CUSTOMER JOURNEY
INSIGHTS:

The Corporate Perspective

Customer Experience Management Benchmark Series
2016 Corporate Edition, Published February 8, 2017

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Execs In The Know

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INSIGHTS:

The Corporate Perspective

PREFACE

In 2016, the Customer Experience Management Benchmark (CXMB) Series reports saw a number of new areas of exploration, particularly around the multichannel experience, omnichannel migration, channel consistency and the alternative channel journey. These new topics, along with the tried-and-true exploration of channel results and strategic and operational insights, have helped to shape one of the most robust and comprehensive sets of reports so far in the series.

Like last year, the Consumer Comparison section (page 68) serves to tie together results from the 2016 Consumer Edition and this report, the 2016 Corporate Edition. The section provides analysis comparing and contrasting common results from each edition. While significant gaps remain between consumer and corporate perceptions, it is evident that consumer perception of customer care performance has improved over the years, but much work remains.

As with past reports, we continue to segment and define each channel of care and channel solution 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: SMS/Text, Apps and Mobile Chat

Please be sure to keep these definitions in mind as you review this year's results.

Key Insights from this year's Corporate Edition of the CXMB Series:

• Only 31% of survey participants believe they currently offer support in all channels their customers want to use

• 59% of respondents indicate their Quality Assurance (QA) programs are aligned with their CSAT results, but only 38% of respondents feel their QA programs are helping to monitor and improve resolution and CSAT rates

• A strong correlation exists between forcing customers into a multichannel approach and lower CSAT and resolution rates, yet 61% of survey participants reported they were actively trying to shift traffic from one channel to another

• Only 26% of brands feel they are providing a consistent experience when customers engage their brands with a multichannel approach

A NOTE FROM THE STUDY'S AUTHORS

Dear Reader,

It is with great pleasure that we bring you this, the 2016 Corporate Edition and ninth installment of the Customer Experience Management Benchmark (CXMB) Series. Titled *Customer Journey Insights: The Corporate Perspective*, this volume, like previous Corporate Editions in the series, would not be possible without broad industry support and, in particular, strong support from the Execs In The Know community. We gratefully acknowledge the more than 60 individual brands that lent their time and knowledge to the development of this report. Your contributions are essential and greatly appreciated.

We'd also like to send a special thank you to Hui Wu-Curtis from Choice Hotels and Ebrahim Hyder from Michael Kors for contributing this year's corporate commentaries. Both Hui and Ebrahim are superb advocates for the customer, and we are grateful to share their stories.

As we look forward to the development of the 2017 CXMB Series reports, we invite you, our reader, to consider playing an active role in the evolution of these reports, both in shaping the topics and in contributing to the survey dataset. If there is a specific area of interest you would like to see explored by the CXMB Series, please connect with us; we're always looking for new areas of research. Likewise, we invite you to participate in the 2017 Corporate Edition survey which commences each year in late summer/early fall.

As professionals in the customer care industry, each of us have one goal in mind: create the best possible experience for our customers. It gives us great pleasure to be able to share the industry insights conveyed in these reports, knowing this information might help our readers get closer to achieving this goal.
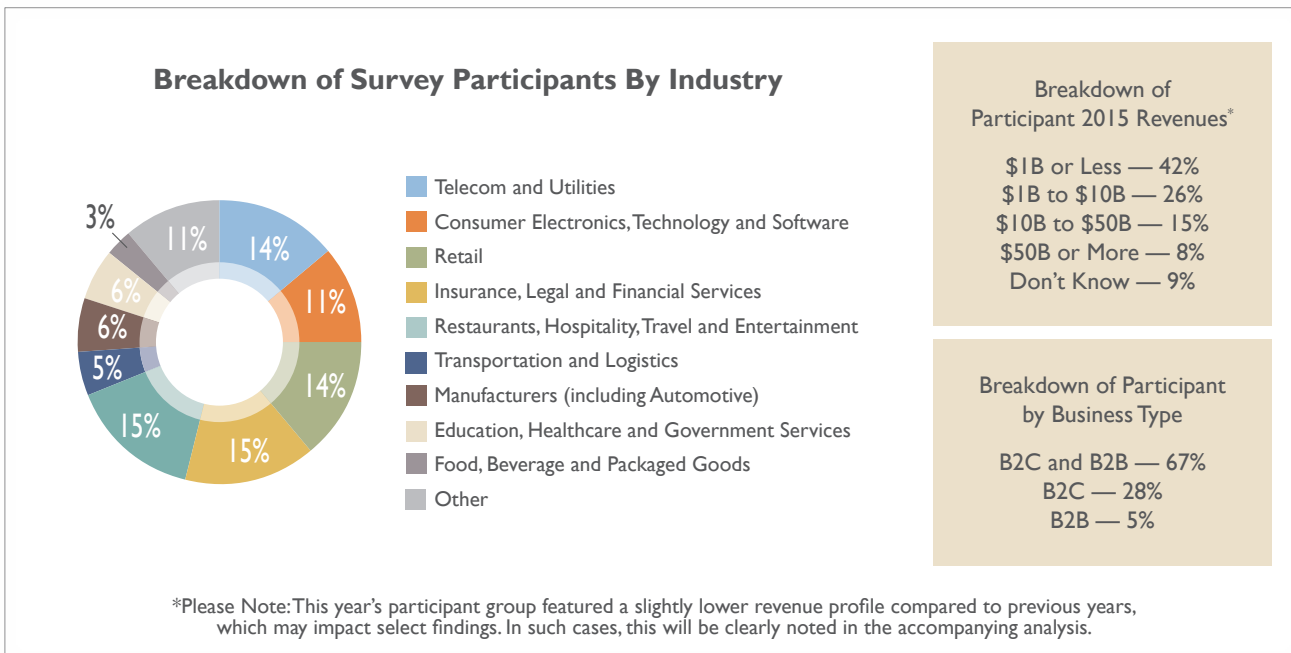
Sincerest Regards,

COPC

Execs In The Know

ABOUT THE SURVEY'S PARTICIPANTS

Once again, the CXMB Series Corporate Edition report was well-supported by the community, with participation from a broad array of companies and industries. Retail, Financial Services and Leisure (Restaurants, Travel and Entertainment) were especially well-represented in this year's results.

As always, we would like to acknowledge all of the brands that gave their time and effort to support this endeavor. Thank you!

Breakdown of Survey Participants By Industry

3%
11%
14%
11%
14%
15%
15%
5%
6%
6%

- Telecom and Utilities
- Consumer Electronics, Technology and Software
- Retail
- Insurance, Legal and Financial Services
- Restaurants, Hospitality, Travel and Entertainment
- Transportation and Logistics
- Manufacturers (including Automotive)
- Education, Healthcare and Government Services
- Food, Beverage and Packaged Goods
- Other

Breakdown of Participant 2015 Revenues*

$1B or Less — 42%
$1B to $10B — 26%
$10B to $50B — 15%
$50B or More — 8%
Don't Know — 9%

Breakdown of Participant by Business Type

B2C and B2B — 67%
B2C — 28%
B2B — 5%

*Please Note: This year's participant group featured a slightly lower revenue profile compared to previous years, which may impact select findings. In such cases, this will be clearly noted in the accompanying analysis.

A special thank you to these and the many other brands that contributed their time and effort to this year's benchmark results:

DTE Energy®

HYATT

KOHL'S®

Nintendo®

HomeAdvisor

Sony Interactive Entertainment

petco

Marriott

FedEx®

SURVEY RESULTS

STRATEGIC INSIGHTS

+489,656

- Perception
- Priorities
- Initiatives
- Program Structure

PERCEPTION

For the second consecutive year, corporate perception of its customer care performance (i.e., meeting the needs and expectations of customers) has hovered near 80%. Since 2014, a similar question has been posed to consumers as a part of the CXMB Series Consumer Edition, and corporate and consumer perceptions regarding this issue are still worlds apart. In results released in September 2016, only 41% of consumers felt brands were generally meeting their needs and expectations. For more details about these results, see the Consumer Comparison section on page 69.

Do you feel your customer care organization is generally meeting the needs and expectations of your customers?

—Key Insight

	Yes	No
2014	88%	12%
2015	79%	21%
2016	81%	19%

In a new question for 2016, we asked brands about the customer experience consistency they provide as consumers navigate the multichannel approach. Results show brands appreciate that there is a lot of room for improvement in this critical area, with only 26% of brands responding in the affirmative. This question is especially important as more consumers adopt a multichannel approach. The 2016 CXMB Series Consumer Edition results saw 67% of consumers indicating they had taken a multichannel approach in the previous 12 months.
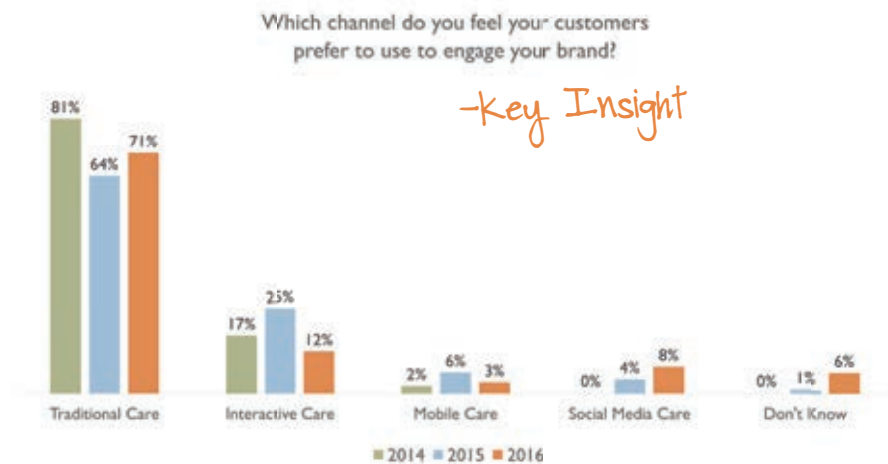
—New Question

Do you feel that your organization does a good job of providing a consistent customer experience when customers engage your brand with a multichannel approach?

- Yes: 26%
- Somewhat: 39%
- No: 35%
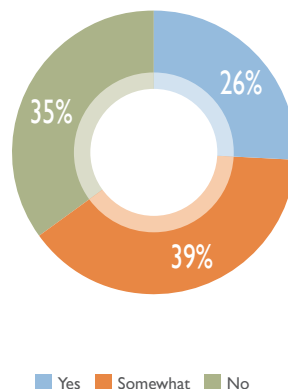
PERCEPTION

As was the case in 2014, brands continue to overestimate consumer preference for the Traditional Care channel. While these results are certainly in line with actual use, results from the CXMB Series Consumer Edition suggest consumers have far greater preferences for both Interactive Care (the preferred channel of 27% of consumers) and Mobile Care (the preferred channel of 16% of consumers). The difference in actual use versus preference could be the result of solution availability, ease of use or consumer awareness. Brands should seek to understand why their customers might not be using the solution they most prefer.

Which channel do you feel your customers
prefer to use to engage your brand?

—Key Insight

	Traditional Care	Interactive Care	Mobile Care	Social Media Care	Don't Know
2014	81%	17%	2%	0%	0%
2015	64%	25%	6%	4%	1%
2016	71%	12%	3%	8%	6%

Nearly two-thirds of brands feel they are doing a good job of exemplifying their brand promise at every touchpoint. This result takes on special interest when compared to the results on the bottom of the previous page in a question regarding customer experience consistency within the multichannel approach. In that question, only 26% of brands felt they were offering customer experience consistency throughout the multichannel journey. This should prompt brands to consider if providing a great customer experience is (or should be) a core component of their brand promise. If it is, the only way to truly exemplify their brand promise at every touchpoint would be to provide a consistent and exceptional customer experience, regardless of channel.

—New Question

Do you feel your organization generally does a good job at
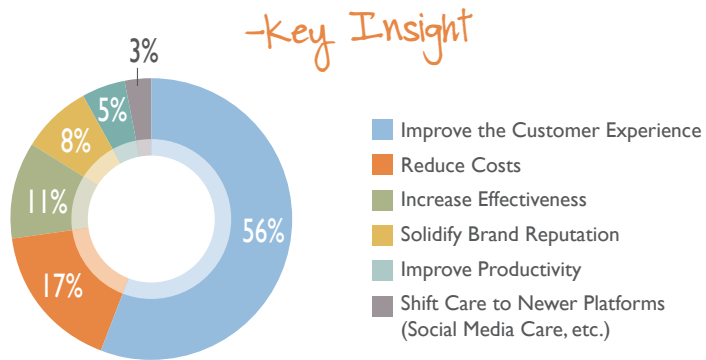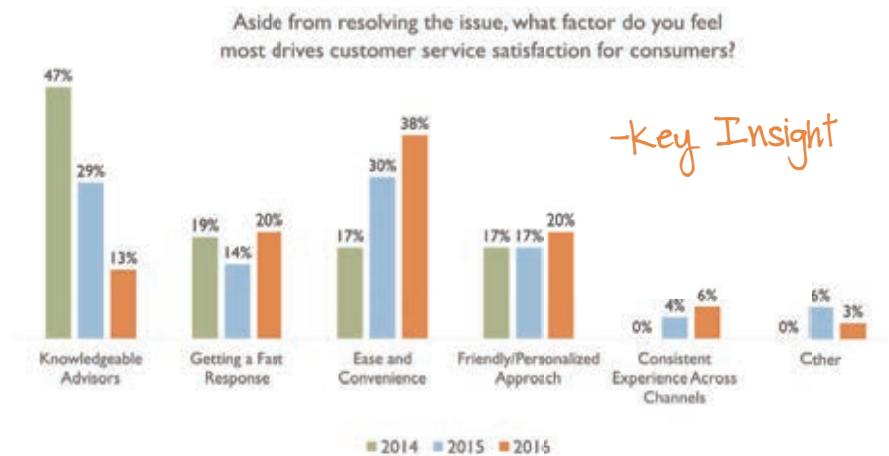exemplifying your brand promise at every touchpoint?

38% | 62%

Yes | No
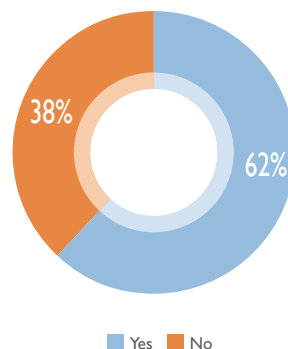
PRIORITIES

PRIORITIES

While this same question about priorities has been asked in previous years, this year's results were broadly redefined by the inclusion of a new response: Improve the Customer Experience. This option obviously resonated with brands, capturing more than half of responses. Reduce Costs and Increase Effectiveness also figured prominently in the responses received.

What was the top priority of your company's leadership regarding customer experience management over the past 12 months?

-Key Insight

- Improve the Customer Experience — 56%
- Reduce Costs — 17%
- Increase Effectiveness — 11%
- Solidify Brand Reputation — 8%
- Improve Productivity — 5%
- Shift Care to Newer Platforms (Social Media Care, etc.) — 3%

When it comes to driving customer satisfaction, 2016 marks the second consecutive year in which brands have downplayed the role of Knowledgeable Advisors, while putting more emphasis on Ease and Convenience. While not exactly an apples-to-apples comparison, a pair of similar questions are asked of consumers. In one such question, results from both 2016 and 2015 saw "Shorter Response/Resolution Times" and "More Knowledgeable Advisors" as the top two consumer responses, respectively. In a separate question asked of consumers, one which included "Ease and Convenience" as a possible response, only ten percent indicated this as most important to them. A complete comparison of these results can be found in the Consumer Comparison section on page 70.

Aside from resolving the issue, what factor do you feel most drives customer service satisfaction for consumers?

-Key Insight

	2014	2015	2016
Knowledgeable Advisors	47%	29%	13%
Getting a Fast Response	19%	14%	20%
Ease and Convenience	17%	30%	38%
Friendly/Personalized Approach	17%	17%	20%
Consistent Experience Across Channels	0%	4%	6%
Other	0%	6%	3%

PRIORITIES

Only a handful of survey participants were surprised by channel change, which dealt mostly with the expansion and consumer acceptance of Chat. Conversely and somewhat related, more survey respondents felt they needed more training and development for alternative channels in 2016. In a follow-up question that asked respondents to identify specific areas of interest, Chat (including Chat Bots), mobile, data mining and alternative channel integration were all named.

Has there been a substantial change in any channel that has taken you by surprise?
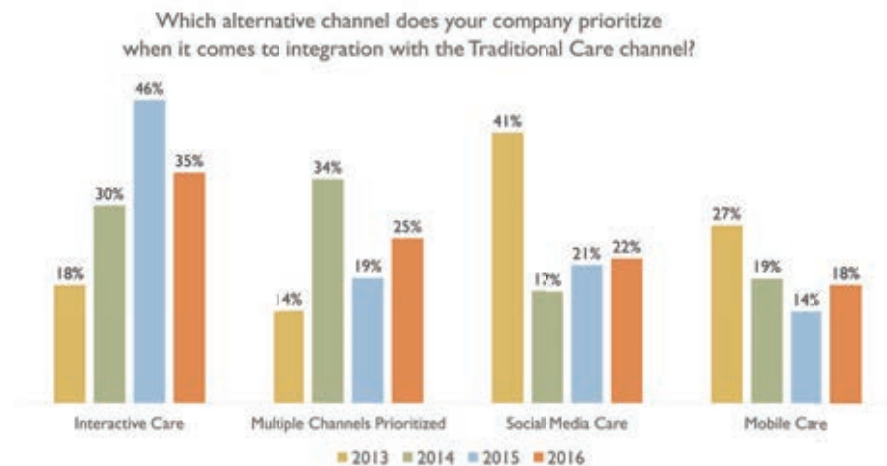
Responded "Yes" to the above survey question:

2016: 5%
2015: 6%
2014: 20%

As a customer experience professional, do you feel you need more training and development on alternative channels and the strategies to support them?

Responded "Yes" to the above survey question:

2016: 58%
2015: 45%
2014: 70%

Prioritization of alternative channel integration is evenly distributed, with Interactive Care holding a slight edge, though down significantly from 2015. Multiple Channels Prioritized also experienced a modest gain in 2016. In general, these results align well with consumer channel use and preference. In a 2016 CXMB Series Consumer Edition question that asked consumers which channels of care they used the most over the proceeding 12 months, results were Traditional Care (60%), Interactive Care (22%), Mobile Care (10%) and Social Media Care (8%). As expected, for those brands that do not prioritize multiple channels, it appears prioritization is in line with channel use, with the most used alternative channel (Interactive Care) receiving the highest level of prioritization.

Which alternative channel does your company prioritize when it comes to integration with the Traditional Care channel?

Interactive Care: 18% / 30% / 46% / 35%
Multiple Channels Prioritized: 14% / 34% / 19% / 25%
Social Media Care: 41% / 17% / 21% / 22%
Mobile Care: 27% / 19% / 14% / 18%

■ 2013 ■ 2014 ■ 2015 ■ 2016
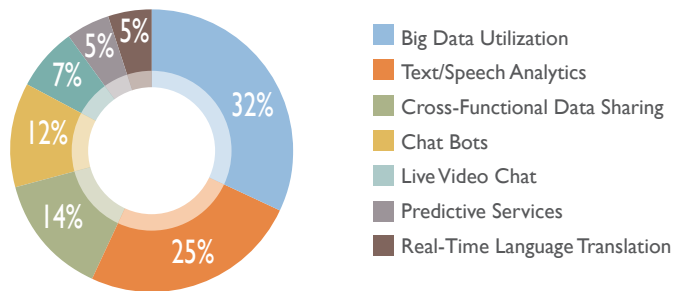
PRIORITIES

In a new question for 2016, we discovered brands are most interested in two specific technological areas: Big Data Utilization and Text/Speech Analytics. As more organizations look for ways to create a feedback loop between customer data and the wider organization, technologies for sorting and understanding this data will become increasingly important. In much the same way that early adopters of digital technologies quickly became category leaders, the same may hold true of companies already at the forefront of utilizing this data in relevant and inventive ways to improve the customer experience.

—New Question

Which of these emerging technologies is your organization most interested and/or invested in?

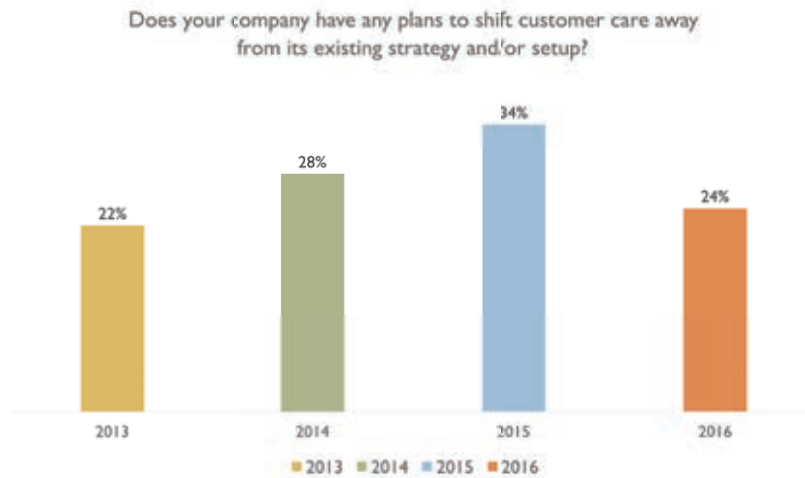
- Big Data Utilization — 32%
- Text/Speech Analytics — 25%
- Cross-Functional Data Sharing — 14%
- Chat Bots — 12%
- Live Video Chat — 7%
- Predictive Services — 5%
- Real-Time Language Translation — 5%

INITIATIVES

INITIATIVES

In 2016, about a quarter of companies indicated they had plans to shift customer care away from an existing strategy and/or setup. This is down from the more than one-third of companies that indicated the same in 2015. This also reversed an emerging trend which saw two consecutive years of growth in the percentage of companies that indicated a plan to shift their strategies and/or setup.

Does your company have any plans to shift customer care away from its existing strategy and/or setup?

22% 2013
28% 2014
34% 2015
24% 2016

■ 2013 ■ 2014 ■ 2015 ■ 2016

In a follow-up question that asked for details regarding planned changes, shifts toward alternative channels of care figured predominately. Launching or expanding chat and social media support capabilities were common themes, as was investing in technologies to support such initiatives. Moving toward omnichannel was also mentioned, both specifically and generally by the types of changes indicated.

About one-third of companies indicated they have initiatives aimed specifically at their Millennial customers. In a follow-up question, respondents were asked to provide examples of these initiatives. The majority of companies saw expansion into alternative channels (most notably, social media and SMS/text) as Millennial initiatives. Aside from these channel expansions, other initiatives included revised training methods for advisors, new products/services aimed at Millennials and marketing partnerships to develop advertising and brand messaging content catering to Millennial consumers.
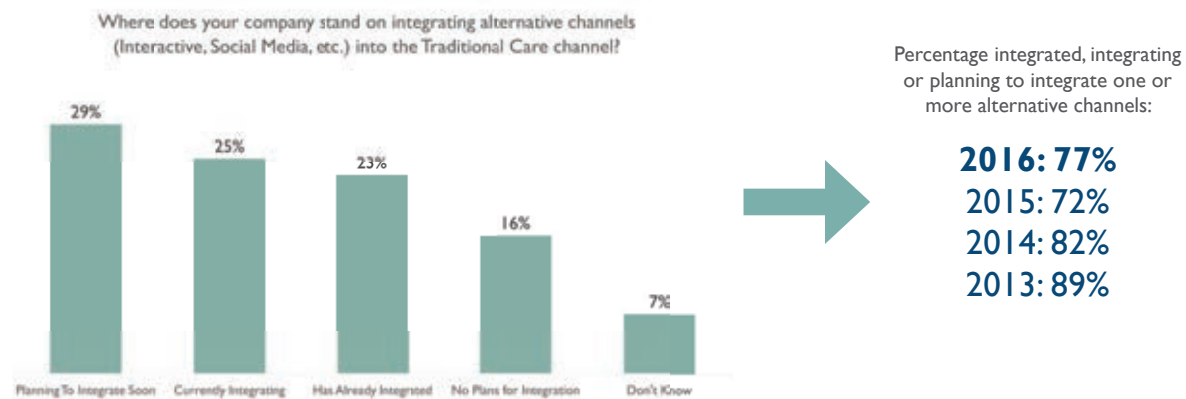
—New Question

Does your organization have any customer experience initiatives aimed specifically at your Millennial customers?

8%
32%
60%

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't Know
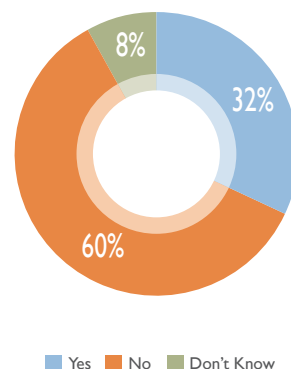
INITIATIVES

Integration of alternative channels into Traditional Care continues to be a bellwether of change for brands, with more than three-quarters of companies having already integrated, currently integrating or planning to integrate. In last year's results, 16% of brands had already integrated. This year's results saw that number climb to 23%. As more brands move toward omnichannel support, it is expected that integration will continue, unabated.

Where does your company stand on integrating alternative channels (Interactive, Social Media, etc.) into the Traditional Care channel?

- Planning To Integrate Soon: 29%
- Currently Integrating: 25%
- Has Already Integrated: 23%
- No Plans for Integration: 16%
- Don't Know: 7%

Percentage integrated, integrating or planning to integrate one or more alternative channels:

2016: 77%
2015: 72%
2014: 82%
2013: 89%

In a new question for 2016, roughly half of the brands demonstrated a keen awareness of the importance of consistency across channels. Cross-channel consistency is especially important as brands attempt to transition from multichannel to omnichannel, as well as for those brands that want to solidify a consistent and exceptional customer experience as a part of their core brand identity.

—New Question

Does your organization have any specific initiatives to create greater consistency across channels?

- Yes: 49%
- No: 36%
- Don't Know: 15%
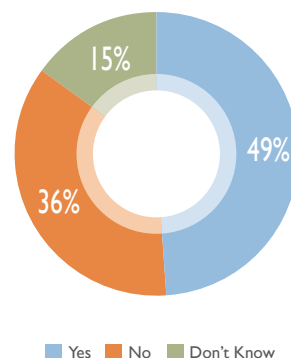
INITIATIVES

In a result that should give brands pause, a majority of companies continue to divert focus away from Traditional Care and toward self-help options. While there are many compelling reasons to do so, brands should consider CXMB Series Consumer Edition results that continue to show consumers have a strong preference for live interactions over automated ones. These results are shown in detail in the Consumer Comparison section on page 73.

Do you feel your company is beginning to divert focus away from traditional avenues of assistance and into autonomous (self-help) options?

Responded "Yes" to the above survey question:

-Key Insight

2016: 60%
2015: 63%
2014: 55%
2013: 53%

Is your organization actively trying to shift engagement traffic from one channel to another?

Responded "Yes" to the above survey question:

-Key Insight

2016: 61%
2015: 47%

Consistent with the results above, the majority of traffic shifts occurring at organizations were aimed at driving consumers into self-service and automated-assistance solutions. While these moves might make great financial sense, brands need to be certain these channels are capable of resolving the sorts of issues brought to the channel by customers. Furthermore, they need to take care to ensure these shifts aren't perceived by consumers to be forced, as forced channel shifts are often correlated with lower customer satisfaction (page 74) and issue resolution rates.

From where to where? (Select all that apply)

	2015	2016
From Traditional Care to Interactive Care	73%	44%
From Live Assistance to Automated Assistance	27%	32%
From Traditional Care to Mobile Care	13%	18%
From Interactive Care (Chat) to Social Media Care	7%	0%
From Traditional Care to Social Media Care	7%	3%
Away From Email	0%	12%
From Phone to Email	0%	6%

■ 2015 ■ 2016
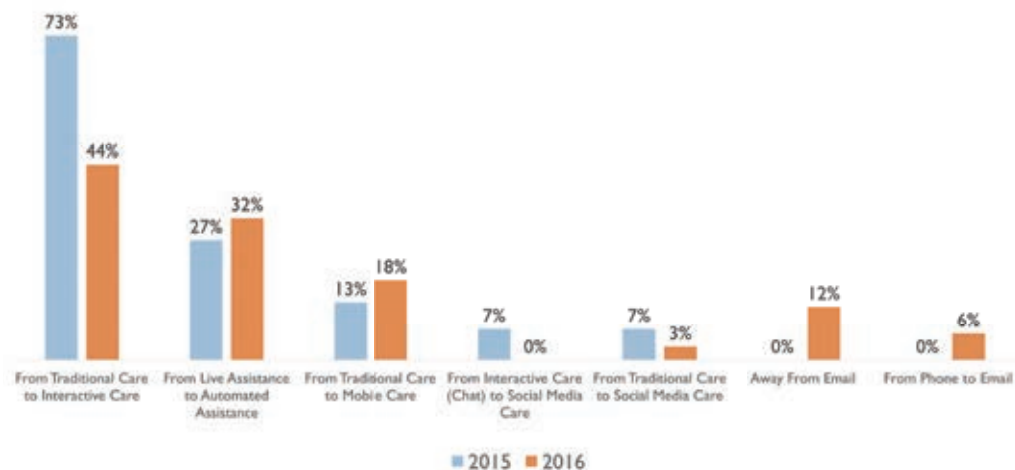
PROGRAM STRUCTURE

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

In an area of new exploration for the Corporate Edition of the CXMB Series, a set of questions was introduced to explore where brands are with the transformation from multichannel to omnichannel. While it's still early, and many companies are just now embarking on the road to change, only 12% of companies felt confident enough to define themselves as omnichannel. Progress in this area will be worth close monitoring.

