk brand to begin with. Why rebrand now after so many years with a successful—and pretty consistent—brand? Are you crazy?

When I was first tasked with creating a brand for Zendesk, we had no customers, no product, and just a vague idea of what Zendesk would be: a sexy alternative to old school customer service software. It needed to be fresh, easy to use, and to provide a different, more joyful experience for people working in a thankless and under-appreciated job.

Now, almost 10 years later, customer service is central to every successful, modern company. We've outgrown our brand, but have an established story and a clear vision for the future. Today, and this new brand system can grow with us and allow us to tell relevant brand stories.

Q: What role does video have in bringing character to a brand or its products?

One of the best mediums to express a brand or product's personality is through video and animation. We've always put detail and care into our videos. When I was interviewing for Zendesk and watching the videos, the things that stood out



Q: What was most important to you in the endeavor of rebranding Zendesk?

We were hellbent on designing a system with its own personality that allowed for storytelling and that wasn't limiting. It's important that our new brand is flexible, scalable, and fun to work with. If we don't have fun designing with our new brand assets, nobody outside of Zendesk will appreciate them either. The rebrand also needed to reflect the amazing culture of our company.

to me were the little "easter eggs", such as the lion that appears from video to video. As a viewer, it felt like someone was going above and beyond. The new branding is exciting because there's so much opportunity to create thoughtful, fun moments for our customers in our products, website, and other content.

Q: What is the personality and the character of each shape?

I see these shapes as being quite human in their characteristics. They don't always get along, and they have imperfections, but ultimately they're there to do a job and they're determined to work through it together.

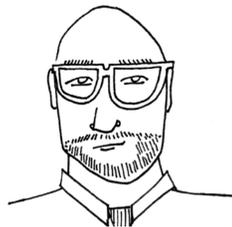
Q: What animation principles did you apply, and how did you keep the animation aligned to the Zendesk brand?

The most important part of creating these animations is the idea that we are telling a short story with the shapes. Each animation should feel like a personal moment between the characters, never a performance for an audience. We want these mini narratives to provoke an emotion. Just like humans, these shapes' imperfections give rise to funny, sad, surprising, or inspiring moments. This ties into the overarching message of "Relationships are complicated".

Animation is an extremely expressive medium that can communicate a lot very quickly. Just as the shapes themselves are simple and the basic

"I thought it just looked like clown shoes."

First impressions from Zendesk employees



Bob Galmarini
Creative Director

Q: What do you want the Zendesk community to take away from the new branding?

That we are growing. I want people to see that we aren't losing our charm or wit. We are still the same company, but we understand that our customers have growing needs and we are addressing those and growing with them.

Q: Why do you think the new design works?

Concept is King. I think we started in the right place. Rather than designing new marks that just look cool, we came up with a scalable concept that is rooted in our brand statement that relationships are complicated. When design is rooted in a solid concept, it is hard to dispute.

Q: How does this concept allow for room to grow beyond the current family of products?

They are very simple shapes. There are a thousand ways these shapes can be arranged to make new, unique marks that communicate the actions of any product we add to the family.

Q: How will the rebrand change the overall design aesthetic of Zendesk?

We are shedding a lot of the existing Zendesk visual identity, so it will look different moving forward. What won't be different is our desire to relate to people, tell stories, add some charm, and inspire companies to create better relationships with their customers.



Ethan Kanat
Brand Manager

You're a writer. What role do words play in a product and brand redesign?

What we're doing is more than a redesign. It's a complete rebranding of Zendesk. Obviously there are a lot of big ideas and important messages wrapped up in that. We need to make sure the story is interesting, and the messages are consistent—no matter where or how people come across them. Words are pretty helpful for making that happen.

What does the Zendesk brand stand for today?

Zendesk's values haven't changed. We still stand for the idea of improving relationships between businesses and their customers. But the way we do things has evolved. We're talking about more products and bigger ideas to a much larger audience. So we had to switch our style up a little bit.

