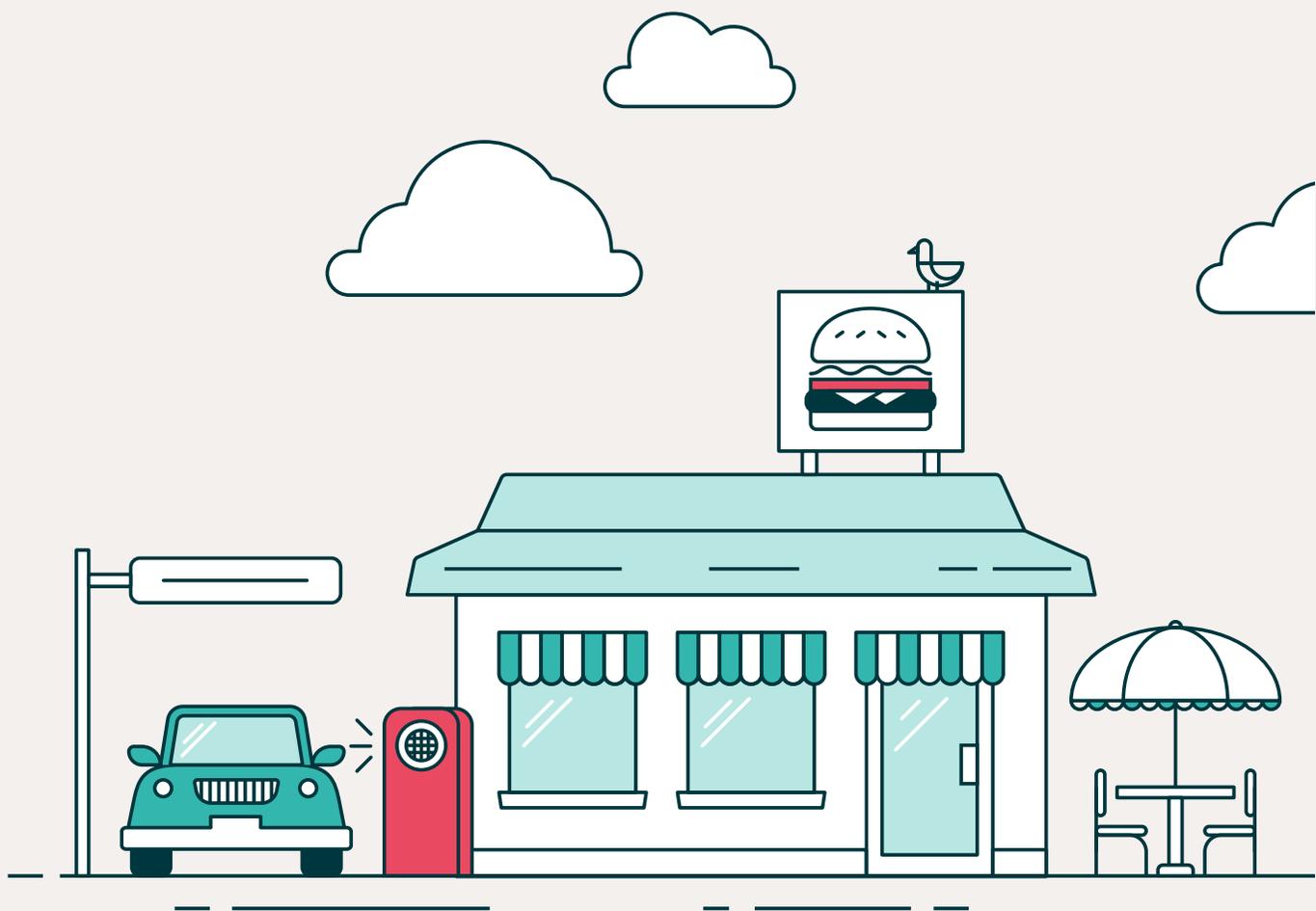




# Multi-channel support made-to-order with Zendesk



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# Introduction

For many businesses, it's tough to keep up with evolving expectations around where and how your customers can get help and how quickly you'll respond. Depending on the size of your support operations, it might seem safer and simpler to stick with a single communication channel and focus on providing great support.