Do you consider the support provided by your company to be omnichannel or multichannel?

—New Question

3%
12%
85%

■ Omnichannel   ■ Multichannel   ■ Don't Know
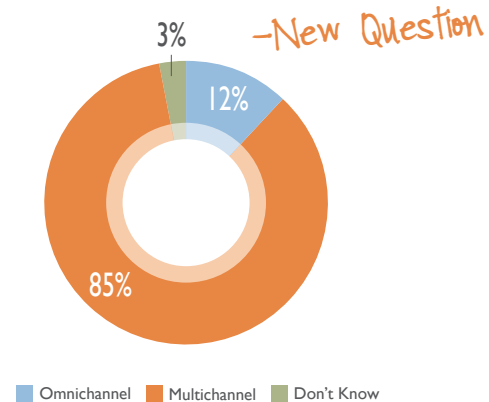
While there are a variety of enablers for making the transition from multichannel to omnichannel, this year's survey introduced a set of questions aimed at some of the more critical components of a true omnichannel program. Not surprisingly, given the above results, when it came to the individual building blocks of an omnichannel program, few companies were able to check all the boxes below. Perhaps the most encouraging finding was the responses received to the final question; with few exceptions, almost all companies had a system in place for utilizing customer feedback to improve the customer experience. As brands make the leap from multichannel to omnichannel, it is critical that the customer be placed at the center of those changes, and an effective customer feedback system can help ensure this.

—New Questions	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Does your organization utilize a shared CRM system that combines information from all contact channels?	49%	51%	0%
Do your agents have the ability to review the complete thread of an interaction for a specific customer across all channels of care?	26%	72%	2%
Do you believe your company offers support in all of the channels your customers want to use?	31%	67%	2%
Does your organization have a Chief Experience Officer (CXO) or similar role dedicated to improving the customer experience?	37%	61%	2%
Does your organization have a system in place for utilizing customer feedback to improve the customer experience?	92%	8%	0%

CONCLUSIONS

Key Findings:

• 12% of brands consider themselves omnichannel, while 85% of brands consider themselves multichannel

• Only 31% of survey participants believe they currently offer support in all of the channels their customers want to use

• 26% of brands feel they are providing a consistent experience when customers engage their brands with a multichannel approach

• 49% of brands are working on specific initiatives to create greater consistency across channels

The transformation to a true omnichannel program is still a ways off for most brands. That said, many have a clear-eyed and honest view of where they currently stand. Only 12% of brands participating in this year's survey identified themselves as omnichannel. Furthermore, only 31% of brands felt they were currently offering support within all the channels their customers want to use. So, while a lot of work remains, brands seem keenly aware of where they are and where they need to be to provide the best possible experience for their customers.

Although cross-channel consistency isn't always at the top of a consumer's list of important characteristics when interacting with a brand, it's critical in building trust and shaping a positive brand opinion among customers. While only 26% of brands in this year's corporate survey felt they were providing their customers with a consistent experience across the multichannel journey, nearly 50% of brands were working on initiatives to create greater consistency across channels. While it's encouraging to see such a large percentage of companies focused on channel consistency, these results reveal the fact that there is a large pocket of brands that know they are not providing a consistent experience, nor are they working to address the issue.

Critical Questions Brands Should Be Asking Themselves:

When it comes to omnichannel support, where do we stand versus our competition and the industry at large? If we are in the midst of transitioning to omnichannel, are our time lines sensible?

Do we know which channels our customers prefer to use to interact with our brand? Do we offer these channels? Have we ensured a high level of capability as a part of rollout?

How might the preferences of our customers change over the medium- and long-term?

How are we gauging channel consistency for our brand, and are we prioritizing channel consistency as we bring new channels and solutions online?
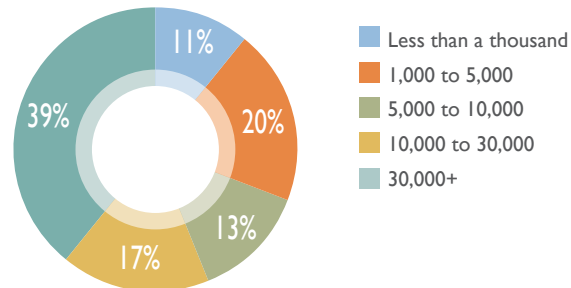
OPERATIONAL INSIGHTS

- Volumes and Growth

- Monitoring, Measuring and Performance Improvements

- Staffing

VOLUMES & GROWTH
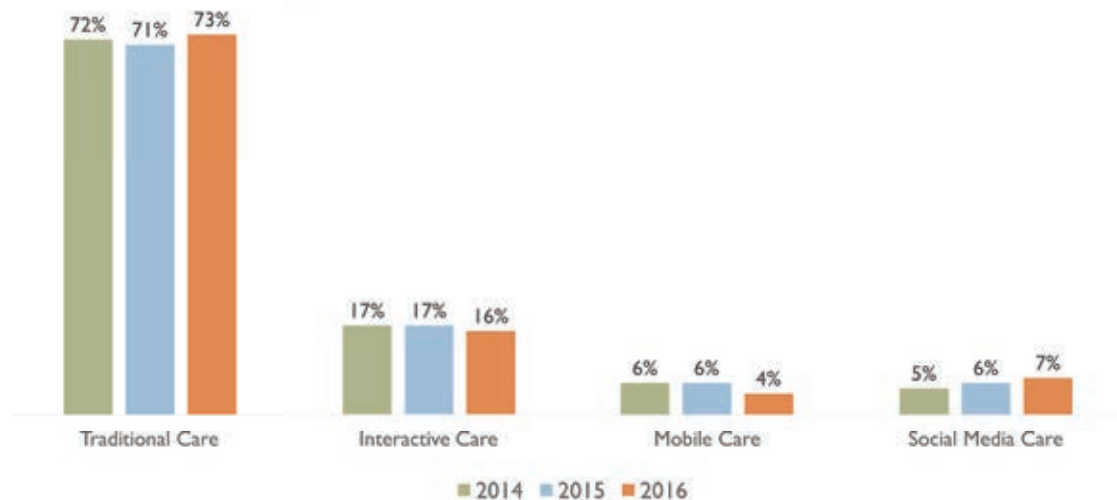
VOLUMES AND GROWTH

Weekly interaction results reflected the change in revenue mix of this year's survey participants, as highlighted on page 5. In particular, brands with 30,000+ engagements per week fell by seven points year-over-year, with 46% of survey participants indicating such last year, compared to 39% in 2016. Furthermore, last year saw 60% of participating companies indicating 10,000 or more unique customer care engagements per week, compared to only 56% in 2016.

In a given week, how many unique customer care interactions does your organization engage in?

- 11% — Less than a thousand
- 20% — 1,000 to 5,000
- 13% — 5,000 to 10,000
- 17% — 10,000 to 30,000
- 39% — 30,000+

With the exception of a 33% drop for Mobile Care, the channel mix of consumer interactions was relatively flat year-over-year. Results related to this question have been very stable since it was first asked in 2014. Traditional Care continues to lay claim to the vast majority of consumer interactions. In response to the question below, 73% was the average response received. Interactive Care continues to be named as the second most popular channel of care, and by a wide margin compared to both Social Media and Mobile Care. In terms of the overall mix, this result is fairly consistent with results from the recently released CXMB Series Consumer Edition report.

In your estimation, which percentage of total consumer interactions at your organization occur in each specific channel of care?

Channel	2014	2015	2016
Traditional Care	72%	71%	73%
Interactive Care	17%	17%	16%
Mobile Care	6%	6%	4%
Social Media Care	5%	6%	7%

■ 2014 ■ 2015 ■ 2016

VOLUMES AND GROWTH

2016 saw the highest percentage of companies naming Traditional Care as the channel with the most growth since the question was first asked in 2014. And while nearly half (48%) of participating companies indicated Traditional Care as the channel of most growth, Social Media and Mobile Care saw notable year-over-year drops. Although this question could be interpreted as absolute growth (total volume) or relative growth (percentage of growth), these results suggest most participants understand the question to be aimed at absolute growth. Provided that Traditional Care volume makes up such a large percentage of total interactions, even a small percentage gain in Traditional Care can amount to far more total growth than a large percentage gain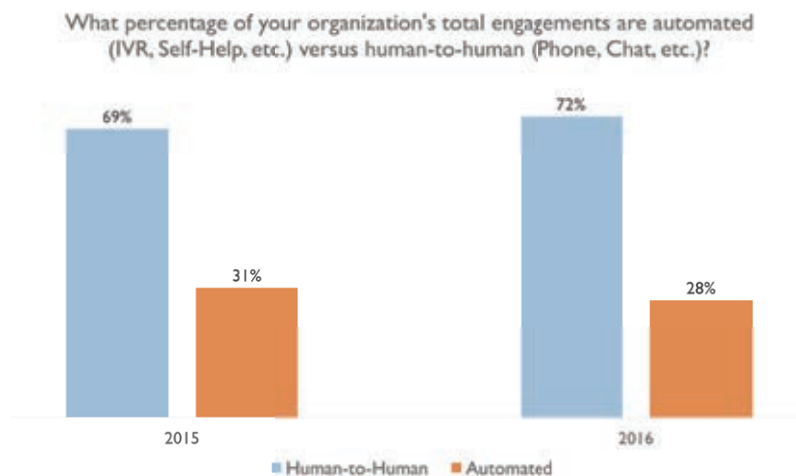 in an alternative channel. That said, it is surprising to see such strength for Traditional Care when about one-third of companies saw a year-over-year decline in Traditional Care traffic (next page).

In which customer care channel have you seen
the most growth during the past 12 months?

-Key Insight

	2014	2015	2016
Traditional Care	31%	38%	48%
Social Media Care	25%	23%	18%
Interactive Care	23%	28%	31%
Mobile Care	21%	11%	3%
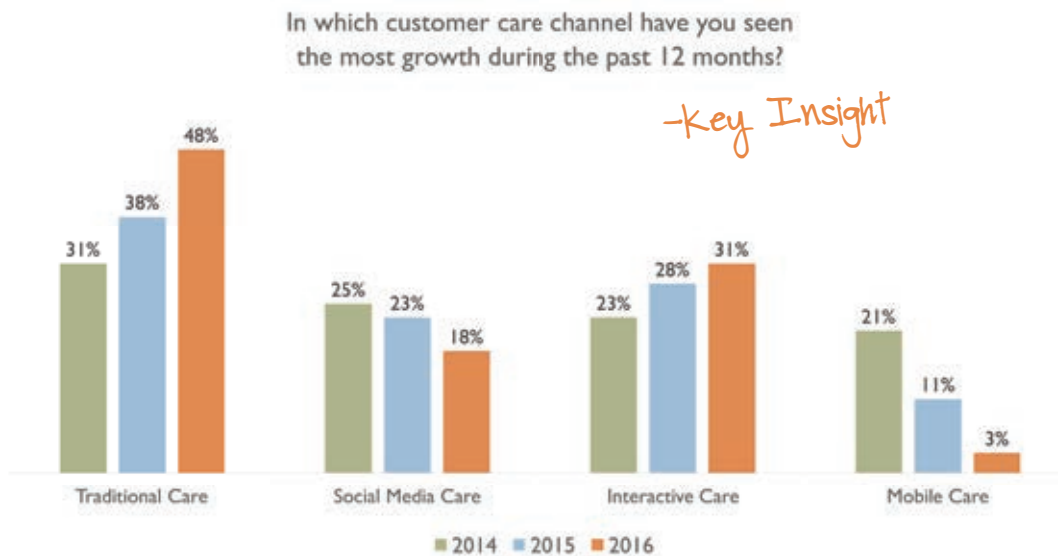
Given the popularity within the industry of shifting traffic from live to automated interactions, it would be reasonable to expect the percentage of automated engagements to grow over time. While not a dramatic move, the slight decrease in the percentage of automated versus human-to-human engagements year-over-year is possibly due to the difference between this and last year's participating brands, as highlighted on page 5.

What percentage of your organization's total engagements are automated
(IVR, Self-Help, etc.) versus human-to-human (Phone, Chat, etc.)?

	Human-to-Human	Automated
2015	69%	31%
2016	72%	28%

VOLUMES AND GROWTH

In the result at the top of the previous page, survey findings reveal that companies are increasingly naming Traditional Care as the channel of "most growth." But what about relative growth by channel? In the set of questions below, we asked companies to indicate whether traffic increased, decreased or remained the same for each of the four primary channels of care. These results show that while an increasing number of companies might be seeing Traditional Care as the channel with the most growth, a decreasing number of companies are seeing any increase whatsoever in their Traditional Care channel. In fact, 30% of companies actually indicated a year-over-year decrease in Traditional Care traffic. At first glance, these findings might seem contradictory with those on the previous page. One explanation might be the massive imbalance of total volume that moves through Traditional Care compared to the other channels of care. Even if Traditional Care volumes increase only marginally, that growth, in total volume, could still dwarf the growth of other channels, leading companies to indicate Traditional Care as the channel with the most growth.

Consistent with the findings on the previous page, Mobile Care saw a sharp decline in growth, although not a single company indicated a decrease in traffic for the channel — something that can only be said of Mobile Care.

Traffic Change By Channel Over Previous 12 Months *—Key Insight*
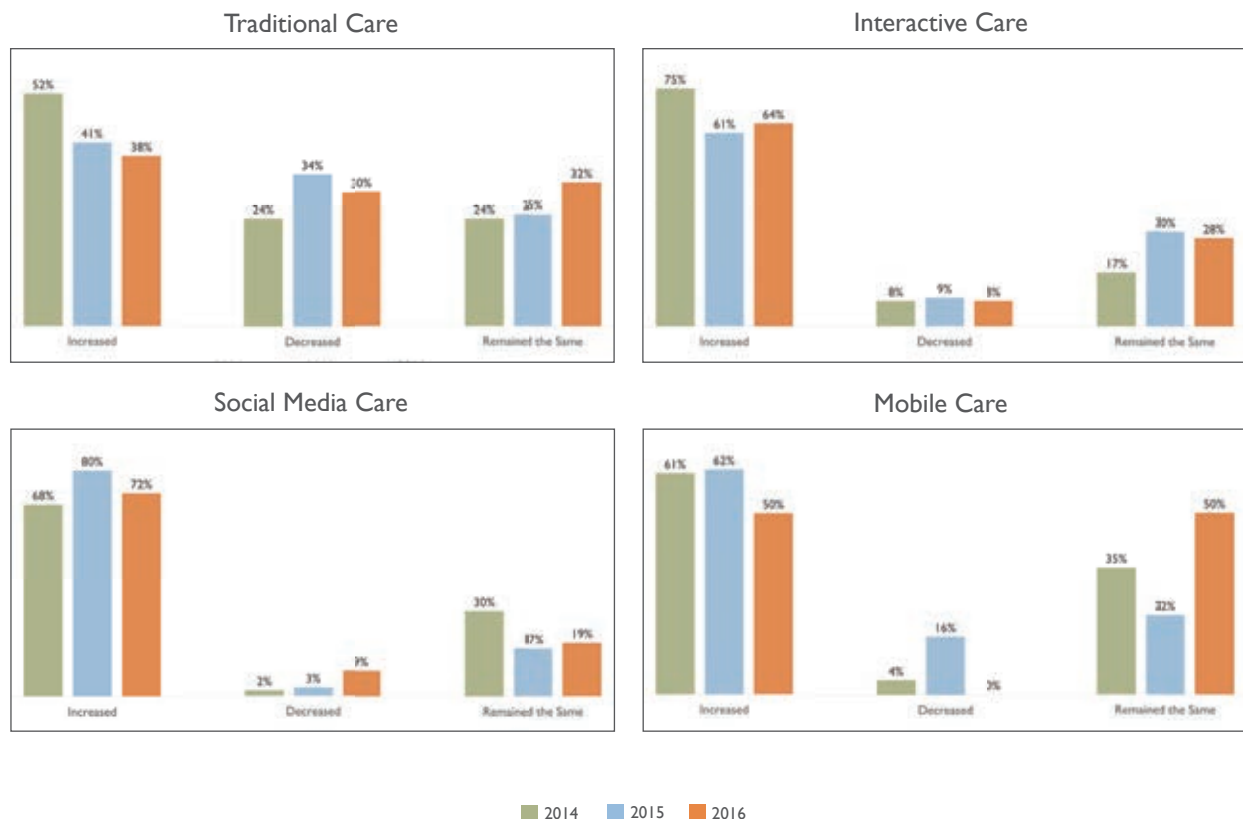
MONITORING, MEASURING & PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENTS

MONITORING, MEASURING AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENTS

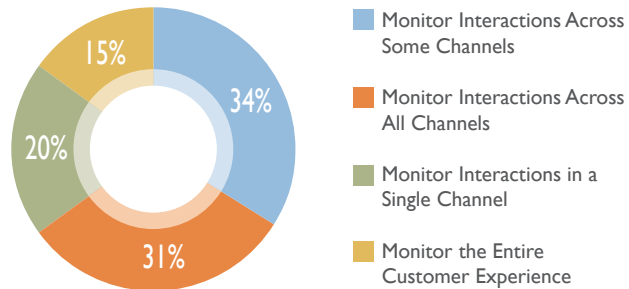With the introduction of a number of new survey questions aimed at understanding how brands monitor the customer experience, it's clear that no single approach dominates the industry. In 2016, only 15% of participant companies were monitoring the entire customer experience which is, ultimately, the premier approach for supporting a robust omnichannel environment.

How would you describe how you are monitoring the customer experience?

–New Question

- Monitor Interactions Across Some Channels
- Monitor Interactions Across All Channels
- Monitor Interactions in a Single Channel
- Monitor the Entire Customer Experience

34% / 31% / 20% / 15%

Does your organization measure multichannel performance against single-channel performance (i.e., resolution or satisfaction rates)?

–New Question

26% / 64% / 10%

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know
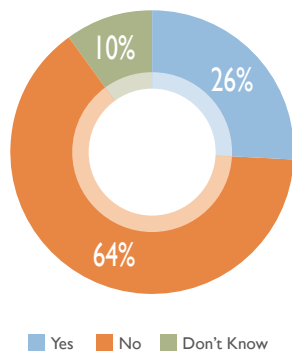
Results from the 2016 CXMB Series Consumer Edition report revealed that 67% of consumers had a multichannel interaction on one or more occasions over the course of the previous 12 months. As multichannel interactions become more prevalent in the industry, brands will need to invest in understanding performance differences between multichannel and single-channel engagements. Already, 26% of companies are actively monitoring multichannel performance against single-channel performance. It is expected this number will grow as brands seek to better understand how well their multichannel platforms perform.

When brands were asked which metrics they use to measure customer experience, both Net Promoter Score (NPS) and Customer Effort saw strong, year-over-year gains in 2016. Customer Effort saw especially impressive gains, moving up 11 points, representing a 52% move. Among the "Other" responses, survey participants indicated use of Customer Dissatisfaction (DSAT) and customer surveys, as well as third-party tools and performance audits.

Which metric do you use to measure customer experience? (Check all that apply)

	2015	2016
Customer Satisfaction	85%	77%
NPS	49%	58%
Customer Effort	21%	32%
Other	8%	11%

■ 2015 ■ 2016
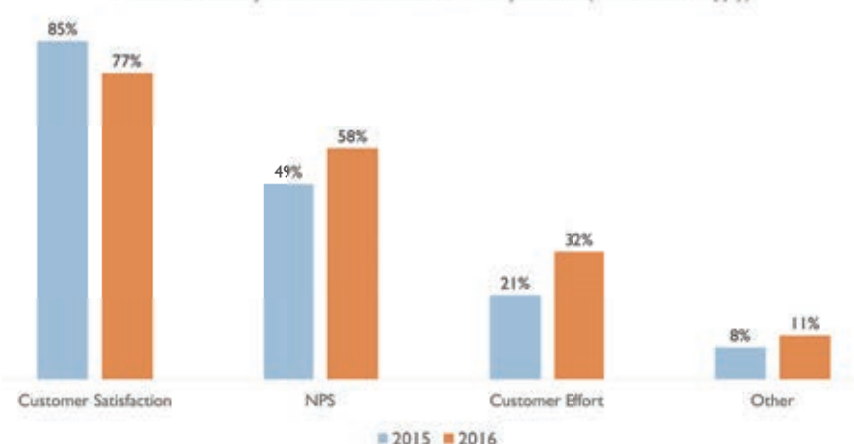
MONITORING, MEASURING AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENTS

The vast majority of brands continue to measure customer satisfaction (CSAT) within Traditional Care, with about half of the brands doing the same for Interactive Care. Social Media Care CSAT monitoring also saw strong, year-over-year gains, increasing by nine points (+41%).

In terms of CSAT performance across channels, Traditional Care continues to perform best. This is almost certainly due to two specific reasons: First, many companies don't monitor CSAT outside of Traditional Care, and second, the resolution rates of alternative channels continue to lag behind those of Traditional Care. Since getting a resolution is the primary driver of CSAT, it follows that Traditional Care has an inherent edge in providing higher CSAT results.

In which channel(s) do you measure Customer Satisfaction (CSAT)? (Check all that apply)

—Key Insight

	Traditional Care	Interactive Care	Mobile Care	Social Media Care
2015	96%	54%	25%	22%
2016	94%	49%	18%	31%

Which of your customer care channels consistently provides the highest level of Customer Satisfaction (CSAT)?

	Traditional Care	Interactive Care	Social Media Care	Mobile Care
2015	71%	18%	6%	5%
2016	73%	20%	5%	2%
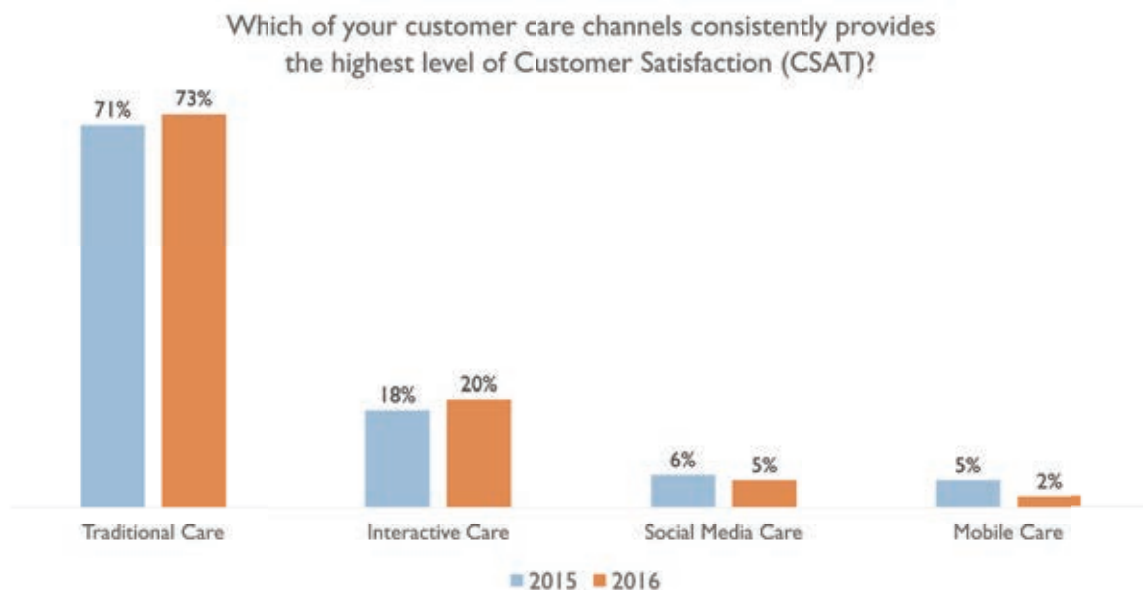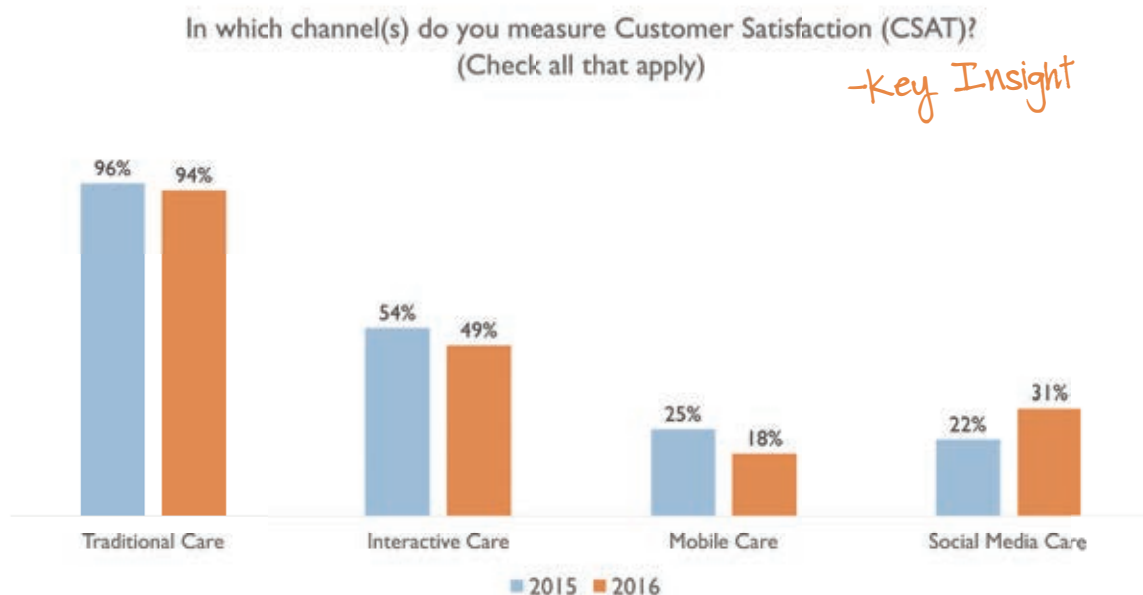
MONITORING, MEASURING AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENTS

As with CSAT measurement, First Contact Resolution (FCR) measurement is most common within the Traditional Care channel. While this year's results saw a decrease across all channels, Traditional and Mobile Care channels were most impacted, with year-over-year declines of 13% and 69%, respectively. While these results are worth noting, they could be impacted by the change in participant mix, as outlined on page 5.

In which channel(s) do you measure First Contact Resolution? (Check all that apply)

—Key Insight

Channel	2015	2016
Traditional Care	95%	83%
Interactive Care	44%	37%
Mobile Care	26%	8%
Social Media Care	23%	22%
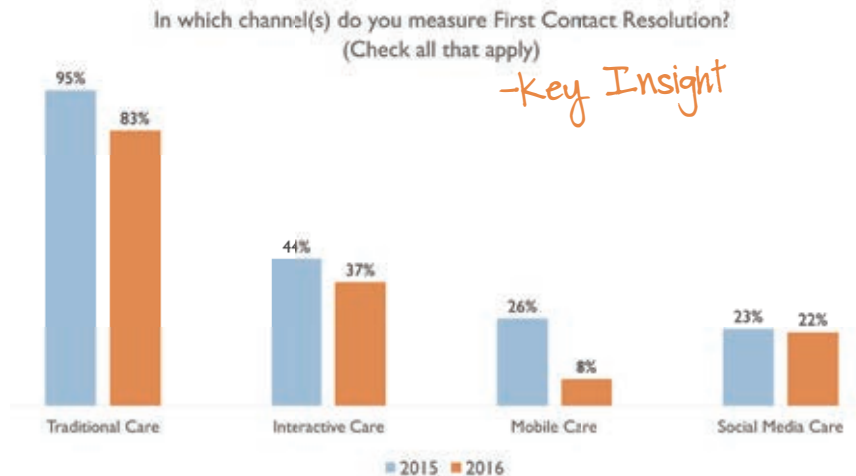
Corporate perception of FCR saw a modest improvement year-over-year, with slim improvements occurring for both "Always" and "Often." While promising, these results continue to contrast greatly with consumer perception. A comparison of these results against a similar question from the 2016 CXMB Series Consumer Edition can be found in the Consumer Comparison section on page 71.

How often does your organization resolve an issue during the first instance of connecting with the customer?