How does the "Relationships Are Complicated" message fit into the new brand?

Zendesk has always been about improving the relationships between companies and their customers, but in the past we were limited in the way we could talk about that. We were a new company making a product that not many people understood, so we had to put a lot of focus on features and functionality.

Now we have a little more room to move. We can tell bigger, more interesting stories about the people using our products—and about human relationships in general. And as most humans know, relationships are complicated.

"I have to say that I absolutely LOVE the new branding. I'm in love."

First impressions from Zendesk employees



Tell us about the potato prints.

Growing up, my mom was super crafty. She showed me how to make fun designs by cutting shapes into potatoes and then dipping them in paint. It was fun to bring that into the process as we were exploring simple shapes as a design aesthetic. We knew that a circle or a square alone wasn't something we could own, so I started playing with how to make those forms more human. That's what this aesthetic is all about. How do you create a whole world with just 6 shapes?



Erin Pinkley
Art Director

Q: What was most important to you in the endeavor of rebranding Zendesk?

Keeping the charm alive. Our people live it and our customers expect it.

Q: What is the philosophy behind the new design?

Every Zendesk product is designed to help you work with relationships, in both good and bad times. The marks of our products are designed to represent those relationships. Each is made of two simple shapes that can do anything together: talk, walk, fight, agree, annoy, support, love. Each relationship is as unique as each product.

Q: Zendesk is a Danish company. Did you reference Danish design with this rebrand?

That's exactly where we started. This simple language of shapes is consistent in Danish design.

It's something that has a way of sparking the imagination, whether that's in children's toys or textiles in your home. We found that when simple shapes come together, they can create something unexpected and also full of character. And as simple as they are, they have a way of looking fresh and timeless in almost any environment or medium.

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Adrian McDermott
SVP, Product Development

Q: Why become a multi-product company when you're doing one thing really well?

A single-product company should become a multi-product company because it's starting to serve different audiences or needs. Cramming every use-case into a single product creates an overstuffed, confusing hodgepodge of functionality that stops making sense except in its historical context.

Product people strive to solve their customer's problems, that's what they do, so when problem spaces diverge, new products must be gestated. Any new customer should recognize the raison d'être of each product they interact with instantly, because every product should be clear, concise, and compact.

"I like it all – it's a clean move away from the discombobulated brand identities and pulls us together better. The Z will have to grow on me."

First impressions from Zendesk employees

Q: What was the biggest challenge in redesigning Zendesk to be multi-product? When did this work really begin?

Once you begin thinking about creating a multi-product family you want the familial connections to be clear, natural, and strong. Every product should manifest its shared DNA proudly; to know one is to know all. It sounds great but is really hard to do well.

Think about it like a house being remodeled. Sharing homegrown parts of the Zendesk product family required ripping and replacing infrastructure, plumbing and features. It requires tremendous bravery and forethought in product design, but it also required tempering one's ambition and appetite for change because customers don't want to live in a house that's permanently under construction.

Q: In the new Zendesk family of products, which child is your current favorite/are you most excited about?

I'm most excited to have a connected family—to offer choice and to solve more than one problem. But I fucking love data products.



Alexander Aghassipour
Founder

Q: Becoming a multi-product company is a goal for many companies. How do you know when it's the right time?

When your product story is bursting at the seams and you are covering to many orthogonal domains in one product, it's time.

In order to keep our product beautifully simple, it has to become products, thus enabling us to super optimize each product to a specific problem space. To eliminate noise and cross-chat. To be precise in our marketing. To help our product teams stay agile. And to reduce fucking red alerts.

Q: What did you think of the new branding when you first saw it (be honest)?

I had a strong reaction. Clown shoes. Professor Balthazar (google it). Wtf. But as the initial knee jerk reaction (conservative, complacent) subsided, I realized this was true. This is what we need to do; our story needs to be retold.

