

Better customer experiences with omnichannel engagement

More conversation leads to better relationships. This is true in life and in customer service.

With friends, it's easy to begin a conversation on Facebook and to pick it up in person, but in customer service, it can be a lot more challenging. Multiply the number of customers with the number of available communication channels and the ease with which customers can communicate on their mobile devices, and suddenly there's a lot to track.

Without a unified support system, customer conversations become siloed in different tools or software, creating a disjointed customer experience. These days, it is as important to answer customers as it is to track when and where they contact you, and to pick up each conversation right where the last one left off.

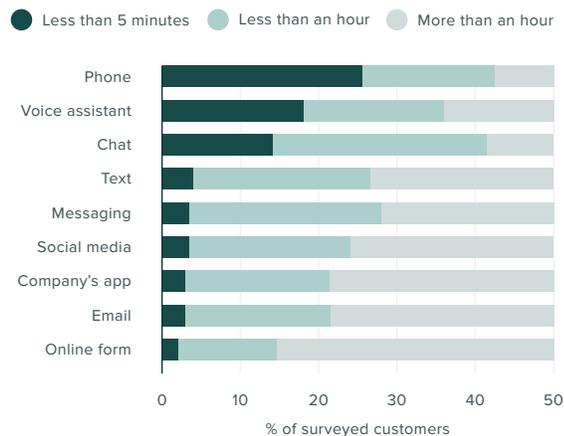
The changing definition of good service

The digital economy and the rapid adoption of technology have changed everything about the customer experience. Consumers rely on word-of-mouth as much as ever, but often from review sites, from people they don't know. They're also interacting with companies before and after the point of sale to ask questions before committing.

There's more information at hand, leading to more informed decision-making, which is great—except that the multitude of consumer questions places a higher demand for resources on a business. The more a business meets consumer expectations, the higher those expectations climb. It may sound daunting, but consumers are raising the bar and helping all of us to provide better customer service.

Research in [Zendesk's Customer Experience Trends Report 2020](#), revealed how high the customer loyalty bar has become. Consumers expect to reach brands on more channels than ever and demand better resolution times across every touchpoint of engagement.

Customer expectations for a response by channel



While traditional contact touchpoints, such as email and the phone, remain important, [Benchmark Research](#) revealed that patience for response times is shortening, as 51 percent of respondents expect a response in under five minutes on the phone, and 28 percent the same on live chat. The immediacy of a conversation on new and emerging channels like social media and text message can raise customer expectations for speedy responses over traditional channels, like email and the phone. And speed is an increasingly important factor in how customers choose to reach out to your business.

In fact, [findings also show](#) that half of customers choose a channel based on how fast they need a response and half say that they like to contact customer service over the same channels they use to interact with families and friends. The details are in the data: Delivering fast responses on your customers' channels of choice directly impacts customer satisfaction and loyalty.

However, despite customers' expectations, most companies aren't incorporating channels outside of phone and email. In fact, [less than 30 percent](#) offer chat, social messaging, bots, or communities—key channels for quick and easy communication.

CX teams mostly aren't offering channels beyond phone and email

- Only 28% offer a knowledge base
- Less than 30% offer chat, social messaging, in-app messaging, bots, or communities

Teams aren't planning to add real-time channels their customers want

- Since fast responses and resolutions are customers' top priorities
- Only 35% of Benchmark companies take an omnichannel approach

Help your team meet customer expectations

It's possible to give customers what they want, but you'll need an engagement model that allows you to move with the customer, and to shift in time with the customer's needs, preferences, and changing expectations. You'll also need a solution that does more for you. Solving a ticket is good, but uncovering the root problem is better. Excellent service isn't just about resolving a ticket; it's getting to know your customer.

A good way to get to know your customers better is to give them choices for how and when to interact with your business. It's not just that some customers prefer the phone while others gravitate towards self-service—it's more that customers prefer having options. Based on the complexity of the question, how convenient it is to find help, and the context—who the customer is, what they're doing, and how urgently they need an answer—the right channel will often make itself apparent.

The ability to offer seamless service through all channels, or to strategically turn channels on or off as you grow, allows businesses of all sizes to meet consumer expectations. The key is to enable your customers to have natural conversations with your business, regardless of how or when they reach out. This involves connecting all channels so that agents can have continuous conversations, with access to history and context, to give customers the effortless, fast, and personalized experiences they expect.

Let customers say it once and be done

A hallmark of excellent service is to make it easy for a customer to reach a business and get help. However, this is a sticking point for many businesses offering support across channels. When channels are served by different agents using different systems, customers have to explain their issue—and every step they've already taken to resolve their issue—to everyone they reach.

This has been the way of things for a long time, but it's no longer the status quo. In fact, [71 percent](#) of customers expect companies to collaborate internally so they don't have to repeat themselves.

