THE CONSUMER'S VOICE:

Opinions, Perceptions and Expectations

Customer Experience Management Benchmark Series
2017 Consumer Edition, Published September 2017

copc

Execs In The Know

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

This year's Customer Experience Management Benchmark (CXMB) Series Consumer Edition report brings an expanded dataset, new standalone questions and two completely new sections, The Purchase Experience and Customer Effort. This new content adds greater depth to the continued exploration into the opinions, perceptions and expectations of the U.S.-based consumer.

As in previous years, the 2017 CXMB Series Consumer Edition report brings in-depth coverage of not only Traditional Care, but also of alternative channels. The Alternative Channel Journey section, which was introduced last year, returns with insights and conclusions now bolstered by two years' worth of results. Also, like volumes from previous years, channels have been defined to survey participants as follows:

Traditional Care: Phone, Email and In-Person
Interactive Care: Online/Video Chat, FAQ and Self-Help
Social Media Care: Twitter, Facebook, Forums, etc.
Mobile Care: Apps, Text/SMS and Mobile Chat

Please keep these channel definitions in mind as your review these results.

Highlights from this year's CXMB Series Consumer Edition report:

- After two consecutive years of solid improvements, consumer opinion toward customer care's ability to meet needs and expectation has flattened (Page 34)

- With results going back to 2014, 2017 saw the lowest percentage of consumers avoiding interacting with customer care (Page 15)

- Whether or not consumers self-select the multi-channel approach (as opposed to being forced into it) continues to have a profound impact on resolution and satisfaction rates for multi-channel engagements (Page 21)

- In-Person Shoppers place far more value on good customer service than Online Shoppers (Page 28)

- More survey respondents feel brands should focus their improvement efforts on the customer care experience than on any other area, including shopping, purchase and ownership experiences (Page 37)

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHORS

The 2017 CXMB Series Consumer Edition report, titled *The Consumer's Voice: Opinions, Perceptions and Expectations*, is the fifth to be published under the ongoing research partnership between Execs In The Know and COPC Inc. Always a labor of love, it is our hope that this and other editions in the CXMB Series will continue to inform and inspire.

This year's volume expands in new directions under the guidance and recommendations of both the Execs In The Know community and the wider customer care community. We gratefully acknowledge these contributions, as well as the community's continued support for the CXMB Series. This research would not be possible without such an eager and receptive audience, and we are honored to play a role in helping CX professionals gain a better understanding of their customers.

As always, we encourage you, our reader, to share this research with your network. Regardless of industry and brand, everyone in the customer care community is working toward one goal: improve the customer experience of their respective brand. By sharing this research, you'll propel innovation not only at individual organizations, but across industries.

A special thanks to Liliana Petrova from JetBlue Airways for providing an exclusive look into her innovative solutions for JetBlue passengers. At the end of the day, research and a deeper understanding of the consumer is only one part of the larger equation. Getting a firsthand look at how such insights are transformed into initiatives and strategies is invaluable. We are thrilled to be able to bring Liliana's story of success to you, our readers.

Kind regards,

Execs In The Know COPC

Please contribute your voice to the 2017 CXMB Series Corporate Edition!

We want to hear your story! Execs In The Know and COPC Inc. are currently gathering responses for the 2017 CXMB Series Corporate Edition report, and we could use your help. Your individual responses will never be shared, and your participation will help broaden this year's insights and results.

For information on how you can participate, please contact Susan McDaniel at Susan@execsintheknow.com

CORPORATE COMMENTARY

TRANSFORMING THE JETBLUE AIRWAYS PASSENGER EXPERIENCE

jetBlue

Liliana Petrova, Director Customer Experience, JetBlue Airways

Travel is stressful. When you look at people at the airport, you usually see anxious, nervous and impatient faces. As the most caring travel provider, JetBlue's Customer Experience mission is to deliver personal, helpful and simple experiences across the travel ribbon. The way JetBlue is delivering this is by being truly committed to the customer.

After analyzing customer follow-alongs, market research and survey data, we were able to map out our pain points and prioritize our work along the travel ribbon. Based on these findings, JetBlue redesigned the check-in experience in 2016 to eliminate queuing, build efficiencies and create movement in the lobbies. Customers can now see the signs we have built and are able to self-bag tag and bag drop in two minutes. While we were at it, we made sure the space design was a reflection of our brand image, achieving a feeling of openness and simplicity in the space.

A second pain point for our customers was the boarding process and area. The feelings of confusion and overall unfairness of the process was permeating the boarding area. When we looked at how to streamline the boarding process, we realized that we could again combine the design work of our brand with an innovative technology to create something unique that can differentiate JetBlue while creating more opportunities for our crew members to have interactions with our customers. Our self-boarding builds on JetBlue's innovative self-service efforts and "line-less" lobbies.

Finger prints, iris scanning and facial recognition have all been broadly discussed as identification tools in the technology world, and we knew we wanted to incorporate one of these into our boarding process. Our goal was to create a seamless experience and remove any friction points for our customers as they moved along their journey, and facial recognition was the best fit for this goal. It is practically effortless – just a quick snap of the camera, and off you go. We partnered with Customs and Border Protection to integrate with the agency and deliver an experience where our customers do not need to show their passports or boarding passes to safely board our international flights on the Boston – Aruba route. We do not require pre-registration, so every JetBlue customer can participate in self- boarding if they opt in at the gate.

CORPORATE COMMENTARY, CONT.

TRANSFORMING THE JETBLUE AIRWAYS PASSENGER EXPERIENCE

jetBlue

The successful partnership with Customs and Border Protection has been a key to JetBlue's successful launch of this new boarding process, which debuted in June 2017. Like any partnership, the key to success in public-private partnerships is listening to each other and taking into account each side's objectives and limitations. Customs and Border Protection prioritized JetBlue's project work, and was very responsive. Like any innovation, self-boarding is the result of many reiterations and tests. Our first design meeting was in February and our launch date was June 12th. There aren't many private partnerships that are that effective. The biggest lesson from this program is that we all want to be part of something that matters – regardless of who we work for. If people are inspired by the idea of building the future, they can deliver extraordinary results. JetBlue and Customs and Border Protection did not just change the way customers can board in the future, they created a glimpse of a future that awaits us all.

The results of the boarding trial have been very positive. As JetBlue continues the work on reimagining the gate experience, there are more technological innovations that will be combined with self-boarding to create efficiencies and deliver the personal, helpful and simple experience that we all desire when flying.

Liliana Petrova

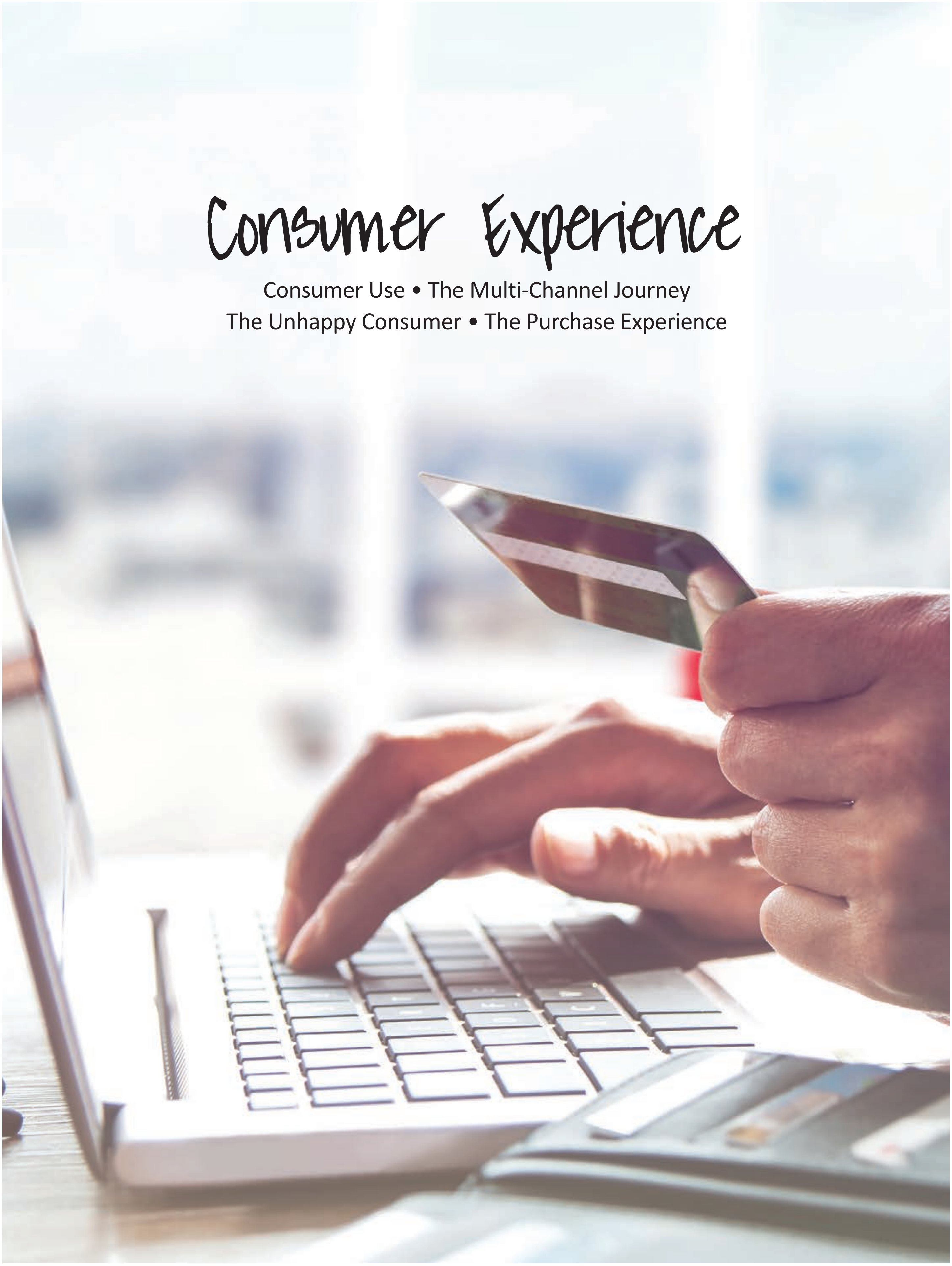
Director of Customer Experience at JetBlue Airways, Liliana Petrova is an inspirational leader who has pioneered a new customer-centric culture, energizing the more than 15,000 JetBlue employees worldwide with her vision. By empowering JetBlue's workers with the latest advances in technology, she has given employees at all levels of the organization valuable new tools to support them in creating a truly world-class experience for the airline's customers.

A native of Bulgaria, Ms. Petrova originally came to the U.S. to attend college. After completing her undergraduate studies, she went on to receive her MBA from New York University. A truly global citizen, Ms. Petrova speaks fluent Russian, Spanish and English, along with her native Bulgarian. With her international background, Ms. Petrova brings a deep sensitivity for world cultures to her role as a leader in developing and implementing customer experience initiatives to serve clients across the globe.

SURVEY RESULTS

Consumer Experience

Consumer Use • The Multi-Channel Journey
The Unhappy Consumer • The Purchase Experience

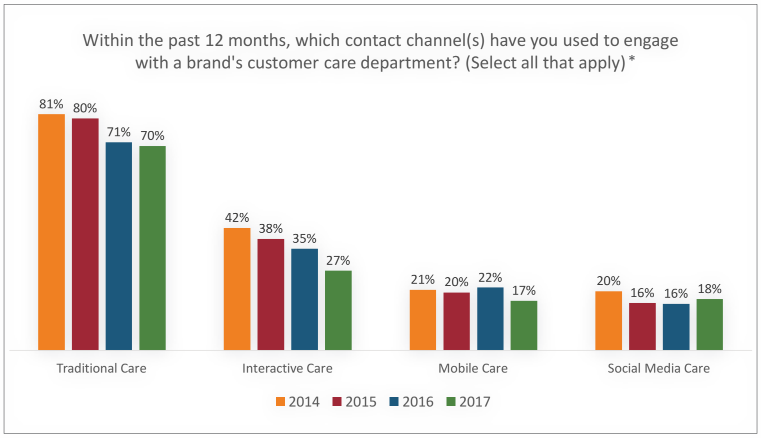


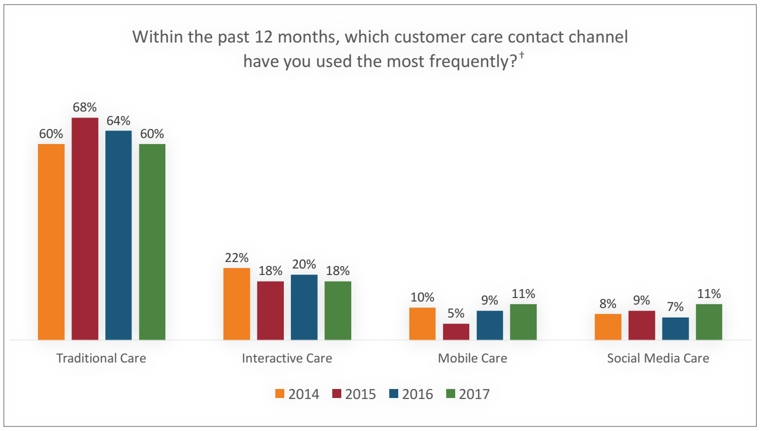
Consumer Use

CHANNEL AND SOLUTION USE

Consumer Experience — Consumer Use

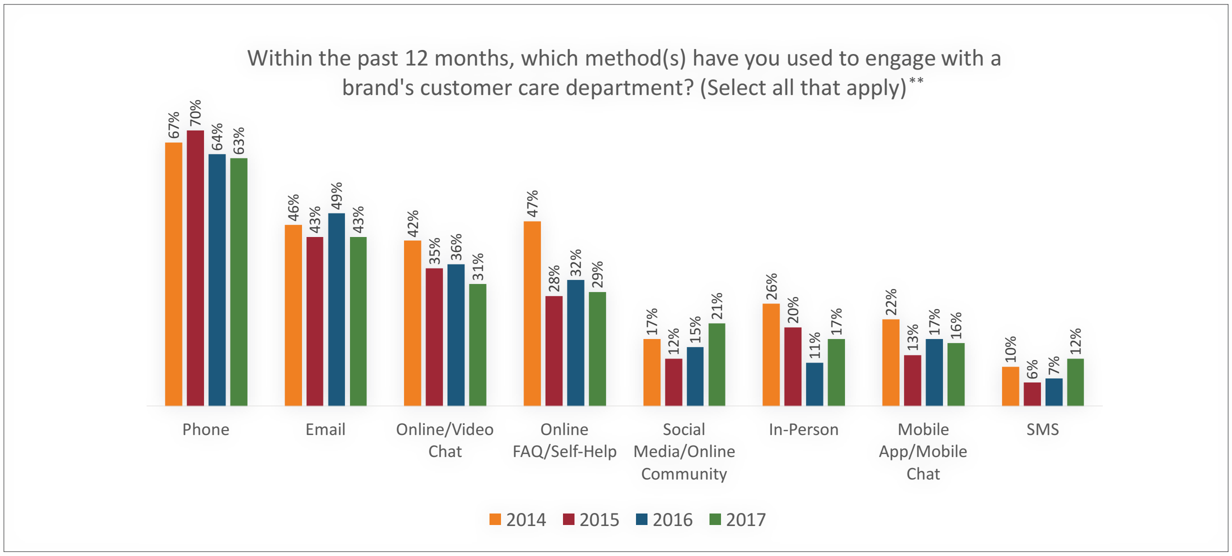
The mix of channel use remained relatively consistent in 2017. That said, there was a notable shift in Interactive Care, with a year-over-year decline of 23% (-8 points). This decrease is also observed in the solution data (at bottom), which registered modest declines in the use of both FAQ and Online/Video Chat. Nevertheless, Online Chat remains by far the most widely used Interactive Care solution, as seen in the channel-specific solution breakdown on the following page.





Channel of most use remained relatively consistent year-over-year, with the largest percentage change (+57%) occurring in Social Media Care. This change is also reflected in solution use results (below). Also of note, these results mark the second straight year of declines within Traditional Care, making for a 12% decline since 2015.

While the majority of solution types saw year-over-year declines, Social Media, In-Person and SMS each saw significant year-over-year percentage gains. Both SMS and Social Media Care, which saw year-over-year use increases of 71% and 40% respectively, continue to grow in popularity among consumers. As more and more consumers embrace the idea of text and social media as channels for customer care, companies will need to ensure their channel strategies and solutions meet their customers' expectations.



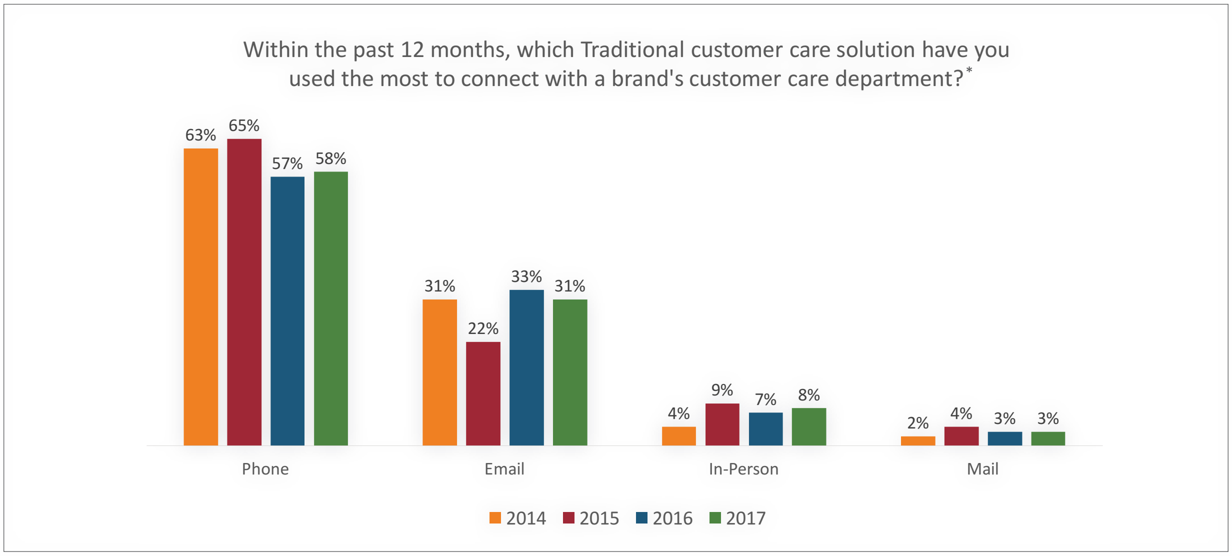
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 409 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 228 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 255 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

SOLUTION USE BY CHANNEL

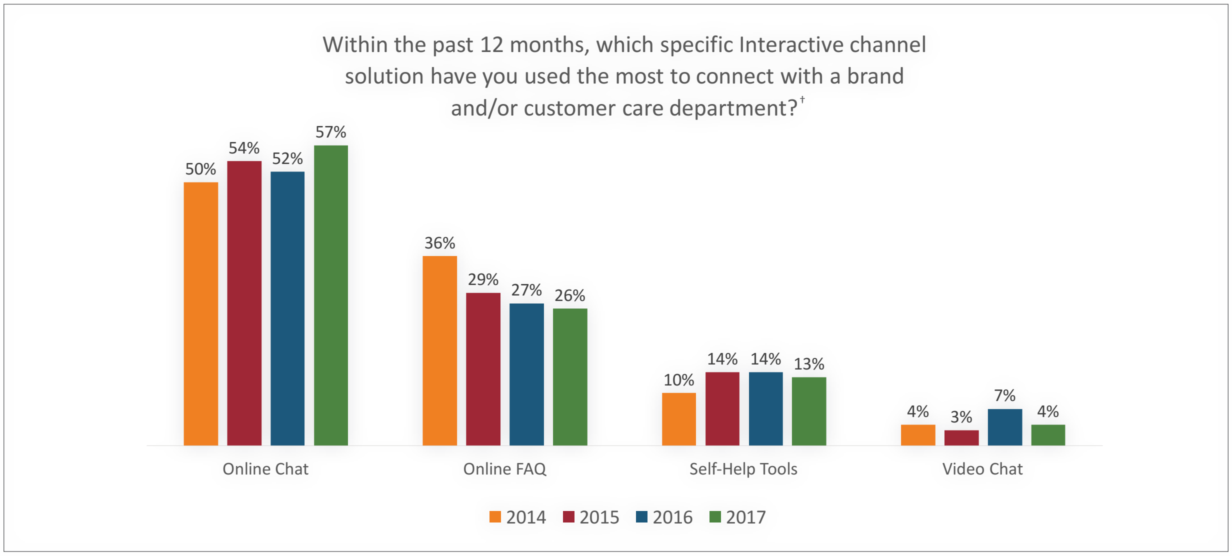
Consumer Experience — Consumer Use

In addition to the general channel use and solution breakdowns (previous page), solution use is also examined channel by channel. These results are channel-specific, meaning respondents are screened to be actual users of the channel in question, providing a more accurate picture of actual solution use.

In examining solution use by channel, we find very little change within Traditional Care over the past year. Phone continues to dominate the majority of transactions, with Email at a distant second. Given the sheer volume of the Traditional Care channel, Phone and Email remain critical channels of care, and are likely to continue receiving high levels of resources and priority for most organizations into the near- and even longterm.



Like Traditional Care, Interactive Care use remained fairly consistent year-over-year. The most significant change came in the form of a modest bump in online chat use (+10%). Online chat continues to be a cornerstone for the Interactive Care channel of many companies, providing consumers with a unique mix of functionality and convenience.

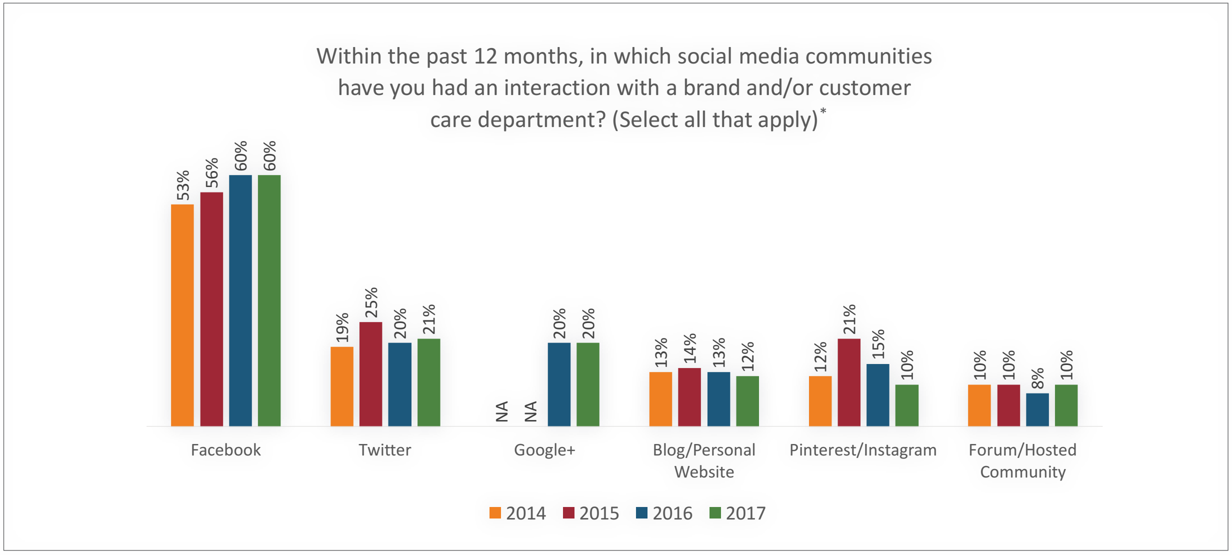


*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 222 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 225 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

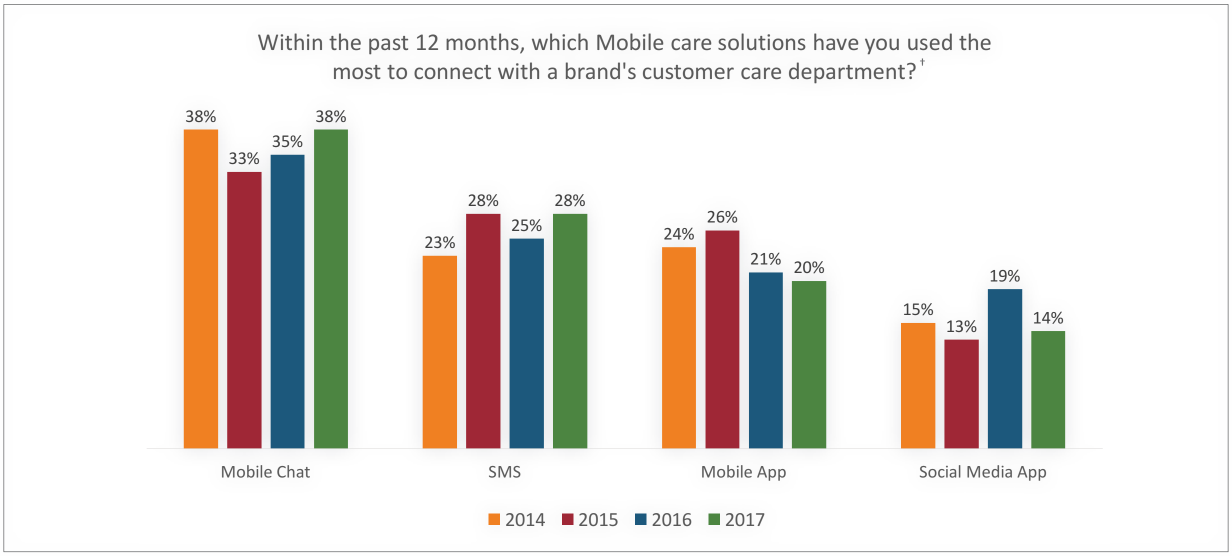
SOLUTION USE BY CHANNEL, CONT.

Consumer Experience — Consumer Use

Community use within Social Media Care was flat year-over-year, with little change among the most popular social media sites (Facebook, Twitter and Google+). Pinterest/Instagram underwent a 33% decline in use, which is especially puzzling given that the number of active users has been steadily growing on these sites. Brands that want to commit to supporting these communities must work to ensure a high level of capability in the solutions they provide.



Mobile Chat and SMS/Text continue to typify consumer solution use within the Mobile Care channel. In general, year-over-year changes in the Mobile Care solution of most use were minimal and within the margin of error, with the exception of social media applications. Social Media apps had a year-over-year decline of 26%, more in line with results from 2014 and 2015.

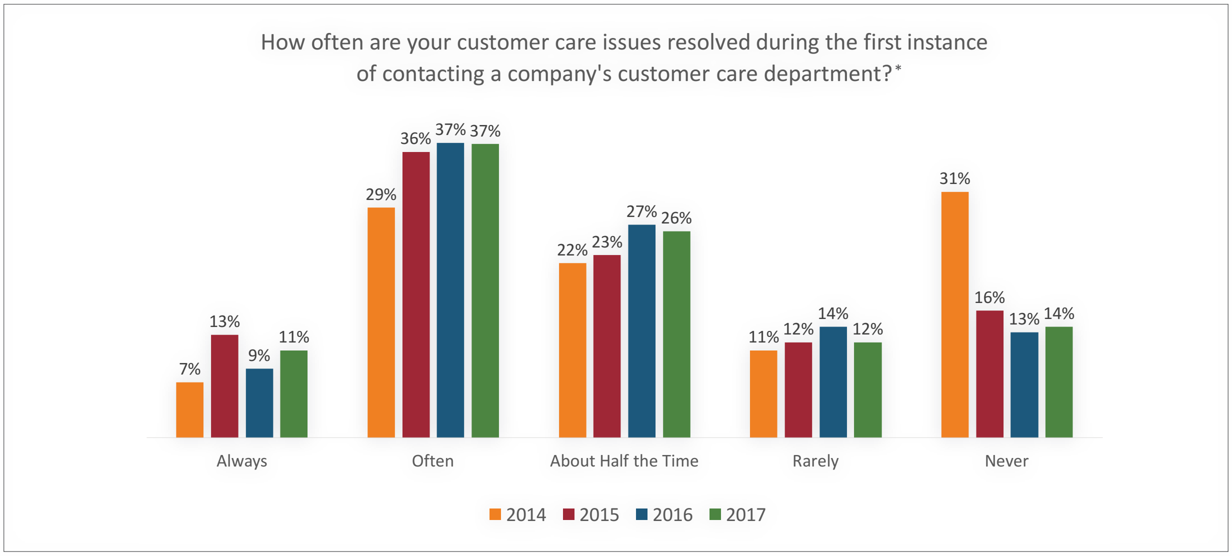


*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 420 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 216 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

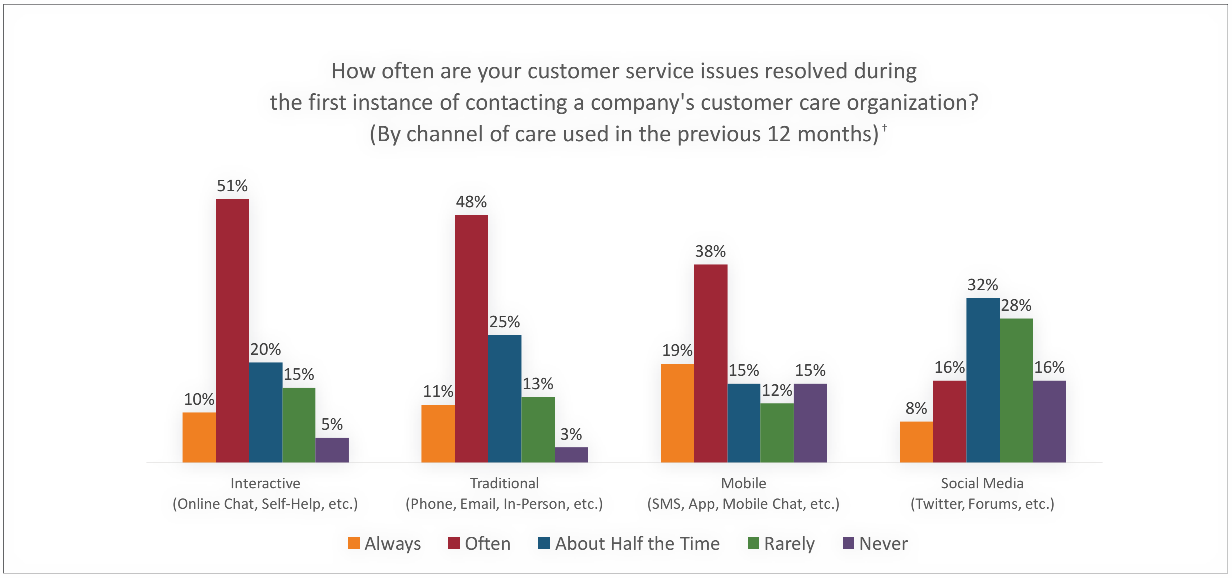
FIRST-CONTACT RESOLUTION

Consumer Experience — Consumer Use

First-contact resolution (FCR) is not only a measure of program effectiveness, it's also a measure of ease for consumers. Additional contacts to resolve an issue means more time and effort. That said, new approaches to issue resolution — like multi-channel and alternative channels of care — may lead to brands to rethink the importance of FCR. This is especially true as consumers approach issue resolution in fits and starts, constructing a personalized approach that sometimes mandates multiple contact. Rather than focus exclusively on whether an FCR was provided, companies also should focus on the type of experience provided, and do so across the entire journey.



When FCR is examined by channel of care, the lack of FCR performance becomes apparent for Social Media Care. According to survey participants, Interactive, Traditional and Mobile Care provide an FCR "Always" or "Often" about 60% of the time (which, in and of itself, leaves ample room for improvement), while Social Media Care does so only about 25% of the time. This could be due, in part, to the nature of the medium. Identities need verification and issues need to be clarified and, given the limitation of the medium, this can sometimes entail a couple messages back and forth. But even given this reality, brands should be vigilant in expanding the solution capabilities of the channel, while also understanding and setting expectations among customers, as use is likely to only grow.