The new brand does not look like any other software brand out there (just like our version 1.0 did not in 2007), and it's a great proxy for who we are. Original, bold, beautiful and quirky. It feels earned and it makes you curious.



Ryan Donahue
VP, Global Design

Q: What was most important to you in the endeavor of rebranding Zendesk?

I wanted our creative team to feel inspired by the work and inspired about their role in helping shape the future of the company. I'm thankful we achieved some of both.

Q: What was the most difficult aspect of the rebranding process?

Staying patient. It takes time for the best ideas to emerge and sometimes you need to have the patience to let a creative process move at its own pace.

Q: What do you want the Zendesk community to take away from the new branding?

I'd like people to see that Zendesk is expanding into something that is broader but, at the same time, remains committed to all the same things Zendesk has become trusted and known for.

Q: How does this concept allow for room to grow beyond the current family of products?

It provides a vision of where we are going, not just where we are today.

Q: Why does everyone hate rebrands? How did you prep your team for negative reaction?

People hate rebrands for two reasons. First, they don't like change. Second, we invest heavily in brands we believe in and we can feel betrayed when we're asked to invest in something different.

Customers. Colleagues. Community. It's complicated.

Relate
by zendesk

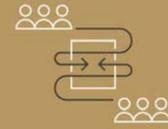
Life is made up of relationships. But relationships are complicated.

Relate is here to help you ponder, explore, and hopefully improve your important relationships. From coworkers to customers, bosses to best friends, everything except romance. That's on you.

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Where we work shapes how work, from where we meet to where we sit



In three years, I've moved desks four times, relocating between two buildings and three floors. There have been key differences between each location—some floors were noisier, others had more light—but for the most part, my desk, a blank slate of wide, white surface, was nearly identical in each space.

So, too, are the floor plans, where my desk stands with its fellow snowy friends, congregating around cool gray lounge chairs and ceding to a community kitchen. In fact, the next time my team does the desk shuffle, I can be assured that my experience of coming to work will remain largely unchanged.

Of course, this is intentional and not uncommon at a growing tech company. Every detail is designed to create consistency, to convey brand identity, and to reflect company values—whether that's by bringing amenities into a space to keep people in the office, or by leaving a space slightly lacking, even uncomfortable, to push employees back out into the world.

But our workspaces are, ideally, designed to do more than that. Where we work inevitably shapes how we work, and how we build relationships with our colleagues, our customers, and our larger communities. We don't even need science—just a quick gut check—to know that we feel different ways in different spaces. Every attribute of a physical space, from ceiling height to seating choice, affects our happiness, productivity, and ability to collaborate.

Technology enables mobility

Today's office culture isn't strictly business. As much as companies might promote work-life balance or work-life fit, there's increasingly less delineation between life at home and life at work. Thanks to wifi, laptops, and smartphones, we can take work with us. This is evidenced in our habits—checking email while on vacation, or going to yoga during the day only to finish a work project at night—as well as in our workspaces. Anyone working in a “traditional” office, relying on a computer and phone, is no longer tied to their desk. In fact, studies show that workers are not at their desks 50-60 percent of the time, and many Fortune 1000 companies are re-envisioning their workspaces as a result.

Not only are workers abandoning their desks, but many are abandoning the office altogether. As reported by GlobalWorkplaceAnalytics.com in January of 2016, the number of non-self-employed workers who regularly work at home has grown by 103 percent since 2005.

Numbers like this leave little doubt that many of us appreciate the flexibility and freedom of being able to work from where we choose, when we choose. Mobility places an emphasis on the quality and dependability of work, while location takes a back seat. And while some people are better suited to working remotely, it's also true that some offices don't provide an atmosphere that supports productivity.

The origins (and demise) of the cubicle

Today, as many as 70 percent of modern offices have an open floor plan, calling to mind words like “airy” and “transparent” and “collaborative”—all words that challenge cubicle life, now something relegated to pre-Millennial times and the bygone era of the bland business parks.