That's all well and good, except in research conducted by Loudhouse, whose findings are published in the [2017 The Multi-Channel Customer Care Report](#), 57 percent of customers expect to have a choice of contact channels. We're not just talking about choosing between email and the phone, even as those channels remain the bread-and-butter of customer support. Sometimes, customers want to look up an answer for themselves. Other times, they might want to send a quick text or Facebook message. On top of this, Loudhouse reported that customers are less patient and expect more from their customer service experience than they did three years ago.

## **More channels doesn't mean more problems**

At Zendesk, we know that providing great, consistent multi-channel support can be tough. But we also believe that providing support to your customers through a variety of channels doesn't have to be complicated or costly.

Five star service support begins with the customer—and tailoring your offerings to meet their needs.

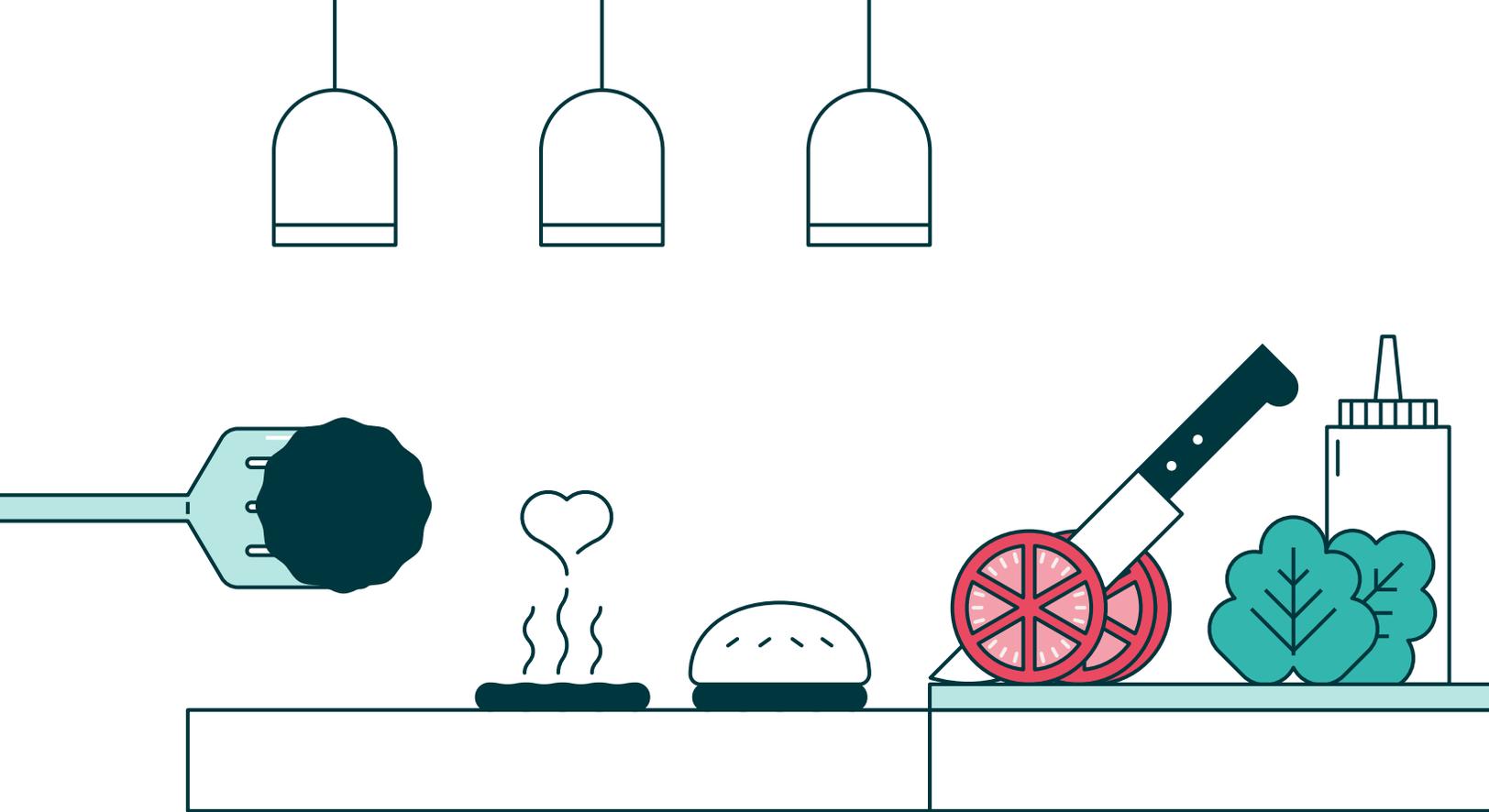
There are a few ways to go about this. Customers

often use the contact channels that they prefer, or that are most familiar. Sometimes though, what we want or prefer isn't always what we need. Channel usage can have just as much to do with context and convenience, as with preference.