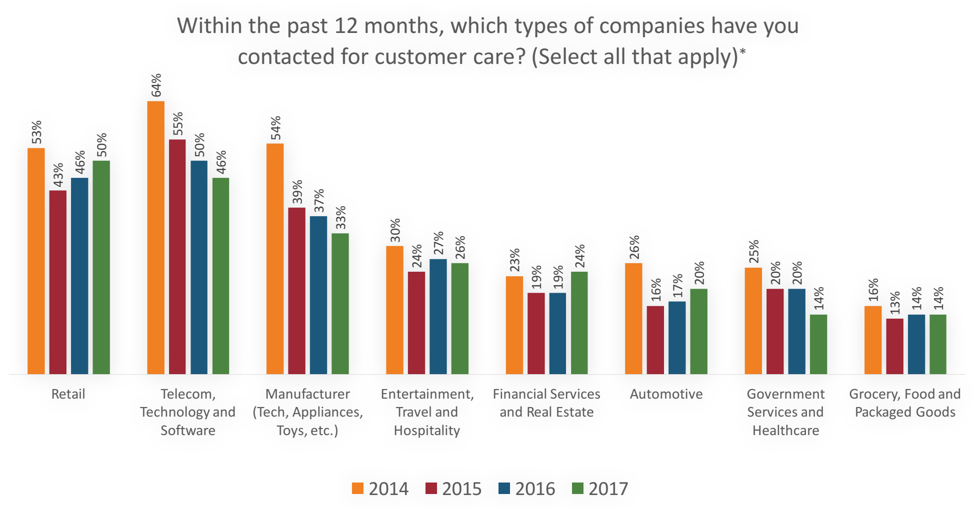


*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 427 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 225 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

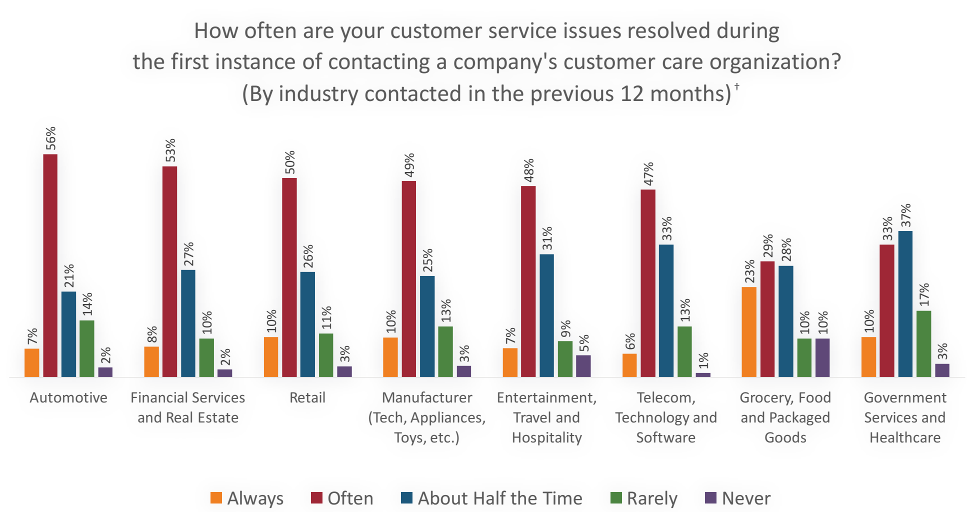
TYPES OF COMPANIES CONTACTED AND FCR BY INDUSTRY CONTACTED

Consumer Experience — Consumer Use

Retail and Telecom/Tech/Software and Manufacturer organizations continue their streak as the most commonly contacted types of companies among survey participants. Financial Services/Real Estate also saw a significant uptick, indicative of strong home sales, construction and refinancing numbers over the previous 12 months.



In cross-referencing FCR (previous page) with industries contacted in the previous 12 months, we find most industries provide a first-contact resolution "Always" or "Often" around 55-60% of the time. The lone exception is government services/healthcare. Among these industries, survey participants indicated they were receiving an FCR "Always" or "Often" only 43% of the time. While customer care issues in these industries are often far more complicated and sensitive in nature, these industries should strive to simplify the resolution process.

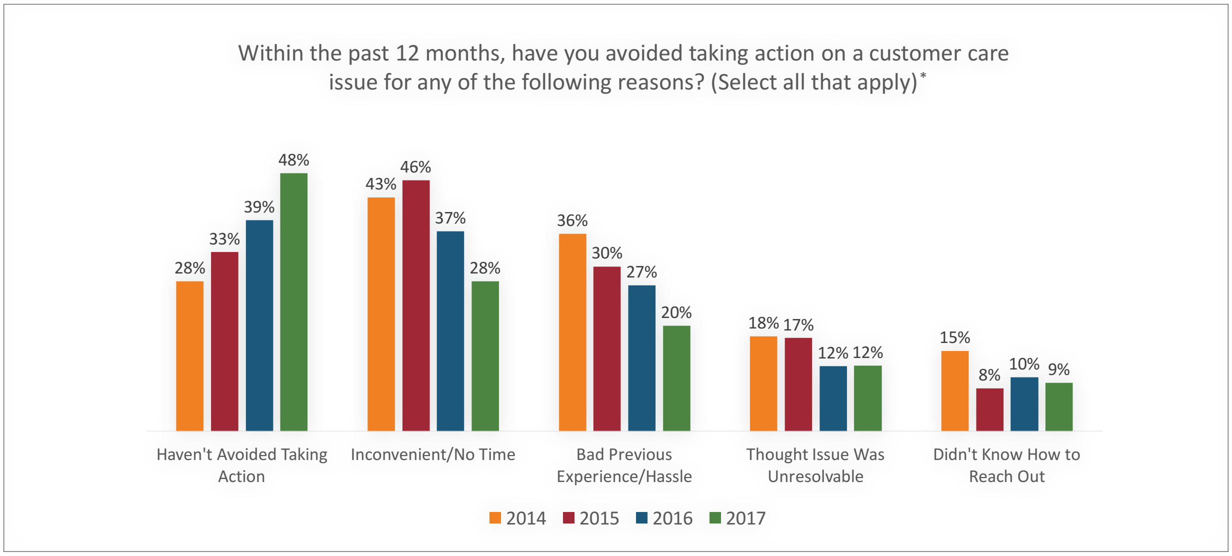


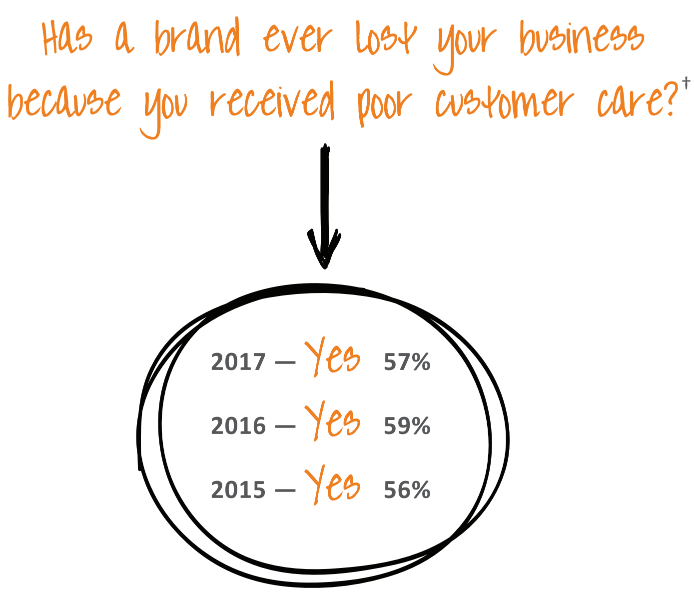
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 218 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 225 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

CARE AVOIDANCE AND LOST BUSINESS

Consumer Experience — Consumer Use

In what is shaping up to be a very positive and strong trend for the industry, fewer and fewer consumers are avoiding taking action on customer care issues. For the past three years, customer care avoidance has been trending in a positive direction. Furthermore, the trend showing fewer consumers avoiding care because of a bad previous experience or hassle is evidence that brands are headed in the right direction with the care they provide.





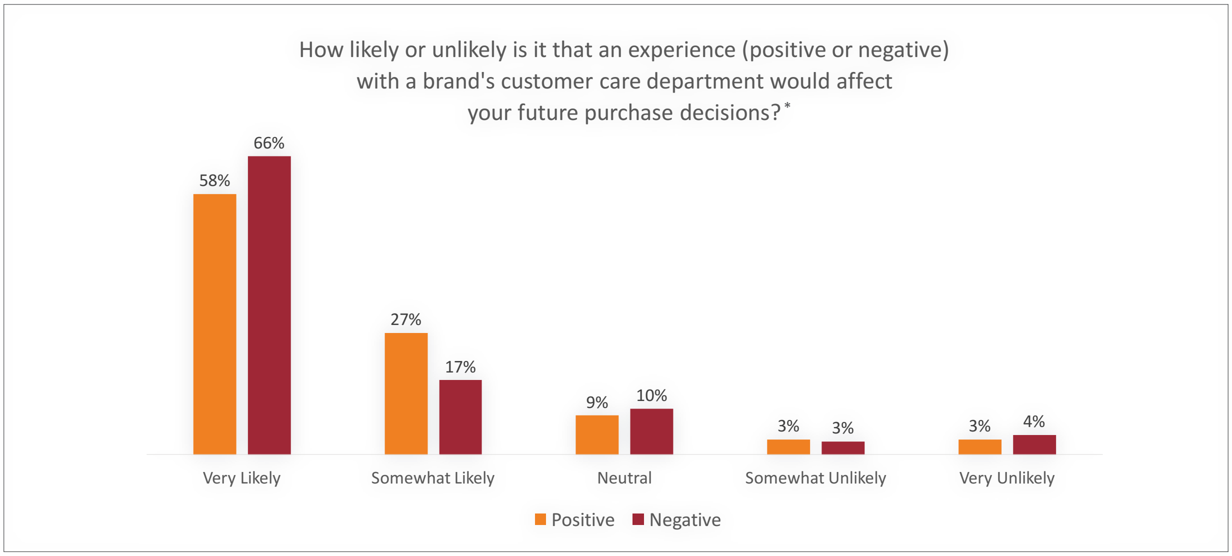
Lost business as a result of poor customer care remains consistent. As in past years, nearly 60% of survey respondents indicated that a brand had lost their business as a direct result of poor customer care. Brands would be wise to account for this reality and assume they can take nothing for granted when it comes to customer care quality. Expectations among consumers are high, and the competition for all categories of products is fierce.

*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 256 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 201 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

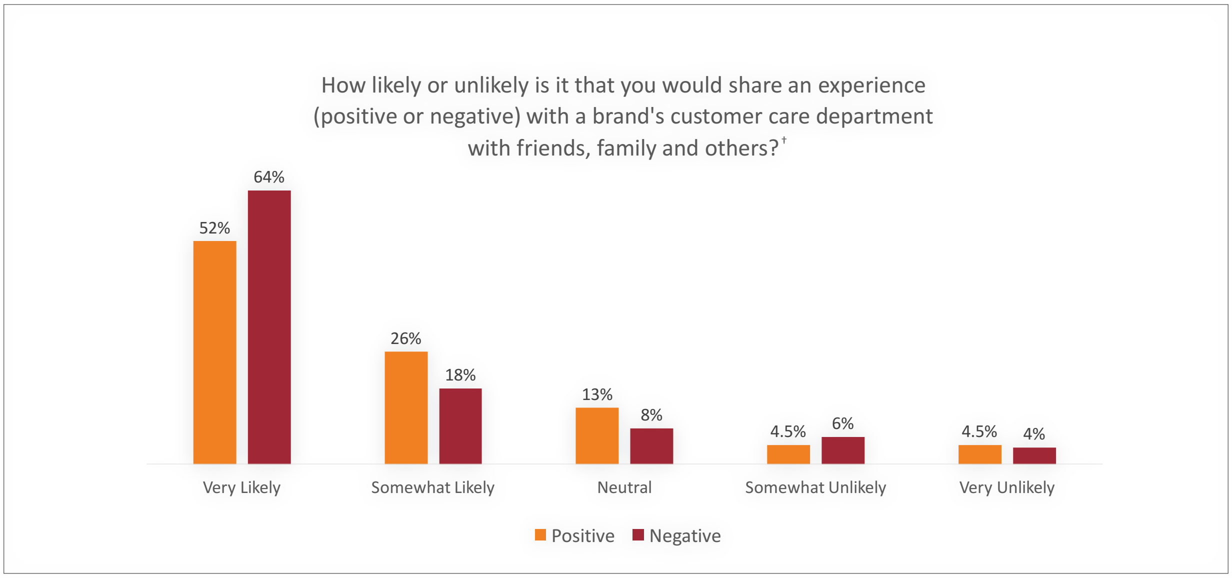
THE IMPACT OF POSITIVE (AND NEGATIVE) EXPERIENCES

Consumer Experience — Consumer Use

The likelihood of an experience (either positive or negative) impacting a future purchase decision remains elevated. This is especially true of negative experiences, where 66% of respondents indicated a very high likelihood of a negative experience negatively impacting a future purchase decision, as opposed to only 58% of respondents who indicated a likelihood of a positive impact as a result of a positive experience. Based on these results, it's clear that creating positive customer care experiences, while avoiding and correcting negative ones, is critical to building and maintaining customer loyalty and high levels of purchase intent.



Like future purchase intent, the likelihood of customers to share an experience (either positive or negative) with friends, family and others is considerable. This is important, as consumers increasingly look to each other for advice and recommendations regarding purchase decisions. And, just like the results above, negative experiences have a greater impact on the likelihood of a customer sharing an experience. All things being equal, the consequences of providing a negative experience more than offset any gains that might be earned as a result of providing a positive experience.



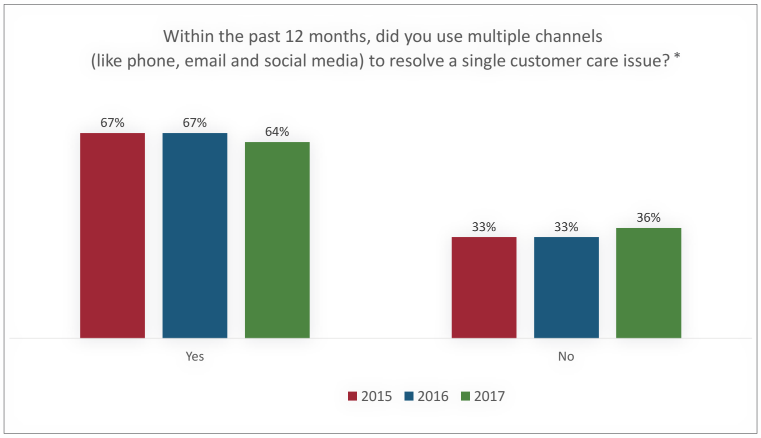
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 414 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 410 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

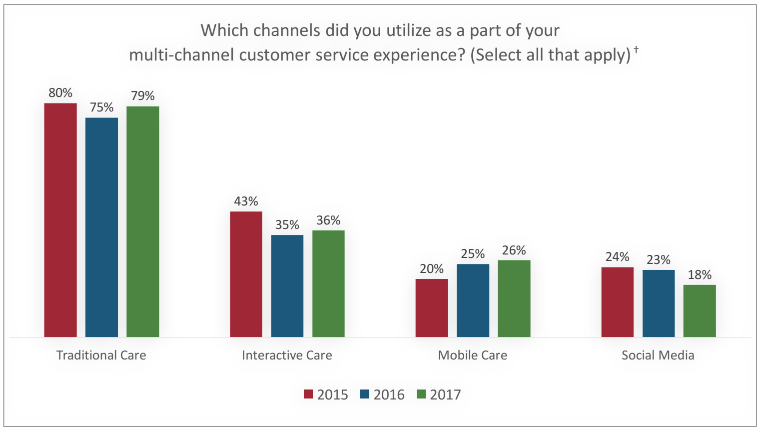
The Multi-Channel Journey

MULTI-CHANNEL USE AND USE BY CHANNEL AND SOLUTION TYPE

Consumer Experience — The Multi-Channel Journey

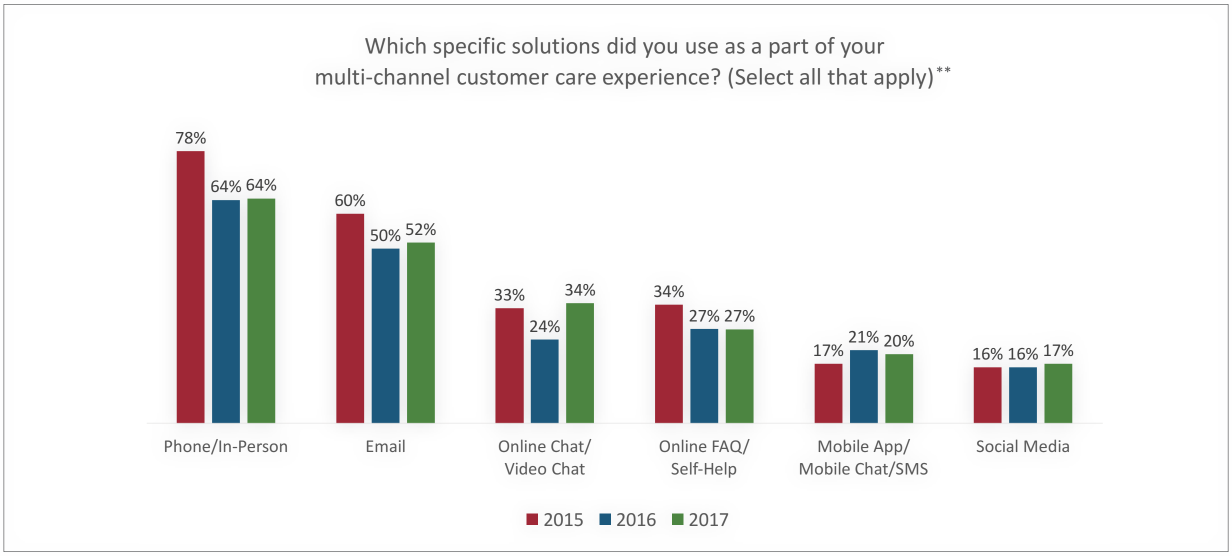
Multi-channel usage in an attempt to resolve a single customer care issue remained steady year-over-year, holding to the tight band first established in 2015. As more companies diversify their channel coverage, and channel shifts become easier, multi-channel engagements should grow more frequent.





Traditional Care continues to dominate multi-channel use, finding a place in nearly 80% of all multi-channel engagements. Interactive Care use within multi-channel engagements also remains strong, with its use occurring in more than 35% of all survey respondents' multi-channel engagements.

While Phone/In-Person and Email continue to be used in the majority of multi-channel engagements, Online/Video Chat saw the largest year-over-year growth (up 42%). As consumers continue to demand and expect instant access with an immediate response, brands will be challenged with striking a balance between costs, providing the right mix of assisted and unassisted solutions, and making solutions work together as consumers cross channels.

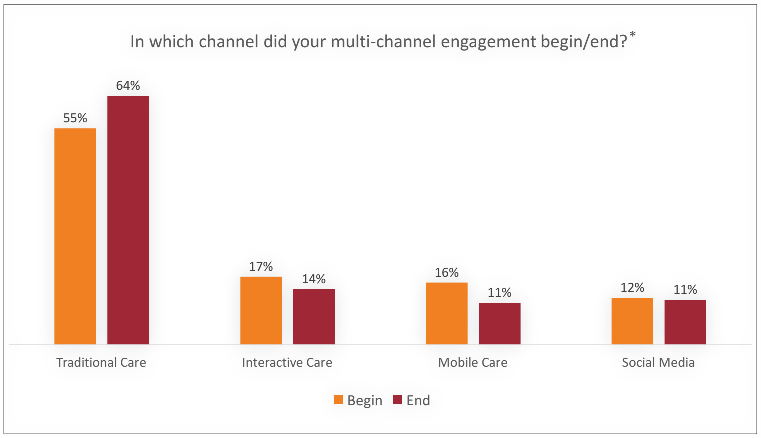


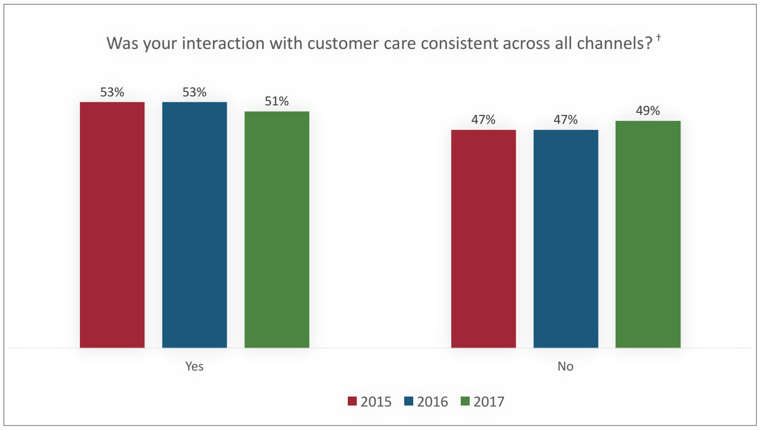
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 492 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 285 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 253 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

PERFORMANCE, CONSISTENCY AND REASON FOR APPROACH

Consumer Experience — The Multi-Channel Journey

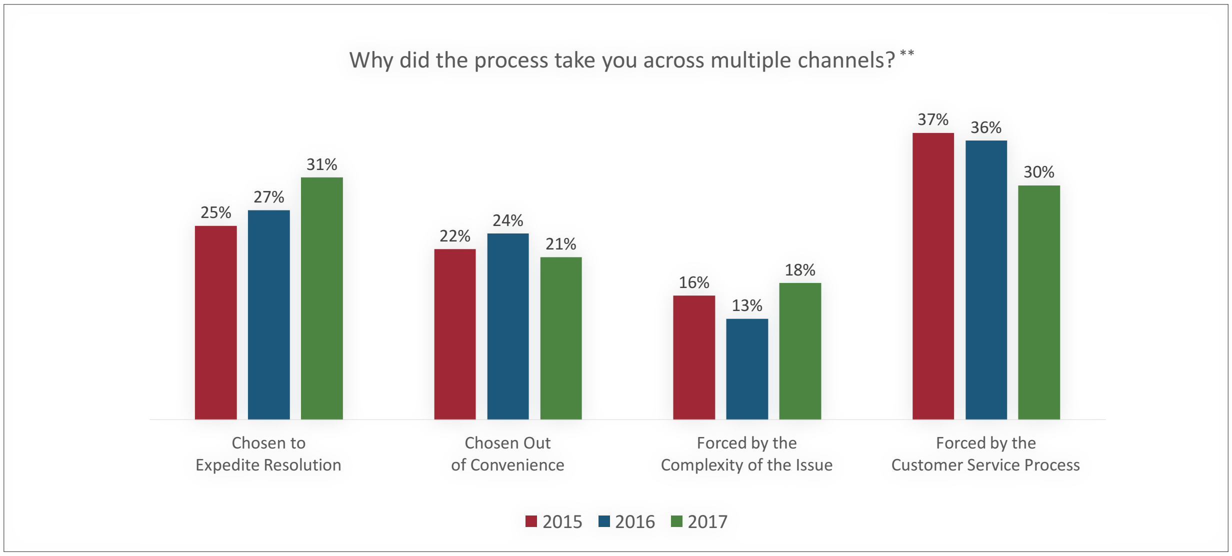
Like last year, more multi-channel engagements ended in Traditional Care than began there, proving Traditional Care's value as a destination of last resort. With the inverse being true of alternative channels, a good portion of individuals are abandoning alternative channels in search of a solution, and concluding their journey with the help of a Traditional Care solution. Brands that want to keep engagements within the channel of origin will have to bolster resolution capabilities, particularly in alternative channels.





Views on consistency across channels while taking a multi-channel approach remained steady year-over-year, hovering around 50%. In related CXMB Industry Insights research, consumers indicated they value consistency above competitive pricing and personalization. Brands should seek to improve consistency, allowing organizations to better meet the expectations set by their brand's promise.

As in previous years, approximately half of survey respondents indicated their multi-channel journey was forced upon them, while the other half of respondents indicated their journey was one of choice. As seen on page 21, whether an approach is forced or chosen can have a huge impact on both resolution and customer satisfaction (CSAT) rates.

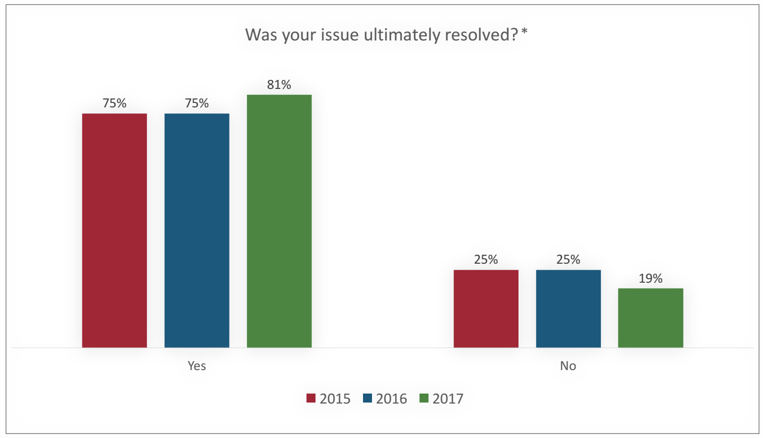


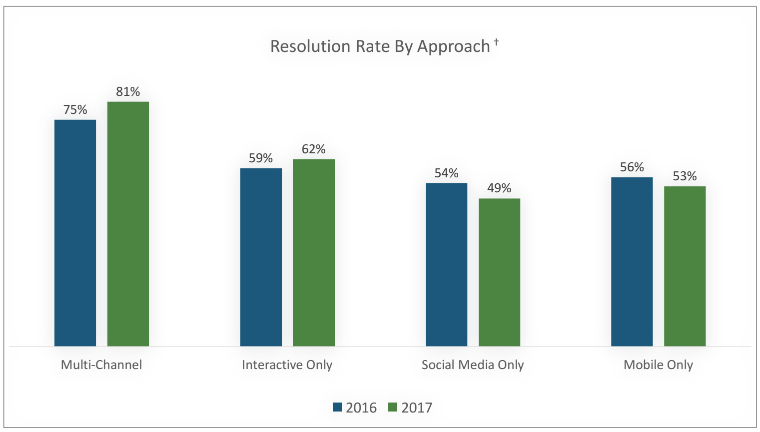
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 262 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 246 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 301 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

MULTI-CHANNEL RESOLUTION AND SATISFACTION RATES

Consumer Experience — The Multi-Channel Journey

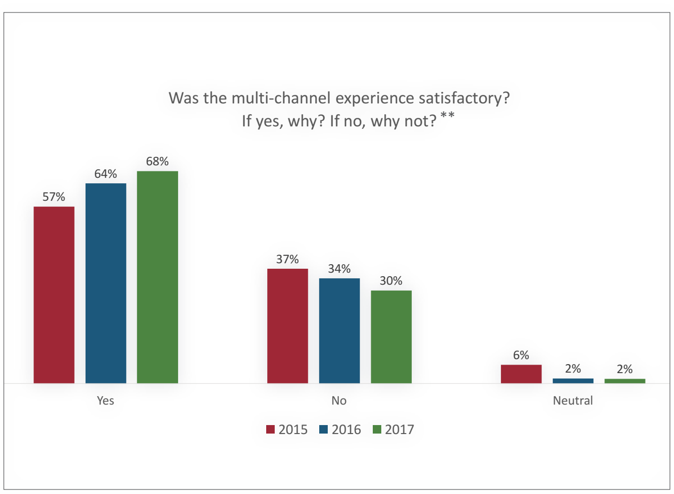
The resolution rate of multi-channel engagements jumped six points year-over-year, moving from 75% to 81%. This move could be the result of improved processes and technology solutions. In other words, businesses are possibly getting better at multi-channel engagements. The key to supporting a high resolution rate is good internal communication across channels, including a shared database of customer interactions and case notes.





While the resolution rate of multi-channel saw a slight improvement, this was not the case among alternative channels. Although Interactive Care experienced a slight up-tick, both Social Media Care and Mobile Care saw resolution rates slip downward. Alternative channels still have a long way to go to match the resolution rates provided by Traditional Care solutions, such as phone and email.

Satisfaction levels for the multi-channel approach continued to improve in 2017 at 68%, an 11 point (+19%) improvement since data was first collected in 2015. While satisfaction levels have improved in back-to-back years, levels are still below those of Traditional Care; and many of the same difficulties persist. Common consumer complaints (like having to repeat one's self, slow response speeds and additional complication) need to be resolved in order to achieve higher customer satisfaction levels.



As part of the question at left, we asked survey participants to explain why the multi-channel experience was or was not satisfactory. Here are some verbatim responses received as to whether or not the experience was satisfactory:

Satisfied

"Timely and fully resolved the issue"

"Got straight to the point"

"Multiple options provide convenience"

"Not all stuff can be handled via web sites"

Dissatisfied

"They didn't help my problem at all"

"Quit because it took too much time"

"Very complicated and had to repeat myself a lot of times"

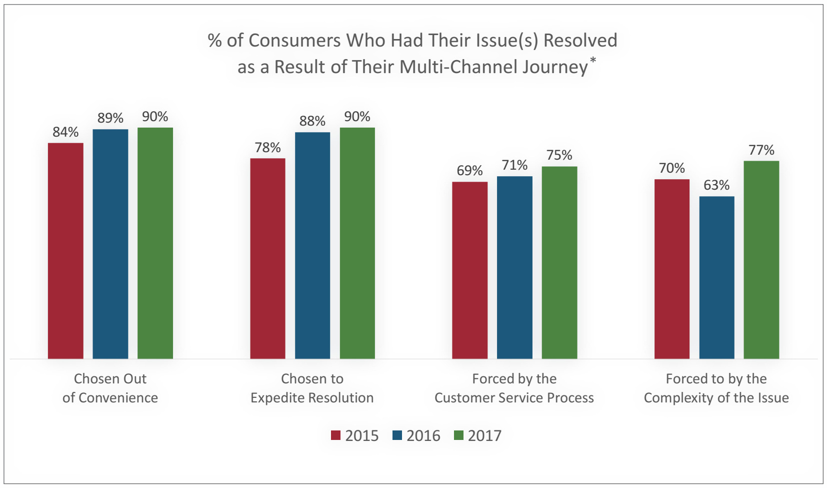
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 243 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 243 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 190 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

THE IMPACT OF CHOICE ON MULTI-CHANNEL OUTCOMES

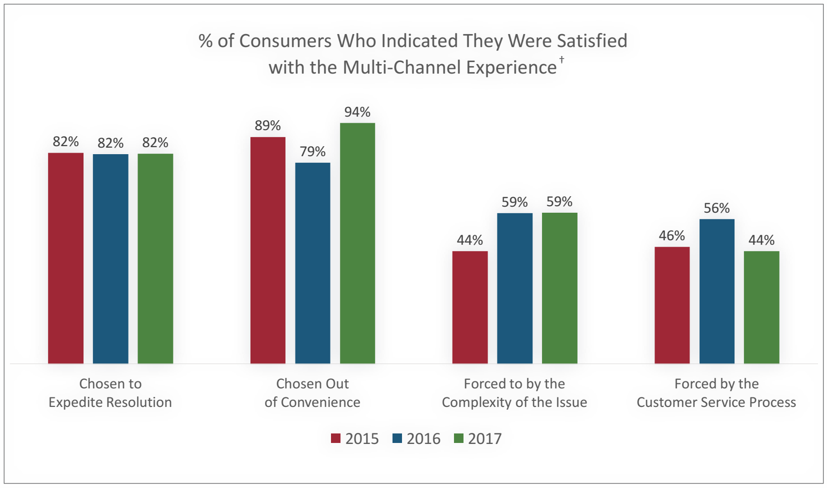
Consumer Experience — The Multi-Channel Journey

Not surprisingly, choice matters. Across three years of data, a strong relationship has been established between whether a consumer chooses a multi-channel approach or is forced into it, and resolution and satisfaction outcomes. When a consumer self-selects the multi-channel approach, they are more likely to get their issue resolved, and are far more likely to be satisfied with the experience. Satisfaction levels are particularly impacted, with up to a 50% swing in satisfaction rates between consumers who chose a multi-channel approach out of convenience and those who were forced into a multi-channel approach as a result of the customer service process.