	2015	2016
Always	3%	5%
Often	73%	75%
Half of the Time	17%	15%
Rarely	7%	5%
Never	0%	0%
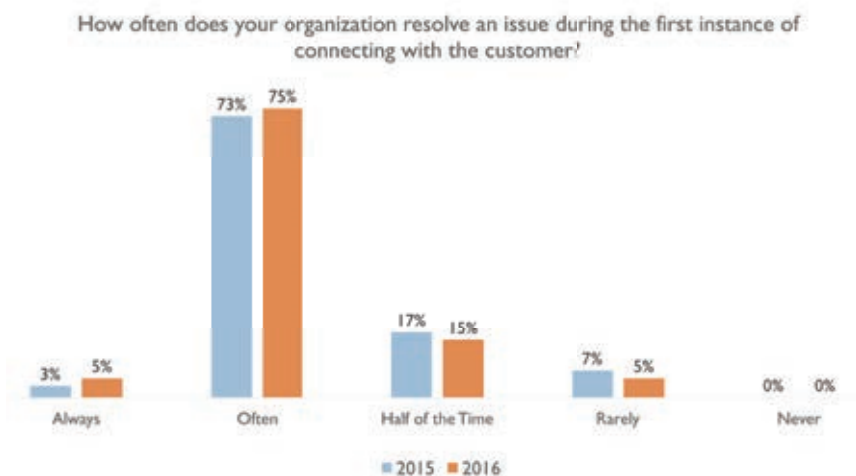
In a new question (one that expands on the question above), we asked survey participants to provide an approximation of their FCR rate by channel. The results (at right) are an average of responses received. As with the CSAT result on the previous page, and perhaps contributing to those results, most brands feel the Traditional Care channel performs best in providing a first-contact resolution.

For each channel, please list your approximate rate of FCR.

—New Question

Channel	Rate
Traditional Care	75%
Interactive Care	61%
Social Media Care	54%
Mobile Care	47%
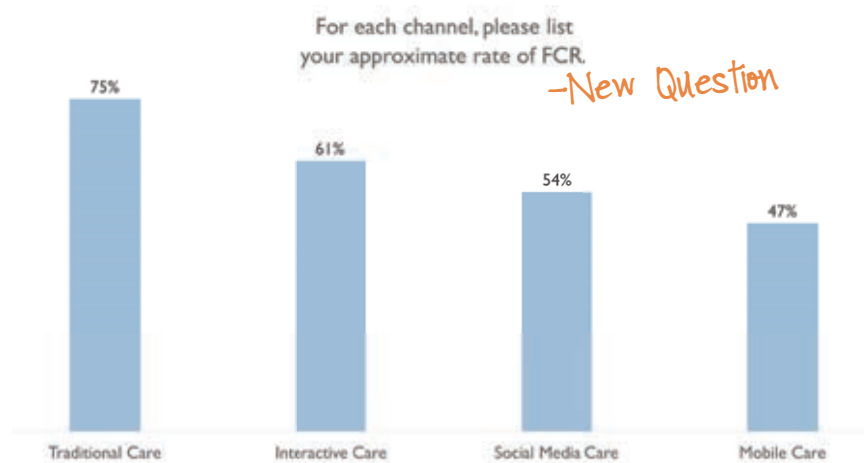
MONITORING, MEASURING AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENTS

In a new series of questions aimed at Quality Assurance (QA) programs, this year's survey investigates in which channels these programs are being used, and to what extent they are working to improve the customer experience. Not surprisingly, these programs are widely used within Traditional Care channels. Of note is the divergence between Interactive and Social Media Care channels, and the Mobile Care channel.

Percentage of organizations that have a Quality Assurance Program in place for the following channels:

—New Question

- Traditional Care: 91%
- Interactive Care: 38%
- Social Media Care: 34%
- Mobile Care: 6%

When properly designed and managed, QA programs can be a powerful source of customer insights, and a vehicle for positive change. But often these programs aren't focused on the right things. To better understand how companies gauge the performance of their QA programs, a pair of new questions (below) were introduced into this year's survey. With only 38% of respondents believing their QA program is helping to monitor and improve resolution and CSAT rates, and only 59% of respondents indicating their QA program is aligned with their CSAT results, these results show that brands could be doing a lot more to maximize their QA programs.

In general, do you think your Quality Assurance Program(s) is helping to monitor and improve resolution and customer satisfaction rates?

—New Question

- Yes: 38%
- No: 9%
- Don't Know: 53%
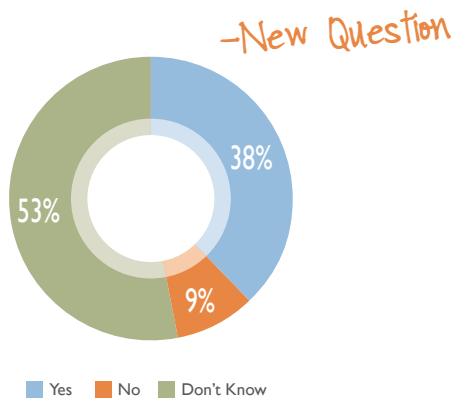
Are results from your Quality Assurance Program aligned with your CSAT results (i.e., as QA performance improves, CSAT results also improve)?

—New Question

- Yes: 59%
- No: 28%
- Don't Know: 13%
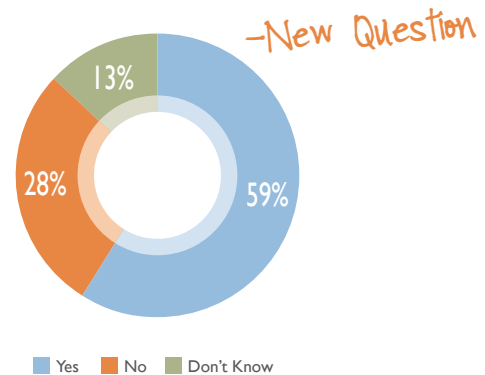
Has your company conducted any customer journey mapping projects in the past 12 months?

—New Question

- Yes: 55%
- No, But Plan To Do So: 26%
- No, And No Plans To Do So: 19%
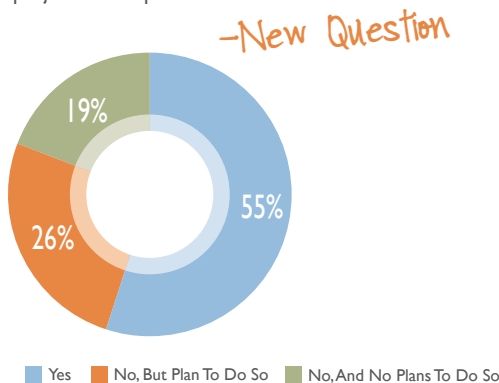
Customer journey mapping is often a key first step in understanding and improving the customer experience. It's such a crucial process, 81% of companies have either completed a customer journey mapping project within the past 12 months, or plan to do so. Customer journey mapping is a holistic approach that provides an end-to-end view of customer experience, identifying opportunities for improvement across the wider organization.

STAFFING

STAFFING

Employee counts have decreased slightly compared to last year. This is possibly due to the reduced level of revenue in this year's survey group, as reflected elsewhere in this year's report, and explained on page 5. In 2015, results pegged companies with 1,000+ customer care employees (both internal and external) at 41%, compared to 37% in 2016.

How many Full-Time Employees (FTEs), both internal and external, are employed by your company's customer care organization?

I to 100	101 to 500	501 to 1,000	1,001 to 5,000	5,000+
32%	14%	17%	23%	14%
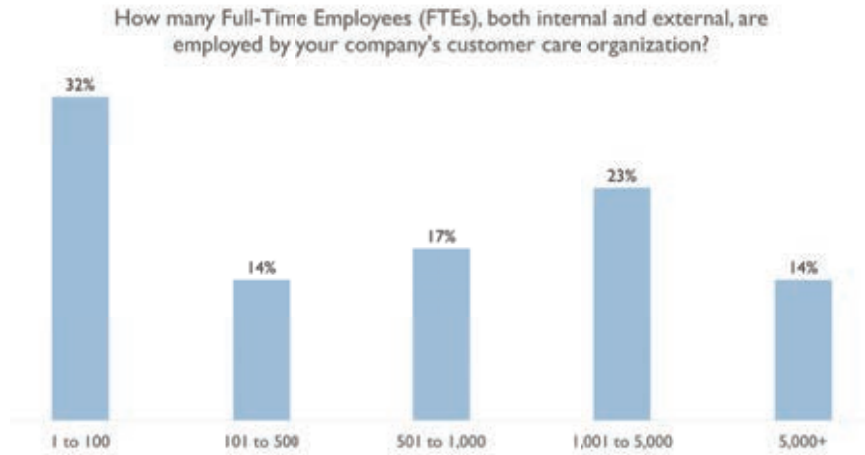
While overall agent mix (internal versus external) remained fairly consistent year-over-year (right), 2016 saw a high watermark in terms of survey participants indicating a change in staffing over the past five years (below). Although most of the change revolved around the back-and-forth shift between insourcing and outsourcing, there were a fair number of companies that indicated "Other." The most common change among this group was nearshoring. Also mentioned among the "Other" write-ins was the shift toward home advisors.

Are the bulk of your customer care engagements carried out by company employees or an outside provider?

	Company Employees	Outside Provider	Even Mix
2015	63%	37%	0%
2016	55%	34%	11%
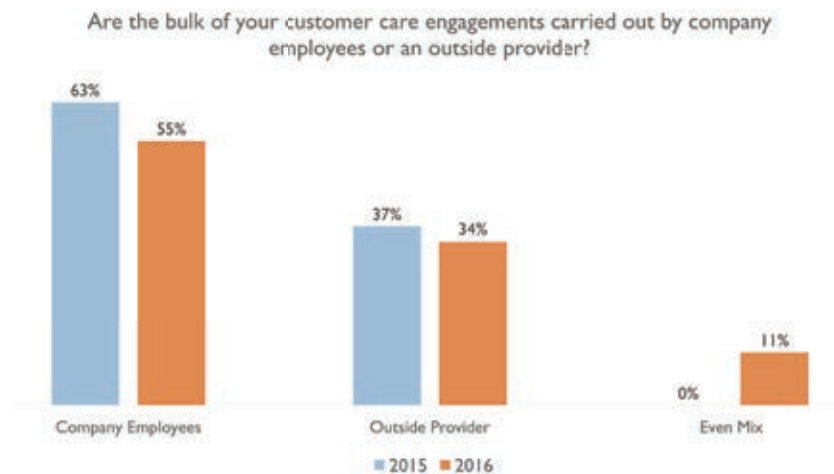
Has your customer care team been staffed in the same way the past five years or has it changed (e.g., internal staffing to outsourced or vice versa)? (Check all that apply)

	Same (unchanged):	From Internal to Outsourced:	From Outsourced to Internal:	From Onshore to Offshore:	From Offshore to Onshore:	Other:	Don't Know:
2013	73%	13%	13%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2014	65%	20%	15%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2015	60%	26%	7%	14%	3%	9%	3%
2016	58%	23%	14%	3%	3%	9%	0%
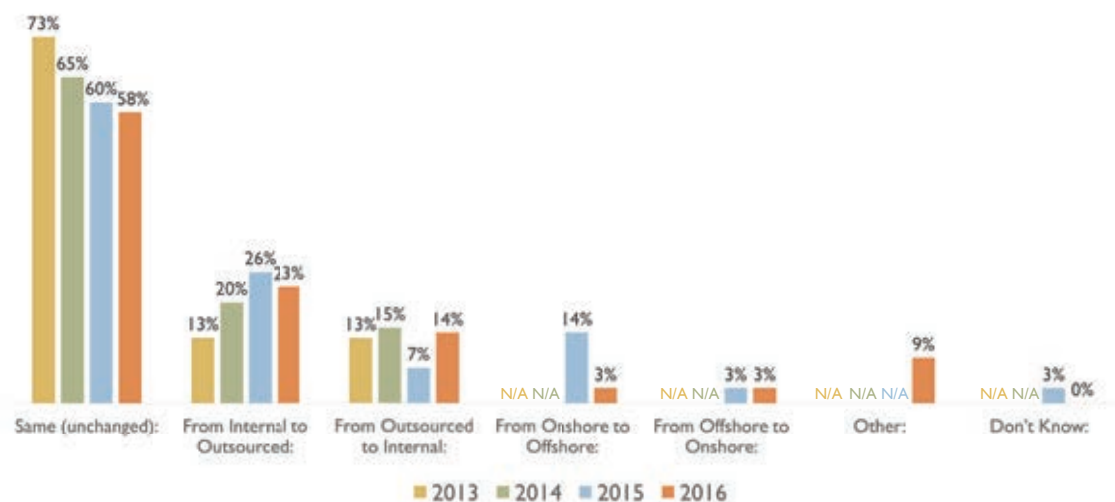
Consistent with the increasing volumes among alternative channels (page 26), 2016 saw increasing levels of change in the hiring requirements used by customer care organizations. In a follow-up question that asked survey participants to describe the type of change that occurred, three specific (and desirable) agent skill-sets emerged: strong social skills, ability to problem-solve complex issues and digital channel capabilities (especially Chat). Hiring individuals suited to a remote/work-from-home environment was also mentioned by several organizations.

Have your hiring requirements for customer care agents changed in a significant way over the past 12 months?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
2015	21%	73%	6%
2016	31%	64%	5%

■ 2015 ■ 2016
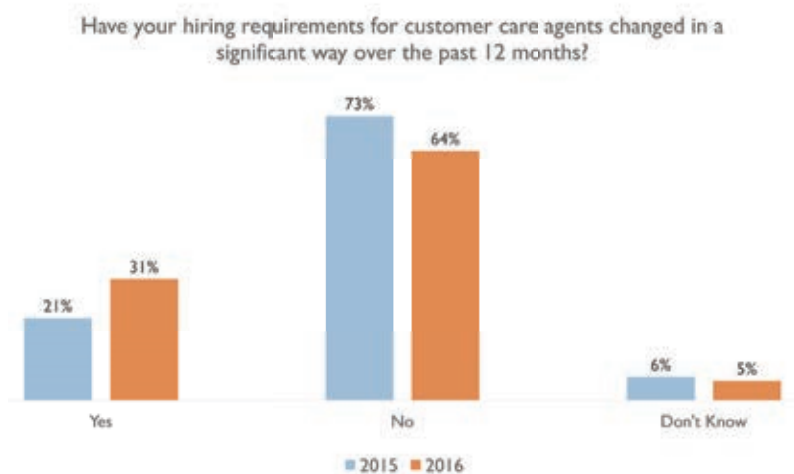
Does your organization deploy agents who provide customer care via multiple channel solutions simultaneously (i.e., via Phone and Chat)?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
2015	52%	47%	1%
2016	46%	52%	2%
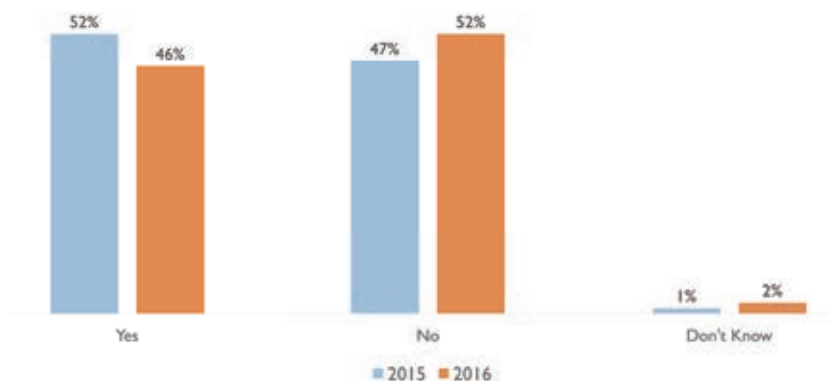
■ 2015 ■ 2016

In your estimation, which percentage of consumer interactions resulting in a resolution are conducted across multiple channels?

2016: 31%
2015: 28%

For which channel solutions do your agents provide simultaneous cross-channel support? (Check all that apply)

	Email	Phone	Online Chat	Social Media	Mobile Chat	SMS Text	Video Chat
2015	81%	81%	78%	32%	16%	5%	3%
2016	97%	97%	60%	30%	7%	10%	3%

■ 2015 ■ 2016
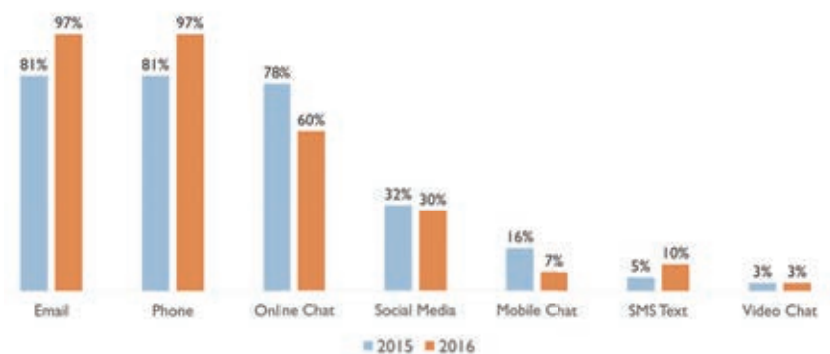
It came as no surprise that the percentage of interactions conducted across multiple channels increased in 2016 by about ten percent from 2015. At the same time, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of brands fielding agents that provide support in one or more channels simultaneously. While this result could be a reflection of this year's survey participants, it could also be the case that companies are deploying agents who are specialized in specific channels. Alternatively, it could mean that more alternative channels are beginning to secure the resources needed to recruit, hire and maintain a dedicated agent workforce.

CONCLUSIONS

Key Findings:

• Only 15% of survey participants indicated they monitor the entire customer experience, as opposed to 54% of companies that monitor either in single channels or across some channels

• CSAT measurement remains low in alternative channels, with 49% of organizations measuring in Interactive Care, 31% measuring in Social Media Care and just 18% measuring in Mobile Care

• Like CSAT, FCR is under-measured in alternative channels, with 37% of organizations measuring in Interactive Care, 22% measuring in Social Media Care and just 8% measuring in Mobile Care

• 59% of respondents indicate their Quality Assurance (QA) programs are aligned with their CSAT results, but only 38% of respondents feel their QA programs are helping to monitor and improve resolution and CSAT rates

Many of this year's most interesting Operational Insights results came out of the Monitoring, Measuring and Performance Improvements section. Results from this section, which contained a number of new questions aimed at benchmarking how brands monitor and measure program performance, reveal an industry that is a long way off from comprehensive surveillance of cross-channel performance. In fact, only 15% of organizations indicated they were monitoring the entire customer experience. While this sort of monitoring isn't easy, often requiring specialized tools and plenty of internal coordination, it's vital to understanding the customer journey.

In addition to not measuring the entire customer experience, companies are also failing to measure specific KPIs (like CSAT and FCR) within their alternative channel environments. Measurement of these indicators is widespread and commonplace within the Traditional Care channel, but only a fraction of companies are doing the same for Interactive, Social Media and Mobile Care. And when measurements do occur, performance is often lacking in comparison to Traditional Care. Although the lack of measurement might make sense from a volume perspective, businesses need to be prepared for continued growth within these channels, while also laying the groundwork for an eventual transition from multichannel to omnichannel. Adequate program performance monitoring and measurement is especially important as brands make the transition from multichannel to omnichannel. Gaps in performance monitoring can quickly undermine the benefits of an omnichannel program and mask points of failure.

Finally, only 38% of survey respondents feel their Quality Assurance (QA) programs are doing a good job at monitoring and improving resolution and CSAT rates. Oftentimes, QA programs become an exercise in mandating processes and checking boxes. Companies should not lose sight of the fact that these programs should be put in place with the purpose of improving the customer experience.

Critical Questions Brands Should Be Asking Themselves:

If we are not yet measuring the entire customer experience, do we have a road map for achieving this? Does this road map coincide with a larger plan to transition to an omnichannel environment?

Does our channel management strategy include an initiative to measure performance in our alternative channels with the same sort of rigor applied to our Traditional Care channel? If not, do we have a good reason for not having such an initiative?

Is our QA program doing enough to improve the customer experience?

CHANNEL RESULTS

- Traditional Care
- Interactive Care
- Social Media Care
- Mobile Care

TRADITIONAL CARE

TRADITIONAL CARE

Improving the customer experience continues to be the prominent Traditional Care priority among customer care organizations, with more than 50% of survey participants calling it a top priority for the first time in the series' history. This increase came exclusively at the expense of "Shift Traffic/Decrease Volume" and "Decrease Costs." Although only a handful of companies responded "Other," increasing productivity and multiple priorities were included among the write-ins.

What is currently your company's top priority for the Traditional Care channel?

-Key Insight

	Improve the Customer Experience	Shift Traffic/Decrease Volume	Decrease Costs	Other
2014	46%	29%	17%	8%
2015	48%	30%	17%	5%
2016	56%	25%	14%	5%

■ 2014 ■ 2015 ■ 2016

What is your organization's level of maturity within the Traditional Care channel?

	Very Mature	Somewhat Mature	Intermediate	Somewhat New	Very New
2015	52%	32%	11%	3%	2%
2016	51%	31%	14%	2%	2%

■ 2015 ■ 2016

For the second year in a row, the CXMB Series survey included a question aimed at understanding channel maturity. Organizational maturity within the Traditional Care channel remained remarkably consistent, with 82% of participants indicating "Very Mature" or "Somewhat Mature." Here's how Traditional Care compared to the other channels of care in this regard:

Traditional Care: 82% (84% in 2015)

Interactive Care: 20% (29% in 2015)

Social Media Care: 26% (20% in 2015)

Mobile Care: 12% (14% in 2015)

TRADITIONAL CARE

An increase in channel traffic continues to be the most common direction for Traditional Care, but the margins between the various responses have evaporated since 2014. This marks the second year in a row of reduced traffic increases. Essentially, 2016 saw one-third of survey respondents experiencing an increase in channel traffic, one-third experiencing a decrease and one-third experiencing no change at all.

In the past year, how has traffic to your Traditional Care channel (phone, in-store, direct mail, etc.) changed?

—Key Insight

	Increased	Decreased	Same	Don't Know
2013	44%	22%	24%	9%
2014	50%	23%	23%	4%
2015	40%	33%	25%	2%
2016	37%	30%	31%	2%

■ 2013 ■ 2014 ■ 2015 ■ 2016
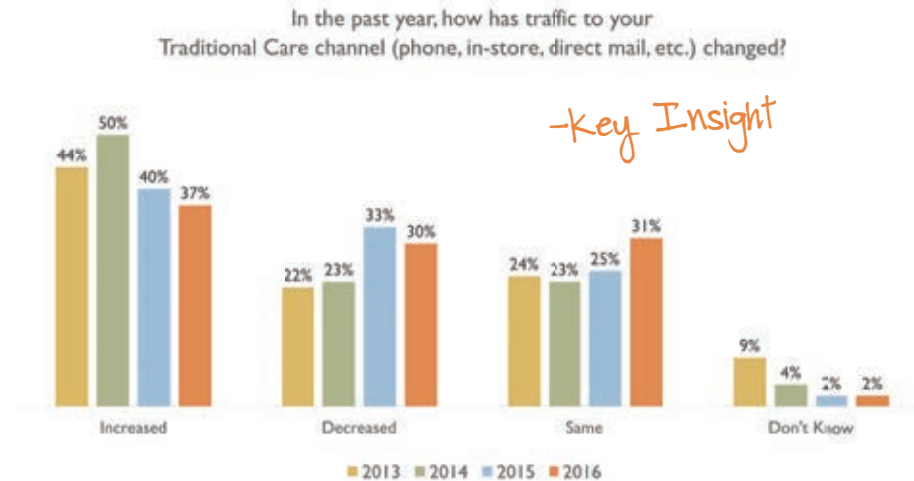
In a set of new questions for 2016, we asked survey participants to indicate what sort of traffic changes were occurring for each of the various solutions that make up the Traditional Care channel. Interestingly, nearly one-half of all survey respondents indicated an increase in traffic for their email solution, with only 22% indicating a decrease in email traffic — the lowest among all solutions. This result aligns with a similar finding in the recently released CXMB Series Consumer Edition report, showing an increase in consumer use of email, the details of which can be found in the Consumer Comparison section on page 76.

How has traffic volume changed for each of the following Traditional Care solutions over the previous 12 months?

—New Question

	Phone	Email	Mail	In-Person
Increased	38%	48%	8%	10%
Decreased	31%	22%	56%	28%
Same	29%	26%	26%	45%
Don't Know	2%	4%	10%	17%

■ Increased ■ Decreased ■ Same ■ Don't Know
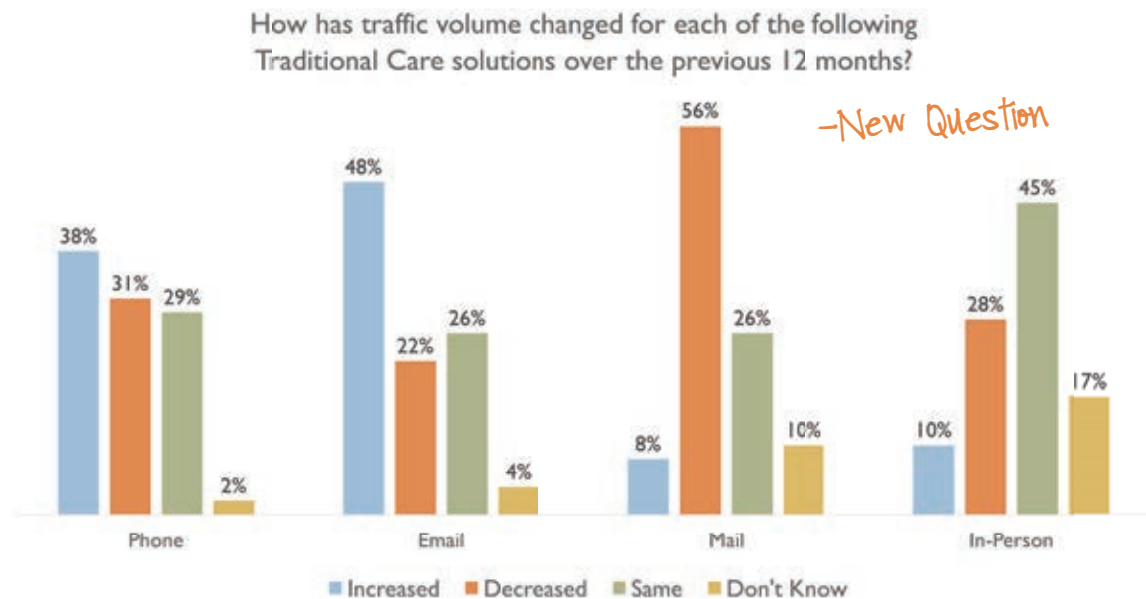
TRADITIONAL CARE

While the 2016 and 2015 lists of CXMB Series corporate survey participants are not identical, the budgetary results below provide a sense of the general direction of the industry. In terms of surprises, in 2015, 29% of survey respondents expected an increase in their Traditional Care budget in the coming year. That compares with 21% of this year's survey respond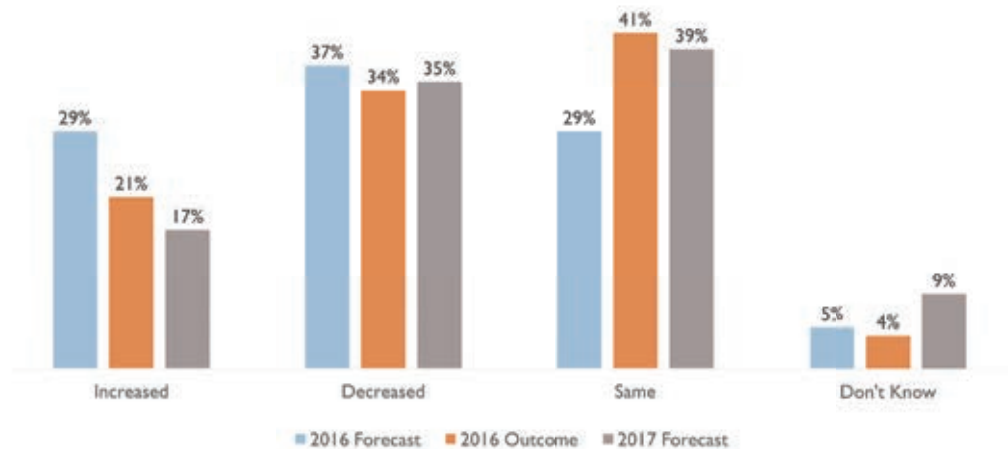ents indicating an actual increase. Furthermore, only 17% of this year's survey participants expect to see an increase in their Traditional Care budget for 2017.

Traditional Care Budget Forecasts and Outcomes

	Increased	Decreased	Same	Don't Know
2016 Forecast	29%	37%	29%	5%
2016 Outcome	21%	34%	41%	4%
2017 Forecast	17%	35%	39%	9%

In a question aimed at understanding how brands primarily staff their Traditional Care channel, results show the bulk of agents are internal in 2016, consistent with results from previous years. This question of staffing was also further enhanced this year by inclusion of a new component aimed at identifying whether agents are onshore, offshore or a mix of both. Survey responses to this new element show that most agents are onshore, with only 14% of companies indicating their agents are exclusively offshore (compared to 64% of companies that indicated their agents were exclusively onshore).

How is your Traditional Care channel (phone, email, etc.) primarily staffed?