## **Five star service support begins with the customer—and tailoring your offerings to meet their needs.**

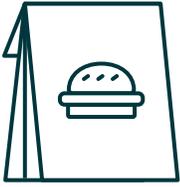
With our phones in our purses and pockets, and the internet on our phones, there's no bad time to ask a question. Based on the complexity of the question, how convenient it is to find help, and the context—who the customer is, what they're doing, and how urgently they need an answer—the right channel will often make itself apparent. That's why choosing the right channel mix is as crucial as providing great support through those channels.

Use this guide to help determine which channels are best for your customers, and to learn more about what you can do with each channel, using Zendesk products.



## Satisfy customer cravings with the right channel mix

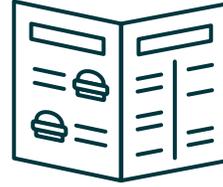
At Zendesk, our goal is to make it easy for businesses to offer service through any channel. We've come up with some guiding principles to help keep your customers at the heart of the decision-making process. We call them "the three C's" and we've added a bonus fourth. The right answer will consider each of the following: convenience, context, complexity, and cost.



## Convenience

A great customer experience is one that's easy. Customers don't want to work too hard to contact you, and they shouldn't have to. Convenience is all about the user experience—how easy is it for your customers to get help? Do customers have to look for a support link somewhere in your footer, or is it visible on the page they're browsing or within your app?

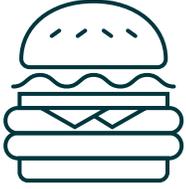
Depending on the nature of your business, some channels become obvious choices. If, for example, your business is based online, you'll want to offer some online support, like email or live chat. Taken a step further, ask yourself: Have you offered easy-to-find online support and a quick way to reach live help? The answer to this question might be the difference between whether you offer email and phone support, email and live chat, or even live chat and something else. We've all been victims of technology fails, so it's nice to include a channel that doesn't require a laptop or web browser in the event of an urgent issue. It might even be as simple as letting customers text an SOS message—anything that connects them to a human in real time.



## Context

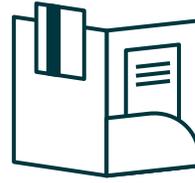
Behind every customer interaction is a story. Customers make channel decisions based on their age, demographics, and the type of issue they're experiencing. Email or self-service might be the way to go for a question that isn't time-sensitive. But needing to exchange a dress or suit in time for a wedding is a different matter, one which will likely involve the telephone or live chat. Similarly, if you're a B2B tech company and you're handling technical issues, reports of bugs, or system glitches, you'll want to be sure you can jump on known issues and take action. The best way to make an angry customer more upset is to make them wait for help.

Taking the time to consider the types of questions you see most often, as well as looking at the age and location of your customers, can be eye-opening. Industry best practices might tell you to offer a particular channel. But if, for example, you have a massive client base in a country that's mobile-first, your support should be mobile-first, too.