Whether a customer gets an issue resolved via a multi-channel engagement is linked to whether or not the customer chose the multi-channel approach. This link has persisted across three years' of data. If companies want to improve multi-channel resolution rates, one way to prevent the multi-channel engagement in the first place is by increasing the resolution rates in alternative channels. In lieu of this, brands need to ensure issues are quickly and easily routed to the channel best capable of resolving the issue.



Like resolution rates — but to a much greater degree — consumer choice is critical for driving improved satisfaction rates. Brands that are motivated to raise their satisfaction levels within the multi-channel journey must put channel shift decisions into the hands of their customers and simplify the process. This also means raising the resolution capabilities of alternative channels to prevent the dreaded, "You'll have to call for help with that" response. More and more, consumers expect to be helped in the channel they initially contacted.



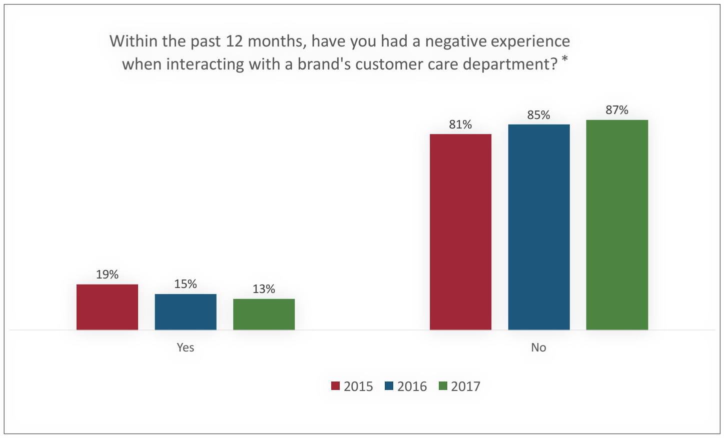
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 204 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 186 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

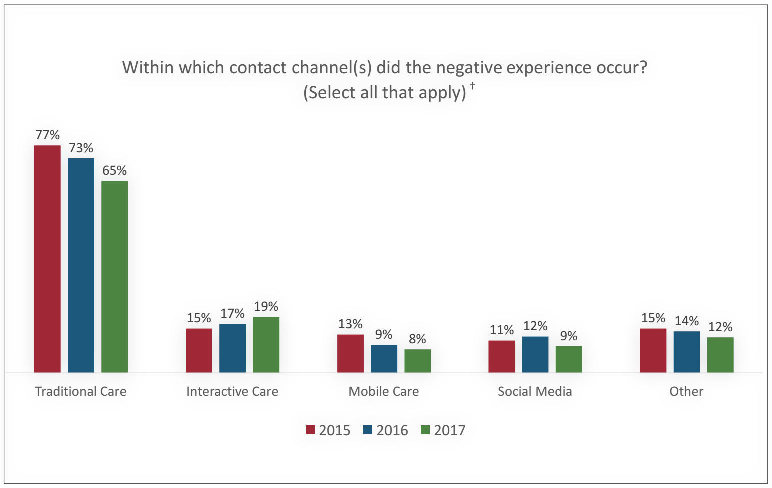
The Unhappy Consumer

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES (BY CHANNEL AND SOLUTION)

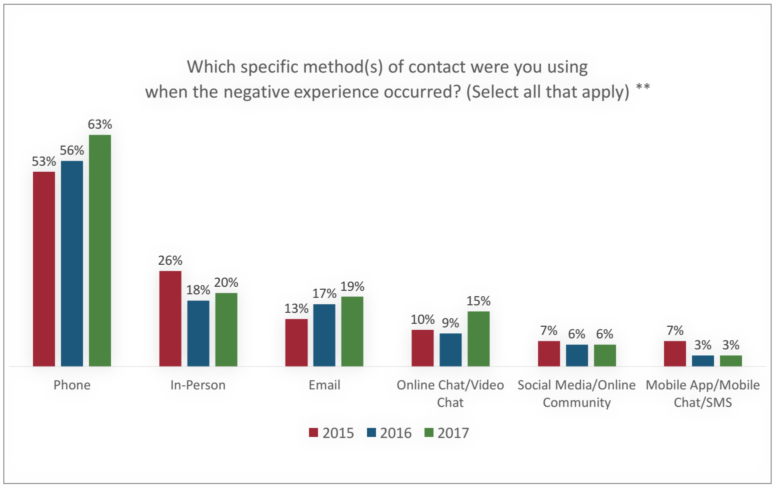
Consumer Experience — The Unhappy Consumer

The occurrence of negative customer care experiences fell for the second consecutive year, with only 13% of survey respondents indicating they had a negative customer care experience in the previous 12 months. While this is good news for the industry, negative experiences are still all too frequent, and can have detrimental effects on brand impression and the future purchase intent of individuals who get caught up in negative customer care experiences.





Given the disparity in channel and solution use rates, these results can be misleading, making it appear as if negative experiences are common within the Traditional Care channel (above) and using the phone (below). To account for this, the Inferred Quality Rating (at right) was introduced to adjust for use rates. Accordingly, the channel and solution in which a negative experience is least likely is Interactive Care and email.



Inferred Quality Rating
2015/2016/2017 Results

Interactive Care: +23/+18/+16
Traditional Care: +3/-2/+13
Mobile Care: +7/+13/+5
Social Media Care: +5/+4/+2

About this rating:
Since some care channels are used more often than others, we wanted to put in place a mechanism that would account for this imbalance. The above Inferred Quality Rating is an expression of the percentage difference between utilization rates (Page 10) and negative experience rates (at left). While not a precise model, this rating is intended to provide a general sense of channel quality. **The higher the number, the less likely were the odds of a survey participant having a negative experience in the channel.**

Inferred Quality Rating
2015/2016/2017 Results

Email: +30/+32/+24
Online/Video Chat: +25/+27/+16
Social Media: +5/+9/+15
Mobile App/Chat: +6/+14/+13
Phone: +17/+8/+0
In-Person: -6/-7/-3

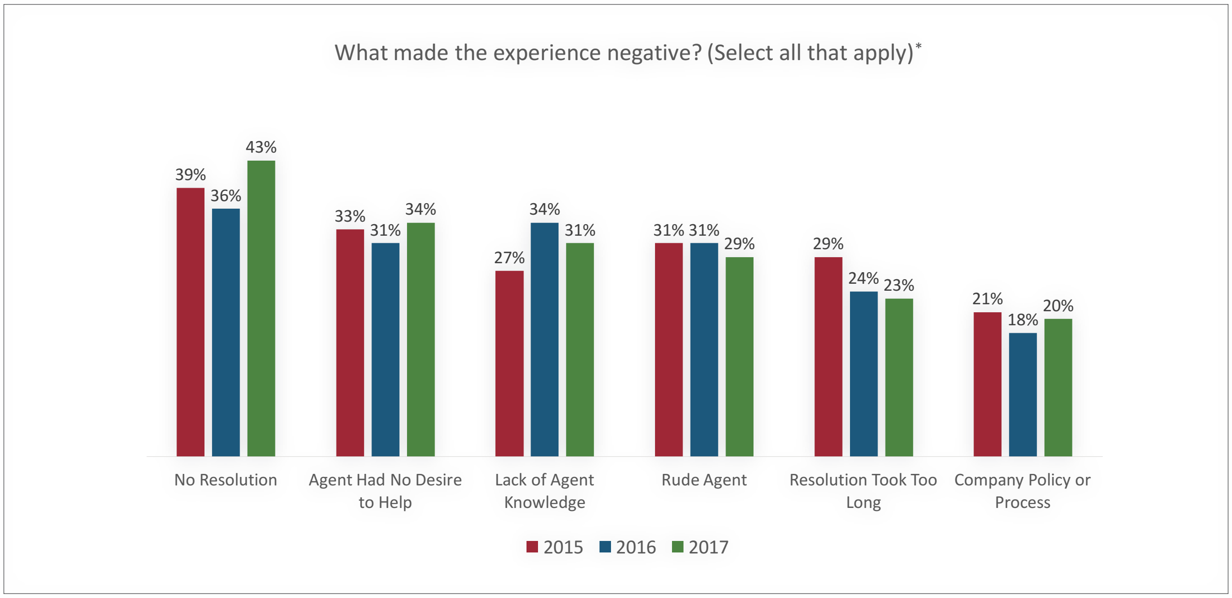
About this rating:
Since some care channels are used more often than others, we wanted to put in place a mechanism that would account for this imbalance. The above Inferred Quality Rating is an expression of the percentage difference between utilization rates (Page 10) and negative experience rates (at left). While not a precise model, this rating is intended to provide a general sense of channel quality. **The higher the number, the less likely were the odds of a survey participant having a negative experience in the channel.**

*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 2,038 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 246 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 217 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

REASON FOR THE NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE AND SHARING HABITS

Consumer Experience — The Unhappy Consumer

Lack of resolution continues to be a primary driver of negative customer care experiences, expanding 19% year-over-year. Given this fact, the most effective path for brands to reduce negative experiences and boost customer satisfaction is to make policy and procedure adjustments that enable resolutions. Additionally, making policy and procedure changes will also help improve agent-related issues, which are often the result of inadequate recruiting, training and coaching practices.



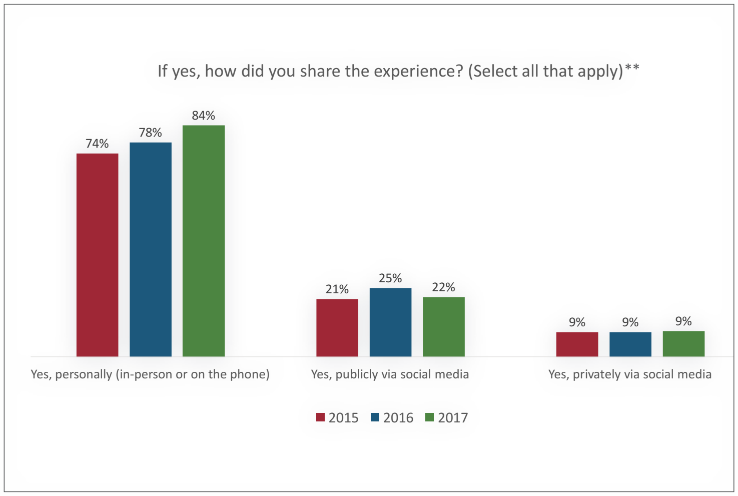
Consumers continue to express their negative brand experiences with friends, family and/or strangers more than 80% of the time. Social media has the power to magnify this negative word-of-mouth message, particularly when shared publicly. One negative experience can quickly translate into hundreds or thousands of negative impressions. Brands must act quickly in their response to negative experiences posted to social media. And, when possible, brands should also use these negative experiences to improve not only the policies and procedures of customer care, but also the very products and services offered by the brand via shared business intelligence.

Did you share this negative experience with friends, family and/or strangers?†

2017 — Yes 80%

2016 — Yes 81%

2015 — Yes 83%



*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 222 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 214 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 171 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

THE BUSINESS IMPACT OF NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

Consumer Experience — The Unhappy Consumer

Even though the customer service experience was negative, was your issue eventually resolved to your satisfaction?[1]

2017 — Yes **38%**

2016 — Yes **35%**

2015 — Yes **32%**

Will this negative experience impact your future purchase decisions?[2]

2017 — Yes **82%**

2016 — Yes **83%**

2015 — Yes **82%**

Were you given the opportunity to express your dissatisfaction via a survey or other feedback form?[3]

2017 — Yes **44%**

2016 — Yes **32%**

If so, did you take advantage of the opportunity to express your displeasure?[4]

2017 — Yes **67%**

2016 — Yes **62%**

For three years running, data strongly suggests that, even when a negative customer care experience meets with a satisfied resolution, future purchase decisions are still negatively impacted. This fact reinforces the importance of providing a positive end-to-end experience for customers, regardless of the resolution outcome.

Percentage of Consumers Who Had Their Issue Resolved to Their Satisfaction but Still Indicated a Negative Impact on Future Purchase Decisions.

2017 — Yes **82%**

2016 — Yes **82%**

2015 — Yes **82%**

Although resolution outcomes following a negative experience appear to be largely ineffective in saving future revenue, the same is not true of proactive contacts. By contacting consumers after an engagement goes sour, brands can have a measurable impact on customer churn.

Following the negative experience, did the brand proactively contact you to try to remedy or apologize for the situation?[5]

2017 — Yes **20%**

2016 — Yes **15%**

Percentage of Consumers Who Indicated the Negative Experience Will Have a Negative Impact on Future Purchase Decisions Based on Their Proactive Contact Status.

Proactively Contacted	Not Proactively Contacted
2017 — Yes **73%**	**2017 —** Yes **84%**
2016 — Yes **73%**	**2016 —** Yes **86%**

1 Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 206 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
2 Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 211 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
3 Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 205 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
4 Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 111 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
5 Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 200 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

The Purchase Experience

WHERE GOODS ARE PURCHASED AND WHY

Consumer Experience — The Purchase Experience

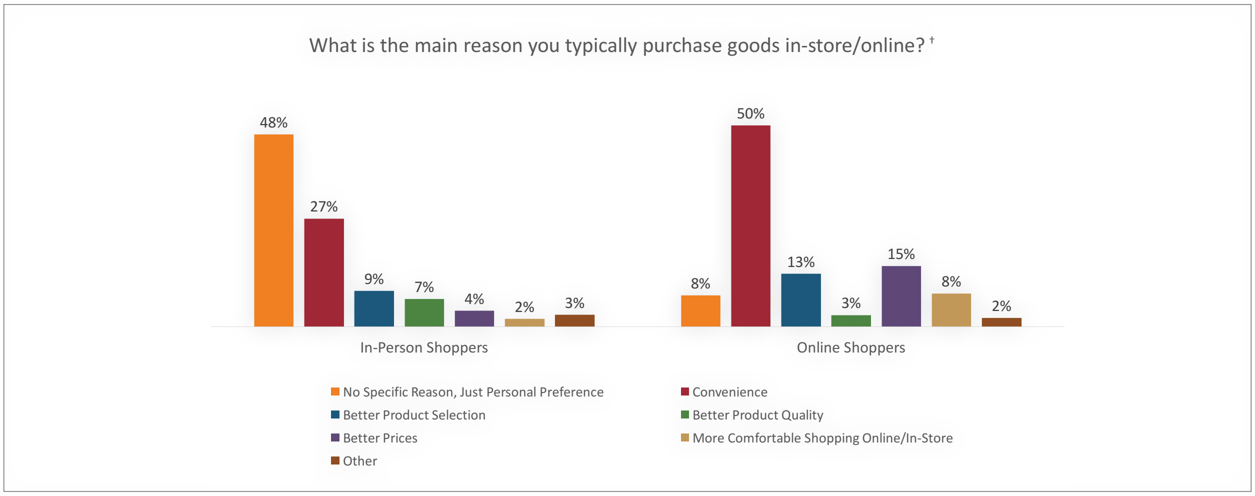
In an entirely new section for 2017, CXMB Series research turns to the purchase experience. For all results in this section, respondents have been screened and identified as either primarily In-Person Shoppers or primarily Online Shoppers. Once segmented, results can be compared, identifying differences and similarities between the two groups of consumers.

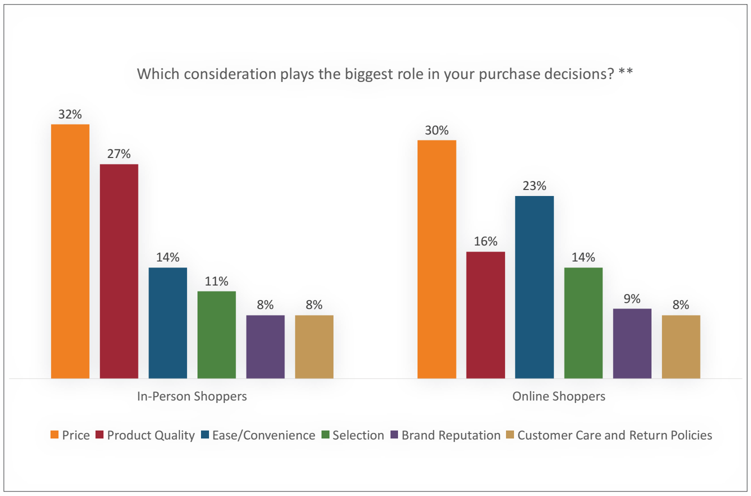
Do you primarily purchase goods online (via computer or smart device) or in-person (via a physical store)?*

In-person **66%**

Online **34%**

In one of the most easily identified differences between In-Person and Online Shoppers, In-Person Shoppers are much less specific about the reasons for their purchase preferences and, when specific, convenience reigns. Conversely, Online Shoppers are very specific about their preferences, and it has a lot to do with convenience. And while both In-Person and Online Shoppers point to "convenience," to one degree or another, it's likely they think of convenience differently. For In-Store Shoppers, convenience means experiencing products in person and having a product in hand upon purchase, whereas for Online Shoppers, convenience means shopping from anywhere and having products delivered to your door.





For both In-Person and Online Shoppers, price plays a significant role, coming in as the top consideration for about a third of each group. As reflected above, ease/ convenience is also a top consideration, especially for Online Shoppers, with about a quarter of respondents indicating it as their top consideration. Given these results (and those above), one thing is clear — convenience is a critical differentiator in today's marketplace. For companies that can create an easy and convenient purchase experience, they will have an instant edge on the competition. Nowhere else is this more apparent than in the retail space.

*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 2,382 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 842 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 821 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

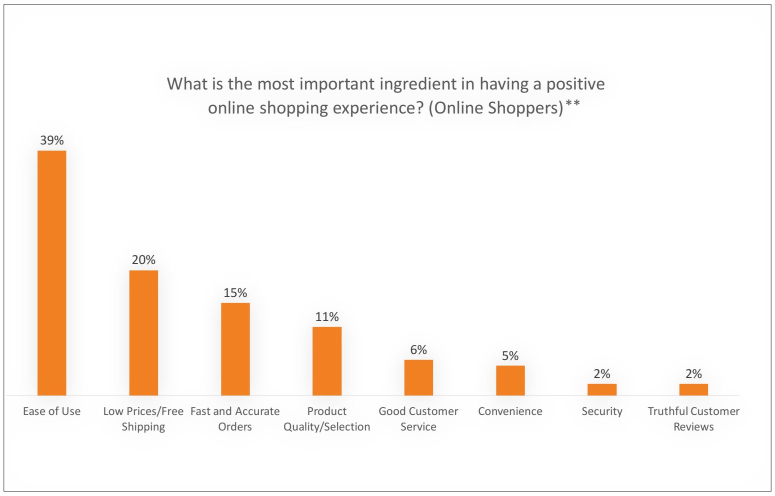
IMPORTANCE OF VALUE, AND CREATING A POSITIVE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Consumer Experience — The Purchase Experience

Both In-Person and Online Shoppers generally identify getting a good deal as important, with slightly more Online Shoppers indicating getting a good deal of the highest importance. In related research released this past spring, results from the *CXMB Industry Insights: Retail* report showed that Online Shoppers were also far more likely to research price before making a purchase.

Every company wants to improve the opinion of its brand among their customers, and that often means creating a positive shopping experience. In the set of open-ended questions below, both In-Person and Online Shoppers were asked what was most important in shaping and delivering a positive shopping experience, either online or in-store. Responses have been grouped together in common themes from the answers received.

Interestingly, when asked which is the most important ingredient in having a positive in-store shopping experience, In-Person Shoppers continue to place a high value on good customer service, naming that category above all others by a wide margin.



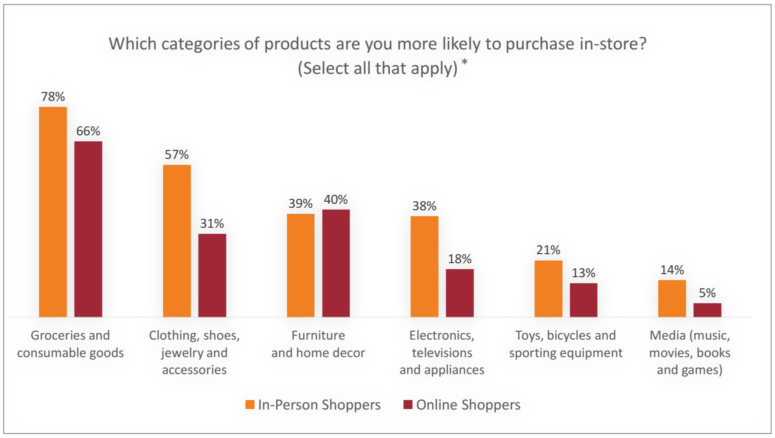
Unlike In-Person Shoppers, Online Shoppers place little value on good customer service, while placing a ton of value on ease, price/free shipping and fast/ accurate orders. Online Shoppers also had a much great variety of responses, indicating that they are a varied and diverse group of consumers with much more nuanced expectations.

*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 737 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 209 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 208 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

WHERE SHOPPERS ARE LIKELY TO BUY DIFFERENT PRODUCTS

Consumer Experience — The Purchase Experience

In exploration of which categories of products different types of shoppers were likely to buy in-store versus online, few surprises emerged. Online Shoppers were less likely to buy most categories of products in-store versus buying online. Groceries and consumable goods emerged as a natural fit for in-store purchases among both groups, while media registered as a common online purchase among both groups of shoppers. If In-Person Shoppers are to ever adopt the shopping behaviors of their Online Shopper counterparts, categories like clothing and electronics appear to be prime areas in which to make inroads.



Not surprisingly, In-Person Shoppers are far more likely to buy products in-store across all categories, with the exception of furniture and home décor. Groceries and consumable goods was also the only category where the majority of both consumer groups indicated they were more likely to buy such products in-store.

Although media (including music, movies, books and games) is the category of product most likely to be purchased between both groups, Online Shoppers are more likely to purchase other categories of products online: clothing, shoes, jewelry and accessories, and electronics like televisions and appliances. Online Shoppers were also far more likely to buy all categories of products online versus In-Person Shoppers, with the exception of media.

*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 443 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 434 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

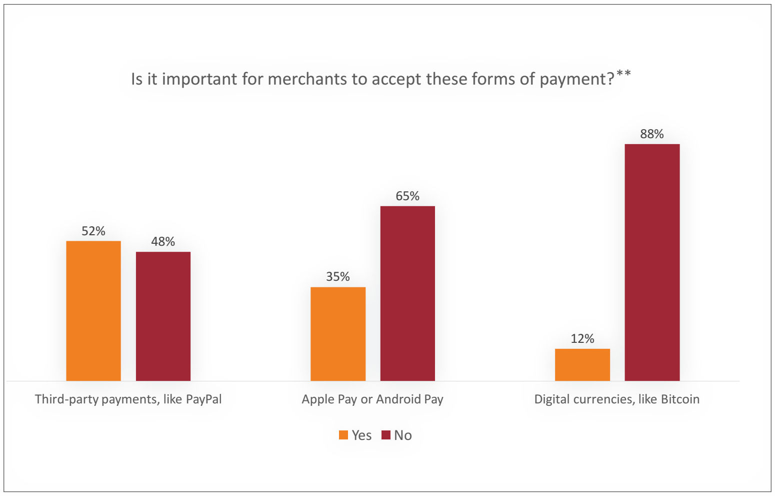
WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT, RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPINIONS ON PAYMENT

Consumer Experience — The Purchase Experience

Continuing the theme of ease and convenience as important for Online Shoppers, nearly half of respondents indicated a quick and easy purchase as important in having a positive purchase experience. In-Person Shoppers, on the other hand, valued being treated well on the same level as having a quick and easy purchase experience, reinforcing the notion that these types of shoppers have very different expectations in how they want to experience brands.

Online Shoppers indicated they were significantly more likely to recommend purchases to friends and family based on their experiences, with more than half of respondents saying they do so either Always or Often. This effect is likely magnified, as Online Shoppers are more likely to be frequent users of social media, where recommendations are easily amplified.

In a set of questions aimed at the general population, survey respondents were asked to provide their opinions on the importance of merchants accepting different forms of payment. Third-party payments, like PayPal, were the only category of payment in which more than half of respondents indicated they were important. At the opposite end of the spectrum were digital currencies, with only 12% of respondents indicating such form of payment as important to accept.



*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 419 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 430 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 601 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

CONSUMER EXPERIENCE CONCLUSIONS

Key Findings:

1) Traditional Care continues to be a channel of last resort for multi-channel engagements, but Traditional Care as a channel of most use has slipped in consecutive years (Pages 18 and 10)

2) There have been three straight years of decline in the percentage of consumers avoiding interacting with customer care, plus a 26% decline in the percentage of consumers avoiding interacting with customer care as a result of a previous bad experience (Page 15)

3) Multi-channel approach as a choice, rather than being forced into it, continues to have a profound impact on resolution and satisfaction rates (Page 21)

4) 52% of In-Person Shoppers say "good customer service" is the most important ingredient to having a positive shopping experience, compared to only 6% of Online Shoppers (Page 28)

The last two years have seen modest declines in the percentage of consumers indicating Traditional Care as the channel they use most. This is tempered by the fact that Traditional Care remains the most widely utilized channel of care, and by a wide margin. Furthermore, the channel continues to play a pivotal role in multi-channel engagements, with many consumers beginning their journey in an alternative channel, yet winding up in Traditional Care to get a final resolution.

Regarding multi-channel engagements, evidence of a strong connection between consumer choice and engagement outcome continues to mount. When consumers choose to take a multi-channel approach, rather than being forced into a multi-channel approach by the process or complexity of the issue, both resolution and satisfaction rates are positively affected. Brands would do well to understand this relationship as they plan out the issue resolution capabilities of alternative channels and decide how to direct consumers into the channels best suited to assist.

Critical Questions Brands Should Be Asking Themselves

1) Are we supporting, expanding and innovating around the initiatives that have most improved the customer experience?

2) Do we make it easy for our customers to maneuver between channels, and do so at their discretion?

3) Have we bolstered alternative channel solution capabilities to more closely match those of Traditional Care, and are we doing a good job of directing customers to the right channel?

Consumer Opinion

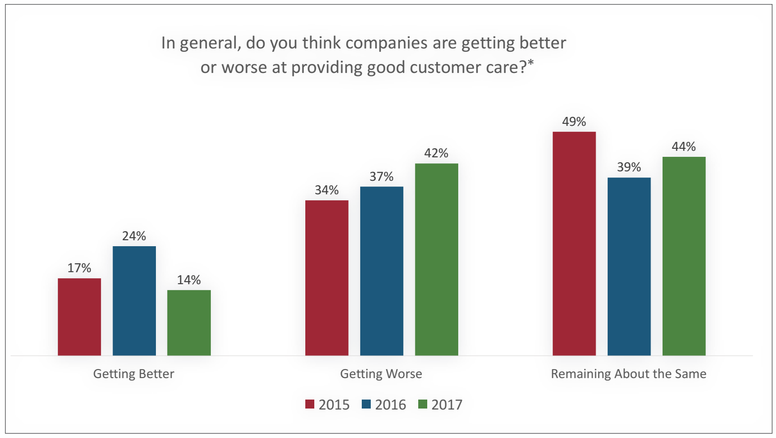
Industry Perception • Channel Preferences
Interaction Preferences • Customer Effort

Industry Perception

CONSUMER OPINION TOWARD CUSTOMER CARE AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION LEVELS BY CHANNEL

Consumer Opinion — Industry Perception

Consumer opinion on customer care performance slipped in this year's results, turning in the lowest "Getting Better" (14%) and the highest "Getting Worse" (42%) responses since this question was first asked in 2015. Businesses should seek to understand if this is the result of a realignment of expectations, or if these results are based on a decline in performance.



Do you feel the customer care departments of today's companies are generally meeting your customer service needs and expectations?†

2017 — Yes 40%

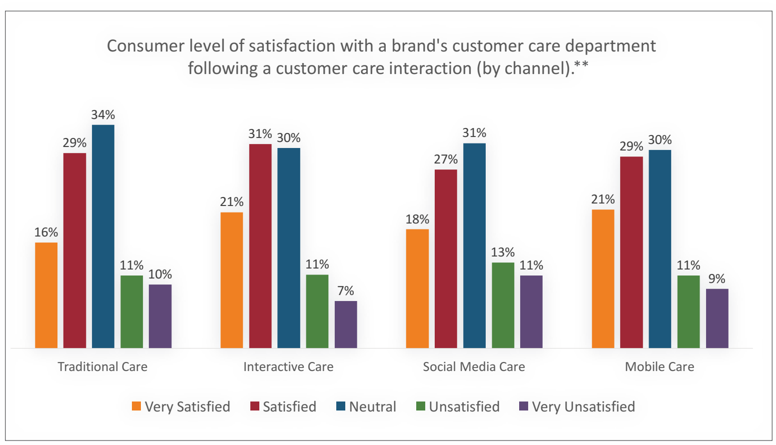
2016 — Yes 41%

2015 — Yes 33%

2014 — Yes 22%

After two consecutive years of improved consumer opinion regarding the ability of customer care departments to meet needs and expectations, 2017 results flattened at 40%. Brands would do well to keep a close eye on the innovations and strategies of segment leaders, as they are the entities that will be setting and resetting consumer expectations in the years to come.

In examining customer satisfaction rates by channel, results were very similar to those from last year. Interactive Care provided the highest level of satisfaction to survey participants in 2017, with 52% indicating they were either "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" with a brand's customer care department following an interaction. Other channels were not far behind, with an average response of 47% of respondents stating they were either "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied."