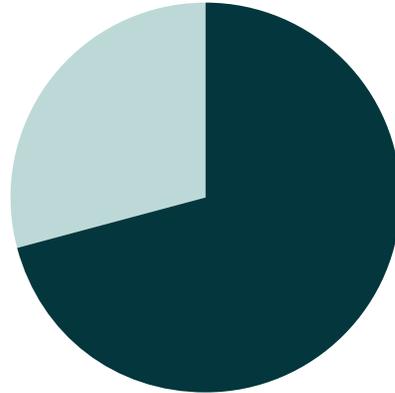
To deliver on customer expectations, support teams will need a [connective layer of tissue](#) that gives agents the context they need to have natural conversations with customers, such as the customer's email, account type, or the reason he or she last reached out. As such, customers can get the personalized experiences they expect, and agents won't have to spend time asking the same questions over and over.

Customers often begin an interaction on the channel that's most convenient to them. They tend to start with self-service, by searching for an answer on your help center. From there, they may initiate a chat. The agent handling the chat should know which articles the customer has already viewed so they don't offer the same article in response. When agents are guided by a central source of customer intelligence, they're empowered to make decisions based on data instead of intuition.

Similarly, when support is embedded into your app, there's no need to ask a customer to tell you which version and which device they're using. Agents can get to the bottom of the issue sooner, and [with the help of AI](#), see how likely that customer is to be satisfied with the interaction and take steps to ensure a positive experience.

Connected conversations lead to more insight

The gains in productivity go far beyond removing repetition. Fostering natural, connected conversations across touchpoints allows businesses to meet customers where they are and glean intelligence from each interaction.



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The Zendesk Support Suite

Different customers have different needs and preferences. Sometimes, they're loyal to a channel. Other times it depends on the kind of day they're having. Zendesk's full service experience delivers the

flexibility to cater to every customer and have natural conversations right from the start, so that there's no need to re-engineer your engagement model later, as you grow.



"I need help, but it's not urgent."

A reply back in a reasonable amount of time—either the customer's issue isn't urgent or the customer doesn't want, or isn't able, to have a conversation in the moment.



Zendesk Support is the central hub into which all other products are integrated. Support allows you to easily respond to emails or tickets created from web forms, and to track, prioritize, and solve tickets.

"I'll find it myself. I'm sure the answer is out there."

Quick, easy engagement—this customer expects your site to offer FAQs and to anticipate their questions.



Zendesk Guide takes the average knowledge base one step further by allowing you to build a powerful, customizable help center, and to empower agents to turn ticket content into articles, or to add articles to tickets. And with Answer Bot, you can even suggest relevant articles without the help of an actual agent.

"I just have a quick question."

Fast, almost immediate help—this customer knows you're there, waiting on the other side. What they don't know is that the agent has insight into how long they've lingered on your website, or which pages or help articles they've already visited.



Zendesk Chat connects customers to an agent ready to answer their questions, and can also provide insight into the customer journey up until that chat begins. To deflect chats, the Zendesk Web Widget can first suggest help articles based on search criteria, and then offer the option to chat. Chances are, the customer who skipped taking the time to search the help center can easily find what they need through the chat widget.

"I just need to talk to someone."

Connection with another human—either the customer's issue is urgent or complex, or they just want to be sure to make a human connection.



Zendesk Talk allows you to easily deliver that personal support with just a pair of headphones and the Internet. There's all the bells and whistles of a contact center, without all the fuss.

"I want a convenient way to contact support."

An effortless and more personal way to get help—this customer expects you to meet them where they are and wants to communicate with your business like they do with their friends and family. They want to have the ability to start and continue the conversation on their own schedule.

The Zendesk Social Messaging add-on enables you to easily connect with customers on their preferred messaging apps—including WhatsApp, WeChat, LINE, Facebook Messenger, and Twitter Direct Messages—and bring those conversations into a unified workspace for your agents. Messaging is fast, personal, and asynchronous, which means customers can begin and end the conversation when it's most convenient for them.

What you can do with Zendesk

[The Zendesk Support Suite](#) can help you achieve your business goals in a variety of ways. It's easy to use out of the box and can be configured pretty much any way that you can imagine.

With Zendesk's full service experience, you can set your support organization up to provide world-class service from the start.

Have natural conversations with your customers, regardless of channel

Enabling customers to have the same kinds of natural conversations they have in their personal life with your business, doesn't have to be complicated or costly. With a connected support system, your organization can immediately gain a better understanding of a customer's history and experience with your company. Not only do all cross-channel interactions feed into Zendesk, but you can integrate that seamless support experience into your website and mobile app so that customers never have to travel far to find help.

Operationalize any—and every—channel

Consider the Zendesk Developer platform your ticket to anywhere you want to go. Use the open APIs, App Framework, or Channel Framework to build powerful integrations and easily bring in customer communications from internal, proprietary, and outside tools or from ratings and review sites like Yelp, Reddit, and other popular social media sites. You can also use our [app marketplace](#) to integrate with hundreds of tools for things like workforce management and agent productivity, or our open and flexible CRM platform [Sunshine](#), to connect and understand data from external sources.