Yet today's open office culture is actually a throwback to the 1950s and '60s. If you watched *Mad Men*,

“Where we work inevitably shapes how we work, and how we build relationships with our colleagues, our customers, and our larger communities.”

then you have a good picture of office culture and layout at the time. Or consider the film *The Apartment*, where we get a glimpse into large rooms of typists clacking away at breakneck speed. Office life was, invariably, loud.

An office furniture designer by the name of Robert Propst designed the cubicle as an answer to the problem associated with open-plan offices. Propst unveiled his creative, flexible three-walled design, called “Action Office II,” in 1968. At the time, and for a long time, it was widely adopted and considered an early example of progressive office design-thinking.

The cubicle, as it later became known, was even named the most successful design of the previous 25 years at the 1985 World Design Conference. Companies found they could easily reconfigure spaces around business needs and still offer employees privacy and a buffer from visual and noise distractions.

What's curious, however, is that how we perceive a space can be just as important as how we actually fare within it. According to Nikil Saval, author of *Cubed: A*

Secret History of the Workplace, the economic climate of the 1980s and 90s—marked by corporate mergers and mass layoffs—began to erode the perceived safety of the cubicle. Instead of being a space where meaningful work could be done, independently, workers began to view the cubicle as a place of confinement and disposability.

Your physical space affects productivity

That the noise levels, distraction, and lack of privacy associated with open-plan offices both lowers productivity and affects an employee's well-being has been well-documented. In *The New Yorker*, Maria Konnikova dove into several studies reviewing “the open-office trap” that many of us had gotten entangled in.

Organizational psychologist Matthew David revealed that while open offices “often fostered a symbolic sense of organizational mission, making employees feel like part of a more laid-back, innovative enterprise, they were damaging workers' attention spans, productivity, creative thinking, and satisfaction. Compared with standard offices, employees experienced more uncontrolled interactions, higher levels of stress, and lower levels of concentration and motivation.”

And, as it turns out, maybe there are reasons beyond stature that executives are given private offices. Research revealed that the more senior the employee, the more they were affected by the open office environment. Open-plan offices also lead to employees needing to take more sick time.

It's interesting that we know this, and yet, from the top down, persist in creating ever-cooler open-plan offices. Yet, maybe, that's not entirely what's happening today. Some would argue that workplace design is experiencing an evolution, driven by increased mobility and the demands of the workforce, as companies are pressed to solve difficult questions about space in order to promote productivity and to attract and retain talent.

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Chelsea Larsson is a content marketer for Zendesk and a frequent contributor to Relate. She believes any problem can be solved with pen, paper, and a Pimm's cup.

Keep brand voice consistent in customer support

Imagine driving down the highway, checking the mile markers, when all of the sudden the signs change from miles to inches. What would your first reaction be? Confusion? Concern? Frustration, definitely. Anxiety as well when you realize there's a new knowledge needed to translate the distances. No question, it would be a bad experience.

As customers, we experience this confusion everyday when companies don't use their brand voice in customer service.

A consistent brand voice:

1. Improves the customer experience

Too often customer service content—help center articles, forums, FAQs—is written with no regard to the customer experience. The brand voice shifts from what customers know to something new, dry, and technical. The sense of familiarity is gone. This puts customers on edge at a time when they are already stressed out.

2. Builds brand trust

Just like in personal relationships, consistency of character builds trust over time. Your brand identity gets muddled if your brand speaks one way in advertisements and another way on the blog and yet another way in customer service.

3. Helps the customer navigate and digest information

Customers are already familiar with your tone of voice. They know when to read a whole page of text vs. when something needs an action: “Click here now!” Using a consistent brand voice enables you to lead customers to certain actions and behaviors.

4. Increases opportunities for more customer interactions

If all customer service channels feel consistent (and comfortable) then customers will more likely explore multiple touch points. Aim for a seamless brand voice from chat to social to self-service.