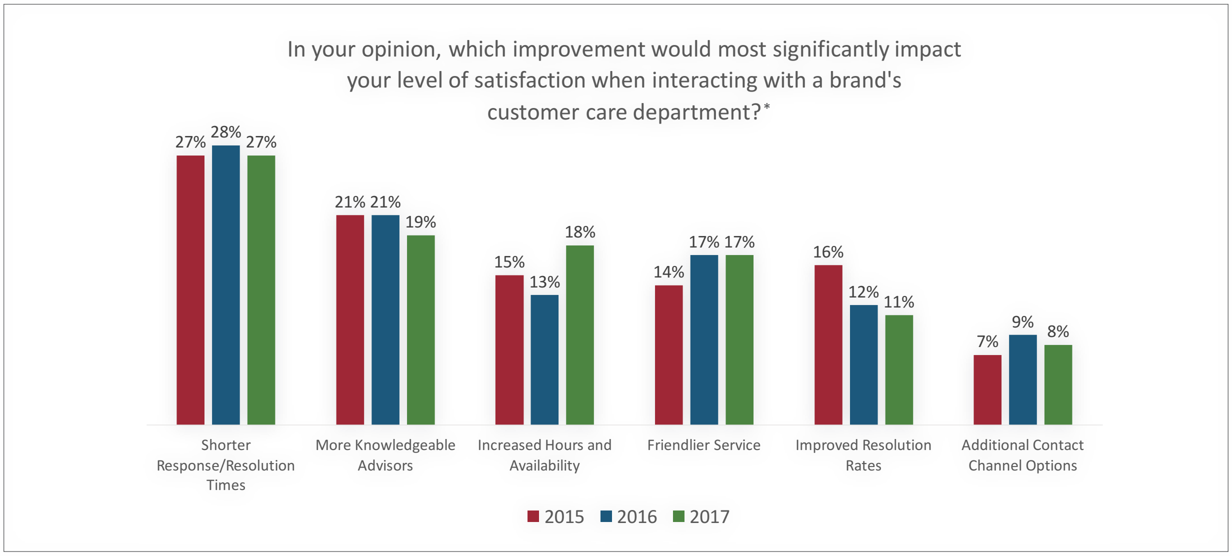


*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 202 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 200 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 1,423 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

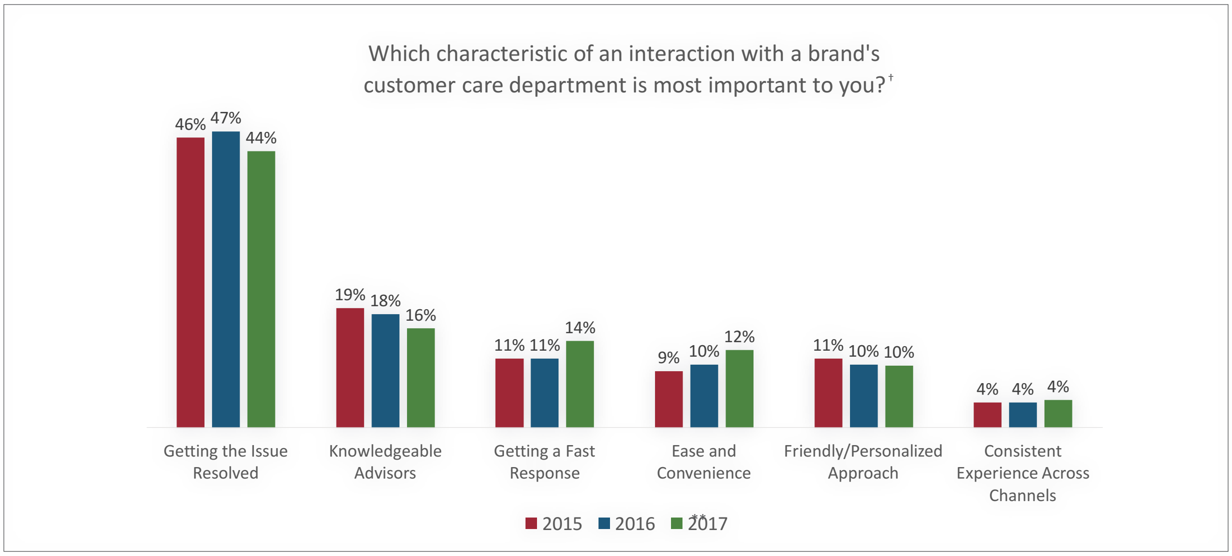
WHAT'S IMPORTANT, WHAT DRIVES SATISFACTION

Consumer Opinion — Industry Perception

In a pair of questions aimed at understanding what consumers want most out of their engagements with customer care, it was found that speed to resolution plays a critical role in delivering a satisfactory experience. Knowledgeable advisors, increased availability and friendlier service also play key roles in shaping a satisfying interaction. Once again, provision of additional contact channels received a very low response. One way this could be interpreted is that consumers care less about their preferred channels and more about getting great service in whatever channel they happen to find themselves in.



In a related question, we asked survey participants to indicate which characteristic of an interaction was most important. This year's response fell in line with results from both 2015 and 2016, with issue resolution first and foremost, distantly followed by knowledgeable advisors. At the end of the day, consumers are consistent — they want to speak with someone who knows what they're talking about, they want to be helped quickly and, most of all, they want their issue resolved.



*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 222 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 203 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

HOW COMPANIES CAN DO BETTER, AND WHAT MATTERS OUTSIDE OF A RESOLUTION

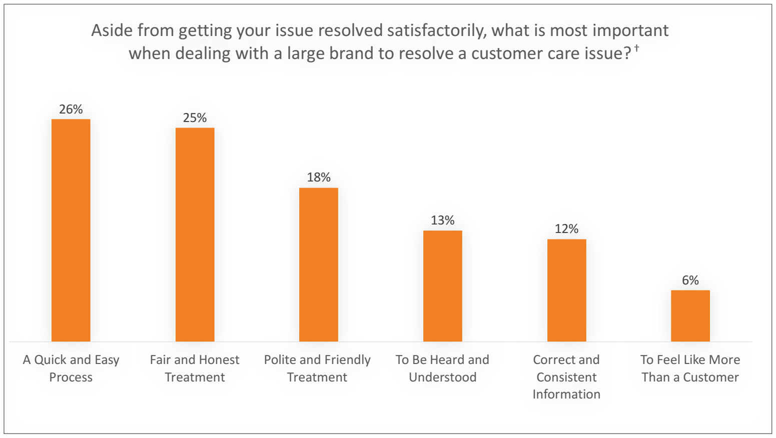
Consumer Opinion — Industry Perception

Each year, the CXMB Series Consumer Edition report includes a number of open-ended questions aimed at unveiling honest assessments and unique insights. The word cloud below captures the essence of the responses we received to the question of how customer care can better meet the needs of consumers. Also shown below is a sampling of responses received. As in past years, consumers were very poignant about what they want — to speak to a person, and for that person to be an excellent communicator and empowered to help.

How can the customer care departments of today's companies better serve your customer care needs?*

Verbatim responses to the above question:

- "Let me talk to a human if I call them"
- "By using critical thinking when problem solving and not just follow a script"
- "Have people that speak clear English"
- "Customize their service to the individual instead of offering cookie cutter solutions"
- "Care about the people they help"
- "They need to be trained to listen to the problem before they make up their mind"



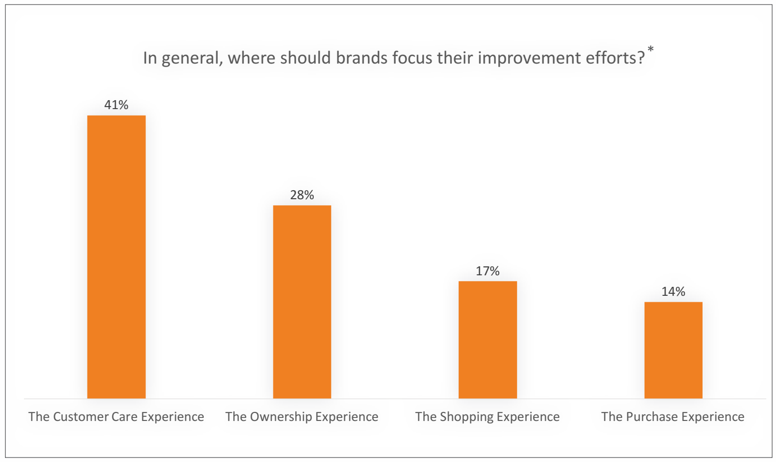
As the results on the previous page indicate, above all else, consumers value a resolution to their issue. But what if a resolution is assumed? Then, what do consumers value most? This year's research sought to answer exactly that in a brand new question (at left). As it turns out, consumers value an equal mix of ease and fair treatment. If brands can consistently solve issues quickly and fairly, they'll be satisfying at least half of all customers.

*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 200 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 200 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

WHERE TO FOCUS, PAYING FOR BETTER SERVICE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CARE

Consumer Opinion — Industry Perception

In a new question for 2017, we asked survey participants to indicate where brands should be focusing their improvement efforts. "The Customer Care Experience" was the most common response received, with "The Ownership Experience" coming in as the second most common response. These results beg the question, "Do brands really have that far to go in improving customer care, or have consumer expectations simply shifted from where they were in the past?"



Would you be willing to pay a little more for a product or service if you knew you would receive world-class customer service as a result?†

2017 — Yes **60%**

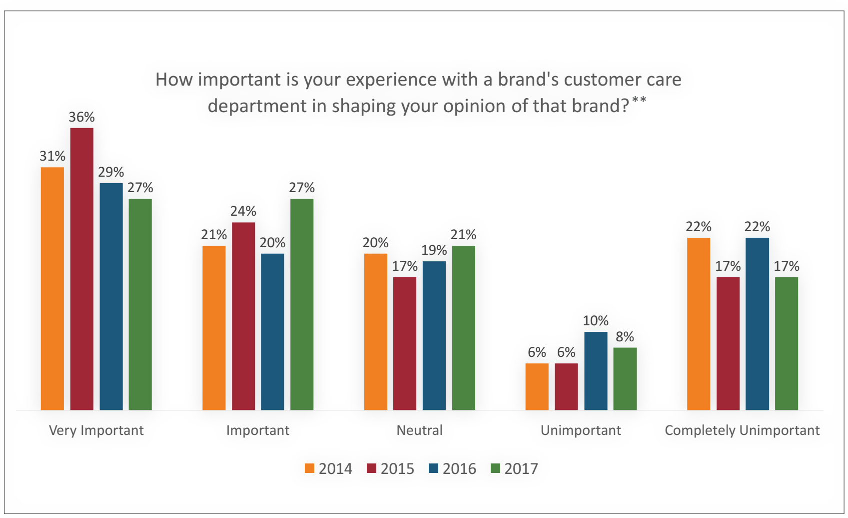
2016 — Yes **58%**

2015 — Yes **46%**

2014 — Yes **48%**

Last year's leap in results to the question at left not only held, but increased slightly. A majority of respondents now indicate they would be willing to pay a little more if it meant a guarantee of receiving amazing customer service. For brands that are increasing their investment in customer care, this is compelling evidence they are on the right track.

The number of survey respondents who felt their experience with a brand's customer care department is either "Important" or "Very Important" in shaping their opinion of a brand rose slightly year-over-year, moving from 49% to 54%. Although such a result shouldn't come as a surprise, it provides a strong basis for the notion that an investment in customer care is an investment in brand image.



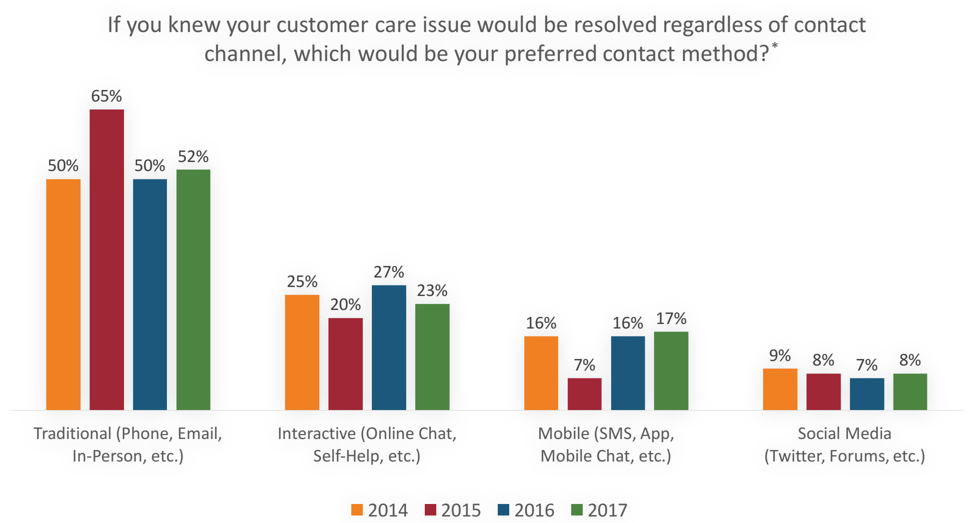
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 200 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 200 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 200 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

Channel Preferences

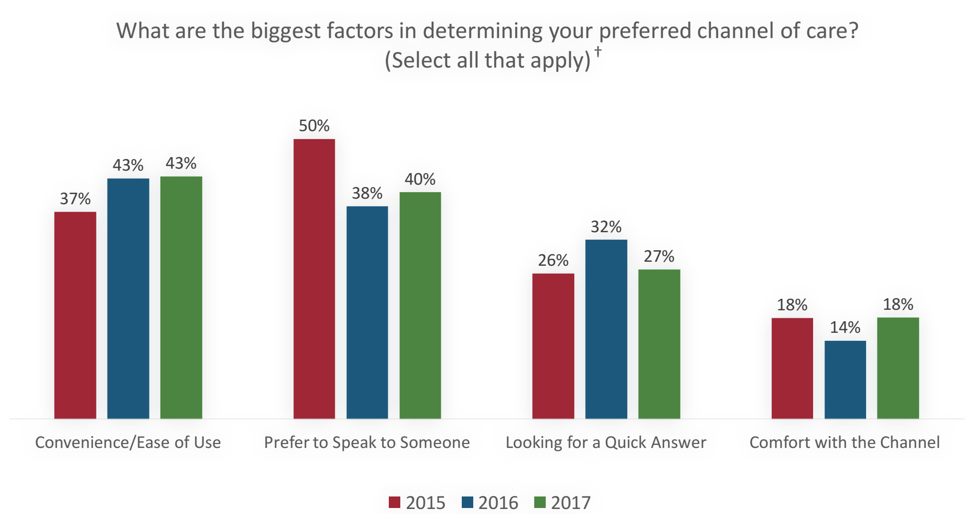
CHANNEL PREFERENCES AND FACTORS FOR PREFERENCE

Consumer Opinion — Channel Preferences

Consumer channel preferences remained relatively stable year-over-year. That said, Traditional Care is still underrepresented by consumer preferences (below) compared to actual use (page 10). At the same time, Interactive Care and Mobile Care remain overrepresented in consumer preferences compared to actual use. This is likely due to the fact that not all companies offer channels like Interactive Care and Mobile Care, so even if consumers prefer these channels, they are not always available. But as these channels become more widely available, use and preference results should align more closely.



Beginning with last year's results, it began to become apparent that the biggest factor driving channel preference was neck and neck between convenience/ease of use and the desire to speak with a person. In 2017, that race became even closer, with just three points of separation. Consumer desire to speak with a person has been widely reflected across CXMB Series research, and is widely covered in the Interaction Preferences section (beginning on Page 42).

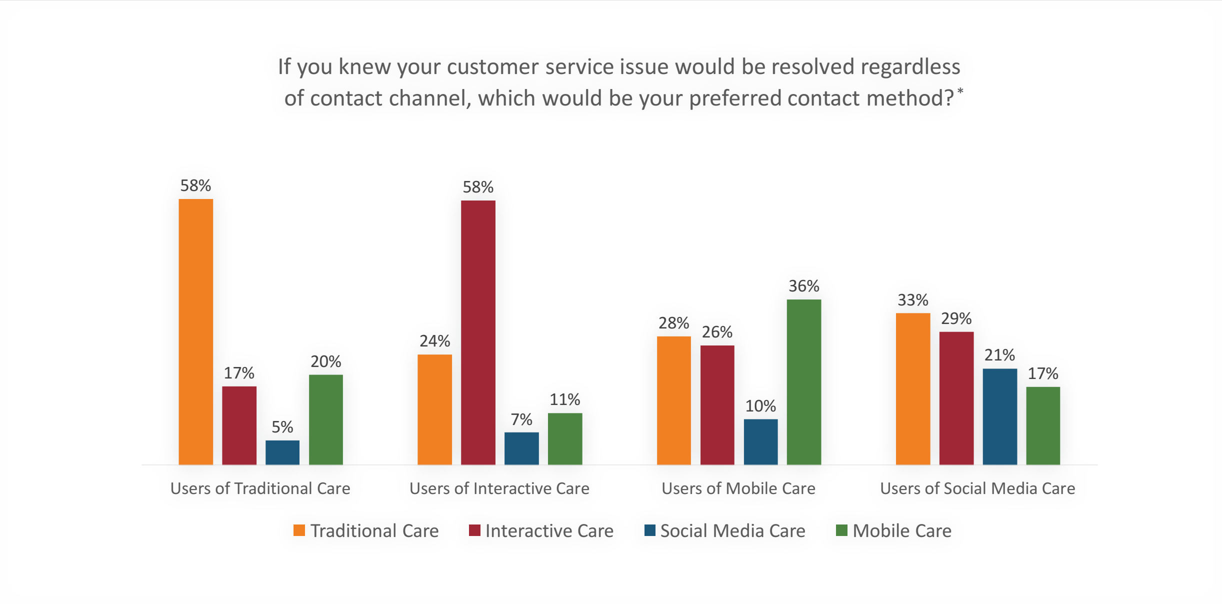


*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 210 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 210 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

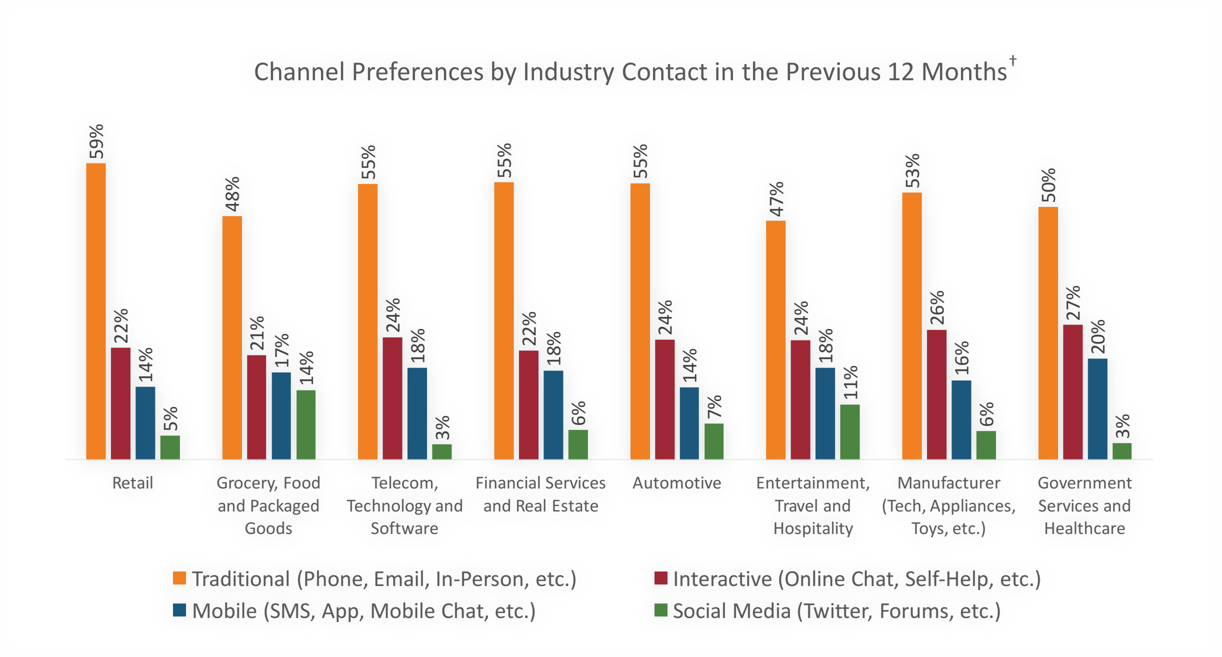
CHANNEL USER PREFERENCES AND PREFERENCES BY INDUSTRY CONTACTED

Consumer Opinion — Channel Preferences

The previous page listed the channel preferences of general users of customer care. The chart below sets out to ascertain the channel preferences of confirmed users of specific channels. Results clearly show the highest level of channel loyalty among users of Traditional Care and Interactive Care, meaning that most users of those channels also prefer them above all other channels. Mobile Care saw less channel loyalty, although more Mobile Care users prefer Mobile over other channel offerings. Social Media Care saw the least amount of channel loyalty, with only 21% of channel users also indicating Social Media Care as their preferred channel.



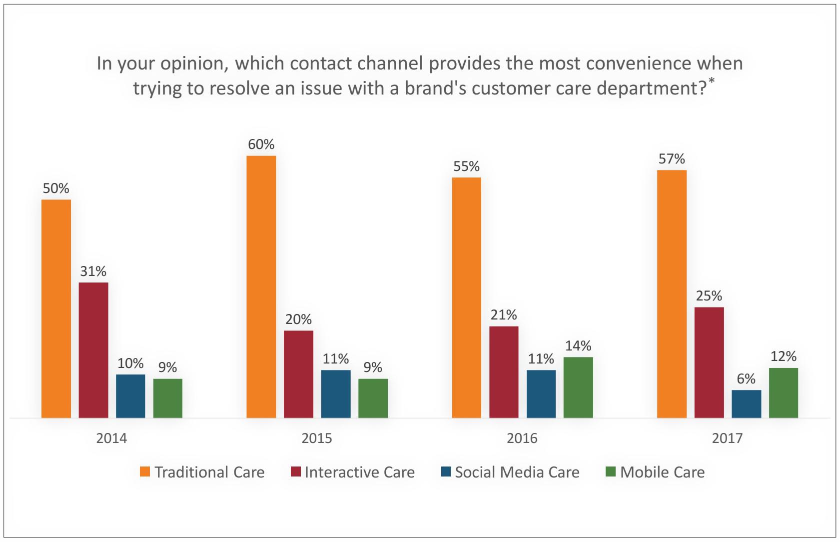
As expected, Traditional Care was by far the most preferred channel among survey respondents, regardless of the industry being contacted. That said, individuals contacting both Grocery, Food and Packaged Goods, and Entertainment, Travel and Hospitality brands were more open to alternative channels, especially Social Media Care. Brands should consider the preferences of their customers as they roll out new channel options.



*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 819 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 210 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

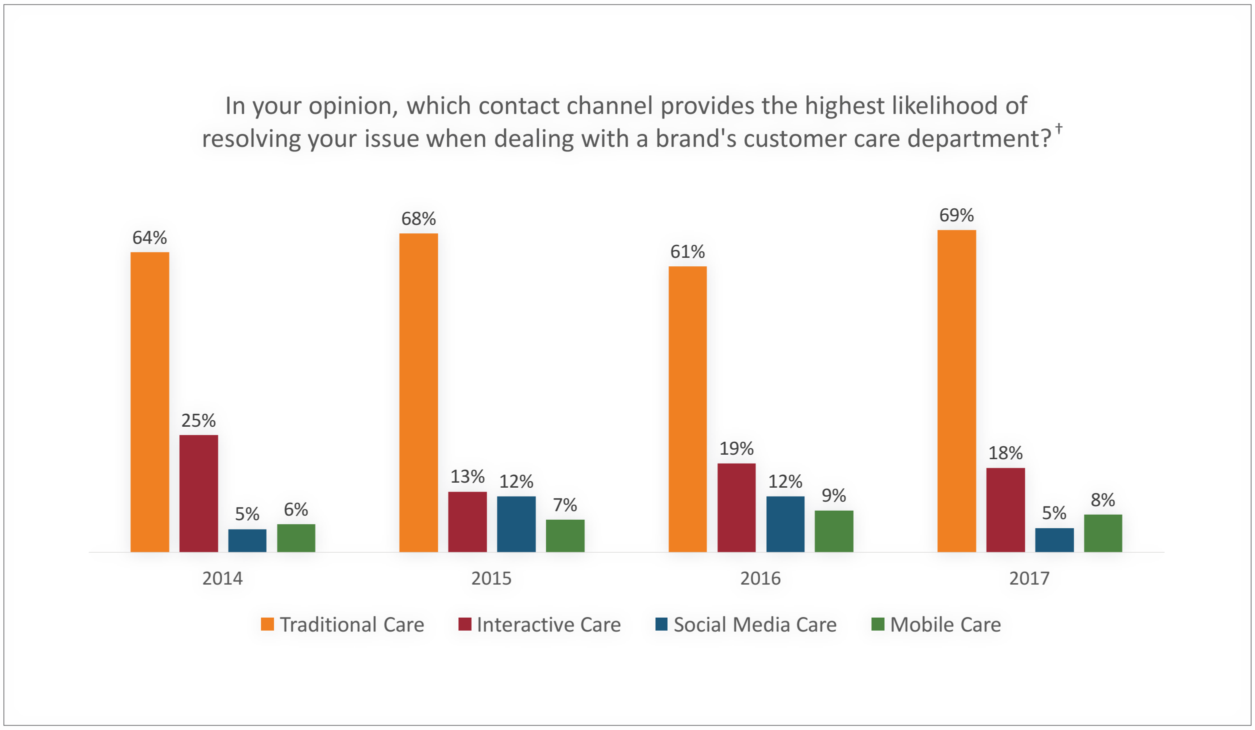
OPINIONS ON CHANNEL CONVENIENCE AND RESOLUTION CAPABILITIES

Consumer Opinion — Channel Preferences



Traditional Care continues to be viewed as the most convenient customer care channel, with 57% of 2017 survey respondents naming Traditional Care as the most convenient channel in which to resolve an issue. Brands that want to shift traffic from Traditional Care to alternative channels need to devise effective ways to increase the convenience of these channels, while also shifting consumer perception.

Just like convenience (above), consumers peg Traditional Care as the channel most likely to resolve their issue. The perception that issues have a better shot at getting resolved in Traditional Care versus other channels is well-founded, considering that results from the 2016 CXMB Series Corporate Edition indicate fewer than 10% of companies measure first-contact resolution across all channels. Without widespread monitoring of resolution rates (including FCR), it’s next to impossible to identify shortcomings, correct them, and improve.

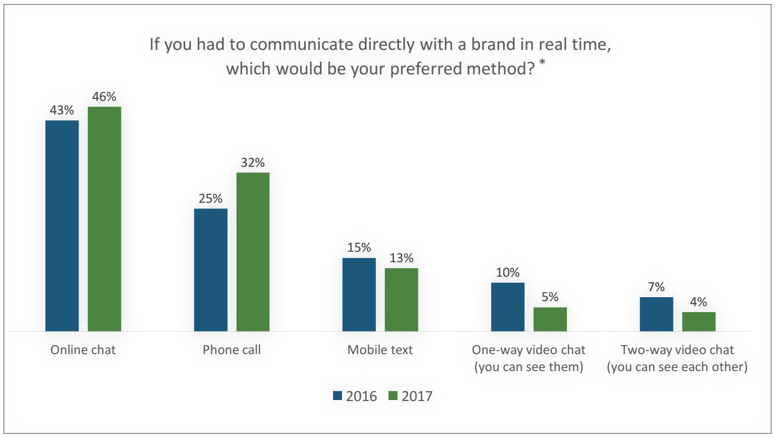


*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 217 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 211 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

Interaction Preferences

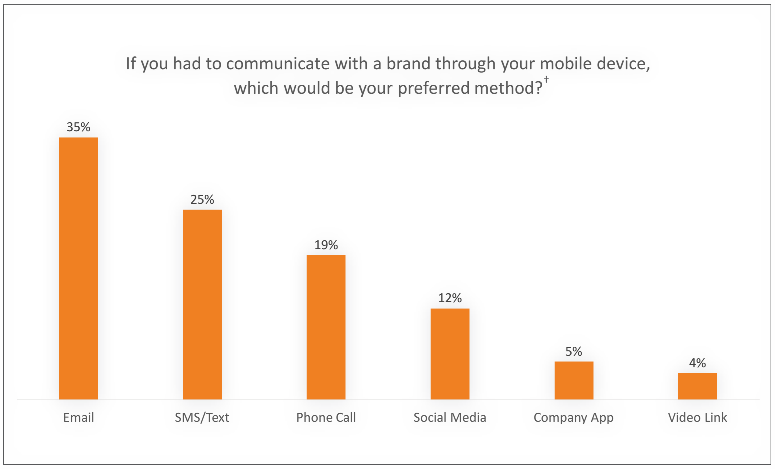
REAL-TIME, MOBILE DEVICE AND CALL PREFERENCES

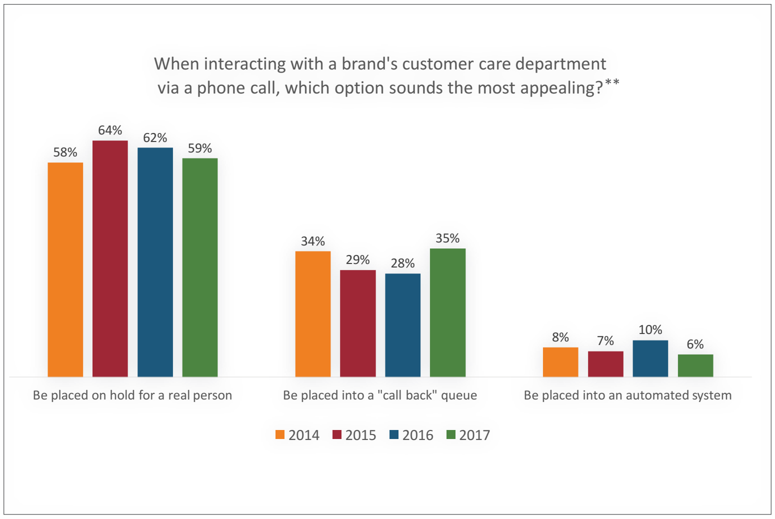
Consumer Opinion — Interaction Preferences



In year two of asking about real-time communication preferences, Phone Call saw a measurable gain, with Video Chat (both one- and two-way) falling dramatically on a percentage basis. It should also be noted that this question and the results are specific to Interactive Care users, and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of general consumers.

In a new question for 2017, the general population was asked about their preferred solution from a mobile device. Results proved intriguing, with Email garnering the highest response, at 35%. Also interesting was the fact that only 19% of respondents named Phone Call as their preferred method, placing it behind both Email and SMS/Text.



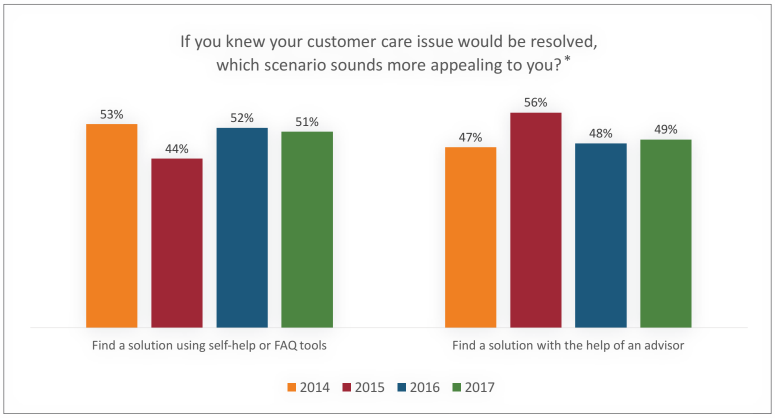


With four years of data, when phoning in to interact with a brand's customer care department, consumers continue to heavily favor the option of waiting on hold for a live person. The percentage of survey respondents who would opt for being placed into an automated system fell to an all-time low of just 6%, showing how little interest and patience consumers have for dealing with automated systems.