	Internally	Externally	Both Internal and External	Onshore	Offshore	Both Onshore and Offshore
2013	38%	22%	40%	N/A	N/A	N/A
2014	49%	27%	24%	N/A	N/A	N/A
2015	48%	18%	35%	N/A	N/A	N/A
2016	44%	20%	36%	64%	14%	22%
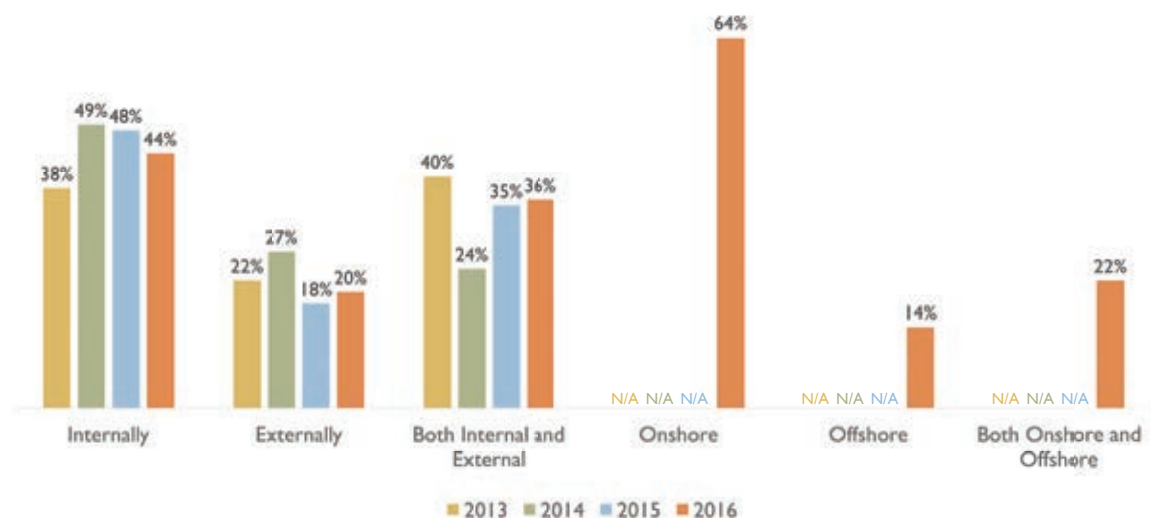
TRADITIONAL CARE

Change in Traditional Care staffing accelerated in 2016, increasing by 14 points year-over-year. This represented a 74% year-over-year increase in the number of companies experiencing significant staffing changes to their Traditional Care channel.

Has the staffing of your company's Traditional Care channel
changed in a significant way over the past twelve months?

Responded "Yes" to the above survey question:

YES   **2016: 33%**
2015: 19%
2014: 31%

In what way has it changed? (Check all that apply)

More FTEs: 73% / 42% / 44%
Fewer FTEs: 27% / 33% / 17%
Increased Insourcing/Decreased Outsourcing: 7% / 17% / 22%
Increased Outsourcing/Decreased Insourcing: 13% / 0% / 22%
Increased Onshoring/Decreased Offshoring: 7% / 0% / 0%
Increased Offshoring/Decreased Onshoring: 7% / 8% / 22%
Work-From-Home Options: 33% / 8% / 33%

■ 2014 ■ 2015 ■ 2016
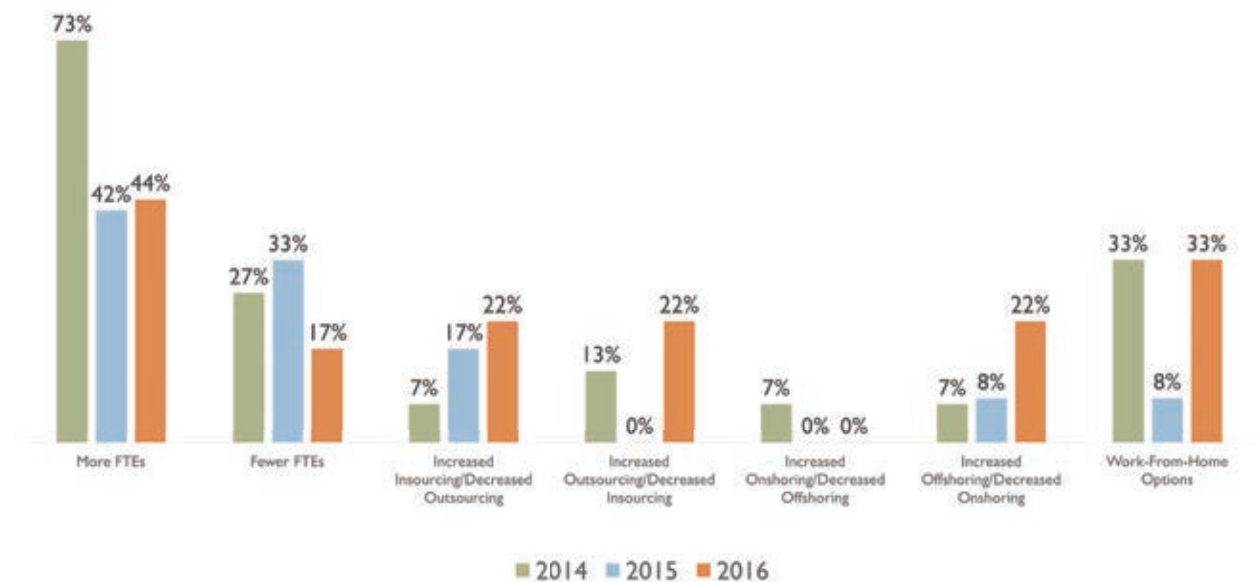
Of the 33% of companies that did experience significant Traditional Care staffing changes over the previous 12 months, more full-time employees and work-from-home options were the two most common types of change. About one-fifth of brands also indicated increased outsourcing/decreased insourcing, but this was precisely offset by an equal number of companies indicating increased insourcing/decreased outsourcing. Additionally, about one-fifth of companies indicated increased offshoring/decreased onshoring; and this result came without an accompanying offset. In fact, not a single company claimed an increase in onshoring in 2016, in a repeat of 2015 results.

INTERACTIVE
CARE

INTERACTIVE CARE

Does your company provide Interactive Care support, including online/video chat, FAQ and self-help tools?

Overall percentage of companies providing live Interactive Care support:

Responded "Yes" to the above survey question:

YES

2016: 67%
2015: 75%
2014: 88%
2013: 76%

2016: 44%
2015: 59%
2014: 59%

For the second year in a row, the percentage of survey participants that provide Interactive Care support declined, this time by eight points (-11%). Similarly, the percentage of companies offering live Interactive Care support also fell 15 points (-25%). Both of these decreases could be driven, in part, by the nature of this year's survey participants, as explained on page 5. Given the two-year trend, however, it is possible companies are prioritizing other alternative channel solutions, such as social media and SMS/text.

To provide some context for the above result, 88% of this year's survey participants engage customers on social media, 39% of companies provide Mobile Care solutions and 20% provide Mobile Care solutions requiring live assistance.

Of the 67% of companies that provide one or more Interactive Care solutions, Online FAQ was almost universally offered. Online Self-Help Tools and Online Chat saw steep declines year-over-year, again possibly owing to the fact that the revenue mix of this year's survey participants is down slightly compared to previous years.

Which Interactive Care solutions does your company currently offer? (Check all that apply)

	Online FAQ	Online Self-Help Tools	Online Chat (Click-To-Chat)	Video Chat	Other
2014	90%	86%	63%	0%	12%
2015	96%	82%	80%	11%	16%
2016	92%	69%	67%	0%	6%
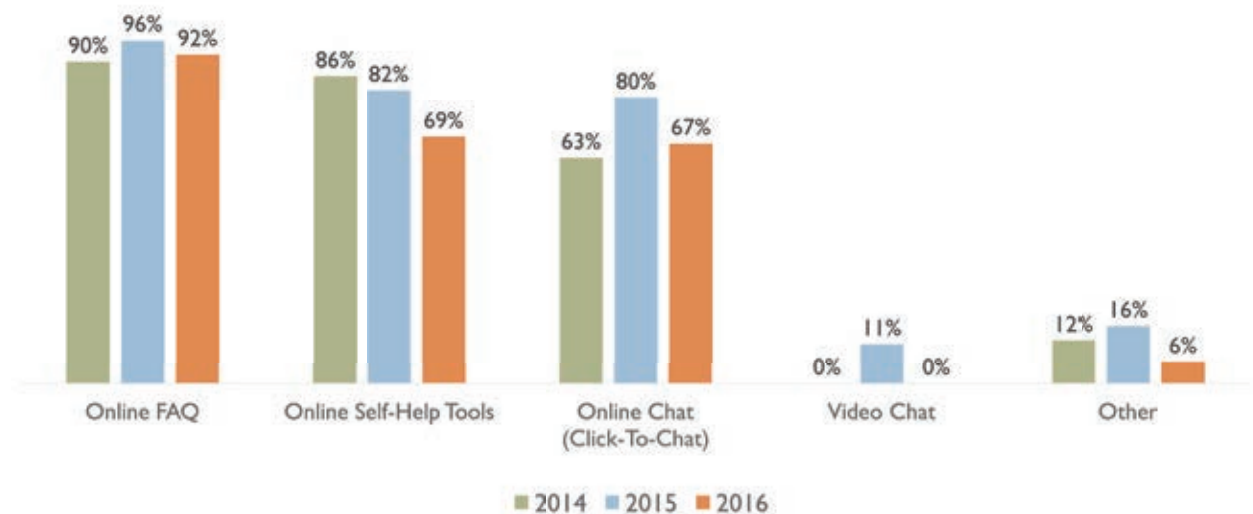
INTERACTIVE CARE

When it comes to Interactive Care channel priorities, the 2016 CXMB Series survey saw the introduction of a new response option, "Improve the Customer Experience." Although this new option attracted more responses than any other, it is worth noting the continued strength of the "Expand Capability" response. As companies attempt to shift more traffic into alternative channels, it's clear efforts are being made to ensure alternative channels are capable of handling a greater variety of issues.

What is your company's top priority for the Interactive Care channel?

-Key Insight

	2014	2015	2016
Improve the Customer Experience	NA	NA	36%
Expand Capability	44%	33%	30%
Improve Quality/Performance	23%	30%	9%
Increase Channel Awareness	20%	11%	15%
Integrate With Other Channels	11%	19%	8%
Other	2%	7%	2%

What is your organization's level of maturity within the Interactive Care channel?

	2015	2016
Very Mature	2%	2%
Somewhat Mature	27%	18%
Intermediate	33%	37%
Somewhat New	21%	25%
Very New	17%	18%

Channel maturity for Interactive Care leaned slightly toward less maturity in 2016, with a strong downward move in the "Somewhat Mature" category, which fell nine points (-33%). Most of this move was picked up by "Intermediate" and "Somewhat New," which saw gains of 12% and 19%, respectively. Twenty percent of companies indicated their Interactive Care offering as "Very Mature" or "Somewhat Mature." Here's how Interactive Care compared to the other channels of care in this regard:

Interactive Care: 20% (29% in 2015)
Traditional Care: 82% (84% in 2015)
Social Media Care: 26% (20% in 2015)
Mobile Care: 12% (14% in 2015)

INTERACTIVE CARE

In yet another illustration of the impact of a lower revenue mix among this year's survey participants compared to previous years, the volume of human interactions within the Interactive Care channel saw a sharp year-over-year reduction. This was particularly evident in the 1,000+ response, which fell by 14 points (-32%). This result should not be a reflection of overall channel volume, which is undoubtedly rising as more companies attempt to shift traffic from Traditional Care into alternative care channels, as evidenced on page 18.

For Interactive Care solutions that require human assistance, how many unique engagements occur per week?

	Less Than 100	100 to 500	500 to 1,000	1,000+	Don't Know
2015	25%	2%	6%	44%	13%
2016	15%	28%	10%	30%	17%

■ 2015 ■ 2016

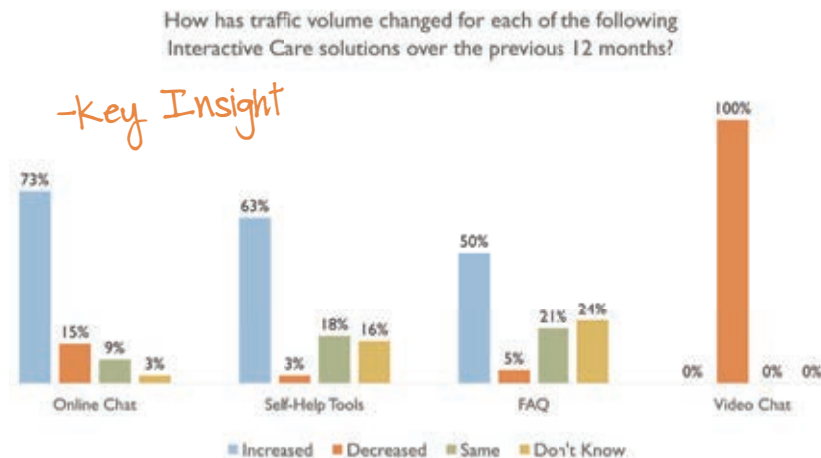**In the past year, how has traffic to your Interactive Care channels that require human assistance (such as online or video chat) changed?**

—Key Insight

	Increased	Decreased	Same	Don't Know
2014	75%	8%	17%	0%
2015	57%	8%	29%	6%
2016	56%	7%	25%	12%

■ 2014 ■ 2015 ■ 2016

As illustrated in the results at left, traffic to the Interactive Care channel continues to grow. When "Don't Know" responses are removed from the equation, about two-thirds of companies indicated an increase in channel traffic. Comparatively, growth within the Interactive Care channel is more widespread than Mobile Care, where 45% of respondents indicated an increase in traffic, and slightly less widespread than Social Media Care, where 67% indicated an increase in channel traffic.

How has traffic volume changed for each of the following Interactive Care solutions over the previous 12 months?

—Key Insight

	Online Chat	Self-Help Tools	FAQ	Video Chat
Increased	73%	63%	50%	0%
Decreased	15%	3%	5%	100%
Same	9%	18%	21%	0%
Don't Know	3%	16%	24%	0%

■ Increased ■ Decreased ■ Same ■ Don't Know

To get a better understanding of traffic changes among the various Interactive Care solutions, 2016 saw the introduction of a new question (at left). Results show that growth is evenly distributed across solutions, with the exception of Video Chat, which received only one response by a brand that, incidentally, discontinued Video Chat support in 2016.

INTERACTIVE CARE

In 2016, the prioritization of the Interactive Care channel was somewhat degraded compared to 2015. In these most recent findings, 43% of respondents defined the expansion and/or development of the channel as "A Top Priority" or "As Important or More Important Than Other Expansions," compared to 50% in 2015. Comparatively, these results closely resemble those from an identical question posed in the Mobile Care section, where 45% of participants responded in a similar fashion.

What level of importance does your company place on expanding and/or developing an Interactive Care channel?

What reason would most compel your organization to develop and/or expand the current Interactive Care channel in the future?
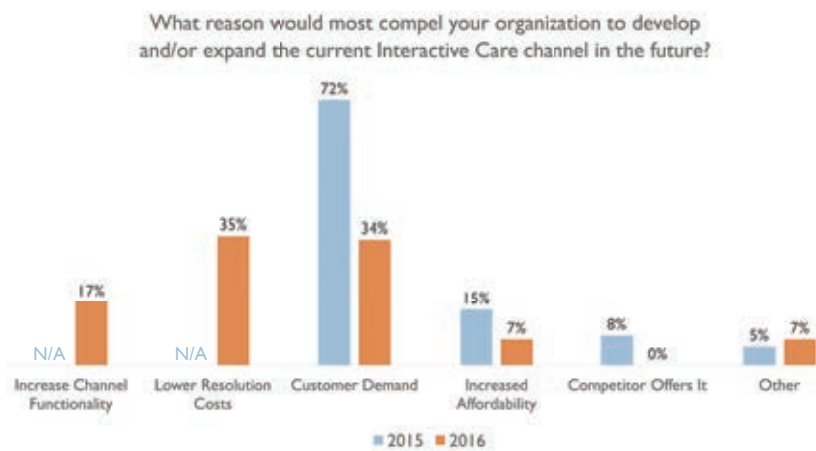
In identifying what reason would most compel an organization to develop or expand its Interactive Care channel, two new responses were introduced in 2016: Increase Channel Functionality and Lower Resolution Costs. While customer demand remains at the forefront, costs have also been identified as a key consideration for the Interactive Care channel.

Which department is responsible for developing, sustaining and/or expanding the Interactive Care channel?
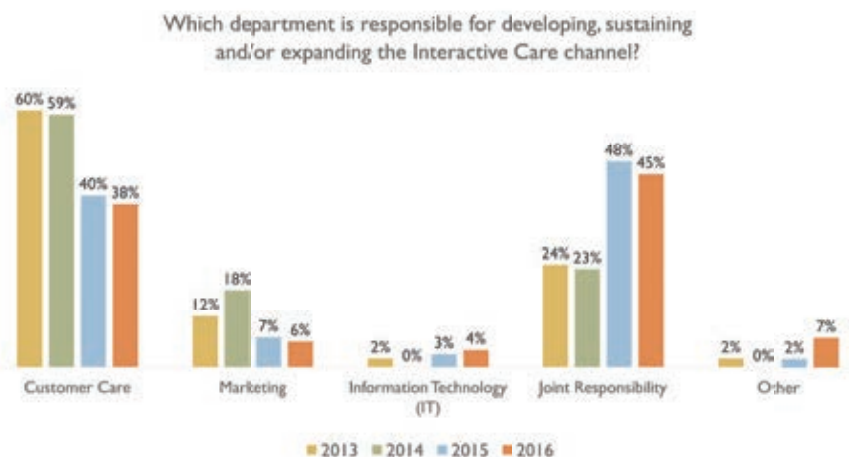
Customer Care sits front and center as the department most responsible for the management of the Interactive Care channel. Among 38% of companies, Customer Care had responsibility for the channel. Furthermore, Customer Care played a significant role among the 45% of companies that indicated joint responsibility. Departments named in the "Other" group included Customer Experience and Sales.

INTERACTIVE CARE

Since the question was first asked in 2014, Online Chat and Self-Help Tools have closely competed for investment dollars within the Interactive Care channel. For 2016, Online Chat holds a slight edge for the first time, with 53% of respondents indicating it as the channel in which they are most heavily invested. Given the pus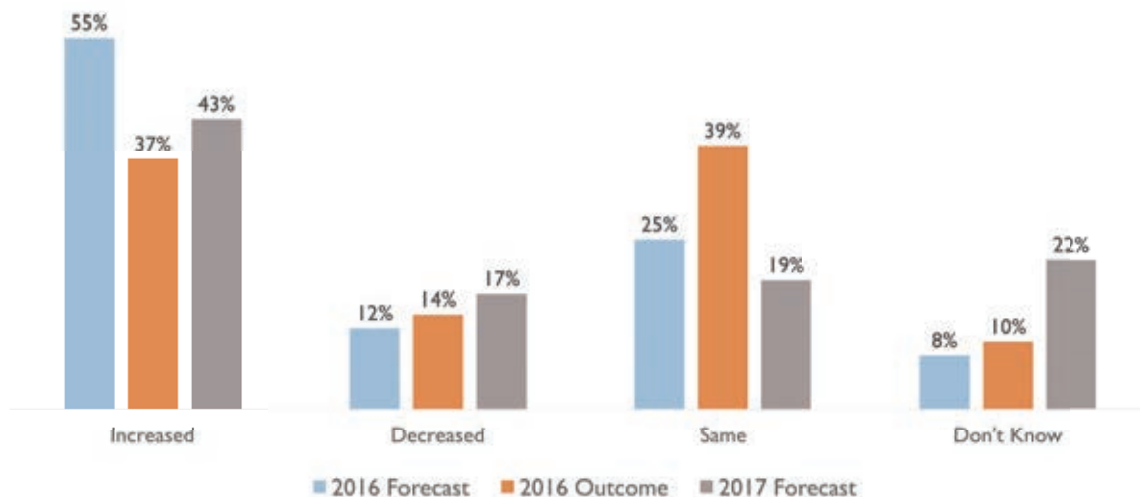h to move customers from Traditional Care into Interactive Care (page 18), it's reasonable to expect future investment to increase across the Interactive Care channel.

In which Interactive Care solution is your company most heavily invested?

	Online Chat (Click-To-Chat)	Self-Help Tools	Video Chat
2014	50%	50%	0%
2015	47%	51%	2%
2016	53%	45%	2%
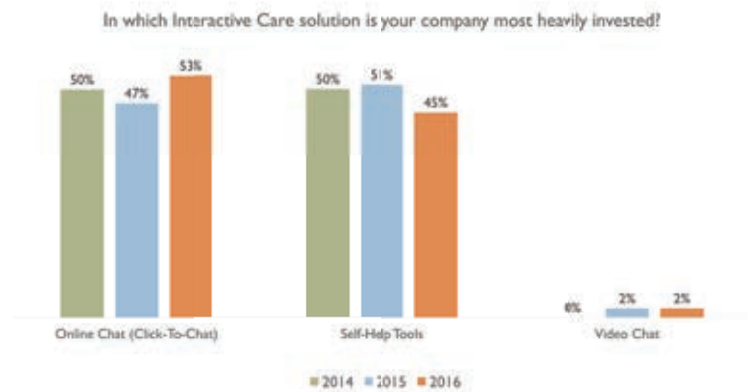
As volumes within the Interactive Care channel continue to rise, and more companies shift consumer interactions from Traditional Care to Interactive Care, nearly half of companies expect an increase in the channel's budget for 2017. While this year's survey participant list is not exactly identical to last year, the 2016 budget outcome appears to have surprised to the downside. While 55% of brands expected an increase in their Interactive Care budget in 2016, only 37% actually saw that increase, with the largest portion of brands (39%) seeing no change in budget allocation year-over-year.

Interactive Care Budget Forecasts and Outcomes

	Increased	Decreased	Same	Don't Know
2016 Forecast	55%	12%	25%	8%
2016 Outcome	37%	14%	39%	10%
2017 Forecast	43%	17%	19%	22%

INTERACTIVE CARE

Owing to the change in the revenue mix of survey participants (as explained on page 5), 2016 saw smaller FTE counts within the Interactive Care channel. Only 15% of 2016 survey respondents indicated programs of 51 or more agents, compared to 36% of respondents in 2015. Furthermore, 2016 saw the smallest amount of staffing changes since 2014, with only 29% of companies indicating a significant staffing change over the previous 12 months.

How many Full-Time Employees (FTEs), both internal and external, are dedicated to your company's Interactive Care channel?

	1 to 10	11 to 25	26 to 50	51 or More	Don't Know
2015	38%	10%	10%	36%	6%
2016	28%	25%	30%	15%	2%
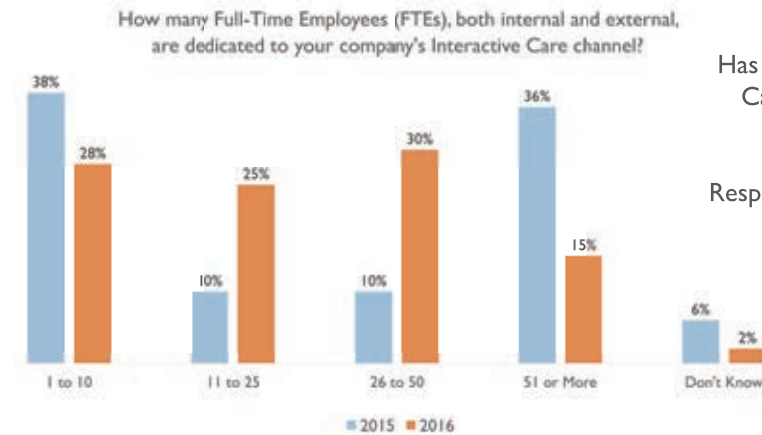
Has the staffing of your company's Interactive Care channel changed in a significant way over the past twelve months?

Responded "Yes" to the above survey question:

2016: 29%
2015: 38%
2014: 39%

YES

Not only was the amount of staffing change limited in 2016 (above, right), the type of change was also limited to increases and decreases in full-time employee (FTE) counts, with increases far more common than decreases. These changes align well with a channel that is, on the whole, expanding in volume and increasing in spending.

In what way has it changed? (Check all that apply)

	More FTEs	Fewer FTEs	Increased Insourcing/Decreased Outsourcing	Increased Outsourcing/Decreased Insourcing	Increased Onshoring/Decreased Offshoring	Increased Offshoring/Decreased Onshoring	Work-From-Home Options
2014	59%	24%	6%	18%	6%	18%	24%
2015	70%	10%	5%	30%	0%	5%	5%
2016	92%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
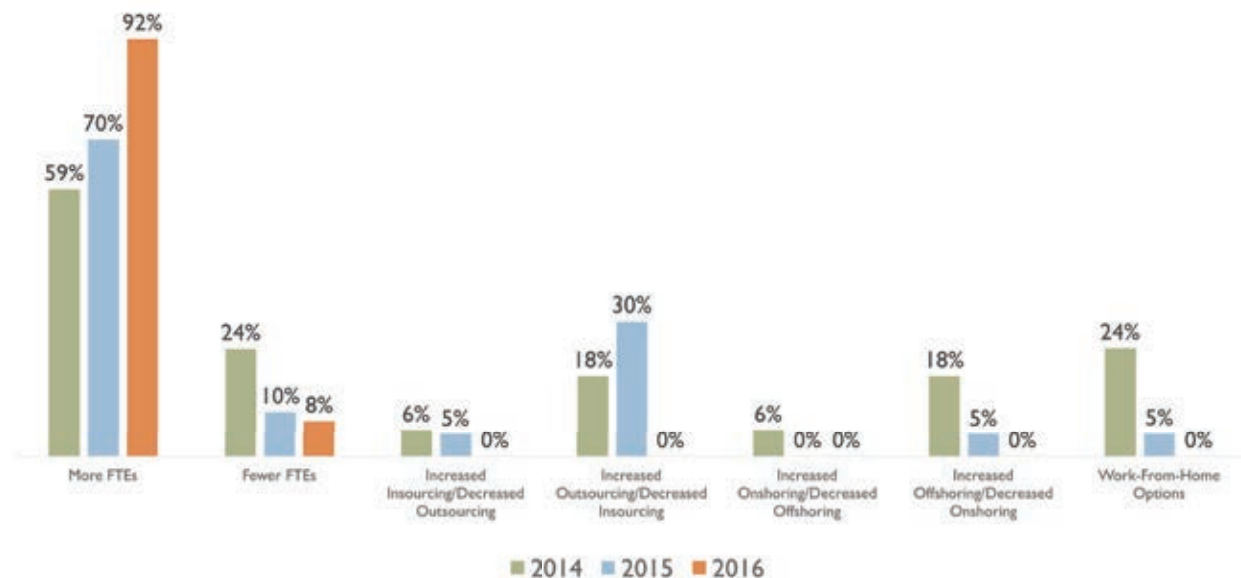
INTERACTIVE CARE

For Interactive Care solutions that require human assistance (for the purposes of this year's survey, essentially Online Chat), agent availability was relatively unchanged year-over-year. A similar question was posed for both Social Media and Mobile Care. Here's how Interactive Care's seven-day availability compares:
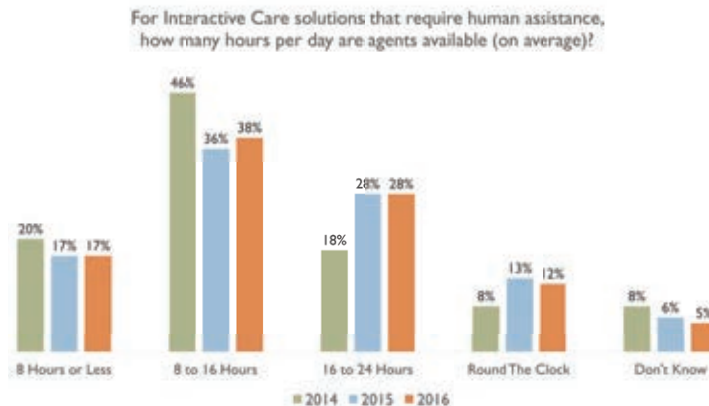
Interactive Care: 55%
Social Media Care: 50%
Mobile Care: 61%

For Interactive Care solutions that require human assistance, how many days per week are agents available?

	7 Days	6 Days	5 Days	Don't Know
2014	52%	17%	28%	3%
2015	49%	11%	31%	9%
2016	55%	10%	33%	2%

Like the daily availability of live Interactive Care assistance (above), hourly availability was consistent year-over-year, with **78%** of companies offering eight or more hours of coverage per day. Here's how Interactive Care's eight or more hours of daily coverage compares to other alternative channels:

Interactive Care: 78%
Social Media Care: 69%
Mobile Care: 72%

For Interactive Care solutions that require human assistance, how many hours per day are agents available (on average)?

	8 Hours or Less	8 to 16 Hours	16 to 24 Hours	Round The Clock	Don't Know
2014	20%	46%	18%	8%	8%
2015	17%	36%	28%	13%	6%
2016	17%	38%	28%	12%	5%

For Interactive Care solutions that require human assistance, on average, how long does it take for your customers to receive a response?