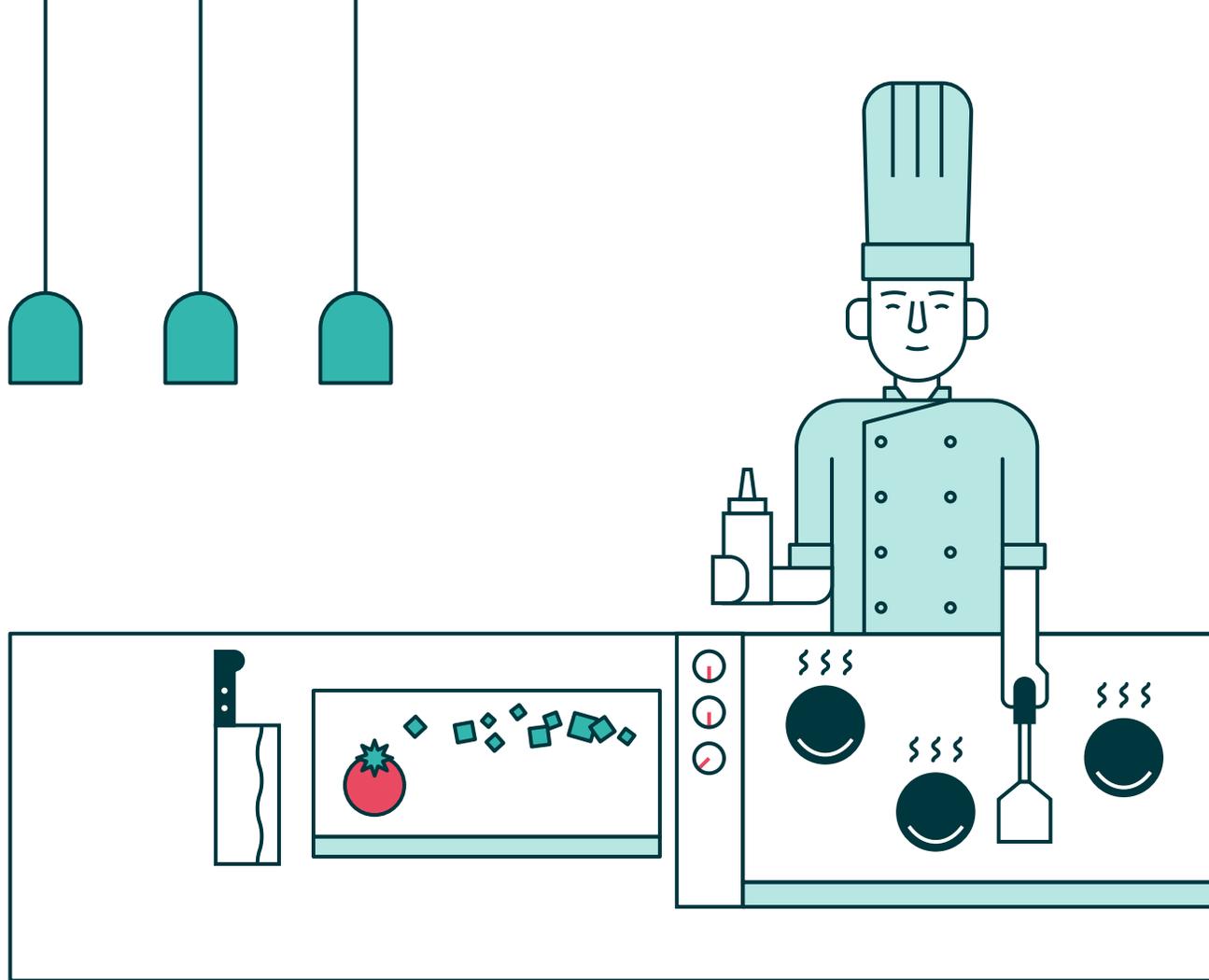
## Complexity

Issue complexity is another factor. Technical questions that require troubleshooting may be best served over a real-time channel like the phone or live chat. By contrast, how-to software questions might be better addressed through a self-service channel or by email, where users can follow step-by-step instructions at their own pace. The first step is to analyze the volume of your contacts and the issues you see most often. Consider if there are better ways to save time answering repetitive and low-touch questions, whether that's using pre-written email responses, setting up an IVR, a help center, or even putting a bot to work.



## Cost

Cost is the C that's reserved for your business. You're all about keeping the customer's best interests in mind, but no one is working with an unlimited budget. It's possible that adding or turning on another support channel will increase costs, depending on the channel. At the same time, consider that costs incurred at the outset can be recouped and even decrease over time if you take the long view. A good multi-channel strategy is one that offers customers the channels that are right for them, thereby leading to higher satisfaction, faster resolution times, and better all-around experiences. Great, easy customer experiences lead to repeat business.



## Follow a recipe for success— and make it your own

There's another way to think through channel selection. Consider the operational challenges you're trying to solve for and how replacing a channel, or opening a new channel, might help solve them.

For example, these signs are indicators that you might not have the right channel mix in place:

- Low customer or agent satisfaction ratings
- Slow agent response times or large backlogs
- Too many drawn-out, back-and-forth conversations
- Answering the same questions over and over
- Inability to show or prove that you aren't just a cost center and that your agents are contributing to customer conversions



## Increase customer satisfaction

Raising customer satisfaction has everything to do with convenience and providing effortless customer experiences. Some channels lead to higher customer satisfaction ratings. According to [The Zendesk Benchmark Report](#), [live chat consistently earns the highest customer satisfaction ratings](#) by channel, with an average of 92 percent.