Turn data into actionable insights

Continuous, cross-channel conversations make it easier to see the big picture, as well as the details of a customer interaction. Zendesk captures intelligence from every interaction, whether it's where the customer was on your site before they asked for help, what search terms they used in your help center, or what device they submitted a request from.

[Zendesk Explore](#) integrates data from every channel, so you can measure how customers interact with your brand without losing the thread—and analytics can be shared across teams for greater insights at scale. From first-reply time to issues by resolution area, we allow you to track the metrics you need to improve customer satisfaction (CSAT) over time. A wealth of contextual information will leave you feeling confident about making real-time, data-driven business decisions—and since each customer interaction builds upon the last, it becomes easier to gauge expectations and even predict future preferences or satisfaction.

Deliver better-personalized experiences

The era of omnichannel support has made providing an integrated customer experience more complicated. But customers don't care what challenges you have on your end—if they have to repeat themselves three different times in three different channels, they aren't likely to come away from the experience feeling good about your company.

Context gives agents the relevant information they need to provide faster, more personalized responses, so agents don't have to ask the customer to reintroduce themselves and remind them of what they last reached out about each time they contact your business. We arm agents with context through an essentials card that displays relevant details on the customer your agent is serving, and interaction history that gives agents visibility into all previous customer events.

Empower your team to contribute to your knowledge base

Most customers prefer to help themselves: [69 percent](#) want to resolve as many issues as possible on their own, and 63 percent always or almost always start with a search on a company's online resources when they have an issue. With [Zendesk Guide](#), agents can provide feedback on knowledge, ensure content is approved before publishing, and schedule reviews to get the right people involved in article creation and upkeep to create the self-service experience your customers expect.

Serve up smart, fast answers with AI

[Recent Zendesk research](#) uncovered a compelling link between success, AI use, and self-service. With the help of AI, you can get your customers the answers they need at speeds that are faster than humanly possible.

A feature of Zendesk Guide, Answer Bot uses a deep learning model that only improves over time. Answer Bot serves up answers automatically and can easily handle all the simple, repetitive questions. This enables your team to focus on questions or tasks that require more time, troubleshooting, or a personal touch. And with [Zendesk Content Cues](#), which leverages the same machine learning that powers Answer Bot, you can identify gaps in your help center with machine-aided article suggestions.

Provide your agents with a unified workspace

We know it can be complicated to manage conversations happening everywhere at once. That's why the [Zendesk Agent Workspace](#) gives agents the ability to unify support channels, including email, chat, phone, and messaging, in a single place. This provides a conversational thread that gives agents the relevant context they need to know when a customer reached out and on what channel. It also enables them to respond to customers on the channel they prefer, or what's most relevant to the conversation.

What our customers have done with Zendesk



Evernote

Uses Zendesk Support, Guide, and Chat to offer differentiated support to their freemium and business customers. They also use integrations from Zendesk's Apps Marketplace, including an integration with Salesforce. With self-service content offered in 30 languages, Evernote serves a global audience and has achieved a ticket deflection rate of 17 percent with Zendesk Guide.



Spartan Race

Uses Zendesk Support and Guide, and added proactive chat with Zendesk Chat for a 27 percent increase in sales. Spartan Race also integrated Support with social media and with Shopify to centralize service, social, and ecommerce customer data.



Naturebox

Offers omnichannel support through Zendesk's integrated solution. The company started small and scaled at its own pace, beginning with Support in 2013, rolling out Zendesk Guide and Zendesk Chat in 2015, and Zendesk Talk in 2017. Now, with all channels connected, NatureBox saw a 60 percent drop in call volume, an increase in CSAT, and saved 60 seconds in resolution time per ticket—across a monthly average of 19,000 tickets.



Cleverbridge

Provides global support through Zendesk Support and Guide, and has extended Support with the Zendesk APIs. Zendesk's solution has enabled cleverbridge to scale, and the Answer Bot feature of Guide has helped the company achieve a 24 percent ticket deflection rate.

The future is here, and the time is now

No matter what your support organization's needs are, The Zendesk Support Suite allows teams to take the long view.

Beyond the queue, teams can focus on customer retention, cart abandonment, and overall customer satisfaction. For their part, customers can engage in their preferred engagement style and begin to build a lifelong relationship with your business.

The data shows that customers engage or re-engage with your business at multiple times and on multiple channels. They may even shift the way they engage with your company mid-interaction. With Zendesk's full service experience, your support team can also shift, without losing track of the conversation.

The Zendesk Support Suite gives you the flexibility to have natural conversations with your customers from wherever they are, so you'll be equipped to grow and expand alongside your customers. Even if you decide to start with a single channel, your vision can be larger, as the Support Suite provides the necessary infrastructure to expand and refine your customer service as your business grows.

We've got a solution for you. To learn more about the Zendesk Support Suite, [start your free trial today.](#)