—New Question

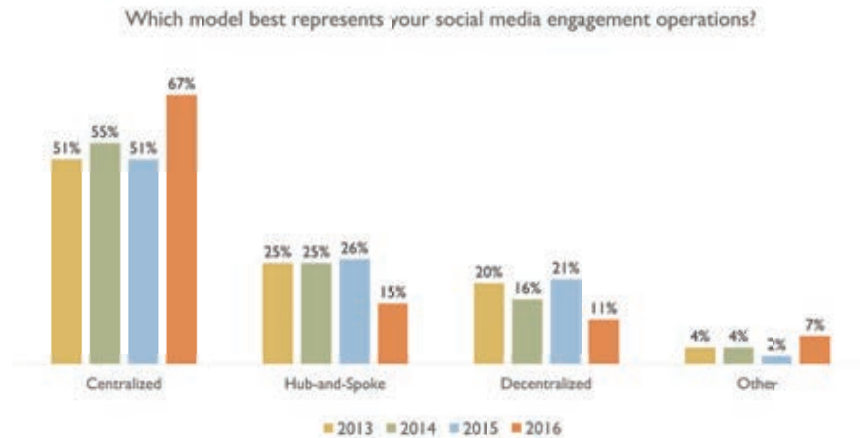| Less Than 10 Minutes	10 to 30 Minutes	30 Minutes To An Hour	1-4 Hours	4-8 Hours	More Than 8 Hours	Don't Know
59%	8%	13%	5%	5%	2%	8%

Response time can often impact the customer experience, so 2016 saw the introduction of a new question aimed at understanding how long it typically takes brands to respond via a live Interactive Care engagement. In response to this question, 80% of participants indicated a response in one hour or less. This result compared quite favorably with both Social Media and Mobile Care, where survey participants indicated a response in an hour or less 36% and 47% of the time, respectively. Check out the Consumer Comparison section (page 75) for a side-by-side look at average response time and consumer response expectations.
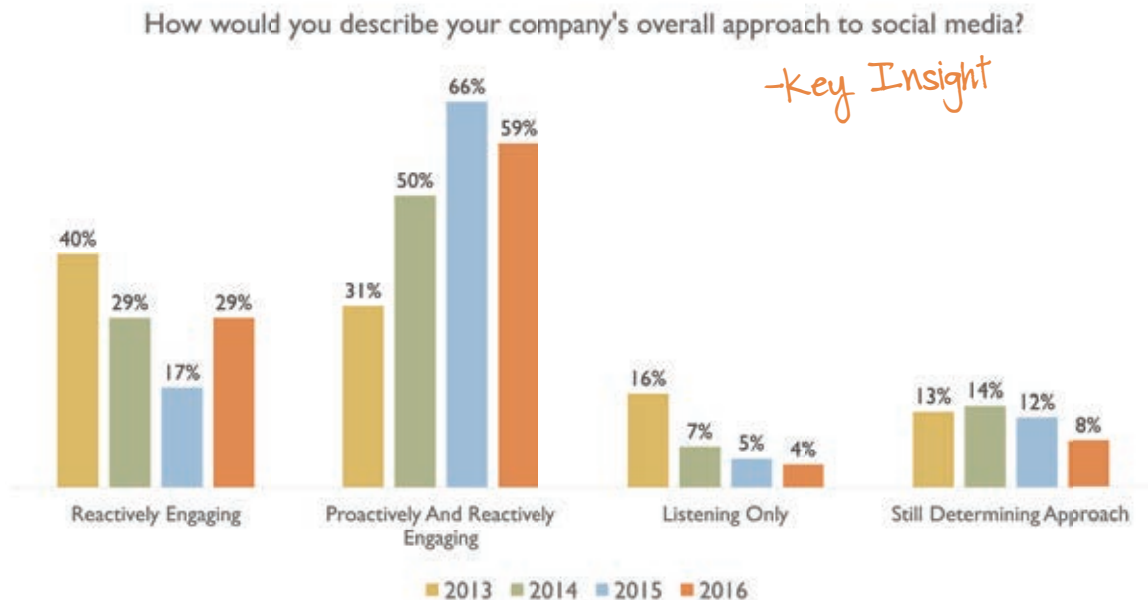
SOCIAL MEDIA
CARE

SOCIAL MEDIA CARE

In 2016, the Centralized model was claimed as the Social Media Care model of two-thirds of survey participants, representing a year-over-year increase of 16 points (31%). While the Centralized model has long been favored, this recent surge is likely the result of an increase in the adoption of Customer Experience (CX) groups and centralized leadership for customer engagement.

Which model best represents your social media engagement operations?

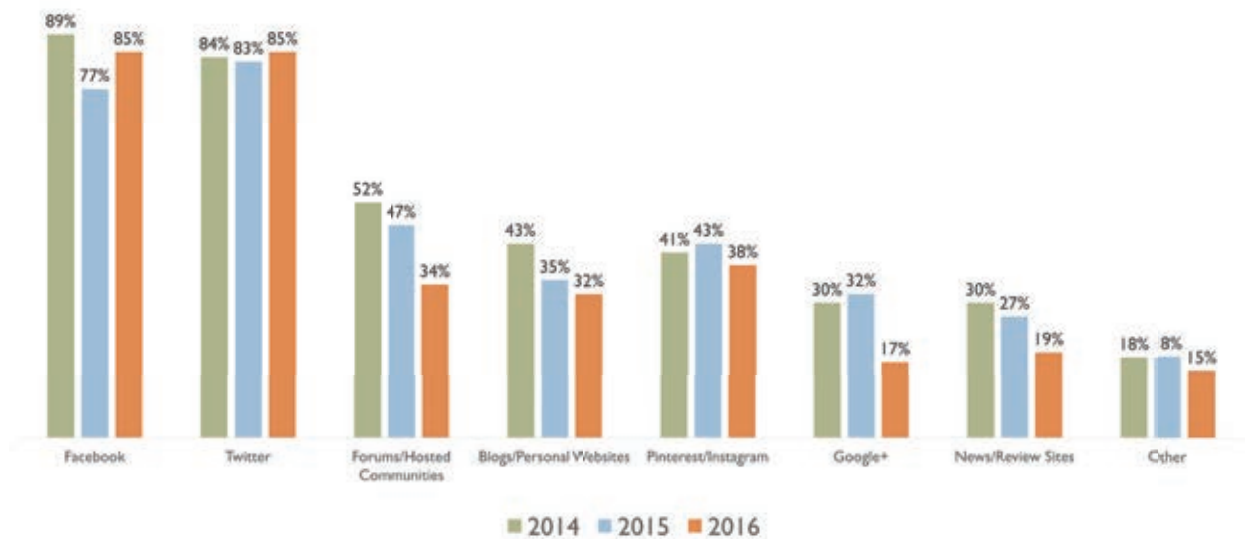|	Centralized	Hub-and-Spoke	Decentralized	Other
2013	51%	25%	20%	4%
2014	55%	25%	16%	4%
2015	51%	26%	21%	2%
2016	67%	15%	11%	7%

For the third straight year, active social media engagement has grown among CXMB Series survey participants. In 2016, active participation (which includes both Reactive and Proactive engagement) stood at 88%. This represents a 17-point rise in activity since this question was first asked in 2013, which translates into an increase of 24%. In 2013, active participation stood at only 71%. For those companies that are not actively engaging but, instead, are either listening or still determining an approach, 2016 marked a low. The typical program progression for a social media care program is Listening → Reactive Engagement → Proactive and Reactive Engagement.

How would you describe your company's overall approach to social media?

-Key Insight

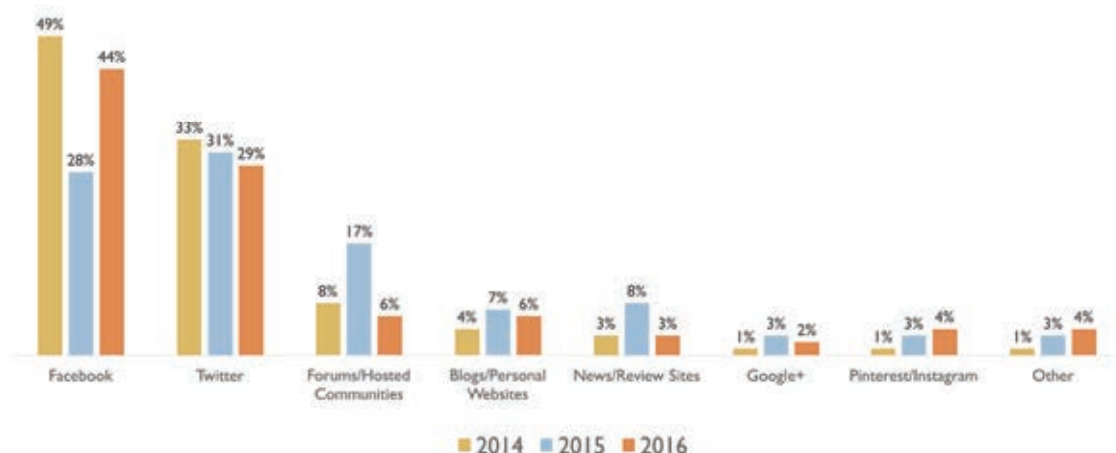|	Reactively Engaging	Proactively And Reactively Engaging	Listening Only	Still Determining Approach
2013	40%	31%	16%	13%
2014	29%	50%	7%	14%
2015	17%	66%	5%	12%
2016	29%	59%	4%	8%

SOCIAL MEDIA CARE

Facebook and Twitter, which have dominated the social media landscape for years, both came in with 85% of brands participating on the platforms. Among the second tier of social media communities that enjoy brand participation, Pinterest/Instagram showed the most strength (38% participation), followed closely by Forums/Hosted Communities (34% participation) and Blogs/Personal Websites (32% participation).

In which of these social media platforms does your company presently engage with consumers? (Check all that apply)

	Facebook	Twitter	Forums/Hosted Communities	Blogs/Personal Websites	Pinterest/Instagram	Google+	News/Review Sites	Other
2014	89%	84%	52%	43%	41%	30%	30%	18%
2015	77%	83%	47%	35%	43%	32%	27%	8%
2016	85%	85%	34%	32%	38%	17%	19%	15%

Facebook and Twitter combined to account for an average of 73% of all social media engagement activity occurring within the social media care programs of this year's survey participants. This marks a significant increase over 2015, when these two platforms accounted for an average of just 59% of all activity. This shift in volume came mostly at the expense of Forums/Hosted Communities, which saw an 11-point drop (-65%) and News/Review Sites (-63%). Given the tiny volume of social media engagements outside of the big two (Facebook and Twitter), it will be worth watching to see if these shifts continue to hold over time.

Please estimate the percentage of total social media engagements that occur within each platform:
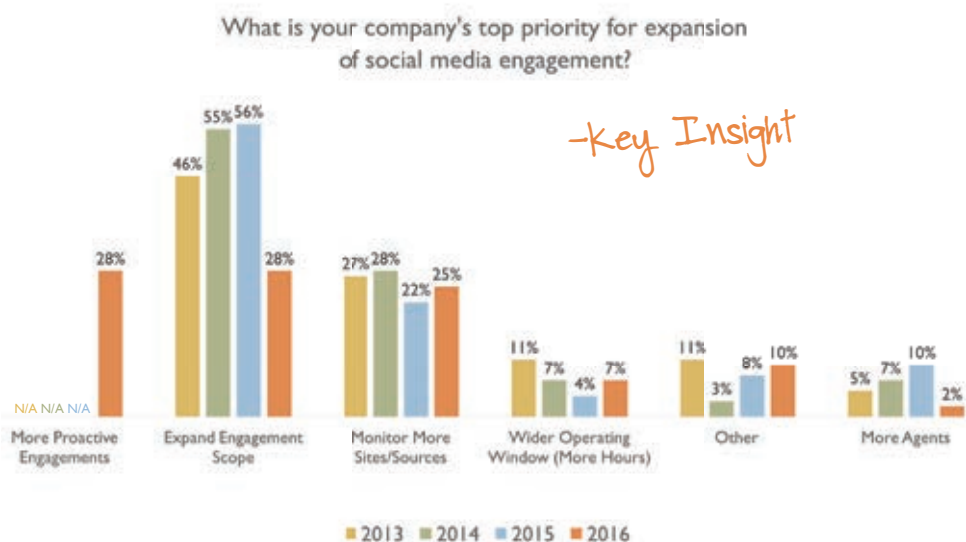

	Facebook	Twitter	Forums/Hosted Communities	Blogs/Personal Websites	News/Review Sites	Google+	Pinterest/Instagram	Other
2014	49%	33%	8%	4%	3%	1%	1%	1%
2015	28%	31%	17%	7%	8%	3%	3%	3%
2016	44%	29%	6%	6%	3%	2%	4%	4%

SOCIAL MEDIA CARE

Although the CXMB Series survey has been asking participants about Social Media Care expansion priorities since 2013, this year, a new question was introduced to gauge overall channel priorities. Similar to results seen for both Interactive and Mobile Care, "Improve the Customer Experience" and "Expand Capability" are the leading priorities among respondents.

What is your company's top priority for the Social Media Care channel?

—New Question

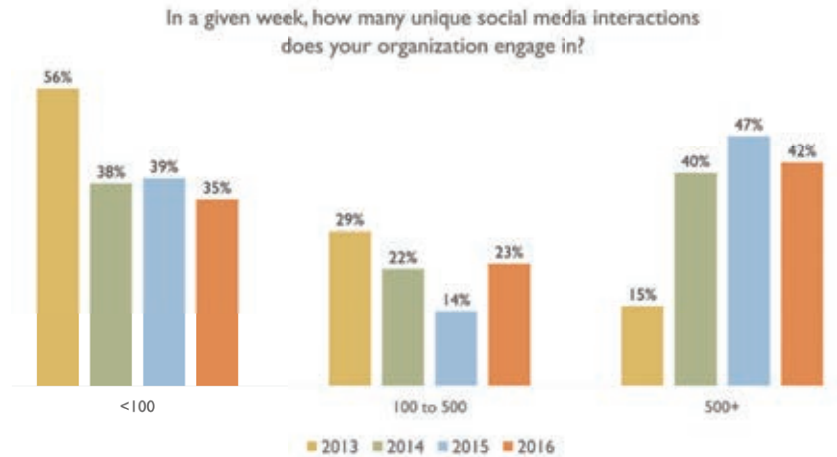|	%
Improve the Customer Experience	36%
Expand Capability	24%
Integrate With Other Channels	15%
Improve Quality/Performance	7%
Increase Channel Awareness	7%
Other	11%

In an ongoing question about social media engagement expansion, a new response option, "More Proactive Engagements," was introduced this year. This new option, along with "Expand Engagement Scope" and "Monitor More Sites," combined to be named as the top social media expansion priority of more than four-fifths of all survey respondents.

What is your company's top priority for expansion of social media engagement?

—Key Insight

	2013	2014	2015	2016
More Proactive Engagements	N/A	N/A	N/A	28%
Expand Engagement Scope	46%	55%	56%	28%
Monitor More Sites/Sources	27%	28%	22%	25%
Wider Operating Window (More Hours)	11%	7%	4%	7%
Other	11%	3%	8%	10%
More Agents	5%	7%	10%	2%

What is your organization's level of maturity within the Social Media Care channel?

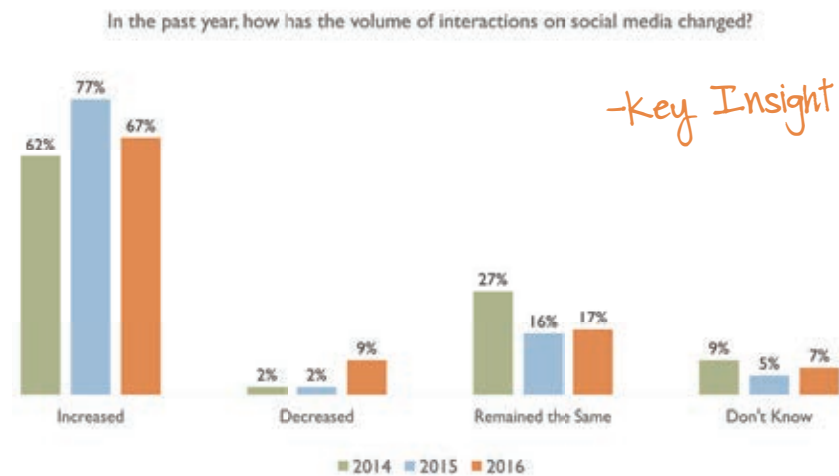|	2015	2016
Very Mature	2%	6%
Somewhat Mature	18%	20%
Intermediate	37%	28%
Somewhat New	29%	34%
Very New	14%	12%

Corporate maturity within the Social Media Care channel edged up slightly year-over-year, with 26% of respondents indicating some level of maturity in 2016, compared to just 20% in 2015. Those indicating intermediate levels of maturity fell by nine points (-24%), with two-thirds of this change moving toward greater channel maturity. Companies who responded "Very Mature" increased three-fold in 2016, which is great news for consumers who prefer social media as a means of engagement.
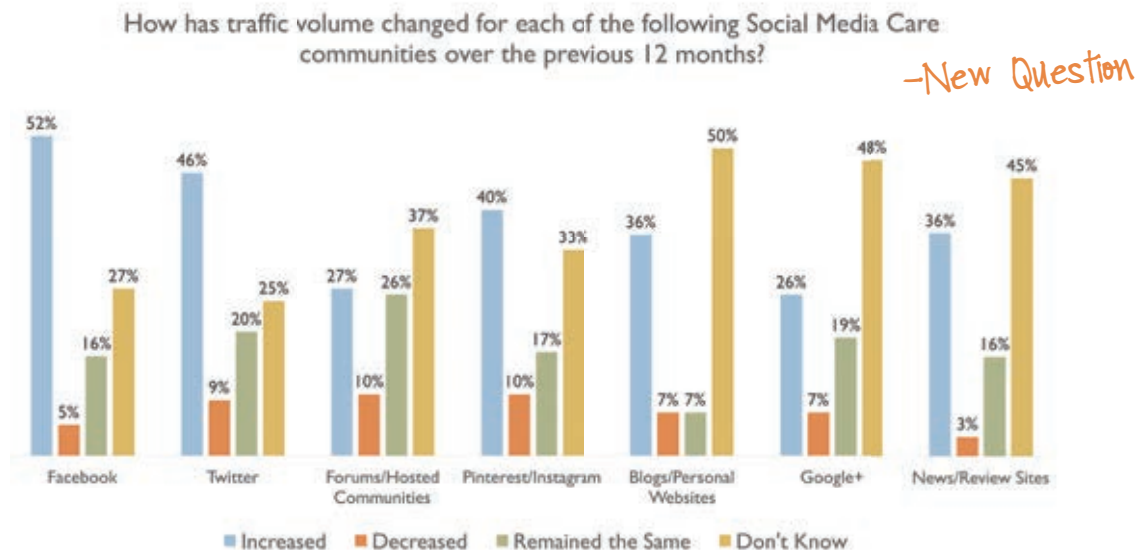
SOCIAL MEDIA CARE

Little changed this year regarding the volume of weekly program engagements among survey participants, with several percentage points from the bottom and top of the engagement spectrum flowing to the middle. That being the case, the largest portion of Social Media Care programs, at 42%, conduct 500 or more unique engagements on a weekly basis.

In a given week, how many unique social media interactions does your organization engage in?

	<100	100 to 500	500+
2013	56%	29%	15%
2014	38%	22%	40%
2015	39%	14%	47%
2016	35%	23%	42%

■ 2013 ■ 2014 ■ 2015 ■ 2016

While the growth narrative within the Social Media Care channel remains remarkably positive, 2016 survey results revealed an unprecedented increase in the percentage of companies indicating a decline in channel traffic. While slightly more than two-thirds of companies said Social Media Care interactions grew in volume over the past 12 months, nearly one in ten noted a decline — a more than four-fold increase in comparison to 2015 results.

In the past year, how has the volume of interactions on social media changed?

—Key Insight

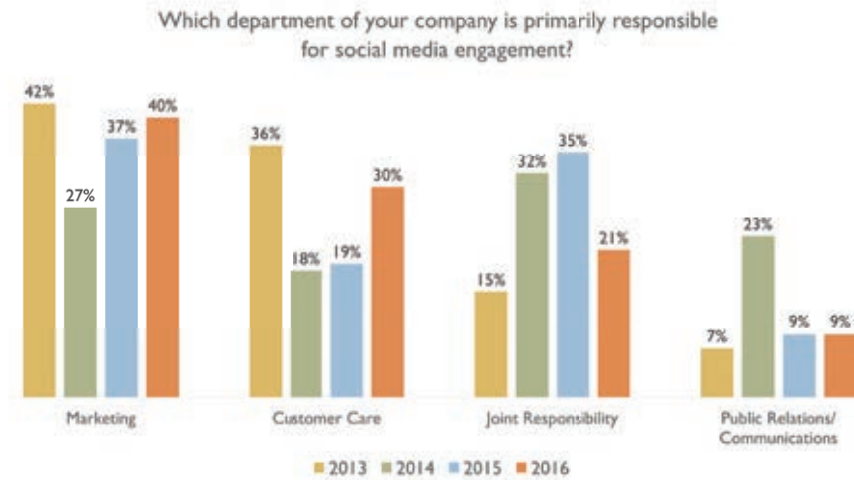|	Increased	Decreased	Remained the Same	Don't Know
2014	62%	2%	27%	9%
2015	77%	2%	16%	5%
2016	67%	9%	17%	7%

■ 2014 ■ 2015 ■ 2016

In a new question that looks at volume changes for individual social media platforms (below), the narrative is the same, with increases out-pacing decreases by a wide margin — especially among Facebook, the most heavily trafficked site.

How has traffic volume changed for each of the following Social Media Care communities over the previous 12 months?

—New Question

	Facebook	Twitter	Forums/Hosted Communities	Pinterest/Instagram	Blogs/Personal Websites	Google+	News/Review Sites
Increased	52%	46%	27%	40%	36%	26%	36%
Decreased	5%	9%	10%	10%	7%	7%	3%
Remained the Same	16%	20%	26%	17%	7%	19%	16%
Don't Know	27%	25%	37%	33%	50%	48%	45%

■ Increased ■ Decreased ■ Remained the Same ■ Don't Know

SOCIAL MEDIA CARE

Marketing continues to be strongly positioned as the department most responsible for social media engagement. It remains unclear whether marketing departments will enjoy even greater influence as more brands adopt a proactive sales approach on social media. Also worth noting is the percentage of companies managing the channel through joint responsibility, which fell by 14 points. Much of this change resulted in an increase of responsibility for customer care.
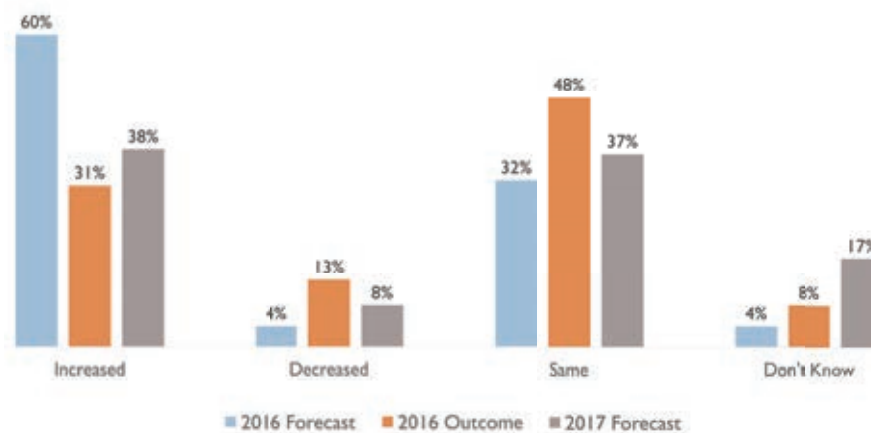
Which department of your company is primarily responsible for social media engagement?

	Marketing	Customer Care	Joint Responsibility	Public Relations/Communications
2013	42%	36%	15%	7%
2014	27%	18%	32%	23%
2015	37%	19%	35%	9%
2016	40%	30%	21%	9%

Percentage of companies that answered "Yes" to the following questions:

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Does your company have plans to expand or launch social media customer engagement activities?	87%	66%	68%	60%
Does your company have a social media response team specifically for customer care?	67%	64%	62%	68%
Does your company use a social media engagement tool(s)?	69%	72%	77%	83%
Does your company have a designated social media "command center"?	36%	53%	41%	50%
Has your company established a hosted community and/or forum?	46%	53%	54%	46%

2016 saw the lowest percentage of companies (60%) with plans to expand or launch social media engagement activities, possibly due to the realization of previous plans. That said, program assets generally remained strong in 2016, with nearly 70% of organizations fielding a dedicated social media care team, and nearly half of companies either managing a "command center," hosting a community/forum, or both.

Social Media Care Budget Forecasts and Outcomes

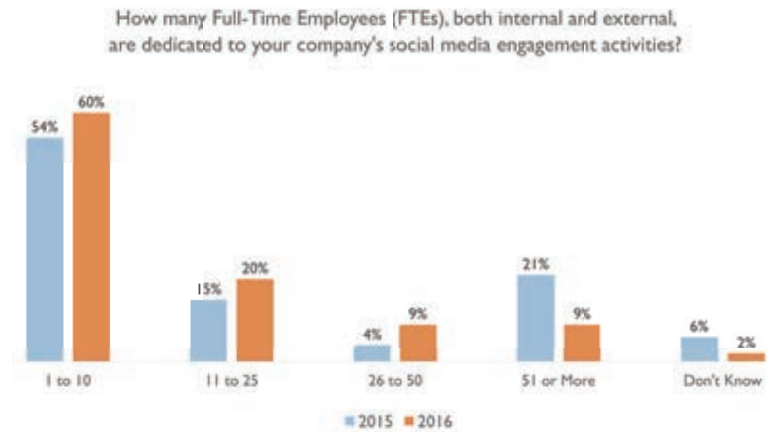|	Increased	Decreased	Same	Don't Know
2016 Forecast	60%	4%	32%	4%
2016 Outcome	31%	13%	48%	8%
2017 Forecast	38%	8%	37%	17%

As mentioned in the budget analysis of other channel results, 2016 budget forecasts and outcomes are not representative of an identical survey cohort; but the general consensus is that most Social Media Care budgets will either increase or remain unchanged in the coming year. This result is very similar to budget expectations for both Interactive Care (page 47) and Mobile Care (page 64).

SOCIAL MEDIA CARE

Comparatively speaking, 2016 survey results see most social media engagement teams remaining small. In relation to other alternative channels, the team sizes among Social Media Care programs are, on average, the smallest, with 60% of survey participants indicating a team size of ten or less. This compares to 28% for Interactive Care and 38% for Mobile Care.

How many Full-Time Employees (FTEs), both internal and external, are dedicated to your company's social media engagement activities?

	1 to 10	11 to 25	26 to 50	51 or More	Don't Know
2015	54%	15%	4%	21%	6%
2016	60%	20%	9%	9%	2%

Has the staffing of your company's social media engagement team changed in a significant way over the past 12 months?

Responded "Yes" to the above survey question:

2016: 38%
2015: 33% YES
2014: 20%

About two-fifths of brands indicated significant change within their social media engagement team within the past 12 months. Of those, 88% indicated the significant change came as they hired more full-time employees (FTEs), which makes sense, given the healthy growth of traffic to the channel (page 54). This result sets a CXMB Series high watermark for both team change and FTE growth.

In what way has it changed? (Check all that apply)

	More FTEs	Fewer FTEs	Increased Insourcing/Decreased Outsourcing	Increased Outsourcing/Decreased Insourcing	Increased Onshoring/Decreased Offshoring	Increased Offshoring/Decreased Onshoring	Work-From-Home Options
2014	78%	0%	22%	44%	0%	0%	0%
2015	67%	6%	6%	39%	0%	6%	11%
2016	88%	6%	0%	6%	0%	0%	6%
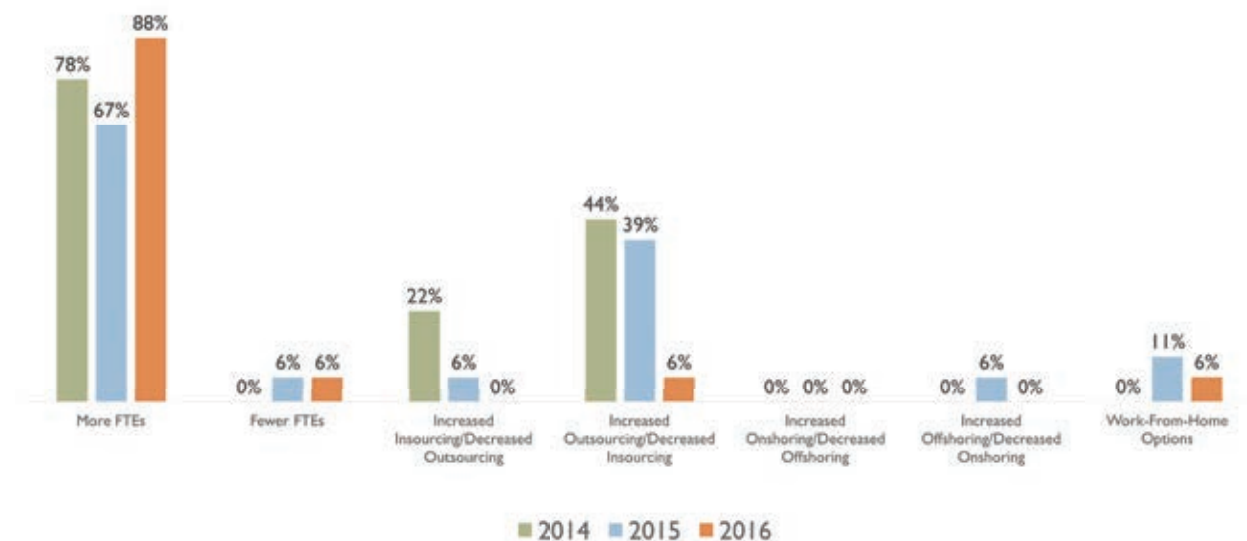
SOCIAL MEDIA CARE

After two consecutive years of growth in the percentage of survey participants utilizing third-party staffing for social media engagement agents, 2016 registered a reversal. This year's results show nearly one out of every three survey respondents utilized a third-party provider for some or all of their social media agent-staffing needs, compared to nearly two out of five last year.