Investing in self-service also goes a long way toward customer satisfaction. [Forrester Research reported](#) that the no. 1 trend for 2017 is to extend and enhance self-service over phone support. Forrester analyst Kate Leggett wrote, “Customers of all ages are moving away from using the phone to using self-service—web and mobile self-service, communities, virtual agents, automated chat dialogs, or chatbots—as a first point of contact with a company.” A well-designed, well-maintained self-service option allows your customers to serve themselves in real time.

Context affects customer satisfaction, too. If your customers are heavy mobile users, or if you have an app, then help should be in the app. You might consider adding SMS or messaging apps as a support channel.

Voice and email support aren't to be discounted here. Voice support becomes important if there's no other way for the customer to quickly connect with another live human. Email can also yield high satisfaction ratings, particularly with tools like [Zendesk's predictive analytics](#). This approach can help you see which contacts are at risk for low satisfaction ratings so that you can take proactive and intentional steps to turn the experience around.

92%

is the average  
customer satisfaction  
rating for live chat

Q2 2015 Zendesk Benchmark Report



## Raise revenue

Convincing the powers-that-be to invest in better customer service is hard when you're fighting the perception that customer support is "just a cost center." You know that your agents provide great customer experiences and influence future business, whether that's by winning a customer or keeping one from churning, but it's tough to quantify.

The good news is that proactive support is one way to clearly prove that your team is moving the revenue needle. Data has shown that customers are three times more likely to make a purchase when you reach out proactively through live chat, and [a 2017 report from Forrester](#) found that chat increases conversions by 29 percent. By embedding chat on a checkout page, or even on a 404 page, agents have the opportunity to engage the customer before they abandon their cart or leave your site.

Wherever it is that your business loses customers is the perfect location to put a live chat widget.

Any channel that promotes real-time, person-to-person engagement, using tools that can track interaction outcomes, is where you can best leverage opportunities to influence buying decisions. SMS text messaging can be another convenient way to prompt customers, and, of course, voice is always a persuasive channel.

Chat increases  
conversions by  
**29%**

The Total Economic Impact™ of Zendesk,  
Forrester Research

**Wherever it is that your business  
loses customers is the perfect  
location to put a live chat widget.**



## Boost efficiency

Often, increasing efficiency while reducing operational costs is best accomplished through channels that allow customers to self-serve, or that allow agents to help more than one customer at a time. This is why live chat, messaging apps, and social media are all great options for providing quick responses.

With the right tools, there are also ways to make email support more efficient. Macros, or pre-written answers, help save time. Sorting tickets into views can help move agents through the queue in a focused way, or you can set up business rules to automatically route tickets where they need to go to ensure you meet your service level agreements. Zendesk's email, voice, chat, and self-service products all offer features that help provide more context so that agents can see where a customer has already looked for help.

“Zendesk Support has given us more visibility into customers’ needs, which has decreased the time it takes to resolve issues. We are no longer wasting time checking in with people across other systems because everything is now visible in Zendesk.”

**Mark Stagi**  
Director of Customer Success, Base



## Improve agent satisfaction

Bots are great for handling busy work—the kind of things that become rote and boring and repetitive for agents. Customer service can be a tough job, so agents appreciate it when you can automate things that take time and energy away from more challenging, engaging tasks. When you spend time on your knowledge base and invest in self-service, you can deflect a lot of ticket volume and give agents more time to solve more challenging issues.

Something to consider is that email can be more work for agents when the contact doesn't come in through a ticket form. Ticket forms help collect the right information for customers and allow you to create triggers to automatically route tickets to the right place. When it comes to agent satisfaction, chat is efficient and yields great customer satisfaction. But, like phone support, chat can take an emotional toll on agents. They must be “on,” actively dealing with sometimes angry or rude customers. For this reason, part of your channel decisions should include how you'll schedule your team to cover them.

Here at Zendesk, we schedule agents to work on voice or chat for an hour at a time and then switch to tickets. We also don't recommend having agents handle more than one live channel (voice, chat, social media) at the same time. However, when they are on live channels and no customers are waiting, they can work on tickets.