*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 201 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 198 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 213 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

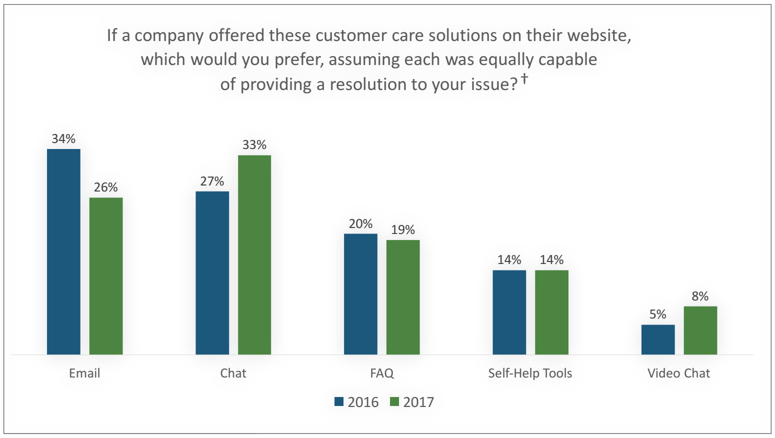
SELF-HELP VERSUS ASSISTED, WEBSITE SOLUTIONS AND CHATBOTS

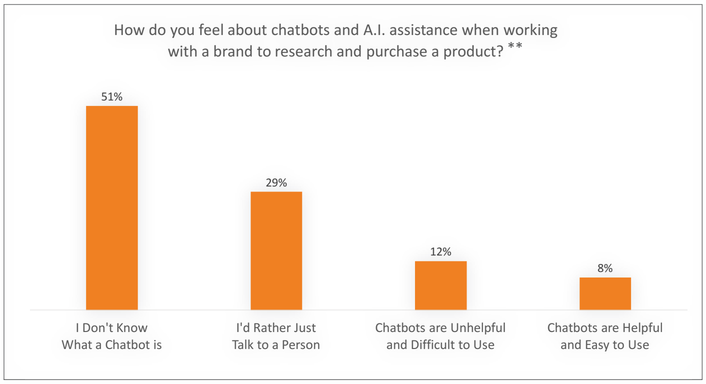
Consumer Opinion — Interaction Preferences



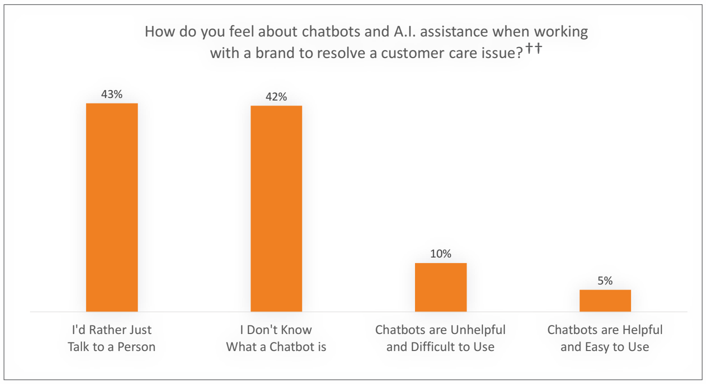
In a question (at left) asked exclusively of Interactive Care users, results demonstrate how users of certain technologies can widely differ from the general public on their acceptance of automation and self-assistance. While most consumers prefer live assistance (as demonstrated on the following page), Interactive Care users are basically divided in their preferences.

In a question aimed at the general population of consumers, survey participants were asked about their website solution preferences. Taking into account both current and previous results, consumers were mostly divided between Email and Chat, with FAQ not too far behind. With Email and Chat basically trading results, it will be interesting to see what the future holds as many companies attempt to scale down Email support while increasing support for Chat.





In a question about chatbots, half of all respondents were unfamiliar with the term. And while consumers are slightly more familiar with chatbots in a customer care capacity (below), it's clear that if brands want to drive the adoption of chatbot technology, regardless of the reason for contact, they have a long way to go in convincing a seemingly skeptical body of consumers.



Echoing results on the following page, a good portion of consumers would rather talk to a person rather than deal with a chatbot or other automated system. This is especially apparent once "I Don't Know What a Chatbot is" responses are removed from results. If that were done, fewer than one in ten respondents felt chatbots were helpful and easy to use. Undoubtedly, there is much room for improving the capabilities of chatbots.

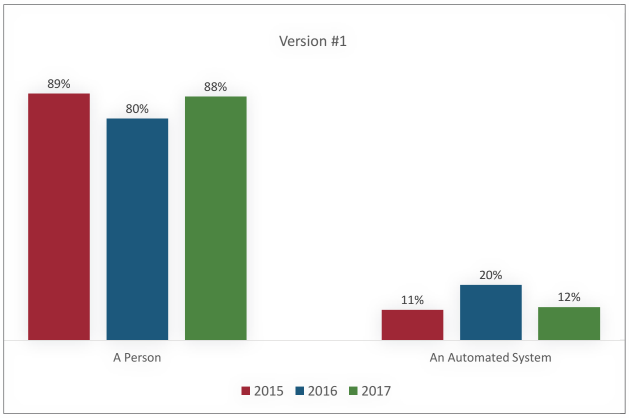
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 220 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 205 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 198 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
††Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 198 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

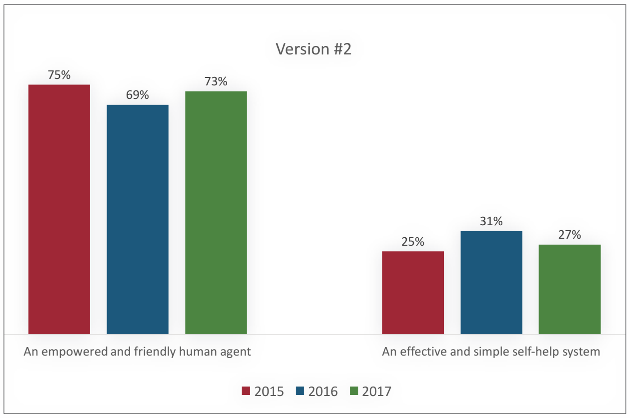
CONSUMER PREFERENCE FOR ASSISTED INTERACTIONS

Consumer Opinion — Interaction Preferences

In research first conducted in 2015, we sought to understand consumer preferences between live and automated assistance. Initial results gave the CXMB Series research team pause, and called for increased variables both in the way the question was asked, and in the available responses. Below is the initial set of variable questions, with different responses. Even with these variations, and across three years of data, consumers remain remarkably consistent in their overwhelming preference for live interactions over automated systems.

In the event of a customer care issue, which would you rather interact with (assuming both are equally capable of resolving the issue)?*

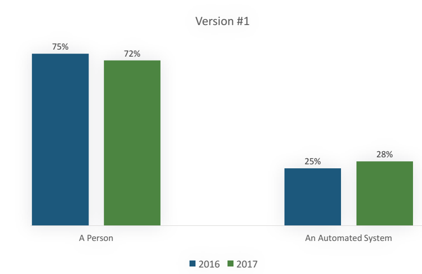


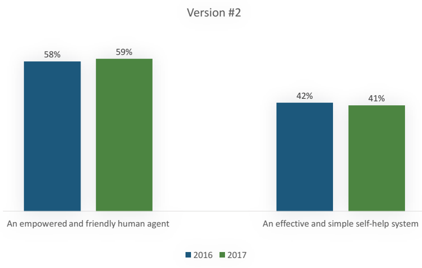


Beginning last year, we expanded on the above topic by describing the type of customer care issue as routine/simple/complex. Results show consumers by and large still prefer live assistance, but are more likely to lean toward automated help when issues are described as routine or simple. In order to increase their customers' acceptance of an automated system, brands will need to find a way to simplify the issue resolution process, boost the resolution capabilities of automated solutions and get the right issues to the right solutions.

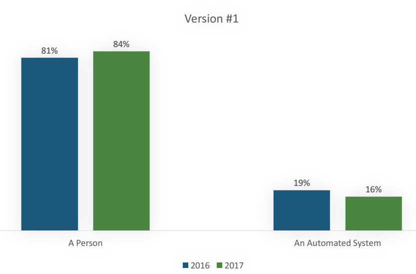
In the event of a (routine/simple/complex) customer care issue, which would you rather interact with (assuming both are equally capable of resolving the issue)?

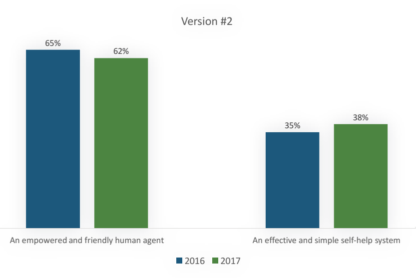
Routine Customer Care Issues†



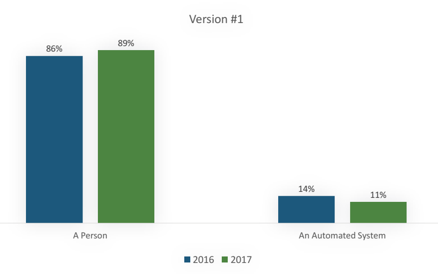


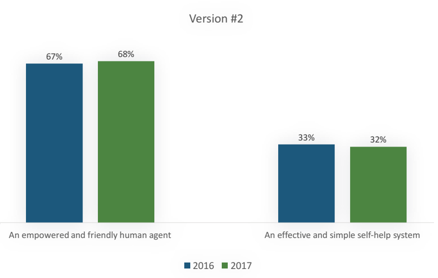
Simple Customer Care Issues**





Complex Customer Care Issues††





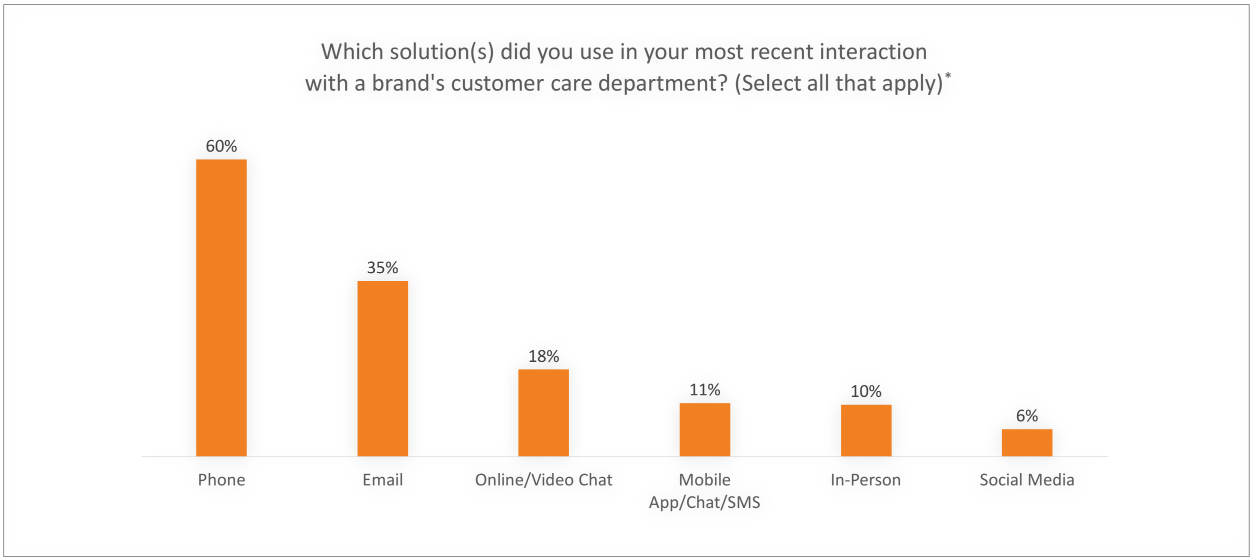
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 204 (#1) and 201 (#2) online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 213 (#1) and 200 (#2) online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 200 (#1) and 200 (#2) online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
††Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 200 (#1) and 200 (#2) online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

Customer Effort

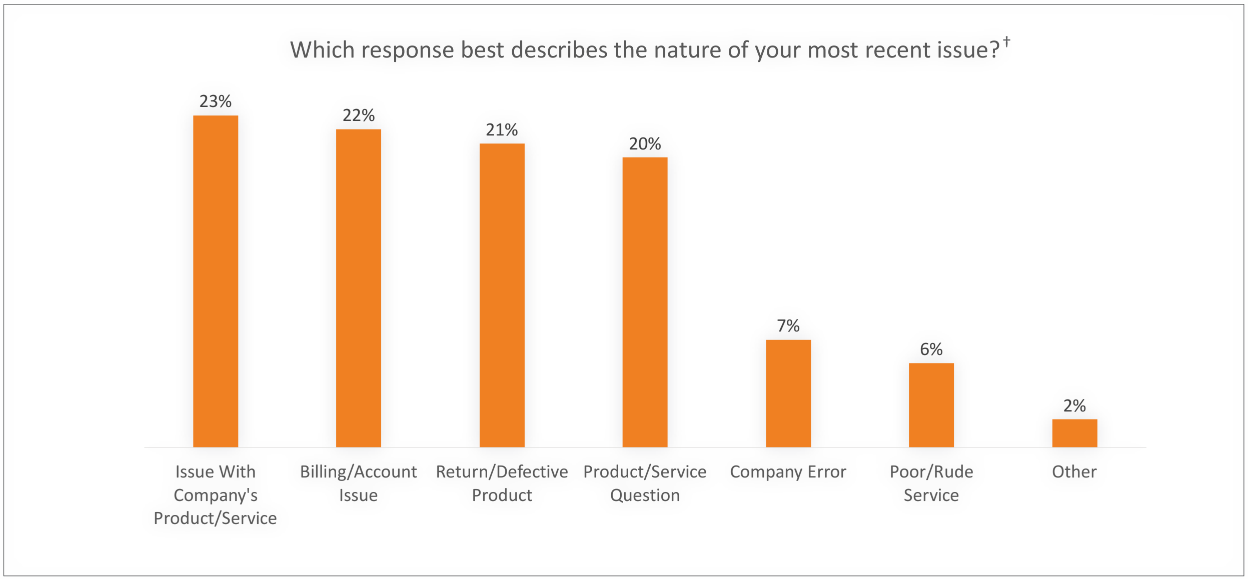
SOLUTION USE AND NATURE OF MOST RECENT ISSUE

Consumer Opinion — Customer Effort

This year's report features an entirely new section on customer effort. To provide additional insights into individual solutions, survey participants were asked to indicate which channels they used in their most recent interaction. As expected, Traditional Care solutions such as Phone and Email were, by far, the most popular.



Company- and product-specific issues, including product/service problems, billing/account issues and returns/defective products, formed the bulk of issue types seen among survey respondents. These types of issues are common across companies, but are difficult to remedy without making organization-wide changes, touching on a variety of business groups such as customer care, engineering and product fulfillment. To make effective change, it's critical for brands to understand why customers are contacting them, and determine if there are underlying issues that can be remedied.



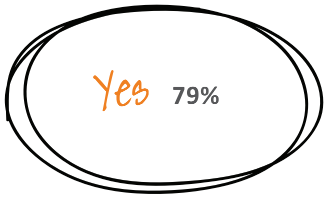
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 324 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 313 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

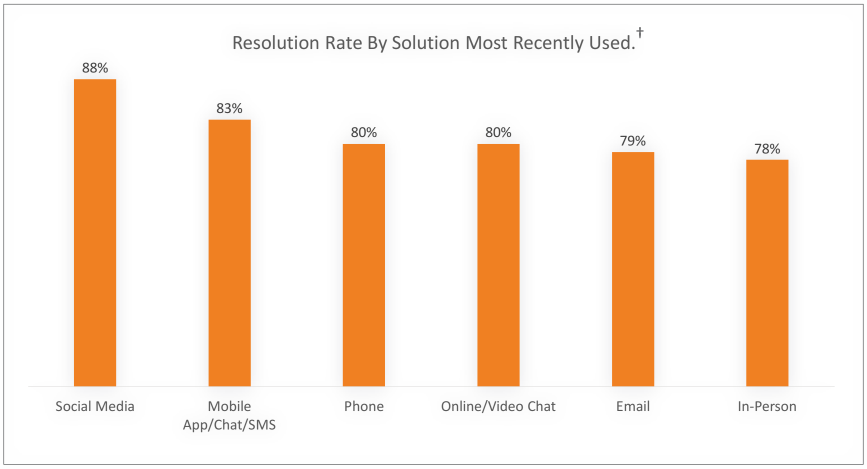
RESOLUTION RATES (ALSO BY SOLUTION) AND POSITIVITY OF EXPERIENCE

Consumer Opinion — Customer Effort

Seventy-nine percent of survey respondents in the customer effort section indicated their issues were resolved, which is a slightly higher rate than what was seen in individual alternative care channels. The reason for this higher resolution rate could be due to the fact that 25% of respondents indicated multiple channel use. Multi-channel engagements typically have a higher resolution rate in comparison to all channels except Traditional Care.

Was your issue resolved?*

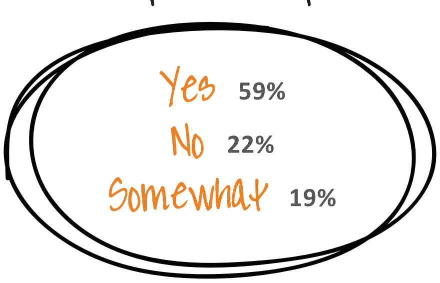


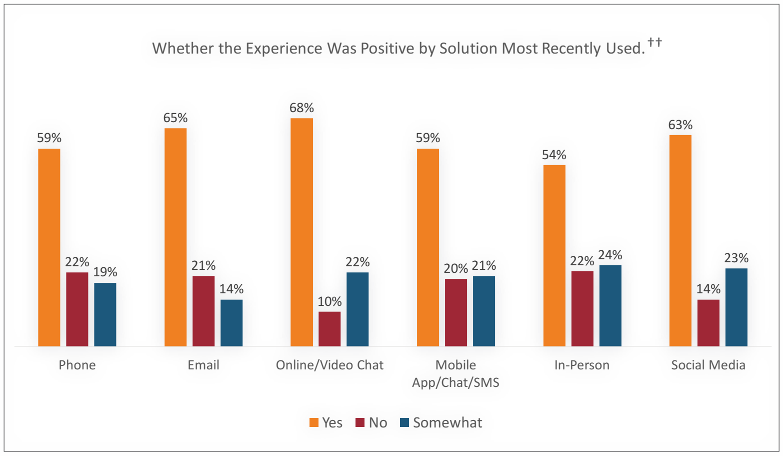


Since some survey respondents used multiple channels in an attempt to resolve their issue, the associated resolution rates of individual channels are slightly inflated over the cohort average (above). Still, resolution rates by solution provide some insights into which channels performed best for this particular set of survey respondents, with Social Media and Mobile providing slightly better resolution rates than the field.

About three in five survey respondents found their interaction with the brand they contacted to be a positive experience. Based on the solution breakdown of this result (below, right), Online/Video Chat provided the highest likelihood of a positive experience, as well as the lowest chance of the interaction being decidedly not positive. The performance of Online/Video Chat was closely followed by Email and Social Media. In-Person care provided the worst outcomes, with only 54% of respondents indicating they had a positive experience, while 22% said they did not have a positive experience.

Did you find your interaction with the brand to be a positive experience?**

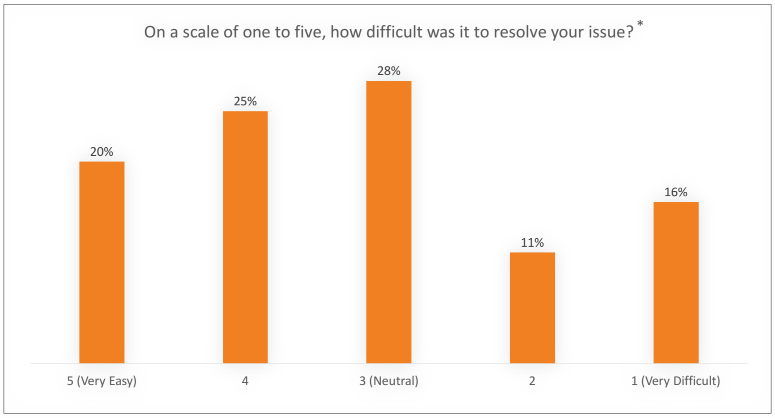




*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 296 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 296 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 288 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
††Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 288 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

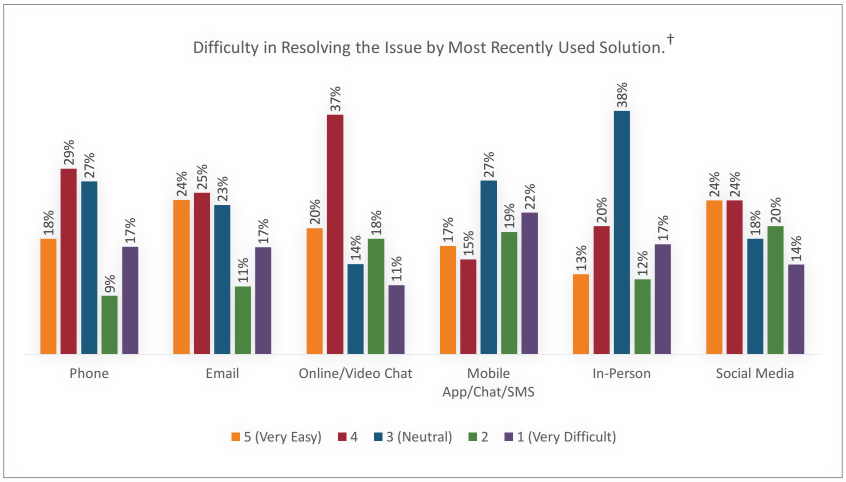
GETTING A RESOLUTION AND RESOLUTION RATE USING PREFERRED CONTACT SOLUTION

Consumer Opinion — Customer Effort



For 45% of all customer effort survey respondents, the difficulty in getting the issue resolved was described to be either easy or very easy. Given how strongly consumers value ease, companies should seek to understand where the process could be made easier. And they should do so on a channel-by-channel basis, starting with the solutions that have the highest number of difficult and very difficult responses (below).

In examining difficulty in resolving the issue by most recently used solutions, Online/Video Chat received the best results, meaning survey participants felt it was easiest to resolve an issue using Online/Video Chat as a solution. On the flip side, Mobile and Social Media seemed to create the most difficulty, with 41% and 34% of users indicating that getting a resolution was either difficult or very difficult.

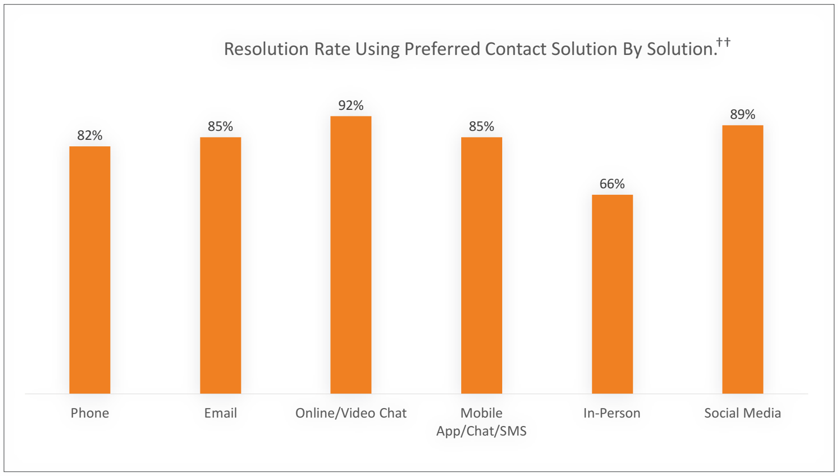


The majority of consumers (84%) who participated in the customer effort survey felt they were able to resolve their issue using their preferred contact method.

Do you feel you were able to resolve the issue using your preferred contact method (i.e., phone, email, etc.)?**

Yes **84%**

When cross-referencing whether individuals were able to resolve the issue using their solution of choice by the channel solutions most recently used, the resolution rates of the various solutions were generally in line with the overall average, the exception being In-Person. And while In-Person did underperform its peers, both Online/Video and Social Media outperformed all other channels.

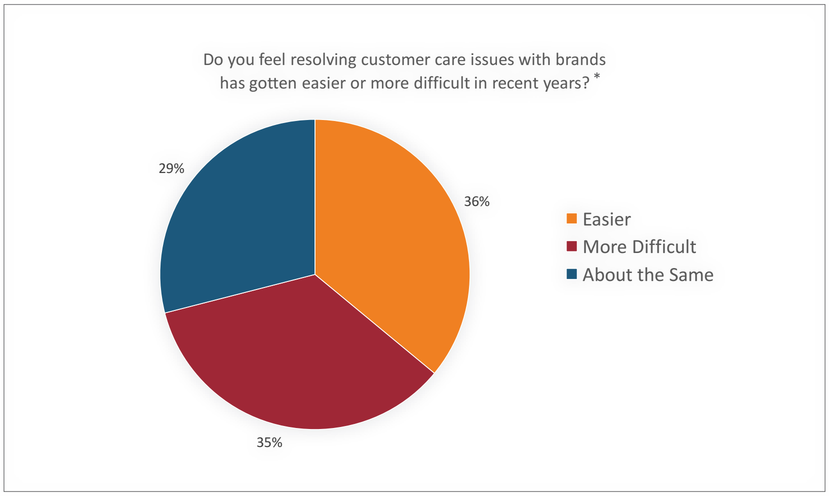


*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 280 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 280 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 274 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
††Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 274 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

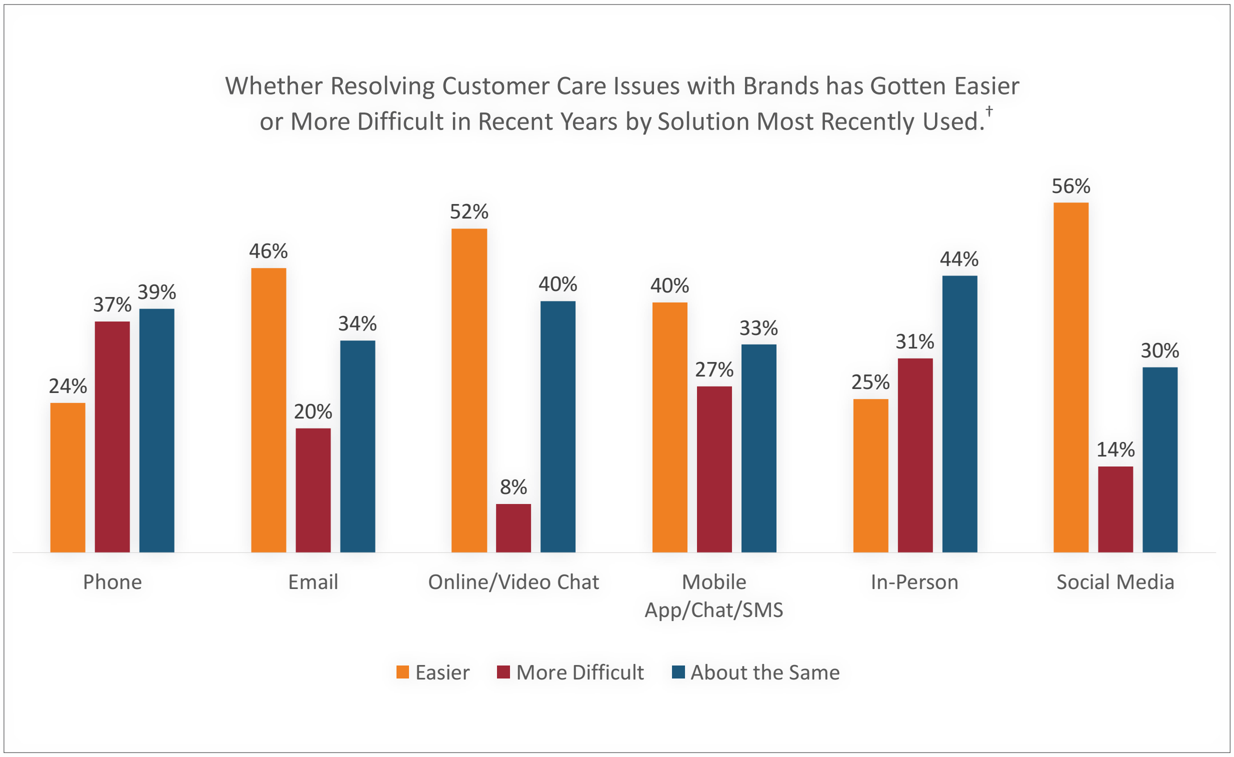
HOW PERCEPTION OF CUSTOMER CARE IS CHANGING (ALSO BY SOLUTION USED)

Consumer Opinion — Customer Effort

As a part of this report's investigation into customer effort, survey participants were asked whether they thought resolving issues had recently gotten easier or more difficult. Opinions were near even. But once these responses were segmented by the channels most recently used (below), things became more interesting.



When the above results are broken down by the solutions most recently used by survey respondents, interesting insights emerged. While more users of Phone and In-Person solutions saw things getting more difficult rather than easier, solutions like Email, Online/Video Chat and Social Media strongly represent the exact opposite. If brands could find a way to marry higher resolution rates with the convenience and ease of digital engagement, they would be going a long way in delivering an exceptional experience to a growing user base.



*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 269 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 269 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

CONSUMER OPINION CONCLUSIONS

Key Findings:

1) After two consecutive years of improving consumer sentiment toward customer care, 2017 results were flat year-over-year (Page 34)

2) Email, Online/Video Chat and Social Media users feel customer care has gotten easier in recent years, while Phone and In-Person users feel it has gotten more difficult (Page 50)

3) Email is the preferred mobile device solution among consumers, beating out both SMS/Text and Voice Call (Page 43)

4) Fifty percent of consumers don't know what chatbots are and, of those who do, only 16% find them to be helpful and easy to use (Page 44)

Consumer opinion toward customer care was flat in 2017, with multiple results confirming subdued improvements in consumer opinion toward customer care organizations. This comes on the heels of two years of strong, positive improvement, particularly as it relates to care organizations meeting needs and expectations. After several years of industry excitement around a "customer first" approach, brands might need to take a gut-check to make sure they remain focused on the sorts of initiatives that resulted in such elevated sentiment in recent years.

Based on results from a new CXMB Series section focused on customer effort, Phone and In-Person solutions seem to be at the center of degrading consumer opinion, with more solution users indicating that these solutions have gotten more difficult to use in recent years versus easier. The good news: users of alternative channel solutions like Online Chat and Social Media see it the other way, with stronger indications of customer care getting easier.

Critical Questions Brands Should Be Asking Themselves

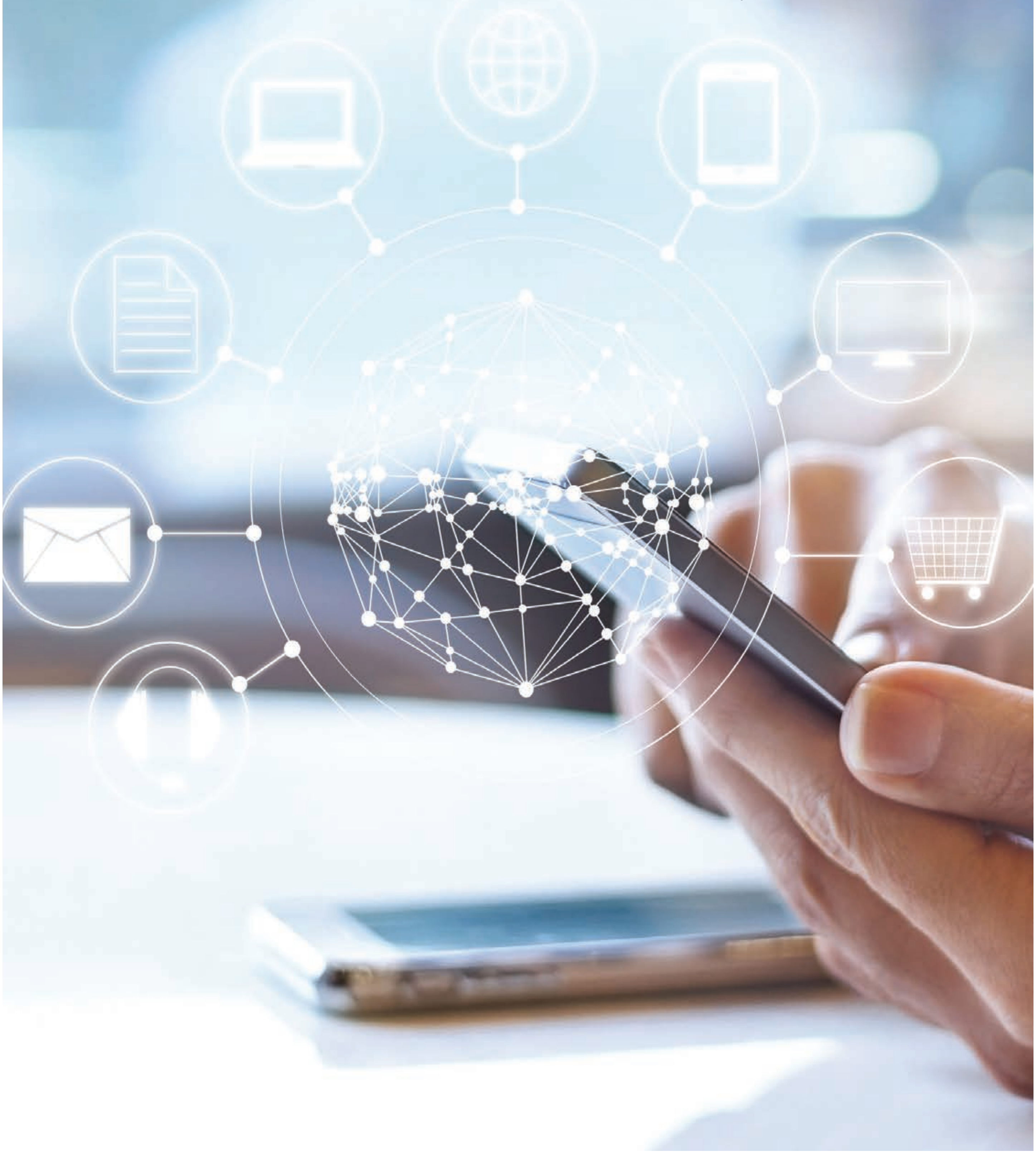
1) Are we supporting, expanding and innovating around the initiatives that have most improved the customer experience?