Does your company utilize a third-party staffing provider for its social media engagement agents?

Responded "Yes" to the above survey question:

YES   **2016: 30%**
2015: 38%
2014: 23%
2013: 18%

More than three-quarters of survey respondents stated they provide specialized training for their social media agents — the highest percentage since the question was first asked in 2014. This result speaks not only to the maturation of the channel, but indicates organizations better understand the fact that social media engagement often requires a different set of skills and competencies.

Does your company provide training specific to social media for agents?

Responded "Yes" to the above survey question:

YES   **2016: 78%**
2015: 64%
2014: 52%

Although more organizations are providing agents with training specific to social media, the average length of training fell dramatically. While it's unclear whether this change is the result of improved efficiencies or simply less training, an increase in the percentage of companies providing any training at all can only mean good things for consumers who opt for brand engagement via social media.

How long is that training period?

	Less than 1 Week	1-2 Weeks	2-4 Weeks	1 Month or More	Ongoing
2015	41%	13%	31%	6%	9%
2016	56%	28%	10%	3%	3%
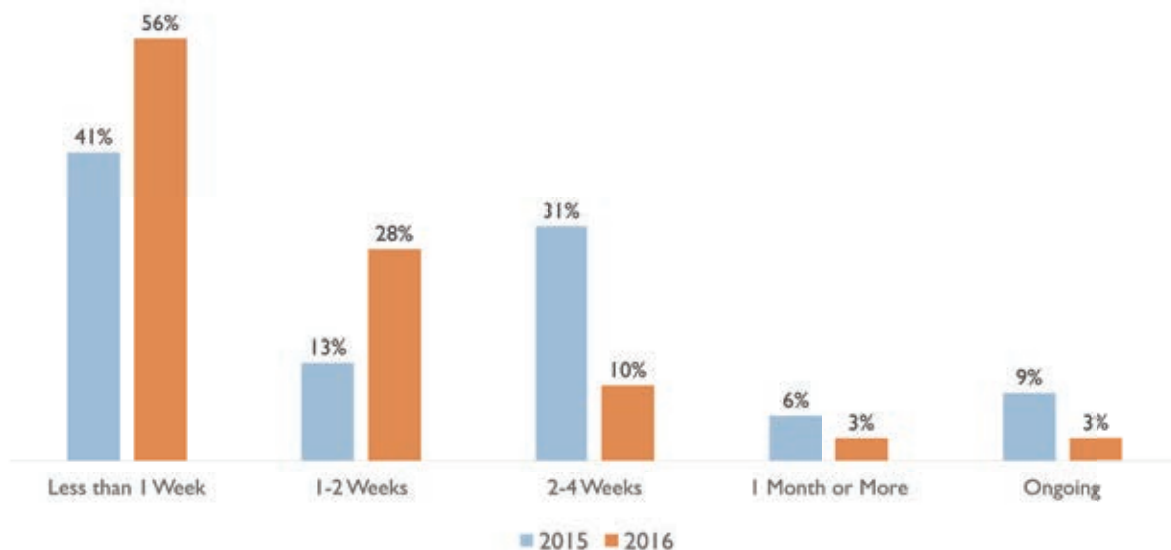
SOCIAL MEDIA CARE

Half of this year's participants provide Social Media Care support every day of the week, down 11-points (-18%) from last year. It's likely this change has more to do with this year's survey participant mix (as detailed on page 5) versus an operational shift within the industry. Social media is a 24/7 touchpoint. If anything, brands that can support the volume are eager to expand their availability in support of customers via social media. Here's how Social Media Care's seven-day coverage compared to other alternative channels:

Social Media Care: 50%
Interactive Care: 55%
Mobile Care: 61%

How many days per week does your company have an active social media engagement presence?

Hourly availability broke even year-over-year, with gains going to both "Round-the-Clock" coverage and coverage of 16 hours or less, all as a result of an 18-point plunge (-72%) in the 16 to 24 Hours segment. Surprisingly, the Social Media Care channel offered less coverage of eight hours or more compared to the other alternative channels of care. Here's the complete breakdown of alternative care coverage (eight or more hours):

Social Media Care: 69%
Interactive Care: 78%
Mobile Care: 72%

On average, how many hours per day does your company offer social media engagement support?

Since 2014, the majority of organizations have been indicating that, on average, they respond to their customers on social media. within four hours. While four hours might seem like a reasonable response time, the recently released CXMB Series Consumer Edition showed half of consumers (51%) expect a response within one hour, with 23% of all consumers expecting a response within 30 minutes. For a complete breakdown of channel response performance and consumer expectations, see the Consumer Comparison section on page 75.

On average, how long does it take for your organization to respond to a consumer on social media?
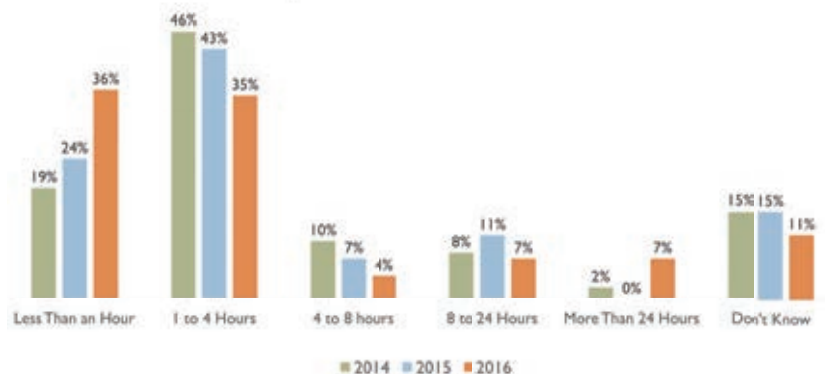
MOBILE
CARE

MOBILE CARE

CXMB Series survey results from 2016 show a measurable decline in the percentage of companies providing both Mobile Care support and human-assisted Mobile Care support, with pullbacks of 19% and 33%, respectively. This could be caused, in part, by the makeup of this year's survey participants, as explained on page 5. That said, it is also worth considering that these results mark the second year of decline for companies offering any sort of Mobile Care support.

Does your company provide Mobile Care support, including mobile apps, SMS/text and mobile chat?

Responded "Yes" to the above survey question:

YES
2016: 39%
2015: 48%
2014: 56%
2013: 56%

Does your company provide Mobile Care support that requires human assistance, such as mobile chat or SMS/text?

Responded "Yes" to the above survey question:

YES
2016: 20%
2015: 30%
2014: 29%

Which Mobile Care solutions does your company currently offer? (Check all that apply)

-Key Insight

	No Mobile Care Offered	Mobile App	Mobile Chat	SMS Text	Other
2013	44%	36%	23%	4%	0%
2014	35%	58%	12%	14%	7%
2015	45%	45%	10%	20%	3%
2016	55%	31%	10%	20%	2%

■2013 ■2014 ■2015 ■2016
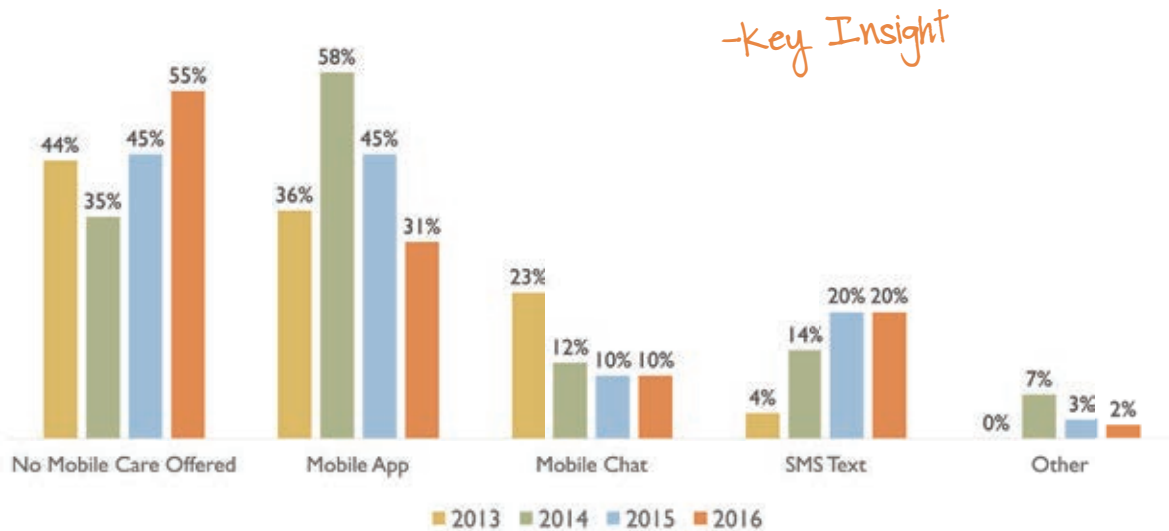
Echoing the results at top, there was zero growth among individual channel solutions. Mobile Chat and SMS/Text remained flat; but the percentage of companies offering mobile app solutions fell by 14-points (-31%), continuing a decline first observed last year. The percentage of companies offering a two-way SMS solution (below, left) also declined greatly on a percentage basis, retreating 58% year-over-year. Noting the importance of the Mobile Care channel, it will be interesting to see if these numbers bounce back in 2017.

Does your organization provide an SMS solution that utilizes two-way communication?

Responded "Yes" to the above survey question:
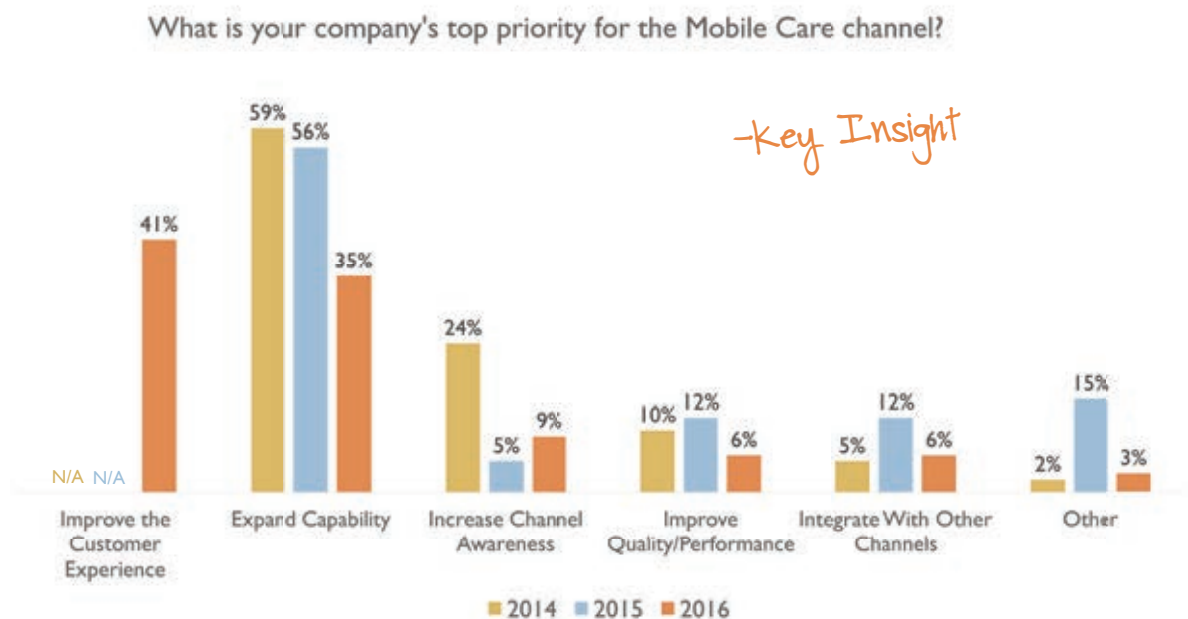
YES
2016: 5%
2015: 12%

Is your company's 1-800 number text-enabled?

Responded "Yes" to the above survey question:

YES
2016: 8%
2015: 10%
2015: 15%

MOBILE CARE

Similar to what was observed in both Interactive and Social Media Care, the introduction of a new priority option, Improve the Customer Experience, has had an immediate impact on channel priority results. Although Expand Capability remains a top priority for about one-third of all respondents, Improving the Customer Experience was a priority claimed by more survey respondents than any other. Increase Channel Awareness also experienced a surge on a percentage basis, increasing 80% in 2016.

What is your company's top priority for the Mobile Care channel?

-Key Insight

	2014	2015	2016
Improve the Customer Experience	N/A	N/A	41%
Expand Capability	59%	56%	35%
Increase Channel Awareness	24%	5%	9%
Improve Quality/Performance	10%	12%	6%
Integrate With Other Channels	5%	12%	6%
Other	2%	15%	3%

Not only did the percentage of companies offering a Mobile Care solution decline in 2016 (previous page), of those companies offering solutions, 59% indicate they are new to the channel. This represents only a minuscule increase over the percentage of newcomers in 2015. While this outcome might be the result of the survey participant list, it comes at a time when one might expect a shift toward greater channel maturity. Here's how Mobile Care compares to other channels of care in terms of "Very Mature" and "Somewhat Mature":
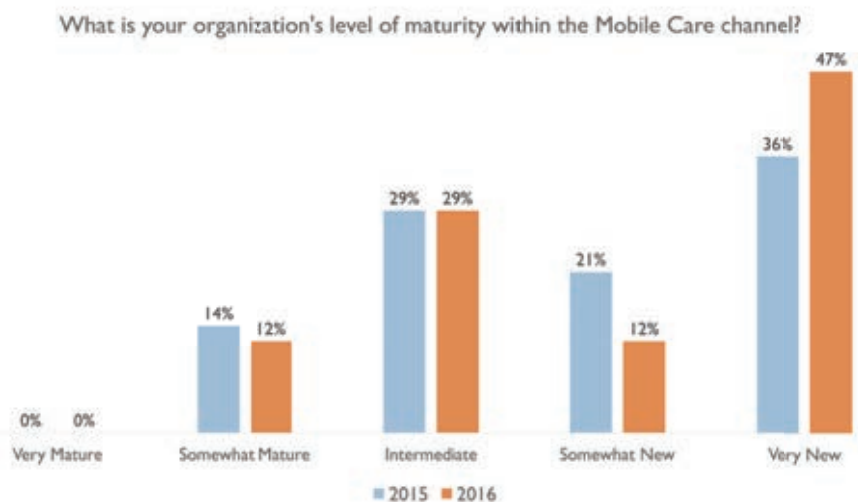
Mobile Care: 12% (14% in 2015)
Interactive Care: 20% (29% in 2015)
Traditional Care: 82% (84% in 2015)
Social Media Care: 26% (20% in 2015)

What is your organization's level of maturity within the Mobile Care channel?

	2015	2016
Very Mature	0%	0%
Somewhat Mature	14%	12%
Intermediate	29%	29%
Somewhat New	21%	12%
Very New	36%	47%

MOBILE CARE

Like the volume indicators in other alternative channels, Mobile Care saw a significant year-over-year decline in the percentage of brands conducting 1,000+ human-assisted engagements each week. This change is possibly due to the downward shift in survey participant revenue in 2016 in comparison to previous years, and should not be construed as an indication of shrinking channel volumes on an industry-wide basis.

For Mobile Care solutions that require human assistance, how many unique engagements occur per week?

	Less Than 100	100 to 500	500 to 1,000	1,000+	Don't Know
2015	16%	12%	8%	36%	28%
2016	11%	33%	6%	22%	28%

Although a shift in the revenue mix of this year's survey participants has potentially influenced some of this year's results, findings related to channel traffic changes (right) reinforce a story of growth within the Mobile Care channel. While the percentage of companies that saw traffic unchanged year-over-year more than doubled, from 19% in 2015 to 44% in 2016, not a single company saw a decrease in channel traffic in 2016. On balance, the story for Mobile Care is continued growth.

In the past year, how has traffic to Mobile Care channels that require human assistance (such as Mobile Chat) changed?

—Key Insight

	Increased	Decreased	Same	Don't Know
2014	48%	3%	28%	21%
2015	53%	12%	19%	16%
2016	45%	0%	44%	11%

In a new question for 2016, results show there were strong levels of growth across channel solutions, with only a few pockets of decreased traffic. Based on the fact that not a single brand indicated a decrease in full-channel traffic, it can be assumed that any decrease within a single solution was more than offset by an increase in solution volume elsewhere.
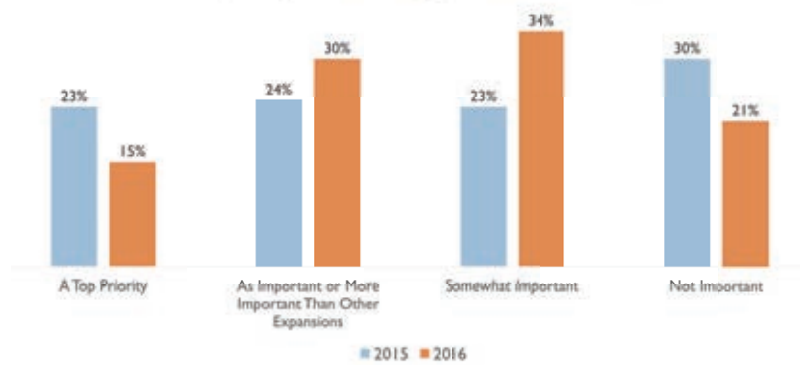
How has traffic volume changed for each of the following Mobile Care solutions over the previous 12 months?

—New Question

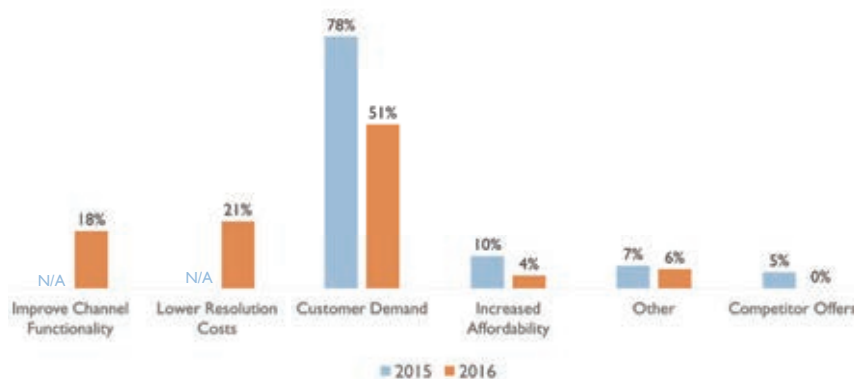|	Company App(s)	SMS/Text	Mobile Chat
Increased	58%	31%	27%
Decreased	4%	13%	9%
Same	19%	31%	27%
Don't Know	9%	25%	37%
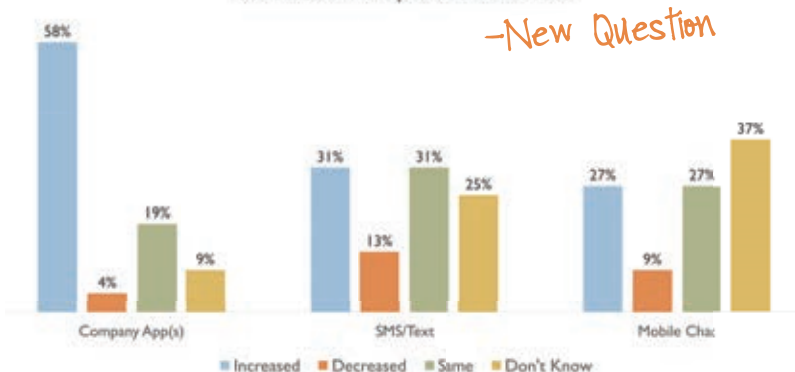
MOBILE CARE

On the whole, the importance of developing and/or expanding a Mobile Care channel was unchanged year-over-year. Fewer organizations indicated the effort as a top priority, but this was offset by a decline in the percentage of companies that indicated an expansion of the channel was "Not Important." Conversely, those in the middle, where the effort to expand the Mobile Care channel is considered to be important or somewhat important, increased. The net-result is very little change in brand attitudes toward expansion of Mobile Care, which is considered to have some level of importance by 79% of survey participants.

What level of importance does your company place on expanding and/or developing a Mobile Care channel?

	2015	2016
A Top Priority	23%	15%
As Important or More Important Than Other Expansions	24%	30%
Somewhat Important	23%	34%
Not Important	30%	21%

What reason would most compel your organization to develop and/or expand the current Mobile Care channel in the future?

	2015	2016
Improve Channel Functionality	N/A	18%
Lower Resolution Costs	N/A	21%
Customer Demand	78%	51%
Increased Affordability	10%	4%
Other	7%	6%
Competitor Offers	5%	0%

Even with the addition of two new answer options in 2016 (Improve Channel Functionality and Lower Resolution Costs), the majority of this year's survey participants still named Customer Demand as the most compelling reason to develop and/or expand the Mobile Care channel. Regarding that demand, according to results from the 2016 CXMB Series Consumer Edition, 16% of consumers named Mobile Care as their preferred contact method.

Which department is responsible for developing, sustaining and/or expanding the Mobile Care channel?

|	2014	2015	2016
Customer Care	48%	30%	25%
Joint Responsibility	21%	45%	47%
Marketing	19%	12%	12%
IT	7%	8%	8%
Other	5%	5%	8%
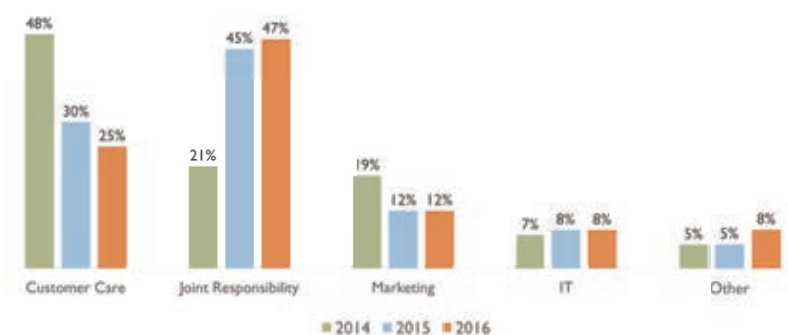
Shared responsibility among departments continues to be the most common structure for departmental responsibility in developing, sustaining and expanding the Mobile Care channel. For the second year in a row, more companies indicated Joint Responsibility versus ownership of any single department. Among all alternative channels of care, Mobile Care has the highest rate of joint ownership at 47%, followed by Interactive Care at 45% and Social Media at 21%.
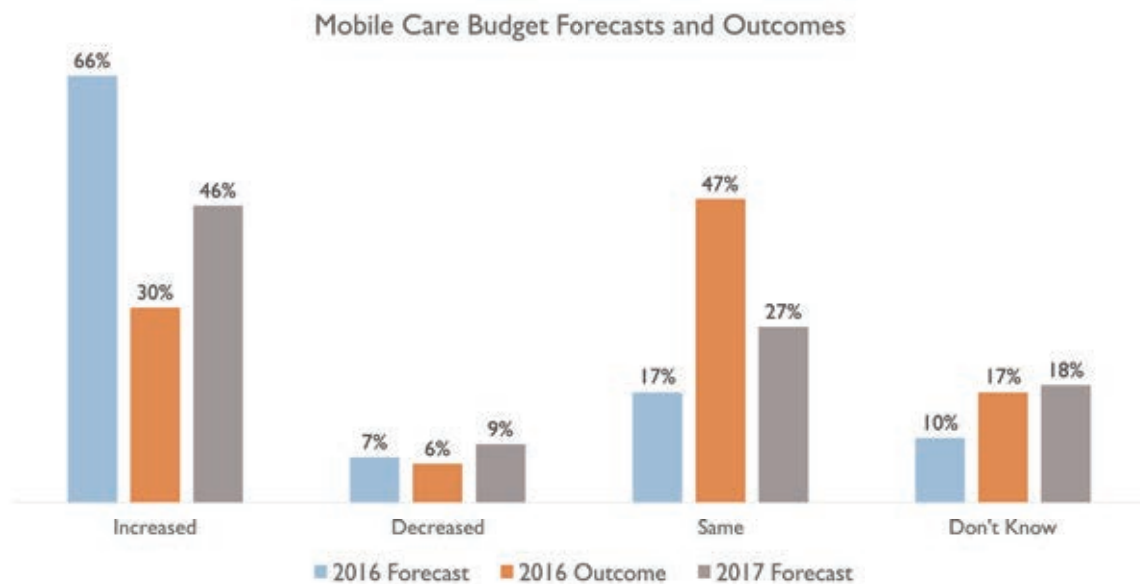
MOBILE CARE

Mobile Apps continue to draw the heaviest amount of investment among Mobile Care solutions, enjoying a ratio of roughly 4-to-1 over the next nearest solution, Mobile Chat. While SMS/Text has been widely touted as the next up-and-comer, when comparing this year's survey participants to last year, increased investment has failed to materialize. SMS/Text warrants close monitoring, especially considering CXMB Series Consumer Edition results in which 29% of consumers named SMS/Text as their preferred communication method via a mobile device.

In which Mobile Care solution is your company most heavily invested?

–Key Insight
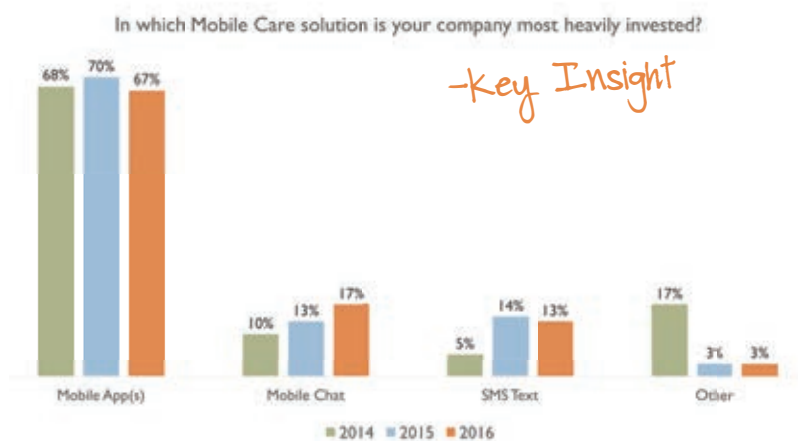
Like the budget forecast and outcome results for both Interactive and Social Media Care channels, 2016 budget increases for the Mobile Care channel came in under expectations. While 66% of 2015 survey participants expected an increase in their budgets, only 30% of 2016 survey participants realized such increases. That said, organizations that saw increases in their 2016 Mobile Care budget outnumbered those that saw a decrease by 6-to-1. Furthermore, nearly half (46%) of all survey participants expect to see increasing budgets for their Mobile Care programs in 2017.

Mobile Care Budget Forecasts and Outcomes

MOBILE CARE

In lockstep with the lower program volumes of this year's survey participants (page 5), this year's survey participants also field smaller programs by FTE count compared to last year. This shift in program size is most noticeable in the percentage of programs supporting 26 to 50 FTEs. This is likely due to the reduced revenue mix of this year's survey participants.
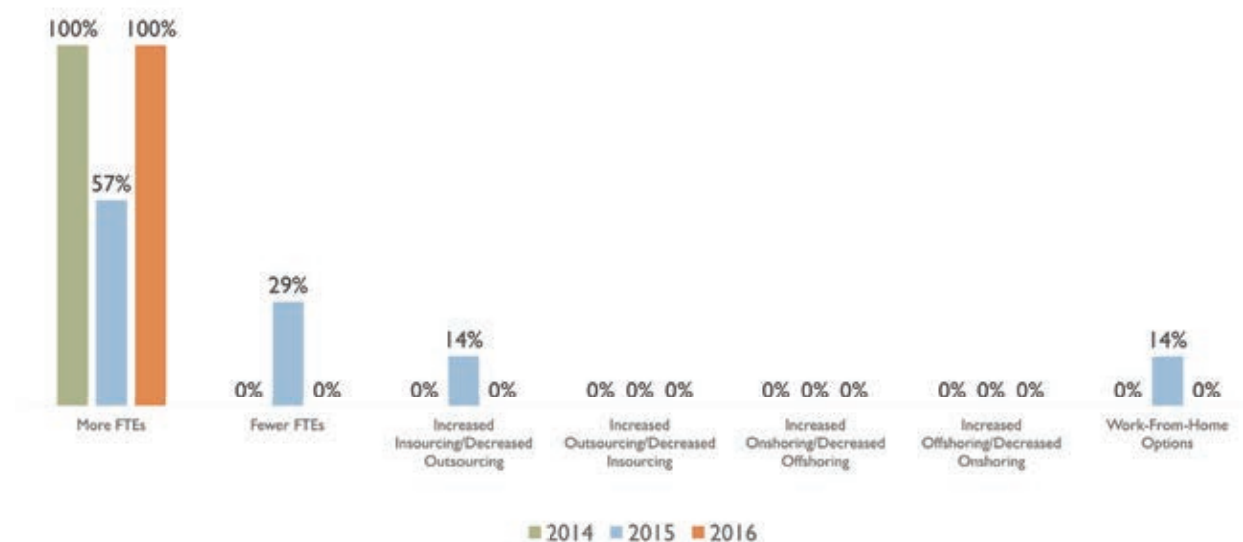
How many Full-Time Employees (FTEs), both internal and external, are dedicated to your company's Mobile Care channel?