**Don't keep guests waiting.  
Part of your channel decisions  
should include how you'll schedule  
your team to cover them.**

“Zendesk lets us easily collaborate across departments and seamlessly integrate with other services we use. This has drastically reduced our response time, meaningfully increased our customer satisfaction, and definitively created a better experience for our staff responsible for support.”

**Michael Anderson**  
CEO, GameWisp

# Ingredients for better outcomes



## Raise revenue

- Chat
- SMS
- Voice



## Improve customer satisfaction

- Chat
- Self-service
- SMS / messaging apps
- Social media
- Embedded support



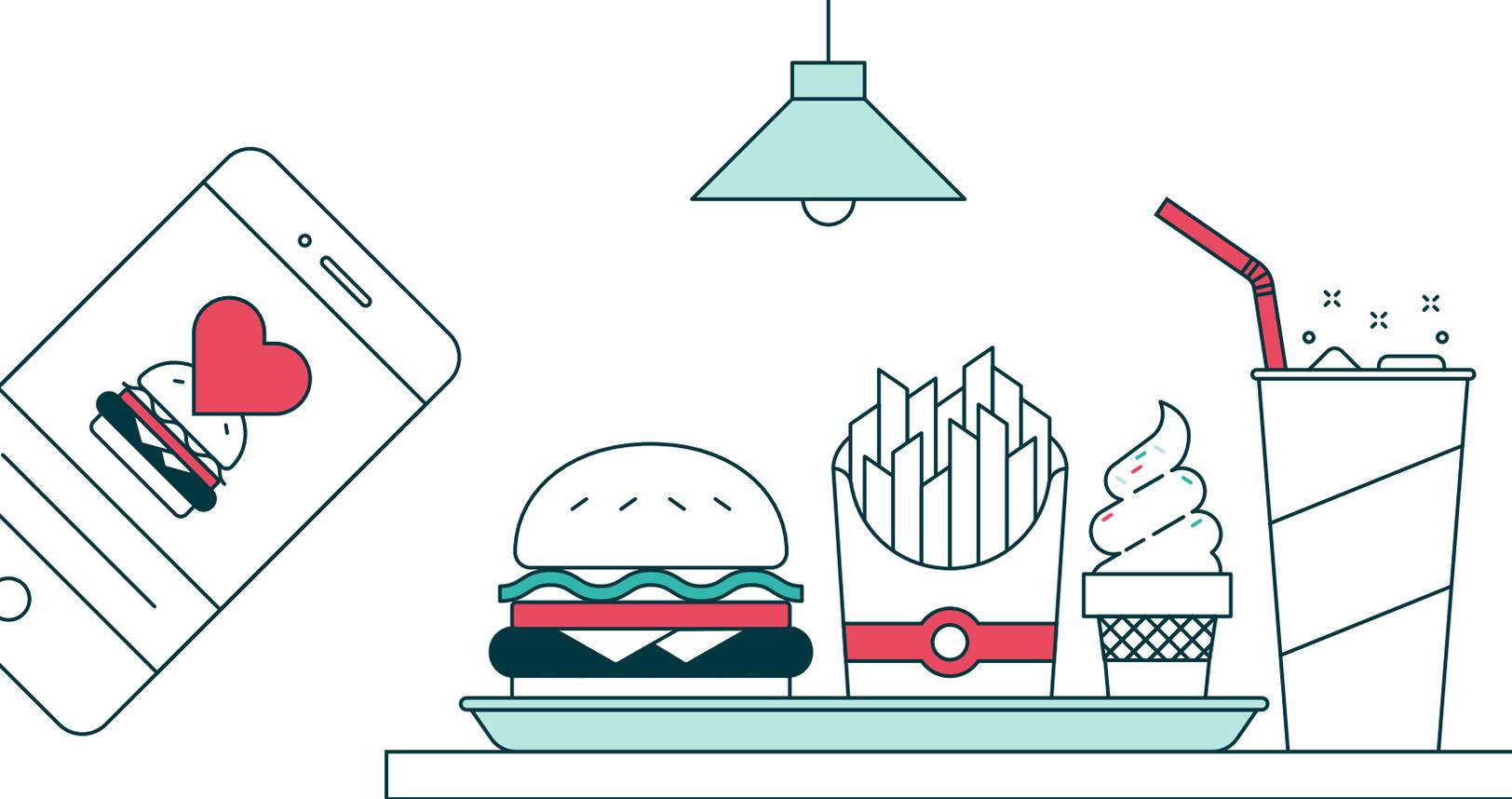
## Boost efficiency

- Chat
- Self-service
- Email
- SMS / messaging apps
- Social media



## Improve agent satisfaction

- Email
- Self-service
- Chat
- Voice



## The Zendesk multi-channel solution

Providing easy, cost-effective multi-channel support is something Zendesk can help with. The Zendesk family of products are simple to set up and manage and are designed to seamlessly work together.