2) Have we made any changes to Traditional Care support (main Phone and In-Person) that might degrade the customer care experience?

3) In exploring the deployment of a chatbot solution, are our customers ready and willing to adopt such a solution, what sort of capabilities do they expect from such a system and are we implementing chatbot for the right reasons?

Channel Results

Traditional Care • Interactive Care • Social Media Care
Mobile Care • Alternative Channel Journey



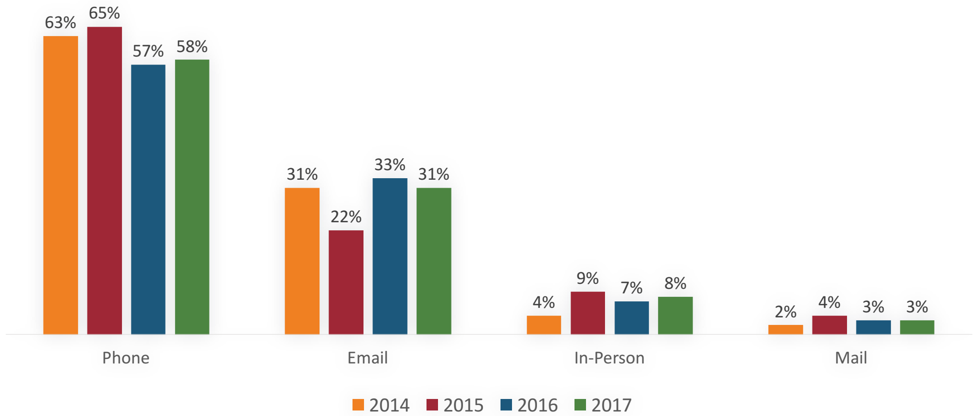
Traditional Care

SOLUTIONS MOST USED AND REASON FOR INTERACTION

Channel Results — Traditional Care

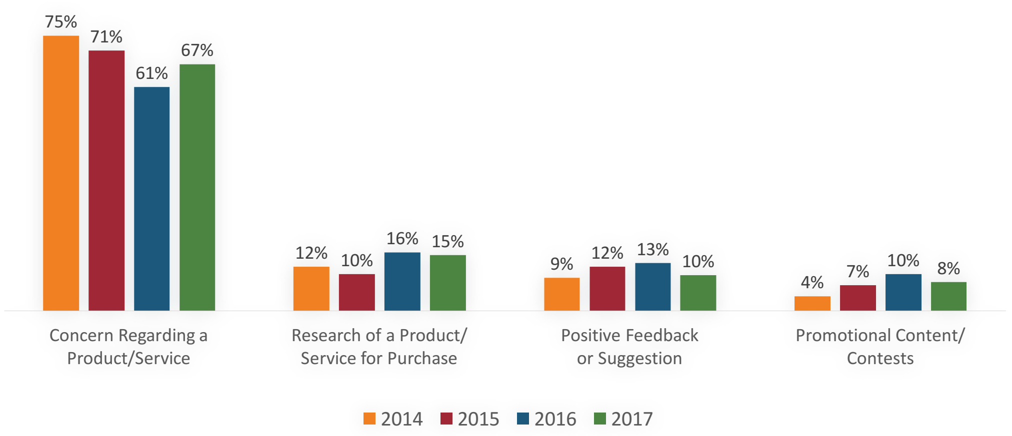
Traditional Care solutions — most often used by survey participants — remained steady year-over-year, with Phone still leading the way, even slightly improving on its lead over the second-most-used solution, Email. As for Email, it has held steady year-over-year, holding a bit below one-third. Although support for Email has waned at many companies, consumer support remains healthy for the time being.

Within the past 12 months, which Traditional customer care solution have you used the most to connect with a brand's customer care department?*



More than any other channel, Traditional Care is dominated by consumers looking to resolve a concern with a product and/or service. In fact, according to survey participants, two-thirds of Traditional Care interactions are directed at this purpose. More detail regarding the reasons for interactions can be found on the following page, with a breakdown by individual channel solutions.

Within the past 12 months, which scenario typifies your reason for interacting with a brand's customer care department via a Traditional contact channel?†

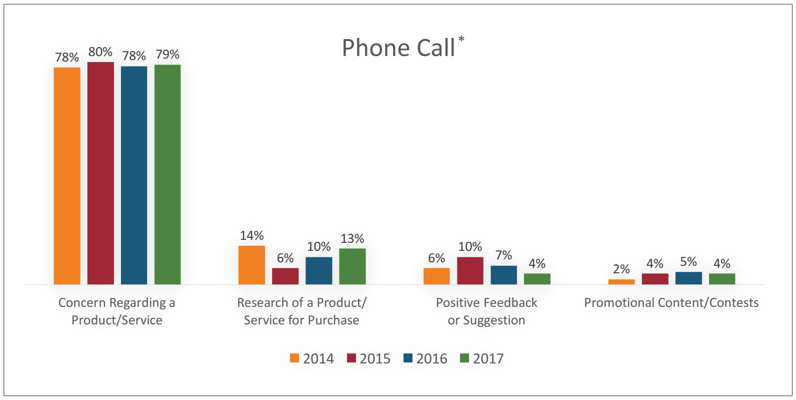


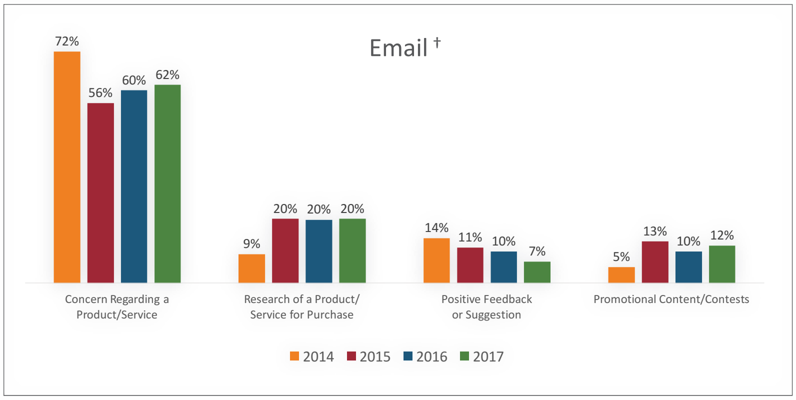
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 222 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 382 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

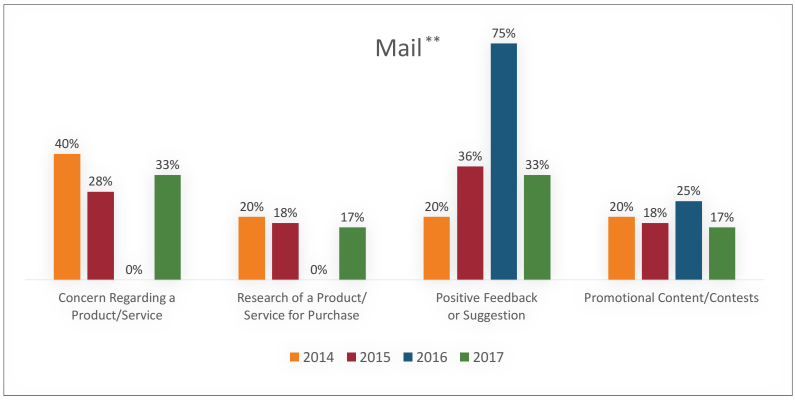
REASON FOR INTERACTION BY CHANNEL SOLUTION

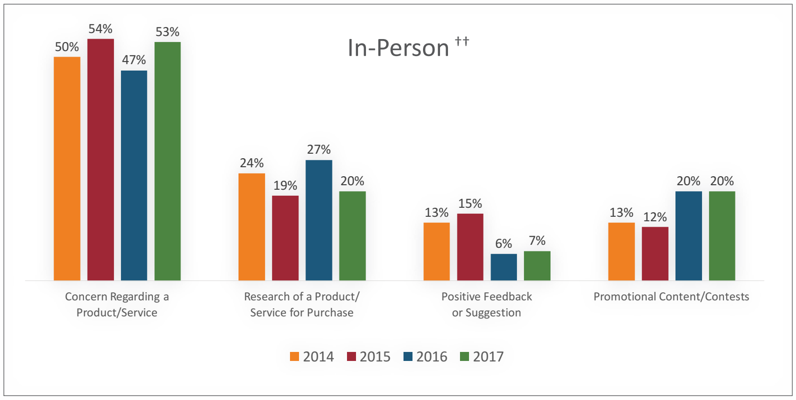
Channel Results — Traditional Care

Based on this and previous years' results, Phone continues to play an essential role when it comes to issue resolution. This is true not only of Traditional Care solutions, but of all individual channel solutions. Email and In-Person are also widely utilized for the purpose of resolving issues. For a quick comparison of these results to those of alternative channel solutions, breakdowns can be found on pages 60 (Interactive Care), 65 (Social Media Care) and 71 (Mobile Care).







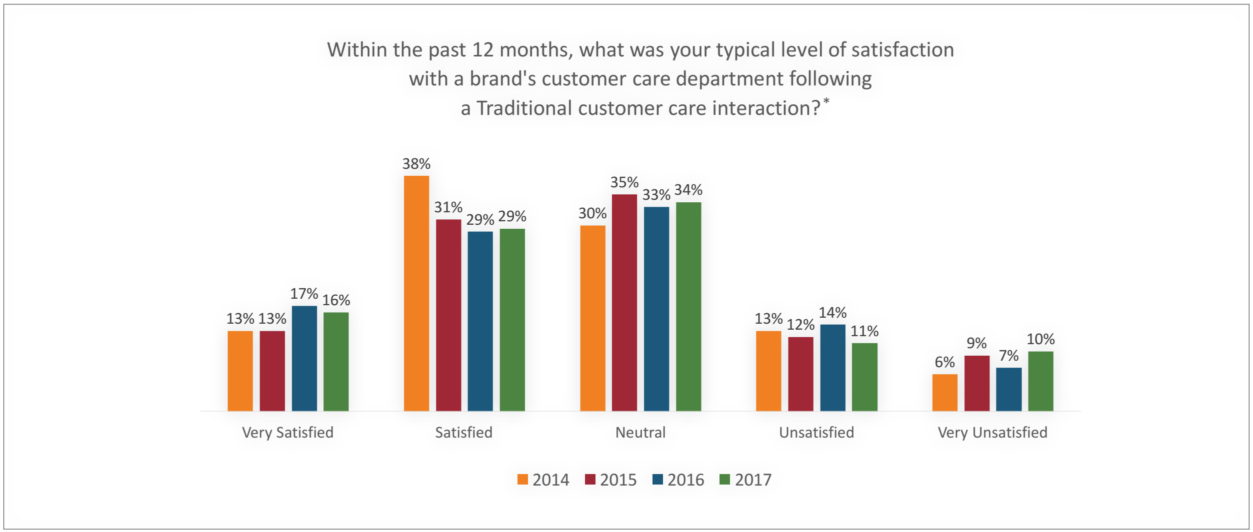


*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 115 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 60 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 6 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
††Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 15 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

CHANNEL SATISFACTION AND CHARACTERISTIC OF MOST IMPORTANCE

Channel Results — Traditional Care

Although Traditional Care satisfaction rates were mostly unchanged left of neutral, three percent of responses shifted from "Unsatisfied" to "Very Unsatisfied." Furthermore, consumers remained consistent about the causes for their dissatisfaction: slow response or lack of resolution, inability to get in touch with a real person, and indifference when able to connect with a real person.



What caused you to rate your level of satisfaction as you have?†

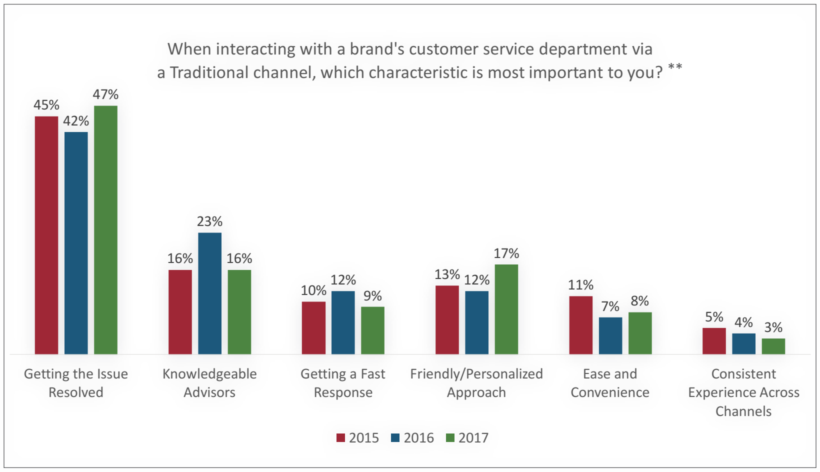
"Slow response time and indifference to reported problem"

"Service reps low level of product knowledge"

"Hard to talk to a real person"

"They never resolved my issue"

"I sent an email and received no response"



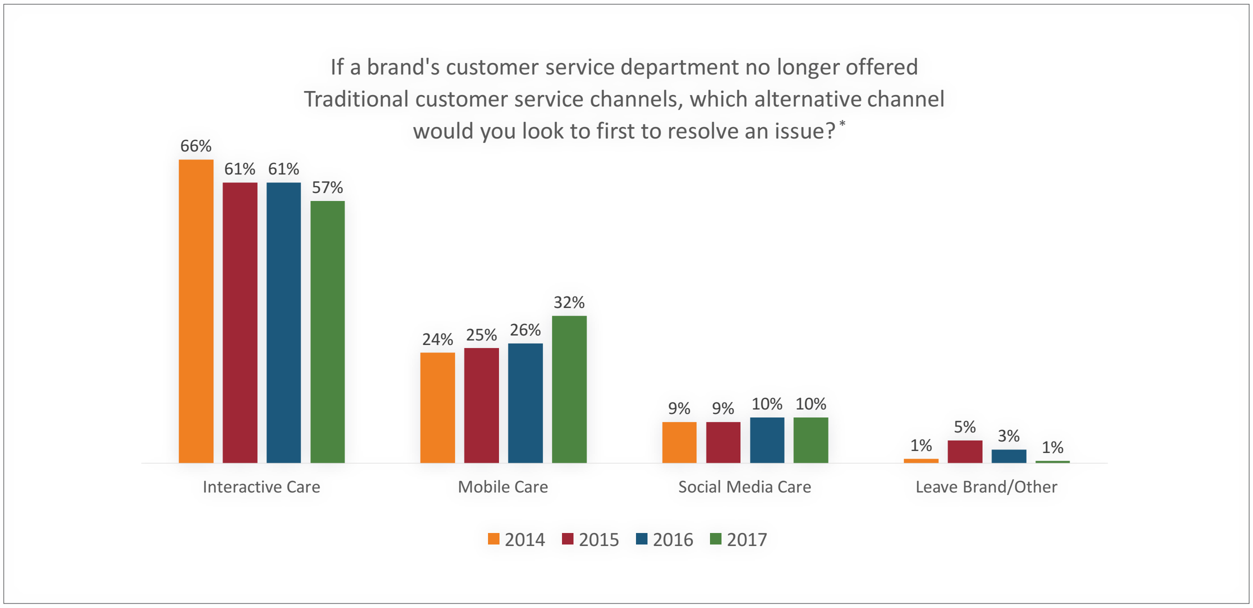
"Getting the Issue Resolved" remains the most important characteristic of an interaction for Traditional Care users, increasing its position in 2017. Also of note was the shift in consumer preference away from "Knowledgeable Advisors" and toward "Friendly/ Personalized Approach," with results now nearly even. Brands should strive to understand the satisfaction drivers of their own customers to ensure they are meeting or exceeding expectations.

*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 373 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 239 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 208 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

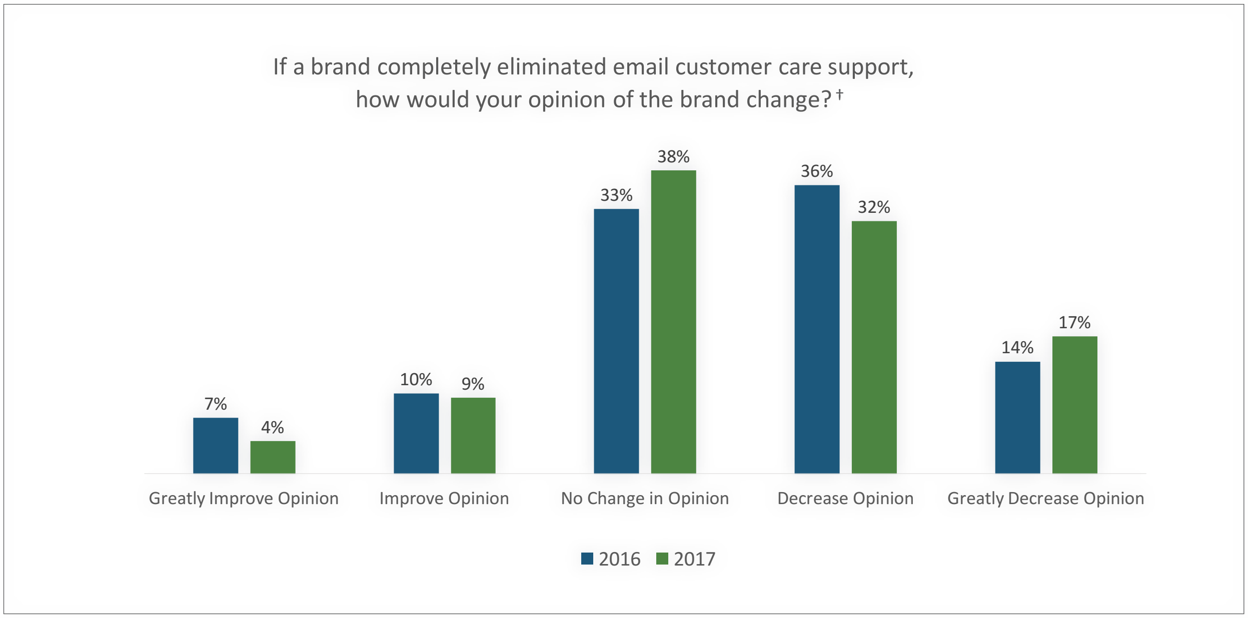
CHANNEL PREFERENCE OUTSIDE OF TRADITIONAL CARE AND SUPPORT FOR EMAIL

Channel Results — Traditional Care

In a question aimed at alternative channel preferences, Interactive Care continues to lead, with more than half of all respondents indicating it as their preferred channel in the absence of Traditional Care. That said, Interactive Care has shown a steady decline over the past several years, while Mobile Care has experienced the polar opposite. Already, Mobile Care has grabbed a one-third share of alternative channel preference. If this trend continues or accelerates, it's advisable for businesses to determine if they are properly positioned in Mobile Care.



Strong support for Email revealed itself again in this year's results, with 49% of respondents indicating a decreased or greatly decreased opinion of brands that eliminate Email customer care support. There was also a slight year-over-year decrease in the percentage of survey respondents who would have a positive reaction to brands eliminating Email support. The net-net: Email remains an important channel for many individuals.



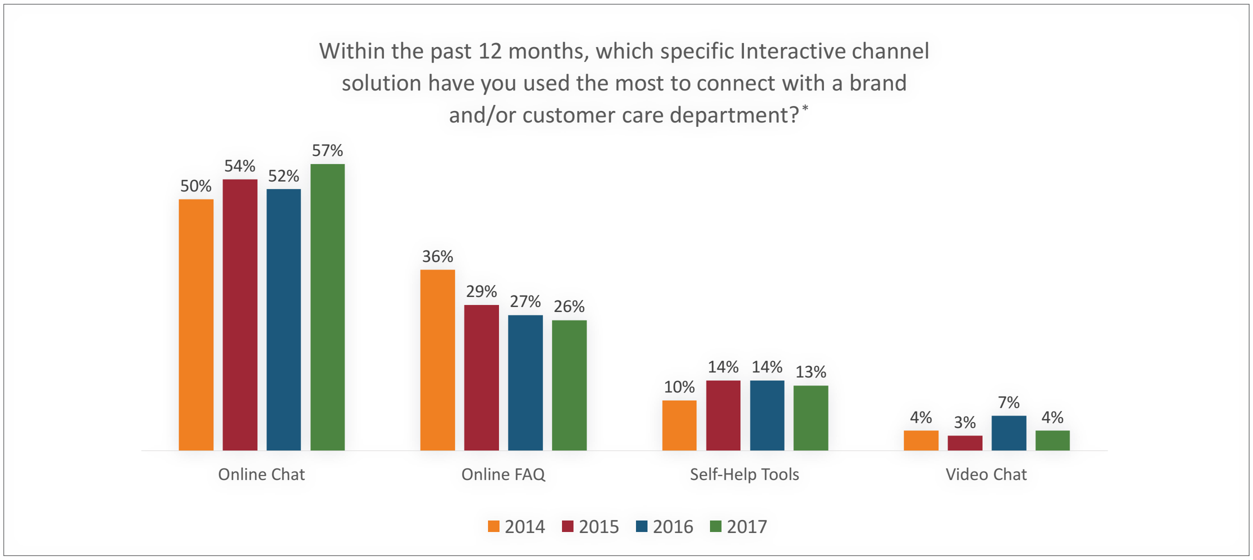
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 199 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 222 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

Interactive Care

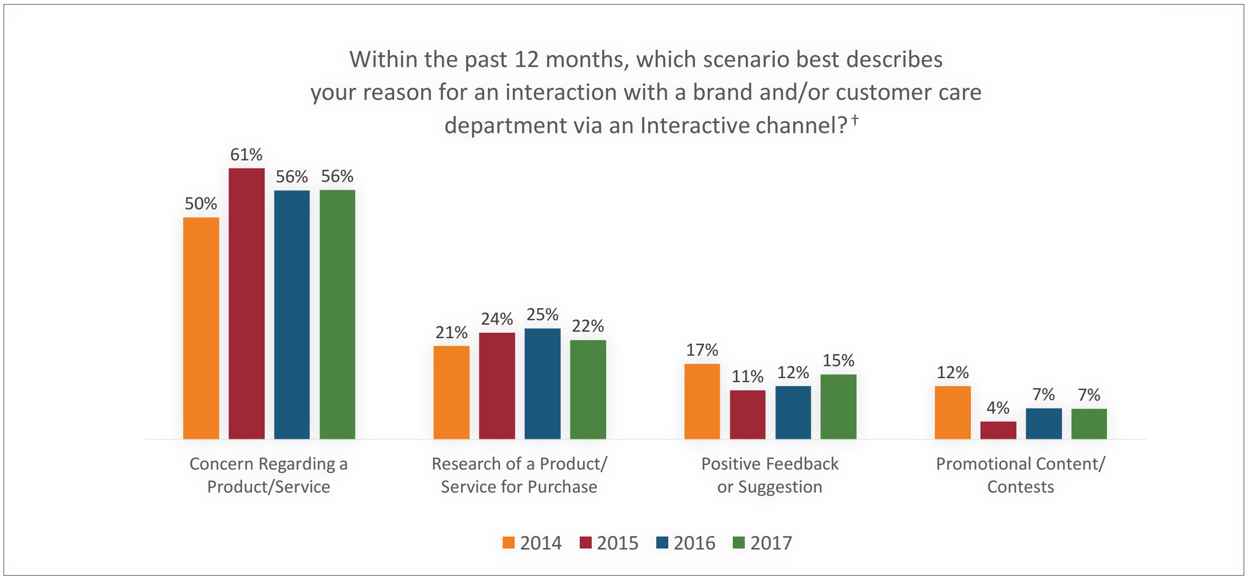
SOLUTIONS MOST USED AND REASON FOR INTERACTION

Channel Results — Interactive Care

Online Chat edged slightly higher year-over-year, moving from 52% to 57% (up 10%), although mix of results remained mostly unchanged year-over-year. The current and trailing results of Online FAQ are also worth noting. Since 2014, Online FAQ as a solution of most use has fallen by 28%. As Mobile Care use increases, and consumers are offered more answer-on-demand-type options, it's possible that Online FAQ use may see continued declines.



Interactive Care use is mostly directed at product/service concerns, but a significant portion of survey respondents (nearly one-quarter) use Interactive Care solutions to research products/services for purchase, a rate matched only by Social Media Care. These results bolster the notion that it is critical for brands to encourage collaboration between business units in the development on new technologies, and the capabilities of those technologies.

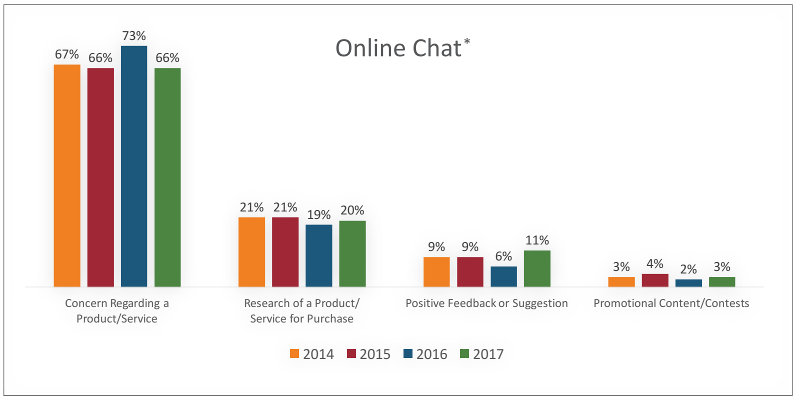


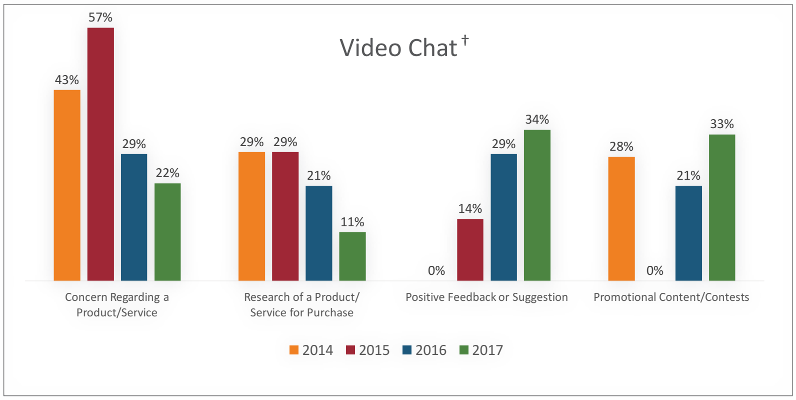
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 225 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 349 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

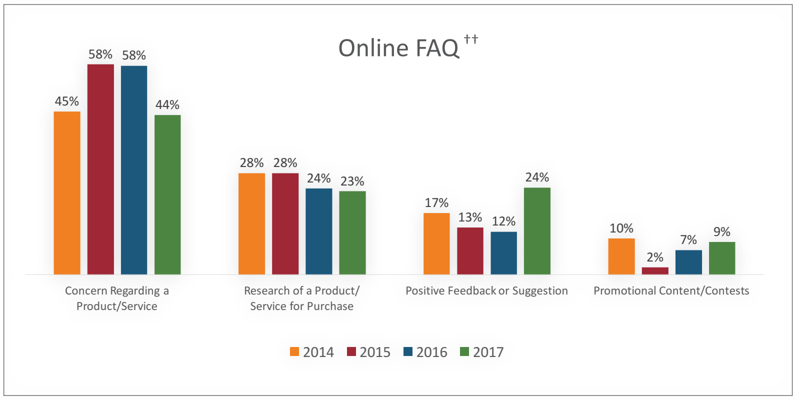
REASON FOR INTERACTION BY CHANNEL SOLUTION

Channel Results — Interactive Care

Among all Interactive Care solutions, Online Chat continues to be the solution most often utilized for the purpose of resolving a product/solution concern. Self-Help Tools have also seen considerable gains in their usefulness for researching products/services for purchase, with three consecutive years of strong gains. As businesses continue to develop these types of tools, they should take care to ensure such use cases are accounted for in both the design and functionality of the tools.





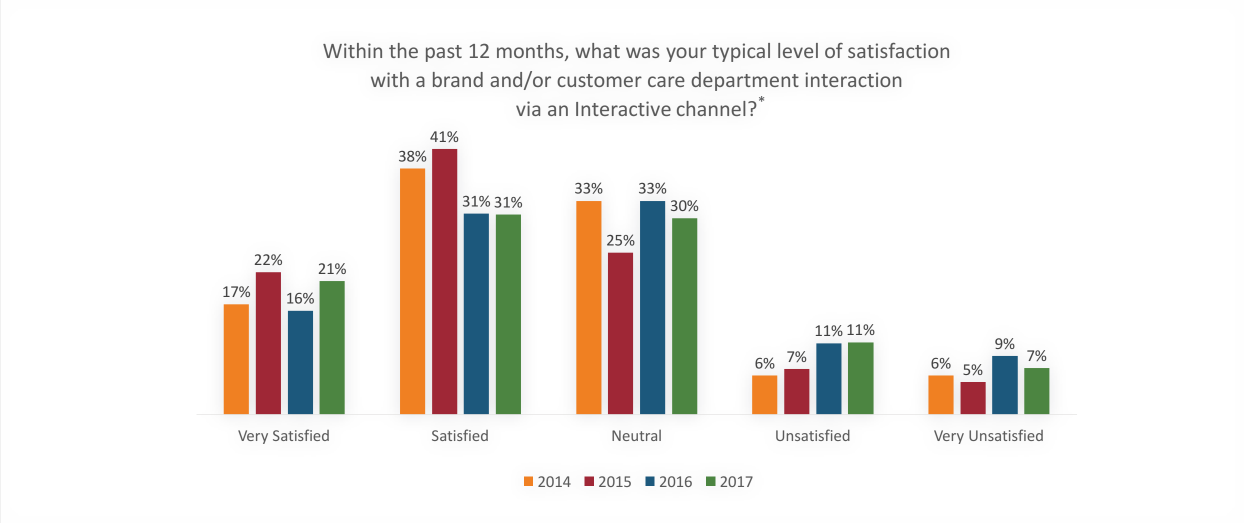


*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 124 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 9 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 29 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
††Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 57 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

CHANNEL SATISFACTION AND CHARACTERISTIC OF MOST IMPORTANCE

Channel Results — Interactive Care

Satisfaction levels within the Interactive Care channel saw modest improvements year-over-year, with a five point gain in the percentage of respondents who counted themselves as "Very Satisfied." At the same time, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of respondents who were "Very Unsatisfied."



In an open-ended follow-up to the satisfaction question (above), lack of an appropriate response, apathy and inconsistencies were all too common in the responses received from those who provided either an "Unsatisfied" or "Very Unsatisfied" response.