	1 to 10	11 to 25	26 to 50	51 or More	Don't Know
2015	33%	6%	16%	19%	26%
2016	38%	9%	5%	19%	29%
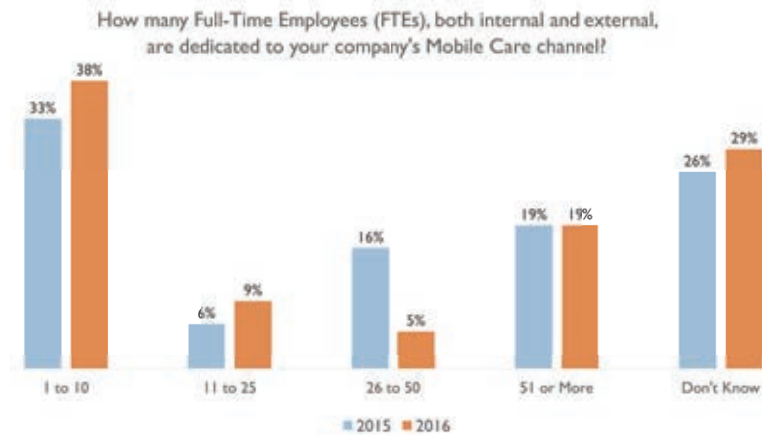
Has the staffing of your company's Mobile Care channel changed in a significant way over the past twelve months?

Responded "Yes" to the above survey question:

2016: 13%
2015: 21%
2014: 12%

YES

Among the three alternative channels of care (Interactive, Social Media and Mobile), Mobile experienced the least amount of significant staffing changes over the past 12 months. Only 13% of companies claimed any sort of significant change, and 100% of these companies indicated the change was the addition of more FTEs to their Mobile Care program. Albeit in a small way, this result supports the ongoing narrative of growth for the Mobile Care channel.

If yes, in what way has it changed? (Check all that apply)

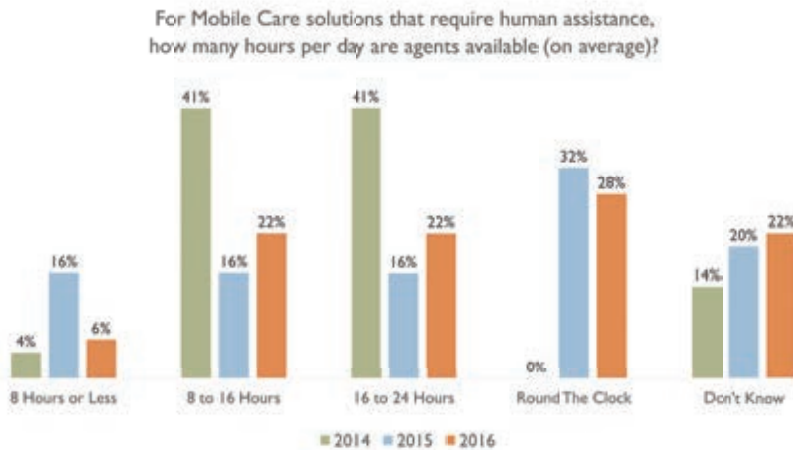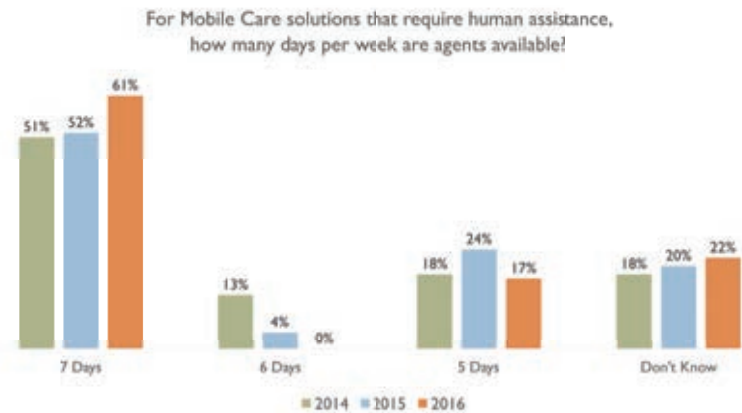|	More FTEs	Fewer FTEs	Increased Insourcing/Decreased Outsourcing	Increased Outsourcing/Decreased Insourcing	Increased Onshoring/Decreased Offshoring	Increased Offshoring/Decreased Onshoring	Work-From-Home Options
2014	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2015	57%	29%	14%	0%	0%	0%	14%
2016	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

MOBILE CARE

According to this year's survey participants, of the three alternative channels of care (Interactive, Social Media and Mobile), Mobile Care provides the most daily live-assist availability. Here's how Mobile Care fared against the other channels in terms of providing availability seven days a week:

Mobile Care: 61%
Interactive Care: 55%
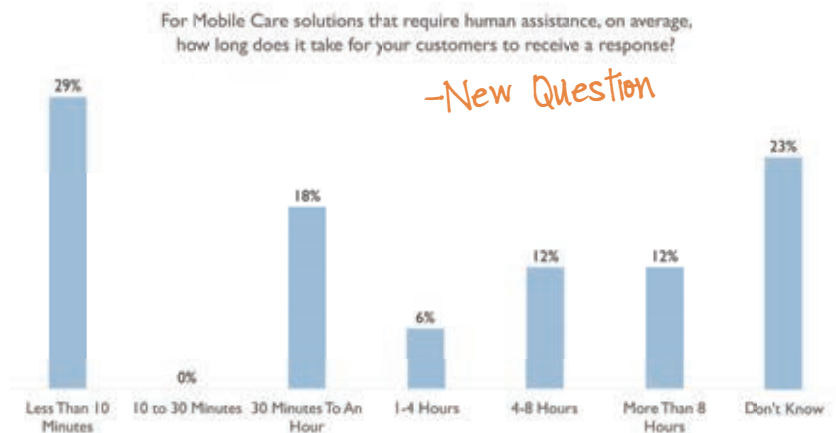Social Media Care: 50%

For Mobile Care solutions that require human assistance, how many days per week are agents available?

2014 2015 2016

For Mobile Care solutions that require human assistance, how many hours per day are agents available (on average)?

2014 2015 2016

Although Mobile Care offers more daily coverage than any other alternative channel, average hourly availability per day falls in between Interactive and Social Media Care. Below are the percentages of companies that offer an average of eight or more hours of live agent coverage each day:

Mobile Care: 72%
Interactive Care: 78%
Social Media Care: 69%

Along with Interactive Care, Mobile Care also saw the introduction of a new question aimed at average response time for human-assisted interactions. These types of interactions deal mainly with Mobile Chat and two-way SMS/Text. Results show that roughly half (47%) of organizations respond within one hour to such interactions. To see how this performance compares to consumer expectations, as well as the other channels of care, see the Consumer Comparison section on page 75.

For Mobile Care solutions that require human assistance, on average, how long does it take for your customers to receive a response?

—New Question

CONCLUSIONS

Key Findings:

- 38% of survey participants saw an increase in Phone volume in the previous 12 months, while 48% saw an increase in Email volume over the same time period

- 73% of survey participants indicated an increase in their Online Chat volume, the highest among all alternative care solutions

- Although "Improve the Customer Experience" was the top priority for companies within each of the alternative channels, "Expand Capability" was a close second in each channel

- Among alternative care channels, growth was most widespread within Social Media Care, where 72% saw channel growth in the previous 12 months, compared to Interactive Care at 64% and Mobile Care at 50%

Among channel solutions, the two most notable growth stories are for Email and Online Chat.

With only 38% of companies noting an increase in their Phone volume over the previous 12 months, it comes as a surprise that 48% of companies indicated an increase in their Email support volume. It's interesting to note that at a time when many companies are eagerly working to phase out Email support, such a large percentage of this year's survey participants see an increase in Email volume. Furthermore, consumers have indicated an increase in use of email over the past 12 months, with 31% of consumers naming Email as the Traditional Care solution they used most in the 2016 CXMB Series Consumer Edition report, compared to 22% in 2015. Fifty percent of consumers would also have a "Decreased" or "Greatly Decreased" opinion of a brand if that brand eliminated support of email.

As for Online Chat, 73% of survey participants indicated an increase in solution volumes, compared to 63% for Self-Help and 50% for FAQ solutions. Among survey participants, Online Chat is offered by roughly 45% of brands.

For the second year in a row, Social Media claims the title of channel of most widespread growth, with 72% of survey participants indicating increasing volume within the channel. While not an expression of total growth, the fact that so many brands see continued growth in the channel is a good indicator that more and more consumers are coming to embrace the channel.

Critical Questions Brands Should Be Asking Themselves:

Does a continuation or discontinuation of email support align with the preferences of our customers? If we are trying to shift email traffic to another channel, does that channel have similar capabilities to email support?

Are we ensuring we have a high level of capability in our Online Chat solution as volume and consumer adoption continue to rise?

Are we supporting the right sort of growth in our Social Media channel? Are we creating greater value for the organization in Social Media through generation of revenue and customer insights?

CONSUMER COMPARISONS

MEETING NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

Since 2014, both the CXMB Series Corporate and Consumer Editions have contained a pair of questions related to how well customer care organizations are meeting the needs and expectations of customers. While the delta between the responses to these questions has closed considerably over the years, a significant gap remains, with 81% of companies feeling they are generally meeting needs and expectations, while only 41% of consumers feel their needs and expectations are actually being met. These results highlight the fact that businesses should strive to understand their performance from the point of view of their customers. Understanding actual customer needs and expectations is a critical, yet often overlooked, component.

Corporate Perspective

Do you feel your customer care organization is generally meeting the needs and expectations of your customers?

	Yes	No
2014	88%	12%
2015	79%	21%
2016	81%	19%

■ 2014 ■ 2015 ■ 2016
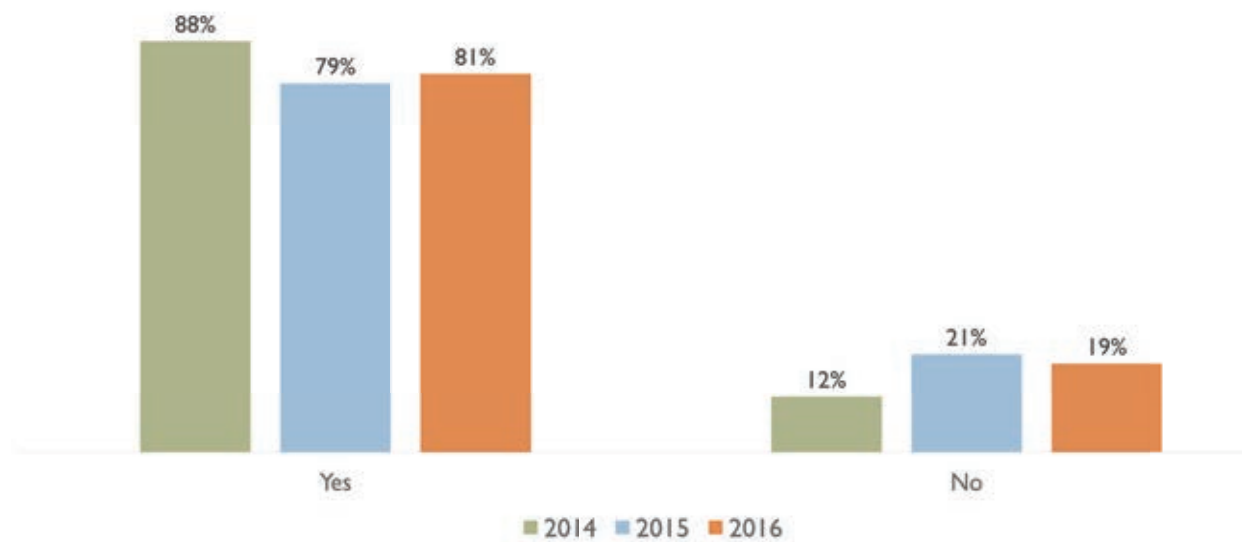
Consumer Perspective

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

Responded "Yes" to the above survey question:
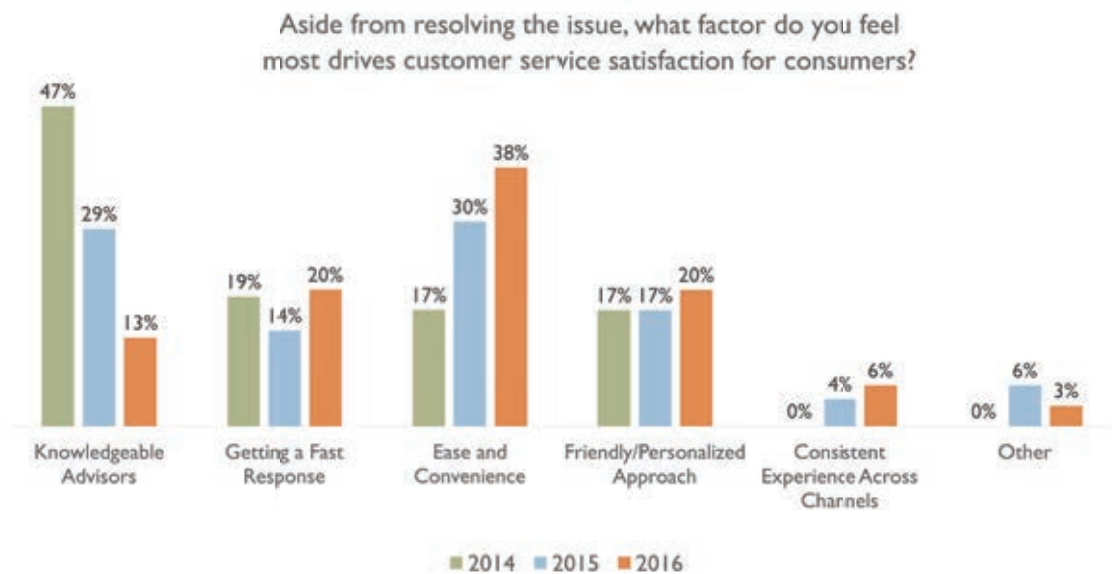
2016: 41%
2015: 33%   YES
2014: 22%

*Methodology 2016 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, April 2016 and based on 200 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
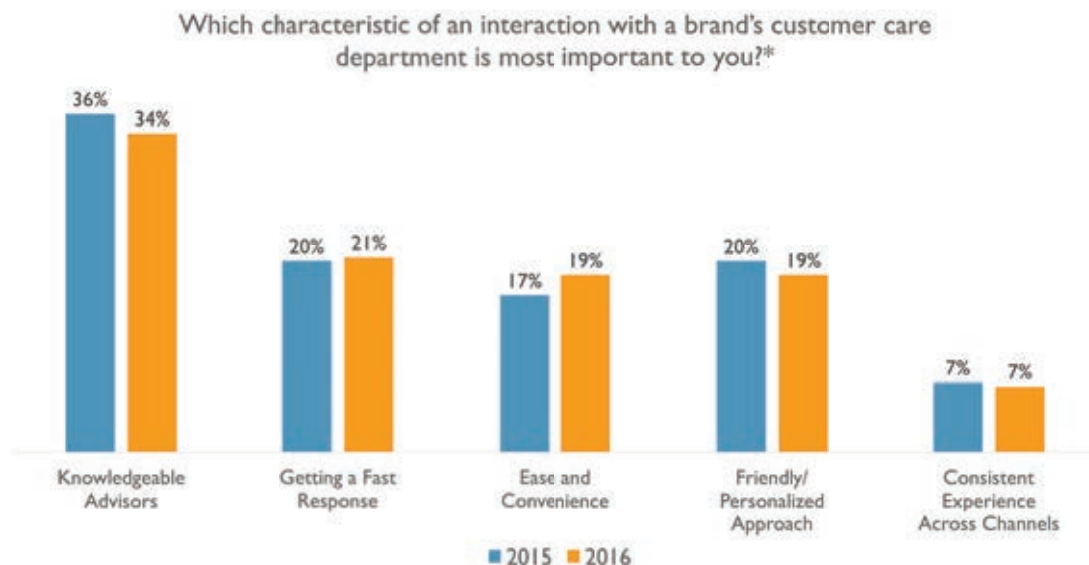
DRIVING SATISFACTION

The pair of questions below pursue an understanding of what's most important to consumers when interacting with customer care. Companies generally have a pretty good handle on the order of importance, yet tend to overestimate the importance of "Ease and Convenience" and underestimate the importance of "Knowledgeable Advisors." Undoubtedly, brands need to strive for excellence in each of these key areas, but understanding what's most important to their specific customers is critical in helping to shape a positive customer experience.

Corporate Perspective

Aside from resolving the issue, what factor do you feel most drives customer service satisfaction for consumers?

	Knowledgeable Advisors	Getting a Fast Response	Ease and Convenience	Friendly/Personalized Approach	Consistent Experience Across Channels	Other
2014	47%	19%	17%	17%	0%	0%
2015	29%	14%	30%	17%	4%	6%
2016	13%	20%	38%	20%	6%	3%

Consumer Perspective

Which characteristic of an interaction with a brand's customer care department is most important to you?*

	Knowledgeable Advisors	Getting a Fast Response	Ease and Convenience	Friendly/Personalized Approach	Consistent Experience Across Channels
2015	36%	20%	17%	20%	7%
2016	34%	21%	19%	19%	7%

*Methodology 2016 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, April 2016 and based on 211 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

FIRST CONTACT RESOLUTION

Perceived experience with first contact resolution (FCR) continues to be an area of dramatic difference between corporate and consumer perceptions. In 2016, 80% of brands indicated they provided a first-contact resolution "Always" or "Often." At the same time, only 46% of consumers felt their issues were "Always" or "Often" resolved during the first instance of contacting a company. Brands should be aware of how they measure FCR, and ensure they are doing so from the point of view of their customers. In other words, just because an issue does not require additional follow-up, or a case is closed, that doesn't necessarily mean the issue was resolved in the eyes of the customer.
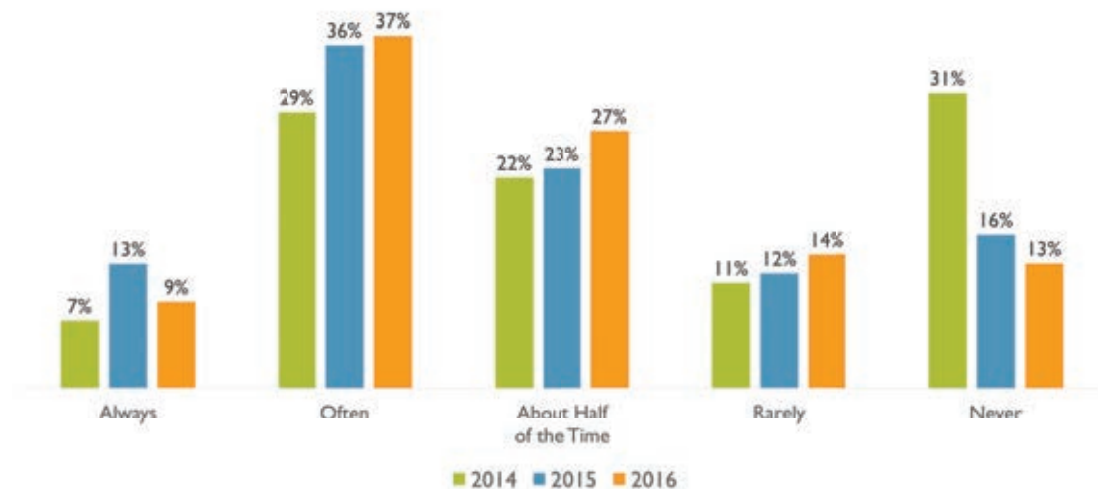
Corporate Perspective

How often does your organization resolve an issue during the first instance of connecting with the customer?

	Always	Often	Half of the Time	Rarely	Never
2015	3%	73%	17%	7%	0%
2016	5%	75%	15%	5%	0%
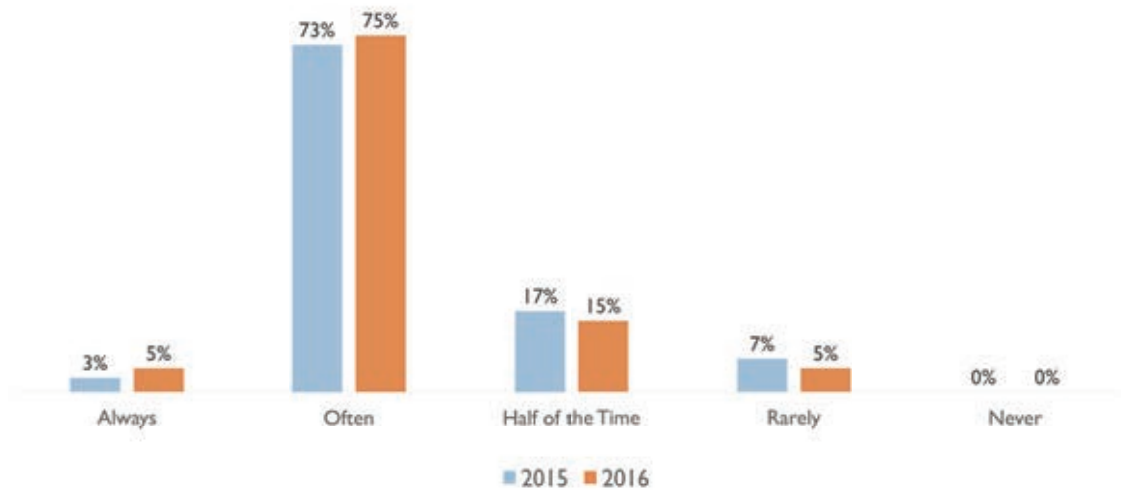
Consumer Perspective

How often are your customer care issues resolved during the first instance of contacting a company's customer care department?*
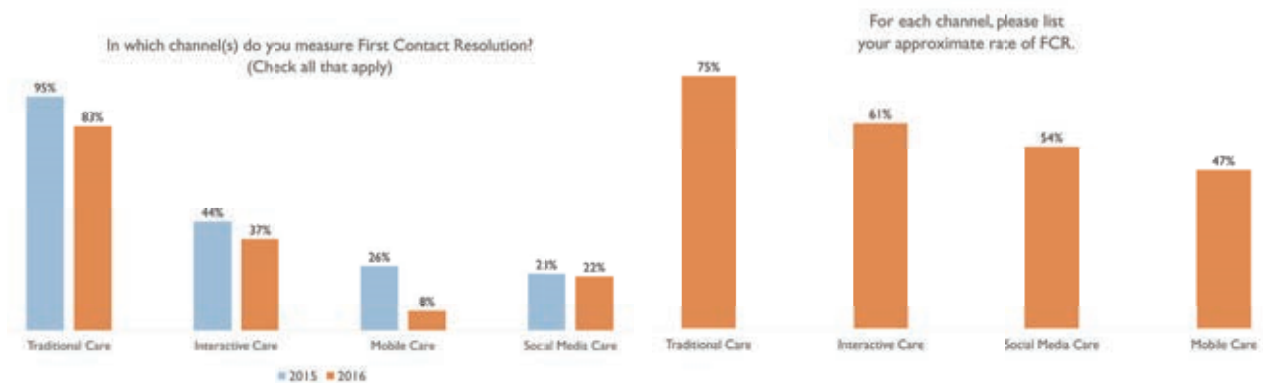
	Always	Often	About Half of the Time	Rarely	Never
2014	7%	29%	22%	11%	31%
2015	13%	36%	23%	12%	16%
2016	9%	37%	27%	14%	13%

*Methodology 2016 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, April 2016 and based on 436 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
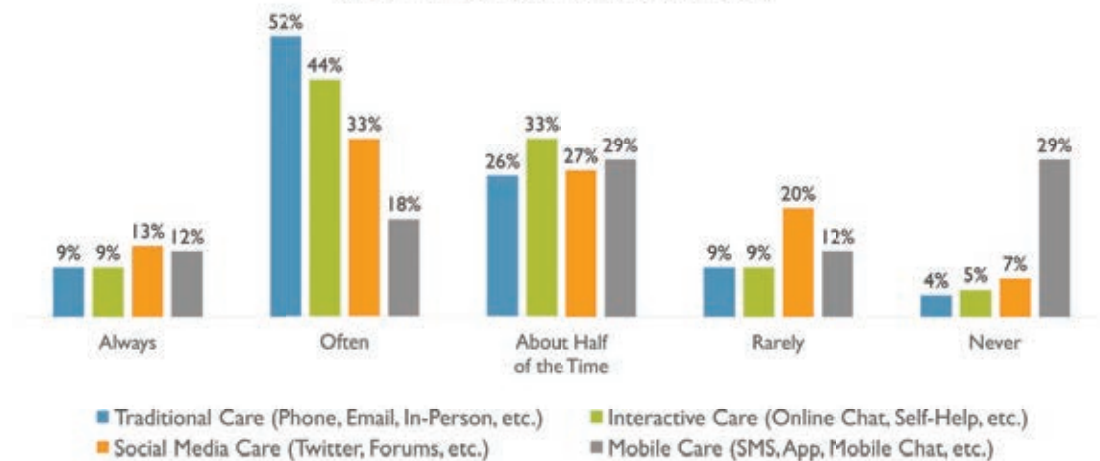
FCR PERFORMANCE BY CHANNEL

In dissecting first contact resolution (FCR) by channel of care, it becomes apparent that there is a relationship between where brands are measuring FCR, and what sort of FCR experience customers have. In Traditional Care, for instance, in which FCR is measured by 83% of companies, 61% of consumers indicated receiving an FCR "Always" or "Often." At the other end of the spectrum is Mobile Care, where FCR is measured by only 8% of companies, and only 30% of consumers indicated they receive a FCR "Always" or "Often." Furthermore, this relationship is reflected in companies' own estimation of FCR performance by channel; the more often a channel's FCR is measured, the better that channel performs.

Corporate Perspective

In which channel(s) do you measure First Contact Resolution? (Check all that apply)

Channel	2015	2016
Traditional Care	95%	83%
Interactive Care	44%	37%
Mobile Care	26%	8%
Social Media Care	21%	22%

For each channel, please list your approximate rate of FCR.

Channel	Rate
Traditional Care	75%
Interactive Care	61%
Social Media Care	54%
Mobile Care	47%

Consumer Perspective

How often are your customer service issues resolved during the first instance of contacting a company's customer care department?
(By Channel Most Used in the Previous 12 months)*

	Always	Often	About Half of the Time	Rarely	Never
Traditional Care	9%	52%	26%	9%	4%
Interactive Care	9%	44%	33%	9%	5%
Social Media Care	13%	33%	27%	20%	7%
Mobile Care	12%	18%	29%	12%	29%

- Traditional Care (Phone, Email, In-Person, etc.)
- Interactive Care (Online Chat, Self-Help, etc.)
- Social Media Care (Twitter, Forums, etc.)
- Mobile Care (SMS, App, Mobile Chat, etc.)

*Methodology 2016 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, April 2016 and based on 214 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

DIVERTING ASSISTANCE TO SELF-HELP

Since 2013, the percentage of companies that have been diverting traffic away from Traditional Care and into autonomous (self-help) options has consistently ranged between 53% and 63%. At the same time, consumers have been adamant in their preference for interacting with live agents versus automated/self-help systems. Depending on how the question is posed, consumer preference for live interaction versus interacting with an automated/self-help system ranges from 58% to 86%. Change is inevitable, but brands need to closely monitor how their customers respond to this shift, and always ensure that new avenues of engagement provide an easy and efficient path to resolution.

Corporate Perspective

Do you feel your company is beginning to divert focus away from traditional avenues of assistance into autonomous (self-help) options?

Responded "Yes" to the above survey question:

2016: 60%
2015: 63%   YES
2014: 55%
2013: 53%

Consumer Perspective

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

Response Version 1
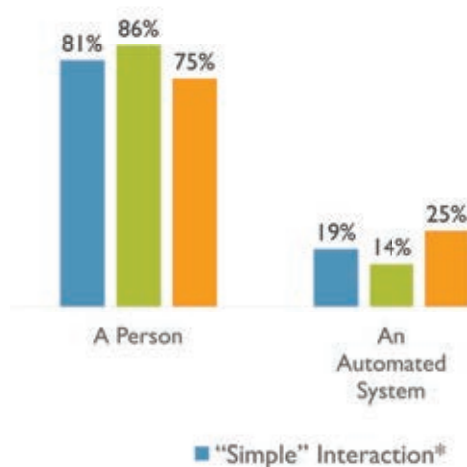
	Simple	Complex	Routine
A Person	81%	86%	75%
An Automated System	19%	14%	25%

Response Version 2

	Simple	Complex	Routine
An empowered and friendly human agent	65%	67%	58%
An effective and simple self-help system	35%	33%	42%

■ "Simple" Interaction*   ■ "Complex" Interaction†   ■ "Routine" Interaction**
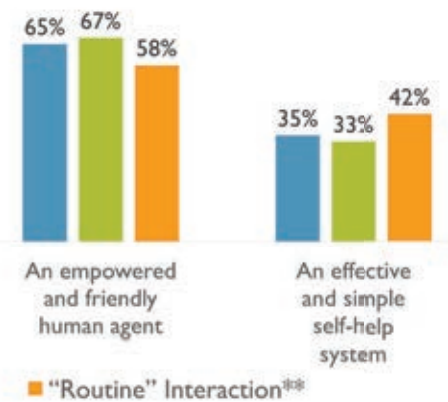
*Methodology 2016 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, April 2016 and based on 215/217 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2016 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, April 2016 and based on 214/220 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2016 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, April 2016 and based on 212/213 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

ACTIVE CHANNEL SHIFT

Although the Corporate and Consumer Edition results below are not exclusively paired, they do highlight a specific and emerging dynamic within the industry. The majority of brands are now actively trying to shift engagement traffic from one channel to another. At the same time, roughly two-thirds of consumers indicated they have taken a multichannel approach to resolving a single customer care issue. As indicated by the data, an issue arises when consumers are being forced into the multichannel approach. When they are, both satisfaction rates (below) and resolution rates suffer. Consumers will always value choice, so brands need to ensure their active channel shift activities do not result in forcing their customers to take a multichannel approach.