Since each key channel—whatever those are for your customers—is built natively into a single platform, every contact becomes part of the central customer record. This way, everyone gains visibility into the customer’s history, and customers don’t have to repeat themselves every time they contact you or move between channels. What’s more, it’s easy to turn channels on and off in just a few clicks, allowing you the flexibility to adjust and grow alongside your customer base.



“Zendesk is the hub, the central tool we connect everything to.”

Chris Wilson  
Director of Technical Support, Shopify

## Email

Email support runs through [Zendesk Support](#), your central ticketing hub. As customers contact you through the channel of their choice, agents work from a single interface so they can focus on delivering fast, personal, and consistent customer service.

Zendesk Support is a simple-to-use tool that was built for agility, allowing you to customize your support offerings in any way, shape, or form.

With Zendesk Support, you can:

- **Give agents more context** by tailoring the information you collect from customers using dynamic request forms.
- **Meet your service-level goals** by setting service level agreements (SLAs) to ensure you respond within an expected time frame for each channel.
- **Customize your workflow** using business rules and automations to ensure that no ticket ever gets left behind.
- **Save time** responding to frequently asked questions by creating macros (pre-written responses) that every agent can use.
- **Predict the future** by turning on our predictive analytics feature. And by “predict the future,” we mean raise customer satisfaction levels to new heights and turn potentially negative customer experiences around.



## Voice

The phone is a powerful tool for resolving issues and a channel that fosters human connection. [Zendesk Talk](#) is a cloud-based call center software built right into the Zendesk Support ticketing system, allowing customer service teams to provide phone support from the same platform they use to manage all other channels.

Zendesk Talk lets your team:

- **Focus on conversations, not workflows** with automatic ticket creation, access to the full customer history, and call recording for accuracy and coaching afterward.
- **Streamline queues** with flexible IVRs and group routing, and allow customers to request a callback instead of waiting on hold.
- **Track and improve** with powerful out-of-the-box cross-channel reporting and analytics and agent monitoring tools.
- **Improve customer experiences** by delivering seamless, personal support across multiple channels—from text to email to social media to voice.
- **Quickly scale up and down** as needed. Since Talk is a VoIP system natively-embedded into the Zendesk ticketing system, setup only takes a few minutes, and all an agent needs to get started is a computer, an internet connection, and a headset.

“Zendesk Talk allows our team to deliver excellent customer experiences as our business continues to grow. Our agents have everything they need—customer history, order details, and previous tickets—all in one place, for fast, personal support.”

[Mina Aiken](#)

[Head of Customer Experience, Taylor Stitch](#)

“Live chat lets agents handle multiple chats at once, so the wait time is reduced and customers have a better experience.”

Jorge Vernetta

Global Operations Manager, foodpanda



## Live chat

Live chat is a fast and effective way to offer help and a great way to create a personal connection with customers. To help with that, [Zendesk Chat](#) is our integrated chat product that allows you to respond to customers or reach out proactively, and embed chat anywhere on your website or even natively within your app.

With Zendesk Chat, you can:

- **Reach out in real time** and welcome customers before they ask for help. Proactive engagement using automated triggers encourages conversions and, for retailers, helps reduce cart abandonment.
- **Dig deep into the metrics** through Chat’s real-time analytics, which dial into customer satisfaction and agent performance.
- **Manage all conversations from a single dashboard** whether customers are chatting with you from their laptop, mobile phone, or through your app.
- **Help multiple customers at once** and keep an eye on the queue with real-time queue monitoring.
- **Create seamless experiences** by embedding chat on any page, or within your app, using the Zendesk Web Widget.
- **Surface content from your knowledge base** before sending a chat through to an agent.



## Self-service

Great self-service begins with a well-maintained knowledge base, one that allows customers to easily find content from the context of where they are, whether that's browsing your site or using your mobile app. Exceptional self-service is the result of a knowledge base that gets smarter over time. [Zendesk Guide](#) is our self-service option that allows your team to create and refine a knowledge base that keeps learning. What's more, Answer Bot can take the first pass at answering low-effort, high-frequency questions.