What caused you to rate your level of satisfaction as you have?†

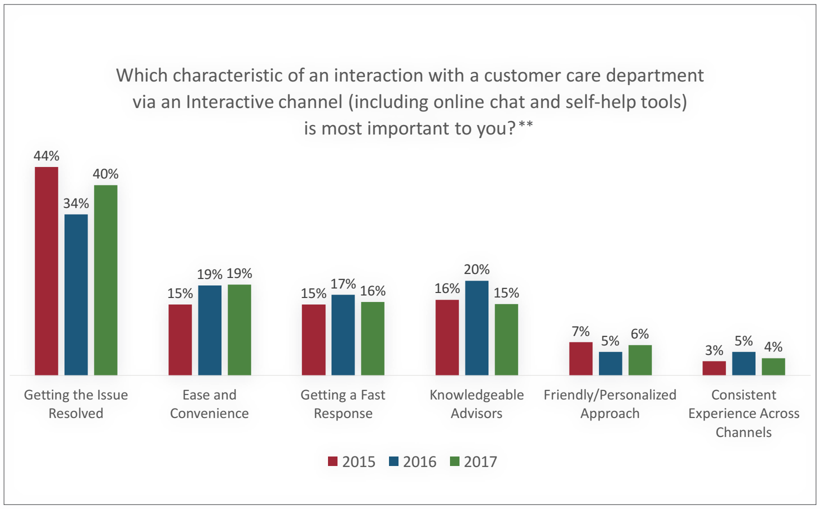
"Give me answers to questions I did not ask and failed to answer my question"

"Rude customer service"

"Didn't get a resolution"

"Multiple contradicting answers"

"Lack of concern"



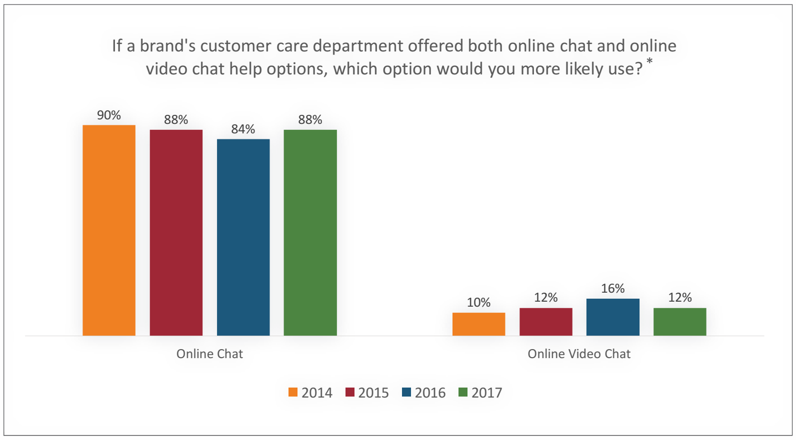
By resolving issues easily, quickly and with knowledgeable advisors, brands could deliver on what's important to 90% of consumers. Although category results vary slightly year to year, the previous statement has held true since the question (below) was first asked in 2015. Although the target is in plain sight, hitting the mark isn't such an easy task. For that reason, businesses should begin with improving resolution rates. Once resolution rates are optimized, brands can put resources into figuring out how to do it with greater ease and speed.

*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 350 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 238 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 219 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

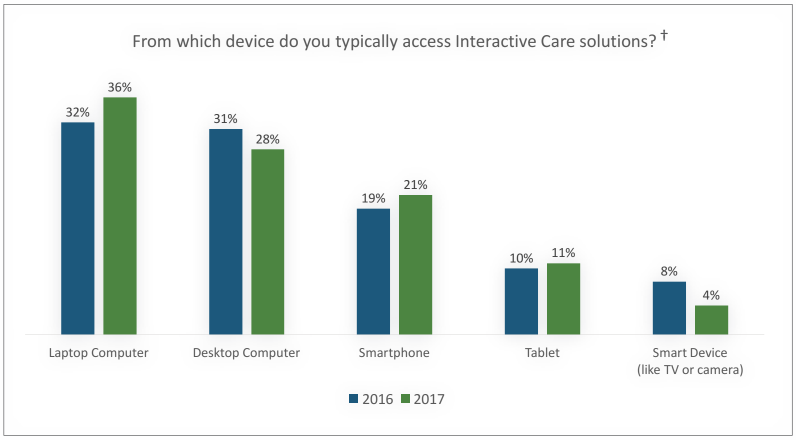
ONLINE VERSUS VIDEO CHAT, DEVICE USE AND DRIVERS OF ADOPTION

Channel Results — Interactive Care

Consumer preferences for Video Chat over Online Chat remain low, with roughly one in ten surveyed preferring Video Chat over Online Chat, if given the option. Consumers have remained consistent in their disinterest regarding Video Chat, with few brands announcing new initiatives.



Regarding device preferences for accessing Interactive Care solutions, computers continue to lead the way, followed by smartphones. It's important for brands to understand such breakdowns as they decide which features and capabilities to include in future generations of Interactive Care solutions.



In an open-ended question, survey participants were asked what change would increase their use of Interactive Care solutions in the future. Ease of use and speed to response/resolution were two popular themes in the responses received. Many also indicated technology-based responses, like better adaptation to broader platforms (like mobile) and designs aimed at increasing usability. Below is a small sample, representative of the responses received.

What change would make you more likely to use the Interactive channel in the future?**

"Resolving the issue"

"Quicker response times"

"Not having to wait long for an associate to link up with me"

"Adopt a Facebook chat box approach where the window is within the browser window"

"Allow option to talk with a live person"

"Native, English-speaking operators"

"Knowing that I am getting accurate responses to my questions"

"Time of response from online chatters"

"Ability to use on mobile browser"

"Make it easier to use FAQ so I won't have to actually speak or chat with a person"

"Reliable voice to text translation"

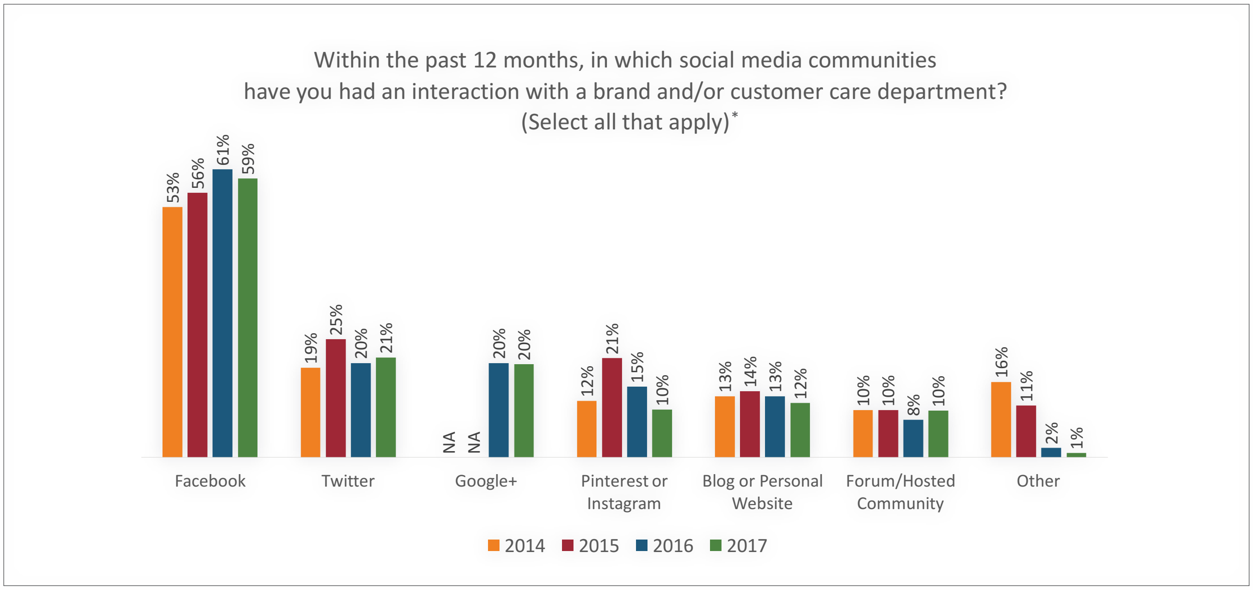
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 218 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 204 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 202 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

Social Media Care

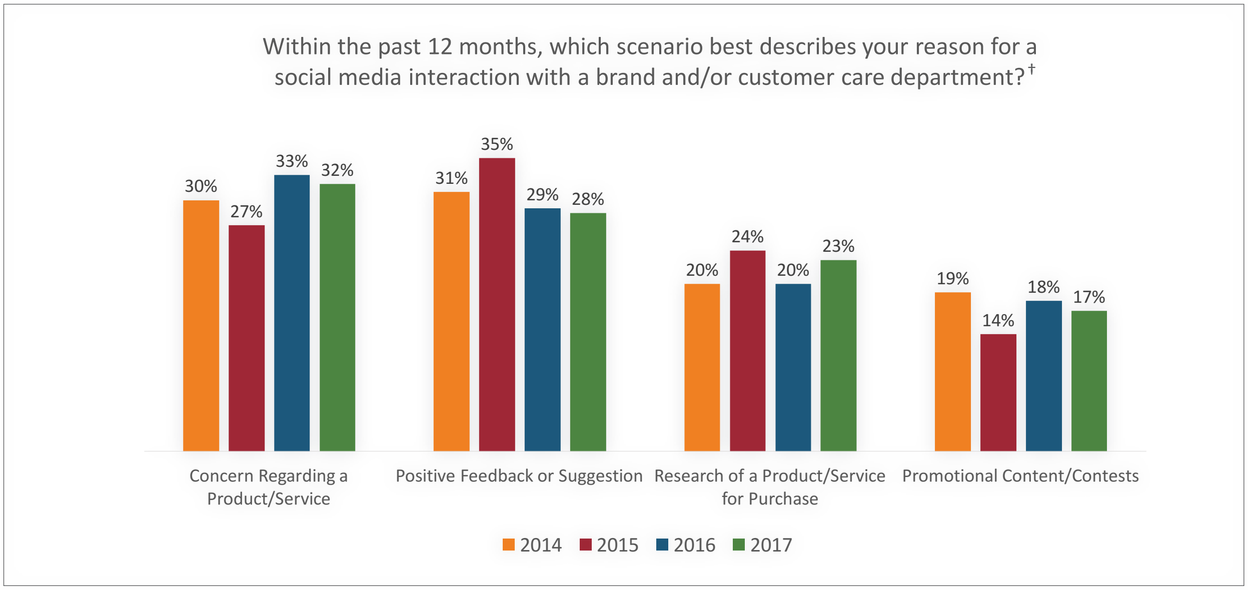
COMMUNITY USE AND REASON FOR INTERACTION

Channel Results — Social Media Care

The three main sources of Social Media Care engagement, Facebook, Twitter and Google+, have held steadily year-over-year, with Facebook still out in front by a margin of three to one versus either Twitter or Google+. Pinterest/Instagram also experienced a large percentage slip, with year-over-year use falling by 33%. This comes at a time when both sites continue to add users, leading to the conclusion that consumers are seeking support elsewhere, either within different social communities or on an entirely different channel of care.



The reasons why consumers use Social Media Care to interact with brands remain the most diverse among all channels, with a slight edge going to "Concern Regarding a Product/Service." Although this means social channels require greater resources to handle a greater variety of interactions, it also presents unique brand building and sales support opportunities. Companies should give serious consideration to how they support and create value within the social media communities in which they participate, going far beyond reactive engagement.

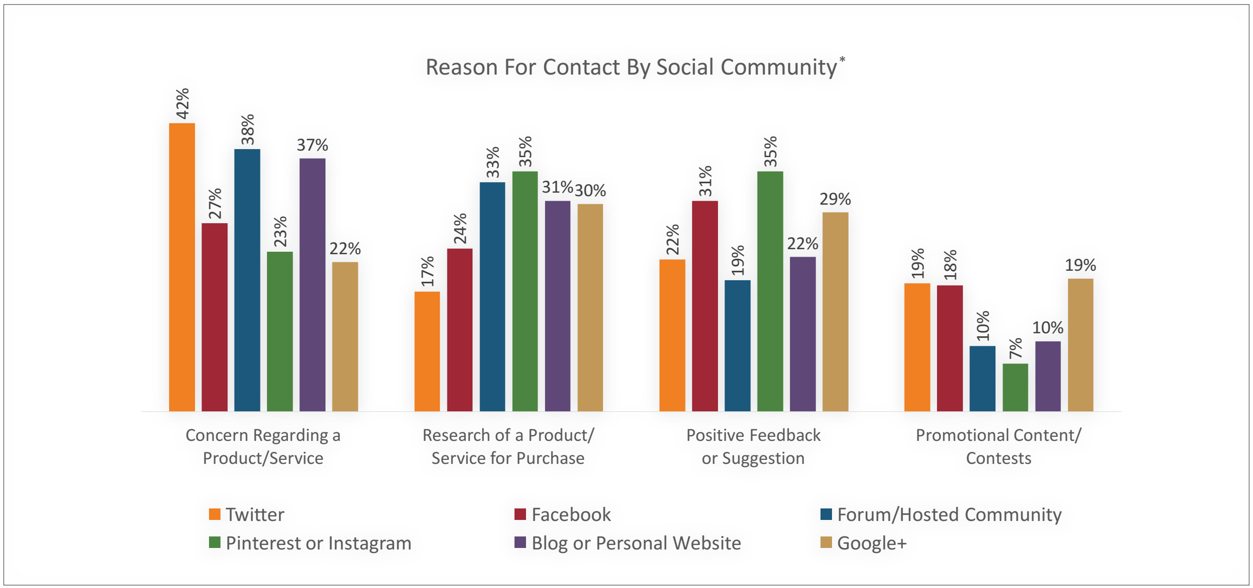


*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 425 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 429 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

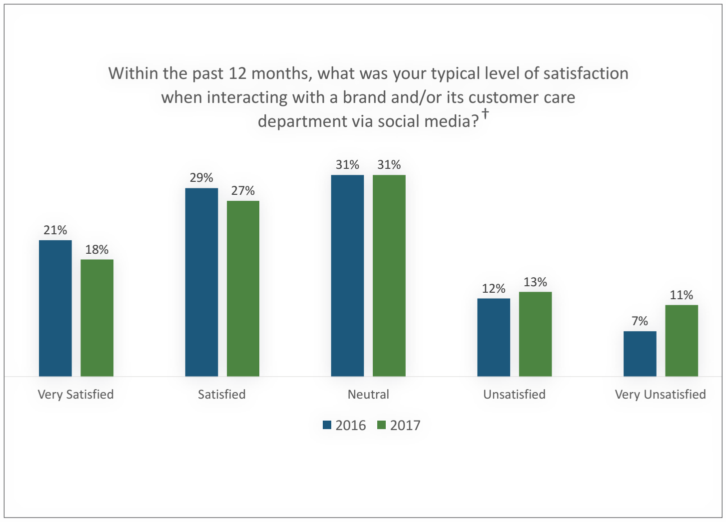
REASON FOR INTERACTION BY COMMUNITY AND CHANNEL SATISFACTION

Channel Results — Social Media Care

When it comes to using Social Media for the purposes of resolving product/service concerns, Twitter, forums and blog/personal websites are mainstays. As for research of products/services for purchase, Pinterest/Instagram, forums, blogs and Google+ are well-utilized by consumers. Given the broad reach of channels like Twitter and Facebook, brands need to walk a tightrope by finding creative ways to promote and sell their products on social media, while continuously improving social media customer care responsiveness and capability.



Satisfaction levels among Social Media Care users were marginally lower year-over-year, with the greatest moves occurring at the extreme ends of the spectrum. In an open-ended question aimed at understanding what led to a particular level of satisfaction, consumers in the “Unsatisfied” and “Very Unsatisfied” buckets most often cited lack of a response, unhelpful advisors and difficulty in arriving at a resolution within the Social Media Care channel. As is the case for all alternative channels, brands need to focus on timely responses and boosting the resolution capabilities within the channel, while providing social media agents with the same level of empowerment as agents from more traditional channels.



What caused you to rate your level of satisfaction as you have?**

"Rude and unhelpful"
"No response"
"They blocked me"
"Got the runaround"
"They did not respond"

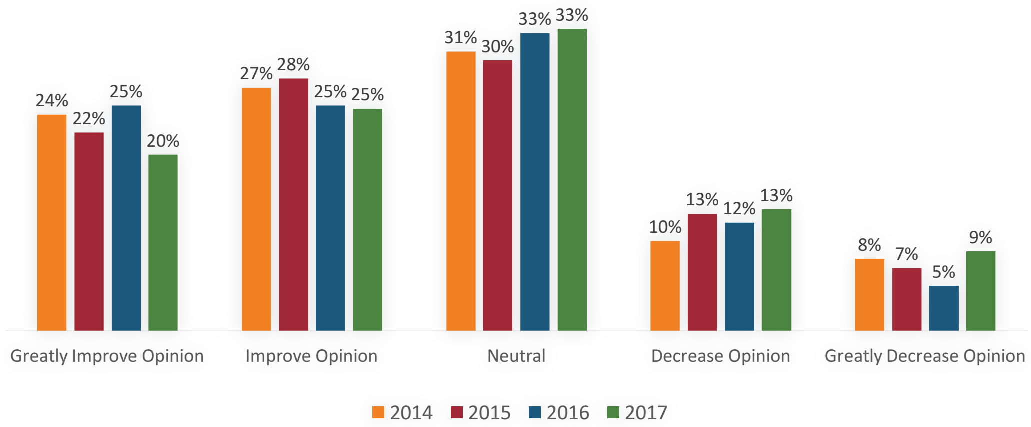
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 425 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 356 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 236 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

CONSUMER OPINIONS ON PROACTIVE OUTREACH

Channel Results — Social Media Care

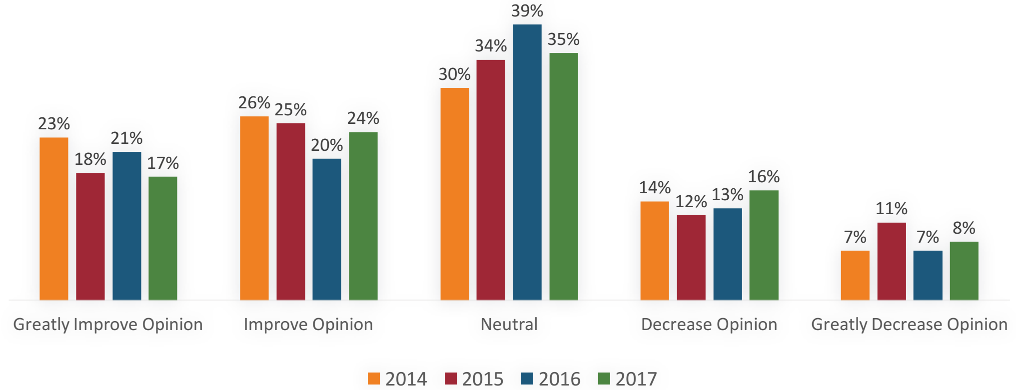
In a pair of questions asked since 2014, answers have changed very little over the years. The majority of consumers continue to have either a favorable or neutral view of companies taking a proactive approach to social media engagement for the purpose of resolving product/service concerns. Nonetheless, enough consumers (21% in 2017) view the practice in a negative light. Companies should tread cautiously and continually gauge the reaction of their customer base.

How would your opinion of a brand be affected by that brand proactively reaching out to you regarding a product/service concern within social media?*



As has been the case since 2014, consumers are slightly more apprehensive about a proactive social media approach if it involves purchase assistance. Although the percentage differences are small, taking an approach that's too aggressive could have a negative effect on the brand. For brands interested in testing the waters of a proactive selling approach on social media, sound advice would be to go slow, get a good sense for brand impact and carefully weigh the results against the perceived and real risks to brand image.

How would your opinion of a brand be affected by that brand proactively reaching out to you to assist in your purchase decision of a product/service within social media?†

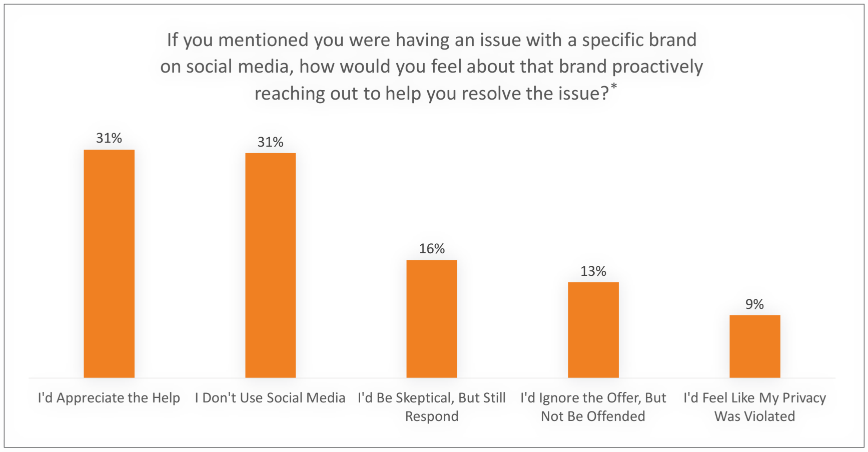


*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 215 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 206 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

CONSUMER OPINIONS ON PROACTIVE OUTREACH, CONT.

Channel Results — Social Media Care

To get a deeper sense of consumer acceptance of brands taking a proactive approach on social media, two new questions were introduced in 2017. As with the results on the previous page, consumers are more open to accepting brand help to resolve an issue versus purchase assistance. In fact, 31% of respondents would appreciate customer care help, versus only 14% indicating an appreciation for purchase assistance. Regarding privacy concerns, only 9% of consumers felt proactive issue resolution was a violation of their privacy, versus 22%, when it came to proactive purchase assistance. Brands should seek to understand these opinions for their own customer base, and weigh the benefits and risks associated with a proactive approach to social media.



Do you think it's appropriate for brands to proactively reach out to consumers on social media to assist with customer issues?**

2017 — Yes 55%
2016 — Yes 53%

Do you think it's appropriate for brands to proactively reach out to consumers on social media to assist in purchases decisions?††

2017 — Yes 48%
2016 — Yes 50%

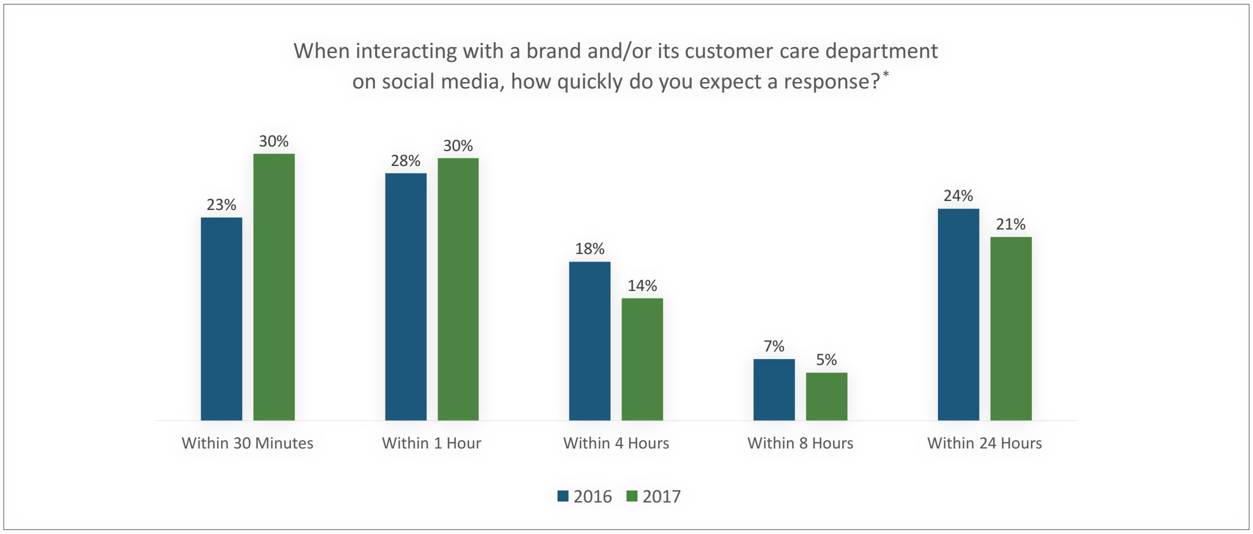
Survey respondents were consistent year-over-year in their opinion of the appropriateness of brands proactively reaching out to help with purchases on social media, with mixed results largely intact. As with all other results, consumers are definitely more open to receiving customer care assistance versus purchase assistance. It's also likely that these opinions vary by brand and product category, so businesses will have to weigh these results against their own segment and customer base to get a clear picture of which approach is best for their brand.

*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 198 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 201 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 201 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
††Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 203 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

RESPONSE EXPECTATIONS AND CHANNEL EXPERIENCES

Channel Results — Social Media Care

Response expectations for social media users saw considerable growth year-over-year. In 2016, a response that took longer than one hour would miss the expectations of 51% of consumers. In 2017, that number has grown to 60%. Since the early days of customer care engagement on social media, response time has been important to consumers. As expectations for shorter response times grow, companies will be under increasing pressure. Individual companies would benefit by understanding the response time expectations of their specific customers, and work to deliver on those expectations.



Have you ever used Facebook Messenger to resolve a customer care issue with a brand?†

Yes 8%

No 76%

I Don't Know What Facebook Messenger Is 16%

Within the past 12 months, have you used social media to research or resolve an issue without actually engaging the brand or its care department?**

2017 — Yes 46%

2016 — Yes 52%

Without a baseline, it is difficult to know Facebook Messenger use rates. That said, what is certain is that there is a high level of awareness for Facebook Messenger among survey participants. This is good news for brands making an investment in launching or increasing use of Facebook Messenger. However, like all alternative support solutions, timely responses, excellent communication and agent empowerment are all key to creating a positive customer experience.

In a question first asked last year, we sought to understand how often consumers were self-solving via social media, either through peer-assistance or by reviewing the brand engagements of others. Undoubtedly, the one-to-many aspects of Social Media Care is powerful, but it's an aspect that is difficult to quantify. According to this year's results, though, about half of all Social Media Care users are researching and resolving without direct engagement, which speaks positively to the capability and amplification of the channel.

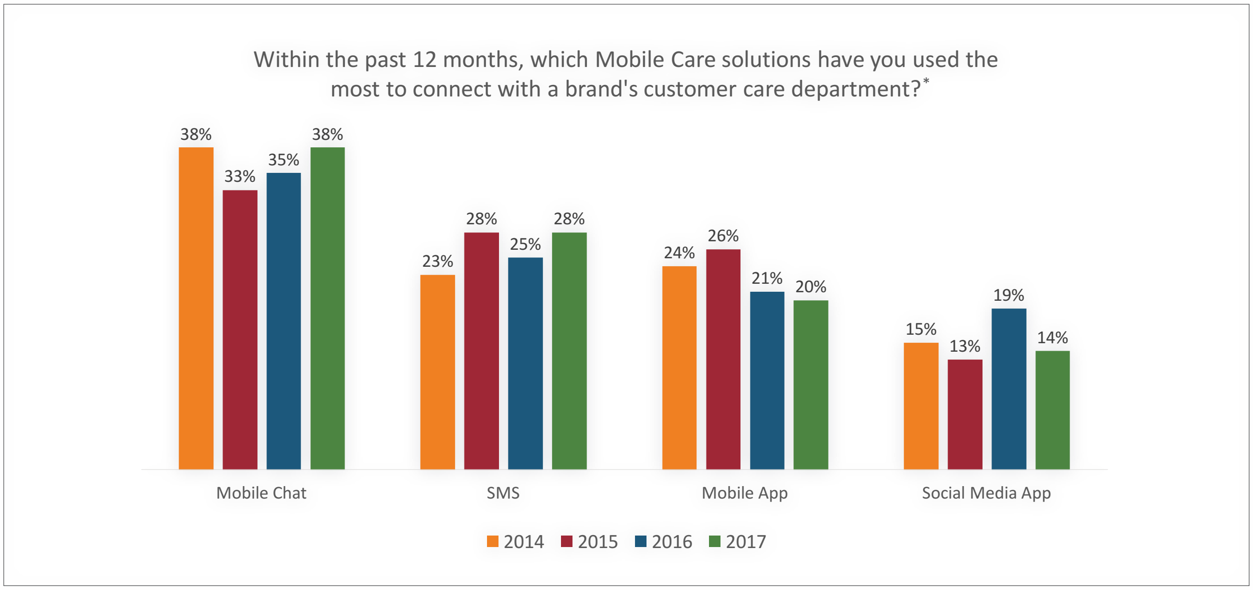
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 202 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 201 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 202 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

Mobile Care

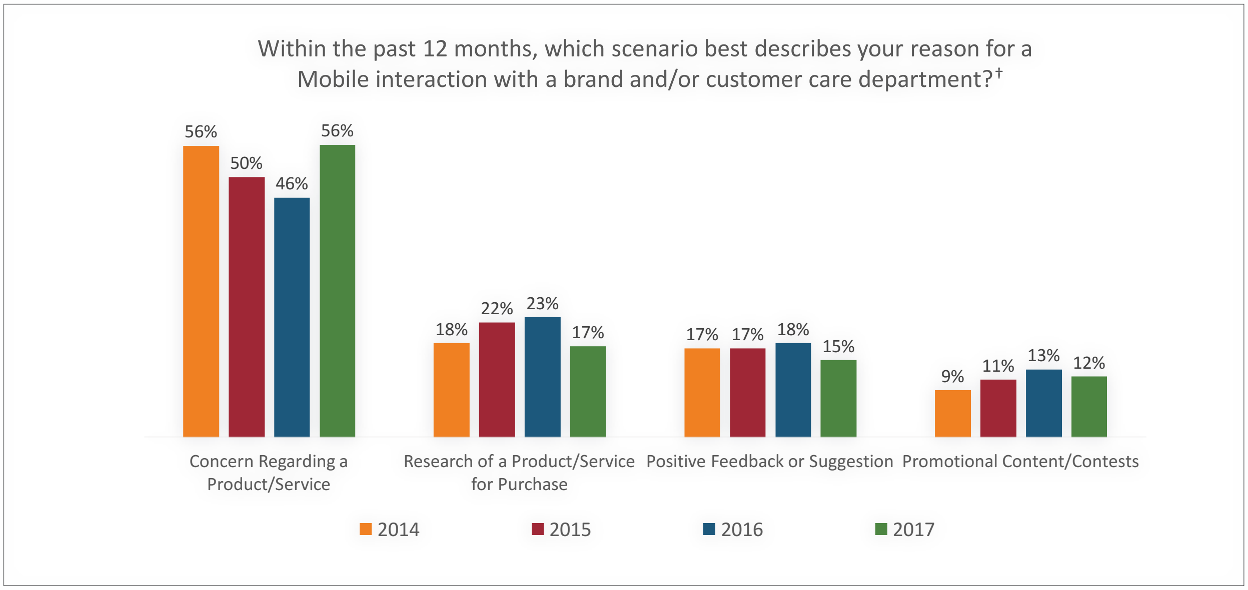
SOLUTIONS MOST USED AND REASON FOR INTERACTION

Channel Results — Mobile Care

Year-over-year, Mobile Chat and SMS/Text saw slight increases in how often they were used by survey participants, and they continue to lead the way. At the same time, device applications — both Mobile Apps and Social Media Apps — experienced declines. Although Mobile App declines were minimal, Social Media Apps as a solution of most use fell by 26% year-over-year.



After two consecutive years of decline in Mobile Care use for issue resolution, 2017 showed a resurgence in the channel's use for addressing product/service concerns, increasing by 22%. This is due, perhaps, to one of two things: the increased use of issue resolution-focused solutions like Mobile Chat and SMS/Text, or improvements in the issue resolution capabilities of the channel. For more details on why consumers turn to Mobile Care, refer to the results on the following page, which shows a breakdown of interaction reason by individual solutions.