Corporate Perspective

Is your organization actively trying to shift engagement traffic from one channel to another?

Responded "Yes" to the above survey question:

YES   **2016: 61%**
2015: 47%

From where to where? (Select all that apply)

From Traditional Care to Interactive Care: 2015 73%, 2016 44%
From Live Assistance to Automated Assistance: 2015 27%, 2016 32%
From Traditional Care to Mobile Care: 2015 13%, 2016 18%
From Interactive Care (Chat) to Social Media Care: 2015 7%, 2016 0%
From Traditional Care to Social Media Care: 2015 7%, 2016 3%
Away From Email: 2015 0%, 2016 12%
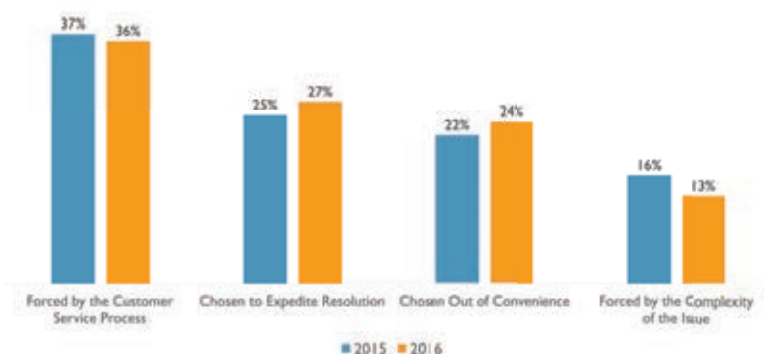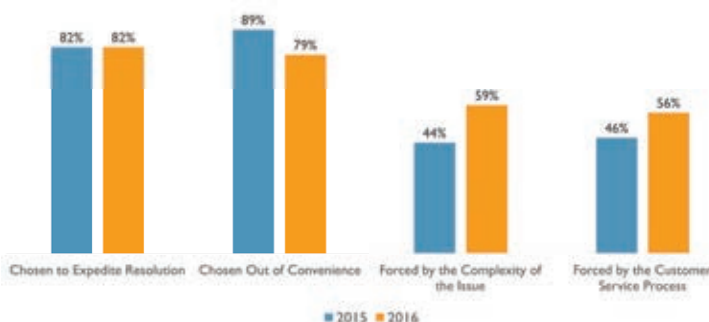From Phone to Email: 2015 0%, 2016 6%

■ 2015 ■ 2016
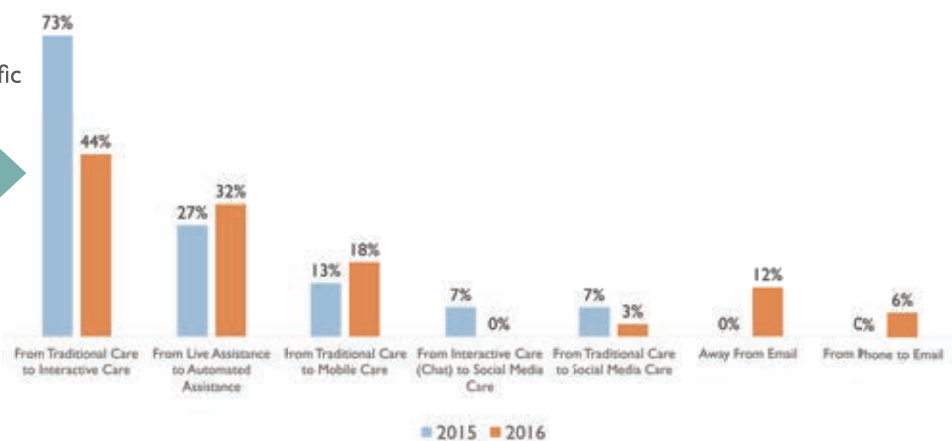
Consumer Perspective

Percentage of consumers who used multiple channels (like phone, email and social media) to resolve a single customer care issue?*

2016: 67%
2015: 67%

Why did the process take you across multiple channels?†

Forced by the Customer Service Process: 2015 37%, 2016 36%
Chosen to Expedite Resolution: 2015 25%, 2016 27%
Chosen Out of Convenience: 2015 22%, 2016 24%
Forced by the Complexity of the Issue: 2015 16%, 2016 13%

■ 2015 ■ 2016

Percentage of Consumers Who Indicated They Were Satisfied with the Multichannel Experience

Chosen to Expedite Resolution: 2015 82%, 2016 82%
Chosen Out of Convenience: 2015 89%, 2016 79%
Forced by the Complexity of the Issue: 2015 44%, 2016 59%
Forced by the Customer Service Process: 2015 46%, 2016 56%

■ 2015 ■ 2016

*Methodology 2016 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, April 2016 and based on 465 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
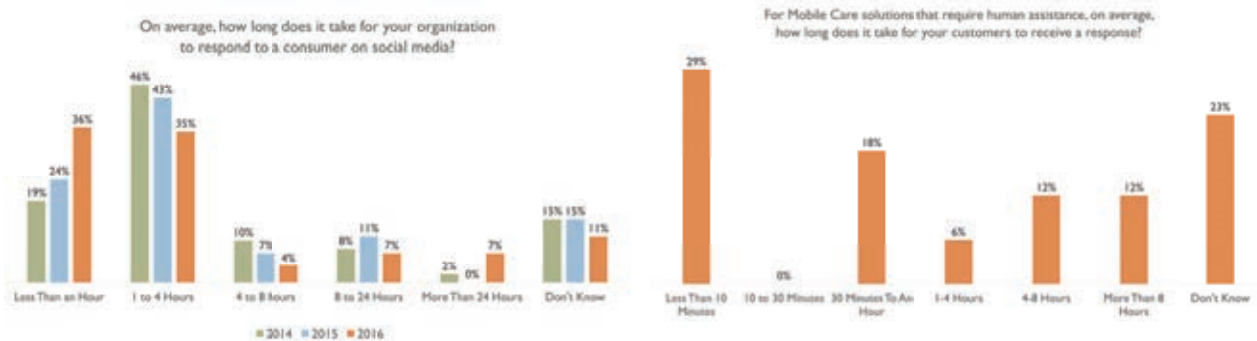†Methodology 2016 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, April 2016 and based on 301 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
**Methodology 2016 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, April 2016 and based on 140 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
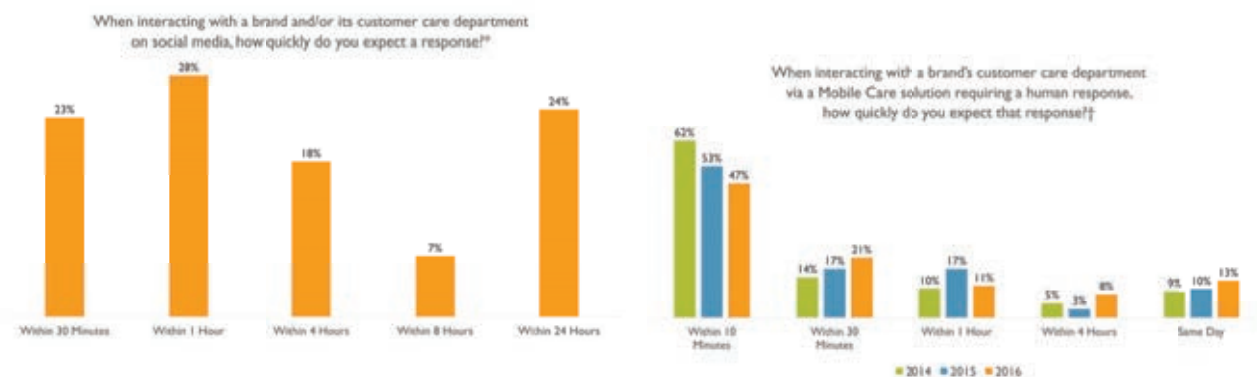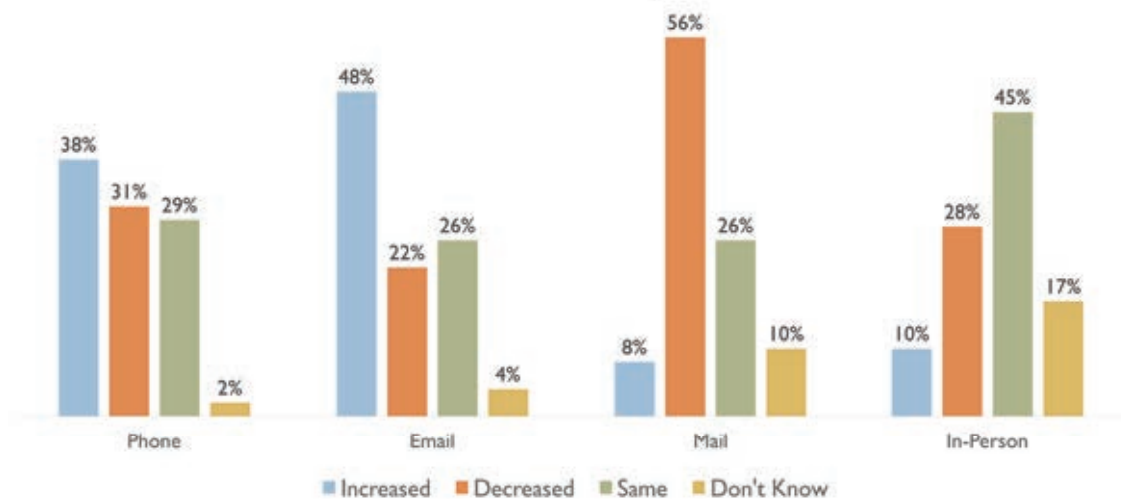
RESPONSE EXPECTATIONS

By responding within one hour on social media, brands can meet the response expectations of at least 77% of consumers. In the 2016 CXMB Series Corporate results, only 36% of corporate survey participants indicated they were performing at such a level. For Mobile Care, consumer expectations were much higher. For this channel, a response within 30 minutes would meet the expectations of at least 53% of consumers. According to 2016 CXMB Series results, only 29% of brands were hitting this mark. Although response time is just a single component of creating a great customer experience, brands should seek to understand the expectations of their customers, and develop strategies to meet or exceed those expectations.

Corporate Perspective

On average, how long does it take for your organization to respond to a consumer on social media?

	Less Than an Hour	1 to 4 Hours	4 to 8 Hours	8 to 24 Hours	More Than 24 Hours	Don't Know
2014	19%	46%	10%	8%	2%	15%
2015	24%	43%	7%	11%	0%	15%
2016	36%	35%	4%	7%	7%	11%

For Mobile Care solutions that require human assistance, on average, how long does it take for your customers to receive a response?

Less Than 10 Minutes	10 to 30 Minutes	30 Minutes To An Hour	1-4 Hours	4-8 Hours	More Than 8 Hours	Don't Know
29%	0%	18%	6%	12%	12%	23%

Consumer Perspective

When interacting with a brand and/or its customer care department on social media, how quickly do you expect a response?*

Within 30 Minutes	Within 1 Hour	Within 4 Hours	Within 8 Hours	Within 24 Hours
23%	28%	18%	7%	24%

When interacting with a brand's customer care department via a Mobile Care solution requiring a human response, how quickly do you expect that response?†

	Within 10 Minutes	Within 30 Minutes	Within 1 Hour	Within 4 Hours	Same Day
2014	62%	14%	10%	5%	9%
2015	53%	17%	17%	3%	10%
2016	47%	21%	11%	8%	13%

*Methodology 2016 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, April 2016 and based on 214 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2016 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, April 2016 and based on 207 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

EMAIL UTILIZATION

Email has been a bone of contention over the past several years. While some companies have been working to phase out email support, others have seen an expansion in volume. There may not be any single right answer regarding email, but what is apparent is the channel is still relevant to some consumers. In 2016, not only was there strong year-over-year growth in the percentage of consumers who use email more than any other Traditional Care solution, but half of consumers said they'd have a "Decreased" or "Greatly Decreased" opinion of a brand if that brand eliminated email support. Clearly, brands should take a close look at their customer's opinions and preferences for email before making the move to nix support.

Corporate Perspective

How has traffic volume changed for each of the following Traditional Care solutions over the previous 12 months?

	Phone	Email	Mail	In-Person
Increased	38%	48%	8%	10%
Decreased	31%	22%	56%	28%
Same	29%	26%	26%	45%
Don't Know	2%	4%	10%	17%

Consumer Perspective

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

	Phone	Email	In-Person	Mail
2014	63%	31%	4%	2%
2015	65%	22%	9%	4%
2016	57%	31%	7%	3%
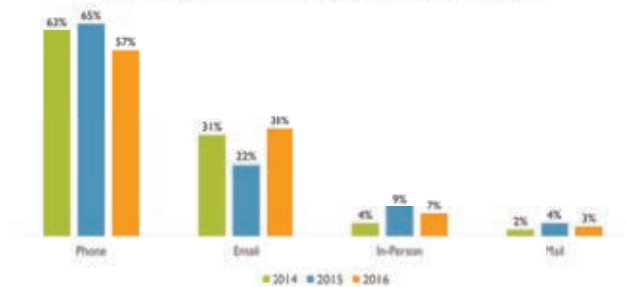
If a brand completely eliminated their email customer care support, how would your opinion of the brand change?†

Greatly Improve Opinion	Improve Opinion	No Change in Opinion	Decrease Opinion	Greatly Decrease Opinion
7%	10%	33%	36%	14%
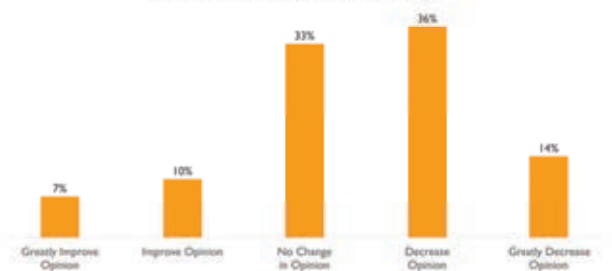
*Methodology 2016 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, April 2016 and based on 272 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.
†Methodology 2016 data: Conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, April 2016 and based on 240 online responses. Sample: National Adult Internet Population.

CONCLUSIONS

Key Findings:

• 81% of brands feel they are generally meeting the needs and expectations of their customers, while only 41% of consumers feel their needs and expectations are generally being met

• 80% of brands feel they resolve issues "Always" or "Often" during the first instance of connecting with a customer, while only 46% of consumers feel the same

• 60% of corporate survey participants indicated they were diverting away from traditional avenues of assistance into autonomous and self-help options. At the same time, consumers continue to overwhelmingly prefer live interactions over automated systems

• A strong correlation exists between forcing customers into a multichannel approach and lower CSAT and resolution rates, yet 61% of survey participants reported they were actively trying to shift traffic from one channel to another

As seen in previous years, a significant delta continues to exist between corporate and consumer perceptions regarding both meeting the needs and expectations and first-contact resolution rates. Granted, consumer perception may be skewed as people tend to remember hassles and negative experiences versus smooth and positive transactions. Still, brands need to be vigilant about truly understanding the customer experience they provide, and doing so from the customer's point of view. And many companies are pursuing these insights, with 81% of survey participants either completing a customer journey mapping project within the past 12 months, or planning to do so soon.

For the second year in a row, CXMB Series Consumer Edition data is clear and decisive on the consumer's preference for live interactions over automated/self-help tools. This preference for live agent assistance does not just apply to phone. It also encompasses alternative channel solutions like online chat, video chat, social media, two-way SMS/text and mobile chat. While companies are eager to invest and expand these alternative channels, they need to be careful if they are actively diverting traffic away from traditional avenues and forcing customers to shift channels. One of the primary reasons for this is the strong correlation between forced channel changes and a negative impact on CSAT and resolution rates.

Critical Questions Brands Should Be Asking Themselves:

Are we truly meeting the needs and expectations of our customers, or are we simply meeting the requirements of our own process?

Are we measuring FCR in all channels? If so, how does performance measure up from channel to channel?

In our pursuit of shifting engagement traffic from one channel to another, are we still providing our customers with channel choice, and are we ensuring our channels are equally capable?

CORPORATE
COMMENTARIES

QUALITY PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS —
CHOICE HOTELS

Hui Wu-Curtis, Senior Director — Customer Care Strategy

At Choice Hotels, we realize the contact center is a key component of the customer's experience with our brand. This involves both how our agents interact with customers, and also ensuring that we, as a company, are focused on what truly impacts the customer experience. So we turned to our quality program to see what changes we could make to drive improvements in the customer experience, and in the business.

We had come to realize that the way our agents were interacting with our customers could be impacting the customer experience in undesirable ways. So in late 2015, Choice Hotels looked at how we could break our front line agents from sounding so transactional, and instead, become more personable in our reservation contact centers. We soon discovered that we were the cause of this robotic type of behavior with our scripting, call flows and what we had inadvertently focused on through our quality assurance program. Our processes and scorecards had driven agents to be more concerned with their quality score and hitting all of the call requirements, versus ensuring they were not only addressing the customer's needs, but doing so in a manner that was more personable.

In the early part of 2016, the first change we made was to redesign the quality form used for monitoring and coaching agents. The team designed a more competency-based form with elements that drove relationship building and was customer-focused, while minimizing compliance. No score was assigned; instead, the form was used purely for coaching.

The second change we made was related to business-level monitoring. The quality team dedicated to monitoring for business-level issues became less focused on calibration and more focused on driving overall results. We focused on our reservation contact centers first. Our quality assurance analysts began evaluating reservations calls with the goal of identifying opportunities where we could increase sales conversion and improve on other business metrics. Shifting focus to these critical areas, the team identified issues impacting performance that were not agent-related issues, such as sales training curriculum, our incentive structure and how we approached coaching.

Surprising Results

For most of 2016, our quality analysts partnered very closely with the lines of business leaders to drive business results. The quality assurance team was focused on figuring out why conversion was lower in our busiest season, why our agents struggled with sounding more personable and why many were not converting reservation calls or falling short of other performance metrics. At the end of 2016, our quality assurance team, in conjunction with our manager of reservation sales, increased conversion by 140-bps over 2015, which was the highest conversion percentage in the last three years. This was in spite of the fact that 2016 was projected to be either stable, or possibly even decrease in reservation bookings for the hospitality industry. The reservation sales team also doubled the enrollment percentage for new Choice Privileges members, while increasing the partner transfer program by over 400-bps from 2015.

QUALITY PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS —
CHOICE HOTELS

CHOICE
HOTELS

Not only did we improve our quality program, but we transformed its functionality in our organization to be a partner and true business driver. The role of many quality assurance programs in contact centers have not changed much in the last 30+ years, despite the evolution of technology, consumer behavior and market conditions. The transformation of our quality assurance team has proven to be an effective approach to evolving our internal operations, truly driving business results for the rest of the enterprise. The results from the changes in our quality assurance program encourages us to continue to challenge what we believe to be tried-and-true structures within contact centers, and to use this approach not only in reservation sales, but in customer care as well. We continue to push the envelope in all parts of the contact center, continuously looking for other ways we can continue to be a strategic business partner to the rest of the enterprise.

Hui Wu-Curtis

As the Sr. Director – Customer Care Strategy for Choice Hotels, Hui is responsible for global delivery of reservations, member services, property support, and reputation management/social media. She has over 15 years of experience leading contact center operations for hospitality, utilities, healthcare, telecommunications and financial companies. She has extensive experience in both tactical and strategic management of large, global contact centers being well versed in technology, personnel management, project management, budgeting and process improvement. Hui holds a Bachelor's degree in Communications from San Diego State University, an MBA from Western International University and currently working on her dissertation on social media and customer satisfaction at Grand Canyon University. She is also a half-marathon survivor.

FROM COACH TO FIRST CLASS:
THE EVOLUTION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AT MICHAEL KORS

MICHAEL KORS

Ebrahim Hyder, Vice President of Consumer Support (North America)

Today's educated consumers are connected, savvy bargain hunters with a short attention span and a low tolerance for poor customer service. Innovation allows them to research, find and buy products from the comfort of their couch with very little to no human intervention. With brand loyalty becoming a waning concept, retailers need to do more to ensure customers are attracted to, and stay true to, their brand and product offerings. Employees at brick and mortar stores play an integral role in ensuring the brand experience is true and consistent. But what happens when the consumer reaches out to the call center – how do we ensure that there's a consistent brand experience across all channels?

The mantra at the Michael Kors call center is that we are "A seamless extension of the retail store experience." To ensure our customers receive the same elevated service they get at our stores when contacting our call center, our Style Consultants (CSR's) are provided with extensive brand and product knowledge training with a strong focus on using specific brand appropriate phrases, vernacular and keywords.

To validate that the Call Center was delivering on our service promise, we established a Quality Assurance (QA) program to provide valuable insight into Style Consultants' performance and help the business identify opportunities for improvement. The goal was to develop a program that would allow us to track, measure, analyze and improve on our service delivery. This approach, combined with results from our After Call Survey (ACS), provided us with a holistic 360 degree view of the customer experience.

Sadly, our initial attempt at creating a monitoring program was too ambitious and all-encompassing, turning out some unexpected results. Originally, our monitoring form contained the standard components: Introduction, Verification, Communication Skills, Call Handling, Process & Knowledge, Resolution, Sales (optional) and Closing. After establishing the basic building blocks for a good call, we made sure to incorporate very specific brand elements from our Michael Kors Jet Set training. This allowed the Style Consultants to introduce Michael Kors (the man) into the conversation to help close a sale, provide additional insight into product and to assist customers with accessorizing an outfit. We encouraged the use of phrases like "Did you know that Michael suggests …" and "When Michael designed this bag, his inspiration came from …" It was important to measure every aspect of the call in order to properly identify our strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. Unfortunately, this all-encompassing approach also left us with an extensive 27-line QA monitoring form which resulted in very long call evaluations and calibrations. In the end, our QA team was unable to meet our monthly goal of 12 audits per Style Consultant. And because they were spending most of their time monitoring and scoring calls, it left very little time to coach, identify and analyze trends, and provide useful feedback necessary to drive improvements.

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MICHAEL KORS

So our next attempt at improving our QA program was to reduce the time spent evaluating calls by eliminating trivial or non-critical elements, and combining areas of commonality into a single category. We also decided to reduce the monthly goal for audits per Style Consultant. These tweaks to the program had immediate positive results. By virtue of reducing the time to complete an evaluation, we were able to increase the number of monitoring events. We also started identifying trends which allowed us to step back, evaluate and make incremental changes to improve the customer experience. Trends we identified were that Style Consultants displayed low energy, lack of enthusiasm and an unwillingness to assist. They also were not asking any lifestyle questions or making an effort to close a sale. Through collaborative coaching, gap training and a department-wide focus on the importance of QA scoring, the Call Center's QA scores steadily increased by 9% over a period of three quarters. This increase in scores also contributed to an improvement in Style Consultant morale.

However, even with a steady increase in QA scores, the results we got from our After Call Survey painted a different picture which just did not align with the QA results we were seeing. During weekly calibration sessions, some of these disparities came to light. What we heard (or didn't hear) during calibration sessions were that the Style Consultants did not engage in genuine and natural conversations with the customer. They were not taking advantage of the leeway we gave for them to insert their own style and personality into these calls. We sell a great product and help customers achieve an aspirational lifestyle, yet our telephone interactions sounds very scripted and rote. We didn't hear the genuine and natural interaction that customers experience in our stores. The energy that our brand is known for was simply not evident in the phone conversations. The QA scores didn't reflect these missing elements because the Style Consultants were doing just enough to get a passing score. They were basically checking off a mental to-do list and going through the motions in order to get a passing score. The end result was a transactional sounding conversation that met the customer's basic needs but failed to create a memorable and branded experience. We knew that we had a problem that needed fixing.

The answer to our dilemma presented itself almost 2000 miles from our base of operations. At the CRS Summit in Austin this last September we attended one of the Customer Shop Talk break-out sessions. The session, presented by COPC Inc., was titled, "*5 Best Practices to Ensure Your Quality Program is Aligned with the Customer Experience.*" The content of the presentation was apropos and mirrored the challenges we were experiencing in our Call Center environment: 1) High QA scores but low CSAT results, and 2) Spending time and money on tools and coaching, but not seeing meaningful improvements in the customer experience. A key take-away from the session was that we should really be focusing on the critical aspects of the customer experience. We learned that customers tend to place a high value on reaching someone that truly cares about them, is knowledgeable, shows a desire to help and is empowered to resolve their issue or concern. Customers care less about being put on hold or that the Style Consultant's greeting and salutation includes their first name and a brand mention. This was a truly a eureka moment and provided the impetus we needed to attempt another revamp of our QA program.

FROM COACH TO FIRST CLASS:
THE EVOLUTION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AT MICHAEL KORS

MICHAEL KORS

Armed with a new vision and energized by what we learned at CRS Austin, we completely (again) overhauled our approach to QA and the supporting monitoring form. This time around we divided our key scoring elements into three categories: CUSTOMER CRITICAL, BUSINESS CRITICAL and COMPLIANCE. To allow Style Consultants the freedom to inject their own personality into the conversation and make the call memorable, we also included a 4th category called WOW ME. This is a subjective category that allowed the QA team to add bonus points when evaluating a call based on whether the Style Consultant provided exceptional service and helped turn a customer into a loyal fan or KORS ADDICT.

What once was a QA form with 27 scoring elements was now just 15 critical evaluation components. We placed a lot of emphasis on creating a memorable and branded customer experience. By incorporating a WOW ME category, the Style Consultant has the liberty to introduce a little bit of their own personality into the call (and be rewarded for it), making it even more genuine and memorable.

This new approach to monitoring was recently introduced into our Call Center. We will be closely tracking the QA and ACS results to see if there's been an in-tandem lift in Style Consultant performance and CSAT results. At Michael Kors we've raised the bar and now require much more from our Style Consultants than just ticking the boxes on a QA scorecard in order to achieve an acceptable score. Our goal of providing exceptional customer experiences has never changed. However, by being flexible and open to new ideas, our approach to measuring, monitoring and achieving that goal has evolved over the years.

Ebrahim Hyder

Ebrahim Hyder is the Vice president of Consumer Support for Michael Kors. Ebrahim's purview extends to delivering exceptional customer service experiences and sales support for luxury consumer products across retail, wholesale and e-commerce channels. He is responsible for building a process driven contact center organization by establishing standards for operational excellence, achieving service and sales performance results and delivering a multi-channel integrated customer experience. Ebrahim leads a high performing contact center team that services customers in English and French Canadian in both on-shore and near-shore locations. He has worked in various industries including mail order, technology, telephony and, most recently, travel and leisure industry. Ebrahim's career spans more than 20 years in leadership roles across the USA, Europe and South Africa. Ebrahim is a highly accomplished visionary with local and international experience in contact centers, customer service, strategic planning and change management in both start-up and growth organizations. He is a decisive, results-oriented leader with proven success working in dynamic multi-national and multi-cultural environments.

ABOUT THE STUDY'S METHODOLOGY

The 2016 Corporate Edition of the Customer Experience Management Benchmark Series was developed using the results of a custom online survey. Consisting of 129 questions, the survey was privately and exclusively solicited by email invitation. These invites targeted individuals responsible for managing the customer experience and customer care programs of large B2C and B2C/B2B organizations in the U.S. and Canada, with the majority of survey participants holding the title of Vice President or higher. Survey answers were gathered from September 19 through November 4, 2016.

ABOUT THE 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.

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COPC

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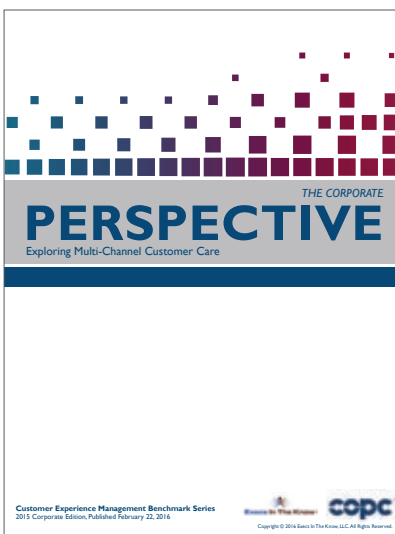
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