“Investing in our knowledge base meant we saw a massive decline in the number of support requests coming in. Partners were getting what I consider to be the very best service—which is that they never had to log a ticket in the first place.”

**Mike Cartwright**  
Chief of Partner Solutions, Expedia®  
Affiliate Network

Use Zendesk Guide to:

- **Create a central repository** of agent knowledge that new and seasoned agents can access and use directly from their agent interface. Once that's done, you can manage and distribute that knowledge from a single, easy-to-maintain location.
- **Continuously improve your knowledge base** using the Knowledge Capture app, which allows agents to search for, create, and flag content for improvement.
- **Solve tickets faster** in Zendesk Support using the contextual insights from Guide, which help to ensure that agents don't send articles to customers that they've already read.
- **Measure the effectiveness of your content** to see what's working, what needs work, and to uncover what you need to write next.
- **Automatically suggest relevant articles** to customers while they wait for an agent. Answer Bot, powered by Zendesk artificial intelligence, is at your service to handle those often-asked, easy questions, freeing agents to focus on problems that require a human touch.



## Messaging and social media

Consumers spend a lot of time in messaging apps like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and more. When you can communicate with your customers in those apps, it becomes a personal and intuitive way to interact within the context and convenience of their lives.

While you can set up Zendesk Support to turn social media contacts into tickets, [Zendesk Message](#) goes one step further. Message allows you to automate replies using a bot and to see and prioritize customers who are online to help facilitate real-time conversation.

Use Zendesk Message to:

- **Scale support and reach more customers** by blending human agents with bots to increase efficiency.
- **Stay a step ahead** by offering messaging support to the next generation of consumers.
- **Allow agents to own conversations** for better workflows and create more personal customer relationships.

“Bots on Messenger is a prime example of how conversational commerce is developing, and Spring is thrilled to work with Zendesk to deliver users a shopping experience that seamlessly integrates an automated personal shopping assistant with best-in-class concierge customer service.”

Alan Tisch  
CEO, Spring Inc.



## Support served just the way they like it

The best thing about providing easy multi-channel support is that you can provide it everywhere, on every device, everywhere the customer goes.

With [Zendesk Embeddables](#), you can embed Zendesk functionality natively into any app, website, or device through our API, Web Widget, or Mobile SDKs. This keeps the experience consistent for customers and your workload efficient.

“The Zendesk API has allowed us to extend the out-of-the-box functionality beyond what we ever thought possible. We’ve come up with creative solutions using the API to automate processes within our team and throughout our organization.”

Michael Stone  
Customer Service Manager, BetterCloud

Use Zendesk Message to:

- **Reduce friction for customers** by keeping them where they are: in-app or on any website or device.
- **Present information in the right language** based on the customer’s browser settings.
- **Maintain brand consistency** by enabling seamless customer support across devices and operating systems.
- **Be more efficient and deflect tickets** by embedding your knowledge base into your app or web widget.

# More channels, more solutions: Your menu for success

Of course, there's no magic formula for multi-channel support success. Your success is your own when you solve for your customers' needs.

Use this checklist to ask questions that will help keep your customer at the center of your decision-making process.

## Convenience

- Where on your website can customers access support today?
- Where would you like them to access support in the future?
- Do customers have an option to self-serve?
- Is there a way to reach a human for live, fast help?
- With your current solution, are you able to recognize a customer and their support history if they contact you using two different channels?

## Context

- Who are your primary customers? How old are they, and where do they live? How does this affect your channel offerings?
- What types of issues or questions do customers most frequently have?
- Are there questions that could be automated or handled by self-service?
- Is there a way to receive immediate, real-time help from a person?
- Can customers access support channels from your mobile site or app?

## Complexity

- How much of your volume requires troubleshooting and back-and-forth interaction with agents?
- How much of this volume is time-sensitive?
- Are there questions that could be automated or handled by self-service?

The right channel mix for your customers and business is one that will help optimize your operations, not weigh them down. You'll be able to deliver better, faster, and more personal service by guiding customers to the right channel for their issue.

On the business end, Zendesk's multi-channel solution enables you to meet your customers wherever they are and to provide a consistent customer experience as customers move between channels.

If you're still hungry for more information on multi-channel support, schedule a demo at <https://www.zendesk.com/demo>