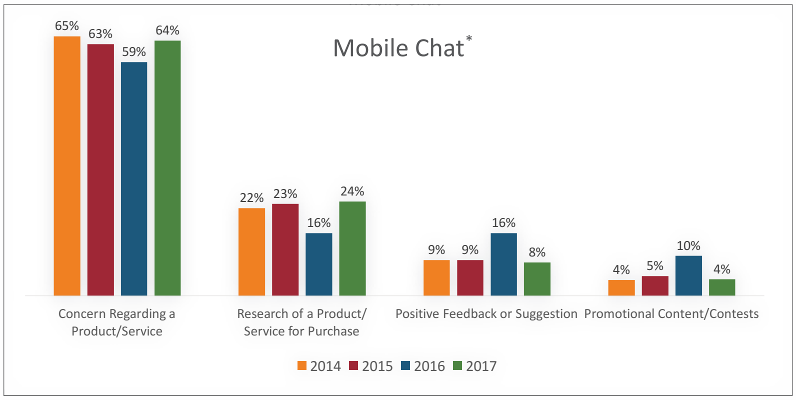


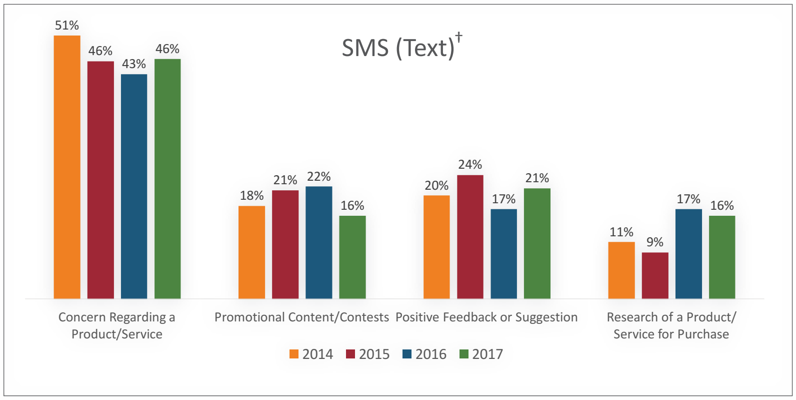
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 216 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 379 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

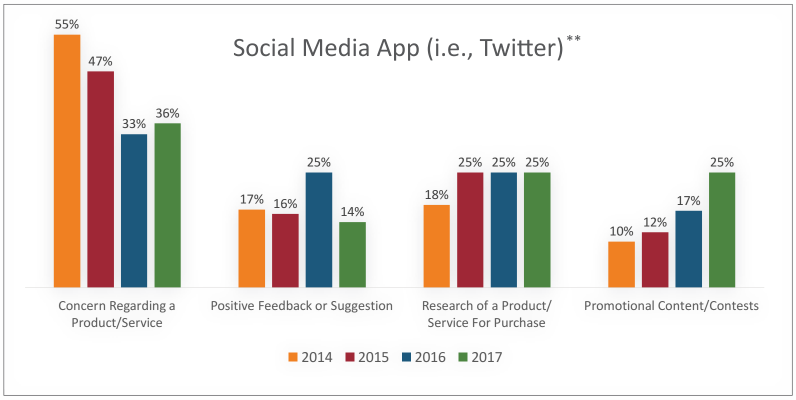
REASON FOR INTERACTION BY CHANNEL SOLUTION

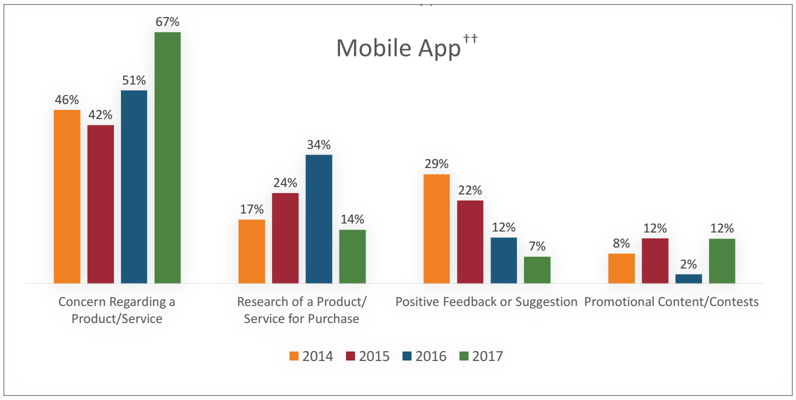
Channel Results — Mobile Care

While Mobile Chat, SMS/Text and Mobile Application engagements continue to focus mostly on issue resolution, Social Media App use remains diversified, just like the Social Media Care channel itself. And, like the Social Media Care channel, social media interaction presents unique marketing and sales opportunities for brands willing to test the waters of a proactive sales approach. For brands deciding to take such an approach, they should start small, constantly monitor how the activities are received, and tailor their approach to what works best for their specific customers.







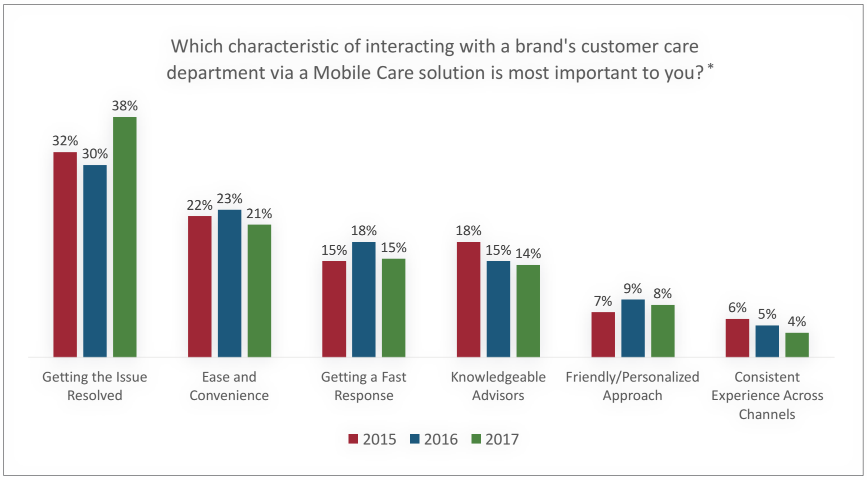


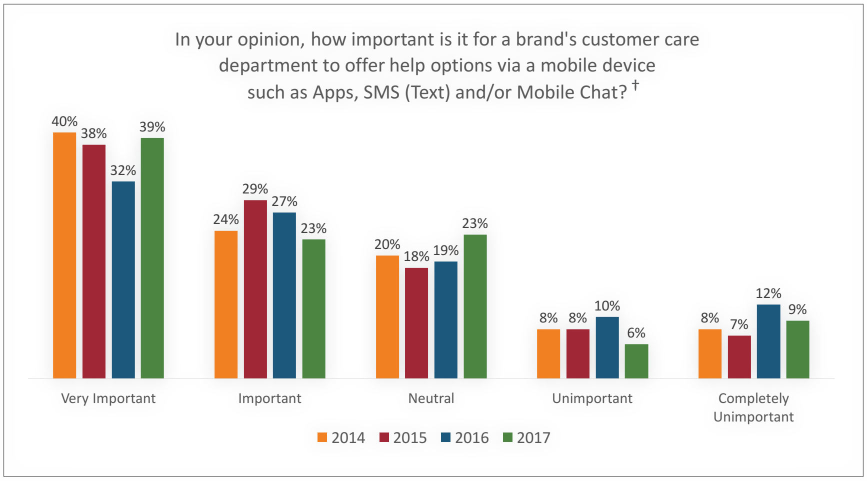
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 72 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 56 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 28 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
††Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 42 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

CHARACTERISTIC OF MOST IMPORTANCE AND OPINIONS ON MOBILE OPTIONS

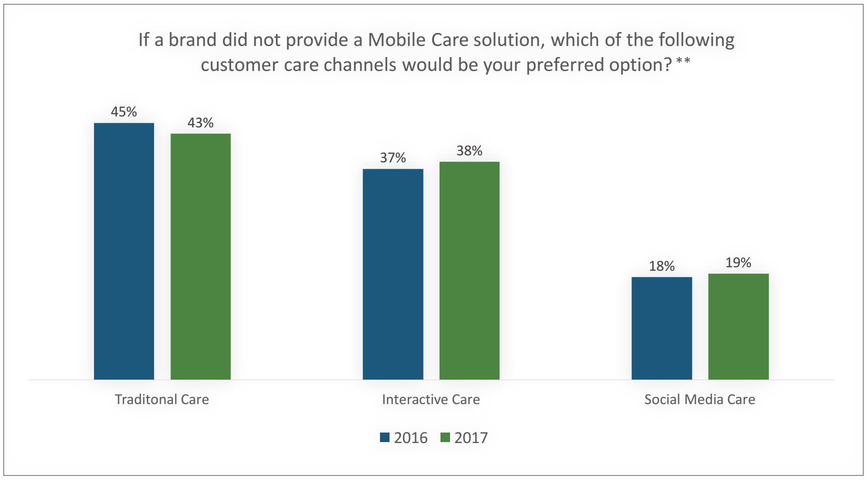
Channel Results — Mobile Care

For brands offering Mobile Care solutions, providing an in-channel resolution is critical. In addition to ensuring issues are resolved, brands need to make sure their Mobile Care solutions provide ease, are responsive, and are staffed by knowledgeable advisors. These are the characteristics that are most important to Mobile Care users.





Compared to last year's results and, on the whole, survey respondents placed increased importance on the availability of mobile device help options. Along with a 22% increase in the percentage of survey respondents indicating such options as "Very Important," there were also measurable declines in the percentage of respondents indicating mobile device options were "Unimportant" or "Completely Unimportant."



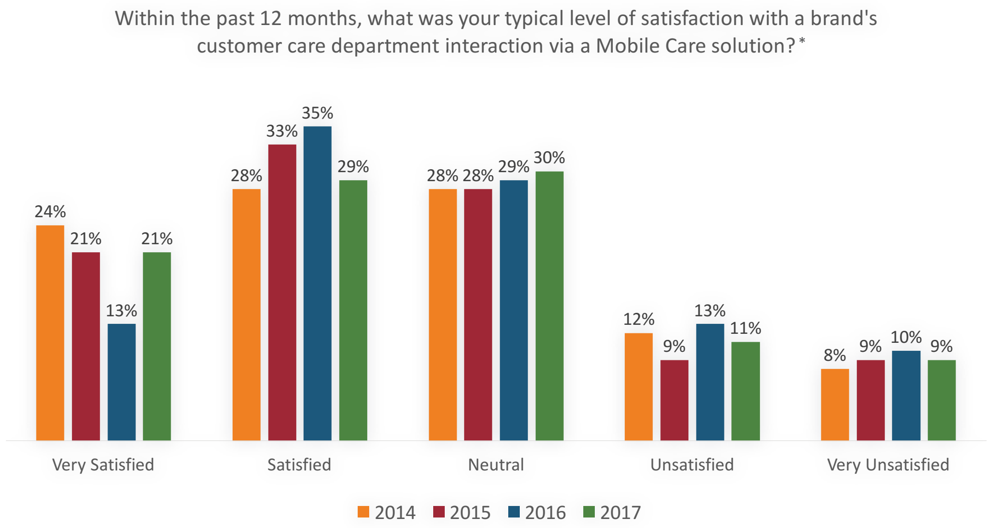
In a question aimed at understanding consumer channel preferences absent a Mobile Care solution, 2017 results fell in line with those from 2016. Eighty-one percent of Mobile Care users indicated they'd turn to either Traditional or Interactive Care in the absence of Mobile Care solutions, with only 18% opting for Social Media Care.

*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 208 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 394 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 204 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

CHANNEL SATISFACTION

Channel Results — Mobile Care

Consumer satisfaction for the Mobile Care channel found firmer footing in 2017, with a 62% increase in the percentage of respondents who indicated they were typically “Very Satisfied” with their Mobile Care interaction. Although this gain was partially offset by a 17% decline in the percentage of survey respondents who indicated they were “Satisfied,” on the whole, 2017 results saw marginally improved satisfaction levels.



To gain greater insight into satisfaction levels, the above question was paired with the open-ended questions above. The verbatim responses below were selected from individuals who answered the above question with either “Unsatisfied” or “Very Unsatisfied.” The main complaints revolved around poor communication, unresponsiveness and the inability to address and fix the problem at hand.

What caused you to rate your level of satisfaction as you have?†

"Customer care rep was helping like 5 people and not giving timely responses"

"Two different people and two different answers; poor training"

"Agent didn't have enough language skills to deal with the problem"

"Got a fill in the blank response that does not address the problem"

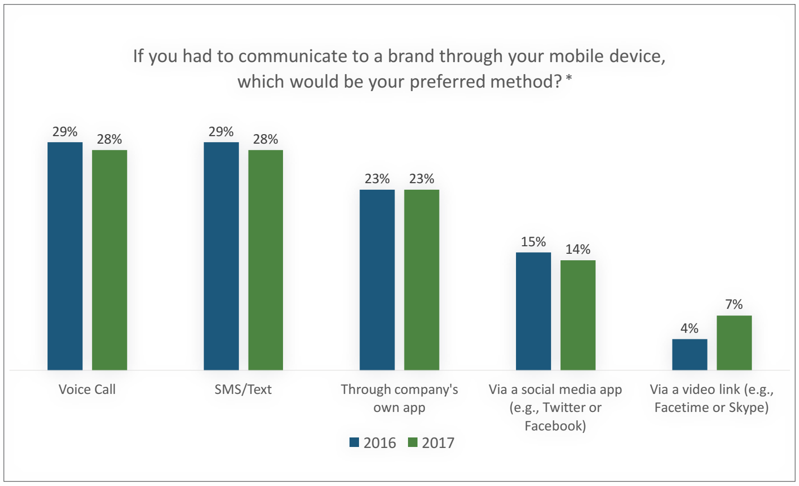
"Difficulty understanding agent"

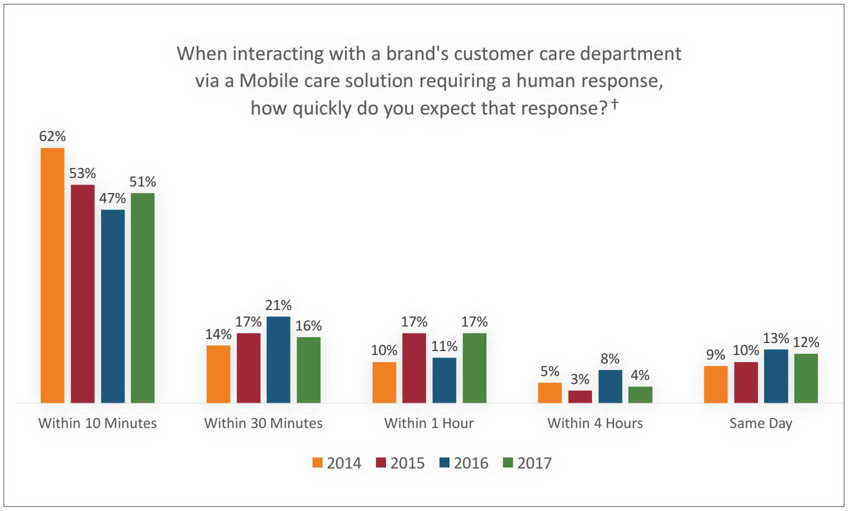
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 344 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 238 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES AND RESPONSE EXPECTATIONS

Channel Results — Mobile Care

Communication preferences via a mobile device remained mostly unchanged year-over-year, with Voice Call and SMS/Text continuing to lead the way. Like all results in the Mobile Care section, these findings are specific to confirmed Mobile Care users. Among the general population, Voice Calls are still utilized at five times the rate of SMS/Text (page 10); but SMS/Text has been growing at a consistent rate, and is worth exploring for brands wanting to expand their Mobile Care presence.





Although response expectations for Mobile Care didn't increase quite as much as with Social Media Care, there was a slight increase in the percentage of consumers expecting a response within one hour. In last year's results, 79% of survey respondents expected a response within one hour. In 2017, that amount increased to 84%. Companies should expect a continued rise in expectations, especially as segment leaders push the envelope on response times.

If a brand offered a Mobile care app that was helpful to you, would you be open to receiving information about new products and services as part of that app?**

2017 — Yes 59%
2016 — Yes 57%
2015 — Yes 58%
2014 — Yes 59%

Consumers have been consistent in their lukewarm reception of push content via brand apps. That said, it's likely this is another scenario where reception of content is largely dependent on the segment and specific brand. For brands interested in pursuing push content, they should start by surveying their specific customers, and start small to gauge reception.

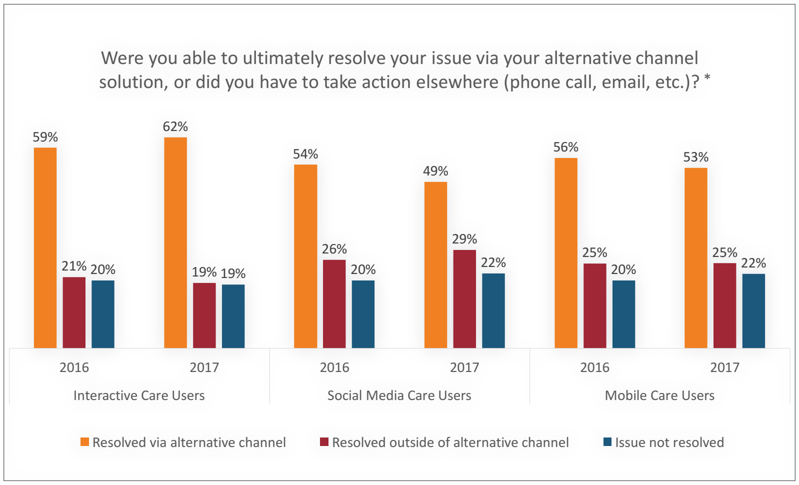
*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 200 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 214 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 205 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

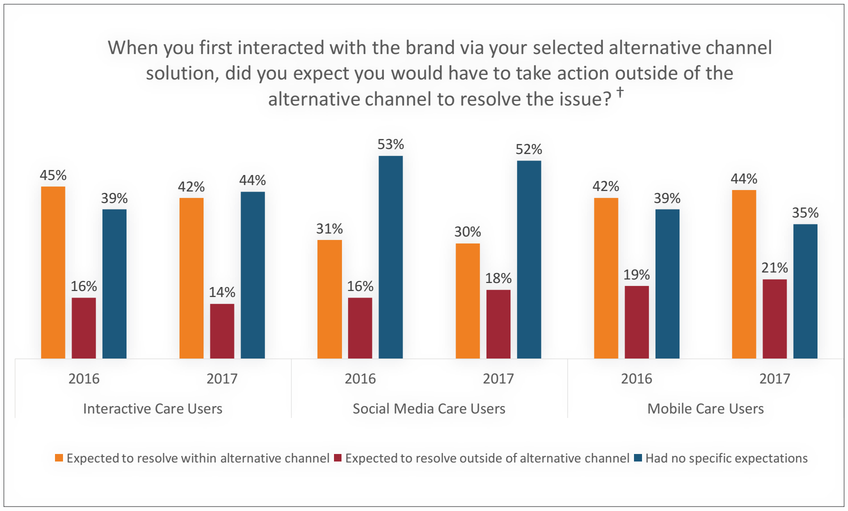
Alternative Channel Journey

RESOLUTION VIA CHANNEL AND EXPECTATIONS

Channel Results — Alternative Channel Journey

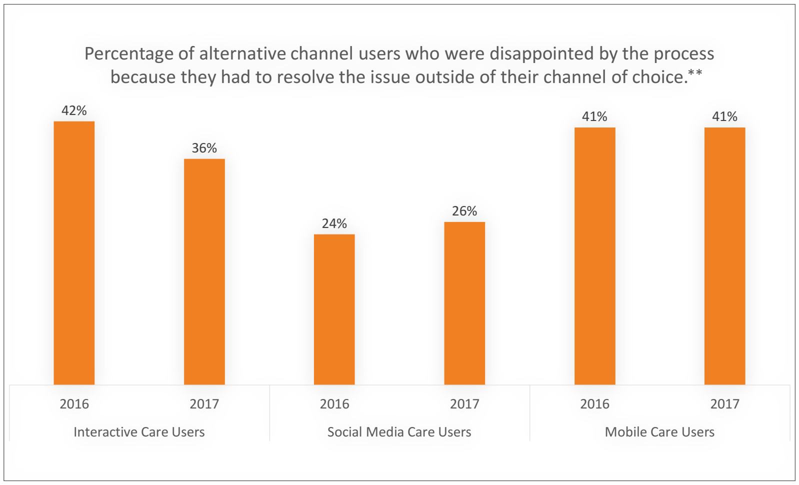
In a set of channel-specific questions aimed at understanding the alternative channel journey, survey respondents were asked about their ability to resolve their issue via their channel of choice. As was the case last year, Interactive Care users continue to get a slightly higher rate of resolution versus Social Media and Mobile Care users. Interactive Care is also the only alternative care channel to see a rise in in-channel resolutions, while both the in-channel resolution rates of both Social Media and Mobile Care fell modestly year-over-year.





Similar to last year's results, Social Media Care users had the lowest levels of expectations for getting a resolution in their selected alternative channel. Only 30% of Social Media Care users expected to have their issue resolved without leaving their channel of choice, compared to Interactive Care users (42%) and Mobile Care users (44%).

As shown above, Social Media Care users have far fewer expectations, and are often less disappointed when they have to seek a resolution outside of their channel of choice. Interactive and Mobile Care users, on the other hand, had both higher expectations and greater levels of disappointment when those expectations were unmet. Brands should do their best to understand the expectations of their own customers, and work toward higher resolution capabilities in the channels where expectations are highest.

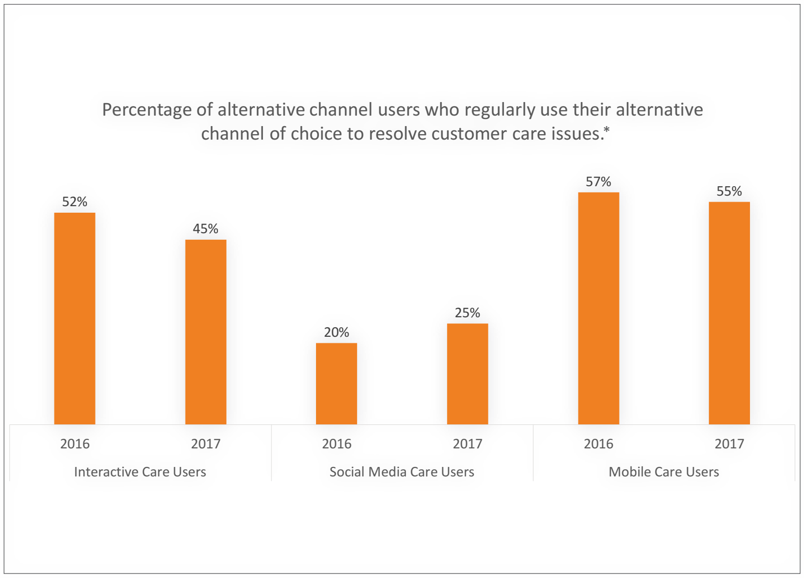


*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 1,411 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 1,364 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 700 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

ALTERNATIVE CHANNEL USE FOR ISSUE RESOLUTION

Channel Results — Alternative Channel Journey

Regularity of use is an important topic in deciding where to invest. Although the question regarding use regularity (right) produced similar results to last year, there were two changes worth noting: First, Interactive Care use slipped slightly (-13%), while Social Media increased (+25%). Although these shifts were minor, they could be the start of an interesting trend, and are definitely worth close monitoring over the near- to long-term. While social media users still make up a minority, they have powerful abilities to amplify experiences, rewarding brands that create positive experiences, and punishing brands that provide negative experiences.



Amazon, like last year, continues to overshadow all other brands in the minds of consumers When it comes to issue resolution capability and performance within alternative channels. Additionally, new brands made their way onto the list in 2017, including the likes of LL Bean, Facebook and Delta. Undoubtedly, consumers will continue to adopt and normalize the use of alternative channels. Businesses need to start competing in this space now to gain the experience and expertise needed to succeed. This is especially true when the future looks like it will be far more dependent on solutions like Online Chat, Video Chat, Social Media and SMS/Text.

The brands below are listed in descending order based on their frequency in the responses received.

Which brand(s) provide the most useful support for resolving customer issues in your alternative channel of choice?

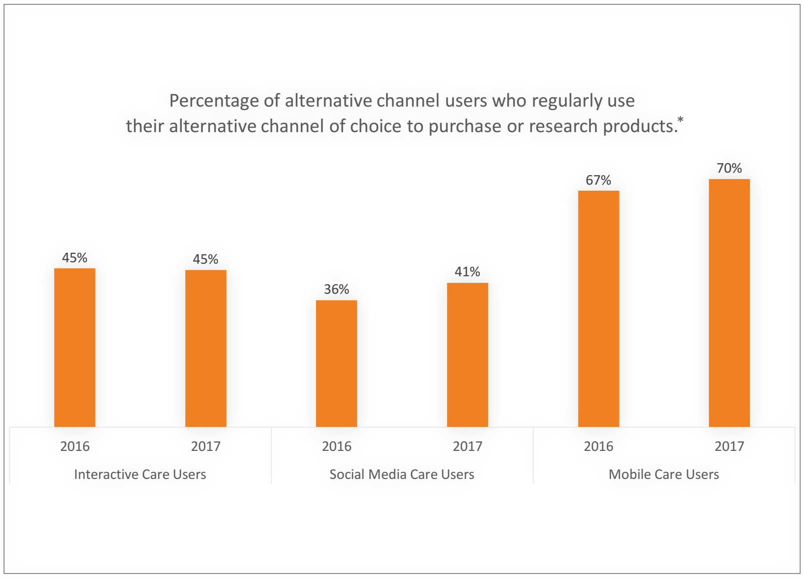
Interactive Care Users†	Social Media Care Users**	Mobile Care Users††
Amazon	Amazon	Amazon
Apple	Facebook	Apple
Sprint	Google	Verizon
AT+T	Apple	AT+T
Google	Delta	Google
LL Bean	Target	Samsung

*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 714 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 209 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 210 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
††Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 208 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

ALTERNATIVE CHANNEL USE FOR ISSUE RESOLUTION

Channel Results — Alternative Channel Journey

Like alternative channel use for the purpose of issue resolution (previous page), Social Media Care for the purpose of purchasing or researching a product (at right) saw an increase in regular use among Social Media Care users. Mobile Care users also slightly increased their use year-over-year, while Interactive Care users remained flat. Driving purchase consideration and sales within alternative channels presents a unique opportunity for today's businesses. The brands that can excel in this space will gain an enviable edge against the competition.



Yet again, Amazon dominates across all channels by providing the most useful support for purchasing and/or researching products. Not only has Amazon created an amazing ecosystem for its customers, it raised the bar to such an extent that the brand is reshaping consumer expectations — and not just in the retail space. All brands, regardless of sector, would benefit by keeping a close watch on the initiatives and innovations of the brand to discover what works, what doesn't and what is worth emulating. Like issue resolution (previous page), several new brands made their way onto the list in 2017, including the likes of LL Bean, Zulily and T-Mobile.

The brands below are listed in descending order based on their frequency in the responses received.

Which brand(s) provide the most useful support for purchasing or researching products in your alternative channel of choice?

Interactive Care Users†	Social Media Care Users**	Mobile Care Users††
Amazon	Amazon	Amazon
Google	Apple	Google
Apple	Nike	Apple
Verizon	Facebook	Samsung
YouTube	Google	Verizon
LL Bean	Zulily	T-Mobile

*Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 1,183 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 246 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 253 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
††Methodology 2017 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, June 2017 and based on 240 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

CHANNEL RESULTS CONCLUSIONS

Key Findings:

1) Forty-nine percent of consumers would have a decreased or greatly decreased opinion of a brand if it eliminated email customer care support (Page 57)

2) If they had to directly communicate with a brand via a mobile device, as many people would prefer to use SMS/Text as those who would prefer to call (Page 74)

3) Social Media Care has the lowest resolution rate (49%) among alternative channels (Page 76)

4) Seventy percent of Mobile Care users regularly use the channel to research and purchase products, as opposed to only 45% of Interactive Care users and 41% of Social Media Care users (Page 78)

Like last year, survey results pertaining to email continue to tell a complex story. With many brands cutting back or eliminating email support, consumers continue to voice strong support for the channel. Email support also continues to play a prominent role in multi-channel engagements, finding its way into as many as half of all multi-channel engagements.

Although the majority of mobile interactions (56%) are for the purposes of resolving a customer care issue, the channel has demonstrated a great deal of potential for product research and sales, with almost 80% of channel users indicated they regularly use their mobile device to shop for and/or purchase items. This presents a valuable opportunity for businesses, particularly for those brands that are able to integrate care and selling solutions into a centralized, engaging and easy-to-use platform.

Critical Questions Brands Should Be Asking Themselves

1) If curbing the use of email support, have we done our due diligence in understanding the impact on our customers?

2) Have we explored SMS/Text as a viable mobile option for our brand?

3) Are we making the most of our Mobile Care solutions, particularly as it applies to sales and product research?

METHODOLOGY

Google Consumer Surveys reports on the inferred age and gender of anonymous respondents based on the websites users visit, as well as their location based on IP addresses. Income and urban density are then approximated using census data for particular geographic regions. Inferences, as they relate to these categories, may not be available for all survey participants.

Please note that it's possible that Google Consumer Surveys may mis-categorize people. For example, if someone visits websites that are usually frequented by younger people, they may be categorized as younger than their actual age. Similarly, if a household uses a shared computer, we may categorize that "user" based on the combined interests of the household.

Provided the complexities of participant screening questions through the study's body of surveys, we present unweighted findings. When targeting an audience representing the U.S. Internet population, Google Consumer Surveys attempts to find respondents that match the distribution of people in the U.S. by age, gender and location as reported in the U.S. Census Current Population Survey (CPS). When outliers were observed in the data as they relate to the inferred age, income, gender and urban density, we made an effort to highlight these findings.

ABOUT THIS STUDY'S AUTHORS

Execs In The Know

For over 15 years, Execs In The Know has built a reputation of excellence in the Customer Management Industry and a worldwide community of over 50,000 Customer Experience Professionals. Execs In The Know connects people to engaging industry content, thought leadership, current trends, peer-to-peer collaboration, networking and industry employment opportunities. Examples of this can be seen at their Customer Response Summit events, roadshows, webinars, workshops, Blog Talk Radio segments, Industry Benchmarking Series, blogs, thought papers and social communities.

To learn more about Execs In The Know, visit www.ExecsInTheKnow.com.

copc®

COPC Inc. provides consulting, training, certification and the RevealCX™ software solution for operations that support the customer experience. The company created the COPC Standards, a collection of performance management systems for call center operations, customer experience management, vendor management, and procurement. Founded in 1996, COPC Inc. began by helping call centers improve their performance. Today, the company is an innovative global leader that empowers organizations to optimize operations to deliver a superior customer experience across all channels. COPC Inc. is privately held with headquarters in Winter Park, FL, U.S. and with operations in Europe, Middle East, Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America, India and Japan.

To learn more about COPC Inc., visit www.copc.com.

GET PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF THE CXMB SERIES

Looking for previous editions of the
Customer Experience Management Benchmark Series?

Visit execsintheknow.com/resources/cxmb-series/
to view Executive Summaries from previous reports and
learn how you can acquire back editions of this valuable resource.

You can also sign up to participate in the upcoming
CXMB Series Corporate Edition survey by visiting here:

http://www2.execsintheknow.com/2017cxmbcorporatesurvey